MY BEAUTIFUL RELIGION

2



ERKAM PUBLICATION

I AM LEARNING THE FUNDEMANTALS OF FAITH

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II

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I AM LEARNING THE FUNDEMANTALS OF FAITH



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FOREWORD

Praise be to our Allah who has honored us with our beautiful religion, Islam! Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, who taught our religion to all of humanity by practicing it in the best manner, and to His family and His Companions!

Dear Children!

The biggest capital that we have in this world is our faith. Our biggest goal is to live as a believer and to return to our Lord with this faith. The love of God which is the greatest love of all, and having faith in Him is the essence of our religion. Faith begins in the heart and is reflected in our behaviors. The love of God in our hearts leads us to become good human beings who obey God's commands and prohibitions. In turn, our good deeds and worship enhance our love and faith.

Dear Children!

The going of faith that began with our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has been continuing for generations. Each generation did their best to practice and pass this religion on to the next generation. Thus, Islamic knowledge has been passed down through hands, mouths, and hearts until finally reaching us.

In the future, you will continue the happy walk of the faith initialized by our beloved Prophet. Our responsibility is to prepare you for this blessed march and transmit in the best way the supreme messages of our religion, which encompasses all ages. Our work that we have begun with this purpose continues, praise be to Allah the Exalted.

The previously published book "**I learn my worship**" from "**My Beautiful Religion**" collection has won your satisfaction and the one of our friends which have examined the book. With the grace of our Lord, we could not predict such a beauty.

Our books have been translated in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, Albanian, Lithuanian, Flemish, Bulgarian, Georgian, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Hungarian, Uighur and Chinese. Translation in various languages are in process.

The book "**I am Learning the Fundemantals of Faith**" that you've in your hands has been prepared to explain the fundamentals of the faith. In this book a place is done to the subjects of the religions as belief in Allah, the angels, the Books, the Prophets, the hereafter, the destiny and the fate.

During the preparation of this book, we had the advantage of reviewing previously written works on the subject; however, we wanted to present the topics in a way that would bring a different taste to its readers. Therefore, we have taken into consideration the following issues:

- In order to learn about our beautiful religion with affection and interest, we began each topic with a story.
- In order to express their significance, we presented the verses from the Quran and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), the two most important sources of our religion, in frames.
- The fundamentals of faith contribute a number of positive aspects to our lives. These contributions have been explained in the light of the Koranic verses and the Prophet's sayings.

- We have provided as many examples, stories, analogies, drawings and illustrations as possible to facilitate the readers' comprehension.
- We tried to bring sweet memories of our Prophet (p.b.u.h.), his loyal friends, and prominent names in Islam into your spiritual lives.
- As appropriate, we explained the information with tables and graphs.
- We included a poem in almost every section that you can enjoy reading and possibly memorize.
- We have chosen a language that is easy and clear for you to understand when explaining the subjects. We have not included the details and the topics that you will learn in the years to come.
- Praying is a part of worship that our Exalted Lord loves deeply; besides, it helps us communicate with Him. Prayer is the essence of our worship. It is the sign of our faith. We have included pictures of friends who have risen up their hands to pray, so that you can join them in prayer.
- We have include at the end of each part questions to control your knowledge.

With your beautiful prayers, everyone who contributed to the preparation of this books hope that your will a place for them in your beautiful prayers. We leave you alone with the book "**I am Learning the Fundemantals of Faith**" of the "**My Beautiful Religion**" collection.

We pray that your hearts be filled with faith, your life with Islam, and your soul with sincerity. May the angels be your companions, and nice people your friends! May Almighty God be your lover and helper! May God speed your way until Paradise!

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January 2009/ Üsküdar

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THE WAY THAT LEADS US TO ALLAH:

RELIGION

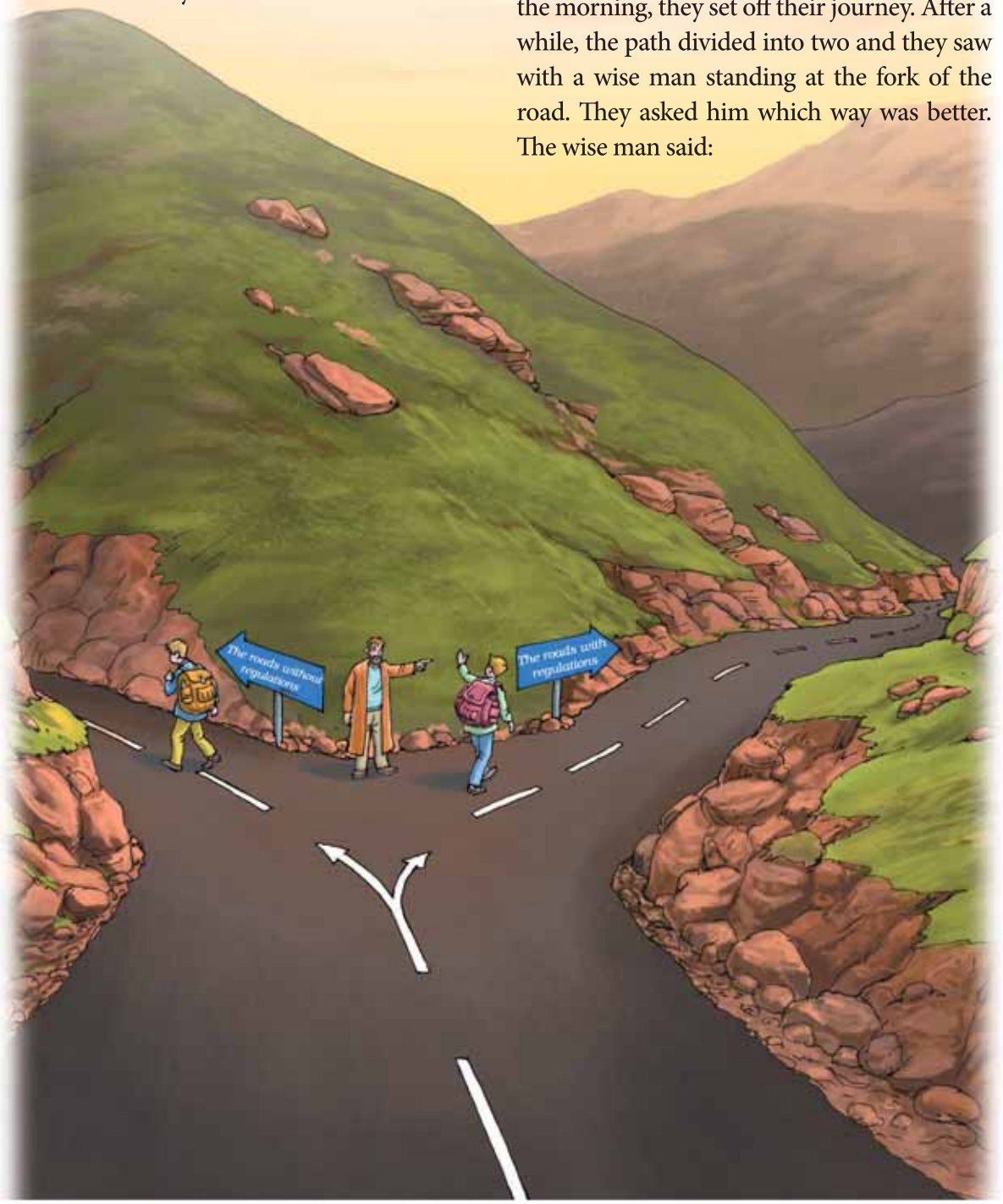
- *Definition of Religion*
- *What Religion Contributes to Us*
- *Characteristics of the Religion of Islam*
- *Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) Being the Exemplary Personality in Religion*





TAHIR AND MAHIR

There was a very nice town located at the skirts of a volcano. There lived two brothers named Tahir and Mahir. According to scientists, the volcano was going to erupt soon and destroy and ruin the beauties of this town. Tahir used to believe that there would be another town whose beauties would not be destroyed. Mahir did not want to live in a wrecked town. This is why the two brothers decided to leave their town. One day, early in the morning, they set off their journey. After a while, the path divided into two and they saw with a wise man standing at the fork of the road. They asked him which way was better. The wise man said:



"*The right path* goes to a very nice town. However, there are signs and rules on it. If you choose the right path, you should definitely obey its rules, and avoid the prohibitions. You should keep the places that you pass by clean and treat other humans and animals nicely. You should only eat from the food that is allowed. You should never forget that there is an owner of this road and everything on this road, and he is the one who has determined these rules. If you follow the signs carefully and obey the rules, you can pass all the dangers and difficulties that you come across and reach to a town that is lovelier than you could ever imagine.

On the *left path*, there are neither laws nor rules. You may act as you wish and behave freely. However, there are dangerous passages on this path. You may encounter brigands and wild animals at any moment. They can harm you or your valuables."

Tahir and Mahir gave a little thought after listening to what the wise man had told them. Tahir decided to go down the right path. Thus, he was going to secure himself and his valuables and learn the ways to avoid the dangers. He was going to reach his destination safely by traveling down the secure path. Mahir was unable to stand the gaff. He thought to himself "Why should I obey any rules when I can live freely and travel as I wish?" According to Mahir, real peace was to be able to act as one wishes. He thought that he could run away from any danger that crossed his path, and thus he could save himself. For this reason, he insisted on going down the left path. Tahir told him that his decision was wrong and the end of the left path would be very bad. He also told him that the rules on the right path are for the safety of the travelers. No matter how hard he tried to explain to his brother that real peace and happiness could be found in well-ordered and organized traveling, he could not make him listen. Finally, they said goodbye to each other and separated.

Mahir set off on his journey with the easiness of being free. He did not have to obey any rules here. He was happy to act freely and continued his journey as he crossed with joy over the hills and streams . He was eating from everything he came across and did not care about the damage he was causing to his surroundings. Just at that moment, he came to *flat and wide moorland*. While he was walking on the moorland, he suddenly heard a voice. Then, guess what he saw: A *lion* from the forest running towards him. Mahir, who was shocked, started to run away. If he continued at his speed, the lion was going to catch and tear him up. Nearby, he spotted one of the largest wells he had ever seen before. He reached the well before the lion caught up with him and desperately jumped in.

The well was so big that trees had grown up on its walls. Mahir held on to one of the trees as he was sliding down. Relieved that he had escaped from the lion, he closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath. However, his happiness did not last long. What he saw was really frightening: He looked down and there was a *dragon*. He looked up and the lion was at the edge of the well. The root of the tree that he was holding on was continuously being eaten by one white and one black mouse.

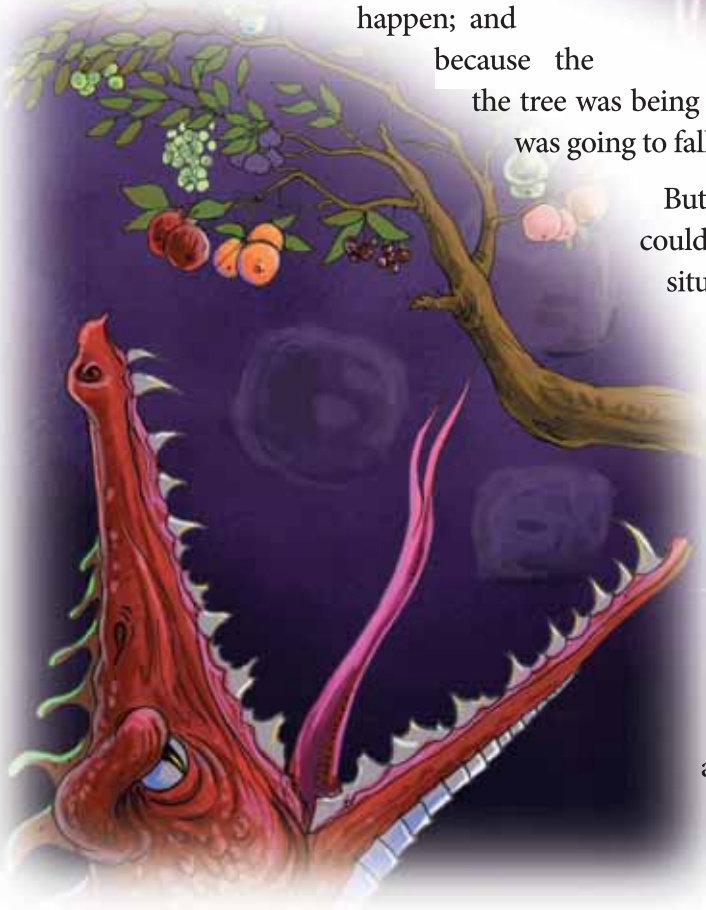
It was a very interesting tree; every kind of fruit one could imagine could be found on it. Seeing this wide variety of fruits made Mahir hungry.

There is a dragon if you look down and lion if you look up! And the root of the tree is being eaten. Mahir forgot this frightening

situation and continued to act as he had done on the way. By blocking his ears to the voices of his soul and heart, he gave into his appetite. Without worrying about if it was harmful or not, he ate all the fruits that he could get a hold of. He had already forgotten about the dangerous situation that he was in. The temporary satisfaction that the fruits gave him fooled him into thinking that he was happy and at peace. Though in reality, he was surrounded by danger.



A tragic ending awaited him. If he climbs back up the tree, he surely will be the lion's prey, and if he falls down, he will be the dragon's. There was no way he could avoid the ending that was about to happen; and because the the tree was being eaten by the mice, he was going to fall.



But, what was he supposed to do? How could he be saved from this difficult situation?

Would eating whatever he wanted without having discern for the good and harmful make him happy? Would it be possible for him to save himself from this devastating situation by acting as he wishes without following any laws and regulations, and by disregarding the rules that rule maker had ordained?

Let's leave Mahir by himself for a while and see what happened to his

brother. What did Tahir do? Did he reach the place that we wanted to go, safely?

Since Tahir believed that it would be safer to travel by obeying the laws and rules, he had chosen the right way. He thought that unlimited freedom was impossible. He knew well that people who live without rules and regulations would harm either themselves or others.

Tahir, who had made the best decision of his life, performed the duties that was asked of him. He read the signs carefully, followed the commands and prohibitions written on the boards, and learned the ways to protect himself from the dangers that he would face in future.

Finally, just like his brother, Tahir's path also reached to a flat and wide grassland. Tahir noticed that a lion was coming towards him. However, he did not get scared like his brother did. He knew that this grassland had an owner and that the lion was under this owner's command, and that he could save himself from the lion if he asked for the owner's help.

However, first he needed to protect himself. By running away from the lion, he jumped down into one of the wells whose walls were covered with trees. He held on to a tree when he was falling down. Just like in the well that his brother jumped into, one white and one black mouse were eating the roots of the tree that he was holding on. There was a lion at the top and a dragon at the bottom. There were thousands of kinds of fruits on the tree. Luckily, Tahir knew what to do when facing with such a dangerous situation. This was a test that everyone had to pass in order to reach that beautiful town that the wise man had been talking about.

Tahir understood that there is an owner of this grassland, the well, the lion, and the dragon and that the owner was testing Tahir. He knew that he needed to act with caution just like he did on his way. He knew that the fruits on the tree in this well were just examples of the fruits at the beautiful town he was going to. And some of the fruits had the property of putting him to sleep. Furthermore, those particular fruits with the sleeping agent in them were of the forbidden fruits. If he were to eat one of those fruits, he would fall from the tree. For this reason, Tahir should not eat from all of the fruits, but only from those that are allowed and that would give him energy. It was written on one of the signs that there was a tunnel that connected this tree to the beautiful town. He needed some energy to find this tunnel and reach the town. The only thing that Tahir needed to do was to try and find the tunnel that would save him from this tunnel and to pray to the owner of all these things.

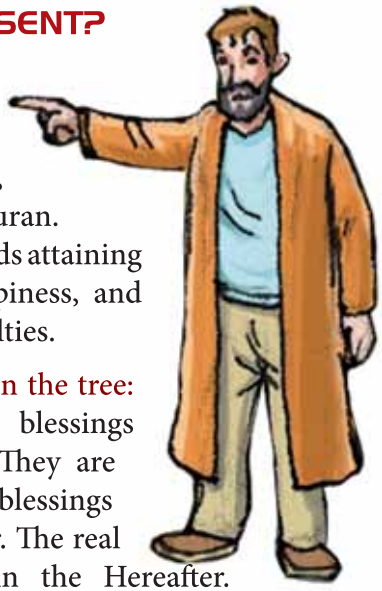
Tahir started to search for the tunnel. He did the best he could. He both worked very hard and sincerely prayed to the owner of those things.

O Lord of these places! I followed your orders. I tried to follow the right path. I stayed away from the things that you have forbidden. I did not harm anyone. Now, I need your help. I trust in you and seek refugee in you."

This prayer was giving Tahir hope and making him feel stronger. After working hard and praying, Tahir found his way to the tunnel, which had the shape of a dragon. He opened the door. Now in front of him, there were bedazzling gardens. This town was incomparably more beautiful than his old town.

And thus, Tahir received the gift of being patient by obeying to the rules and praying to the owner, the creator of everything. He reached eternal peace and happiness in this new town.

WHAT DO THE SYMBOLS IN THE STORY REPRESENT?



In this story, the journey of man in this world is symbolically described. Now let's see the explanations of such sybolism.

Tahir: Tahir represents the faithful and sincere Muslims who do good by using their intellect, trusting in Allah and obeying His rules.

Mahir: Mahir represents humans who do not obey Allah's rules, follow their own desires, and who have adopted doing harmful deeds and acts of denial as their habits.

The Path to the Right: This represents faith and Islam. It is characterized by the rules that Allah commands. It is the way that Quran shows us that which our Lord wants us to follow. It coincides with the life style that Islam promotes.

The Path to the Left: This is the path that Allah does not approve of. It is the profane and rebellious path that Satan directs. This is the path disapproved by our religion; it promotes a lifestyle that is rebellious towards Allah.

Flat and wide grassland: Represents the world that we live in.

Tree: It is the life span of every human. It is the life that one experiences.

Black and White mice: The black mouse represents the night. The white mouse represents the day. They slowly eat away at human life each day.

The lion: The lion represents the death of humans. It is the reality of death that separates humans from the material joys and loves.

The dragon/the door: The dragon represents the grave, which is the door to the Hereafter. It is a door that opens up from this world of tests to the gardens in Paradise for those Muslims who follow the way of Allah, shown in the Quran. It is a step towards attaining peace and happiness, and escaping difficulties.

The fruits on the tree: Represent the blessings in this world. They are examples of the blessings in the Hereafter. The real blessings are in the Hereafter. Those who busy themselves with such worldly blessings, look for satisfaction in them and forget about the Hereafter harm themselves, because they would be destitute of the better blessings that Allah the Exalted will give them in the Hereafter. Those who utilize the safe worldly blessings and spend them on the right path to Allah reach the eternal blessings in Paradise.

Having thousands of kinds of fruits in one tree: It shows the power and grandeur of Allah the Exalted. It also refers to thousands of different kinds of blessings bestowed upon the servants of Allah on this earth.

❁ *Whoever acts like Tahir and lives his life as a believer according to our religion, reaches eternal peace and goes to Paradise.*

❁ *Whoever acts like Mahir and disobeys our beautiful religion's sacred laws lose eternal happiness and a place in Paradise. Their seat is in Hell.*

MAN AND RELIGION

Human beings are creatures composed of body and soul. The body represents their material side and the soul represents their spiritual side. Our soul (spirit) is what separates us from other creatures and makes us human.

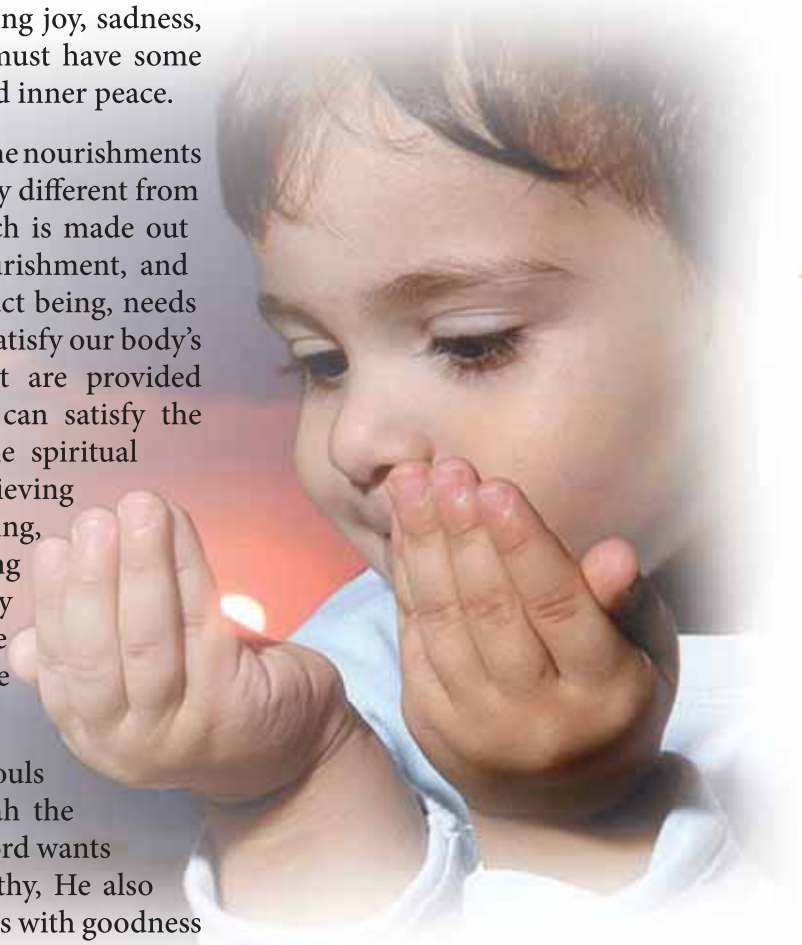
We cannot perceive the soul with the senses. The relationship between our body and soul is similar to the relationship between a lamp and electricity: We cannot see electricity, but we recognize its existence when the lamp is turned on. Just as the lamp cannot be turned on without electricity, a human cannot live without a soul.

The soul has needs, just as the body has needs. The body gets hungry, thirsty, and cold. It needs food, drink, and warmth. The soul lives by experiencing joy, sadness, happiness, and sorrow. It must have some kind of innate happiness and inner peace.

Both the structure and the nourishments of the body and soul are very different from each other. Our body, which is made out of clay, needs material nourishment, and our soul, which is an abstract being, needs spiritual nourishment. We satisfy our body's needs with the foods that are provided from the earth, while we can satisfy the needs of our soul with the spiritual nourishments such as believing in Allah, worshipping, praying, being altruistic, having compassion and mercy. Only this way we can achieve the happiness and inner peace that our souls need.

Our bodies and souls are entrusted to us by Allah the Almighty. As our Exalted Lord wants us to keep our bodies healthy, He also wants us to nourish our souls with goodness

Our body is like a car, and our soul is its driver. Can we argue that we have fed the driver when we put gas into the car? Arguing this would be obviously ridiculous. Because we know very well that the car needs fuel and the driver needs food. Is it not more ridiculous to assume that by feeding someone we also feed his soul?



that will keep us away from evil and this can only be achieved with the help of our religion.

The Creator of All: Allah (j.j.)

Allah has created the universe in a perfect order. He put the sky, the land, and all that is in between in perfect order making them wonders of the universe. He adorned our world with mountains, lowlands, canyons, rivers, and seas. He established such an order in the universe that even our intellect cannot fathom. This perfect system has been working without a problem for billions of years. Night and morning follow each other; the sun rises in the East every morning and sets in the West every ecvening. Seasons come and go in their designated order.

All of the creatures in universe have been acting in accordance with the laws that Allah has decreed, therefore fulfilling their duties perfectly. A seed dropped to earth blossoms, grows, and satisfies the needs of humans and animals. Animals are born and they live a life according to Allah's unique plan. To sum up, the universe continues in perfect balance and order.

The universe has been created to serve humanity. The worldly palace – with all its beauty – has been embellished for this purpose. Well then, for what purpose was the human race created, to which countless blessings have been given? What is the duty of humans in this world?

A great blessing was given to us for the purpose of finding our Creator: Intellect.



Man is different from other creatures in this universe. He was created as an intelligent being. Since he has an intellect, he also has the freedom to worship his Creator or not; he may choose how to behave in this world as well. By using one's intellect, one can choose the right path; he can avoid all and any kinds of evil. A human being can recognize the right and good path by using one's intellect. It is for this reason that people are responsible for their actions.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah Sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they Trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;- (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:164)

Our guides that inform us of the Existence and Oneness of Allah: Prophets

Apart from our intelligence, our Exalted Lord also sent His messengers to us. They

Allah the Exalted says:

"Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts), of Hearing and Sight. We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)."

(Surah Al-Insan (Man), 76:1-2)

guided people in finding the right path. The first human, Adam (p.b.u.h.), was also the first prophet. Those who use their intellects and acknowledge the guidance of the prophets believe in the existence and oneness of Allah. However, throughout human history there have also been people who have not used their intellects well, and therefore have not been able to recognize the guidance of the prophets. These people have deviated from the right path by worshipping nature, spirits, or idols instead of Allah.

A way that will make us happy in this world and the Hereafter: Religion

Our Exalted Lord has created the universe and put it in the service of humans. Unlike other creatures, He gave humans the freedom to believe or not, and to choose how they should act. Man was created in such a way that he is capable of acting both arrogantly or servile.

Our Lord, who has infinite mercy, did not leave humans, whom He provided with many blessings, helpless on the issue of having the freedom of choice. He has given human beings the intellect so that they may make the right choices. He also sent prophets to show them the straight path. He has given certain rules and made suggestions which will help humans reach happiness by leading them to good behaviors and protecting them from bad ones. The happiness of humanity lies under these divine rules and counsel. When humans learn and practice them, then they are able to keep their lives balanced. They may attain peace in this world as well as in the Hereafter. These rules and counsel that our **Exalted Lord provided us with in order for us to be happy in this world and Hereafter is called religion.**

Allah the Exalted says:

"Messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers."

(Surah al-Nisa (Women), 4:165)

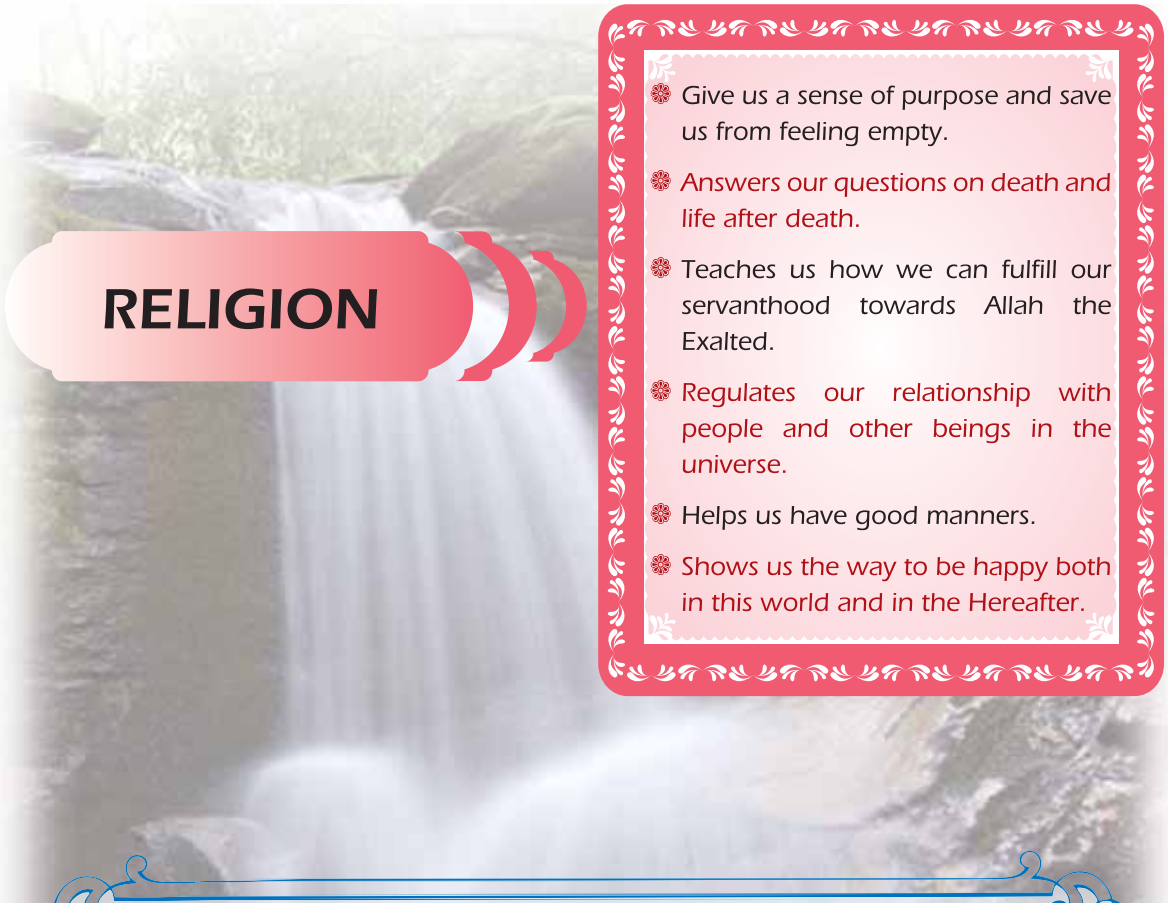
Allah the Exalted says:

"So set you your face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind…"

(Surah Ar-Rum (The Romans), 30:30)



WHAT RELIGION CONTRIBUTES TO US



RELIGION

- Give us a sense of purpose and save us from feeling empty.
- Answers our questions on death and life after death.
- Teaches us how we can fulfill our servanthood towards Allah the Exalted.
- Regulates our relationship with people and other beings in the universe.
- Helps us have good manners.
- Shows us the way to be happy both in this world and in the Hereafter.

As our Exalted Lord did not create anything without a purpose, He did not leave humans without guidance. The religion was sent to us to teach our purpose of creation and how to act in this universe. According to our religion, the fundamental purpose of our creation is to know our Lord and worship Him. As long as we live in accprdance with this principle, our life will have a meaning.

Knowing that there is a purpose in our creation and living in accordance with this purpose saves us from feelings of purposelessness and aimlessness. Religion fills any spiritual void that may be in our hearts.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?"

(Surah al-Qiyamah (Resurrection), 75:36)

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What will happen to me after I die?

Allah the Exalted says:

"He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed…"

(Surah Al-Mulk (Dominion), 67:2)

All of us question our purpose in life by asking these and other similar questions. We want to understand our place in this universe as intelligent beings. However, just like our other abilities, our intelligence is limited as well. Our mind lacks the capacity to find the answers of these questions. Only Allah the Exalted, who created everything and knows everything, knows all the answers. Therefore, only a religion revealed by Allah can answer our questions about creation, death, and life after death.

We can find the existence and oneness of Allah by using our intelligence.

By thinking about all His blessings, we can come to the conclusion that we must thank Him for them. However, we may not know what would be the best and nicest way to thank and worship our Lord. Only religion teaches us how to be in the service of Allah. This is because our Exalted Lord is the One who knows about the forms of worship necessary to show our love, respect, and loyalty to Him. He is the One who determines when and how worship should be conducted. We learn about how to worship by means of the religion that He revealed to His prophets.

Allah the Exalted says:

"And they have been commanded no more than this: To worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight."

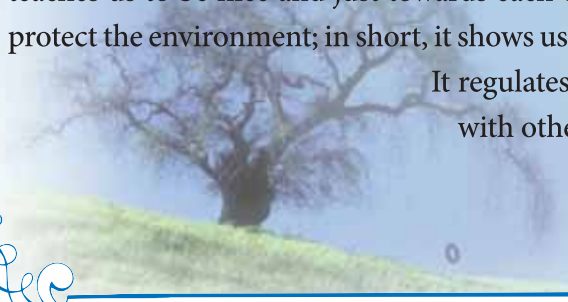
(Surah Al-Bayyinah (Evidence), 98:5)

We are not the only creatures that live in this universe. We share this world with other humans and other creatures. Therefore, our acts affect other living or nonliving beings, no matter we are aware of them or not. Therefpre we have to act in such a way that would be beneficial to humans and our surroundings. Religion shows us the best way of life by teaching us good and evil, and right and wrong. It teaches us to be nice and just towards each other, to treat animals humanely, and to protect the environment; in short, it shows us how to respect the rights of all creatures. It regulates our relationships with one another and with other creatures in this universe.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."

(Surah An-Nahl (The Bee), 16:90)



Religion teaches us that we are always and everywhere under the control and supervision of our Lord. It enforces our belief that Allah sees us, even when no one else does, and that we will be held accountable for our actions in the Hereafter. This feeling of spiritual control surrounds our inner life. It enables us to avoid doing wrong and makes us good-natured.

Allah the Exalted says:

"O my son!» (said Luqman), «If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well-acquainted (with them)."

(Surah Luqman, 31:16)

Whether rich or poor, human beings sometimes feel a kind of emptiness and uneasiness in their inner-lives. Some people turn towards harmful things, such as alcohol or drug abuse in order to fill this emptiness they feel in them. They think that they can find happiness in games and entertainment. They disregard the connection between man and Allah. They forget about the the reality of death and the Hereafter. However, when they are alone and remember the reality of death, the superficial happiness that they have created in their minds comes to an end. Hence, the most important thing for humans is to find true and real happiness. Indeed, religion is the perfect means to attain eternal happiness. Religion builds the connection between man and Allah. It reminds us that death is not the end, but the beginning of a new and eternal life. It establishes the love of Allah in our hearts. It teaches us to look at the whole universe from the window of this love. It shows us the way to happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

Allah the Exalted says:

"And there are men who say: «Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!»"

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:201)



THE SOAP THAT IS NOT USED

Having lead the Afternoon Prayer, Hasan Hodja, who gained the people's respect of all ages in town, was slowly walking towards the downtown Religious Administration Building.

The municipality had decided to install curbstones on the downtown streets. The pavements the town center were broken up and everywhere looked like a construction site. While shop owners were happy thinking that in a few days, downtown will look much better, the unexpected rain made the area muddy. The shopkeepers felt sorry for this situation but there was nothing they could do about it!

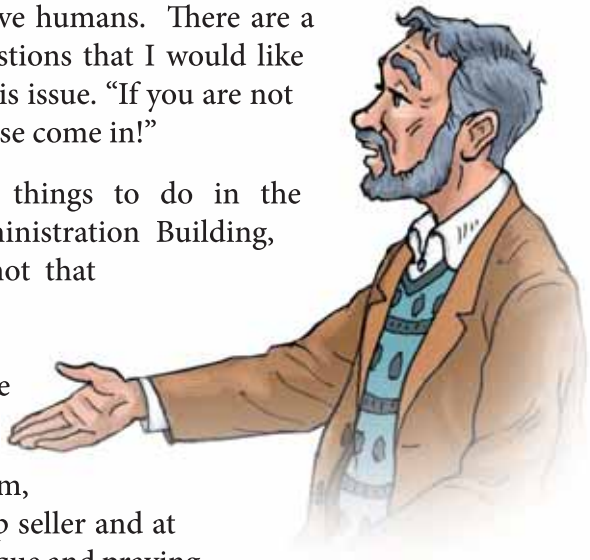


Hasan Hodja was walking over the marbles in front of the shops but when these parts ended, he had no choce but to walk on the muddy road. While he was trying not to get any mud on his clothes, he greeted the shopkeepers and inquired about their well-being.

When he came in front of the electrician shop, master Najib invited him to the shop.

- Come in hodja! Let's have some tea.

How nicely you explained us in the friday sermon that only embracing the religion can save humans. There are a couples of questions that I would like to ask about this issue. "If you are not in a hurry, please come in!"



- "I have things to do in the Religious Administration Building, but they are not that urgent. Let's have a cup of tea while we chat".

Mr. Kazim, who was a soap seller and at odds with mosque and praying, was the neighbor of master Najib. When he heard the voice of Hodja, he came into the electrician shop. As Mr. Najib was ordering the teas, he interrupted:

- "Master! You say that religion provides peace and happiness to humans. However, despite all those years, the world is still full of bad people".

Hasan Hodja said,

- "You have entered into an important and deep subject".

He glanced over at the soap seller, turned to him with confidence as he showed him a man walking around with his muddy pants and said,

- "The world has known about soap for hundreds of years. It has been said that soap cleans filth and dirt. However, there are still many filthy and dirty things in this world and many people become dirty because of them, isn't it so?"

The soap seller disagreed and said:

- "Yes but soap works only when it is used. What can soap do for those who consistently put themselves in the mud?"

Hasan Hodja now had the opportunity he had been waiting for. It was the perfect time to make his point:

- "You are right. What can soap or a soap seller do for those who put themselves in the mud? My child! Religion works in the same way. If it is practiced and lived, it brings happiness to the world. What can religion do for those who perform forbidden acts, sins, cruelty, and injustice?"

THE TRUE RELIGION: ISLAM

The religion that is sent by Allah and that commands us to believe in the One and Only God Allah and to worship Him alone is called **the true religion.**

Allah is the only One who has the right to establish a religion.

It is our Exalted Lord who created the stars in the universe and the creatures in the deep oceans. Everyday, scientists discover new traits of creatures in the universe. We know that the person who knows the computer best is the engineer who designed it. Our Exalted Lord who created man from nothing is the One who knows him best. He is the One who knows the needs of our bodies and spirits the best. Therefore, Allah is the only One who can command the most suitable rules, in other words, establish a religion, which can make us happy both in this world and in the Hereafter. No one except He can have the power to establish a religion, change the fundamental rules of a religion, or abolish it.

Islam is the common name of the religions brought by all the prophets.

Prophets are people who deliver the message that they received from Allah to human beings and show them how to live in accordance with it. The first man, Adam, was also the first prophet. The religion that was revealed to him was the "faith in one God: Allah", in other words **"Tawhid."**

"Islam" is the common name of the true religion that Allah sent to humans through revelation. The verse following verse from surah Al-i Imran learly states this fact: *"The*



Religion before Allah is Islam" (Surah Al-i Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:19).

Throughout history, there were times when humans deviated from the way of divine revelation. They contaminated the faith and pure morality that the religion taught. Our Exalted Lord has sent new prophets to correct the wrong beliefs and the corrupted moral values. All the prophets had claimed to their people that there is no deity but Allah and one must worship only Him. They let them know that everyone will be accountable for their actions in the Hereafter. The fundamentals of faith, morals and values like justice, righteousness, and servitude, which the prophets taught, never changed or differed from one another.

Allah the Exalted had appointed the first human, Adam as a prophet. He taught his people about Islam, the oneness of Allah, and not to worship anything else but Him. Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was the last messenger of Islam; no prophet after him will come, nor will any book after The Noble Quran be revealed.

Religions that do not command believing in Allah (Tawhid) the One true God are false religions

Made-up religions that are not revealed by Allah are called **false religions.**

There are also religions that were later corrupted by human beings even if they were originally revealed by Allah. Some additions and superstitions were mixed into those religions. Many changes were made to the fundamentals and practices of those religions and they are called "corrupted from their originals." Judaism and Christianity are religions that are corrupted from their originals.

Our Beloved Prophet said:

"My situation with regard to other prophets is as follows: Somebody builds a very nice house. The house is completed but only one empty space for one brick is left in its corner. Then, upon seeing that empty spot, the people who visit that house and admire it say "Only if that one-brick wide spot had not been left empty!" Indeed, I am that missing brick, I came and became the last of the prophets."

(Bukhari, Manaqib, 18).

Allah the Exalted says:

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

(Surah Al-Maida(The Table), 5:3)

Allah the Exalted says:

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah., never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good)."

(Surah Ali Imran (The Family of Imran), 3:85)

MY RELIGION

My religion is exalted, I love my religion,
I consider it superior to other religions and praise it.
My religion is Islam, the best of all religions,
We say "Allah is one," we say "Allah is one,"
We do not know anything else but to say "Allah is One"

Prophet Muhammad, the sun of both worlds,
There is no match to him among the prophets…
He is the one who brought this religion to us from Allah
Light shines on us from the skies above, because of this religion.
This religion says "Be clean!" it says: "Be righteous!"
Our book is the Quran; we read it all the time,
Many thanks to Allah for making us Muslims…

Şerafeddin YALTKAYA



THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

The last religion that Allah had sent to humanity is Islam. Some of the important characteristics of Islam are the following:

1. Islam is a universal religion that addresses to every time and every human being.

Our Prophet was sent to all humanity until the end of time. The religion that he brought has the characteristics that will satisfy the needs of all humanity. Islam commands to act kindly towards one's parents, to show mercy and affection to all living beings, to avoid extravagance, to be honest in trade, and to be just in whatever happens. These and other similar principles are the fundamental humanitarian values that every society needs.

Allah the Exalted says:

"We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not."

(Surah Al-Saba, 34:28)



2. Islam is a religion that aims at making things easier for us. It demands from us the things that we are capable of.

Islam does not burden us with major responsibilities that we cannot handle. For example, a sick person who cannot stand up can perform his prayers while sitting. A person who cannot find water to make ablution can make tayyammum (dry ablution with clean soil). A person who is traveling a long distance can postpone the Ramadan fasting for a time after the month of Ramadan.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:285)

3. Islam does not discriminate between rich and poor, or strong and weak.

Islam does not recognize one's race, language, or skin color as superior to others. Therefore, everyone is equal before the court. No matter what one's status in society is, no one person or group has privileges. A perfect example of this principle of equality in Islam is seen in the Hajj (pilgrimage). During Hajj, millions of people dress in white clothes (ihram) and worship shoulder to shoulder. Discrimination is completely non-existent, and this is what our religion commands.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"O people! All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action."

(From the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet Muhammad Prophet Muhammad).

4. The goal of Islam is to make people happy both in this world and in the Hereafter

Islam encourages people to utilize the blessings of this world and earn the Paradise along with them. Islam does not accept setting the Hereafter aside for this world, or setting the world aside for the Hereafter. It tries to incorporate a perfect balance.

Allah the Exalted says:

"But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world.»

(Surah Al-Qasas (The Narration), 28: 77)

5. Islam places great importance on cleanliness.

The practices commanded by Islam not only sustains physical cleanliness but also cleanliness of the heart and spirit. For example, wudu (minor ablution), ghusl (major ablution), salat (ritual prayers), sawm (fasting), hajj, and zakat (alms) purify our souls and keep us away from both material and spiritual filth.

Allah the Exalted says:

"For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2: 222)

6. The commands and prohibitions of Islam is compatible with human nature

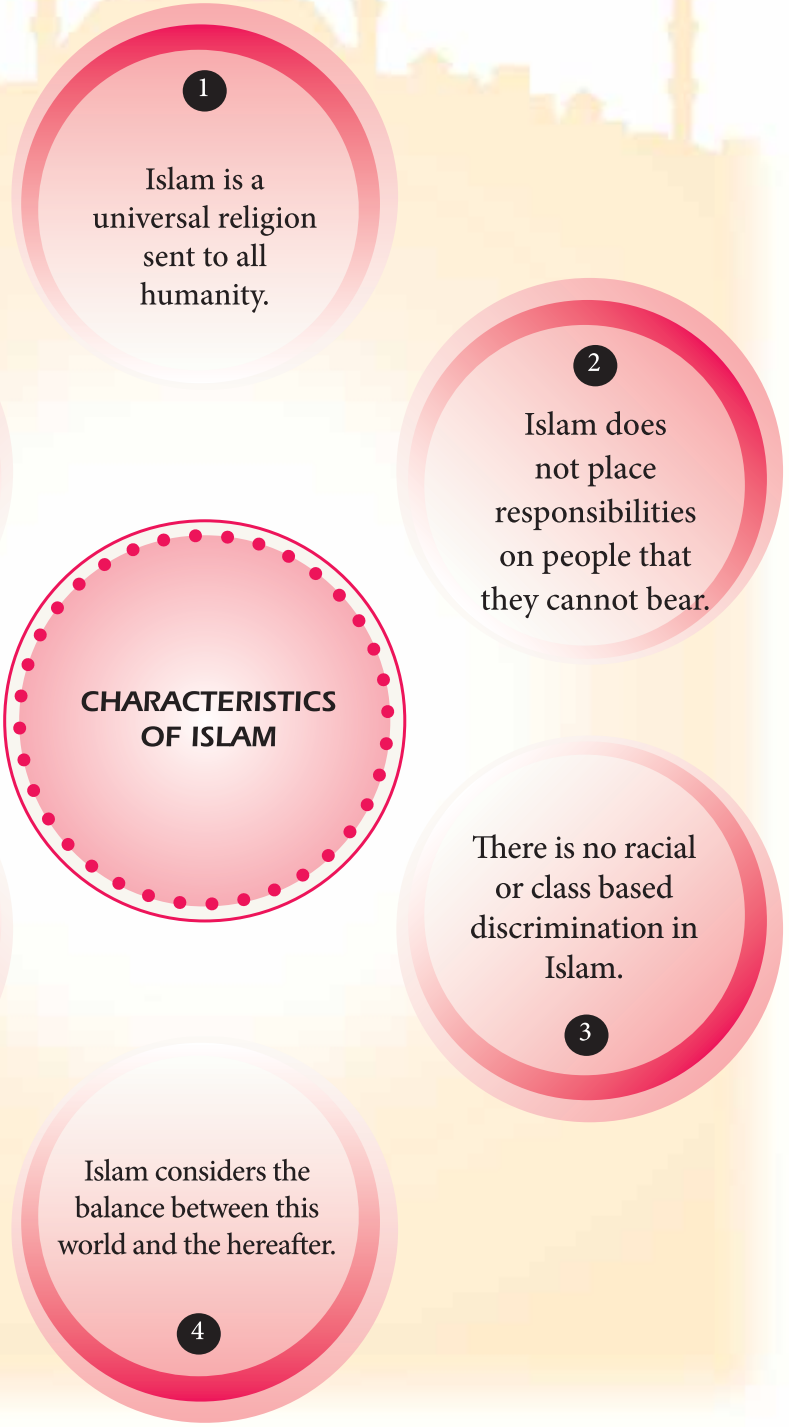
Islam prohibits alcohol, gambling, adultery, lying, oppression, and injustice. Islam commands goodness, altruism, and justice, behaving well towards parents, and watching after the poor and the destitute.

Allah the Exalted says:

«… Prophet, for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure)…»

(Surah Ar-A'raf (The Heights), 7: 157)

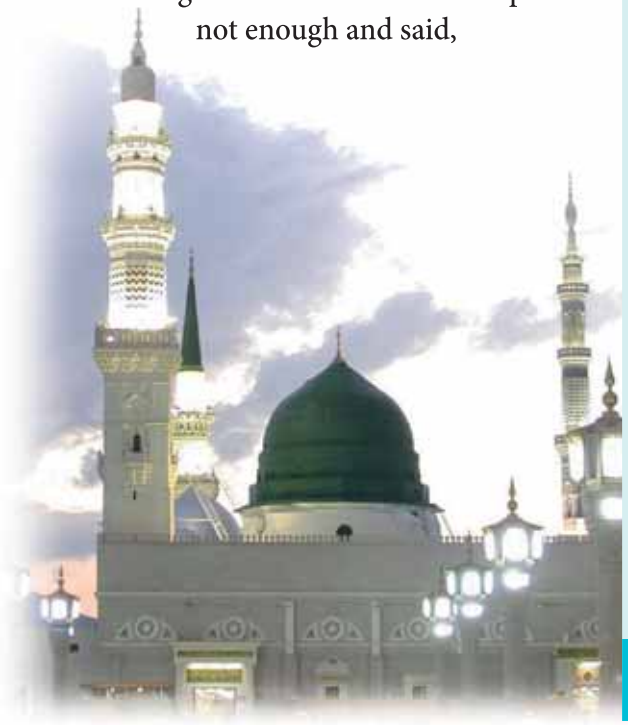
We can summarize the characteristics of Islam as follows:



THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IS THE BEST EXAMPLE FOR US SHOWING HOW TO PRACTICE THE RELIGION

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad, who was sent to teach people our beautiful religion Islam became an example to all of humanity with his way of life. All of his behaviors, acts, and good manners were shaped by the divine standards prescribed in the Noble Quran. He was the one who taught and demonstrated people how to practice the religion of Islam.

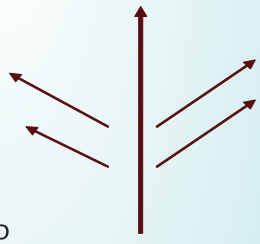
The Prophet was very careful when it came to fulfilling the commands of our religion and avoiding acts that were forbidden. He would avoid habits and extremes that did not benefit individuals or societies. He would recommend Muslims to be moderate, to follow the middle way and to hold on firmly to the commands of the religion. One day, three friends of the Prophet came to his house and asked about his supererogatory worship. When they were told how our Prophet performed his acts of worship, they regarded their own worship was not enough and said,



- Who are we in relation to the Messenger of Allah? His past and future sins are forgiven. One of them said,

- For the rest of my life, I will perform prayers the entire night without sleeping. Another one said,

One day, our beloved Prophet picked up a stick while sitting with his friends. He drew a straight line on the ground. He pointed out the line to his curious friends and said:



- This is the straight path of Allah the Exalted.

Then he drew two more lines to each side of the straight line and said:

- These are the paths of Satan.

Then, he put his blessed hands on the middle line and recited the following verse from the Quran:

"(Allah the Exalted says :) Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus doth He command you that ye may be righteous." (Surah Al-An'am (Cattle); 6: 153)

Ahmad ibn Hanbal, III, 397

- For the rest of my life, I will fast every day; there won't be a day that I spend without fasting. The third companion promised himself by saying:

- For the rest of my life, I will refrain from marital relations; I will never marry. After a while, our Prophet came over to them and said:

"Are you the ones who said so and so? By Allah and I am the one who is the most fearful of Allah and the most respectful to Him. Yet, I sometimes fast and sometimes don't. At night, I pray and get some sleep. I also marry women. Those who do not follow my tradition in religion is not from me (not one of my followers.)" *(Bukhari, Nikah 1)*

Our beloved Prophet used to solve the problems that he faced in life under the lightof Islamic principles. When a question was asked to him or when he wanted to solve issues between people, the first resource that he would resort to was the Noble Quran. He would say that our religion makes things easy, and he would choose the easier solution over the difficult one. He would also recommend to his friends that they take the standards set by Islam into consideration when solving their problems.

Our Prophet would consider religion even more important than his own life. He experienced many hardships because of it, and he endured many difficulties for the sake of Allah.

During the first years of Islam, unbelievers who did not accept the religion tortured our Prophet. They threatened him with his life many times. They left our Prophet and his followers to starve. They spread thorns to the paths that he would pass through. In the city of Taif, they stoned him and his feet were covered with blood. They did many more tortuous things. Despite all of these, our prophet never stopped practicing, preaching, and teaching Islam.

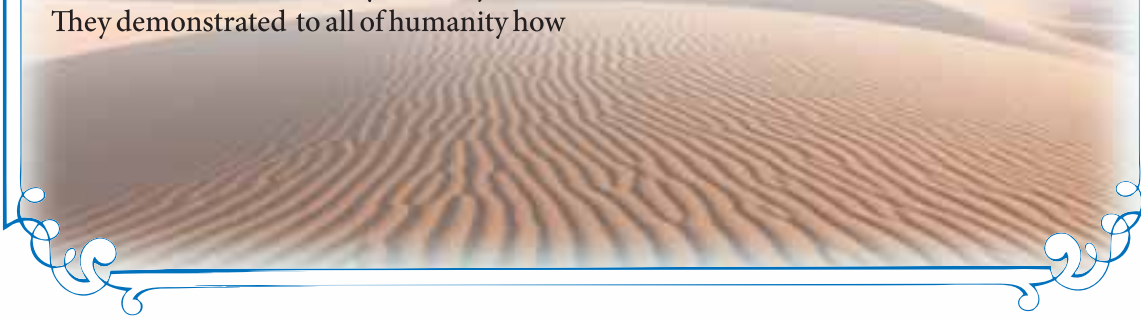
The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had raised an exemplary generation that understood and practiced the religion correctly. The people who heard his Noble message and had accompanied him by accepting our beautiful religion are called "the Companions (Sahaba)."

The era before Islam is called "the era of ignorance." At that time, in the Arabian peninsula, there were bloody battles and civil wars that lasted for years. People used to live in fear and anxiety. There was no security of life and property. The rich used to mistreat the poor, and the strong used to oppress the weak. Free people used to torture slaves in every way imaginable. Islam, however, abolished all of this unacceptable acts and behavior. It established a civilization that honored humanity.

Even if our Prophet did not perform miracles, the generation of Companions that he trained would be enough to prove his prophethood.



The companions who witnessed the age of ignorance (jahiliyyah) realized that religion was the only path to salvation. By the virtue of our beautiful religion, they were saved from the age of ignorance which was full of cruelty and injustice. They demonstrated to all of humanity how the religion needed to be practiced and how a society who practices the religion should be. They established an exemplary generation for humans until the last day. For this reason, the era that they lived in is called (the era of bliss)



The Noble Companions struggled hard to freely practice their religion. They tried to overcome the obstacles they were faced with the help of their faith. As our Prophet did, his friends too faceded with hardship and mistreatment. Some of them were laid down on burning hot sand. Some of them were forced to renounce their faith by being whipped. Moreover, they were faced with an economic boycott. All trade and communication means were taken away from them. For three years, they endured those days of hardship with the support of our beloved Prophet. They tied stones around their bellies to ease their hunger pains. They tried to survive by eating plants, leaves, and pieces of dried skin. They had to leave behind all their wealth and leave the town that they had been born and raised in. But they had experienced the taste of faith… Some of them gave up their lives for this path, but they never renounced their religion.

The Companions have sacrificed their wealth and lives in order to spread the to the whole world the beauties that Islam had brought them. Some of them became martyrs, like Yasir, Sumayyah, Mus'ab, and Hamza. Those who survived scattered in the direction of the four winds in order to spread the beauties of Islam to all of humanity. Our beautiful religion has come to this day without any corruption due to their sacrifices.

Our Exalted Lord has honored us with Islam. He made us love our faith and engraved it in our hearts. He made us realize how bad it is to sin and perform mischievous acts. Our Prophet has bequeathed us with the Noble Quran and his exemplary life by saying *"I am leaving for you two things. As long as you hold on tight to them, you will never deviate from your way. They are the book of Allah and sunnah (traditions) of His messenger."*

If we appreciate the blessings of Allah and listen to the advice of the Prophet, then we learn our religion in the best way, perform our worships, and stay away from evil acts. As a result, we become good Muslims.

QUESTIONS

Match the sentences

1	Man is a creature composed of soul and		finding the right path.
2	The part that separates us from other creatures and		considered the religion to be more important than his life.
3	By using one's intellect, a human being can choose		shows us the best way of life.
4	Prophets guided people in		addresses every era and everyone.
5	According to our religion, our purpose is to		for the things that they cannot do.
6	By showing us what is good and bad, and the right and wrong, religion		what is right and good.
7	Islam is a universal religion that		body.
8	Islam does not hold humans responsible		are coherent with human nature.
9	The commands and prohibitions of Islam		gives us the characteristics of being a human is our soul.
10	Prophet Muhammad		know our Lord and worship Him.

Fill in the blanks with the words given below in parenthesis.

(turn to Him constantly and repent / try / shameful deeds / Life / goodness / Hell Fire / Islam / keep / your religion / doing good deeds)

1. "Our Lord! Give us …….in this world and in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the…….!"
2. "For Allah loves those who ……..and He loves those who ……themselves pure and clean."
3. "This day have I perfected ……for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you …… as your religion."
4. "He Who created Death and ….., that He may …. which of you is best in deed
5. "Allah commands justice, ……., and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all……., and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."



ANSWER KEY

Let's match.

1	Man is a creature composed of soul and	**4**	finding the right path.
2	The part that separates us from other creatures and	**10**	considered the religion to be more important than his life.
3	By using one's intellect, a human being can choose	**6**	shows us the best way of life.
4	Prophets guided people in	**7**	addresses every era and everyone.
5	According to our religion, our purpose is to	**8**	For the things that they cannot do.
6	By showing us what is good and bad, and the right and wrong, religion	**3**	what is right and nice.
7	Islam is a universal religion that	**1**	body.
8	Islam does not hold humans responsible	**9**	are coherent with human nature.
9	The commands and prohibitions of Islam	**2**	gives us the characteristics to be human is our soul.
10	Prophet Muhammad	**5**	know our Lord and worship Him.



Please fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis

1. goodness-Hell Fire
2. Turn to Him constantly and repent-keep
3. Your religion-Islam
4. Life-try
5. doing good deeds-shameful deeds





THE KEY TO PEACE IN THIS WORLD AND TO PARADISE IN THE HEREAFTER

FAITH

- *Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid and Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah*
- *Humans in terms of their Faith*
- *What Should We be Careful about in respect to Our Faith?*
- *How Can We Strengthen Our Faith?*
- *Benefits of Faith*
- *Sincerity of Prophet Muhhamad in his Faith*





"SO I WAS A BELIEVER BUT NOT AWARE OF IT"

At that time, I was not even twenty years old. I was going to the famous hot springs of the Haruniyya. Then, not every driver was brave enough to drive through the curved raods of this mountainous area. With just a few families, we found a minibus and hit the road after loading our sleeping bags and other belongings. After a while, we were on the mountain roads where every tone of green was displayed in perfect beauty. While listening to the songs of cicadas, we were traveling slowly between the green mountain pines and leaving dust clouds behind us. Fortunately no car was coming from the opposite direction. Because in some places, the road was so narrow that



it would be impossible for two cars to pass. As a matter of fact, as we made some sharp turns, the pebbles underneath the tires were flying off into the depths of the river.

Finally, our minibus completed climbing the steep hill in difficulty and reached the plain. Soon, we were going to go down the hill. I wished that our journey would never end since I liked the scenic view a lot and I was breathing in the clean mountain air from the open window. At that moment, I saw something interesting. I was so amazed, I looked again and again, and could not refrain myself from exclaiming:

- O my God, look at this pine tree! It is on top of a pointy rock and there is not even a handful of soil on the rock."

While I was thinking out loud like this, the old man in the front seat, angered by my excitement, said:

- What is all this excitement? There are many trees like this here…"

- What do you mean what's all the excitement? Look at the power of Allah! He created a pure and crisp pine tree on top of this huge rock…"

- Are you kidding! What does this have to do with Allah and His power?

- What else could it be? Who could have planted this pine tree in such a bizarre place?

- Nobody kid… Why do you think someone has to create it? Those are all archaic and backward ideas.

- But if Allah did not create and place this pine tree there, who did?

- For example think like this: A bird while flying with a pine tree seed in its mouth dropped the seed on top of this rock. The seed got stuck inside a crack on the rock and took roots. Then with its roots reaching under the rock, it flourished.

— Even if it happened like that, isn't there a creator who did all this?

— Of course there isn't… Believing in a Creator in this era is shameful.

— How could someone say this at your age? I can give you many examples on this topic.

This talk turned into an argument and we raised our voices as a result. As he raised his voice, so did I. The other travelers who were listening to us quietly were also joining in from time to time. However, no one, except this educated old man denied Allah's existence. But they were wishing that we would conclude the argument and be quiet as soon as possible.

At this moment, our minibus began to accelerate. Just at that moment, the pebbles that go down to Jayhan River that looks like a long string maybe a hundred meters below shocked us. While everybody was looking at one another in silence, the driver turned back and said "I guess the brakes are not working." There was a hillside covered with pine trees on our right. At the end of this hill, the water of the Jayhan River was bubbling as it hit the big rocks. On our right side, there was a precipitous slope with huge rocks. After a moment of silence, everybody started to scream. Some of us were reciting the Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah (testimony to the oneness of God and prophethood of Muhammad), some of us were saying Bismillah (in the name of Allah), some of us were shouting out "Allah," and some of us were praying to Allah. The man

who had denied Allah was also unconsciously repeating "O Allah! Save us. Please Lord save us."

However, this situation did not last long. In our amazement, the minibus started to slow down and then stopped on the side of the road. The travelers got out of the minibus in a panic. Everyone was saying something:

- What was that?

— We thought the brakes did not work!

- We were scared to death.

— Was this some kind of a joke?

The driver came next to us. He turned to the man that I argued with before and said:

- Aren't you ashamed of yourself after denying the existence of Allah? You were denying Allah before, and when you thought that the brakes were not working, you were the one who recited the name of Allah the most! If Allah did not exist, as you claimed, then why were you asking for His help?

Then he turned to us and came back to his seat after saying:

— I apologize from everyone, but the brakes are fine. When I heard the argument, I just wanted to teach this man a lesson.

When the minibus started again, we would only hear the sounds of cicadas. Everybody was so silent, and the old man was lost in thought and his face was red with embarrassment… When we came to the hot springs and started to unload our luggage, the old man came to me and said:



— My son, I am sorry; for all those years I thought I did not believe in Allah. Yes, I was a believer but not aware of it… You made me realize that. Then he turned to the driver and said "O driver! Thank you, too! You provided me an opportunity to realize my faith."

Vehbi VAKKASOĞLU
(The Notebook of a Teacher)

FAITH (AL-IMAN)

Faith means to accept sincerely the existence of Allah, that He is the only deity and that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His messenger.

The key to the eternal salvation: Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid

Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid is the statement that we use to express our faith in words.

There are two parts in Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid. By saying "La-ilaha illallah" we deny all beings which claim to a deity but Allah. We express our gratitude to Allah for our existence and that we will act according to the way He wishes. We acknowledge that

Allah the Exalted says:

"The believers must (eventually) win through"

(Surah Al-Mu'minun (The Believers); 23:1)

Our Beloved Prophet said:

"The most virtuous supplication is 'La Ilaha Illallah' and the most virtuous prayer is 'Alhamdulillah."

(Tirmizi Deavât 9)

Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ

"La-ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah."

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His messenger."



Allah is the only being that is appropriate to be worshipped. When we say "Muhammadun Rasulullah," we sincerely declare our faith that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was sent to us by Allah and that he was an exemplary Prophet that guided us in our lives.

Thinking about the meaning of Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid and remembering Allah with this statement helps people earn many spiritual gifts. Reciting the sentence "La ilaha illallah" sincerely makes people feel better and opens their chest up. It strengthens the love of Allah in our hearts. Thus we become one of the loved ones by Allah.

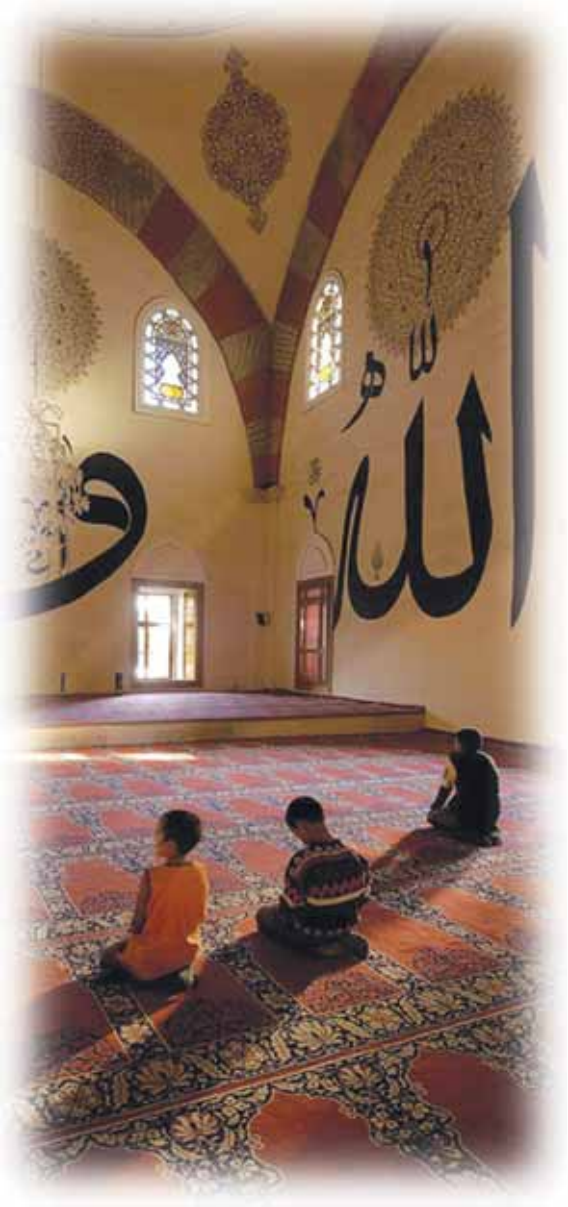
Our Beloved Prophet said:

"Renew your faith by reciting La ilaha illallah many times."

(Ahmet Bin Hanbel, II, 359)

How to express our faith in words: Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah

The best way to express that we believe in Allah and His messenger is to say Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah. Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah is a way of expressing in words that we are Muslims and we announce it to all of humanity. With Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah we announce that we are Muslims and that we accept the commands and prohibitions of Islam. We gain all the rights and responsibilities that Islam provides to Muslims. We become a member of the Islamic Nation (Ummah).



Our Beloved Prophet said:

"Allah prohibits those who testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger from the fire."

(Muslim Iman 47)

What is Al-Kal-imah Al-Shaha-dah?

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

"Ash-hadu an-la ilaha ill-Allah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdu-hu wa Rasuluhu."

What is the meaning of Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah?

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

What do we express by Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah?

With Al Kalimah Al Shahadah we espress that we believe in the existence and oneness of Allah, that no other being is worthy of worship except Allah, that we will live a life consistent with His commands and prohibitions, and that we believe our master the Prophet and the message he brought from Allah.

HIS LIFE CHANGED JUST LIKE THIS

It was the first years of Islam. The number of Muslims were increasing each day. With the conversion of our Prophet's uncle Hamza, the number of Muslims who accepted Islam had reached thirty nine.

Hamza's conversion to Islam had put the non-believers into a panic. The leaders of the non-believers in Mecca had arranged a meeting without losing any time. They discussed how they could stop the spread of Islam and said:

— Muslims are increasing in number and power each day. If we do not prevent this now, in the future there will be a big problem that will be unmanageable. We should find a solution to this right away.

In this meeting where various ideas were offered, the harshest idea came from Abu Jahl:

— There is no possible way except to kill Muhammad. Let's announce that we will give gold and a camel to whoever kills him. Upon this, Umar stood up and said:

— Only Umar, the son of Khattab, can do this, and he went to his home after an applause. He put on his weapon and went on his way to kill the Prophet. On his way, he met with Nuaym, the son of Abdullah. Nuaym became suspicious after noticing his angry state and asked:

— Where are you going O Umar?



— I am going to get rid of the body of Muhammad, who plants the seeds of separation between Arabs.

— Umar you plan to do something big. Muslims are always around Muhammad to protect him. They would not let you go near him. Let's say you did what you planned, do you think that the Sons of Hashim would let you live?

— Are you one of them too? Did you convert to Muhammad's religion too?

— Should not you question your relatives first? Your brother-in-law Said and your sister Fatima became Muslims too! These words of Nuaym made Umar very angry. He did not know what to do with his anger. He did not want to believe that his brother-in-law and sister were Muslim too, but what if it was the truth? What should he do now? To whom should he go first?

In order to find this out, he changed his way. He went directly to the house of his brother-in-law Said ibn Zayd. The Noble Quran was being read inside. Habbab was reciting the Quran to the household. When Umar was in front of the door, he heard the recitation of the Qur'an and then knocked on the door very hard. When they understood that it was Umar at the door, they panicked. They hid Habbab in a hurry. After hiding the page that they were reading from the Quran, they opened the door.

Umar shouted with anger:

— What were you reading?!

— It was nothing, said his brother-in-law.

— So what I heard is correct, he said and grabbed his brother-in-law by the throat. He knocked him down with a punch. He started to kick him with all of his anger. In order to save her husband, his sister held Umar's hands. Upon this, Umar started to hit his sister. Fatima said with her face covered in blood:

— O Umar! Yes, I and my husband became Muslims. Do whatever you can! Even if you kill us, we won't change our religion.

Fatima's sad look and what she said had touched Umar. His heart had softened. He dropped himself to the floor in shame for what he has done. With a peaceful voice, he said:

— Bring what you were reading, I want to see it.

Habbab got out of his hiding place and said to Umar:

— O Umar! I heard the Prophet praying: "O Allah! Strengthen the Ummah either through Abu Jahl or Umar, the son of Khattab!" I wish that our Prophet's prayer for you would come true. Fear Allah and become a Muslim!

At that moment, his sister brought the page of Quran that they have been hiding and gave it to Umar. On that page, the first verses of Surah Taha were written.

Umar got the page and began reading. After completing it, he began thinking deeply for he was so influenced by the verses. Now his heart felt so close to Islam, and he felt like a new person.

He could barely say:

— Take me to Muhammad.

Umar's words made everyone so happy in the house. Without losing any time, they went off on their way.

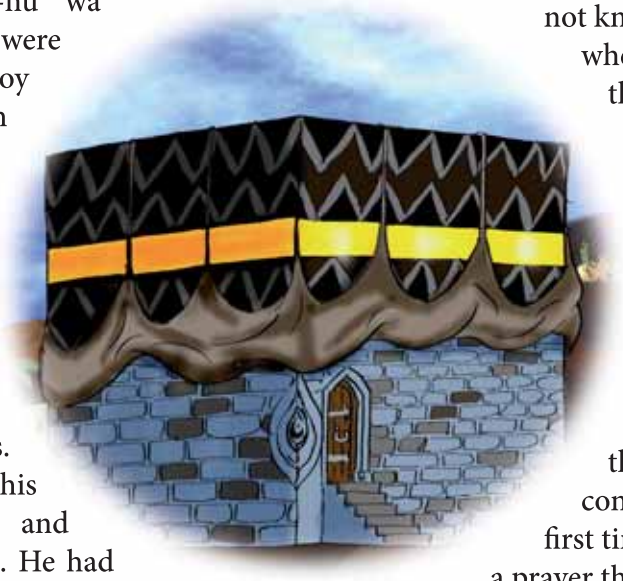
Our beloved Prophet was at the house of Arkam. When Muslims saw that Umar was coming toward the house of Arkam with

his weapon on him, they panicked. Hamza encouraged them by saying:

— If he is coming with good intentions, that's good! If he is coming with bad intentions, then let him come, there are things for him to see. There is no reason to panic.

Umar, who came to the door of Arkam, was taken to the Prophet. The Prophet asked him why he had come. Umar said:

— I came to announce that I believe in Allah and His messenger. Then he embraced Islam by saying "Ash-hadu an-la ilaha ill-Allahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdu-hu wa Rasuluhu." Those who were there showed theşr joy by saying Taqbirs with happiness. The sound of "Allahu Akbar" from the house of Arkam was echoed in the streets of Mecca.



Umar had entered into a new life; he had joined the Muslims. There was no sign of his anger towards Islam and the Muslims any more. He had understood the beauty of Islam and his heart had filled with faith. The old Umar was gone and a new person was born.

With Umar's conversion to Islam, the Ummah got even stronger. The Muslims were even more encouraged when they had Umar among them. By leaving the house of Arkam where they were learning and practicing Islam secretly, they walked towards the Ka'bah.

While the pagans were sitting close to the Ka'bah, they saw that the Muslims with Umar in front of them were coming towards them. They thought that Umar was bringing all the Muslims to them. However, it was not long before they realized that they were wrong. Within the crowd that was approaching with the shouting of Taqbir, Umar came forward. He faced towards the leaders of Mecca and announced:

— Those who do not know, hear it. I am Umar the son of Khattab. I have become a Muslim too. Then, he recited Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah with a loud voice.

The non-believers did not know what to do when they heard the news. They were extremely shocked. They dispersed without saying anything.

The Muslims that came to the Ka'bah in congregation for the first time performed a prayer there. Umar had joined them too. He praised Allah for honoring him with Islam.

Umar's heart had been full of so much hatred and dislike that he really could have killed the Prophet. However, now the same heart was filled with faith and love, as well as the willingness to die on this path. Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah is the best symbol of this faith and love.

HUMANS IN TERMS OF THEIR FAITH

Humans are divided into two main groups according to their faith.
1. Those who have faith
2. Those who do not have faith



- **Humans In Terms of Their Faith**
  - THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH (MU'MIN-MUSLIM)
  - THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE FAITH
    - **Kafir** (Those who Deny)
    - **Mushrik** (Those who associate partners with Allah)
    - **Munafiq** (Hypocrit) (Those Who Only Act like a Believer)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Those who have faith and do righteous deeds,- they are the best of creatures. Their reward is with Allah. Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein for ever; Allah well pleased with them, and they with Him: all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher."



(Surah Al-Bayyina (Evidence); 98: 1-8)

1. Those who have faith

☺ A mu'min or a muslim is someone who sincerely believes in Allah, that He is the only deity, Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His Prophet and his message is the truth. Mu'mins who believe in and perform good deeds enter the Paradise in the Hereafter.





2. Those who do not have faith

Those who do not have faith are divided into three subcategories due to the differences in their faith as *Kafir (infidels), Mushrik (polytheists),* and *Munafiq* (hypocrites). Those who deny Allah and His oneness, His messenger, and the message he brought are called *Kafir*.

☺ Just like calling those who deny all of the fundamentals of Islam as *kafir*, those who deny any one of the commands in Islam are also called *kafir*. Those who die as a *kafir* will be punished in the eternal Hellfire.

☺ Those who believe in Allah, but deny His oneness and worship other gods as well are called *mushrik*.

Allah is the only one who can create something out of nothing, provides food and healing. Those who believe that other beings have such powers are associating partners with Allah, which is called *shirk*. It is also *shirk* to believe that there are other bings which are equal or similar to Allah, or that Allah has a helper.

☺ Those who do not actually believe in Allah, but pretend as though they do when around the believers are called *munafiq*. Due to their hypocrisy their punishment in the Hereafter will be very severe indeed.

Allah the Exalted says:

"But those who reject (Allah) - for them will be the Fire of Hell: No term shall be determined for them, so they should die, nor shall its Penalty be lightened for them. Thus do We reward every ungrateful one! There-in will they cry aloud (for assistance): "Our Lord! Bring us out: we shall work righteousness, not the (deeds) we used to do!" - "Did We not give you long enough life so that he that would should receive admonition? and (moreover) the warner came to you. So taste ye (the fruits of your deeds): for the wrong-doers there is no helper."

(Surah Al-Fatir (The Angels); 35: 36-37)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah does not forgive (the sin of) as-sosiating other gods with Him…"

(Surah Al-Nisa (Women); 4: 116)



ABOUT WHAT SHOULD WE BE CAREFULL IN RESPECT TO THE MATTERS OF FAITH?

Once we accept the existence and oneness of Allah and that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His Messenger, we are considered to have faith. However, just saying "I have faith" is not sufficient. We need to protect our faith until our very last breath.

We need to accept all the fundamentals of our faith and its basic rules

Believing in Allah, the angels, the prophets, the scriptures, the Hereafter, and destiny and fate are the fundamental pillars of our faith in our religion. The obligatory and the prohibited acts are also the basic rules of our religion; Allah the Exalted has ordered forms of worship, such as *salat* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), *hajj* (pilgrimage),

Allah the Exalted says:

"The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire…" (Surah Al-Nisa (Women); 4: 145)

"…That is because they believed, then they rejected Faith…" (Surah Al-Munafiqun (The Hypocrites); 63: 3)

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam."

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3: 102)



zakat (alms), and *jihad* (struggle; striving in the way of Allah). He has forbidden evil acts such as stealing, murdering, gambling, drinking alcohol, engaging in interest, and fornication and adultery. For our faith to be valid, we need to believe that all of these are Allah's definite commands and prohibitions. Disliking, not accepting, mocking, or saying or performing acts that would imply denial of one or more of these fundamentals of belief and basic rules can cause someone to convert out of the religion and become a kafir.

We need to keep balance between the feelings of fear and hope.

It is wrong to think that entering Paradise is guaranteed simply through our worship and good deeds. Similarly, it is wrong to see ourselves as destined for the Hellfire due to our wrongdoings and sins. Being sure that Allah will forgive or losing hope for His mercy may cause us to lose our faith. Then, we should believe that Allah the Exalted has infinite mercy and forgiveness, without ever forgetting that He will torture the sinners. We must pray that we enter Paradise and fear entering the Hellfire. Therefore, the most appropriate way to live is in moderation. We must try to be worthy of Paradise and avoid bad behavior and sins that would lead us to Hell.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe in, and do ye reject the rest? but what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life?- and on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what ye do."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2: 85)

If on the Day of Judgment it were to be declared that only one person would enter Paradise, I would be hopeful that I would be that person. Similarly, if it were to be declared that only one person would enter Hell, I would be fearful of that person being me.

Umar (r.a.)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah. for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

(Surah Al-Zumar (The Troops); 39: 53)

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE PROPHET

Amr ibn As, one of the Companions of the Prophet, was lying on his death bed. Once, his friends came to visit him. When they entered into his room, Amr ibn As had turned his face towards the wall and was crying in deep sorrow. Trying to console him, his son said:

— My dear father! Didn't the Messenger of Allah give you this and that good news? Why are you so sad?

Then, turning his face to his friend, Amr ibn As said:

— The most valuable food that you prepare for the Hereafter is the word "La ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulallah." Then, he narrated one of his memories:

"Once, there was no one who hated and or held grudges against the Prophet more than myself. I was willing so much to find a way to kill him. If I had died while in those thoughts, I would have definitely been destined for Hell.

When Allah the Exalted placed the love of Ilsma in my heart, I came to our Prophet and said:

— Give me your hand; I will pledge allegiance to you (I will promise that I will believe in you and obey you). When the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) gave his hand, I pulled back my hand.

Upon this the Prophet asked:

— What happened, do you no longer believe?

I said:

— I will believe, but on one condition

He said:

— What is that condition?

I said:

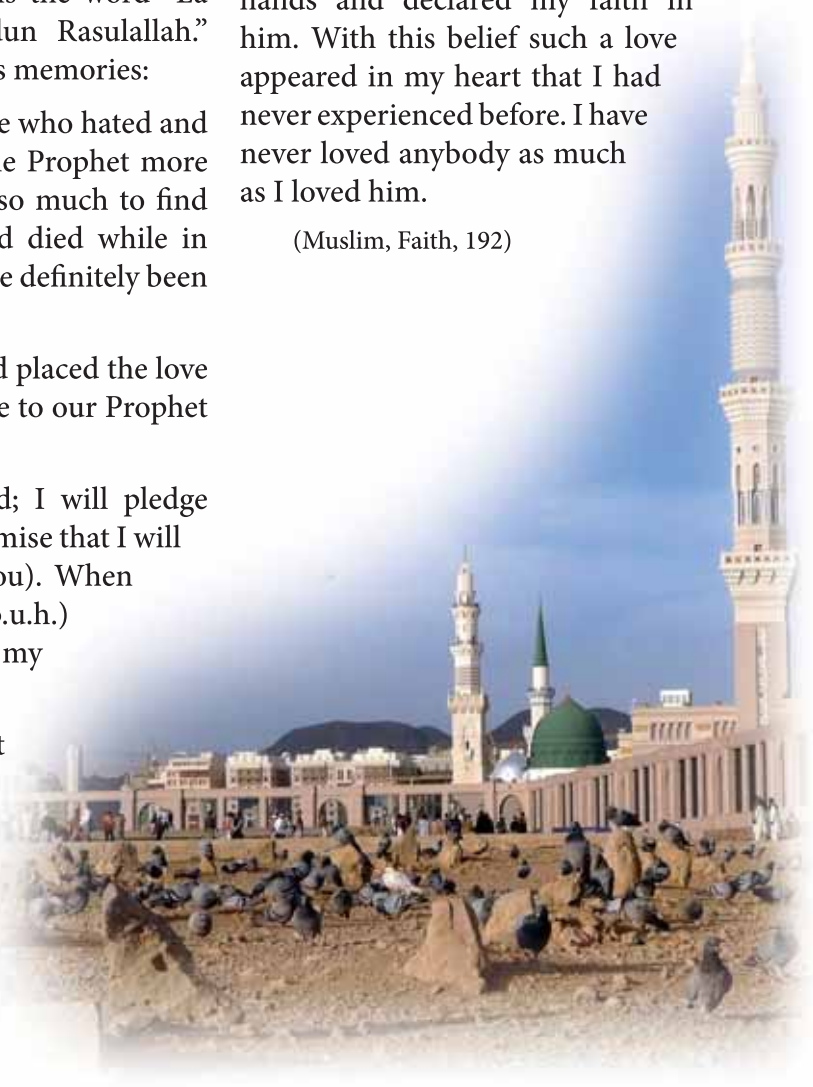
— I want Allah to forgive me.

Upon this the Prophet said the following:

Becoming a Muslim nullifies all previous sins, and so does migrating for the sake of Allah. Similarly, performing the pilgrimage (Al Hajj) nullifies all previous sins.

I was very glad to hear these words from our Prophet. I held his blessed hands and declared my faith in him. With this belief such a love appeared in my heart that I had never experienced before. I have never loved anybody as much as I loved him.

(Muslim, Faith, 192)



WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH?

Faith is the guide of our intellect and the source of serenity in our hearts. A happy passage from this world to the eternal life in the Hereafter is only possible with belief.

Belief is the basis of all forms of worship, which gains its value only by means of faith. Feeling joy in performance of our worships, showing good manners and behaviors, such as paying attention to Allah's contentment, in all the deeds we do can be listed among the most valuable results of our faith. Moreover, these acts will strenghten our belief.

Our belief will take root in our hearts and influence our life depending on

- ☑ how close we are to our Lord,
- ☑ how careful we are in our worship,
- ☑ how attentive we are in staying away from the sins.

The love of Allah is the result of strong faith while committing sins and neglecting worship is a sign of the weakness of belief. The level of belief of someone who cries with the love and respect of Allah is not the same as someone else who, without hesitating, violates the prohibitions of Islam or neglects his worship.

Faith is like a vulnerable sapling that is greening and growing and sprouting in our hearts. In order for this sapling to grow and bear fruits, we need to protect it and take care of its needs. Similarly, we need to feed and strengthen our faith using spiritual nourishment and protect it from all harmful thoughts and beliefs. Otherwise, just like how a sapling dries when we do not take vare of it, faith that is not protected with care also –God forbid- vanishes.

Our faith is our most valuable capital. Satan who is our obvious enemy tries to destroy

Allah the Exalted says:

"So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith.."

(Surah Al-i Imran (Family of Imran) 3: 139)

Faith is both a guiding light and power. The person who attains true belief can challenge the whole universe.

Bediuzzaman





our faith whenever he gets a chance. For this reason, we should keep our faith alive at all times and preserve it until our last breath.

In order to accomplish this

- ☑ We should do good deeds,
- ☑ We should regularly perform our worship,
- ☑ We should contemplate,
- ☑ We should stay away from sins and prohibitions,
- ☑ We should always be in the company of good people.

The common name of all the good things we do for the sake of Allah: Good Deeds (Amal Salih)

Faith is not a theoretical form of knowledge. To ascend towards the peak of faith depends fully on worship and good deeds. Faith is kept alive by first embroiling it to the heart then acting on it. We feel the true joy of faith when we come to that point. For this reason, faith and good deeds are generally mentioned together in the Noble Quran and the Honorable Sayings of the Prophet (Hadith).

All the good and nice deeds that will gain for us the contentment of Allah are called ***Amal Salih*** **(good deeds).** Accordingly, the following beautiful behaviors can be counted among the good deeds:

Our Beloved Prophet said:

"If one of you lives Islam appropriately, he earns from ten up to seven hundred times the divine reward for each good deed. On the other hand, any evil act he commits is recorded as it is until he reaches Allah."

(Bukhari, Faith (Iman), 31)

Any good deed for the sake of Allah strengthens our faith.

- The fulfillment of the commands of Allah the Exalted,
- To keep away from the prohibitions of Allah the Exalted,
- Being good mannered,
- Showing mercy and compassion towards creation,
- Acquiring and transmitting knowledge,
- Working for the betterment of humanity,
- Helping people and caring for their troubles,
- Treating animals well,
- Keeping the environment clean.

Our faith is like a lamp that burns in our hearts and lights our way, and good deeds are like a lamp shade that protects the lamp and keeps the light alive. To protect and strengthen our faith we need to increase our good deeds. The light of the faith in our heart increases as our good deeds increase and the love for Allah and Prophet strengthens.



The opportunities to keep our faith alive: Our acts of worship

There is a direct relationship between our faith and acts of worship. Our will and sincerity in performing our ritual duties show the strength of the faith in our heart.

One day a man came to our beloved Prophet and said;

- O messenger of Allah, tell me the acts that will take someone away from Hell and get him closer to Heaven.

Upon this, the Prophet said the following:

- One should worship Allah without associating any partners with him, perform his ritual prayers, give the mandatory alms, protect and care for his relatives.

(Muslim, Faith, 14)

A believer who has strong faith enjoys worshipping. He worships in serenity and feels a spiritual excitement from the worship. The believer whose faith is weak acts lazily when it comes to worship. Since he does not perform his ritual duties regularly, his religious fervor weakens. He ends up committing sins without hesitation. His heart hardens and the light of faith in his heart slowly diminishes.

Worshipping brings us closer to Allah. It helps us attain His love and contentment. All forms of worship and good deeds, such as prayer, fasting, mandatory and supererogatory alms giving, honesty, and treating friends with honor and respect keep the spiritual bond with our Lord alive and strengthen our faith.

The horizon of human contemplation: Tafakkur (reflection)

Tafakkur (contemplation) is deeply thinking about the following and taking lessons from them:

- ☑ The exaltedness of our Lord,



Allah the Exalted says:

"Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire."

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:191)

- ☑ The greatness of his power and strength,
- ☑ The beauty of the universe and the beings in it,
- ☑ The purpose of human creation,
- ☑ The world, death, and afterlife in the grave,
- ☑ The Day of Judgment, being held accountable for our actions, and Heaven and Hell.

There is a great deal of evidence in the creation of humans and other beings in the universe of the existence and oneness of Allah. When we reflect upon the endless universe and its perfect structure we understand how powerful and exalted our Lord is. We comprehend our weakness and helplessness. We understand how merciful and beneficent our Exalted Lord is to us while we are so helpless.

When we reflect upon death and the Hereafter, we recall that life in this world is temporary. We do not forget that we will be held accountable in the Hereafter for all our behaviors in this world. As a result of this reflection, we obtain a stronger faith. We consider our life as a great opportunity for us to become well acquainted with our Lord and earn our places in Paradise. We behave well towards our parents, siblings, friends, and others. We never hurt any being.

One moment of contemplation is better than a year's extra devotion without reflection.

THE HOLY WORD

We were only a few,
That did not fit in the skies.
We were a few,
Longing for the Paradise.

We never quit saying,
And take it out of our hearts,
The holiest word
La ilaha illallah

You became lover in my heart,
You planted love in me.
In the building of Tawhid,
My heart is on yours.

We never quit saying,
It can never be taken out of my heart,
The holiest word,
La ilaha illallah.

Our honesty,
Is the nightmare of the disbeliever,
If anyone is oppressed and hurt,
His cry touches us.

We never quit saying,
It can never be taken out of my heart,
The holiest word,
La ilaha illallah.



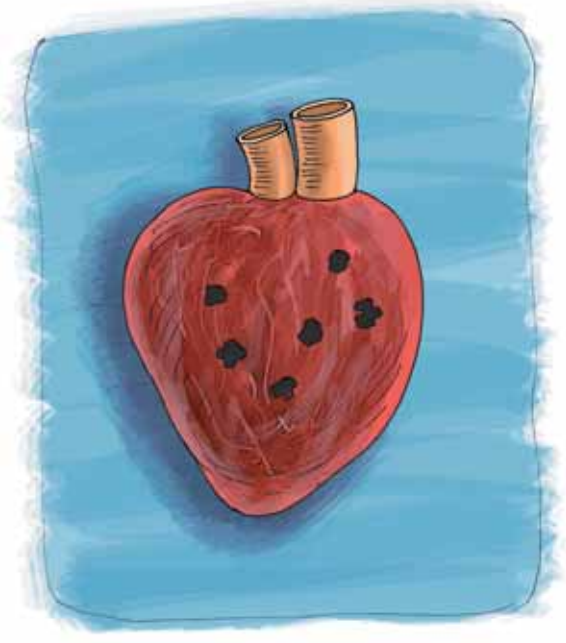
Protecting the heart from stains: Avoiding sin

There are certain behaviors that damage our body, spirit, society, humans and other living beings. Our Exalted Lord has prohibited us from committing these acts.

Allah the Exalted has prohibited acts such as associating partners with Allah, lying, not praying, and hurting others. When we do not obey one of these commands and prohibitions, we commit a "sin."

The sins we commit damage our faith. The sins that we make a habit of cause our faith to weaken. As our sins increase, our will to worship decreases, and our notion of fear from Allah's torment weakens.

Sins that we commit create stains in our hearts. When our heart becomes tainted, it also hardens, and when our heart hardens, we lose our sensitivity towards sin. We start seeing the sins that we were hesitating to commit previously as unimportant. For this reason, when we may sin knowingly or unknowingly, we should immediately repent and ask for forgiveness from our Lord. We must remove the negative impact of the sins out of our hearts by engaging in beneficiary and good deeds



Our beloved Prophet says:

"When a believer commits a sin, a black stain appears in his heart. If he quits that sin and asks from Allah forgiveness, the black stain is erased, his heart becomes as bright as it had been. If he continues sinning, the black stain increase and blacken the heart completely. The rust Allah the Exalted mentions in His verse "By no means! but on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!" *(Surah Mutaffifin, (Defrauding); 8 3:14)* is this.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Someone travels widely for the sake of Allah. His hair is dishevelled and covered with dust. He lifts his hands towards the sky (and thus makes a supplication), "O Lord, O Lord!" Whereas his diet is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, and his clothes are unlawful, and his nourishment is unlawful. How can then his supplication be accepted?"

(Muslim, Zakat, 65)

The person who consumes haram (unlawful) becomes a harami (a robber)

What we eat and drink has a great influence on our inner world and religious sensitivity. As much as our food and drink is clean and permissible (halal) so our religious life becomes beautiful, and our faith becomes strong.

Let's consider the gasoline that a vehicle uses. As the foreign materials in the gasoline damages the operation of the vehicle, the prohibited foods that go into our stomach cause corruption in our thoughts. The person who eats haram thinks evil things. That person's heart has a tendency towards evil. He commits bad deeds. For this reason, our ancestors had said "He, who eats haram, becomes a harami (outlaw)."

Good friends who remind us of Allah: The Righteus Believers

There are some people with good morals and manners who obey Allah's commands, who regularly perform their acts of worship, and who are sensitive to matters concerning what is permissible and prohibited in religion.

These Muslims commit acts that are beneficial, rather than harmful. They are careful about what they say, and try their best to avoid hurting the feelings of others. They love Allah the Exalted very much. These are, as the Quran puts it, "good servants." Good servants are exemplary people who our Exalted Lord mentions favorably and wanted us to be friends with.

A person is definitely influenced by the manners and acts of the people they accompany and love. Being friends with people with bad morals, who neglect their ritual duties and do not avoid prohibitions will affect us negatively, likely causing our faith to weaken and our morals to become corrupt.

Loving righteous believers and accompanying them, on the other hand, affects us positively. This is because the faithful spirits are like tranquil and wide seas. There is light on their faces and serenity in their souls. The spiritual beauties in their souls reflect in their appearance. These people exert positive energy in their surroundings. They are reminders of Allah and the Hereafter and they are good examples with their speech and behavior.

When we become friends with good servants of Allah our faith strengthens. Our love towards Allah increases. A feeling of hatred towards the prohibitions of Allah arises in our hearts. Our manners become more full of grace. Finally, we also become like those good believers who obey Allah's commands and prohibitions and achieve His contentment.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"People are influenced by the life styles of their friends, so each of you should pay attention to whom you will befriend!"

(Abu Dawud, Adab, 16)

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed)."

(Surah Al-Tawba (Repentance); 9: 119)

THE PERSON WHO KNOWS HOW TO ASK A QUESTION

It was the year 630. When the Prophet was conversing with his companions in the Masjid Al-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque), a stranger appeared in front of the mosque. His long braided hair was hanging from both sides of his head. He was a big strong man. He stepped down from his camel in one swift move. After tying up his camel in the courtyard of the mosque, he confidently marched towards those sitting and asked:

- "Which one of you is Muhammad?"

It was apparent that he was not a Muslim because when Muslims addressed the Prophet, they used to go with the title that was given to him by Allah the Exalted, "the Messenger of Allah," not his name.

The Noble Companions showed him the Messenger of Allah and said:

- Here he is, the person with whitish skin sitting down and leaning against the wall. The Prophet had no special place in the Masjid Al-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque), nor did he wear any special item of clothing. He used to sit with his companions as if he was one of them. A stranger who had not seen his rose colored face before would not be able to recognize Him.

The man approached the Messenger of Allah and addressed him with the name of his grandfather:

- O the son of Abdul Muttalib!



The Messenger of Allah responded to his rude addressing:

- Go ahead, I am listening to you.

The man said:

- I will ask you certain questions. If I ask you extreme questions please do not be offended.

When the messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) replied: "I will not be offended, ask whatever you want", the following conversation took place between them:

- According to the messenger you sent to our tribe, you were saying that Allah sent you as a prophet, I am asking in the name of your Lord and the Lord of those before you. Is it Allah who sent you to all humanity?



- Yes, Allah sent me.

- Then, who created these Heavens.

- Allah created them.

- What about the Earth?

- Allah created that, too.

- Who placed these mountains on the earth?

- Allah did.

- You are commanding only to worship Allah by leaving aside the idols and without associating any partners with Him. I am asking in the name of Allah. Did Allah reveal these to you?

- Yes, Allah revealed them to me.

- Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to pray five times a day?

- Yes, Allah commanded me.

- Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to fast during the month of Ramadan?

- Yes, Allah commanded me.

- Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to take the mandatory alms (Zakat) from our rich to give to our poor?

- Yes, Allah commanded me.

The Noble Companions were carefully listening to the logical questions with straightforward explanations that the stranger was asking. The man continued as follows:

- According to what the messenger that you sent to our tribe told us, you are asking that those of us who have the financial means should visit the Ka'bah; is that correct?

- Yes, my messenger had told the truth.

- Say in the love of the One who sent you as prophet. Did Allah command you all of these?

- Yes, Allah commanded me.

The man who received affirmative responses to each question he then stated the following as he looked at the Prophet with the deepest sincerity:

- I certainly believe that there is no god other than Allah. I also certainly believe that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is his servant and messenger. I have faith in all the commands you brought from Allah. I will perform them correctly. I will also stay away from everything you forbid. I am Damam ibn Salabah from the tribe of Sa'ad ibn Bakr. I came to you as a representative of my tribe. I swear by the name of Allah who sent you as Prophet, I do no more and no less than what you just said.

Damam stood up, untied his camel, hopped on and went back to his tribe.

While the Noble Companions were watching behind him with amazement, a sweet smile was seen on the Messenger of Allah. The following good news dropped from his holy mouth:

- If this man with knitted hair is telling the truth, then it means that he has already entered Paradise.

(Bukhari, Ilm, 6; Muslim, Iman, 10)

THE BENEFITS OF FAITH

FAITH

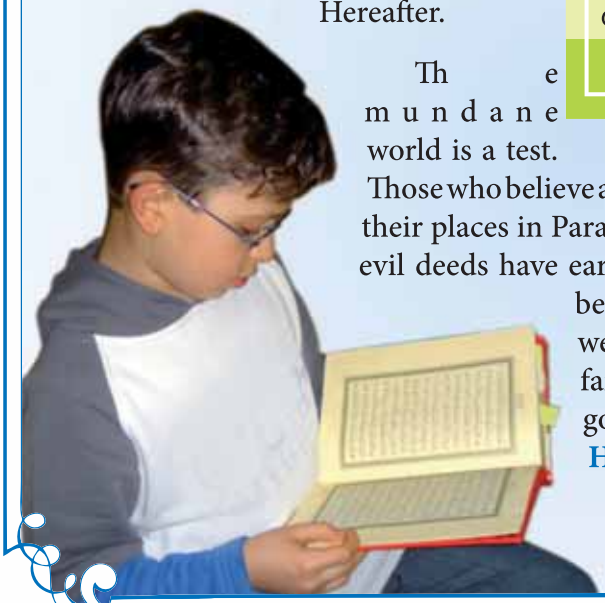
- Guarantees that we us to be saved from Hell and enter the Heaven
- Gives us the strength to stand against troubles and worries.
- It revives our feelings of brotherhood and solidarity.
- Affects positively our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Life is not just comprised of this world. Life that on average lasts about 60-70 years in this world is an opportunity given to us to prepare for the everlasting life. After we die, we will not have the opportunity to return to this world. Those who miss the opportunity to utilize this world will regret it in the Hereafter.

Allah the Exalted says:

"For those who believe and do righteous deeds, will be Gardens; beneath which rivers flow: That is the great Salvation, (the fulfillment of all desires)."

(Surah Al-Buruj (Constellations); 85: 11)



The mundane world is a test. Those who believe and conduct good deeds in this world earn their places in Paradise. Those who disbelieve and conduct evil deeds have earned their places in Hell. Our faith and behavior in this world determines whether we will be happy in the Hereafter. Strong faith causes us to commit beneficial and good deeds. **Such faith protects us from Hell and helps us enter the Heaven.**

Humans are weak by nature. The mundane world, consisting of tests, is full of difficulties and worries. Everybody has their own troubles and problems in the world. The material and spiritual worries and afflictions and calamities are part of our lives. Illness, death and natural disasters are situations that we can encounter at anytime.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere,

Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return""

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2: 155-156)

The unbeliever considers the troubles of this world an unbearable torment. However, the believing person looks at the world from the perspective of faith. He knows that there is wisdom in everything that takes place. He sees all the events that he is passing through as opportunities that will carry him to Heaven and faces them patiently. He does not lose control and hope in the face of difficult situations such as illness, death, and natural disasters. This is because faith establishes in our hearts the thought that there is ease and relief with every difficulty. It teaches us that everything we encounter is a kind of test and that we need to be patient. **It gives us the strength to stand against such troubles and calamities.**

Faith forms an atmosphere of love and brotherhood with other people. **It revives our feelings of brotherhood and solidarity.**

Being a member of a community and sharing one's troubles and worries with others makes a person feel relieved. When we believe we become a member of a community whose members are beautiful people. We understand that we are not alone and helpless in this world. We share our happiness and sorrow with them and we produce common solutions to our problems.



Our beloved Prophet says:

"Believers are like a body when it comes to loving, being merciful, and protecting each other. Whenever a part of the body is ill, the other parts of the body share its pain with sleeplessness and fever."

(Bukhari, Adab, 27)

Our belief shapes our feelings and thoughts. Our behaviors are also mirrors of these feelings and thoughts. Belief **affects our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors positively.**

When we have strong faith, our thoughts are purified. As a result, our speech, demeanor, and behavior are purified. We become honest and helpfulpeople, respectful of other people's rights. We do not repeat bad words, and we do not hurt anyone. No harm comes from our hands or tongues. We become good mannered. Thus, we both achieve Allah the Exalted's love and contentment and gain the love and respect of people around us.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"There is a small piece of flesh in the body. When that piece is sound, the whole body is sound. When that piece is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. That piece of flesh is the heart."

(Bukhari, Iman, 39)



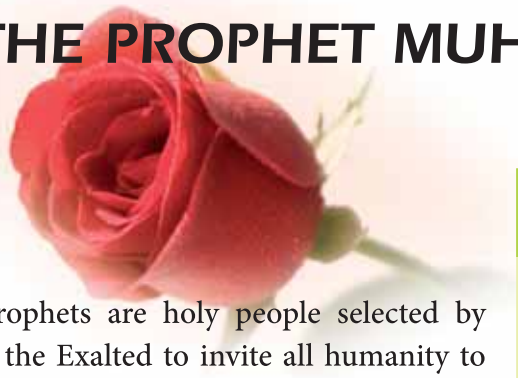
Be mindful of your thoughts, for they can transform your feelings.

Be mindful of your feelings, for they can transform your behaviors.

Be mindful of your behaviors, for they can transform your habits.

Be careful of your habits, for they can transform your manners and character.

THE SINCERITY OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN FAITH



Prophets are holy people selected by Allah the Exalted to invite all humanity to faith. They first believe themselves, then, in turn, they tried to carry the light of belief to the hearts of other people. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the last of the Prophets selected by Allah. As the other prophets, first he believed in the religion that he is supposed to deliver himself. He never worshipped idols. **He did not accept deities other than Allah.** He wholeheartedly worked to spread the religion of our Lord. He bore numerous torments on the way.

The pagans of Mecca tried numerous methods to make our Prophet give up his cause. However, in the face of his sincerity in faith they were helpless. **No power whatsoever could make him give up his faith or give up inviting people to the religion.**

Prophet Muhammad **would never remain silent towards the attacks on faith and Islam even though he used to forgive the evil committed against him personally.** He would never give in to oppression; he used to fight against all kinds of injustice in the best manner possible. He would never even hesitate sacrificing his life for the sake of his faith; he used to see martyrdom as the highest of ranks.

Allah the Exalted says:

"The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2:285)

The pagans of Mecca tried numerous methods to make our beloved Prophet turn away from faith. They succeeded in none of them. At last, they decided to go to his uncle Abu Talib. The Prophet loved his uncle, who raised him since he was eight years of age, very much. The pagans had hoped that the Prophet would listen to Abu Talib and stop believing in Islam and inviting people to it. They asked Abu Talib to talk to him. His uncle introduced the subject to him. He informed him of what the pagans had wished for. He warned him the end of this matter would be very dangerous, and he asked him to give up his cause. Our beloved Prophet responded as follows:

"Uncle! I swear to Allah that even if they place the Sun in my right and the moon in my left I would not give up my cause. Either Allah the Exalted spreads this religion to the whole world or I die in this cause!"

(Ibn-i Athir, Al-Kamil, II, 64)

The beloved messenger of Allah would to keep his faith fresh by **worship, pondering, and invocation.** He knew that he had always been watched by his Lord and tried to gain His love and contentment. He never slacked off in his ritual duties and would to look for opportunities to worship Allah. Worship and contemplation used to make him forget the worries of this world and his heart would find serenity. This beauty and inner peace provided by faith would reflect in the holy face of our beloved Prophet.

Our beloved Prophet **had superior morals.** The beauty in his manners was the outer reflection of the perfect faith in his heart. By saying *"The best of believers in terms of faith is the one whose manners are the best."* (Tirmizi, Rada, 11) he used to draw attention to the fact that having faith entails being good mannered. Furthermore, he used to qualify faith and good manners as two brothers who would never part. He would state that good manners were present wherever there is faith, For this reason, he used to attach special value to the believers with good manners. **He used to assess people based on their faith and good manners, not on their poverty, richness, ranks, or social status.**

Our Prophet, who shaped his life of servanthood for God, used to see the world and **all that was happening in it through the window of faith.**

In short, our beloved Prophet **lived his beliefs in the best fashion.** He became the best example for us. His sincere faith and good manners enlightened the horizon of all humanity like the sun.



At the time of our Prophet there was a poor Companion who used to live in the desert. He was not too happy with his looks. This Companion used to love our Prophet fso much, as our Prophet loved him. Whenever he visited Medina, he would stop by the Prophet's home just to bring small but sincere gifts. The Messenger of Allah, in turn, used to pay him back with a gift worth even more.

One day the Prophet saw this Companion in the market. He approached silently and closed his eyes with his hands. Then he said:

- Is there anyone who wants to buy this slave (meaning the slavery and servant of Allah)

Recognizing the Prophet's voice, the Companion was very glad and said:

- O the Messenger of Allah, who would buy an ugly person like me? You cannot earn much by selling me.

After releasing him, our Prophet said:

- Perhaps those who are deceived by looks may not give too much money, but your value in the sight of Allah is high!"

THE MAN WITH THE WHITE DRESS

Umar said:

One day we were in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.). At that time, someone known by none of use came by wearing a very white dress and with very black hair. He came close to our Prophet and sat knee to knee in front of the Prophet. He put his hands on his own knees and said:

- O Muhammad, tell me about Islam!

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

Islam means that you testify that there is no deity except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, perform the ritual prayers properly, give the mandatory alms, fast during the month of Ramadan, and if you have the means, perform the Hajj (pilgrimage to the Ka'bah).

The man said:

- You are correct.

We found it strange that the man both asked the question and approved the answer. Then the man said: "Now tell me about faith." The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

- It is the belief in Allah, His Angels, Scripture, Prophets, and the Hereafter.

It is also the belief in destiny and that good and evil comes from Allah.

The man approved again by saying "you are correct" and said

- So then what is ihsan, tell me about that too. The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) replied

- Ihsan means to worship Allah as if you actually see Him. Even though you don't see Him, He definitely sees you.

Again, the man said: "you are correct," and after asking a question about the Day of Judgment and its signs, he silently left. I was startled and frozen for a while. Afterwards, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asked

- "O Omar, do you know who the person who asked those questions was?" I said Allah and His Messenger knows.

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

- It was Gabriel; he came to teach you your religion.

(Muslim, Iman, 1 and 5. Also see Bukhari, Iman, 37; Tirmizi Iman, 4; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 16; Nasai, Mawaqit, 6; Ibn Maja, Muqaddimah, 9)

THE PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

All the believers believe in the six principles of faith. These principles are found in the supplication of Amantu:

AMANTU

آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ
وَشَرِّهِ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالٰى وَالْبَعْثُ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ حَقٌّ ۞ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ
اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ ۞ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ

I believe in Allah, His angels, His scripture, His prophets, and in the Hereafter, in destiny, that is, that good and evil happens by the will of Allah the Exalted. Resurrection after death is true and real. I testify that there is no God other than Allah, and I also testify that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His servant and messenger.



QUESTIONS

Please match the following sentences below with the appropriate parts.

1	The expression that declares our faith in Allah and the Prophet		Neglecting the worships is an indicator as the weakness of faith.
2	Creating from nothing, providing sustenance,		continuously recall Allah and not to forget Him.
3	It is the continuity of our faith		we end up having committed a "sin."
4	Worships gain value		enjoys worshipping.
5	The love of Allah		only with faith
6	Violating the prohibitions and		which will get us to endless bliss.
7	A believer who has strong faith		against worries and calamities.
8	Recitation of invocations (dhikr) is to		is the result of a strong faith.
9	Faith gives the power to withstand		or healing belongs to Allah only.
10	When we do not obey the commands and prohibitions of Allah		is the testimony of faith (Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah).



Let's try ourselves

1. What is the meaning of the testimony of faith?

A. I believe in Allah.

B. There is no deity other than Allah. Muhammad (a.s.) is His servant and messenger.

C. I certainly believe that there is no deity other than Allah. I also certainly believe that Muhammad (a.s.) is His servant and messenger.

D. Allah is a witness to everything I do.

3.

I. That we believe in the existence and oneness of Allah

II. That no other being other than Allah is worthy of worship

III. That beings other than Allah can also be deities.

IV. That we will live a life that is in accordance with the commands and prohibitions of Allah

V. That we believe in the Prophet and all the news he brought from Allah

Which of the above do we express in the testimony of faith?

A. Only I and II B. I, II, IV and V

C. II, III and V D. I, II, III, IV and V

2.

I. Conducting good deeds

II. performing the ritual worships regularly

III. Keeping busy with deep thinking and invocations

IV. Participating in all kinds of fun and games

V. Staying away from sins and prohibitions

Which one of the above strengthens our iman?

A. I, II, III and V B. II, IV and V

C. I, II, III and IV D. II, III, IV and V

4. Which one of the choices below means "Oneness of God" (Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid)?

A. Alhamdu lillahi rabbil alemin.

B. Allahumma salli ala Muhammadin wa ala ali Muhammad

C. Ashadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashadu annah Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh

D. La ilaha illallah Muhammadun rasulullah

5. Which one of the below is not a good deed?

A. Being good mannered

B. Staying away from Allah the Exalted's prohibitions

C. Misbehaving towards animals

D. Helping people

Fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis

(is sound / is the heart / good deed / creation / seven / befriend / good / hearts / his friend / recalling)

1. Those who believe and perform …….. deeds are the best of ……..”
2. “Know this well that …… find serenity only by …….. Allah.”
3. “A person is influenced by the life style of …….. Then, each of you should pay attention to whom you will ……”
4. “If one of you lives Islam well with every …… he performs, he gains divine rewards of ten to ……hundred times.”
5. “There is a small piece of flesh in the human body. When that piece ……., the whole body is sound. When that piece is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. That piece of flesh ……..”

ANSWER KEY

Let's match

1	The expression that declares our faith in Allah and the Prophet	6	Neglecting the worships is an indicator as the weakness of faith.
2	Creating from nothing, providing sustenance,	8	continuously recall Allah and not to forget Him.
3	It is the continuity of our faith	10	we end up having committed a "sin."
4	Worships gain value	7	enjoys worshipping.
5	The love of Allah	4	only with faith
6	Violating the prohibitions and	3	which will get us to endless bliss.
7	A believer who has strong faith	9	against worries and calamities.
8	Recitation of invocations (dhikr) is to	5	is the result of a strong faith.
9	Faith gives the power to withstand	2	or healing belongs to Allah only.
10	When we do not obey the commands and prohibitions of Allah	1	is the testimony of faith (Al Kalimah Al Shahadah).

Let's fill in the blanks

1. c 2. a
3. b 4. d
5. c



Please fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis

1. good-creation
2. hearts-recalling
3. his friend-befriend
4. good deed-seven
5. is sound-is the heart





THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

BELIEVING IN ALLAH

- *Allah's Existence and Oneness*
- *Allah's Attributes and Names*
- *Benefits of Believing in Allah*
- *Our Prophet's Love of Allah*





THE KID WHO BELIVED IN ALLAH

There lived a kid by the name of Abraham in Babylon. He used to draw everybody's attention with his good manners and his intelligence. The people of this country used to worship idols, the moon, the sun, the stars, fire, water, and other things. Their temples were full of pictures and sculptures of these false deities. They abandoned Allah and kneeled down in front of these pictures and sculptures that they believed to be gods and worshiped them. They used to pray for their wishes to come true or for these idols to protect them from evil.

Abraham would observe this weird faith of the people in wonder and take lessons. He did not make any sense out of why people had adopted these strange beliefs. Even Azar, the father of Abraham, believed in these. Azar was a famous sculpturer. He used to carve wood and stone to make idols, and people used to worship them.



When Abraham saw people kneel down in front of the idols and pray to them, he felt sorry for them. "How can things that were just ordinary wood or rocks a while ago be gods when they are turned into sculptures by an artist? How could they protect humans or grant their wishes?!"

Even though he was a kid, Abraham never worshiped idols. He tried to convince others not to worship idols either.

One day, Abraham went to those who worshiped heavenly bodies such as the stars, the moon, and the sun. Those people were waiting for darkness for their gods to show up. They were getting ready to worship them and Abraham joined them.

After a while the sky got dark. The evening star appeared while people were curiously looking. The evening star was more apparent than the other stars. While pointing to the sky, Abraham

said to the others who congregated around him, "What a beautiful shining star this is! This must be my Lord."

Those who worship the evening star thought that Abraham had believed the same as they believed and that he had found the right path. After a while, the evening star disappeared. Upon this, Abraham said "No, this can't be my Lord. My Lord could not set. I do not like those that set." Some of the people who heard these thoughtful and wise words agreed with him. This logical explanation made some of them suspect their own faith. Some of them got angry with him. They did not like this kid who questioned their gods in their own temples.

After a while the moon appeared. It was more shiny and beautiful compared to the evening star. Again, Abraham said audibly:

"This one is bigger and shinier! This must be my Lord."

After some time, the moon disappeared as well. Upon this, Abraham said "This one too disappeared as the star did. If my Lord has not made me realize the truth, I would be among those believing in something that was not real. Definitely, this one can't be my Lord, either." After his explanations, people around him started to agree with him. However, some of them did not want to change the faith that they got used to, and therefore they did not agree with his logical explanations.

When the sun was rising, Abraham said "This must be my Lord. This one is much bigger and shinier!" The people around him tried to persuade him by saying "Now you have found the truth. The son is worth being the Lord." However, at night after the sunset, Abraham said to those who worship the heavenly bodies:

"O my people! It is not smart to worship these stars which do not have any control over when to show up and when to disappear and are not capable of doing anything. For sure, I do not worship or show respect to your gods. I believe in the one and only Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, who has created the heavens and the earth out of nothing."

The people around him responded, "Abraham, what are you doing!? If you speak like that you will become paralyzed. Our gods will be offended and will harm you. You will receive their wrath and be sorry for what you have said."

Abraham answered them, "You do not believe in Allah who is all powerful and omnipotent and has created the entire universe. Also, you acknowledge creatures that do not have any power or strength and cannot benefit or harm anyone as your Lords. You make them partners with Allah. You are not concerned about the fact that you will be accountable for this wrong behavior. For all that, do you think that I would be scared of your false Lords?! Come on; give up your wrong beliefs. Believe in Allah, the true Lord who created the earth and the sky, who adorned the sky with stars, the moon and the sun. I have turned my face towards Him who created the heavens and the earth and never shall I associate partners with Allah."

(For verses in Quran on this topic, see Surah An'am (Cattle), 6: 74-79)

EVERY ART WORK INDICATES AN ARTIST

Every piece of art that is aesthetically pleasing to our eyes and beautiful in appearance must have an artist, someone responsible for its making; just as the carpenter is responsible for the chair on which one sits or the architect who is responsible for the house or school, or the author of the book that we are reading. Behind the events that we observe in the universe, there is a Creator who is Omniscient and Omnipotent. It is impossible to think that the perfect system of the universe was just a coincidence. Let's explain this with the following example:

You go to the beach on a hot summer's day. The blue sea is in front of you, so calm and clean. As you stroll the beach, you come across a beautiful sand castle. You look around, but no one is in sight. You wonder who could have made this sand castle.

You can explain the existence of this sand castle in two ways:

The first possibility: This castle was made by putting some effort and skills into it. Only someone who is talented and experienced in making sand castles could have done this. The second possibility: This castle came about due to the waves that hit the beach. While the waves hit the beach one after another, the sand piled up and this beautiful castle had happened by chance.



Which one of the two possibilities looks more logical and acceptable to you?

The castle in the picture is made by someone who is talented in making sand castles by working for hours. No one until this day has seen or heard that waves can cause such a sand castle by chance. This castle will be destroyed by a strong wind or a small wave. Knowledge, experience, and effort are necessary for even this simple sand castle.



Now, let's have a look at the mosque in the picture.



The Suleymaniye Mosque, located in one of the hills of Istanbul that overlook the sea, was built by the great architect Sinan. It is considered one of the most important architectural works in the world, both for its interior and exterior design. It impresses everyone with its tall and aesthetic minarets, huge dome, and magnificent view. The quality of the materials used in the building and the labor, the elegance among the different sections, and the harmony with its surroundings fascinates everyone. It is impossible to think or argue that such a masterpiece can come along without an architect and an engineer.

Well then, is it possible for the sky that covers us like a dome, the world that we live in, humans around us, animals, plants, mountains, living things and fish that find life deep in the sea and ocean, sun, planets and galaxies that decorate the vast outer space, and many other creatures that we do not know and see that make up the whole universe to happen by itself as a coincidence? Who did all this with a perfect plan, delicate art, superior power, in-depth knowledge and glorious artwork?

The only way we can answer this question is: There is a creator of this universe that is the product of detailed calculations and superior design from the smallest atoms to vast galaxies. This creator is Allah (j.j.) who is Omniscient and Omnipotent.







ALLAH

You read a book, and
Want to know who the author is.
When you see a nice building,
You look for the person who made it.

Does no one own the heavens and earth?
One understands when one thinks.
Everything proves to us that,
There is a Great Powerful Allah.

It is our duty to ask and learn
The one who created us.
It is our duty but
It's religion that teaches us this.

İbrahim Alaattin GÖVSA

ABU HANIFA'S RESPONSE

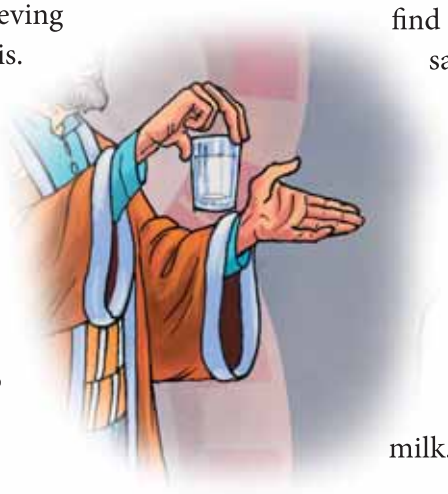
Imam Abu Hanifa, one of the profound scholars of Islam, was living in Baghdad. He raised many students there and gained the trust and respect of everyone.

At that time, there was another scholar who denied the existence of Allah and used to argue about it with other scholars that he met on his travels.



This non-believing scholar heard about Abu Hanifa's fame. He went to Baghdad in order to discuss these issues with him. He began the discussion when he found Abu Hanifa. Abu Hanifa did not answer his proposition right away. He asked to meet the next day in the same place. He was going to give his answer then.

The next day, Abu Hanifa did not show up in the meeting place as he had promised. The non-believing scholar did not like this. When he was about to leave, Abu Hanifa showed up.



The scholar said to Abu Hanifa:

- Why did you come so late? Were you scared to have a debate with me?

Abu Hanifa answered:

- No, I was not scared. You know that the river Tigris divides Baghdad in the middle, and I live on the other side of the river. Last night, the winds blew away the bridge on the river. I wanted to build a new one right away without any carpenters or engineers. I commanded the trees and rocks over there to build me a bridge. I said: "Trees and rocks! Hurry and make a bridge for me." What I wanted did happen but it took longer than I expected. I crossed that bridge and came here, even though late. Now, I am here."

The non-believing scholar laughed and asked:

- O people! Is this the smartest among you? Is it possible to build a bridge without a carpenter and engineer?! Isn't it stupid to believe this?

Abu Hanifa made his point right away:

- Hey unwise man! Since you argue that a bridge cannot be built by itself, how can you argue that this magnificent universe can happen by itself?!

The non-believing scholar could not find anything to say. He could only say: "This issue is over. Now, you show me Allah and I too believe in Him."

Abu Hanifa got a glass of milk and asked:

- Tell me what is butter made from?

- For sure it is made from milk.

- Now, can you show me the fat in this milk?

- There is fat in this milk for sure, but it cannot be seen. That is because it is dissolved in the milk, not compiled in a certain place.

- You believe that the fat in this milk cannot be seen. With the same reasoning, why don't you believe that the Almighty Creator Allah exists but cannot be seen?

Upon these words, the scholar realized his mistake. He acknowledged that there is a Creator of this world but that He cannot be seen. By apologizing, he abandoned his claim. He acknowledged the existence and oneness of Allah.

THE PERFECT HARMONY IN THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL UNIVERSE

The existence and oneness of Allah is an unquestionable fact. Examining ourselves and this world carefully is enough to realize the existence, oneness, and greatness of Allah.



In the human body, which starts up with a single cell, there are around 100 trillion cells. In each cell's nucleus, there is one DNA molecule. Every detail about a human's characteristics are saved in the molecues of these genes. In the human cell, there are around 3 billion genes. In other words, there is hidden information in 3 billion different topics in the DNA of each cell. All the information about us from our skin color to our eye color and our genetic illnesses are recorded in our DNA and transferred to the next generations through our DNA.

Countless bodily functions, such as our heartbeats happen without our having any control over them. Nevertheless, there is a perfect order in all the systems that we have.



Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding."

(Surah Al-Mulk (The Sovereignty); 67: 23)

Everything we do, think, say, and feel happens in our brains. The communication that makes this possible in our brain is made by the neurons in our brain. In a human brain, there are around 100 billion neurons, or in other words nerve cells. In order to perceive, see, and feel, communication between these cells is necessary. 100 billion neurons in our brain communicate with each other through 100 trillion links of communication.

As you read these lines, billions of processes are taking place in our eyes. The light rays that reach our eyes go through first the cornea, then the pupil, and then the lens. The light sensitive cells here transform the light rays into electric signals and send them to nerve endings as an alert. The brain connects the views that come from both eyes into one view. It identifies the shape and the color of an object. It determines how far an object is located. All of this processing just takes one tenth of a second.

75% of the earth and around 70% of the human body is composed of water. Water can go into every cell in the human body and can travel into every vein within us. It carries nutrition to each of the 100 trillion cells in the



Allah the Exalted says:

"Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls..."

(Surah Al-Fussilat ((signs) Spelled Out); 41: 53)

human body and provides then with oxygen and energy. Water is an unmatched blessing for our lives.

Fruits and vegetables that came out of the same earth and watered with the same water have unbelievable variations.

The different tastes and scents of fruits and vegetables that receive the help of earth, water, and minerals, have been carried to this day without deviation or mixing.

Every information about a plant is recorded in a tiny seed that produces it. Seeds contain all the information about their specific plant such as the shape of its bushes and leaves, the color and thicknessl, the taste, scent, and shape of its fruit. In order for a living organism to survive in this world, there are many important requirements, such as the distance from the sun, temperature between certain levels, carbon, ozone, and water cycle, minerals that microorganisms bring out, photosynthesis, the critical slope of the earth, gravity, the power that keeps the atom molecules together, and many others. The earth that we live in is created in such a way that holds all of these requirements and is protected by the atmosphere.

It is believed that there are 300 billion galaxies in the universe. The Milky Way is just one of them. The Sun, which is 103 times the size of Earth is just one of the 250 billion stars in the Milky Way. The distance between the Sun and the planet Earth is 150 kilometers. All of the heavenly bodies rotate on an axis in this system.



Allah the Exalted says:

"So blessed be Allah, the best to create!"

(Surah Al-Mimunin (The Believers); 23:14)

ONE ANSWER TO THREE QUESTIONS

In the old times, there was a man who did not believe in Allah. He would tell every child that he came across that Allah did not exist, because if He did, we could see Him.

This non-believer had a very nice neighbor named Yunus. Yunus believed in Allah, performed his prayers, and never lied.



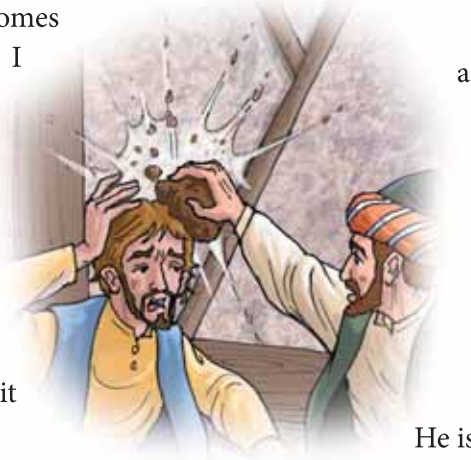
He always acted kindly to everybody. He used to gather the kids and ask them, "Who created you?" If they didn't know the answer, he would teach them to say: "Allah has created you, my son!"

One day, the non-believer approached Yunus and said the following, thinking that he would not answer his questions: "I will ask you three questions about religion and faith. Let's see if you can answer them?" Jonah replied with the courage and confidence that he received from his faith:

- Ask, let's see. He said to himself "Ask and get your answer!"

- My first question: You argue that there is Allah. If there was Allah, then we would see Him. I say, since we don't see Him, He does not exist. If He does exist, then show me! My second question: He says that Satan will burn in Hell fire as well, but you believe that Satan was created out of fire. How is fire going to burn in fire? My third question: Since goodness and evil comes from Allah, why should I receive punishment for not believing in Him?

Yunus who listened to the questions calmly said "Here is my answer to all three questions" and picked up a small rock from the ground and hit it on the non-believer's head.



The man sued Jonah. They went to the court. The judge asked to Jonah:

- Did you hit this man's head with some soil? Jonah answered:

- Yes sir! I hit his head. However, my act was the answer to his three questions that he asked me. He began explaining what had happened:

First of all, he told me that he does not believe in Allah because he cannot see Him. He wanted me to show him Allah in order for him to believe in His existence. Then, I hit his head. Now, he tells us that his head hurts. Unless he shows me his pain, I do not believe him. Since he denies the things that he cannot see, I also deny the pain on his head.

Second of all, he asked me how fire can burn Satan who was created out of fire. The man was created from soil. Since fire cannot burn fire, the soil that I threw at his head cannot hurt him.

Thirdly, he argued that his being a non-believer was his destiny. He told me that it does not make sense for him to receive any punishment because of that. It looks like it was also his destiny to be hit by a rock on his head. Why is he wasting the judge's time with this law suit?

Upon, this answer, the judge asked the non-believer:

- What do you say to this?

The man was embarrassed by what he had said and recognized his mistake:

- Yunus tells the truth sir! He is right. I am not complaining anymore. I want to be a Muslim as well. Please let him help me.

Yunus and his neighbor exited the court together and became very good friends.

WE KNOW ALLAH BY HIS ATTRIBUTES

There is a limit to our sensory organs that help us to perceive matters. For this reason, we cannot see and hear everything.

For example, as we cannot see the germs and viruses around us, we cannot hear low sounds such as the footsteps of an ant or high ones such as the sound of the Earth's rotating on its own axis.

As our sensory organs, our intelligence has limits as well. One of the areas where our intelligence is limited to understanding is the Being and Characteristics of Allah.

We can reach the conclusion about the existence of Allah and His oneness by using our intellects and considering the evidence in the universe. However, we cannot form an opinion about His Being. We can only know Allah and believe in Him in the way He allows us to, through his attributes.

Our Magnificent Lord mentions His Attributes in the Noble Qu'ran in order for us to better understand Him. In order

Allah the Exalted says:

"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision..."

(Surah Al-An'am (Cattle); 6:103)

Our Beloved Prophet said

"Whatever comes to your mind about the being of Allah, He is not that. You think about the things that Allah created. Do not think about Him. That is because it is beyond our comprehension."

(Haithami, Majma al-Zawaid, I, 81)



for us to understand Allah and believe in Him as we should, we have to know these attributes.

We can examine the attributes of Allah in two groups, related to His entity, His creation of this kingdom and His ruling it:

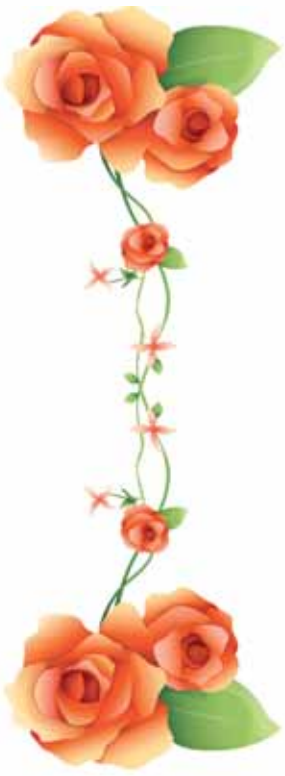
ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

- Intrinsic and Essential Attributes of Allah
- Positive Attributes of Allah

I) Intrinsic and Essential Attributes of Allah (AL-SIFAT AL-DHATIYYAH)

Those are the characteristics of Allah specific to Him only. There are six of them:

Intrinsic and Essential Attributes of Allah



- **Existence (Al-Wujud)**
  He is the Existing One.
- **Eternity (Al-Qidam)**
  There is no beginning of His existence. He is the Pre-Eternal One.
- **Perpetuity (Al-Baqâ')**
  There is no ending to His existence. He is the everlasting One.
- **Oneness (Al-Wahdaniyyah)**
  Allah is one and only. He is the Unique One.
- **Resembling none (Al-Mukhalafatun lil Khawadith)**
  He is unlike the Created.
- **Needing none (Al-Qiyam bi'nafsihi)**
  Allah does not need anyone or anything else in order to exist. He is the Self-Existing One.

1. Existence: Allah exists. His nonexistence is impossible.

2. Eternity: Allah is eternal; there is no beginning of His existence. No matter how far back in time one can imagine, a time that Allah had not existed cannot be thought of.

3. Perpetuity: Allah is everlasting; there is no end to its existence. No matter how far in the future someone's imagination can go, it cannot reach a time that Allah will not exist.

4. Oneness: Allah is one and only. There is no other creator or being that posseses His perfect attributes.

5. Resembling none: Allah does not look like any being. He is beyond any shape or thought that a human mind can conjure up.

6. Needing none: Allah's existence does not depend on some other being. Allah does not have a creator. His existence comes from Himself.

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you men! It is you that have need of Allah. But Allah is the One Free of all wants, worthy of all praise."

(Surah Al-Fatir (The Angels); 35: 15)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him."

(Surah Al-Ikhlas (Sincerity); 112: 1-4)



THE DAUGHTER OF THE MILKMAN

Umar banned the practice of adding water into milk. One night, while he was walking in Medina in order to establish law and order, he got tired. He leaned on the wall of a house to rest a bit. Unintentionally, he overheard a conversation between a mother and daughter.

Mother:

- Come on my daughter go and add some water to the milk.

The daughter:

- Come on mother! Did not The khalifah say not to do that?

- My daughter! In this late hour, how is he going to see us?

- My mother! Even if the Caliph cannot see us, can't Allah see us?!

Umar left silently after listening some more. As soon as the sun had risen, he sent relatives to ask for the girl's hand for his son. One of the daughters from this marriage had a son named Abdulaziz. This son was Umar ibn Abdulaziz who is also known as "the second Umar" in Islamic history. As his grandfather Umar, in the time of the presidency of Umar ibn Abdulaziz, who was also known for his justice, his people lived in happiness and peace.



II) POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH (AL-SIFAT AL-THUBUTIYYAH)

These are the characteristics that exist in Allah in a perfect and infinite form. These characteristics help us to better understand how Allah created the universe and controls it.

POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

- **Life (Al-Hayat)**
  Allah is alive and is the source of all life.
- **Knowledge (Al-Ilm)**
  Allah has infinite knowledge.
- **All Hearing (Al-Samî)**
  Allah hears everything
- **All Seeing (Al-Baseer)**
  Allah sees everything.
- **Divine Will (Iradah).**
  Allah wills and does as He wishes.
- **Omnipotence (Al-Qudrah)**
  Allah has infinite strength and power.
- **Speech (Al-Kalam)**
  Allah speaks.
- **Creating (Al-Takwin)**
  Allah creates everything from nothing.

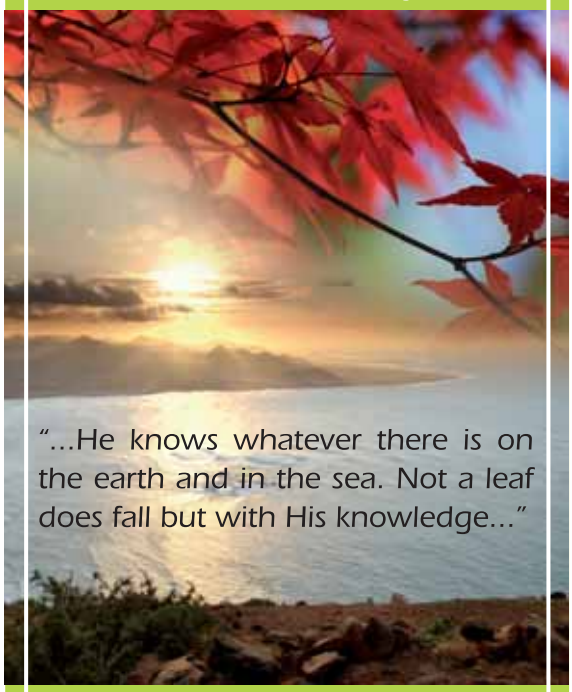
1. Life: Allah is alive and living. There is no beginning or end to His life. His life, unlike the life of creation, does not depend on time, space, or causality. He gives life to all living beings, and everything finds life through Him.

2. Knowledge: Allah the Exalted knows everything in the Heavens and Earth. There is nothing that He does not know. He has knowledge of the Heavens, the Earth, and every living thing in between, all the laws of the universe, and everything that happens. As he knows the billions of stars in the Universe, he also knows the ciphers coded in every living being, and also knows the secrets people keep within themselves because He is the Creator of all of us. Moreover, there is no limit to Allah's knowledge. The order and system, perfection, and harmony seen in the universe is proof of the infinite knowledge of Allah who created them.

3. All Hearing: Allah hears everything perfectly. The concept of nearness or distance does not exist. He hears and understands at all times what every being in the universe says. He also hears the begging and invocations inside of us. Allah does not need a tool or an organ to hear. The hearing power of Allah is infinite. His hearing of a certain thing does not constitute an impediment for Him to hear something else.

4. All Seeing: Allah sees everything. It does not matter for Him whether something is far or near, hidden or clear, small or big. He sees where we are and what we do. He does not need an eye to see like we do.

Allah the Exalted says:



(Surah Al-An'am (Cattle); 6: 59)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Verily it is Allah (alone) Who hears and sees (all things)."

(Surah Al-Munim (The Believer); 40: 20)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, "be", and it is!"

(Surah Ya-Sin; 36: 82)

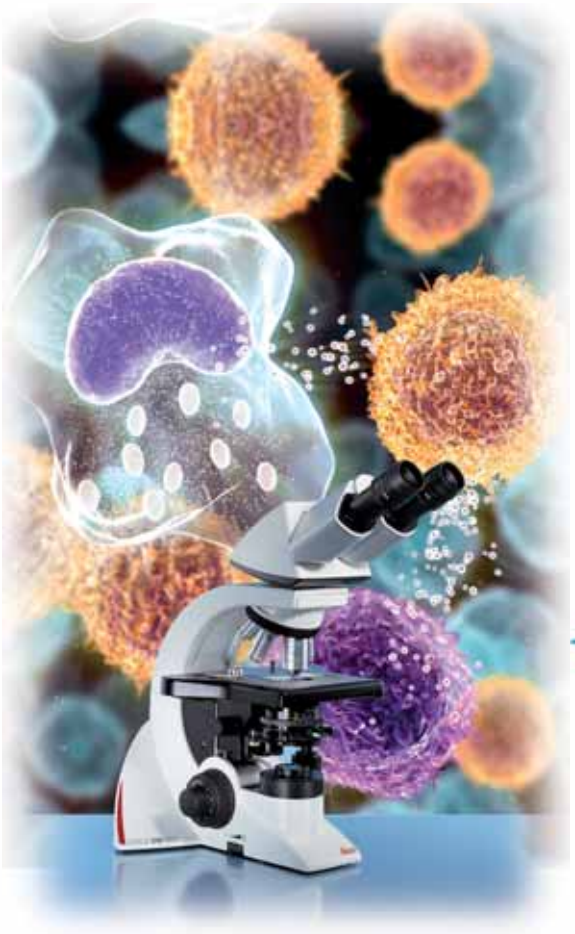
5. Divine Will: Everything happens with the will of Allah the Exalted. Nothing can be done without His will and command. There is wisdom in everything that he wishes and does. Everything that He created has a cause as well as wisdom behind it. There is no power that could reverse His will or stop His command.

6. Omnipotence: Allah has infinite strength and power. There is nothing He cannot do. There is no impediment for Him to do as He wishes. It is sufficient for a person to examine the universe and the phenomena inside it to understand the infiniteness and limitlessness of Allah's power. Orbiting of stars and planets that are millions of tons in weight and Man's creation from one cell are just examples of Allah's power.

7. Speech: Allah the Exalted had the power to deliver His speech without the need for the organs and bodily functions that we humans need to deliver speech. None of his words can be compared to the words of humans. Our Exalted Lord speaks with each being with a language that it can understand. By commanding the Heavens and the Earth, and, small or big, all creation He announces His words. He spoke to the prophets via the holy books He revealed and through the prophets, He spoke to all of humanity. The Noble Quran and the heavenly books revealed to all humanity are His words.

8. Creating: Allah is the Creator of the universe and all that exists in the universe. Allah created everything from the living beings that can only be seen with a microscope to the great starts that are thousands of times greater than Earth. He is the One who creates, causes to live, the One in which we feed on, the One who brings all existence to life. There is no creator other than Him.

Allah the Exalted is His own attribute, the Creator. He creates from nothingness. The technological tools and inventions that Allah's subjects put forth, no matter how wonderful they are, are simply bringing together the already existing things, bringing about the ready energy and ability, and reshaping things.



Allah the Exalted says:

"He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colours)."

(Surah Al-Hashr (Exile, Banishment); 59: 24)

ALLAH SEES EVERYTHING

A father gathered his children together and gave each one of them a very precious ring. He wanted them to hide the rings somewhere, so that no one could find them and use them after he died. After taking the rings, the children looked for a hiding place for them. Two of the kids hid their rings among their personal belongings, carefully, and came back to their father. They waited for the third sibling. After a long time had passed, the other child did not return. Evening had arrived and just when they started to get worried about him, he showed up with the ring in his hands. When they saw that it had taken him this long to hide a simple ring, they mocked him:

- Our brother looked everywhere but could not find a place to hide the ring. At the same time, they were proud of themselves for doing what their father had asked them to do in such a short period of time.

After staring carefully at his three sons, the father told the son who couldn't find a hiding place for the ring:

- My son! Look, your brothers were able to hide the rings. Why did you bring the ring back?

- Father! Did you not want us to hide the rings somewhere so that no one could see or find them?

- Yes.

- Father, I looked everywhere. I could not find such a place. That is because wherever I went, I realized that the magnificent Allah sees me. That is why I brought the ring back.

The father, being very pleased with what his son told him, said:

- Good job my son! With this small test, I wanted to remind you that Allah sees us everywhere and all the time.



MY LORD! I ACCEPT YOU AND BELIEVE IN YOU WITH ALL MY HEART

O My Lord! You exist. You do not need anything to exist. You are the One who created us and informed us about Your existence. Everything except you exists because of You. You are the One who created everything and who sustains their lives. If You want to, You can destroy them all.

O My Lord! You do not have a beginning or an end. You are the starter and finisher. You are the One who created time and who ends time. Infinity is only for You. Everything else except You is temporary. Everyone who is born will die and everything will perish. You are the only One who is everlasting.

O My Lord! You are One and Only. You do not have partners and nothing is like You. All the power and strength is Yours. You are the One who created everything and the One who controls everything. This perfect system and continuous balance in the universe is Your work; and it's a testimony that there is no god but You.

O My Lord! We cannot know Your person. What we do know is that You are different from all that we know. You are far from anything imaginable. Your existence comes from You. You are the One who does not look anything like Your own creation, You are incomparable and Exalted. We know You as our only God and we believe in You.

O My Lord! We cannot know Your person. What we do know is that You are different from all that we know. You are far from anything imaginable. Your existence comes from You. You are the One who does



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

Allah is our first word,
Our essence is filled with faith.
All work that begin in the name of Allah,
ends delightfully,
When waking up in the morning,
I immediately say "BISMILLAH (in the name of Allah)."
While eating or drinking,
Opening my book...
I always recite Basmalah (Bismillah)
I never forget, even once.
I turn to my Lord,
Power comes to my heart.
With Allah, even a little becomes a lot,
Difficulties disappear,
Someone who recites Basmalah,
Is hand in hand with success.
I never quit reciting it, and
Allah lends me a hand.

M. Asım KÖKSAL

not look anything like Your own creation, You are incomparable and Exalted. We know You as our only God and we believe in You.

O My Lord! You are the One who wants something and creates it out of nothing. Everything exists because You want them to. There is wisdom in everything You do. You are Omnipotent and Almighty. There is no one who can stand up to or change Your decisions.

O My Lord! You are the One who says the truest words of all. By being merciful to Your subjects, You are the One who sent Your words and books to us. If all the trees become pens and all the seas become ink, it is not enough to write down Your words.

O My Lord! You are the One who creates out of nothing and who can destroy anything that exists. You create everything within a certain balance and control them with Your Almighty power.

O Lord! Please purify our hearts from thoughts that would not fit Your Grandeur! Please allow us to live our lives worshipping You and die as Muslims!

Please do not embarrass us due to our sins and shortcomings!

Please forgive the sins that we conceal or let be known!

Please help us in richness and poverty!

You are the One who knows all our wants and hears all our prayers. Please accept our prayers!

Amin



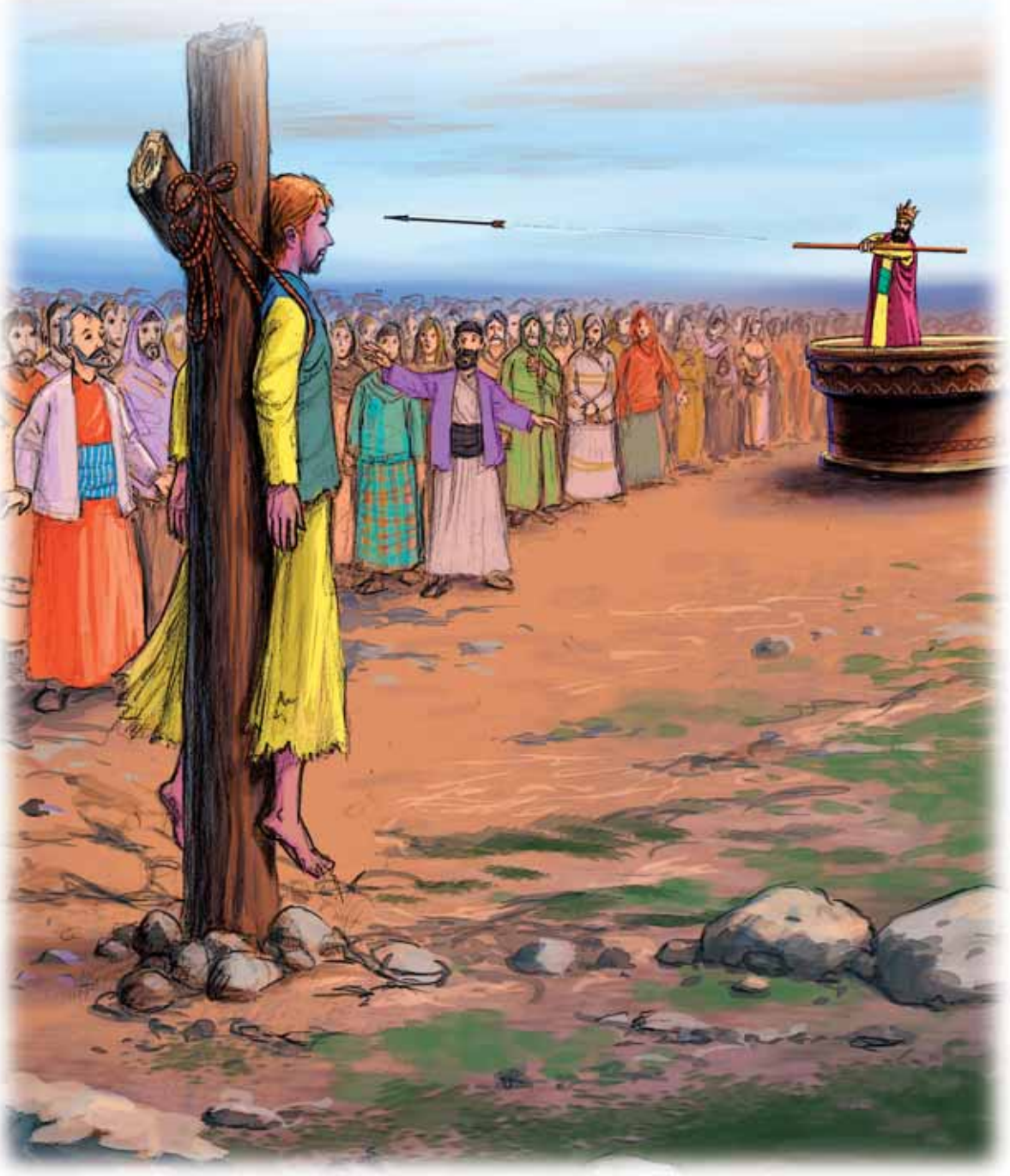
THE FAITH OF A YOUNG MAN

One day, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) told the following story to his Companions.

Among the previous nations, there was a king and his magician. When the magician got old, he said to the king:

- I am old now. Send me someone young for me to teach him my magic.

Upon this wish, the king sent him a young man. When the young man was on his way to see the magician, he came across to a priest in a deserted place. The priest, who



believed in one God, had revolted against the king who claimed to be God. The priest had hidden here from the torture of the king and his men.

The young man then made it a habbit to visit this priest whenever he went to the magician. He liked what the priest was telling him. He had some difficulty leaving the priest and sometimes was late to his meetings with the magician. Whenever the young man was late, the magician would get angry and beat him.

One day the young man saw a big and wild animal that blocked the way to the passengers. He said to himself "Now I will learn who is superior, the priest or the magician" and got a stone from the ground. He threw the stone at the animal and said: "O Allah! If you like what the priest does better than what the magician does, then kill this animal so that people can go their way." The wild animal died and people continued their way. Then, the young man told to the priest what had happened. The priest said:

- Young man! I saw that you have risen to a higher level. Now, you are superior to me. I guess, in a short period of time, you will become troubled. If this happens, don't ever tell anyone where I am.

The young man was healing the blind and chlorotic and other illnesses as well. At that time, the king also had an acquaintance that was blind. The blind man heard about him and went to the young man with valuable gifts and said to the young man:

- If you heal my eyes, all of these valuables will be yours.

The young man said:

- I can't heal anyone by myself. Only Allah the Exalted heals. If you believe in Almighty Allah, I would pray to Him for you, and He shall heal you.

The blind man believed in Allah. Allah the Exalted healed him. The man went to the king and as in the old times, and received his seat in the senate.

The king asked:

- Who healed your eyes? The man said:

- My Lord!

This time the king shouted:

- Do you have a Lord besides me?

The man said:

- Allah the Exalted is my Lord and yours.

The king got mad upon hearing these words and imprisoned the man. They tortured him until he told them where the young man was. When he finally divulged where the young man was, they brought the young man to the kind. The king asked:

- Young man, looks like your magic is so advanced that you can even heal the blind and chlorotic. I heard that you do a lot of, is this correct?

The young man said:

- No, I cannot heal anyone. Allah the Exalted is the one who provides healing.

The king imprisoned him thinking that he received this knowledge from the priest. They tortured him until he told where the priest is.

They brought the priest and told him to reject his faith. The priest did not accept this. Upon this, the king ordered him to be sliced into half with a saw. Then, the man of the king was brought. They said to him as well: "Reject your faith!" When he did not

accept, he was also sliced into half with a saw. Then, the young man was also brought and was subject to such threats as "Reject your faith or die!" The young man resisted. The king delivered the young man to his men and ordered:

- Take this man to the top of this mountain. If he rejects his faith, that is good for him! Otherwise, roll him down the mountain.

The soldiers took the man to the top of the mountain.

The young man prayed:

- O Allah! Save me from their hands however You wish! Upon this, the mountain vibrated and the soldiers fell from the mountain. The young man was saved and walked back to the king. The king said:

- What happened to my men?

The young man said:

- Allah saved me from their hands.

Upon this, the king delivered him to other soldiers and said:

- Take this man to the middle of the sea. If he denies his faith, that is good for him! Otherwise, throw him into the sea.

They took the young man. He prayed:

- My Allah! Save me from their hand as You wish!

The ship turned upside down with its crew, and everybody sank except the young man. He returned to the king.

When the king saw him, he asked:

- What happened to my soldiers?

The young man said:

- Allah saved me from their hands, and continued:

- Unless you do the things I told you so, you cannot kill me.

The king asked:

- What are they?

The young man:

- Gather your people in a court. Tie me to a date log, take an arrow from your quiver, throw the arrow at me saying "in the name of this young man's Lord." Only then will you be able to kill me.

The king gathered his people in a court, tied the young man in a date log, then took an arrow from the quiver of the young man and placed it in his arc. He threw the arrow as he said "in the name of this young man's Lord, Allah." The arrow hit the young man on his temple. The young man put his hand to his temple and died right away. Upon this, the people said:

- We believe in the young man's Lord.

The man of the king informed him about that and said:

- Did you see what happened? What you were scared of happened; the people believe in Allah.

(Muslim, Zuhd, 73)

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL NAMES (AL-ASMA AL HUSNA) BELONG TO ALLAH

Our Exalted Lord introduced Himself to us with His names and attributes. These names, which Allah the Exalted informs us in the Quran and are taught us in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, are called Al-Asma Al-Husna (the most beautiful names). It is commanded in the following verse of the Noble Qu'ran **"The most beautiful names belong to Allah. So call on him by them..."** (Surah Araf (The Heights), 7:180) that we should recite His beautiful names when praying and supplicating to Allah.

Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) informed us of the names of Allah the Exalted saying:

"Allah the Exalted has ninety nine names. Whoever memorizes them and recites them goes to Paradise."

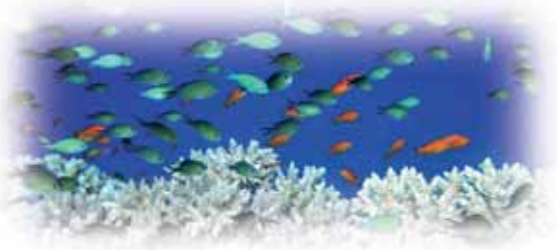
(Bukhari, Daawat, 76; Muslim, Dhikr, 5-6)

The purpose of "memorization and recitation" mentioned in our Prophet's saying is to know Allah by His beautiful names and to remember these names and attributes, therefore they will constantly remind us of Him. It helps us view our lives and the events happening around us from the perspective of Allah's names. For example, we should be able to remember Allah's names "Rahman and Rahim" when we observe the compassion and mercy of a mother; or when we obtain some beautiful blessings, we should be able to remember the name "Razzak"; when we ask for forgiveness of our sins, the name "Ghafur" should come to our minds; each time we reach the Spring, the name "Muhyi," and in the face of death the name "Mumit" should be the names we need to reflect upun.

If we learn these names and their meanings, and correct our manners accordingly, we can be among those servants whom Allah loves. Thus, we can deserve the good news of our Prophet and go to Paradise.

Let's open up our hands and pray to our Lord by reciting some of His beautiful names…



O ALLAH! اَللّٰهُ	O Allah, who has collected all the beautiful names and attributes in Him! 	We pray to you in your Greatest Name. Please accept our prayers!
O RAHMAN! O RAHIM! اَلرَّحْمٰنُ اَلرَّحِيْمُ	O Allah, who treats all of creation with compassion and mercy! 	Please have mercy on us, both in this world and in the Hereafter!
O RAZZAQ! اَلرَّزَّاقُ	O Allah, who gives life to all of creation! 	Bestow upon us from Your abundant and lawful blessings
O HAFIZ! اَلْحَفِيْظُ	O Allah, who protects and cares for everything! 	Please protect me, my family, and all the Muslims from all kinds of trouble and evil!

O MUSAWWIR! الْمُصَوِّرُ		O Allah, who created everything in the most beautiful form!	Please beautify my manners as you did my looks!
O MUJIB! الْمُجِيبُ		O Allah, who hears and accepts all kinds of prayers that come to the hearts or drop from lips!	Please make us among Your servants who pray to You sincerely and whose prayers are accepted!
O HADI! الْهَادِي		O Allah, who shows the true path and who will have us reach the true path!	Please do not separate us from the true path of Islam, honesty, and the honest ones!
O HAYY! O QAYYUM! الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ		O Allah, who is always alive and the source of life, who rules the whole universe!	Please make us among those who spend the life that comes from You in Your way. Please do not let our hearts to be attached to the temporal!
O WADUD! الْوَدُودُ		You are the source of love. You are the One who is worthy of love, O Allah!	Please always make us love the ones whom you like, dislike the ones whom you dislike, and have us love those whom You have enlightened!

THE BENEFITS OF BELIEVING IN ALLAH

BELIEVING IN ALLAH

- It gives us an infinite sense of confidence
- It makes us act with mercy and compassion towards other creatures.
- It makes us control our actions.
- It makes us righteous and trustworthy human beings.

Believing in an Exalted power and leaving the results of everything up to Him is a great source of confidence for us humans who are weak by nature. Everything is in the hands of Allah the Exalted and happens because of Him. He never disappoints those who trust in Him. Unless our Exalted Lord wants, no one can harm us or provide benefits to us.

Allah the Exalted says:

"If Allah helps you, none can overcome you: If He forsakes you, who is there, after that, that can help you? In Allah, then, Let believers put their trust."

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3: 160)

As believers, this is the way we believe in Allah. **This type of faith gives us a feeling of infinite trust.** It makes us open up our eyes with excitement to each day by the principle *"Allah is Sufficient for us and What an excellent Guardian He is."* It makes our lives peaceful by saving us from laziness, depression, and the stress of undue concerns and doubts.

We believe that all of the creatures are the result of Allah's eternal mercy and affection. **Such a faith makes us merciful and affectionate towards other creatures.** That is because, for us, every kind of creature is the sign of Allah's mercy and the proof of His Existence and Oneness.

From now on, we look at every creature that Allah gave life to from the perspective of Allah's mercy. Our hearts are filled with mercy. We do not harm our environment, our family, our friends, nor even a single ant. We know that nonliving beings are the blessings that our Exalted Lord has provided for our service. We avoid misusing or wasting them.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Once a man became very thirsty while walking on the road. Then he came across a well, got down into it, drank some water from it and then climbed out . Right then he saw a dog panting heavily and was licking the moist soil because of excessive thirst. The man said to himself "this dog is suffering from the same state of thirst just as I did." He went down into the well again and filled his shoe with some water for the dog. He climbed out of the well with the shoe in his mouth, and then let the dog drink from the shoe. Allah became pleased with him because of his selfless act and forgave his sins."

(Bukhari, Musakat, 9.)



Our Lord who is closer to us than our jugular vein is the One who sees, hears, and know everything. Nothing in the universe can be outside of His knowledge and control.

Allah the Exalted says:

"...And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do."

(Surah Al-Hadid (Iron); 57: 4)

Knowing that our Lord knows everything makes us control and watch our acts. As humans, we check our clothing or acts even while taking a picture or recording with a camera, this way we gain an auto-control system. We do not forget that we are under divine supervision and pay attention to our acts, behaviors, and thoughts. We shape our behaviors not according to law and order or others, but with the consciousness of knowing that Allah sees us at all times. We worship Allah with the knowledge that Allah sees us and our acts even though we cannot see Him. We strive to do everything in the most perfect way and to be qualified and competent human beings.

When we believe in Allah, we shape our lives in accordance with His commands and prohibitions. Due to our love for our Exalted Lord, we try to gain His contentment. We are afraid of causing His anger and from His Hellfire and avoid the acts that He does not like. Therefore, we gain a consciousness called Taqwa (avoidance of disobeying Allah's commands) in our hearts. **Having such faith makes us righteous and trustworthy human beings.** We become part of those people who are known to be righteous in their words and acts. Whatever happens, we do not deviate from the righteous path by cheating. We do not have bad characteristics such as lying or fraud. We take good care of the things that are entrusted unto us. Just like our beloved Prophet, we can become trustworthy Muslims who are loved and respected in the society, who say what they think, exemplary due to their righteousness and honesty.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Verily those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," and remain firm (on that Path),- on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. Such shall be Companions of the Gardens, dwelling therein (for aye): a recompense for their (good) deeds."

(Surah Ahqaf (The Wind-curved Sandhills, The Dunes); 46: 13-14)

THE LOVE OF ALLAH

Allah is the One who created us, the One who created our souls and placed love in our hearts. One of His beautiful names is "Wadud." In other words, He is both the lover and the beloved.

Our Almighty Lord, the source of love, loves us, His servants very much. He has proven His love by providing us with His countless blessings and by informing us about better blessings in the Hereafter. In return, He wants us to believe in Him, worship Him in acordance with the way He wants us to do, and love Him.

We love Allah as a requirement of our faith and indication of our gratitude. That is because He is the one who is most worthy of being loved.

To love Allah is the zenith of one's faith. Loving Him is the beginning of all nice and beautiful things. As Muslims, we sincerely and strongly believe in Allah, we love Him more than everything else, even more than our lives. We know that our love for our mothers, fathers, spouses, children, friends and others are the blessings that our Exalted Lord provided for us. We can never compare the love for Allah to the other kinds of love.

A lover always remembers the beloved one. One gets pleasure from remembering the name of the beloved and never forgets the loved one. As a believer, we too remember our Lord through our worship, prayers, recitations of the Quran and supplications. We think about His greatness and power with His beautiful names. We show our love by remembering Him.

Our Beloved Prophet said:

"There are three characteristics. Whoever has them will have the sweetness (delight) of faith: The one to who Allah and His Messenger becomes dearer than anything else. Who loves a person and he loves him only for the sake of Allah. Who hates to revert tp disbelief after Allah saves him from the quagmire of disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the fire."

(Bukhari, Iman, 9)

Allah the Exalted says:

"But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2: 165)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: "If you do love Allah, Follow me: Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.""

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:31)

Those who love Allah follow the path of His Prophet. Islam is a path that teaches love. The teachers of this path of love are the prophets who are the most virtuous and superior humans in the world. Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was the "Habibullah," that is, "the beloved subject of Allah." As we continue in the path of our Prophet we both show our love for Allah and gain His love.

When our hearts are filled with the love of Allah, our lives become meaningful, our behaviors become more mature, and our manners and behavior get better. We try to please Allah because of our love for Him. We obey our Lord's words, follow His prophets, and do not part from the true path that He has shown us. When we act like this, Allah also loves us and accepts us along with the other servants whom he loves. We become one of His select slaves and friends. We gain the love of believers and angels.



Allah the Exalted says:

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah. For without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction."

(Surah Ar-Rad (The Thunder); 13: 28)

One of the friends of Allah said:

- I know when my Lord remembers me. Then, people gathered around him and asked:

- How do you know this? He answered as follows:

- It is very easy to understand this. When I remember my Lord, My Lord remembers me.

Allah the Exalted says:

"On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious bestow love."

(Surah Al-Maryam (Mary); 19: 96)

THE LIFEBLOOD OF OUR WORSHIP: SUPPLICATION

Supplication is to accept our weaknesses and all that we are incapable of, and to turn to Allah the Exalted, asking Him for help. It is one of the moments that we are closest to our Lord. We open our hands, beg, and invoke. We pass on our wishes to Allah through supplications.

There are no certain conditions, special times or place for offering supplications. We may offer supplications anytime and anywhere. However, some periods and locations are good opportunities for offering supplications. The holy days and nights, Fridays, times of fast breaking (iftar) or pre-dawn meals (sahur) before the fast are important opportunities for supplications. Holy places, such as the Ka'bah and plain of Arafa in Mecca are places where supplications are accepted.

Allah the Exalted accepts wholehearted and sincere supplications. Allah does not return a servant who prays wholeheartedly empty handed. However, one should not hasten to see the results of their supplications, because Allah is the One who knows best what is most beneficial for his servant. In this respect our beloved Prophet says: "The Invocation of anyone of you is granted (by Allah) if he does not show impatience by saying: 'I invoked Allah so many times, but my request has not been granted'" (Bukhari, Daawat, 22)

Supplication is a form of worship that keeps our connection alive with our Lord at all times. Just when we remember the Exalted Allah in our difficult and anxious times we remember Him in times of ease and comfort and pray to Him at every opportunity.

It is just as important to obtain the prayers of others as it is to pray. Acts such as helping our mothers set the table, offering water to our elders, finding a solution to one of our friends' troubles, are all good opportunities to obtain the prayers of others. Then, starting with our parents, we need to try to obtain the invocation of our elders, righteous and knowledgeable people, teachers, guests, neighbors, orphans, the destitute, and poor people. We, in turn, should pray for them and for our Muslim brothers and sisters.

Our beloved Prophet commands:

"Prayer is the essence of worship."

(Tirmidhi, Daawat, 1)

Allah the Exalted says:

"When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calles on Me..."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2: 186)

Our beloved Prophet commands:

"Remember Allah when you are in ease and comfort so that He remembers you when you are in difficulty and anxiety."

(Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, I,)

O Allah! Please protect the Nation of Muhammad! Please forgive them. Please do not hold back your help and mercy on them. Amin

HERE I AM! O MY SERVANT

A Muslim used to wake up every night and remember Allah. Devil said to him:

- O you, who loves Allah so much, even if you recite the name of Allah all night long, is there anyone who answers your prayers? Not even a single response is coming to you, how long are you going to continue praying?

The man became broken-hearted, laid down his head, and went to sleep. In his dream, he heard:

- Wake up! Why did you abandon your prayers? Why did you get tired?

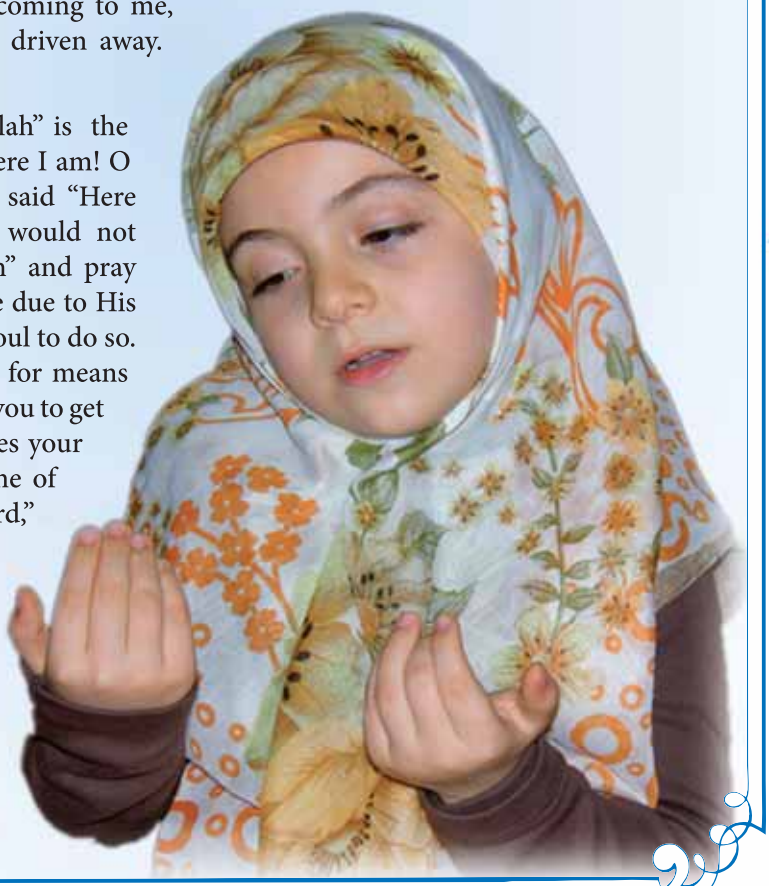
The man said:

- There is no "Here I am! O my servant!" response is coming to me, hence I am scared of being driven away. Upon this he heard:

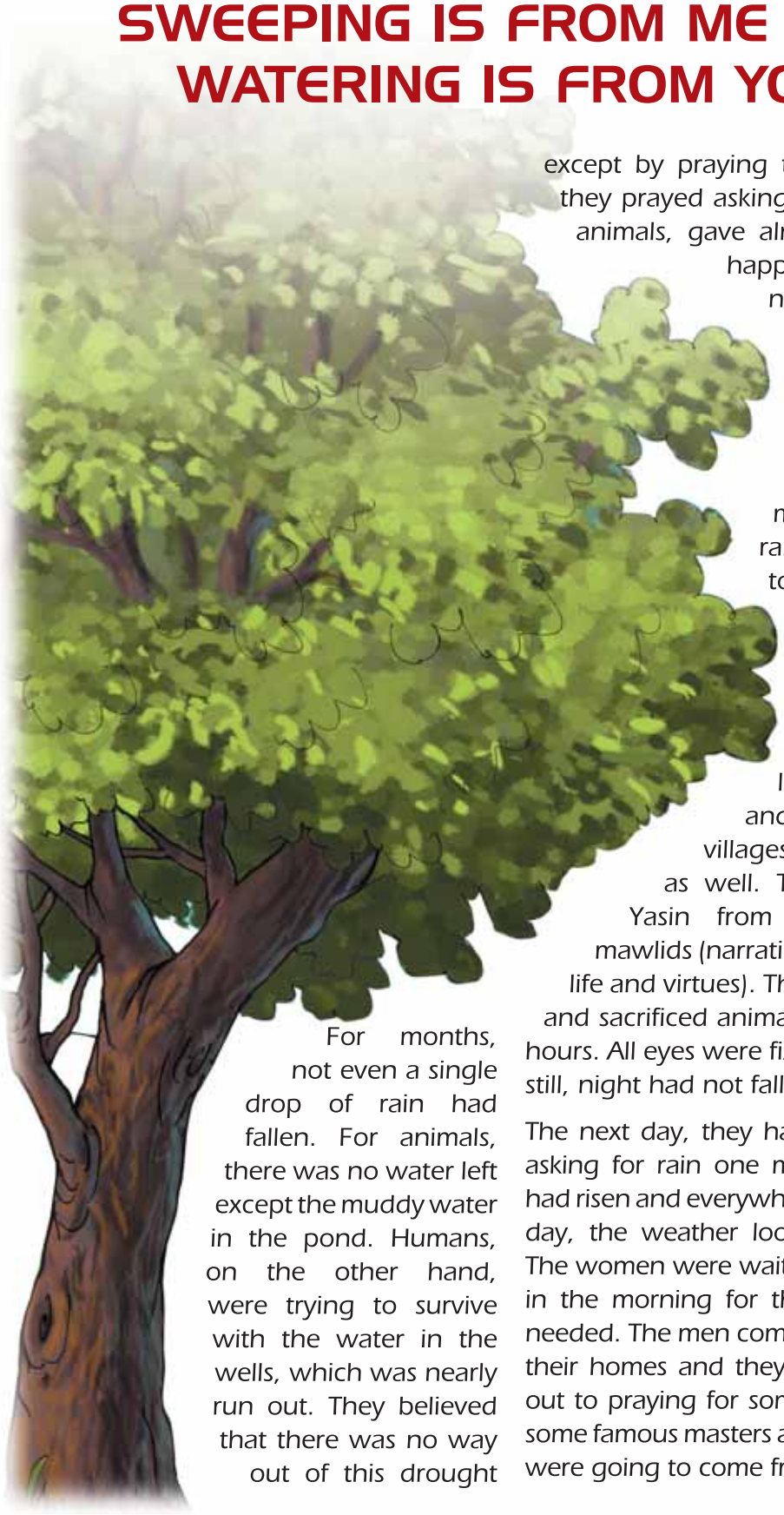
- Your recitations of "Allah" is the same thing as His saying "Here I am! O My servant." If He had not said "Here I am! O My servant," you would not have been able to say "Allah" and pray to Him. Your invocations are due to His implanting a desire to your soul to do so. All your efforts, your search for means happen because Allah wants you to get closer to Him and He releases your feet to do them. In every one of prayer beginning with "O Lord," there are many responses of Allah saying "Here I am! O my servant." A person who is away from worship and prayers is also the one whose soul is far away from the invocation: "O Lord!" This is because he has not been permitted to say "O Lord!" There is a lock and bolt on his mouth, and also on his tongue and heart.

Perhaps Allah did not inflict upon him any troubles, aches, pain, sorrow, and sadness so that he would not cry and whine when he is hurt. Understand from here that the troubles and worries that cause you to pray to and call Allah, are better than the kingdom of this world. The supplication without troubles is cold. The supplication when offered during times of trouble comes directly from the heart.

Mawlana Jalaladdin al-Rumi



SWEEPING IS FROM ME AND WATERING IS FROM YOU



For months, not even a single drop of rain had fallen. For animals, there was no water left except the muddy water in the pond. Humans, on the other hand, were trying to survive with the water in the wells, which was nearly run out. They believed that there was no way out of this drought except by praying to Allah. For days, they prayed asking for rain, sacrificed animals, gave alms, made orphans happy, but somehow nothing worked.

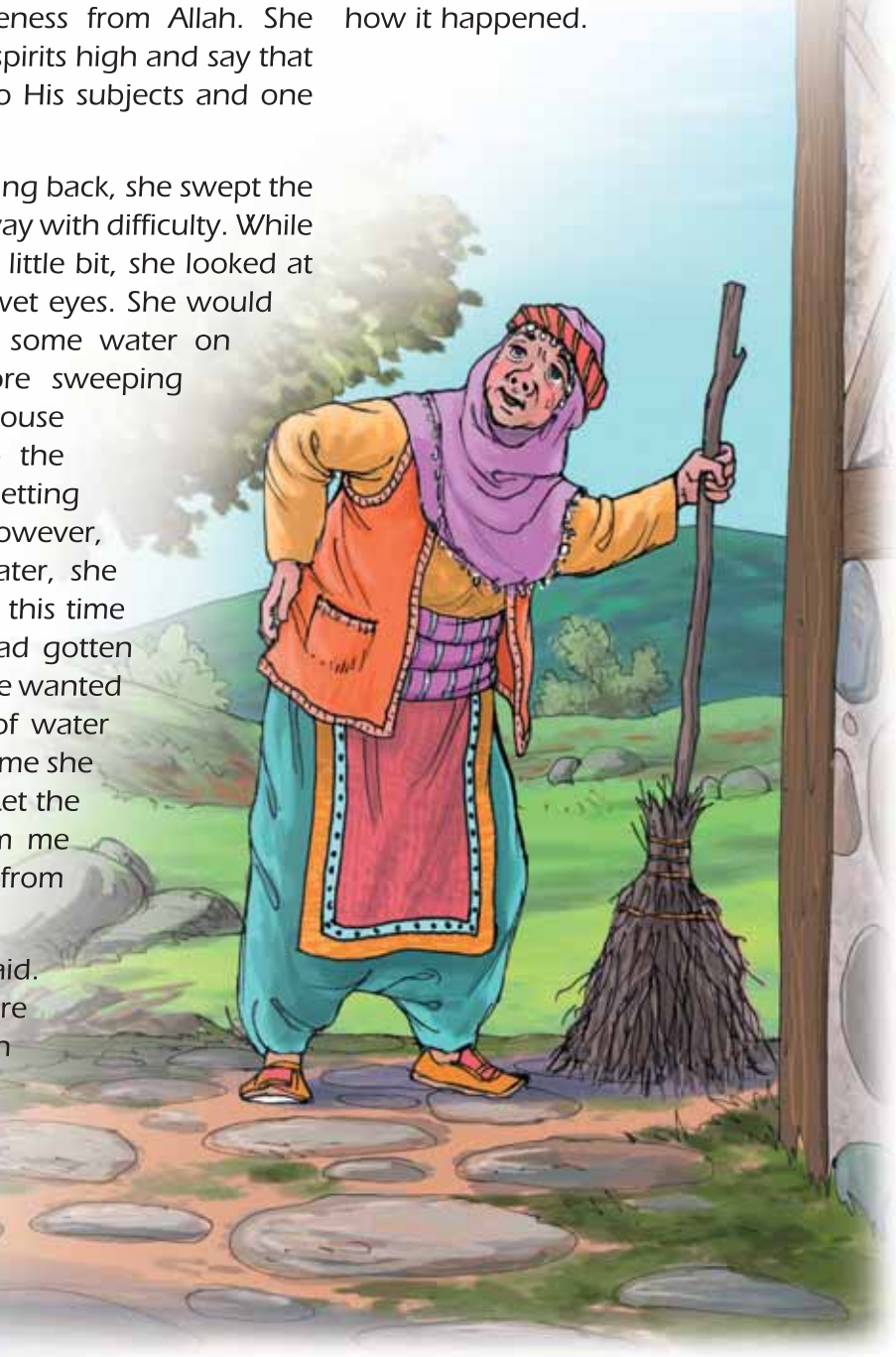
They did not know what to do. Some villages came together and prayed one more time asking for rain. From children to elderly, young to old, everybody from those villages gathered in the threshing field. The religious leaders of the village and neighboring villages gathered together as well. They recited Surah Yasin from the Quran and mawlids (narrations of the Prophet's life and virtues). They distributed alms and sacrificed animals. They prayed for hours. All eyes were fixed on the sky. Yet, still, night had not fallen.

The next day, they had planned to pray asking for rain one more time. The sun had risen and everywhere was bright. That day, the weather looked even warmer. The women were waiting in the line early in the morning for the water that they needed. The men completed their work in their homes and they were about to go out to praying for some rain. Also, today some famous masters and religious leaders were going to come from the city.

Towards midmorning, people of the neighboring villages started to come. The guest imams had also arrived. The prayer service was about to begin. At that moment, an old lady opened her door as she was holding her back. Due to her age and illness, she was not able to go to the threshing field. She was so sad about not getting any rain and continuously was asking for forgiveness from Allah. She used to keep her spirits high and say that Allah is merciful to His subjects and one day it will rain.

In spite of her aching back, she swept the front of her doorway with difficulty. While raising her back a little bit, she looked at the sky with her wet eyes. She would normally sprinkle some water on the ground before sweeping the front of her house in order to keep the dust from getting everywhere. However, due to lack of water, she could not do that this time and some dust had gotten into her throat. She wanted to have one sip of water so much! At that time she said: "Dear Lord! Let the sweeping be from me and the water be from You."

That was all she said. Black clouds were seen from afar even though she had not entered her house yet. In a few minutes, the black rain clouds have covered the whole sky. In half an hour, it was raining cats and dogs. The crowd in the threshing field was both surprised how it started raining even before they began to pray. They all got wet. While they were returning to their houses, they were both thanking Allah and crying out of happiness and amazement, not being quite able to fathom the mystery behind how it happened.



WHAT DOES BEING A MUSLIM ENTAIL?

* As being His servants, we owe everything we have to Allah.
* We do not associate partners with Allah.
* We do not accept any other god but Allah.
* We love Allah more than anything else.
* We worship only Him.
* We pray only to Allah and ask for help only from Him.
* We trust in Allah and believe that He will not leave us alone and helpless.
* We know that all the goodness comes from Allah and thank only Him.
* We only perform our prayers for Him and prostrate only to Him.
* We hope for His mercy and fear His anger.
* We fulfill our Almighty Lord's commands.
* We do not do the things that our Lord prohibits.
* We love Allah a lot and recite His name everywhere and in every situation.
* We try to read, listen, and understand the word of Allah, the Noble Quran.

THAT IS BECAUSE WE ARE MUSLIMS.

WHO IS GOING TO SAVE?

The Prophet had organized a military expedition to the Najd region of Arabia. When they were returning to Medina, the soldiers who completed the expedition got very tired. The weather was hot and they still had a long way to go. It was noon. As soon as they reached a place with trees and shade, they took a break. In order for our Beloved Prophet to be comfortable, the Companions left the best place for him. They themselves relaxed under the shade further away.

The Muslim soldiers went to sleep right away due to the long and tiring travel and the effects of the hot weather. Our Prophet had relaxed under a tree with dense leaves. He hung his sword from the tree and went to sleep.

The enemy was secretly following the Muslim soldiers. For the enemy who was waiting for the right timing, this was the time. By encouraging one of the non-believers among them whose name is Gavres, they wanted to kill our Prophet. Gavres got very close to our Prophet without being noticed by anyone. He got the sword hanging from the tree. He was about to hit the Prophet when he opened up his blessed eyes. Gavres asked:

- O Muhammad! Now, who is going to save you from me?

Our Prophet answered the enemy who wanted to kill him without getting scared or worried:

- "Allah!"

The enemy who was thrilled by the unbending faith of our Prophet and his trust in Allah dropped the sword. Our Prophet got the sword and asked the man:

- Now, who is going to save you from me?

The man who did not understand what had happened said:

- Stop! Don't punish me right away! The Messenger of Allah asked:

- Will you acknowledge that there is no god but Allah and that I am His messenger?

The man said:

- No, I would not. However, I can promise that I will not fight with you and will not join in any army that will fight with you.

Upon that, our Prophet freed the man who was about to kill him. At that time, the Companions who heard the noise came there. The man left there among the shocked looks of the Companions. The man was so touched from this merciful and forgiving act. When he returned to his friends, he said:

- Now, I am coming from the place of the Best Human. (Bukhari, Jihad, 84)

THE PROPHET LOVED ALLAH VERY MUCH

The Prophet loved Allah more than anything else. **He never compared the love of Allah with anything else.** In order to protect this state of love he used to pray to Allah, *"O Lord! Make your love more superior to me than my life, my family, and cold water!"* (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 72)

The thought of gaining the love of Allah was the underlying idea for the Prophet in his relations with the universe, humanity, the animal kingdom, and all other creatures. Since he loved Allah very much, he acted with mercy and compassion towards His creatures.

He wanted to please Allah in each of his acts and always prayed, *"O Lord! I wish from You to love You, to love those who love You, and love the acts that make me reach Your love."* (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 72)

The Prophet used to recite the name of Allah and also said "The difference between those who recite the name of Allah and those who do not is like the difference between the living and the dead." (Bukhari, Daawat, 66) He used to begin all of his acts with the name of Allah and would get pleasure from reciting His beautiful names and attributes.

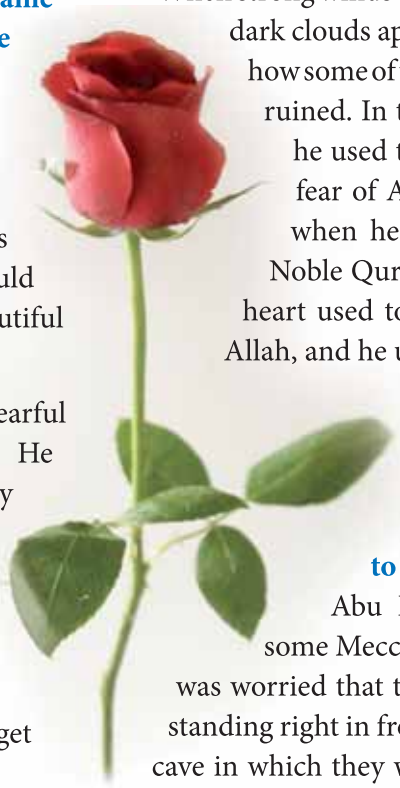
Our beloved Prophet was very fearful of disobeying Allah's commands. He always kept in his heart the worry of losing Allah's love and mercy. His heart used to shiver from the respect and love of our Almighty Lord. He would not fail in respect and obedience and used to say *"I am the one who knows.* He would not forget about the magnitude of the torment of Allah. When strong winds blew, thunder squalled or dark clouds appeared. He remembered how some of the previous nations were ruined. In these kinds of situations, he used to pray and supplicate in fear of Allah's anger. Sometimes, when he read or listened to the Noble Quran, or while praying, his heart used to shiver with the fear of Allah, and he used to burst into tears.

Our Prophet trusted Allah's help and mercy at all times and submitted himself to Allah. Our Prophet and Abu Bakr were hiding from some Meccan polytheists. Abu Bakr was worried that the polytheists who were standing right in front of the entrance of the cave in which they were hiding would harm

Our beloved Prophet said:

"O Allah! You are my Lord. There is no deity that is worthy of worship other than You. You have created me. I am your servant. I still keep my promise and vow that I gave you in the eternal past as much as I am able to. I seek refuge in You from my faults. I thankfully acknowledge Your blessings in Your presence, and confess my sins. Forgive me! There is no doubt that You are the only One who can forgive sins."

(Bukhari, Daawat, 2)

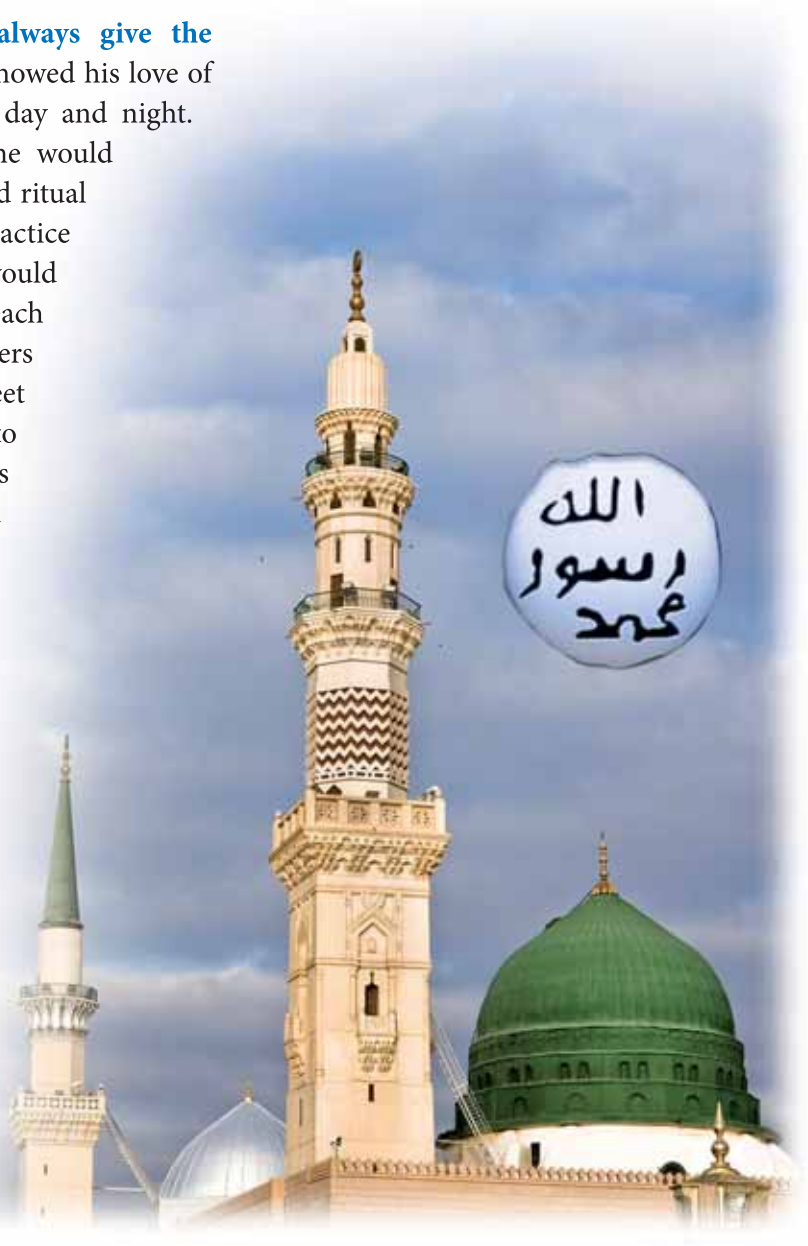


the Prophet. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said to Abu Bakr *"Don't worry! Allah is with us."*

While the Prophet knew that Allah's anger is severe, he never lost hope in His mercy. **He lived a balanced life between fear and hope.** He used to say that he also would reach salvation only by Allah's mercy even though he is a prophet. He said that *"Prayer is the essence of religion"* (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 1) and used to pray to Allah at every chance he got to make him a good servant to Him. He used to ask for His help, mercy, and forgiveness.

Our Prophet would always give the most thanks to Allah. He showed his love of Allah by worshipping him day and night. In order to thank Allah, he would not just practice the required ritual duties, but he also would practice supererogatory acts. He would fast on certain days of each month and perform prayers during the nights. Even his feet sometimes used to swell due to standing up for long periods of time. Once it was asked to him that "Even though his past and present sins are forgiven, why he was tiring himself so much," he answered *"Should I not be a servant who thanks Allah?"* (Bukhari, Tafsir, Surah 48; 2)

Prophet Muhammad, the best examplar and leader in every subject, taught us that the real thanksgiving would be with obeying and worshipping Allah. He wanted to be a servant that always thanked. He used to pray, *"Dear Allah! Help me to remember You, be thankful for Your blessings, and worship You in the best manner!"* and recommended us to pray like this as well. **He thanked Allah both at times of difficulty and at the times of easiness.** He used to say "Alhamdulillah" for every blessing that Allah had provided and expressed what was in his heart.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ
مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ
عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا
يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
الْعَظِيمُ ۝

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

God! There is no god but He, -the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal.

No slumber can seize Him nor sleep.

His are all things in the heavens and on Earth.

Who is there can intercede in His presence expect as He permits?

He knows what (appears to His creatures as) before or after or behind them

Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He wills.

His Throne does extend over the heavens and the earth,

And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them for He is the Most High,
The Supreme (in glory.)

(Surah Al-Bakara (The Cow); 2: 255)

QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with the words in the parenthesis

(be / leaf / love / Prayer / love / (furthest) regions (of the earth) / close (to them) / hearts / Allah / their own souls)

1. "Soon will We show them our Signs in the……, and in….."
2. "He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a …. falls but with His knowledge."
3. "Verily, when He intends a thing, His Command is, "…..", and it is!"
4. "But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for….."
5. "Say: "If you do ……Allah, Follow me: Allah will ……..you and forgive you your sins.
6. "Those who believe, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do …….find satisfaction."
7. "……is the essence of worship."
8. "When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed……: I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me."



Let's Test Ourselves

1. **Which one of the following would give Muslim the sweetness of faith when it was observed?**

   a. To love Allah and His Messenger more than anyone else.

   b. To love for the sake of Allah.

   c. To see abandoning the religion as dangerous as burning in fire.

   d. All of the above.

2. **Which one of the following statements about about is wrong?**

   a. It is not necessary to have a certain place and time to pray.

   b. It is necessary to make ablution before offering a supplication.

   c. It is necessary to make ablution before offering a supplication.

   d. Let's pray when we have plenty so that our Lord will help us through difficult times.

3. **Which one of the following cannot be said about our Prophet's love for Allah?.**

   a. He used to recite the name of Allah all the time.

   b. He aimed to gain the consent of Allah in all of his acts and words.

   c. He was the leader (imam) of his Noble Companions during the five daily prayers.

   d. He always prayed and worshiped Allah in gratitude.

4. **Which one of the following is not among the benefits of believing in Allah?**

   a. It makes us loved by all humans.

   b. It gives us an endless feeling of confidence.

   c. It makes us act with mercy and compassion towards other creatures.

   d. It makes us control our behaviors.

5. Which one of the below cannot be said to express the existence and oneness of Allah?

a. Every piece of art has an artist who produced it. There is a creator of this universe, too.

b. The perfect form and system in the human body cannot happen by itself. This proves the existence of a creator.

c. It is impossible for the sun to rise and set, the night and day and seasons to occur by themselves. The perfect system in the universe is proof of a creator.

d. Everybody has the right to choose good or evil.

THE ANSWER KEY

Fill in the blanks with the words in parenthesis.

1. their own souls - (furthest) regions (of the earth)
2. leaf
3. be
4. Allah
5. Love / love
6. hearts
7. Prayer
8. close (to them)

Kendimizi Deneyelim

1. d
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. d







THE SYMBOL OF GOODNESS AND BEAUTY

BELIEVING IN THE ANGELS

- *Visible and Invisible Creatures*
- *Believing in the Angels*
- *The Characteristics and Duties of the Angels*
- *The Benefits of Believing in the Angels*
- *The Characteristics of Satan*
- *The Prophet and the Angels*





THE VOICE OF THE ANGEL

Halil was a smart and careful child who enjoyed thinking. He looked for the causes of the events that he witnessed or thoughts that would cross his mind. And most of the time, he would come up with conclusions that were good and beneficial.

One day, he said to his father:

- Father, when I see my mother working hard for us and getting tired, I become so sad.

At those times, I want to help my mother. And I do help my mother. But sometimes, even though I know that my mother needs my help, I want to go out and play, and I do just that. I do not understand how I can act this way since I love my mother very much.

His father was used to Halil asking questions like these. He liked his son's sincerity by talking openly without hiding his feelings. He said to Halil:

- This is not something specific to you my son, everybody is like this.

- Is that right? Actually, I am very happy. I was blaming myself thinking that I was the only one like this. However, I wonder what the reason for this is. Aren't these conflicting thoughts?

- They sure are. Humans think opposing thoughts such as these because they are under the influence of two opposing beings whom they can not see. The first of these beings are the angels and the other one is Satan.

- What do the angels do, father?

- Angels give us good advice. They say: Be good! Perform these acts of kindness! They do not want us to perform any bad acts. If we do something bad, the angels become very sad.

- What does Satan do?

- He suggests that we do bad things. He wants us to say bad words and hurt others' feelings. He wants us to disobey Allah's commands. He is happy when we disobey the elderly and do not listen our parents.

- But father! When I want to do something good or bad, I do not hear a voice that says "do this!" or "don't do that!"

- The voices of the angel and Satan do not sound like human voices. They influence our minds directly. Let's work on the example that you gave me.

Whenever you think, "My mother is tiring herself too much. She does not have anyone to help her; I want her to relax a little bit. She works hard for us. Let me help her a little!" you should know that this is the voice of an angel. While you see your mother like that, if you think:

"Why do I care if my mother gets tired? I am in no position to help anyone right now," you should know that Satan is trying to fool you. Sometimes, Satan works hard and makes you act the way that you never would want and makes you think such thoughts as:

"If she is working hard, she is doing it for her home. Everybody is doing their part. What can I do if she gets tired?" At that time, we should pull ourselves together and without falling into Satan's trap.

In order for you to differentiate between the voice of the angel and the voice of Satan, I will give you another clue.

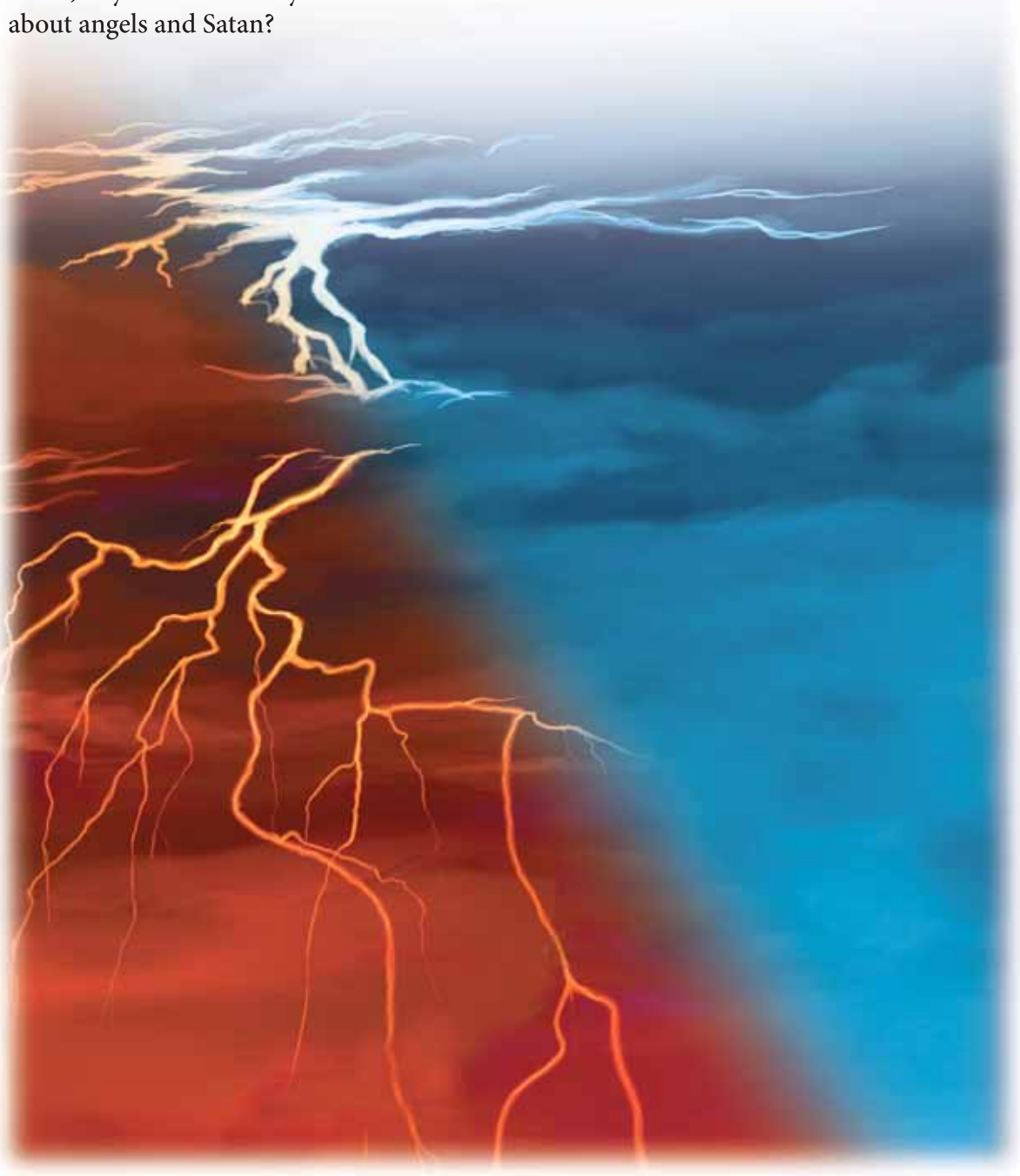
If we ever want to do the things that Allah or our Prophet wants us to do, we should know that we feel this way due to the influence of the angels. If we feel the opposite, this is because of Satan's influence. Satan wants us to distance ourselves from religion, in other words, the good and nice things in life.

- Why can't we see the angels and Satan, my father? Can you tell me more about angels and Satan?

- We cannot see them since their forms are different from ours. I will explain this some other time since I have to go to work now.

Halil thanked his father and started to think about the angels and Satan…

M. Yaşar KANDEMİR



VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE BEINGS

Allah has created all of the creatures and regulated the whole universe. Almighty Allah has created an infinite number of creatures that are both visible and invisible to our eyes.

We can see and comprehend some of the creatures with our sensory organs. However, not all creatures can be sensed by us. There are some creatures that we cannot see and comprehend.

In order to acknowledge the existence of something, we do not have to see it. There are many things whose existence we acknowledge even if we cannot see them. For example, we cannot see our intelligence, love, mercy, and happiness. However, we all accept their existence. We also cannot see electricity traveling through the wires, or the sound waves in the air. These examples show us that the creatures are not just the ones that are visible to our eyes.

Humans, animals, plants, mountains, oceans, trees, flowers, the Moon, the Sun, and the stars are all examples of visible creatures. The angels and Satan are among the invisible creatures. The reason why we cannot see them is because our eyes are not made to see them. We cannot see the angels and Satan, but we believe that they exist. This is because our Lord informed us about the existence of angels and Satan in the Noble Quran.



BELIEVING IN THE ANGELS

The angels were created under Allah's order to perform certain duties. We cannot sense angels with our sensory organs and cannot see them with our eyes. For this reason, we can get information about them only from the Noble Quran and our Prophet.

Believing in the existence of angels is one of the principles of faith in Islam. Denying the existence of angels is the same as indirectly denying the divine revelation, prophets, and the books that are revealed to the prophets, and the religion that they announce. That is because Allah had revealed His messages to prophets via angels. Therefore, those who believe in the divine revelation, prophets, and books should also believe in angels.

Characteristics of the Angels

The angels have characteristics that are different from humans and other creatures. The angels are created from divine light. They are very strong and powerful. They can move extremely fast. For this reason, they can travel long distances in short periods of time.

Angels are creatures that fulfill the duties that Allah commands them to do. They are always busy obeying and worshipping Allah. They do not disobey the commands of Allah. They do not commit any sins by violating any of the prohibitions of Allah. They never harm any creature.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Angels were created from divine light, jinn from fire, and Adam from earth."

(Muslim, Zuhd, 10)

They do not have a gender. They do not eat, drink, or sleep. They never get tired from working and worshipping.

The Duties of Angels

The duty of the angels is that they be servants of Allah and fulfill His commands. Angels fulfill the commands of Allah precisely. While they fulfill their duties, they do not get bored, weary, or tired. They continuously worship Allah and never disobey Him.

The main duty of angels are worshipping Allah and obeying Him. Apart from these main duties, there are some angels that are appointed for special duties. The most important of these are the four high-ranking angels.

Gabriel (Jibra'il): This angel was given the responsibility of delivering the revelations of Allah to the prophets. At the same time, Gabriel delivers the messages and commands of Allah to other angels.

The Angel of Death (Azrael): With the permission of Allah, Azrael's responsibility is to take the souls at the time of death. For this reason, this angel is called "the angel of death" in the Noble Quran.



Michael (Mikail): This angel is in charge of the formation of natural phenomena like the growth of vegetation and creatures´ daily sustenance.

Raphael (Israfil): This angel has been in charge of the task of blowing the trumpet (al-Sur) on Doomsday (al-Qiyamah) to let everyone know that the Hereafter has started.

Apart from these four high-ranked angels, there are many others to whom are appointed special jobs. Some of them are as follows:

Kiram'an Katibin: They are the angels that record our good and evil deeds. They are the angels that are located on the right and left shoulders of humans. The angel on the right shoulder records our nice words, acts, and good behaviors. The angel on the left shoulder records our bad words, works, and acts. When it comes the time for us to be held accountable for what we have done, these angels will be our witnesses.

Angels of Hafazah: They are the protective angels. They are appointed to protect humans that take refuge in and trust in Allah. They protect humans from accidents and trouble with the permission of Allah.

Al-Munkar and Al-Nakir: They are the questioning angels. These are two angels that



are responsible for questioning us in our graves. They will ask questions such as "Who is your Lord? Which book do you believe in?" and will treat us according to our answers.

Other angels: Other than the ones explained above, there are many other angels appointed to fulfill many other tasks. For example, some angels inspire humans' hearts towards the right path and Truth, while some angels record the greetings (salawat) that are sent to our Prophet, and some angels carry out the duties regarding Paradise and Hell.

Allah the Exalted says:

"But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you, Kind and honourable,- Writing down (your deeds): They know (and understand) all that you do."

(Surah Al-Infitar (The Cleaving, Bursting Apart); 82: 10-12)

Allah the Exalted says:

"... angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded."

(Surah Al-Tahrim (Banning, Prohibition); 66: 6)

Angels Pray for Those Who Visit the Sick

One morning, the cousin and son-in-law of our Prophet, Ali, met with his friend Sa'id ibn Ifaqa. By holding his hand, Ali said:

"Sa'id! Today, let's go to visit a sick person. Hassan is sick. Let's visit him."

They hit the road. When they reached Hassan's house, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (r.a.) was there too.

Ali asked:

- O Abu Musa! Did you come with the intention of visiting a sick person, or did you just stop by for something else? Abu Musa said:

- I came to visit him because he is sick.

Upon this, Ali related the good news that he heard from the Messenger of Allah:

"If one Muslim visits in the morning another Muslim who is sick, seventy thousand angels prays for him and asks for his forgiveness until the evening. If he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels will pray for him until the morning. Also, for this person, there will be fruits collected in the heaven."

(Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 2)



Angels Pray for Those Who Fast

The Prophet who was careful about his neighborly relations used to visit his neighbors as much as he could. Once, he blessed the house of Ummu Umara who is also called Lady Nasiba and famous for her bravery in the Uhud War. Ummu Umara who was so pleased with the Prophet's visit prepared something to eat right away. She offered the food to our Prophet and the others who were with him. Our Prophet wanted the host to eat from the food as well and offered some food by saying:

- Come on, you eat too! Ummu Umare said:

- I am fasting.

Since Ummu Umara was performing a supererogatory fasting, she could not join the supper. Upon this, the Prophet gave us the good news,

"If some food is eaten next to someone who is fasting, angels pray for the person who is fasting until others finish their food or become full."

(Tirmidhi, Sawm, 66)



THE BENEFITS OF BELIEVING IN THE ANGELS

BELIEVING IN THE ANGELS

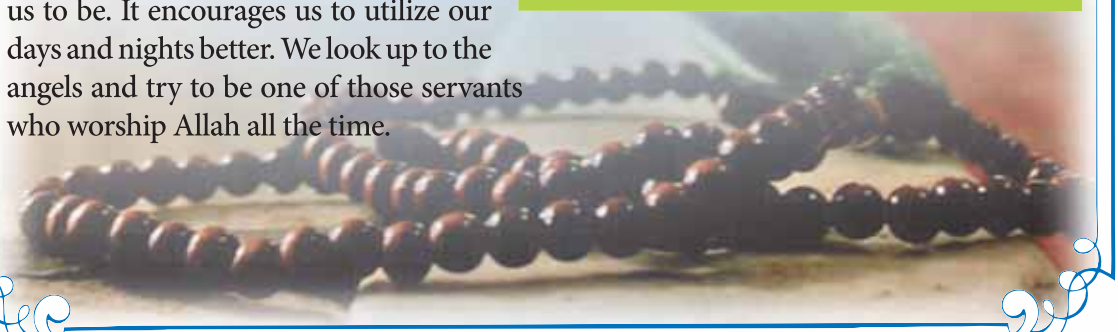
- Increases our consciousness of servanthood and gives us the love of worshipping.
- Keeps us away from wrong acts.
- Corrects our manners.
- Encourages us to work and gives us positive energy.

Angels continuously worship and obey Allah. Some of them are always in prostration and others are in a bowing position. They remember Allah without stopping and ask for the forgiveness of the believers. **Believing in angels that have these characteristics makes us become more conscious of our servitude for Allah and encourages us to worship Him.** It encourages us to ask for His forgiveness for our faults and sins and to be the persons He wants us to be. It encourages us to utilize our days and nights better. We look up to the angels and try to be one of those servants who worship Allah all the time.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Even those who are in His (very) Presence are not too proud to serve Him, nor are they (ever) weary (of His service): They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or intermit."

(Surah Al-Anbiya (The Prophets); 21: 19-20)

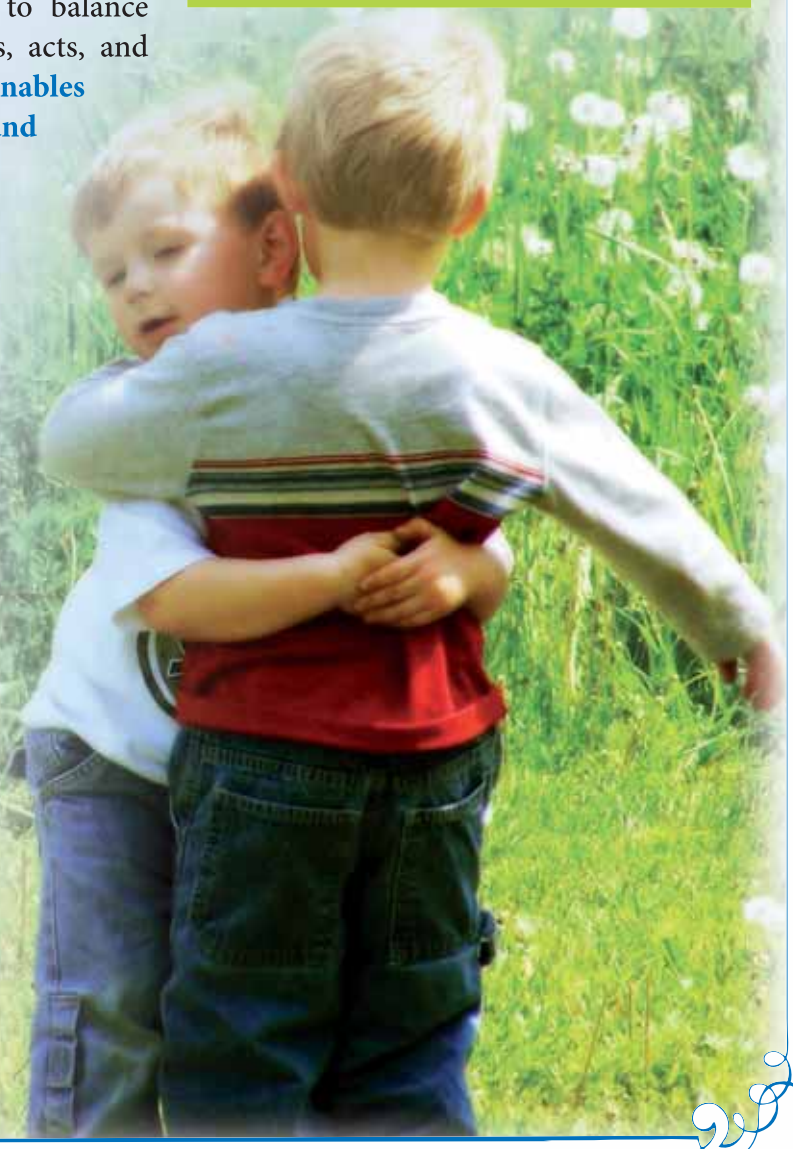


Believing in Kiram'an Katibin angels who are on our right and left shoulders and record our acts, and also in al-Munkar and al-Nakir angels who will question us in our graves, will keep our feeling to be responsible in Hereafter alive. It reminds us that we will be accountable for our acts one day. Believing in angels as a Muslim makes it easy for us to balance and control our words, acts, and relations with others. **It enables us to shape ourselves and stay away from wrong doings.** Believing in angels makes us humans "like angels." In order not to bother the angels that stays with us, we stay away from bad and mean words. We do not backbite or tease anyone. We avoid being unjust and do not act rude to anybody.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Behold, two (guardian angels) appointed to learn (his doings) learn (and noted them), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready (to note it)."

(Surah Qaf; 50: 17-18)



Angels inspire us to do good, beautiful, righteous, and truthful acts. They get happy from each of our good acts that we do by obeying our Almighty Lord's and our Prophet's commands. They pray to Allah for our forgiveness. When we act nicely for the sake of Allah such as when we are nice to our parents, when we help our friends and pray for them, when we visit our relatives or the sick, when we perform our prayers, when we recite the Noble Quran, or when we seek knowledge, angels pray for us and ask Allah to forgive us. Knowing and believing that our good deeds are acknowledged and appreciated makes us feel better. **It encourages us to act even better; it corrects our manners.**

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Both Satan and Angels inspire some feelings and thoughts into humans' hearts. The job of Satan is to invite humans to wrong doing, incline them to do things which turn out to be bad and harmful at the end, and keep them away from the truth. The job of an angel is to invite humans to truth, to beautiful, and to goodness, and to keep them away from wrongdoing. Whoever hears a voice in them that invites him to goodness, he should know that this is the voice of an angel. He should listen to this voice immediately and thank Allah. Whoever hears a voice that invites them to wrongdoings, he should know this is the voice of Satan. He should not listen to this voice and take shelter in Allah's protection."

Tirmidhî, Tafsir, 3.



Allah is the One who gives the energy to work. Therefore, every success comes from Him. Our Lord is always with those who are good and work hard. That is because, He loves His servants' work and gives what those servants ask for. When we intend to do something good, the Almighty Allah helps us. The angels that He appointed stay with us and they inspire nice and good thoughts. They are happy when we perform beneficial and nice acts. They pray to Allah for our success. They help us with the permission of our Lord in difficult times. In the Noble Quran, we are informed that five thousand angels were appointed to help Muslims, to give the good news of victory, and to give moral support in the Battle of Badr. Believing that Almighty Allah will send angels to help us in our hard times **encourages us to keep working and gives us positive energy.** We do not feel exhausted and hopeless when we face hardships.

Allah the Exalted says:

"In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is Allah, and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): "Fear you not!" (they suggest), "Nor grieve! but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which you were promised! "We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall you have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall you have all that you ask for!"

(Surah Fussilat (signs) Spelled Out); 41: 30-31)



ANGELS PRAY FOR BELIEVERS

Angels pray for Muslims to be protected from wrongdoings and sins and to reach goodness. Our Almighty Lord informs us about this fact as follows:

"Those who sustain the Throne (of Allah) and those around it Sing Glory and Praise to their Lord; believe in Him; and implore Forgiveness for those who believe: "Our Lord! Your Reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in Repentance, and follow Your Path; and preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire!

And grant, our Lord! that they enter the Gardens of Eternity, which You have promised to them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity! For You are the Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom.

And preserve them from (all) ills; and any whom You do preserve from ills that Day,- on them will You have bestowed Mercy indeed: and that will be truly (for them) the highest Achievement"."

(Surah Mumin (or Ghafir), The Believer (or The Forgiver (god))); 40: 7-9)



Do you want to receive the prayers of angels?

Our beloved Prophet said:

"The invocation said by a Muslim for his Muslim brother who is not with him at the time will be granted. As the Muslim invokes for his brother in religion, the appointed angel that is with him invokes saying as: 'May Allah accept your prayer! May the same be given to you, too.'"

(Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 3)

Angels Say 'Amin' to Our Prayers

Our beloved Prophet advised us to pray in every chance, and gave us the good news that angels say 'amin' to all of our prayers. He advised us to ask for good and nice things from Allah:

"When you pray, pray for only nice and good things for yourself. That is because angels say 'amin' to your prayers."

(Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 3)

Angels Pray to Those Who Seek Knowledge

Our beloved Prophet informs us that angels especially pray for believers who seek knowledge and try to practice what they have learned:

"If someone travels to seek knowledge, Allah makes the way to Paradise easy for him. Angels get very pleased from this act. They take those who seek knowledge under their wings. Everything on the heaven and earth and even fish in the oceans pray to Allah for the forgiveness of that scholar."

(Abu Dawud, Ilm, 1)



ANGELS, SATAN, AND MAN

Man had not been created yet. Allah wanted to create Man to know and worship Him. He said to angels:

- I will create a vicegerent on the earth. The angels said:

- Are you going to create someone that will cause problems and shed blood, O my Lord? We always glorify You and obey You. Allah said:

- I know things that you do not know. The angels silenced. Then they told each other:

- For sure our Lord knows everything, and does not create things without a reason.

Then, Allah said to them:

- O my angels! I will create the man out of earth, shape it, and give him life. Show him the respect that he deserves and prostrate to him by fulfilling my command. The angels said all at once:

- O our Almighty Lord! We obey Your commands and fulfill them.

Satan did not like this command of Allah. Satan was full of himself, being haughty, and considering himself to be superior to the other creatures that Allah had created.

Finally, Allah had created the man. By obeying Allah's command, the angels showed respect to Adam and prostrated before him. Satan became haughty and rebelled. He did not prostrate before Adam. By this, he disobeyed Allah. The Almighty Allah said to Satan:

- Why did you not listen to me? What is stopping you from prostrating? Satan said:

- You have created me from fire and him from earth.

I am superior to him. Upon this, the Almighty Allah dismissed Satan from His presence.

Later, Allah put Adam into Paradise and created Eve as his spouse. He said to Adam:

- O Adam! You and your spouse can stay in Paradise. You can eat from everything as much as you want. However, do not come close to this tree; otherwise you will be among those who ruin themselves.

The Almighty Allah gave permission to eat from everything else except from one tree. This way, He was teaching man to control his desires and strengthen his self-control.

Adam and Eve were living in Paradise in peace. They did not know what getting tired or scared meant. They were eating whatever they desired. The Almighty Allah warned Adam about Satan.

- O Adam! For sure Satan is your and your spouse's enemy. Be careful, so he won't lead you out of Paradise. Otherwise, you will be sad. If you stay in Paradise, you neither will feel hungry or naked. In Paradise, you won't stay under the sun or feel thirsty.

Adam and Eve lived in Paradise for some time. However, Satan was busy and was devising some evil plans. Once he came close to them and said:

- O Adam! Do you want me to show you the tree of eternity and the eternal kingdom?

Adam looked at Satan and said:

- What is it? Let me see it.

When Satan showed the tree that Allah had forbidden, Adam did not believe him and sent him away. However, Satan would not quit. He came to them one more time and whispered:

- Do you know why your Lord prohibited you from eating off this tree? If you eat the fruits it bears, you can stay here forever. In



order for this not to happen, he prohibited you from eating its fruits. Think well, and eat from this tree now!

Adam and Eve did not listen to Satan. They went away from there. Satan followed them. By promising in the name of Allah, Satan said:

- Believe me, for sure I am giving you good advice.

When Satan promised in the name of Allah, Adam and Eve said to each other:

- It is not possible for someone to promise in the name of Allah while lying. Maybe he is telling the truth. Then, they started to eat from the tree that Allah had prohibited.

- When they ate from the tree, the cover of Paradise was removed and they became aware of their private parts. They felt so ashamed. They tried to cover themselves with the big leaves of the tree. They did not know what to do.

Allah said:

- Did I not forbid you to eat from that tree? Did I not tell you that Satan is your enemy? Why didn't you listen to my commands? Adam and Eve said:

- O my Lord! Please forgive us.

Almighty Allah said to them:

- I commanded you and you did not obey my commands.

Adam and Eve begged:

- Dear Lord! We ruined ourselves. If You do not forgive us and show mercy to us, for sure we will be among those who are lost.

Almighty Allah said to Adam:

- I gave you my biggest blessing, Paradise. I provided whatever you wished for. Was not what I gave you enough, that you had to eat from that tree?

Adam said:

- I swear I could not imagine that someone would lie and swear in the name of You.

Almighty Allah said to Adam who was begging:

- I swear that you will go to Earth and earn your life by working hard and sweating.

Then, Almighty Allah said:

- You all go to Earth. You will stay there for a while and earn your life.

Adam became so sad. He started to cry, sorrowful for what he had done. He begged:

- O Lord, please forgive me! O Lord, please forgive me!

At the end, Allah forgave Him by accepting his invocations. That is because Allah forgives those who regret what they have done and repent by asking for forgiveness. He is merciful.

(Religious Stories from Noble Quran, Sayyid Qutub – Abdullah Judah as-Sahhar)

(For the related verses in Quran see: Surah Baqara (The Cow); 2: 30-37 and Surah A'raf (The Heights); 7: 11-25)

SATAN

One of the invisible creatures is Satan. The other name of the Satan that is mentioned in the Noble Quran is Iblis. Satan was expelled from the presence of Allah since he disobeyed Allah's command and did not prostrate to the first human Adam. He was created from fire. He is the symbol of evil.

The reason for Satan's dismissal from the presence of Allah is his being arrogant and disobeying Allah's command. However, Satan became an enemy to humans, arguing that humankind was the reason for his punishment by Allah. For this reason, Satan tries every lie, trick, and cheat to prevent humans from finding the right path. Satan wants humans to sin by disobeying Allah's commands. By doing this, Satan wants to take revenge by causing Adam and his bloodline to go to Hell. Our Lord warns us of Satan's hostility and tricks:

"Verily Satan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his adherents, that they may become Companions of the Blazing Fire." (Surah Fatir; 35: 6)

Satan is not a powerful creature that we should be scared of. Satan only invokes negative feelings and thoughts in our hearts. Satan puts worry in our hearts. Satan makes bad and evil acts appear good. He tries to make us forget about Allah and the Hereafter. Whereas, we humans have intelligence and self-control. With these characteristics, we are more powerful than Satan. Even though Satan's form is different and invisible, he does not have the power to push us to do wrong. Satan cannot force us to do wrong. Allah the Exalted informs us of this fact as follows:

Allah the Exalted says:

"They bowed down except Iblis. He was one of the Jinns, and he broke the Command of his Lord..."

(Surah Kahf (The Cave); 18: 50)

"No authority has he over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over those only, who take him as their patron and who join partners with Allah." (Surah Nahl (The Bee); 16: 99-100)

If we use our intellects and self-control, without becoming influenced by the feelings and thoughts that Satan invokes within us, we will not perform bad and evil acts. Thus, we would win the struggle between Satan and humankind. However, we should not forget that it is not enough to win this struggle once. This is a struggle that will last until the end of our lives.



The Confession of Satan

And Satan will say when the matters are conducted and decided in the Hereafter: "It was Allah Who gave you a promise of Truth: I too promised, but I failed in my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to call you but you listened to me: then reproach not me, but reproach your own souls. I cannot listen to your cries, nor can ye listen to mine. I reject your former act in associating me with Allah. For wrong-doers there must be a grievous penalty."

(Surah Abraham; 14: 22)

Allah the Exalted says:

"And if (at any time) an incitement to discord is made to you by the Evil One, seek refuge in Allah. He is the One Who hears and knows all things."

(Surah Fussilat ((signs) Spelled Out); 41: 36)

I TAKE REFUGEE IN ALLAH FROM SATAN

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn, From the mischief of created things; From the mischief of Darkness as it overspreads; From the mischief of those who practise secret arts; And from the mischief of the envious one as he practices envy.

(Surah Falaq (The Daybreak, Dawn), 113: 1-5)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King (or Ruler) of Mankind, The Allah (for judge) of Mankind, From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper), (The same) who whispers into the hearts of Mankind, Among Jinns and among men."

(Surah An-Nas (Mankind); 114: 1-6)

The Noble Companion of Our Prophet Whose Coffin was Carried by the Angels

Salama bin Aslam (r.a.) narrates:

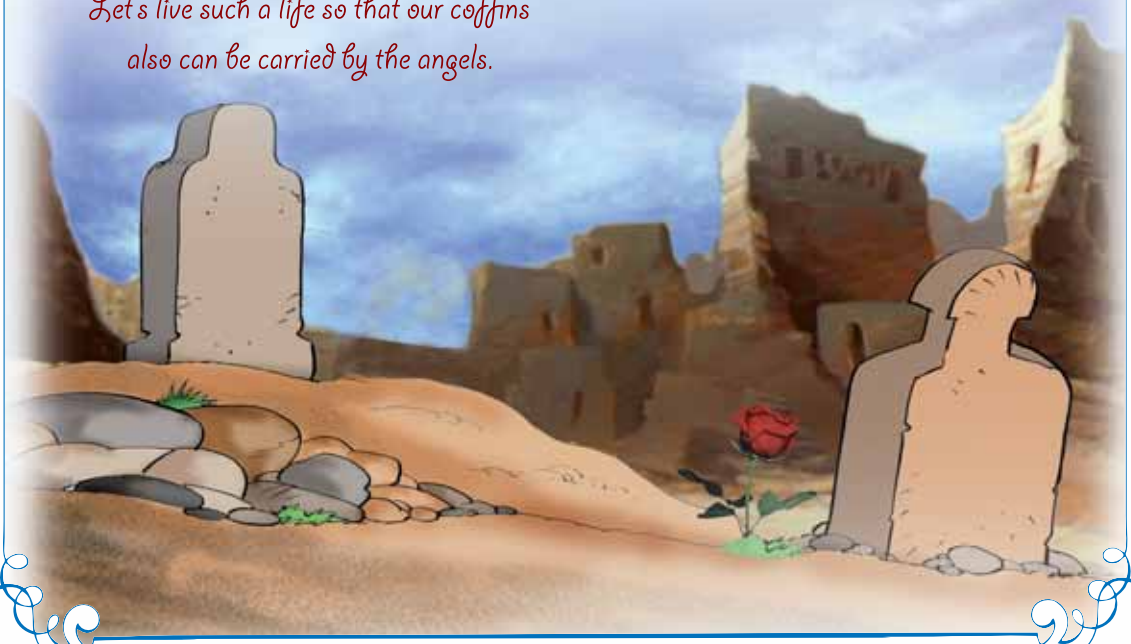
One of the beloved friends of the Prophet, Sa'd bin Muaz (r.a.), had passed away. When the Prophet heard the bad news of Sa'd, he went to his house right away with his friends. Prophet was in front of us and we were following him. We came to the door, and our Prophet entered into the room. There was no one else in the room except the coffin of Sa'd bin Muaz. However, our beloved Prophet was walking carefully as if trying not to step on anyone. When he saw that I was trying to enter the room, he signaled me with his hands to stay where I was. I stopped and signaled the others who were behind me to stop.

When the Prophet stepped out, I said "O Messenger of Allah! I did not see anyone. However, you were walking as if you were trying to get through many people's shoulders." the Prophet said: "In order to carry the coffin of Sa'd, seventy thousand angels that never came to Earth before have come. I could not find anywhere to sit. One of the angels opened up a place for me to sit, so I was able to sit."

Our beloved Prophet was so happy due to the rank that Sa'd b. Muaz (r.a) had gained, he often said referring to him "O Aba Amr! How nice for you! O Aba Amr! How nice for you! O Aba Amr! How nice for you!"

(Ibn Sa'd, III, 428-430)

Let's live such a life so that our coffins also can be carried by the angels.



THE PROPHET AND THE ANGELS

The angels that showed respect to Adam show respect to every Muslim that comes from his bloodline. They too love the good people that Almighty Allah loves. Therefore, angels love and show respect to prophets the most.

Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was the last Prophet that Allah the Exalted sent to humanity. He was chosen by Allah to be the most beautiful example to humanity. He had good manners that can make angels envious. Allah loved him and made his servants love him as well. Angels also loved the Prophet since his childhood and gave the good news of his prophethood to each other.

The intense communication of the Messenger of Allah with angels started with the revelation of the Noble Quran. Our Prophet was around forty years old. He used to retreat for a few nights into a cave called Hira. He would think about Allah and ponder deeply about the universe and the situation of humanity. In one of the nights that he was staying in the cave, Allah appointed Gabriel, the messenger angel. And Gabriel came to our Prophet towards the morning. Gabriel wanted our Prophet to read. Our Prophet told Gabriel that he did not know how to read. Gabriel repeated that he must read. This request was repeated for a few times. Upon receiving the same answer from our Prophet, Gabriel recited the first verses of Quran. After receiving the first revelation, our beloved Prophet came out of the cave and saw that Gabriel (a.s) had covered the whole sky. For twenty three year after this first revelation, Gabriel came to our Prophet many times, and revealed the verses and chapters of the Noble Quran, in other words, the messages of Allah the Exalted.

Every year, the Prophet used to recite from his memory to Gabriel the verses that were revealed until then in the month of Ramadan. In the year that he would pass away, he had recited the whole Quran twice and recited it together with Gabriel.

Gabriel (a.s.) sometimes appeared to our Prophet in human form. One day, while our beloved Prophet was with his Companions, Gabriel came in white, clean clothes. He asked questions about faith, Islam, benevolence, and the day of judgment. After receiving the answers, he disappeared. Our



Prophet informed his Companions that he was Gabriel and came to teach them some knowledge about religion.

In order to make our Prophet feel better and support him, Allah the Exalted used to send angels to him in his difficult times. The best example of this had been experienced during the Migration to Medina (Al-Hijrah). The Meccan polytheists came right in front of the cave that our Prophet was hiding in. If they had leaned forward just a bit more than they already had, they would have seen him. Allah the Exalted bestowed upon our Prophet's heart peace and tranquility. He supported him with invisible armies of angel.

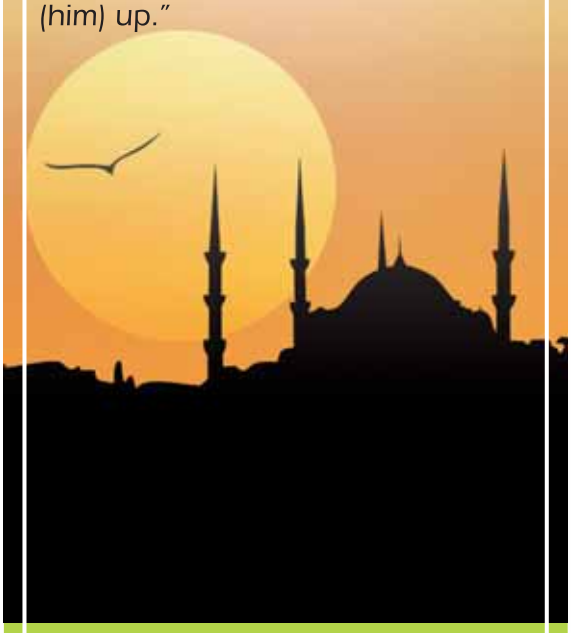
Allah the Exalted supported our beloved Prophet and his Companions with armies of angels in many wars including the Battle of Badr. In the Battle of Hunayn, when Muslims were in a very difficult situation, Allah sent armies of angels and helped the Muslims.

Our beloved Prophet used to say that angels come to places where people act according to Allah's commands. He used to inform us that the angels would come to places where knowledge is sought, the Noble Quran is recited, Allah is worshipped, and good deeds are performed. Our Prophet gave the good news that angels pray to those who are present in the above mentioned places, and brought peace and happiness to their hearts. He would advise that we stay away from acts that will bother the angels and he too paid attention not to perform those acts. Our prophet did not want those who ate smelly foods such as onion or garlic to enter prayer rooms until their breath smelled nice. He expressed that humans and angels should not be bothered.

Our beloved Prophet had been sent as a blessing to the whole universe. Our Lord, who glorified our Prophet with His mercy and content, made the angels love him as well and wanted the angels to recite the supplication that asked Allah to send blessings to Him (salawat). For this reason, angels pray and appeal for mercy and wish for his level to be elevated. There are even angels appointed to determine the believers who recite salawat to the Prophet and deliver them to him.

Allah the Exalted says:

"...truly Allah is his Protector, and Gabriel, and (every) righteous one among those who believe,- and furthermore, the angels - will back (him) up."



(Surah At-Tahrim (Banning, Prohibition); 66: 4)

THE HELP THAT COMES WITH THE ANGELS

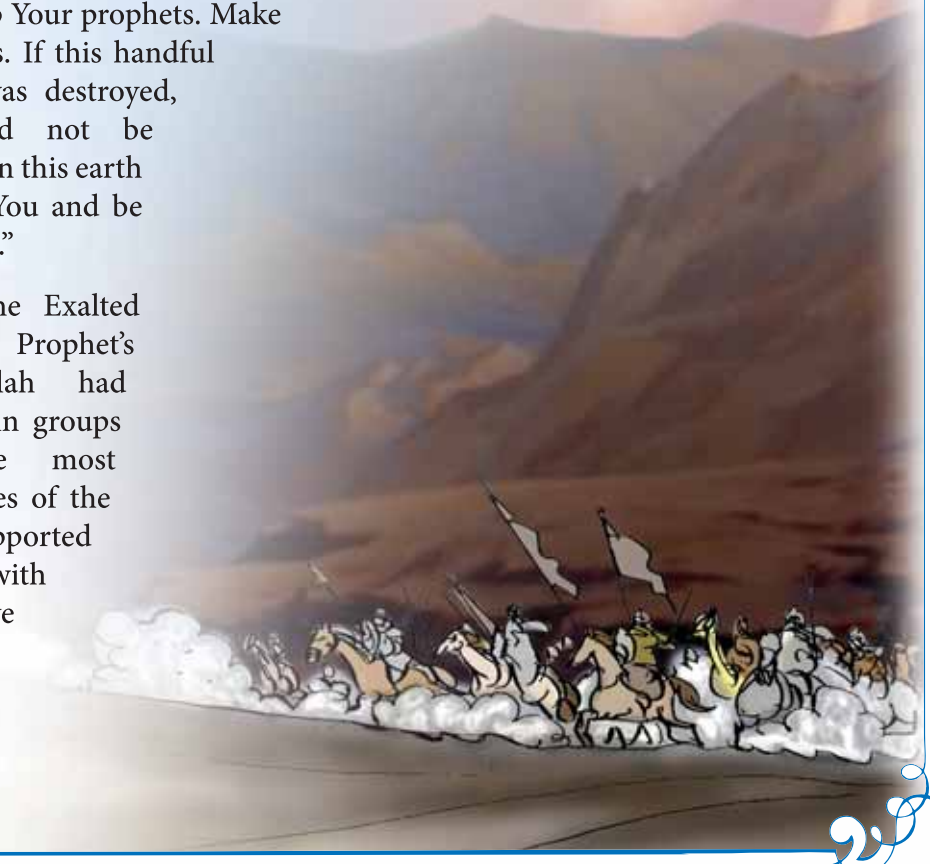
The Battle of Badr was the first battle between the Meccan unbelievers and the Muslims. The number of pagan soldiers that came to Badr was three times more than the number of soldiers in the Muslim army. They were planning to destroy the Muslims all together.

The battle had started and the two armies were fighting. The Muslims were fighting for their lives. Our beloved Prophet raised his hands to Heaven and was repeatedly praying as follows: "Dear Lord! Here is the tribe of the Quraysh and with all its power it's trying to destroy Your religion. They are challenging You. They are denying Your Prophet. O Allah! Please fulfill Your promise that You will help Your prophets. Make us victorious. If this handful of people was destroyed, there would not be anyone left on this earth to worship You and be Your servant."

Allah the Exalted granted our Prophet's prayer. Allah had sent angels in groups during the most difficult times of the battle. He supported the Muslim with a total of five thousand angels. The Muslims won the battle. Our Almighty Lord mentions in the Noble Quran the support He sent with angels:

"Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were a contemptible little force…Allah made it but a message of hope for you, and an assurance to your hearts: (in any case) there is no help except from Allah. The Exalted, the Wise."

(Surah Al-i Imran (The Family Of 'Imran), 3: excerpt from verses 123-126)



Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send your blessings on him, and salute him with all respect."

(Surah Al-Ahzab (The Clans, The Coalition, The Combined Forces); 33: 56)

Let us pray for the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) status to be elevated in the presence of Allah, just as the angels do. Let us send our most beautiful and sincere greetings by entrusting them to the wings of the angels with divine light.

The supplication below is called Salah Al-Ummiyyah:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدِنِ النَّبِيِّ
الْاُمِّيِّ و عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَصَحْبِهٖ وَسَلِّمْ

Allahumma salli ala sayyidina Muhammadin Nabiyy'il-ummiyyi wa ala alihi wa sahbihi wa sallim.

O Allah! Please send blessings and greetings to our illiterate Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), His family and His companions.

AMEEN

QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with the words in parenthesis

(amin / Satan / record / angel / enemy / authority / Satan / partners / word / angels / enemy)

1. "There are two angels who ....., located at the right and left shoulders of everyone. They watch humans and record every …. they say right away."

2. "Verily ……. is an enemy to you: so treat him as an ….. He only invites his adherents, that they may become Companions of the Blazing Fire."

3. "Satan has no …….. over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is over only those, who take him as patron and who associate ……with Allah."

4. "When you pray, pray only for nice and good things, because ……say ……..to your prayers."

5. Whoever hears a voice in them that invites him to goodness, he should know that this is the voice of an ……. He should listen to this voice and thank Allah. Whoever hears a voice that invites them to wrongdoings, he should know this is the voice of ……. He should not listen to this voice and take shelter in Allah's protection."



Let's Test Ourselves

1- Which one of the characteristics of angels is wrong?

a) They do not eat or drink.

b) They do not sleep.

c) They are neither male nor female.

d) They have the ability to disobey Allah.

2- Which one of the following is not among the duties of angels?

a) To be an example to humans

b) To protect humans

c) To pray for believers

d) To carry messages to the prophets

3-

I- Increases our consciousness of being servants of Allah

II- Encourages us to be more hard working

III- Keeps us away from wrongdoings

IV- Purifies our manners

Which one of the above is among the benefits of believing in the angels?

a) I-II-IV b) I-III-IV

c) I-II-IV d) I-II-III-IV

4-

I- Micheal (Mikail)

II- Rapheal (Israfil)

III- Al-Munkar and Al-Nakir

IV- Gabriel (Jibra'il)

V- Azrael (Azrail)

VI- Yunus (Jonah)

Which one of the above are not among the four high-ranking angels?

a) I -IV b) II-VI

c) III-VI d) IV-V

5- Often when we want to do nice and good deeds, we think of some counter thoughts. Satan and angels invoke thoughts within us. Which one of the following comes from Satan?

a) By doing this, you will feel peace and relief in your heart.

b) You will be a good example to others.

c) It won't benefit you in this world.

d) You will earn the love and divine gifts of Allah.

ANSWER KEY

Fill in the blanks with the words in the parenthesis.

1. record / word
2. Satan / enemy
3. authority / partners
4. angels / amin
5. angel / Satan

Let's Test Ourselves

1. d 2. a 3. d 4. c 5. c







OUR GUIDE IN LIFE

FAITH IN THE BOOKS OF ALLAH

- *People Need Revelation*
- *Divine Books*
- *The things that We Gain from Believing in Divine Books*
- *Our Book: The Noble Qur'an*
- *Our Prophet and the Holy Qur'an*





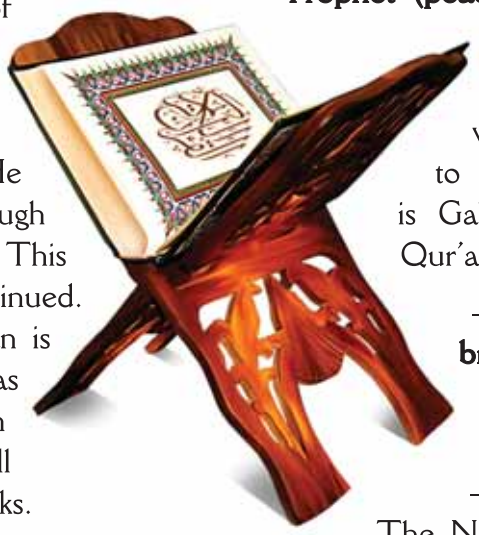
PUT ON YOUR WINGS OF IMAGINATION

Bakr approached his father who was reciting the Qur'an. Pointing at the Noble Qur'an, he asked to his father:

"Daddy! I know the Qur'an is the word of Allah, but I want to know more about it. Would you tell me about the Qur'an?"

His father was very happy to hear Bakr's request. So he began to describe it:

"The Noble Qur'an, my son, is the sacred book of the Muslims. Allah sent people books in every epoch. In this way, He informed them concerning what He wants and expects from them. Long periods of time had passed and these books were lost. Then people began to live contrary to the orders of Allah. Our Almighty Creator always wants the goodness of His servants. This is why He sent a new book through a new messenger. This tradition routinely continued. And the Noble Qur'an is the last book Allah has sent. He also stated in the Qur'an that He will not send any more books.



— Daddy, **so the Qur'an is everybody's book, isn't it?**

— Well done my son! The Noble Qur'an is the book that all human beings from the time of our Prophet Muhammad to the Last Day have to believe in and follow.

— Daddy, **is there any saying of our Prophet in the Qur'an**?

— No, my dear son. There are only Allah's words in the Noble Qur'an. Do you know how sensitive our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was in keeping his words out of the Qur'an?

In the early days of Islam, our beloved Prophet strongly banned his words from being written down. Thus he ordered his Companions "to tear it down if there had been any writing about his words." After the danger of confusing his words with the verses of the Qur'an had passed, he allowed those who wished to write his words down.

— Daddy I wonder **how did the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) received the Qur'an**.

— There is an angel who takes Allah's commands to the prophets. His name is Gabriel. Gabriel brought the Qur'an to our Prophet.

— **How did Gabriel bring the Qur'an?** I am sure he brought it in a nice package.

— No, my smart son. The Noble Qur'an did not come down as a written book. It was sent in a special way called revelation.

— **What is revelation,** daddy?

— Revelation means to talk secretly and to whisper. It is the way that Gabriel takes God's commands to our Prophet. Gabriel used to speak the verses that he brought to our Prophet. And our Prophet

had his companions write and memorize these verses.

— "Dad! I wish we had been born at the time of our beloved Prophet. And I wish we had seen how the Qur'an was revealed. I wish we had the chance to watch his beautiful face and to listen to the Qur'an from his mouth. "

— "You may try to put on your wings of imagination and fly to those days. What do you say? Are you ready for such a trip?"

— "Yes, dad, I am ready."

— Then let's go.

Our first destination is Medina. We are going to the city of the Prophet. Close your eyes.

Here we are Now you can open your eyes. This is Medina.

Let's find our Prophet. I do not think we will have a problem finding him, for he usually spends his time in his mosque. Let's check there first.

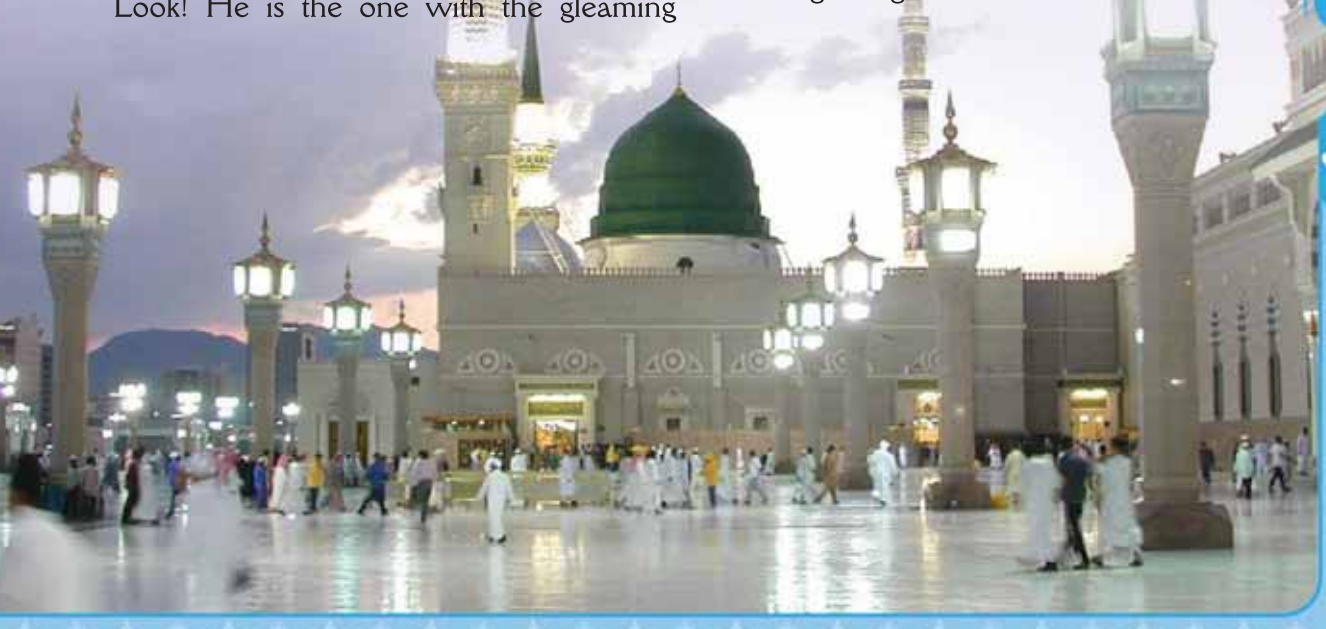
Yes, yes he is here. Look! The one sitting in the middle of the crowd is our Prophet Muhammad. Don't you recognize him? Look! He is the one with the gleaming face and black eyes. His head is a little bit big and his eyebrows arched like the new moon. He has a thick beard and curly hair. His flesh is soft and he is well-built. You have recognized him now, haven't you? This is our Prophet.

We are just in time. You were wondering how our Prophet was receiving the revelation. I think we are going to witness it together.

Look! Our Prophet's face is getting pale. Do you see the sweat drops on his forehead? Everybody is silent. Eyes are fixed to the ground. That means Gabriel (peace be upon him) is bringing a new order from Allah. This is why our Prophet looks tired and absentminded.

Look he opened his eyes. His eyes are shining. His face is illuminated by the light of new revelation.

Look at the friends of our Prophet. As you know we call them *ashab* or Companions. Companions are curious as to what the new command of Allah the Almighty is. They are excitedly waiting to hear what our Prophet is going to say. Look he is beginning to talk:



— Allah the Almighty has revealed a new verse. The scribes of the revelation should write this verse in to the surat al-Baqara. I am reciting it slowly. Listen carefully. Learn it and teach it to those who are not here.

Allah the Almighty says:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but the real righteous person is the one

* Who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and

* Gives away wealth out of love for Allah to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and the beggars and for the emancipation of the captives,

* And keeps up prayer and pays the poor-rate; and then keep their promises when they promise,

* And those who are patient in distress and affliction and in time of conflicts-- these are the people who are true (to themselves) and these are the people who guard (themselves against evil). (Baqara 2; 177)*

— You see, my son! As soon as our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gets a revelation from Allah the Almighty, he teaches it to his Companions and has them write it down. After our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) leaves, his Companions will recite these verses, memorize them, and teach them to those who have not heard them.

— Thank you dad for this imaginative journey. I felt like I was really living in those days. Well, **in how many years did it take for our Prophet to receive the entire Qur'an?**

— The first revelation was sent in 610 in Mecca. After that the revelation continued for 13 years in Mecca, for 10 years in Medina, fora total of 23 years.

— Daddy! I do not want to keep you from reciting the Noble Qur'an any longer, but I have one last question. Why did Allah not send the Qur'an all at once but instead interspersed within a 23 year period?

— To give Muslims the chance to learn it well and to learn it more easily. If it had been sent all at once, it would have been very difficult to write it down and learn it. This is why the Noble Qur'an was revealed in pieces whenever an incident happened or a question was asked. And thus the believers absorbed the new verses in their souls. They followed them in their lives and protected them from being changed.

Now it is our turn my son. We will read the Qur'an and learn Allah's commands and prohibitions. We will accept His advices. We will live in accordance with our religion and leave the Qur'an to the following generations.

Bakr has now known why his father regarded the recitation of the Qur'an so important. It was because the Qur'an is the message sent by Allah. It is a book that should be thoughtfully read, understood, and applied in our lives.

M. Yaşar Kandemir

(Quoted with some adaptations)

* From now on whenever there is a reference to a verse from the Qur'an, we will state the title of the chapter, and then the number of the chapter and finally the number of the verse/s.

PEOPLE NEED REVELATION

Our eyes are one of the most significant parts of our body. We see and gather information about the beings around us by means of our eyes. But our eyes have two limitations: The first one is that our eyes need light to see the objects. We cannot see them without light. The second one is the fact that our eyes do not have the capacity to see everything. We cannot see many minute objects, like viruses or atoms, with our bare eyes. We need to get help from some instruments such as microscope to be able to see such beings.

Our intellect is the most significant characteristic that sets us apart fromthe rest of the creation. We distinguish the good from evil with our intellect. We use it to decide whether something is harmful or not. However, like our eyes, our intellect also has some limits. Alone it is not enough to distinguish right from wrong, or beneficial from harmful. Just like we need physicallight to see, we also need the light of revelation to be able to use our intellect in the right way. Similarly we need revelation in matters of the afterlife, Hell, and Paradise which we cannot understand by only our reason.

The revelation sent by Allah is a light showing the straight path to our intellect and illuminating our way in this life. We can know our Creator and comprehend the goal of our creation. We also get help from the guidance of revelation to find answers of the questions like:

- What is the meaning of life?
- How should the order of our life be?
- What are our duties and responsibilities towards Allah?
- What is going to happen to us after death?
- Is there resurrection after death?
- Where and how are we going to see the results of our actions in this world?



Our Lord the Almighty has communicated with us through the books and prophets that He sent. Since Adam (peace be upon him), all prophets brought us the words and messages of Allah. These messages and words sent by Allah are called wahy (or revelation).

DIVINE BOOKS



Allah the Almighty says that:

"...And those who believe in the Revelation sent to you, and sent before your time..."

(al-Baqara 2; 4)

One of the principles of Islamic faith is to believe in the fact that there are some books sent by Allah the Almighty and that all the information in these books are true.

Allah the Exalted revealed His messages to His prophets either directly or by means of an angel. The prophets notified the people about the revelation they had received. The books consisting of the commands, prohibitions, and advices of our Lord Almighty are called "Divine books." We learn the principles of faith, rules related to the acts of worship and how we need to live in this world from these books. We obey the orders in these books and try to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

Depending on the people's needs, Our Lord Almighty sent to some of His prophets small books consisting only of a few pages (*suhuf*) and to some other prophets more comprehensive books.

The small books are hundred pages in total and they are:

Ten pages to Adam (peace be upon him),

Fifty pages to Seth (peace be upon him),

Thirty pages to Enoch (peace be upon him),

And ten pages to Abraham (peace be upon him)

Besides these pages, four books were sent to four prophets. These four books are:

The Torah:

It was revealed to Moses (peace be upon him). The Noble Qur'an tells us that the Torah is one of the Divine books that were sent to guide people to the straight path. This is why Muslims believe that the original Torah was a book comprised of the words of Allah.

Torah was sent to the sons of Israel through Moses (peace be upon him); however the sons of Israel (or the Jewish people) could not manage to protect it as it had been sent by Allah the Almighty. The original copy of the Torah was lost. It was rewritten by the Jewish scholars after a long period of time.

Even though the Torah was originally sent to Moses (peace be upon him) by Allah the Almighty, it was later corrupted. In the course of time it was however changed by people. Because of this corruption, The Torah that we have today has lost its status of being a Divine book.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"And before this [the Qur'an], there was the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy..."

(Ahqaf 46; 12)

The Psalms of David

It was sent to David (peace be upon him). Since David (S.A.) had a beautiful voice, when he recited the Psalms, everybody who listened to him would be deeply affected. Today the Book of Psalms is a part of Old Testament. In its current form, the Psalms is a book of advices which is written in the form of poems and does not contain any commands and prohibitions.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"...We preferred some of the Prophets above others, and unto David We gave the Psalms."

(al-Isra 17; 55)

The Gospel

It is the book revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him).

The original form of the Gospel was sent by Allah the Almighty. However, just like Torah and the Psalms, it was corrupted by human beings. The Gospel was not recorded in writing during the time of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), but after his time several versions of the Gospelwere written. In the first Council of Nicaea convened in 325, a council of Christian bishops selected four of these Gospel as canonical. They were written by Mark, Mathew, John, and Luke and thus they have become known by their authors' names. These are the gospels that we have today.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"...We sent him [Jesus] the Gospel: therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the law that had come before him: guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah."

(al-Maidah 5; 46)

The Holy Qur'an

It is the last Divine book sent by Allah the Almighty. It was revealed to our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Some of the Divine books have been lost and some of them have been corrupted by humans. But our Almighty Lord sent us all the messages and principles included in the earlier books through the Noble Qur'an.

As a Muslim, we have to believe in the uncorrupted original forms of the earlier books not however the current versions. We accept all the sacred books sent by Allah the Almighty. We also believe in the fact that only the Noble Qur'an among them has come down to us in its original unchanged form.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Surely We have revealed the Reminder [the Qur'an] and We will most surely be its guardian."

(Hijr 15; 9)

THE THINGS THAT WE GAIN FROM BELIEVING IN THE DIVINE BOOKS

DIVINE BOOKS

- Gives us the chance to be in continuous communication with our Lord Almighty
- Teaches us our goal for coming to this world and our responsibilities in this world
- Protects the principles of our religion from alterations and corruption
- Narrates the significant periods of human history in order to make the following generations get lessons from them

We would repeatedly read the sentences of a letter coming from our loved ones. We do not forget some of its sentences for our entire lifetime. Divine books which contain the words of Allah the Almighty are like a letter sent to humanity. It is such a great letter that it comes from Allah the Almighty, the Lord of the universe, and every single word of it contains numerous beauties and wisdom. When we read it, it is as if we are having a conversation with our Lord. Every time we recite or listen to these Divine words coming from the Eternal, they re-affect our souls. They increase our love for Allah the Almighty. And thus **they give us the chance to be in continuous communication with our Lord Almighty.**

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"I am leaving you two important things, one of which is the Book of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, and that is the rope of Allah. He who holds fast thereto would be on right guidance and he who abandons it would be in error." (peace and blessings be upon him)

(Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 37)



Divine books tell us the commands and prohibitions of our Exalted Lord. They teach us our goal for coming to this world and our responsibilities in this world. They command us to worship only Allah and to take his messengers as examples in our lives. They advise us to do things that benefit the people. They encourage us to be righteous, to act justly, and to help the needy. **They want us to be the servants of Allah who abstain from injustice, treat everyone kindly, and become people with good morals.**

Allah the Almighty says:

"This [Qur'an] is a clear message for mankind in order that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that Allah is only one God, and that men of understanding may take heed."

(Ibrahim 14; 52)



The articles of faith constitute the foundations of a religion. When the original forms of the Divine books which inform us about these principles, get corrupted, then people begin to deviate towards wrong beliefs. They get away from the faith in the Oneness of Allah. They begin to regard the prohibited things as permitted and the permitted things as prohibited. Then Allah the Exalted resends His message to renew the corrupted one. He teaches people the right beliefs and behaviors once again. In this way the Divine books sent by Allah the Almighty **protect the principles of our religion from alterations and corruption.** The Noble Qur'an is the final book sent by our Lord Almighty. It consists of all the beauties and truths of all of the preceding Divine

Allah the Almighty says:

"He has revealed to you the Book with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel aforetime as guidance for the people."

(Al-i Imran 3; 3)

books. Peoples' adventure of life has begun with Adam (peace be upon him). Since then many civilizations have been founded by human beings. Those who followed the footsteps of the prophets and did good deeds have always been remembered with gratitude. They have become examples for the following generations; whereas those who did not accept the guidance of the prophets and the Divine books used this earth just for their own benefits. They oppressed the weak and treated them unfairly. They killed the innocent people. They employed their wealth for the wrong purposes and, thus they departed away from Allah's mercy. They left very bad traces and were erased from the pages of history. Therefore the divine books **narrate such significant periods of human history in order to make the following generations get lessons from them.**

Allah the Almighty says:

"In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a narrative which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to the people who believe."

(Yusuf 12; 111)



The body of Pharaoh, who got drowned while passing across the Red Sea, has been preserved for centuries



Pyramids, the graves of Egyptian Pharaohs

LET'S KNOW OUR SACRED BOOK

The Internal Order of the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an is a miraculous divine book which cannot be reproduced by human beings. It is also called ***"Kalamullah"*** which means the Word of Allah. Through angle Gabriel, it was revealed to our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) piece by piece in 23 years. It consists of about 600 pages.

It has a special internal design formed from verses, chapters, and sections. Verses of the Qur'an, which are called in Arabic **"ayat,"** may contain one or more sentences. The parts formed by verses are called chapters, or "**surahs"** of the Qur'an. There are 114 chapters in the Noble Qur'an. Every chapter has a unique title and each chapter's number of verses is different than the others.

Chapters are not arranged in the order of their revelation but in the order that was commanded by Allah the Almighty. The longest chapter is the *surat al-Baqarah* which is the second chapter of the Qur'an and consists of 286 verses, while the shortest chapter is the *surat al-Kawthar* which is the 108th chapter of the Qur'an and contains only three verses. The Noble Qur'an begins with *surat al-Fatiha* and ends with *surat al-Nas*.

Every part which consists of 20 pages of the Qur'an is called ***"juz"*** or section. There are total of thirty sections in the Qur'an. Dividing the Qur'an into such parts makes easier to memorize and read it.

The Noble Qur'an is revealed in Arabic. This is why it has been translated into several languages to help people who do not understand Arabic. These translations into other languages are also called the meaning of the Qur'an (*maal*). We can read and learn the detailed explanations and commentaries of the verses in the books of Qur'anic commentary (*tafseer*).



THE FIRST REVELATION

Our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was known by his good morals in his society. He never worshipped the idols and never ate from the meat of the animals sacrificed for the idols. He did not drink alcoholic beverages and gamble. He never attended the festivals and ceremonies organized in the name of the idols. He gained everybody's praise and trust by his truthfulness, trustworthiness, commitment to his promises, shyness, generosity, and dignity.

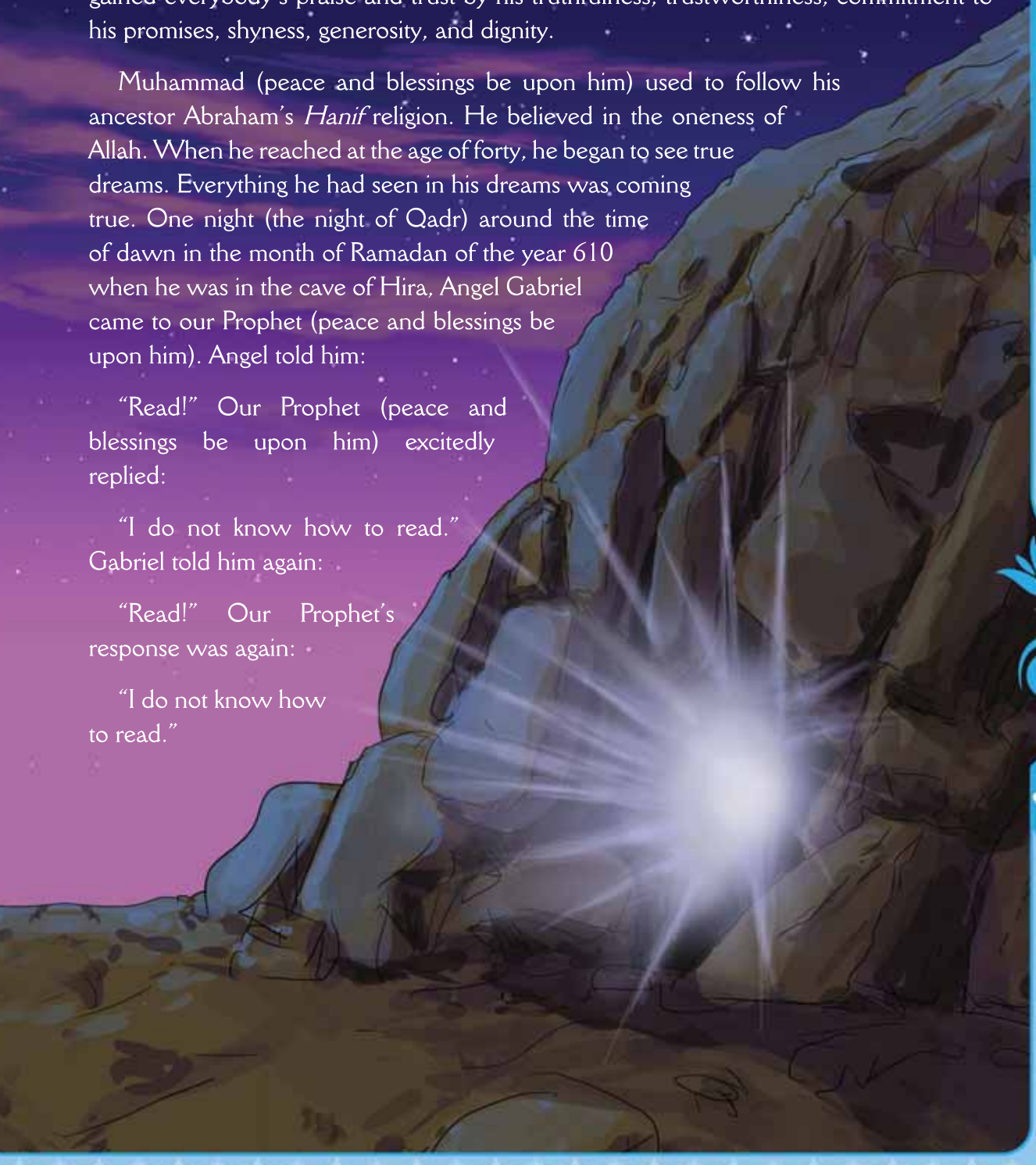
Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) used to follow his ancestor Abraham's *Hanif* religion. He believed in the oneness of Allah. When he reached at the age of forty, he began to see true dreams. Everything he had seen in his dreams was coming true. One night (the night of Qadr) around the time of dawn in the month of Ramadan of the year 610 when he was in the cave of Hira, Angel Gabriel came to our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Angel told him:

"Read!" Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) excitedly replied:

"I do not know how to read." Gabriel told him again:

"Read!" Our Prophet's response was again:

"I do not know how to read."



Angel Gabriel one more time told him to read and then he (angel) recited the first five verses of the *surat al-Alaq* (96). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) repeated these first verses of the Qur'an. Below are the meanings of these five verses:

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created.

He created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood:

Read and your Lord is Most Bountiful,

Who taught (to write) with the pen

Taught man that which he knew not."

(al-Alaq 96; 1-5)

After repeating the words of the angel of revelation, our Prophet stood up. He was puzzled and shaking with fear. He left the cave. This time the same voice was coming from the heaven. The strong voice of Gabriel (peace be upon him) echoed everywhere:

"O Muhammad! You are the Messenger of Allah and I am Gabriel."

Upon this scene the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) got even more excited and went down the mountain with his heart beating wildly, until he came to his wife Khadijah. Our mother Khadijah became worried for his nervousness. Our Prophet was still shaking. He went to his bed and said, 'Cover me! Cover me!' Soon he fell asleep and when he woke up, he told what had happened. Our mother Khadijah consoled him saying:

"Do not be afraid! Allah will never disgrace you. You uphold the ties of kinship, speak truthfully, help the poor and destitute, serve your guests generously and assist those who are stricken by calamity. You help those who cannot work and those who are in need."

These nice words of our mother Khadijah made our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) very happy. Then they went to Waraqah ibn Nawfal, the son of Khadija's paternal uncle. Waraqa was an old man who knew both Torah and the Gospel very well. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told him what he had seen, Waraqah got very excited and said:

"I swear by Allah you are the Prophet of this ummah. And the angel you have seen was Gabriel. He is the same angel who brought the commands of Allah to Moses and Jesus, too." Waraqah continued his words:

"I wish I were young and could help you when your people drive you out of your town."

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) wonderingly asked:

"Are they really going to drive me out of my town?" Waraqah replied,

"Yes. There has never come a prophet with the like of that which you have brought, but he was not persecuted and driven out of his country."

Allah the Almighty says:

"And it is a Quran which We have revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and We have revealed it by stages."

(Al-Isra 17; 106)

Writing the Holy Qur'an Down and Memorizing It

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would immediately convey the verses of the Qur'an to his Companions. He would also make some of his Companions, known as the scribes of the revelation, write these newly revealed verses down. In this way verses of the Noble Qur'an were not only memorized by our Prophet and his Companions but also written down as soon as they were revealed.

In accordance with the means of the time, the scribes of the revelation wrote down the verses of the Qur'an upon materials which could be written upon, such as thin flat stones, the shoulder-blades of camels, leafless palm-branches and stumps of palm-branches, ribs of animals, pieces of cloth or of skin, or papyrus, or wooden boards, etc. Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would first recite the newly revealed verses and make the scribes write them down; and then he would ask the scribes to read what they wrote and check whether there were any mistakes in their writings. The first four caliphs, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) were among the scribes of the revelations. Other famous Companions, such as Zaid ibn Thabit, Ubai ibn Ka'b, and Muadh ibn Jabal, also worked as the scribes of the revelations.



Our Prophet also recited the Qur'anic verses in his prayers and at other times. He explained the rules and subtleties contained in the verses to the believers. Every year in the month of Ramadan, he would recite and review the verses, which had been revealed by that time, with the Angel Gabriel. In the month of Ramadan of the year that the Prophet passed away, they reviewed the whole Qur'an twice.

Compilation of the Holy Qur'an in the Form of a Book

The Noble Qur'an was both memorized and protected by writing it down during the lifetime of our Prophet, however these written verses and chapters of the Qur'an were not yet compiled in the form a book. It was because revelation continued to come during the Prophet's lifetime. And because the revelation was not complete until the end of our Prophet's life, it was impossible to compile the Qur'an in the form of a book.

After the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had passed away, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was elected as the caliph. During his caliphate many Companions who were Hafiz (or knew the entire Qur'an by heart) were martyred in the battle. The decrease in the number of the Companions who knew the whole Qur'an by heart made Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) worried. So he offered Abu Bakr the compilation of the materials upon which the Qur'anic verses had been written. Thereupon Abu Bakr formed a commission under the leadership of the

Prophet's head-scribe Zaid ibn Thabit. All members of this commission knew the entire Qur'an by heart. After about a year-long of serious work the scattered materials were compiled and the verses of the Qur'an got written on clean pages. Finally these pages were put together in the form of a book and submitted to Abu Bakr.

Duplication of the Holy Qur'an

During the caliphates of Umar and Uthman (may Allah be pleased with them) the Muslim land reached into new regions by means of conquests. People from different languages, cultures, and races were converting into Islam. Everybody wanted to read and learn what the Noble Qur'an was saying.

In order to provide the proper circumstances for the believers to learn the Qur'an, Caliph Uthman decided to duplicate the copy compiled during Abu Bakr's caliphate. Uthman formed a commission again under the leadership of Zaid ibn Thabit and had them duplicate the Noble Qur'an. One of the copies was left in Medina. Others were sent to Mecca, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Yemen, and Bahrain. Along with the copies of the Qur'an, a teacher of the Qur'an was also sent to each one of these centers.

- **The Noble Qur'an was memorized and written down during the time of our Prophet.**
- **It was collected and compiled into a book during the caliphate of Abu Bakr.**
- **Starting from the time of Uthman's caliphate, the Qur'an has been duplicated and it has come to this day without a single letter of it being changed.**



Merits of the Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

The Noble Qur'an is the most superior and the most beautiful of the words. Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said that: "The best of you is the one who learns and teaches the Qur'an." This is why our most important task regarding the Qur'an is to read, learn, and teach it to others. Then we need to live in accordance with its regulations.

Recitation of the Qur'an is an act of worship. Our Lord Almighty has given the good news of Paradise and its blessings to those who recite the Qur'an and apply its rules in their lives. Our Prophet informs us that the parents of such believers will also find special rewards in the Hereafter.

Our beloved Prophet would recite the Qur'an slowly and distinctly. He also advised his followers to recite the Qur'an correctly and nicely. He wanted his ummah to recite the Qur'an much. He said that those who recite it beautifully will be with the angels. He gave special good news for those who have difficulty in reciting but continue to try to recite it.



Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"If anyone recites the Qur'an and acts according to its contents, on the Day of Judgment his parents will be given a crown to wear whose light is better than the light of the sun in the houses of this world if it were among you. So imagine the reward of who acts according to its contents."

(Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, I, 355)

Allah the Almighty says:

"Lol Those who read the Scripture of Allah ...For He [Allah] will pay them back fully their rewards and give them more out of His grace..."

(Fatir 35; 29-30)

CONTENTS OF THE QUR'AN

The Holy Qur'an has a distinctive style. It deals with different topics in the same verse or in the same chapter. It uses a method of expression which encompasses all aspects of human beings. On the one hand it appeals to human intelligence; on the other hand it takes people's psychological and spiritual state into consideration. Its object is not just to give information; rather it aims to transform the knowledge into faith and the faith into good behavior and morals.

Before everything else the Holy Qur'an tries to bring people into the correct faith. It teaches us the reason for our existence in this world. It introduces Allah to us. It shows us the way we should deal with ourselves, with our fathers and mothers, with other people, and with the rest of the creation.

The main subjects that are emphasized by the Qur'an are: the issues of faith, acts of worship, and principles of morality. Besides these, there are also verses which guide us in many aspects of human relations. Stories of the prophets and the incidents experienced by the people of the past are narrated in the Qur'an for us to take lessons from them.

When we examine the Noble Qur'an, we see that it mainly contains and guides us in the following areas:

The Main Subject Matters of the Qur'an

- ☑ Articles of Faith
- ☑ Acts of Worship
- ☑ Moral Principles
- ☑ Lawful and Unlawful
- ☑ Social Relations
- ☑ Supplication
- ☑ Creation and the Universe
- ☑ Prophets and the People of the Past

Articles of Faith

The most important aspect of the Noble Qur'an is that it introduces our Lord to us. It tells us about the existence and oneness of Allah. It introduces Allah to us through His names and Divine attributes.

All of the articles of faith that are taught by the Qur'an are related to faith in Allah. In other words according to the Qur'an the principles of faith cannot be separated. Those who believe in Allah also believe in His angels, the books that were sent by Him, prophets, and the Last Day. They also believe in that everything happens by Allah's Will and Wish.

Acts of Worship



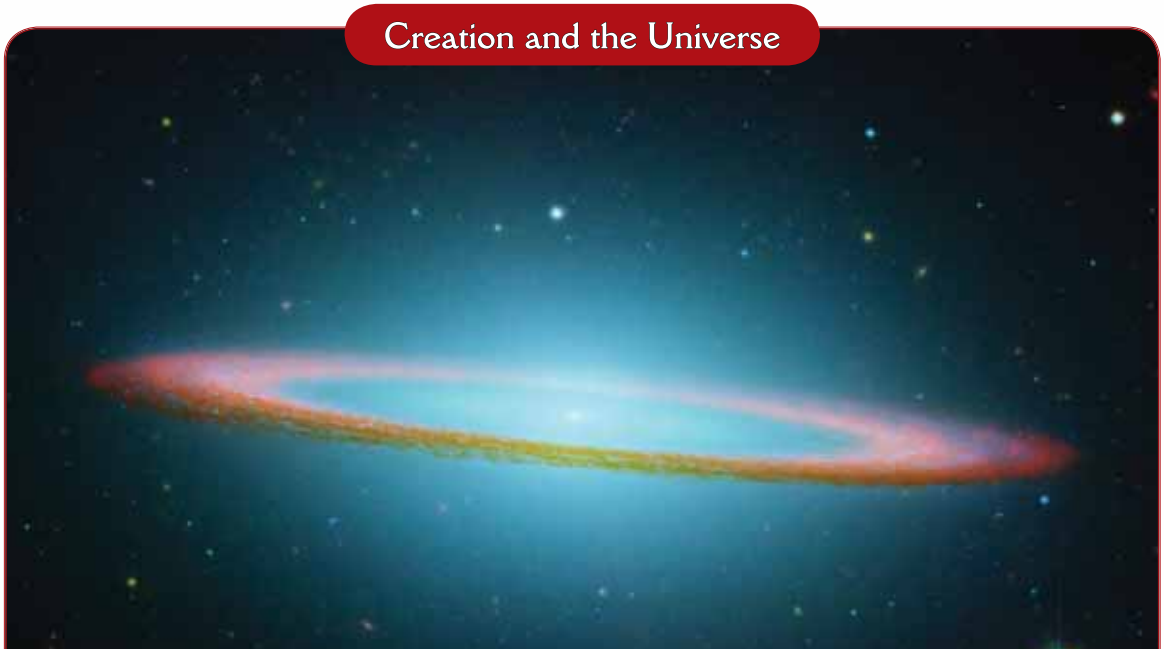
The Noble Qur'an commands us to be servants of Allah. It gives us the general principles in regarding worship instead of giving details. It attracts our attention to the close relationship between faith and worship. It tells us that worship must be performed just for the sake of Allah without showing pride. Through various examples it shows us the wrongness of worshipping anything other than Allah.

Acts of worship, like ritual prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage, are especially expressed in the Qur'an. Every act that pleases our Lord is accepted as a sign of good servitude. Everything that benefits human beings, including a smiling face and a few nice words are all considered within the scope of worship.

Moral Principles

The Holy Qur'an regards good morality as being very important. It tries to make good morals prevail in all aspects of life. This is why the Qur'an speaks about the principles of good morality in many of its verses. It directs people to goodness and righteousness. It commands to show kindness to parents, and to help the relatives, the poor, and the destitute. It prohibits wasting resources and giving harm to others' life or property. It always attracts our attention to the principles of good manners such as keeping promises, being trustworthy, and keeping good relations with others. It expresses that such manners will take human beings to happiness both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Creation and the Universe



The Noble Qur'an brings attention to the universe and the created things therein. It invites people to think about creation and the reason for their creation. It continuously expresses that Allah has created this universe from a state of nothingness.

The perfect order of the universe is stated in the Qur'an. It invites attention to the creation of human beings, animals, plants, earth, skies, the Sun, moon, and numerous more beings. It is expressed that there are signs that show Allah's existence and unity in the creation of every single being. We are asked to carefully examine these signs and recognize the endless power and mercy of Allah the Almighty.

Supplication

Prayer is the essence of worship. We express our gratitude to our Lord through our supplications. Whenever we need His help and whenever we feel dispirited, we run to His gates of mercy and forgiveness. We open our hands and ask help from Him. We take refuge in our Exalted Lord's clemency and forgiveness.

Samples of sincere and genuine prayers, especially samples from the prayers of the prophets, take an important place in our Noble Book. In the Qur'an our Lord Almighty teaches us how to pray to Him. He commands us to pray only to Him and tells us that He is the only One who can respond to prayers.

Lawful and Unlawful

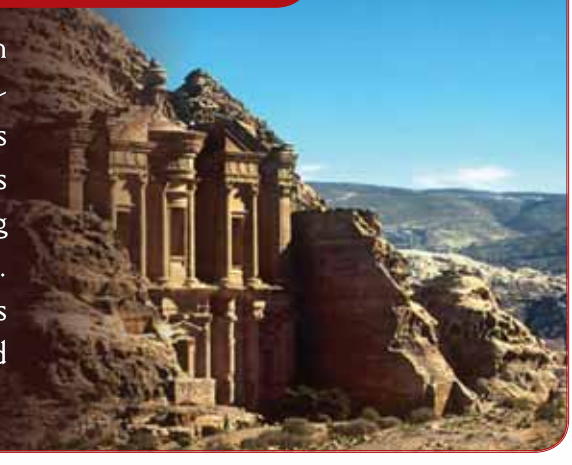
What is permitted by Islam is called Halal or lawful; and what is prohibited by it is called haram or unlawful. The Noble Qur'an explains the lawful and unlawful things. It states that the beneficial, good, and clean things are lawful. It also states that the lawful things are enough for human beings and no one can declare unlawful what is made lawful by Allah the Almighty. It prohibits eating and drinking harmful things like blood, pig flesh, the dead animals' flesh, and alcoholic beverages. It also bans the unjust ways of earning livelihood such as fraud, theft, usury, gambling, and bribery. It counts them among the great wrongs committed against Allah and the Muslim society. It warns all humanity by citing the bad examples of those who violate other peoples' rights by cheating them in measures and balance.

Social Relations

The main object of the Holy Qur'an is to raise individuals into people who have strong faith, true knowledge, and good morals. It aims to make a virtuous society formed from such individuals. The Noble Qur'an establishes the principles and guidelines for our social relations. This is why there are several verses in the Qur'an which organize the social relations such as marriage, divorce, trade, transactions, inheritance, governance, and education. In addition to such regulatory verses, there are also verses in the Qur'an related to crimes and punishments for those who violate the rights of individuals and society. Murder, burglary, and slandering or harming peoples' chastity are all accepted as great crimes in the Qur'an. Qur'anic verses also describe how these crimes will be punished and what will be the amounts of punishments

Prophets and the People of the Past

Starting with Adam (peace be upon him) history of humanity is filled with lessons. The Holy Qur'an provides examples from the lives of prophets and the peoples of the past in order to give the following generations something to take lessons from. It talks about the good and bad experiences of the societies. It asks people to take heed and not to fall into same mistakes.



OUR PROPHET AND THE HOLY QUR'AN

Our beloved Prophet loved to recite the Holy Qur'an. He would recite it slowly and distinctly. Prophet's recitation would give people a different taste and beauty. People who listened to his recitation would immediately be affected from it. One day the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) had recited the surat Tin (95) in the night prayer. One of his companions said that he had never listened to anybody who had a nicer voice than the Prophet's.

Our Prophet would sometimes recite the Qur'an out loud upon his riding beast. For instance on the day of the conquest of Mecca he recited the first verses of surat al-Fath (48) on his camel. Those companions who listened to his recitation mentioned that his beautiful voice was not erased from their ears and hearts.

Our beloved Prophet would think about the verses he recited and say prayers suitable to their meaning. When he recited a verse about praising Allah the Almighty, he would praise Him. If he recited a verse about asking things from Allah, he would pray for Him. Sometimes he would think about one single verse for all night. One night he repeated the verse "If You punish them, lo! They are Your slaves, and if You forgive them (lo! they are Your slaves). Lo! You, only You, are the Mighty, the Wise." (al-Maidah 5; 118) several times. And then he begged Allah the Almighty out of his love for his ummah and because of his concerns that they might get punished. He asked Allah to forgive his ummah.

Sometimes our Prophet would get moved by the verses he was reciting and tears would flow down his blessed cheeks. He also advised his Companions to recite the Qur'an sorrowfully.



One day our mother Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked:

"Would you tell us the most amazing thing that you have seen with the Prophet?"

Aisha replied:

"What was not amazing with him?" And then she narrated the following incident:

"One night he went to bed. Later in the night he asked my permission and got up. He performed ablution and began to pray. During his prayer he began to shed tears so much that his tears were flowing down to his chest. He bowed down and cried. He continued to cry during prostration and when he raised his head from the ground. This state continued till Bilal came and pronounced the call for dawn prayer. When Bilal (may Allah be pleased with him) saw the Prophet crying, he asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Even though your past and future sins have already been forgiven, what makes you cry?" Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied:

"Should I not be a thanking servant of Allah?"

He then stated that he had received a revelation at night and that these verses should be carefully read and contemplated about. Then he recited the following verses:

"Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth say: "Our Lord! You have not created this in vain! Glory be to You. Save us then from the chastisement of the fire." (Al-i Imran 3; 190-191)

Our Prophet would recite the Qur'an **in the month of Ramadan more than the rest of the year**. Gabriel (peace be upon him) would come to our Prophet more often in that month and they would together review the verses that had been revealed up to that time.

Allah's Messenger also liked very much to listen to other peoples' Qur'an recitation. He would ask his Companions with nice voice to recite the Qur'an for him. He once asked Abdullah Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) to recite the Quran for him. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said to the Prophet,

"O messenger of Allah! How may I recite the Quran before you whereas it has been revealed to you?" Upon this the Prophet said,

"I love it much to hear the Quran from someone else." Then Abdullah Ibn Masud began to recite from surat al-Nisa (4). When he recited the verse, "How will it be, then, when We bring from every people a witness and bring you as a witness against these?" (4:41) the Prophet said, *"This is enough for now."* Ibn Masud the narrator of this incident said that "when I looked at the face of the Prophet, I saw tears rolling down both his eyes."

Our beloved Prophet **adopted the Noble Qur'an as his measure for all aspects of**

life. He lived his life in accordance with the Qur'an. All his actions, behaviors, morals, and thoughts were shaped by the verses of the Qur'an. Aisha, mother of the believers said to those who ask about the morals of the Prophet:

"Don't you read the Qur'an? His morality was based on the moral principles of the Qur'an."

By these words, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) emphasized that the Prophet's actions and behaviors were in accordance with the Qur'an and he was like a living Qur'an. And owing to this attribute of the Prophet, Our Exalted Lord has presented him to humanity as the best example.

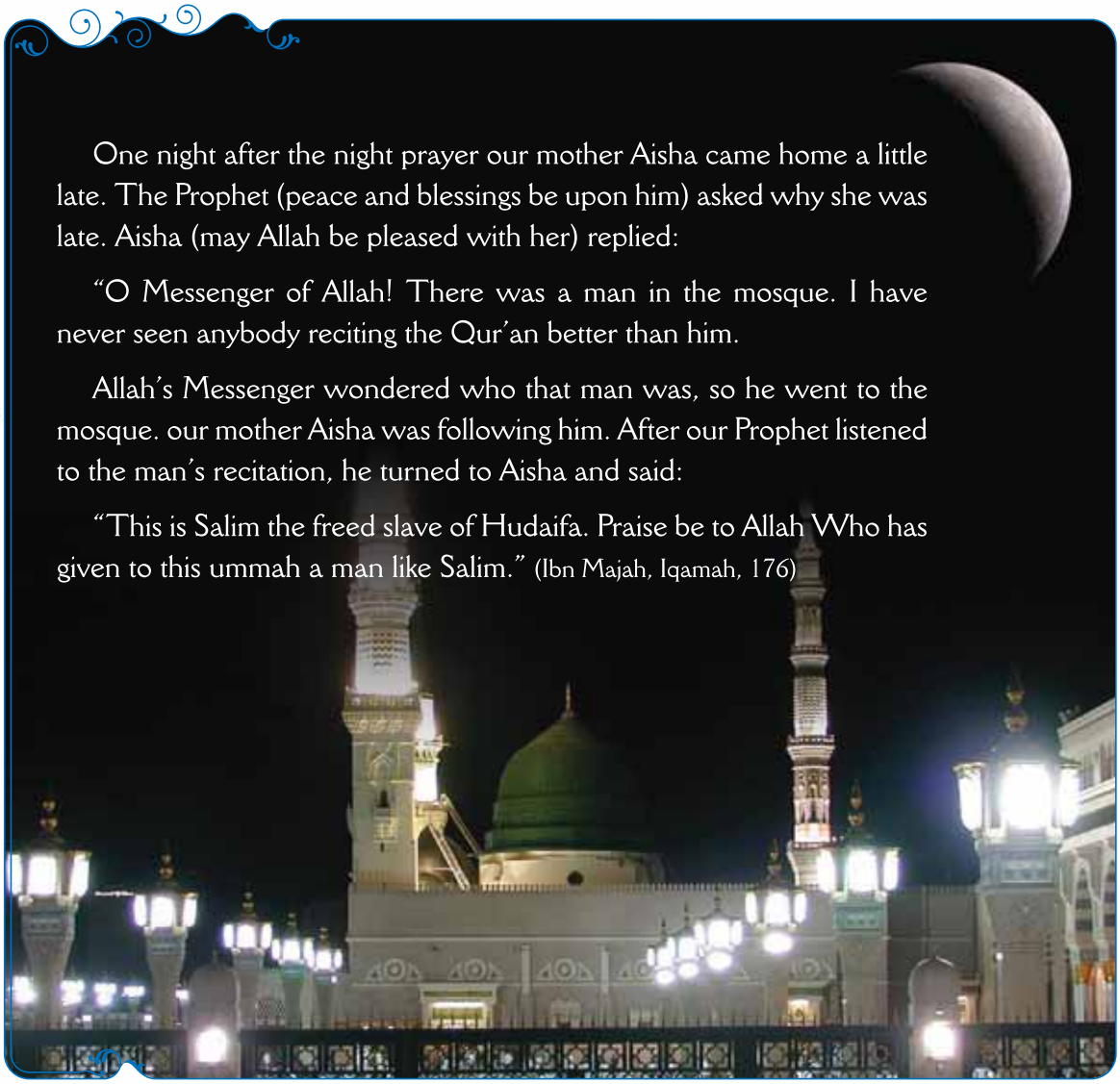
The Holy Qur'an shaped not just the Prophet's life but also all the lives of the Muslims who were following him. The early generations of the believers acted in their personal and social lives according to the requirements of the Qur'an. By taking the Prophet as their example, they became the first practitioners of the Qur'an.

One night after the night prayer our mother Aisha came home a little late. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked why she was late. Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! There was a man in the mosque. I have never seen anybody reciting the Qur'an better than him.

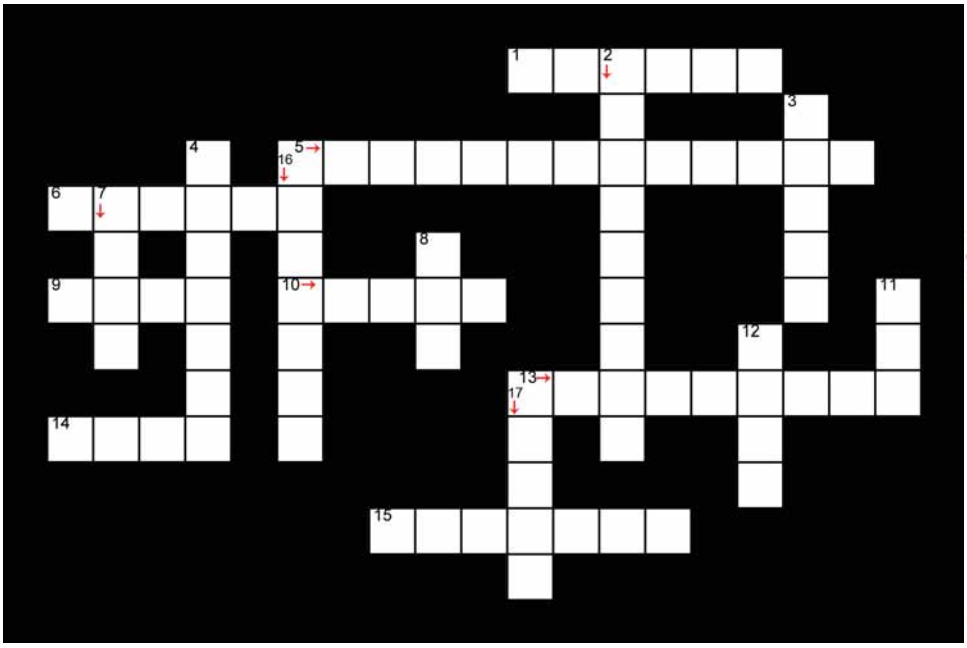
Allah's Messenger wondered who that man was, so he went to the mosque. our mother Aisha was following him. After our Prophet listened to the man's recitation, he turned to Aisha and said:

"This is Salim the freed slave of Hudaifa. Praise be to Allah Who has given to this ummah a man like Salim." (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 176)



QUESTIONS

Crossword Puzzle





Across

1. The first chapter of the Qur'an
2. The book that was revealed to Jesus (peace be upon him)
3. One who knows the entire Qur'an by heart
4. The angel who brings the revelation
5. The last one of the Divine books
6. The longest chapter of the Qur'an
7. Which chapter's verses were revealed first?
8. The term used for every 20 pages of the Qur'an
9. The night that the Qur'anic revelation began
10. The little Divine books

Down

11. The last chapter of the Qur'an
12. Information and messages sent to humanity by Allah through His prophets
13. The book that was revealed to Moses (peace be upon him)
14. Translations of the Qur'an into other languages
15. The month that the Qur'anic revelation began
16. Detailed explanations and commentaries of the verses of the Qur'an; Qur'anic commentary
17. The book that was sent to David (peace be upon him)

Find the Correct Match

1	Allah the Exalted revealed His messages to His prophets		has come down to us in its original unchanged form.
2	Since Adam (peace be upon him), prophets brought us		the commands and prohibitions of our Exalted Lord.
3	We obey the orders in these books and ,		the beauties and truths of all of the preceding Divine books.
4	Depending on the people's needs, Our Lord Almighty sent		people begin to deviate to wrong beliefs.
5	We believe in that the Noble Qur'an		either directly or by means of an angel.
6	Divine books tell us		try to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.
7	When the original forms of the Divine books get corrupted,		the words and messages of Allah.
8	The Noble Qur'an consists of		to some of His prophets small books called *suhuf*

Let's Test Ourselves

1. What is the term used for the Companions who wrote the revelation down during the Prophet's time?

A) Companions

B) Migrants

C) Scribes of the revelation

D) Helpers

2. Which one of the following information cannot be said about the Qur'an?

A) It was revealed by the Angel Gabriel

B) It was revealed in Arabic

C) Its revelation began on the night of *mi'raj* (ascension).

D) It has come down to us without any change

3. "Behold, Luqman said to his son when he admonished him: O my son Ascribe no partners unto Allah. Lo! To ascribe partners (unto Him) is a grievous wrong doing… O my son! Keep up prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage; And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster." (Luqman 31; 13-18)

Which one of the following actions is wrong according to the above mentioned verse?

A) Not showing patience before the hardships

B) To advice truthfulness to someone who lies

C) To perform prayers

D) Not to ascribe partners to Allah the Almighty

4.

I. It has become easier to memorize

II. It enabled to write the Qur'an down

III. It gave a chance to learn the principles of the Qur'an well

These are the result of ....

A) Piece by piece revelation of the Qur'an

B) Revelation of the Qur'an in Arabic

C) Revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad

D) Revelation of the Qur'an through Angel Gabriel

5. What is the first reason for the revelation of the Qur'an?

A) To recite it in our prayers

B) To unite the Muslims

C) To recite it after our deceased relatives

D) To apply it in our lives

6. Which one of the following is not among the reasons for sending Divine books?

A) To give commands and prohibitions

B) To give encyclopedic information

C) To establish moral principles

D) To give information about the Hereafter

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

(The Book of Allah, the people, the Reminder, light, a crown, right guidance, its contents, the Torah, guardian, the Gospel, the Book, in portions)

1. "We sent him [Jesus] ..... therein were guidance and ....., and confirmation of the law that had come before him: guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah." (al-Maidah 5; 46)

2. "Surely We have revealed ..... [the Qur'an] and We will most surely be its ....." (Hijr 15; 9)

3. "He has revealed to you ..... with truth, verifying that which is before it, and He revealed ..... and the Gospel aforetime as guidance for the people." (Al-i Imran 3; 3)

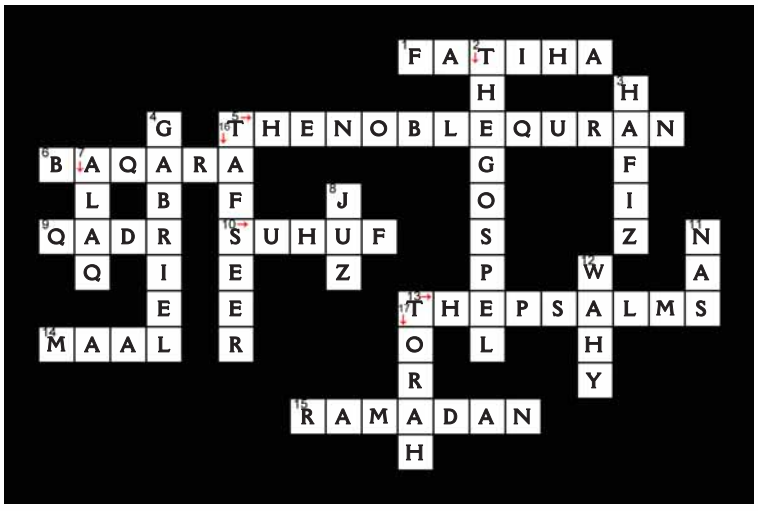
4. "And it is a Quran which We have revealed ..... so that you may read it to ..... by slow degrees, and We have revealed it by stages." (Al-Isra 17; 106)

5. "I am leaving you two important things, one of which is..... , the Exalted and Glorious, and that is the rope of Allah. He who holds it fast would be on .....and he who abandons it would be in error." (Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 37)

6. "If anyone recites the Qur'an and acts according to..... , on the Day of Judgment his parents will be given to wear ..... whose light is better than the light of the sun in the houses of this world. So imagine the reward of who acts according to its contents." (Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, I, 355)

ANSWERS

Crossword Puzzle





Find the Correct Match

1	Allah the Exalted revealed His messages to His prophets	5	has come down to us in its original unchanged form.
2	Since Adam (peace be upon him), prophets brought us	6	the commands and prohibitions of our Exalted Lord.
3	We obey the orders in these books and ,	8	the beauties and truths of all of the preceding Divine books.
4	Depending on the people's needs, Our Lord Al-mighty sent	7	people begin to deviate to wrong beliefs.
5	We believe in that the Noble Qur'an	1	either directly or by means of an angel.
6	Divine books tell us	3	try to gain the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.
7	When the original forms of the Divine books get corrupted,	2	the words and messages of Allah.
8	The Noble Qur'an consists of	4	to some of His prophets small books called *suhuf*

Let's Test Ourselves

1) C
2) C
3) A
4) A
5) D
6) B

Let's Fill in the Blanks

1. The Gospel, light
2. The Reminder, guardian
3. The Book, the Torah
4. In portions, the people
5. The Book of Allah, right guidance
6. Its contents, a crown





EXEMPLARY PEOPLE

FAITH IN THE PROPHETS

- *Prophets and the Attributes of the Prophets*
- *Common Messages of the Prophets*
- *The things that We Gain from Believing in the Prophets*
- *There are the Best Examples for us in the Lives of the Prophets*
- *Our Prophet and the Other Prophets*





PROPHETS (MESSENGERS OF ALLAH)

Husain's homework was about **prophethood**. He was going to check the reference books and prepare for the subject and his friends were going to ask him whatever they wanted to ask about it. When the class started, his teacher asked him the first question:

— "Tell me Husain! **What does prophet mean?"**

— "Prophet is a person who delivers the orders of Allah to the people" replied Husain. His teacher liked Hussain's response and turned to the rest of the class:



— "It is your turn! Ask your friend whatever you want to learn. This way I will see how much you are interested in this subject."

Sulaiman raised his hand:

— Can anybody be a prophet?

Husain responded to his friends question as follows:

— "Prophethood is not a job which can be achieved by hard work or worship. Allah chooses whoever He wants among His servants as His messenger. Because prophethood is not an easy task to fulfill, our Lord Almighty entrusts this work to those who can do it best."

Ahmad raised his hand:

— "Does prophethood pass from father to son like a sultanate or a monarchy?"

— "There is no such rule, but there were some prophets whose sons took over their father's mission. For instance after Abraham, his sons Isaac and Ishmael became prophets. Similarly after Jacob his son Joseph; and after David his son Solomon (peace be upon them) became prophets. However, this is not because prophethood was something hereditary, but it was what Allah the Almighty deemed appropriate."

Batul said:

— "That means prophets' children were good people like their fathers."

— "This was not always the case," said Husain. There had been some prophets in whom their children did not believe just like many other people of their time. Noah's son, for instance, did not accept his father's prophethood and drowned together with the disbelievers in the Flood."

Zainab joined the conversation saying:

— "Prophets must have been rich and respected members of their society. Otherwise no one would listen to them."

Husain said in response to Zainab's remarks:

— "We can find the answer of this question in our prophet's life. Our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was from a respected family, but he was not rich. Some of his opponents used to oppose him saying: "If people had been in need of a prophet, he should have been one of the wealthy people among us." They were unable to understand how the angel of revelation could reveal himself to a poor man. Whereas what would wealth do with a respected task like prophethood?"

Abdurrahman asked:

— "Do you know how many prophets there were?"

— "Twenty five prophet names are mentioned in the Qur'an" said Husain. His teacher added:

— "Throughout the history of humanity many people served as prophets. Most of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an were related to each other. Therefore these prophets lived and fulfilled their mission around the Arabian Peninsula. Undoubtedly there were also prophets sent to the people living in other parts of the world. Our Prophet said that the number of the prophets was around one hundred

and twenty thousand." Aisha asked:

— "was the Holy Qur'an sent to all prophets?" Husain smiled:

— "Your question is wrong. The Noble Qur'an is the name of the sacred book sent to our Prophet. Therefore the question should be **"was a book similar to the Noble Qur'an sent to all prophets?"** And my answer to such question would be "no." We have learned the names of the prophets to whom books were revealed and the titles of these books in the previous chapter about faith in the books of Allah." When Ali asked:

— **"Christians and Jews did not believe in our Prophet. Would it not be appropriate if we too did not believe in their prophets?"** Husain could not immediately respond to his question. His teacher came to his help:

— "This is the biggest difference between them and Muslims. We believe in their prophets because the Noble Qur'an states the names and lives of Moses and Jesus along with other prophets. It is not an appropriate behavior to argue in this matter. We believe in all of the prophets without making any distinction between them." Fatima asked:

— "**Which prophet is the greatest one?"** Husain replied:

— "Our Prophet Muhammad is the greatest of them all." Fatima wanted to learn its reason and asked:

— **"Why is the Prophet Muhammad the greatest of them?"** When Husain realized that he could not answer to this question, he turned to his teacher and asked:

— "Sir! Could you please explain this to us?" Upon this request his teacher said:

— "The greatness of a prophet is evaluated by the greatness of his mission, his actions, and his sufferings.

According to the accounts in the Qur'an, Noah (peace be upon him), for instance, lived 950 years among his people. People used to live very long at that time. Noah delivered Allah's messages to his people and did everything he could to bring them to the right path; but very few people believed in him. In the end, as you know, those unbelievers were destroyed by a great Flood.

Remember Abraham (peace be upon him). People whom he invited to the path of Allah the Almighty wanted to punish him by fire. But Allah did not let them to do this and turned the fire into a rose garden. Thus He saved Abraham from being burned.

Even though sufferings of Moses, Jesus, and our Prophet Muhammad were beyond imagination, they endured all of these sufferings for the sake of their sacred mission. They patiently endured getting beaten, all kinds of insults, and even getting driven away from their towns.

There are more important reasons for our Prophet Muhammad to be the greatest of the prophets:

He is the last prophet.

His prophethood has been continuing for the last fourteen centuries and it will continue till the Last Day. He is a prophet

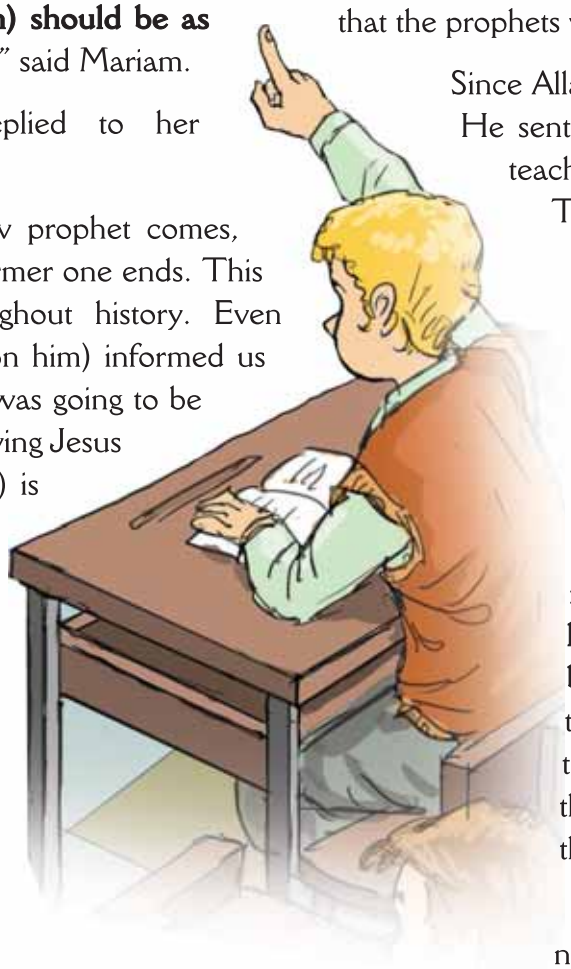
sent to all of humanity; whereas former prophets had been sent to particular groups of people.

As we learn from his sayings, our Prophet has also been the most beloved servant of Allah the Almighty.

— "But teacher, **there are millions of Christians on earth. When we think about the next generations, Jesus (peace be upon him) should be as great as our Prophet**" said Mariam.

The teacher replied to her question as follows:

— When a new prophet comes, the mission of the former one ends. This fact repeated throughout history. Even Jesus (peace be upon him) informed us that a new prophet was going to be sent after him. Following Jesus (peace be upon him) is like insisting upon still using candles after the invention of electricity. This situation would also make the prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) very sad.



Zaki raised his hand and asked a different question:

— "Do we really need prophets? Could people not find the right path if there were not any prophets?"

His teacher pointed out to Husain and Husain replied this question:

— People could certainly find some truth without prophets. They could comprehend the existence of an Almighty Creator, but they would not be able to know how to worship Him. They would not know that there are angels; that there will be an endless life in the Hereafter; and that they will be questioned concerning what they have done in this world. By means of their reason, they could figure out some evil actions but not everything that the prophets warn them about.

Since Allah loves us very much, He sent us His messengers to teach us all this information. These messengers also became examples to people by their good manners.

Ruqiyah asked:

— "I wonder whether it would be more believable if Allah the Almighty had sent his messages by His angels." Husain thought for a moment as to how he could answer this odd question. And then he said:

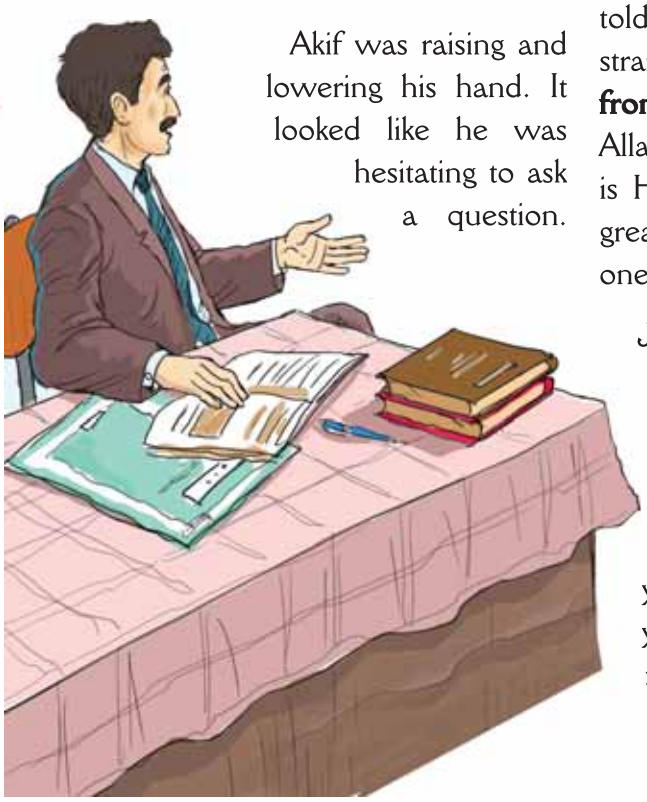
— "We would not know this. If this had been a better way, Allah the Almighty would have certainly done that." His teacher thought Ruqiyah's question needed more explanation so he added:

— "What Husain said is correct. We may also respond to this question as

follows: If Allah had sent his commands through His angels, some people would have said:

— "Because we are not able to see the angels, we cannot ask our questions. We cannot speak freely because of our fear from them. It is easy for the angels to say "do not sin" for they cannot commit sins. We wish that it were a human being who had brought these messages to us. We wonder if he could himself do what he ordered to us."

Those who talked like this could be right about what they said. Because, it is easy to say "do this or do not do that." But it is difficult to practice these orders personally. This is why our Lord Almighty sent His messages through His prophets who fulfilled these orders, abstained from His prohibitions, and became the best examples for their people."



Akif was raising and lowering his hand. It looked like he was hesitating to ask a question.

When his teacher saw Akif's hesitation, he asked:

— "You want to ask something, Akif, don't you?"

— "yes, but …" said Akif and then stopped speaking.

— "Don't be afraid. Ask whatever you want Akif" said his teacher.

— "Did the prophets get paid for their job? If they did, from whom did they get their money?"

The teacher smiled. Akif still had some hesitation. He was embarrassed and wondering if he had asked a meaningless question. Other kids were curiously waiting their teacher's respond. The teacher:

— "Well done, Akif!" You asked a very good question. This question is replied in the Holy Qur'an several times. All prophets told the people whom they invited to the straight path: **"I did not ask for any reward from you; my reward is only with Allah."** Allah's contentedness from His servants is His greatest reward to them. And the greatest and long lasting services are the ones done for free.

Just then the school bell rang.

His teacher thanked Husain for his good job and nice answers. Husain said in return:

— "Actually I would like to thank you, sir. I have learned everything from you. If you didn't help me, I could not manage to prepare this assignment."

M. Yaşar Kandemir

OUR GUIDES

The Bosporus strait, which resides between the continents of Asia and Europe, owns a unique beauty. Every day hundreds of ships pass through this strait connecting the Black Sea and Marmara Sea. However, since some parts of this strait are too shallow for big ships, it becomes very dangerous to pass it. Especially big cargo oil boats and huge passenger liners which have to be very careful when passing through the Bosporus strait. This is why captains of such boats request a pilot from the local authorities in order to protect themselves from accidents and running ashore. And they can safely pass the strait with the help of such guides who know the traffic of the strait, the depth, and the conditions of the coasts very well.

The life of this world is like a ship. And we, as humans, are the passengers on this ship coming from the world of the souls to the abode of afterlife. If we were a captain wanting to pass through the Bosporus strait, we would request a pilot from the local authorities. We also need guides in order to live a nice life in this world, to attain Paradise and to be saved from Hell in the Hereafter. Prophets are such guides sent by Allah the Almighty.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"And we made the prophets leaders, guiding men by our command..."

(al-Anbiya 21; 73)

The reason for the creation of human beings is to worship Allah and to achieve His pleasure. Human beings who are being tested in this world have to fight with Satan, with feelings leading to bad behavior such as lying, stinginess, and belligerency. Our Lord Almighty has not left them without guidance in this difficult journey. He has shown them the right path and given them advices to find the truth. He has also chosen some guides among them in order to present them the best living examples.



PROPHETS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE PROPHETS

Believing in the prophets is one of the six articles of faith. Believing in them is to believe that they were the messengers sent by Allah the Almighty and to accept that all of the messages they have brought are true. Denying the prophets means denying the religion. Because prophets are the ones who brought the religion, taught the Divine books, and delivered the messages that they got from Allah the Almighty.

We call those messengers who are responsible for delivering the commands and prohibitions of Allah to humanity. Our Lord Almighty appointed the first man Adam (peace be upon him) also as the first prophet. Adam conveyed Allah's messages to human beings. In time people forgot Allah and the Hereafter. And they went astray. And thus our Lord sent new messengers to warn them. Between the first prophet Adam and last one Muhammad (peace be upon them) there had been many prophets. In one of the sayings of our Prophet it is stated that 124000 prophets were sent. In the Noble Qur'an only the names of 25 of them are mentioned and Allah the Almighty gives us exemplary information about the lives of these prophets. The names of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an are:

Adam, Idris (Enoch), Noah, Hud (Eber), Saleh, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ayyub (Job), Shu'ayb, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elijah, Al-Yasa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Dhu'l-Kifl, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Muhammad (peace be upon them)

Allah the Almighty chose His prophets among human beings. They were like us. They ate, drank, worked, and acquired a profession. They got married and had children. They became sick and died. However, prophets were different than us by receiving revelation. They were special and blessed people chosen by Allah the Almighty to perform a mission. They were responsible to deliver the religion of Allah to humanity and to live in accordance with its principles.

When choosing His messengers, Allah the Almighty equipped them with some superior attributes. Through these attributes they were able to perform their mission in the best way. And they were also able to overcome the problems they faced. All prophets had these attributes. These characteristics, also known as "the attributes of the prophets," are:

Allah the Almighty says that:

"(We sent) messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against Allah after the (coming of) messengers..."

(al-Nisa 4; 165)

Allah the Almighty says that:

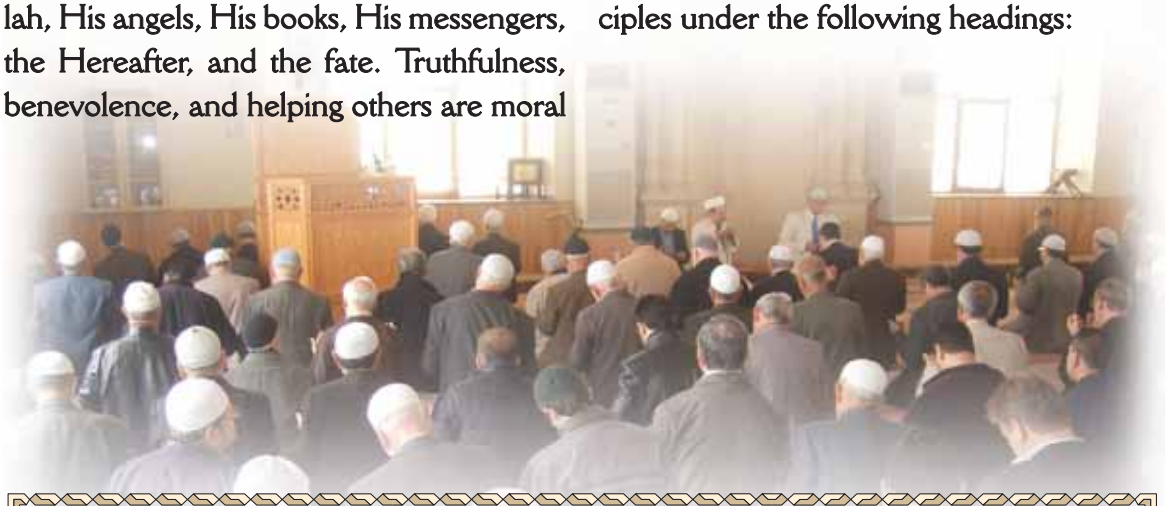
"...and there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past)."

(Fatir 35; 21)

Sidq	Attribute of sincerity, truthfulness, and veracity of the prophets in their speach and actions	Prophets never told lies in their lives. Truthfulness is an excellent attribute which is favored by the all of humanity. If one of our friends tells us a lie, we do not believe him/her anymore; but we trust and respect those who speak the truth. Therefore it is impossible to imagine someone who brings messages from God and does not speak the truth but rather tells lies all the time. In general people do not trust and take example from lying people whose words and acts do not match each other.
Amanat	Attribute of the trustworthiness of the prophets	Prophets are *"amin"* or trustworthy people. Because of this characteristic, people trust them both in their dealings in this world and in matters related to the religion. Because people trust prophets' words and behaviors, they listen to them and try to be like them.
Fatanat	Attribute of prophets' high intelligence and perception	By means of their strong wit, Prophets comprehended the revelation they received quickly. So they could give satisfactory responces to the questions of the people they talked.
Ismat	Attribute of not committing sins	Prophets never committed sins in their entire lives. It can never be thought about them that they associated partners to God, stole drank alcoholic beverages, or fornicated. People usually condemn people who are in such actions and do not take them as examples of their lives.
Tabligh	The Prophets' attribute of delivering all of the commands and prohibitions that they received from Allah to humanity	Every prophet conveyed fully the orders they received to humanity. Even if they faced sufferings and hardships, prophets never held back from fulfilling their mission. Many prophets were threatened by death because they were doing their mission. Some of them, such as Zechariah and John the Baptist, were even martyred.

COMMON MESSAGES OF THE PROPHETS

There are some unchanging and common principles in the messages of the prophets from the first man and the first prophet Adam to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them). All of the prophets advised people to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Hereafter, and the fate. Truthfulness, benevolence, and helping others are moral measures accepted by all of humanity since the creation of human beings. Telling lies, deceiving people, gambling, stealing, killing people, and giving damages to the society can be stated among the disapproved behaviors. We can enumerate the main principles under the following headings:



Protecting Religion	Religion is the most important element protecting the existence of a society. And the most significant requirement of a strong religion is to have belief in Allah. This is why all prophets invited their people to believe in the unity of Allah and to worship Him alone. *Tawhid* or the belief in the unity of Allah has been the common message of all prophets.
Protecting the life	Human life is sacred. Taking an innocent life is a great crime. As it is expressed in the Noble Qur'an "killing a person without a just cause is just like killing all of humanity.
Protecting the intellect	All kinds of foods and drinks which prevent someone to use his/her reason and think clearly are prohibited. This is why alcohol and narcotic drugs are banned in Islam.
Protecting the family	Raising faithful generations with good morals can only be achieved by protecting the family. This is why our religion prohibits all kinds of immoral acts, such as fornication, which causes destruction of families.
Protecting the property	Earning livelihood is accepted as sacred in the messages of the prophets. Property earned by one's own efforts and their right to acquire more is under this sacred protection. Harmful actions and behaviors, such as theft, usurpation, stealing, and bribery, are all banned in Islam.

THE THINGS THAT WE GAIN FROM BELIEVING IN THE PROPHETS

PROPHETS

- introduce us to the concept of Allah the Almighty
- teach us how to worship Allah.
- give us information about our eternal abode or the Hereafter
- become pioneers of the foundation of civilizations
- become the best examples for us by their good morals and behaviors

When we examine the universe, we can see the perfect order it has. We think that such a perfect order cannot come into existence just by coincidence. Thus we reach the conclusion that this universe and all beings in this universe have been created by a Creator. But we do not comprehend who this Creator is and what attributes this Creator has on our own. Our Lord Who knows us better than us have not withhold His help and mercy in this respect. He appointed some of His servants as His messengers. These messengers are our Divine guides and **they are the ones who introduce us to the concept of Allah the Almighty.**

Allah the Almighty said:

"(Abraham said to his people) surely they [idols] are enemies to me, but not (so) the Lord of the worlds; Who created me, then He has shown me the way: And He Who gives me to eat and gives me to drink: And when I am sick, then He heals me; And He Who will cause me to die, then gives me life (again)."

(al-Shuara 26; 77-81)

As a human being, we would like to know why we are in this world; and we would like to recognize ourselves and our Lord Who created us and everything in this universe. We feel the need to beg, pray, supplicate, and worship Him; whereas we cannot determine how to worship Him by ourselves. This is why our Lord appointed His messengers to fulfill this task. Prophets are the living examples showing us how to worship our Lord. They are the ones who **teach us how to worship Allah the Almighty.**

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"Perform the *prayer* as I do."

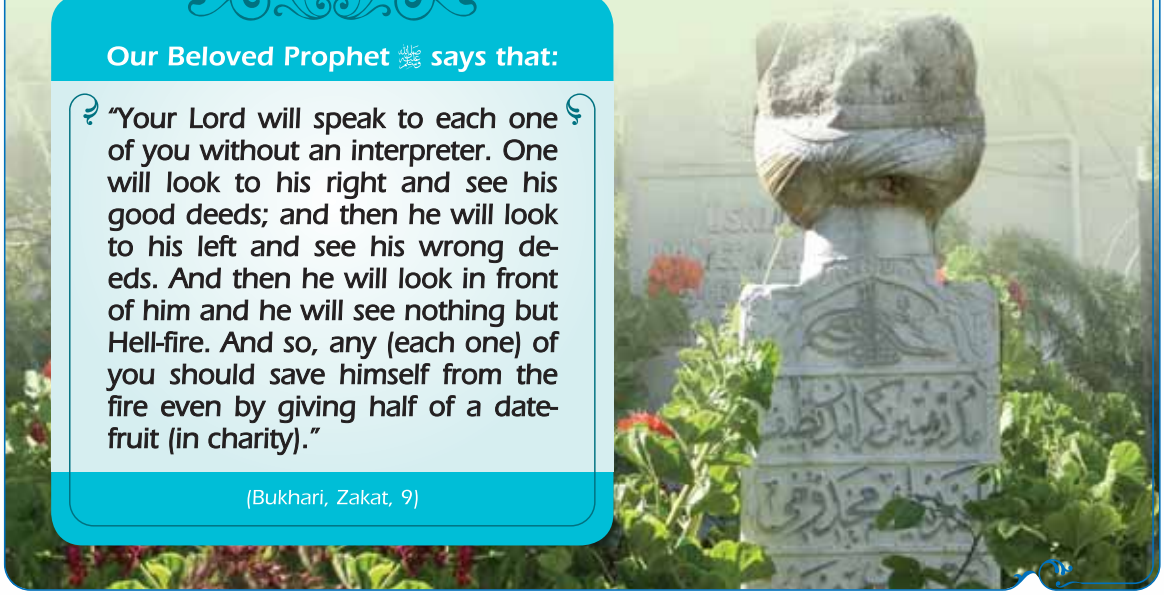
(Bukhari, Ahad, 1)

Sacred books and the prophets are our only source of knowledge about the life after death. Allah the Almighty sends us the information about the Hereafter through His messengers. Prophets give us information about the things that we will face in the Hereafter. They give the good news of rewards waiting for those who believe in Allah and do good deeds. They also warn those who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter by reminding us of the punishment waiting for them. Prophets are our guides in this world and they **give us information about our eternal abode or the Hereafter.**

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"Your Lord will speak to each one of you without an interpreter. One will look to his right and see his good deeds; and then he will look to his left and see his wrong deeds. And then he will look in front of him and he will see nothing but Hell-fire. And so, any (each one) of you should save himself from the fire even by giving half of a date-fruit (in charity)."

(Bukhari, Zakat, 9)



Prophets were leaders and their leadership was supported by the revelation. And they dealt with art, agriculture, trade, and various other occupations. Thus they made contributions to culture and civilization. They **became pioneers of the foundation of civilizations** in which people have lived in peace and tranquility. They tried to make their followers happy both in this world and in the Hereafter. Among the examples given by the Holy Qur'an are that Noah (peace be upon him) knew how to build ships and David (peace be upon him) knew how to melt and use iron."

Allah the Almighty said:

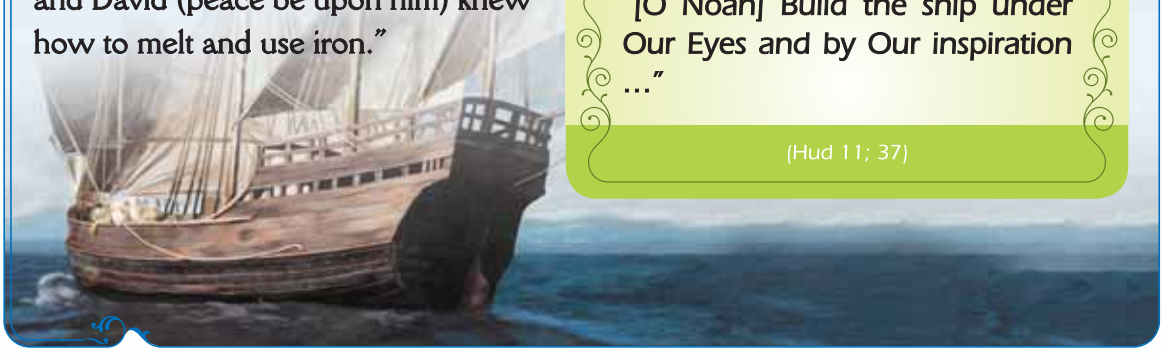
"... And We made the iron soft for him [David]; Saying: Make ample (coats of mail), and assign a time to the making of coats of mail and do good; ..."

(Sebe sûresi, 10-11. âyetler)

Allah the Almighty said:

"[O Noah] Build the ship under Our Eyes and by Our inspiration ..."

(Hud 11; 37)



Our family and environment have a great effect in forming our manners and behaviors. Since our childhood we take our fathers, mothers, teachers, our elders, and our beloved ones as examples in our lives. We get affected by their actions and try to behave like them. Our Lord Almighty has sent His prophets to be our role models. Prophets teach us the truth, justice, honesty, industriousness, mercy, clemency, forgiveness, and compassion. **They have become the best examples for us by their good morals and behaviors.**

Allah the Almighty said:

"There was indeed in them an excellent example for you to follow ..."

(Mumtahina 60; 6)

THE BEST EXAMPLES FOR US ARE FOUND IN THE LIVES OF THE PROPHETS

Allah the Almighty has presented the lives and good morals of the prophets as the best examples for the entire human beings.

Stories of the prophets stated in the Qur'an are also the evidences of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him); because he was an *ummi* prophet (who cannot read and write). It was impossible for someone who cannot read and write to narrate such accurate information about the lives of the prophets who had lived centuries ago. He must have learned this information from a reliable source or it must have been taught to him. This source was Allah the Almighty and His revelation. This fact is expressed in the Qur'an as follows:

"And certainly We sent messengers before you: there are some of them that We have mentioned to you and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you ..." (Mu'min 40; 78)

Now let's briefly see some prophets' exemplary lives mentioned in the Qur'an:

Allah the Almighty said:

"In their [prophets] stories verily there is a lesson for men of understanding...."

(Yusuf 12; 111)

Adam (peace be upon him)

He is the first human being and the first prophet. Allah the Almighty taught him the names of everything and how to talk. Allah the Almighty ordered His angels to prostrate before Adam as a sign of respect. All angels respectfully bowed down before him, but Satan did not obey this order out of jealousy. Satan vowed to make people deviate from the straight path. Allah the Exalted has given him the permission to live till Judgment Day and warned people to be careful about his traps. Adam and his wife Eve were deceived by Satan and ate from the forbidden fruit when they were living in Paradise. And consequently they were sent down to earth. Adam and Eve soon realized their mistake by being deceived with the words of Satan. They immediately repented for their disobedience. They shed tears for many years. Begging for forgiveness they prostrated before Allah the Almighty. Finally Allah the Almighty accepted their repentance and forgave them.

Adam's life is very important to understand the most honorable human being and his value in the presence of Allah. The forgiveness shown to Adam (peace be upon him) by Allah after eating the forbidden fruit is a sign of Allah's mercy to His servants. In this way our Lord Almighty has taught human beings

Adam (peace be upon him) is the best example for us to repent for our sins and ask forgiveness from Allah.

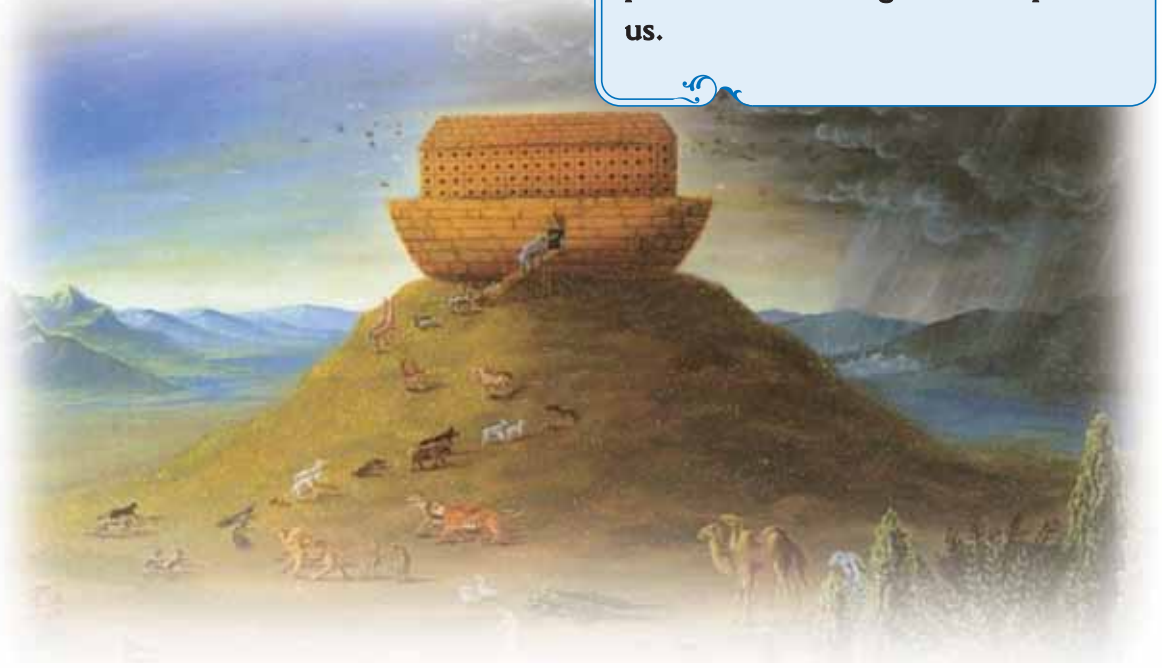
Noah (peace be upon him)

Noah (peace be upon him) is one of the prophets appointed by Allah as a guide to show the right path to humanity. People of Noah (peace be upon him) had deviated from the path shown by the earlier prophets. Strong people had been oppressing the weak ones. People had begun to worship the idols made by their own hands. Noah invited them back to faith in the unity of Allah. He tried everything to show his people the right path and to make them worship Allah. His people insulted and mocked him, but he never held back from performing his mission. He tried to teach people the religion of Allah for 950 years. Day and night he preached to people about the truth. He tried every possible way to show people the right path, but less than a hundred people believed in him.

Unbelievers had many discussions with him. They did everything to torture him. When Noah (peace be upon him) frightened them by the punishment of Allah, they ridiculed him saying: "O Noah! Now bring upon us what you have threatened us with, if you have spoken the truth."

Noah was very sad for what his people were doing. In the end Allah the Almighty ordered him to build a ship and get those who believed in him and one couple from each animal species onto the ship. Then it began to rain for months. Water covered the entire world. Noah and the people believed in him were saved from the Flood by getting on the Ark; while those who did not believe in him and mocked him by saying "bring upon us what you have threatened us with" were drowned in the Flood. After the rain stopped, Noah's Ark rested upon the Mount Judi. Noah (peace be upon him) and those who were with him safely got off the ship. These people and the other animals spread around the world and began to procreate. This is why Noah (peace be upon him) is called the "second father of humanity."

Noah's efforts and patience on the path of truth is a good example for us.



Abraham (peace be upon him)

Prophet Abraham is a great prophet called by Allah as **"Khalil or friend."** At the very early ages Abraham began to preach to people about the existence and oneness of Allah. People of Babylon beginning with his father Azar, however, did not believe in him. Even though his father insulted and drove him away, he treated his father nicely.

Abraham fought with Nimrod the king of his time. Trusting his wealth and sovereignty Nimrod had declared himself as god. He was torturing those who did not accept his claims. Abraham (peace be upon him) invited Nimrod to the true religion. He tried to convince Nimrod to give up his claims of being a god. He asked Nimrod to believe in Allah Who creates everything from nothingness, kills everything and then gives their life back. Nimrod claimed that he could do the same. Then he called two men and had one of them killed and freed the other one. "Look! I kill and give life" said he. This time Abraham told him:

- "Allah makes the sun rise from the East, why don't you make it rise from the West?" Nimrod was astonished upon this question.

It was a festival day. People had gone for festival events. Abraham knew that this was his chance, so he went into the house of idols. He broke all idols into pieces except the biggest one. Then he hung his ax on its shoulder.

When people came back from the festival, they became very upset to see what had happened in the house of their idols. They remembered Abraham and what he had told them about their idols. So they called Abraham and asked:



- "O Abraham! Are you the one who did this to our gods?" Abraham (peace be upon him) replied:

- "Maybe this big one did this to the others. Ask it if it can talk." People had to profess that idols were lifeless beings and they were unable to talk. Thereupon Abraham reminded them the faith in oneness of Allah saying:

- "Then why do you turn away from the one and only God and worship these idols that may give neither benefit nor harm to you? Shame on you and shame on those which you worship! Aren't you going to come to your senses?"

Even though idol worshippers had no response to give this reasonable question, they did not abandon their wrong path. They decided to throw and burn Abraham in fire.

A big bonfire got prepared. Abraham (peace be upon him) was thrown into it through a catapult. However Allah the Owner of everything commanded the fire saying: **"O fire, be coolness and peace for Abraham."** (al-Anbiya 21; 69) The Fire obeyed this order and did not burn Abraham. People were amazed by seeing that the fire had not burned him.

After this incident, Abraham left Babylon and went to Egypt and Jerusalem. He settled in Jerusalem with his wife Sarah. He had his other wife Hagar and his son Ishmael settle in the valley of Mecca. Then together with his son Ishmael he built Qa'bah in Mecca. Unity (oneness of Allah or tawhid) was the basis of the religion brought by Abraham (peace be upon him).

Abraham (peace be upon him) is a good example for us as far as examining the perfect order of the universe and then perceiving the existence of Allah.

Joseph (peace be upon him)

Joseph was one of the sons of Jacob (peace be upon them). He was a very handsome and intelligent boy. When he was a kid, his brothers were jealous of him and threw him into a well in the desert. Then they lied to their father, saying "Joseph had been eaten by a wolf." A caravan pulling water out of the well found Joseph, took him to the palace of Egypt's ruler and sold him as a slave. He was slandered in the palace and innocently sent to prison. Joseph (peace be upon him) stayed in prison during the best years of his youth.



Allah the Almighty bestowed upon Joseph the ability to interpret dreams. He was interpreting his prison-mates' dreams and inviting them to believe in the oneness of Allah and the Hereafter. One night the ruler of Egypt saw an interesting dream. Nobody could interpret his dream. An excellmate of Joseph told the ruler of Egypt that Joseph (peace be upon him) might be able to interpret his dream. Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) interpreted the ruler's dream very well. He said that there was going to be a great famine in the future, but people could survive through it with the help of some precautions. The ruler liked this interpretation. Just then he learned that Joseph was innocently sent to prison. So he got Joseph out of the prison and gave him the responsibility of his treasures.

Joseph (peace be upon him) recognized his brothers who came to Egypt to take some wheat during the years of famine. He invited his parents and brothers to Egypt to live with him. He showed the greatness of forgiveness and kindness.

Prophet Joseph's life story is the best narrative in the Qur'an. The chapter about Joseph (12) deals with some emotional states such as separation and union which every human being may experience in their lives. It also talks about how jealousy can lead people to evil. The ill results of slandering are also expressed in that chapter.

Prophet Joseph is a nice example for us about forgiving those who harm us and responding to evil with kindness.

Moses (peace be upon him)

Moses (peace be upon him) is among the prophets sent by Allah the Almighty to the sons of Israel.

The sons of Israel, who come from the Prophet Jacob's lineage, had settled down in Egypt during the time of Prophet Joseph. In time they had lost their repute in Egypt and begun to be treated like slaves.

Egyptian rulers used to be called as pharaohs. The pharaoh who ruled Egypt at the time when Moses was born passed a cruel period. He decreed that all the sons born to an Israelite parent would be put to death. Allah the Almighty commanded Moses' mother to place her baby into a basket and cast it into the Nile. Allah informed her that her son was going to be raised in the palace and become a prophet in the future. Thus Moses' mother put him in a basket and cast it into the river. Pharaoh's wife found the basket and took it to the palace. Thus Pharaoh was going to raise the person who was going to stand in front of his wrong deeds and preach to him about Allah in his own palace.

Moses' childhood passed in the palace. During his adolescence, he left Egypt for a while, went and lived with the prophet Jethro in Madyan. On his way back to Egypt, with his wife and family, he received the first revelations from Allah on the Mount Sinai. Thus he was chosen as a prophet and bestowed various miracles. He was also commanded to perform his prayers and invite Pharaoh to the right path. His brother Aaron was appointed as his assistant.



Moses, together with his brother Aaron (peace be upon them), stood against the cruel Pharaoh and told him about Allah and His orders. Pharaoh was an arrogant and snooty person. He thought that he owned all the power and revolted against Allah. Moses showed some miracles to make him believe; but Pharaoh did not believe in these miracles saying they were acts of sorcery. Then he asked him to compete with his magicians. Moses (peace be upon him) accepted this offer. Pharaoh's magicians threw their ropes and staffs on the ground. They deceived their audience and their ropes and staffs appeared like serpents. Moses threw his staff on the ground, too. And it turned into a bigger serpent which swallowed all the other serpents. The magicians were wonderstruck and at once prostrated themselves, declaring that they believed in Allah. Pharaoh threatened them, but they did not turn back from their faith. They were martyred by having their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides.

When the sons of Israel realized that Pharaoh was planning to kill Moses and all of his believers, they left Egypt under the leadership of Moses (peace be upon him). Moses and the sons of Israel were stuck between the Red Sea in front of them and Pharaoh's army behind them. Allah the Almighty created a miracle and split the Sea in two and opened a path for the believers to pass. After the believers had passed through the path, Pharaoh and his men attempted to pursue them along the same path. As soon as Pharaoh and his men set foot on the path, however, it vanished, and they were drowned in the Sea.

Moses (peace be upon him) fought against Pharaoh and the sons of Israel were able to escape from Pharaoh's tortures/ Moses spent the rest of his life by teaching the Torah and its principles to the sons of Israel.

The life of Moses (peace be upon him) is a nice example for us to learn how to fight with oppressive and ungrateful people.

Jesus (peace be upon him)

Jesus' mother Mary was a member of the family of Imran who were presented to humanity as an example by Allah the Almighty. Imran's wife Hannah dedicated the baby she had been expecting to the path of Allah. When her baby was born, Hannah named her Mary. Then she kept her promise and gave her daughter to the service of al-Aqsa mosque. Mary was raised as a chaste woman under the care of her aunt's husband Zachariah.

Mary used to spend her time by worshipping in a chamber reserved for her in al-Aqsa mosque and by taking care of the sanitation of the mosque. One day Gabriel came to Mary and told her that Allah the Almighty was going to give her a boy. Mary expressed her chastity and asked how such a thing could be possible since she was a virgin. Gabriel told her that whenever Allah wishes something it happens instantly. Thus Jesus (peace be upon him) was **born miraculously without a father.**

The sons of Israel did not believe the virgin birth of Jesus and reproached Mary saying "she did something to be ashamed." Thereupon our mother Mary pointed at her newborn son and asked people to talk to him. No sooner did the sons of Israel say that babies could not talk than another miracle happened and the baby began to talk:

"He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live; And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed; And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life. Such was Jesus, son of Mary, (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a thing, He says unto it only: Be! And it is. And surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path." (Maryam 19; 30-36)

Just like Allah the Almighty created Adam without a father and mother, He created Jesus without a father. At the age of thirty, Jesus (peace be upon him) was given the mission of prophethood and various miracles. But still only a few people, called hawaris or disciples, believed in him.

Jews wanted to prevent Jesus and his disciples to conveying their message; so they decided from kill him. Allah the Almighty, however, saved him from them. Jews caught and crucified someone who looked like Jesus (peace be upon him). Then they said that they killed Jesus son of Mary; whereas they had not killed Jesus but some other man. Allah the Almighty had raised him up unto the heavens.

There are many good examples for us in Jesus' good manners, his mercy, his eagerness to spread friendship among people and to purify the souls.

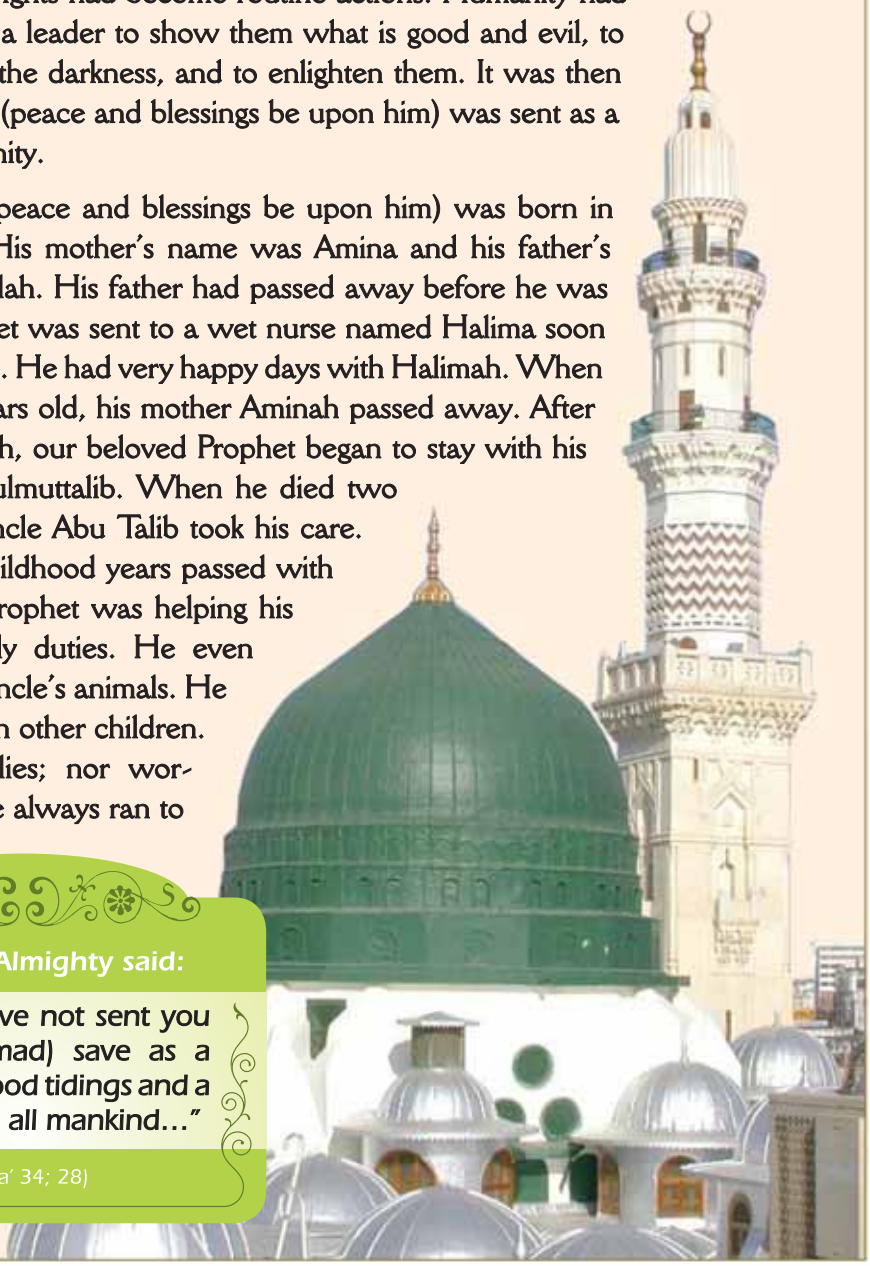


Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)

Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is the last one of the messengers of Allah. Our Lord Almighty states that he is the final prophet saying in surat Ahzab (33) verse 40: **"...but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..."**

Before Muhammad (peace be upon him) was appointed as a Messenger of Allah, people had deviated from the right path. Morality had degenerated. Oppression and injustice had been widespread. The strong had been tyrannizing over the weak. People had been addicted to alcoholic beverages and gambling. Stealing and usurping others' rights had become routine actions. Humanity had been waiting for a leader to show them what is good and evil, to pull them out of the darkness, and to enlighten them. It was then that Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was sent as a prophet to humanity.

Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was born in Mecca in 571. His mother's name was Amina and his father's name was Abdullah. His father had passed away before he was born. Our Prophet was sent to a wet nurse named Halima soon after he was born. He had very happy days with Halimah. When he was seven years old, his mother Aminah passed away. After his mother's death, our beloved Prophet began to stay with his grandfather Abdulmuttalib. When he died two years later, his uncle Abu Talib took his care. Our Prophet's childhood years passed with his uncle. Our Prophet was helping his uncle in his daily duties. He even shepherded his uncle's animals. He was different than other children. He never told lies; nor worshipped idols. He always ran to



Allah the Almighty said:

"And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind..."

(Saba' 34; 28)

help others. He won everybody's trust. This was why an angel named him as "Muhammad al-Amin or Muhammad the trustworthy."

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did business with his uncle Abu Talib during his adolescence. When he reached the age of twenty five, he married Khadijah.

When our beloved Prophet reached the age of forty, he began to frequently retire in a cave called Hira near Mecca. One day in the month of Ramadan when he was in the cave of Hira, Archangel Gabriel (peace be upon him) came to him and informed him that he was chosen as a messenger of Allah. Our Prophet told everything to his wife Khadijah. She immediately believed in him. After that Khadijah, Ali, Abu Bakr, and Zaid (may Allah be pleased with them) became Muslims.

Then our Prophet invited the Meccans to Islam. Although some of them believed in him, most of them did not. They even began to torture the believers. Allah's Messenger and those that believed in him showed patience in the face of all kinds of tortures. The Prophet's mission in Mecca continued for thirteen years.

In order to live in accordance with Islam and to convey its message, our Prophet and his believers migrated to Medina in 622. Our Prophet stayed in Medina for ten years. In these years believers built a mosque in Medina. The Prophet (peace be upon him) declared a state of brotherhood between Medinan believers (Ansar or helpers) and Meccan migrants (muhajirun). Qur'anic verses related to social life were revealed during this period. Similarly many acts of worship, such as almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage, were declared obligatory during this period.

Our Prophet (peace be upon him) sent messengers to the rulers of neighboring countries and invited them to Islam. In 630, he conquered Mecca and destroyed all the idols in the Ka'bah. Islam spread all around Arabian Peninsula. In 632 he performed the farewell pilgrimage and gave his famous speech consisting of very important messages to humanity. In the same year, when he was sixty three years old, he passed away in Medina.

Our beloved Prophet is the most eminent servant of Allah the Almighty. Our Lord Almighty praised his morals and commanded us in the Qur'an to take him as an example in every aspect of our lives saying: **"Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much."** (Ahzab 33; 21)



Our beloved Prophet is an exemplary person who combines in himself the good morals and behaviors of all of the prophets.

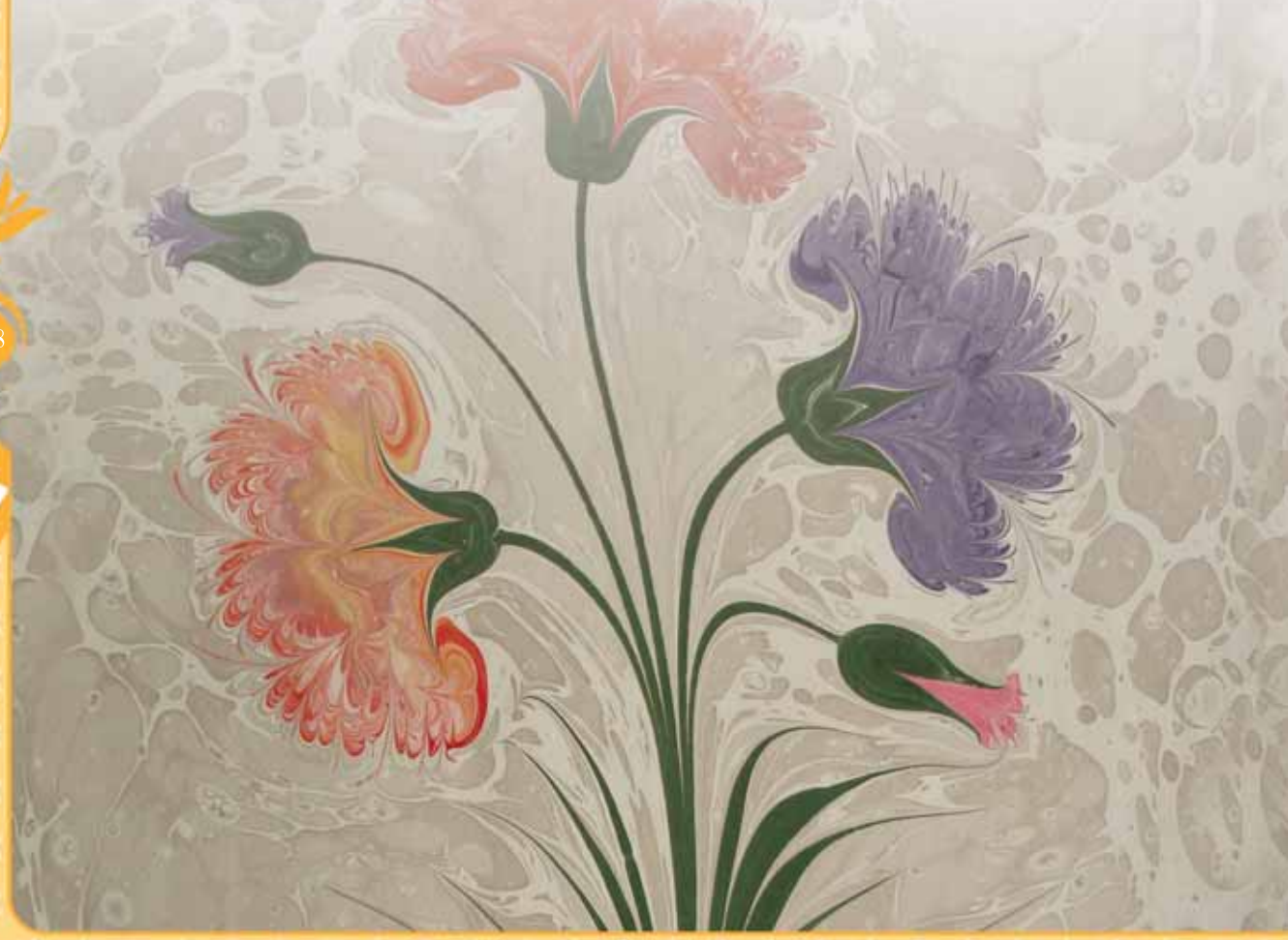
O Lord! The Creator of all creation on earth and in heavens! You have chosen prophets among human beings and sent them to us as examples. We have opened our hands to You and we are begging You! Dear Lord! Bestow upon us the happiness to be servants like

		Peace be upon him
Adam	who sincerely repented of his sins	
Idris (Enoch)	who has been made to ascend to a high level	
Noah	who did everything to convey your religion	
Hud (Eber)	who stood by the oppressed and needy against the oppressors	
Saleh	who visited the sick and took care of the poor and the needy	
Lut (Lot)	who tried to prevent immorality	
Abraham	who sincerely obeyed Your orders	
Ishmael	who showed the courage to give his life for Your sake	
Ishaq (Isaac)	who showed people the straight path	
Ya'qub (Jacob)	who did not give up his hope in You	
Yusuf (Joseph)	who was chaste	
Shu'ayb	who was trustworthy	
Moses	who did not hesitate to tell the truth to the oppressors and ungrateful	
Aaron	who helped the followers of the right path	
David	who was eager to worship You	
Sulaiman (Solomon)	who spent all his possession on Your path	
Ayyub (Job)	who was patient	
Dhu'l kifl	who was remembered among the good people in Your presence	
Yunus (Jonah)	who remembered You in both wealth and poverty	
Ilyas (Elijah)	who remembered You with goodness	
Al-yasa (Elijah)	who was among the righteous	
Zachariah	who prayed to You sincerely	
Yahya (John the Baptist)	who became a martyr on Your path	
Jesus	who purified his soul from evil	
Muhammad	who beautified his morality with the morals of the Qur'an	

OUR PROPHET IN RELATION TO THE OTHER PROPHETS

Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) is the final prophet sent to humanity. While earlier prophets were sent to specific people or nations of their time, **our Prophet has been sent to the all of humanity including those to come till the Last Day**. This is why our Prophet sent letters and messengers to some countries and regions in his life time to convey the message of Islam. For instance he invited the rulers of the two powerful empires of the day, Persia and Byzantium. He asked them to convert to Islam together with their people. Today conveying his sacred message to the entire world and delivering it to people is the responsibility of his followers.

The prophets chosen by Allah the Almighty worked hard for the happiness of the people. Saying that "our reward is given only by Allah" **they did not ask any compensation from anybody for their mission**. Our beloved prophet, too, perfectly fulfilled his mission and exactly lived according to the life style ordered in the Noble Qur'an. He showed the utmost effort and made all kinds of sacrifices for the sake of his mission. And he founded a peaceful and exemplary society in the light of the verses of the Qur'an.



It is the mission of the prophets to invite people to Allah and to show them the straight path. We read the lives of the prophets and what they did for humanity from the Noble Qur'an. And we also learn timeless truths and good manners. **All prophets are messengers coming from the same source and inviting to the same message**. Our beloved prophet expressed that "all prophets come from the same source; their religion is the same religion, and their relation to each other is like the siblings of the same mother." This is why all messengers of Allah, from Adam to Muhammad (peace be upon them), verified and supported each other's message. No prophet contradicted other prophets. Our beloved prophet explains by means of the following example how all prophets verified each other's message:

"My similitude in comparison with the other prophets before me, is that of a man who has built a house nicely and beautifully, except for a place of one brick in a corner. The people go about it and wonder at its beauty, but say: "Would it not be better if this brick be put in its place?" So I am that brick, and I am the last of the Prophets."
(Bukhari, Manaqib, 18)

Our beloved prophet would remember the earlier prophets with love and respect. When he mentioned their names, he would add expressions of "prophet of Allah" or "my brother." For instance once when he was talking about Moses, he started his words saying "my brother Moses." On his way back from Taif, he asked the Christian slave Addas where he was from. When he responded that he was from Ninova (Mosul), the Prophet told Addas "are you from my brother Jonah's town?" and then he complemented Addas and invited him to the believe in the unity of Allah. Addas responded his invitation affirmatively and converted to Islam.

Allah the Almighty said:

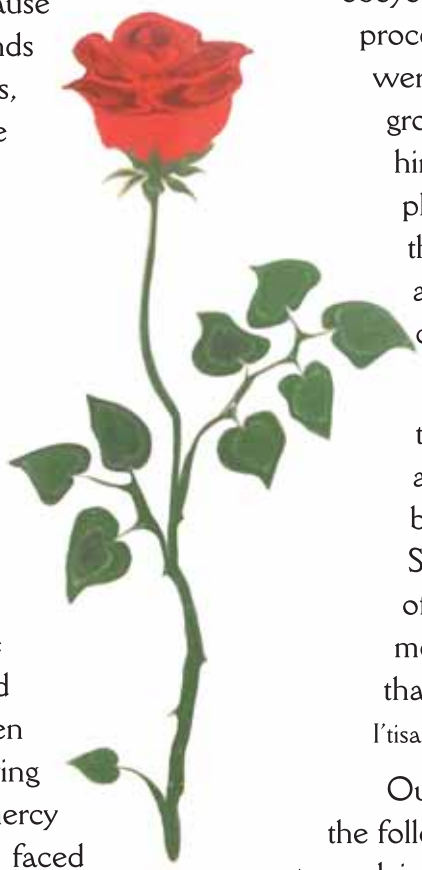
"Say: Obey Allah and obey the messenger. But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and your responsibility is what placed on you. If you obey him, you are on the right way. But the messenger has no other responsibility than to convey (the message), plainly."

(Nur 24; 54)

Our beloved Prophet would give examples from the lives of earlier prophets. He encouraged his ummah to follow these examples and to live a pure life like the prophets had. For instance he gave Prophet David as an example, who had earned his life by manual labor, and expressed that **"the best earning is the one that one earns by his own hands."** The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) advised those who would like to fast more than the month of Ramadan to fast like David (peace be upon him); for he used to fast on the alternate days.

Our beloved Prophet used to narrate to his companions the interesting stories experienced by the earlier prophets. He

asked people to derive lessons from the prophets' lives and the treatment of the people whom they invited to accept their message. **Our prophet would also talk about the sufferings and the hardships that the prophets experienced during their mission and present their patience and struggle as examples.** In this way he would console the believers who were being oppressed because of their faith. Facing all kinds of sufferings and hardships, our beloved prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) himself also got consoled by remembering what had happened to the earlier prophets. While distributing the war booty after the battle of Hunain, some people complained and told the Prophet to be fair. These words hurt the prophet's feelings very much and he said: "If I were not a just person, who could be considered just?" Then he consoled himself saying that "may Allah show mercy to Moses. Even though he faced worse maltreatments than this, he still maintained his patience.



Our beloved prophet also stated that the prophets' mission has been to work for the salvation of humanity. **He expressed the significance of obeying the prophets and following the divine commands that were brought by them.** He once compared the prophets to a man who brought an important message to his people saying:

"My example and the example of Islam that I have been sent with is that of a man who came to some people and said,

— O people! I have seen the enemy's army with my own eyes, and I am a naked warner; so protect yourselves and save your lives."

Then a group of his people obeyed him and fled at night proceeding stealthily till they were safe, while another group of them disbelieved him and stayed at their places till morning when the army came upon them, and killed and ruined them completely.

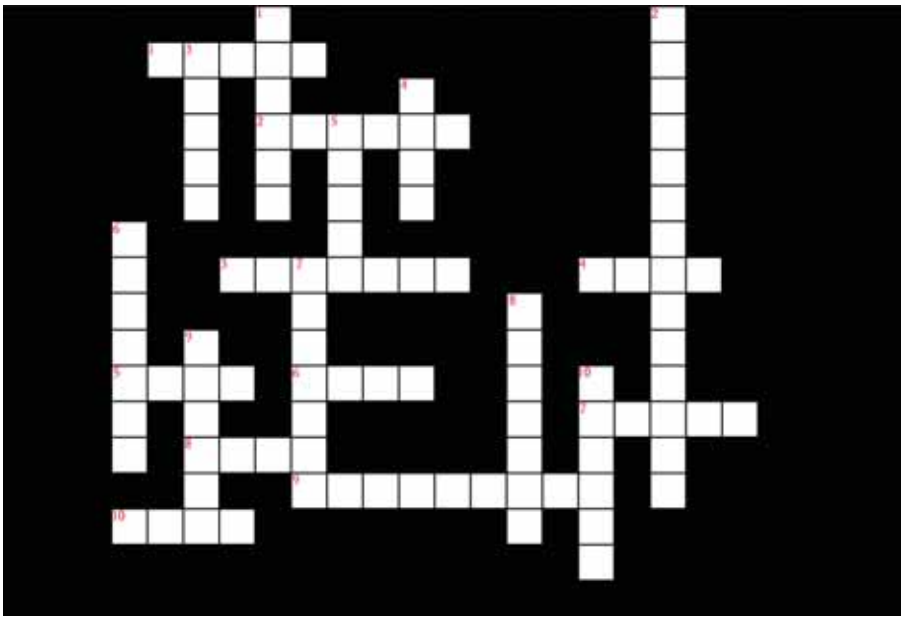
So this is the example of that person who obeys me and follows what I have brought (the Quran and the Sunna), and the example of the one who disobeys me and disbelieves the truth that I have brought." (Bukhari, I'tisam, 2)

Our beloved prophet makes the following comparison in order to explain that the prophets work for the good of humanity:

"My example and your example is that of a person who lit the fire and when insects and moths began to fall in it, he would be making efforts to keep them out. And I am holding you from your belts to keep you back from the fire, but you are trying to escape from my hands and go into the fire." (Muslim, Fada'il, 19)

QUESTIONS

Crossword Puzzle





Across

1. The term used for the being that was expelled from the Paradise and Allah's Mercy since he did not bowed down before Adam
2. The Arabic term used for the trustworthiness of the Prophets
3. The Arabic term used for ancient Egyptian Kings
4. The Arabic term used for Prophets' righteousness in their words and actions
5. The name of the Prophet who saved Humans from the Flood and is accepted as "the second father of humanity"
6. The name of the first human being and the first Prophet
7. The Arabic term used for the sinlessness of the Prophets
8. The name of the cave where the first revelation came to the Prophet (PBUH)
9. The Arabic term used for people who were given the responsibility to take Allah's messages to the humanity
10. The name of the mountain on which Prophet Noah's ark grounded after the Flood

Down

01. The term used for the early believers of Prophet Jesus
02. The nickname given to the Prophet Muhammad by Meccans because of his honesty and trustworthiness
03. The name of the Prophet who has become an example to entire the humanity by his patience
04. The Name of Jesus' Mother
05. The Arabic term used for the Medinan Muslims who helped Meccan immigrants
06. The Arabic term used for Prophets' high intelligence and deep cognizance
07. The name of the Prophet who was called by Allah as "His friend (Khalilullah)"
08. The Arabic term used for the Prophets' attribute to take Allah's messages to the humanity
09. The Arabic term used for the unity of Allah and the common message of His Messengers
10. The name of the king who lived during the time of Prophet Abraham and claimed himself as god because of his enormous wealth and power

Find the Correct Match

1	Denying the prophets		the unity of Allah and to worship Him alone.
2	Prophets were responsible to deliver the religion of Allah to humanity		**the earlier prophets with love and respect.**
3	Even if they faced all kinds of sufferings and hardships,		is a sign of Allah's mercy to His servants.
4	All prophets invited their people to believe in		**about forgiving those who harm us and responding evil with kindness.**
5	Our Lord Almighty has sent His prophets		and to live in accordance with its principles.
6	Forgiving Adam after eating the forbidden fruit		to be our role models.
7	**Our beloved prophet would remember**		prophets never held back from fulfilling their mission.
8	**Prophet Joseph is a nice example for us**		means denying the religion.

Let's Test Ourselves

1. What do we call a person who receives revelation from Allah, delivers the commands and prohibitions to humanity, and invites people to the straight path?

A) Teacher

B) Scholar

C) Prophet

D) Friend of Allah

2. What does "sidq" mean?

A) Sincerity, truthfulness, and veracity of the prophets

B) Not to commit any sin

C) To be intelligent and perceptive

D) To be trustworthy

3. What is the greatest miracle of the Prophet Muhammad?

A) The incident of Isra (the night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem)

B) The Noble Qur'an

C) Splitting the moon in half

D) The incident of Mi'raj (ascension to heavens)

4. Which attribute is about the prophets' intelligence and perception?

A) Amanat

B) Fatanat

C) Ismat

D) Sidq

5. What do we call the extraordinary actions of the prophets which they showed to prove their prophethood?

A) Miracle

B) Magic

C) Wonder

D) Prophecy

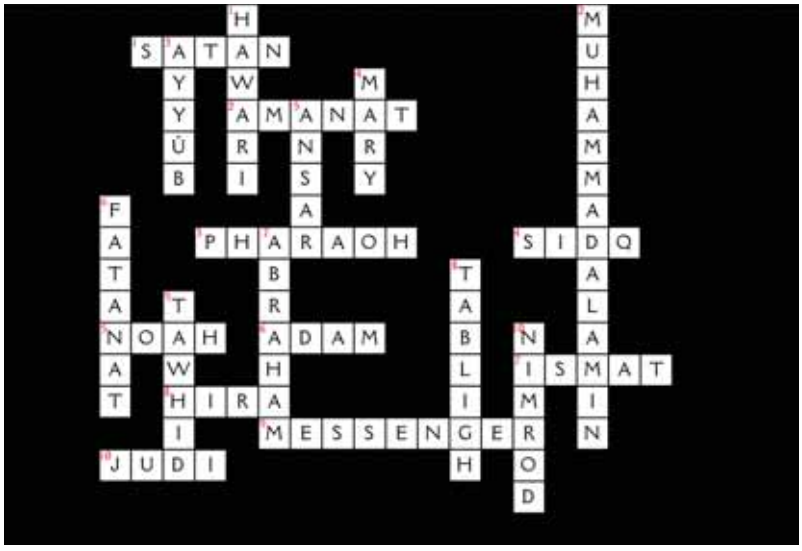
Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

(Prayer, follow, leaders, good news, a lesson, an excellent example, a plea, understanding, our command, I do)

1. "And we made the prophets ……., guiding men by ……." (al-Anbiya 21; 73)
2. "(We sent) messengers as the givers of ……. and as warners, so that people should not have …….against Allah after the (coming of) messengers" (al-Nisa 4; 165)
3. "There was indeed in them …….. for you to……." (Mumtahina 60; 6)
4. "In their [prophets] stories verily there is ……for men of ……" (Yusuf 12; 111)
5. "Perform the ….. as ……." (Bukhari, Ahad, 1)

ANSWERS

Let's solve a crossword puzzle





Find the Correct Match

1	Denying the prophets	**4**	the unity of Allah and to worship Him alone.
2	Prophets were responsible to deliver the religion of Allah to humanity	**7**	**the earlier prophets with love and respect.**
3	Even if they faced all kinds of sufferings and hardships,	**6**	is a sign of Allah's mercy to His servants.
4	All prophets invited their people to believe in	**8**	**about forgiving those who harm us and responding evil with kindness.**
5	Our Lord Almighty has sent His prophets	**2**	and to live in accordance with its principles.
6	Forgiving Adam after eating the forbidden fruit	**5**	to be our role models.
7	**Our beloved prophet would remember**	**3**	prophets never held back from fulfilling their mission.
8	**Prophet Joseph is a nice example for us**	**1**	means denying the religion.

Let's Test Ourselves

1: C

2: A

3: B

4: B

5: A

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

1: "And we made the prophets leaders, guiding men by our command…" (al-Anbiya 21; 73)

2: "(We sent) messengers as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against Allah after the (coming of) messengers" (al-Nisa 4; 165)

3: "There was indeed in them an excellent example for you to follow" (Mumtahina 60; 6)

4: "In their [prophets] stories verily there is a lesson for men of understanding" (Yusuf 12; 111)

5: "Perform the prayer as I do" (Bukhari, Ahad, 1)

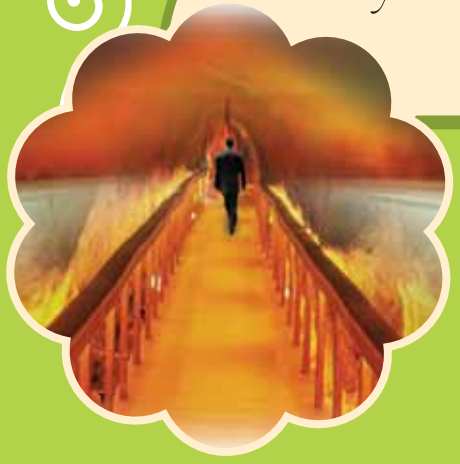




OUR REAL LIFE

FAITH IN THE HEREAFTER

- *The Truth about the Life of this world*
- *Death and Grave*
- *Judgment Day and Resurrection*
- *The Life in the Hereafter*
- *The Things That We Gain from the Faith in the Hereafter*
- *The Balance of This World and the Hereafter in the Life of Our Prophet*





ETERNAL LIFE

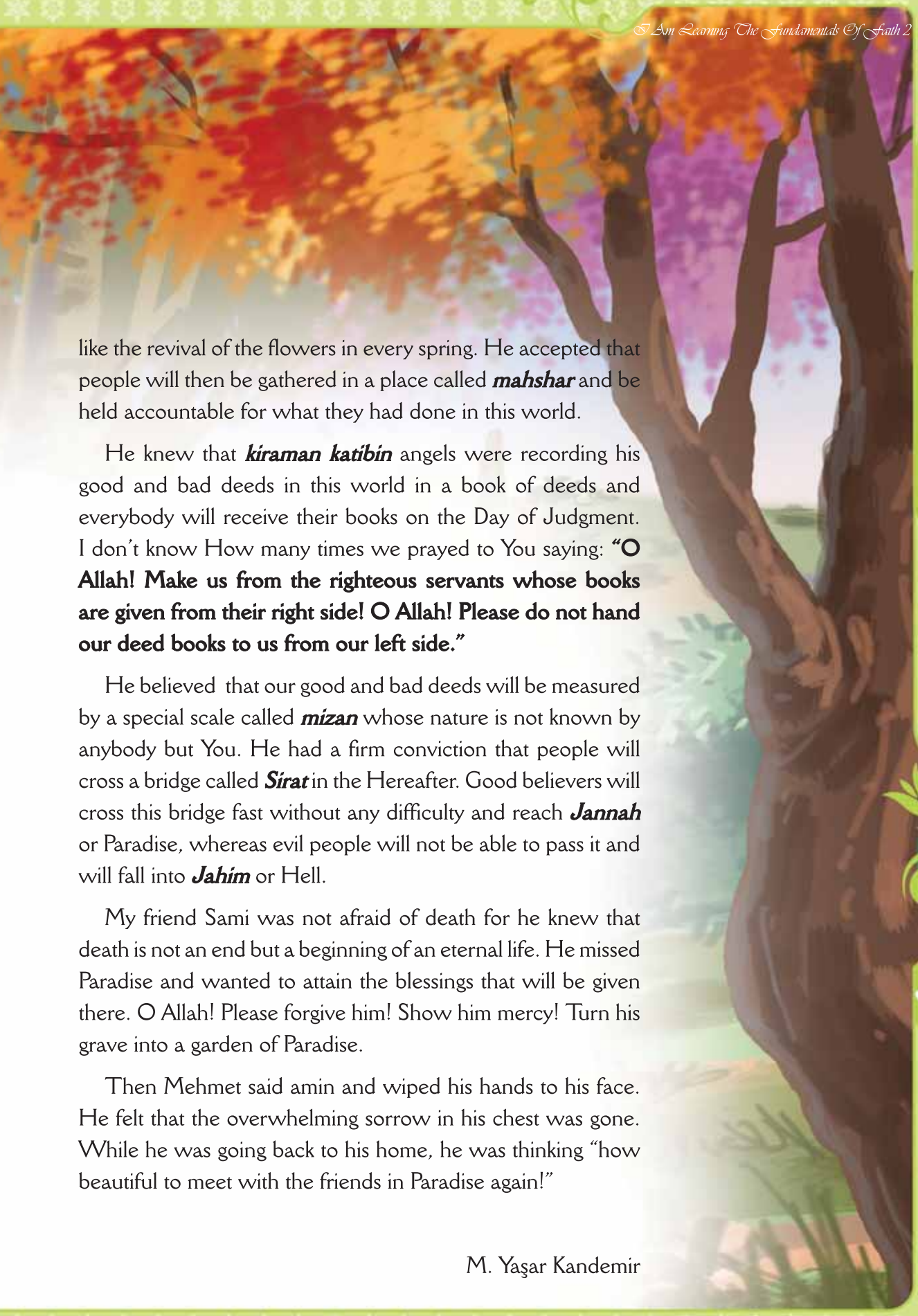
It was a day in fall…. Because of the fallen leaves trees looked half naked. Listening to the rustling leaves Mehmet was walking towards Beşçamlar. He sadly remembered the days when he and his friend Sami, who had passed away and been buried the previous week, walked happily through this road. A deep feeling of sadness overwhelmed him. His eyes filled with tears for grief. He felt all alone under Beşçamlar. Mehmet stared at the skies and said:

"Dear Lord! My friend Sami did certainly believe in the life of the Hereafter. He knew that:

"the life in the grave will begin after death; and first angels of **Munkar** and **Nakir** will come and question the deceased and they will ask: **"who is your Lord? which religion do you believe in? what is the name of your prophet?"** We used to repeat together our answers to these questions saying: **"Allah is my Lord; Islam is my religion; and Muhammad is my prophet."**

He believed that an angel named Israfil will blow the last trumpet, everything will be annihilated and Judgment Day will begin. He also believed that by Your order, O Lord, the last trumpet will be blown for a second time and all people will be resurrected and raised from their graves just





like the revival of the flowers in every spring. He accepted that people will then be gathered in a place called ***mahshar*** and be held accountable for what they had done in this world.

He knew that ***kiraman katibin*** angels were recording his good and bad deeds in this world in a book of deeds and everybody will receive their books on the Day of Judgment. I don't know How many times we prayed to You saying: **"O Allah! Make us from the righteous servants whose books are given from their right side! O Allah! Please do not hand our deed books to us from our left side."**

He believed that our good and bad deeds will be measured by a special scale called ***mizan*** whose nature is not known by anybody but You. He had a firm conviction that people will cross a bridge called ***Sirat*** in the Hereafter. Good believers will cross this bridge fast without any difficulty and reach ***Jannah*** or Paradise, whereas evil people will not be able to pass it and will fall into ***Jahim*** or Hell.

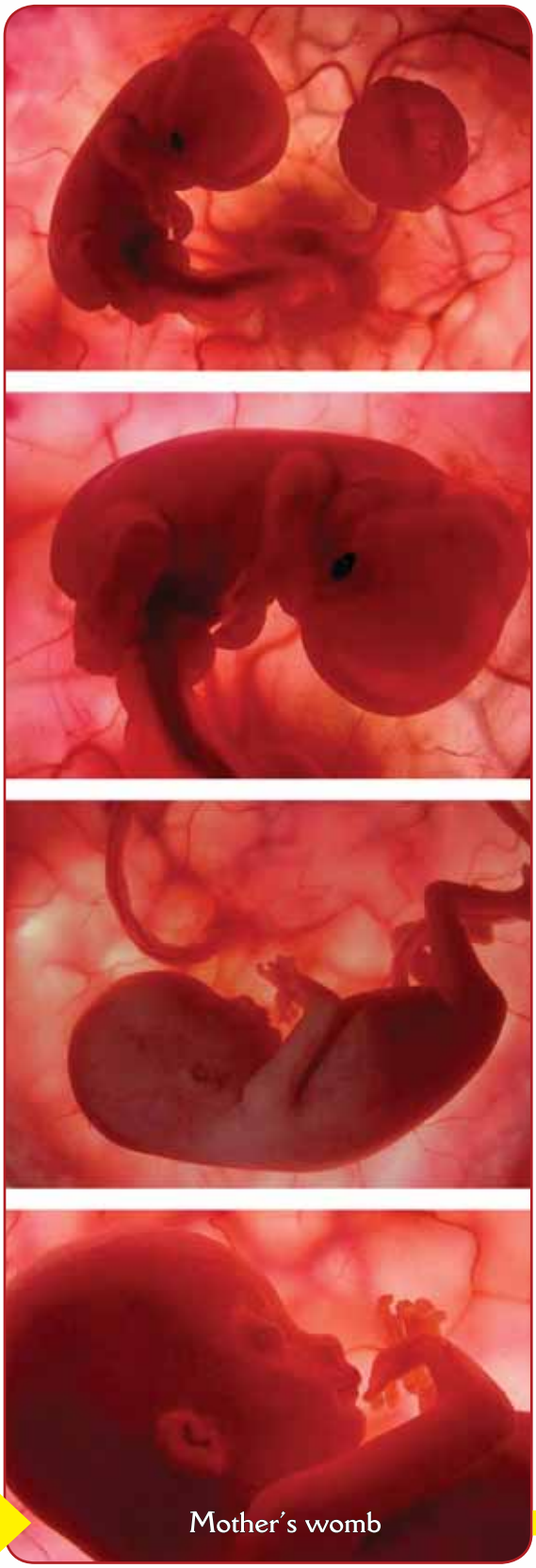
My friend Sami was not afraid of death for he knew that death is not an end but a beginning of an eternal life. He missed Paradise and wanted to attain the blessings that will be given there. O Allah! Please forgive him! Show him mercy! Turn his grave into a garden of Paradise.

Then Mehmet said amin and wiped his hands to his face. He felt that the overwhelming sorrow in his chest was gone. While he was going back to his home, he was thinking "how beautiful to meet with the friends in Paradise again!"

M. Yaşar Kandemir

OUR LIFE ADVENTURE






World


the Hereafter

THE GREATEST BLESSING GIVEN TO US BY ALLAH THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD

The Life of this world is a Journey

Right now we are all continuing on a life journey which we began on the day we were born. This journey is going to be a long one for some of us and a short one for some others. There is however one certain truth that this world will not continue forever. For none of us has come to this world to stay forever.

The life of this world is similar to a station that we stop at on our journey. In order to express this truth our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) took hold of Abdullah bin Umar's shoulder and said,

"Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler." Ibn Umar, who followed this prophetic suggestion for his entire life, gives us the following advice,

"If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take precautions during your health for the time of your sickness, and during your life for your death." (Bukhari, Riqaq, 3)

The Beauties of the Life of this world are Temporary

Our Lord Almighty has given us endless beauties and blessings in this world. Allah

Allah the Almighty says that:

"The likeness of the life of this world is only as water which we send down from the skies: then the herbage of the earth of which men and cattle eat grows luxuriantly thereby, until when the earth puts on its golden ornaments and it becomes embellished, and its people think that they have power of disposal over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped seed, produce, as though it had not been in existence yesterday; thus do We explain the revelations in detail for those who reflect."



(Yunus 10; 24)

decorated this world with the most favorable blessings that we need and presented to our use. He then asked us to benefit from these blessings and to show our gratitude to the One who has given them to us.

The beauties of this world have been entrusted to us for a certain period of time. Allah the Almighty tests us how and where we use such blessings, like wealth, health, knowledge, etc. We can show our gratitude, if we do not forget who has given us these blessings and if we use them in accordance with the object they have been created for. It will be ingratitude to forget the Giver of these blessings and to use them in the ways that Allah does not approve and in the ways that harm people and other creation.

The Life of this world is a Test

This world is a testing place and the life of this world is the test. Using time wisely in a test is as important as having knowledge. Using time wisely in this world is much more important; for there will be no return when the time of the test in this world is over. People who do not appreciate the value of their limited time given them in this world and waste their breaths, days, months, and years will surely regret. Our Lord Almighty expresses this truth in the Noble Qur'an as follows:

"Until when death comes unto one of them [one of those who do not believe in the Hereafter], he says: Send me back, my Lord, send me back; In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected..." (Mu'minun 23; 99-100)

Such people's regret after death, however, will give no benefit to them. Allah the Almighty will remind the opportunities of this world and the time given to them saying:

"...Did We not give you long enough life so that he who would be mindful in it should receive admonition? And (moreover) the warner [prophet] came to you..." (Fatir 35; 37)

This World is the Plantation of the Hereafter

This world is a place of opportunity to attain Paradise. We in fact either gain or lose Paradise in this world. None of our deeds in this world will remain unpaid, but we will see the results of our actions in the Hereafter. If we do good deeds in this world, we will be rewarded in the afterlife. Just as our Lord Almighty will reward our good deeds, He will also inflict punishment upon those who do evil deeds.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"...He Who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best in deed ..."

(Mulk 67; 2)

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it, and whoever brings an evil deed, he shall be recompensed only with the like of it, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly."

(al-An'am 6; 160)

THE GREEN DRESS

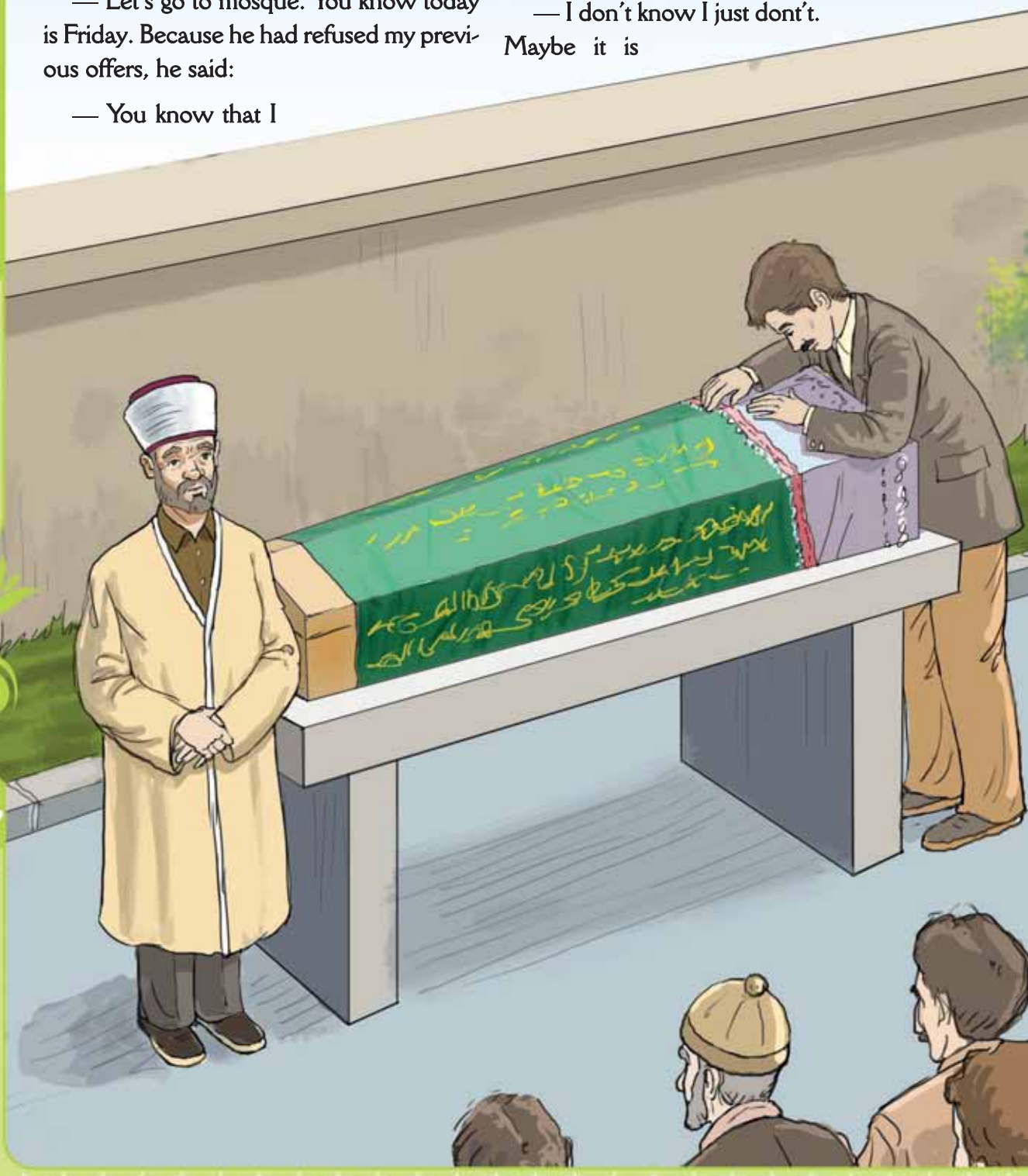
When we run into each other, muezzin was announcing the call for Friday prayer. I told him:

— Let's go to mosque. You know today is Friday. Because he had refused my previous offers, he said:

— You know that I don't go to mosque. I said:

— I know but I wonder why. He replied:

— I don't know I just dont't. Maybe it is





the environment. I also do not want my pants to get wrinkled and worn out.

I could not help but smile:

— You are joking, aren't you? How can anyone abandon going to the mosque with such an excuse? He said:

— I am serious. As you know, I am fond of my apparel and I am especially keen on the "color green." It was true. He would always wear something in a shade of green and his clothes would always be ironed. Then I asked him:

— Have you ever gone to a mosque?

— Yes, he said. I went to mosque with my grandfather when I was a kid; but I do not think I can go any more.

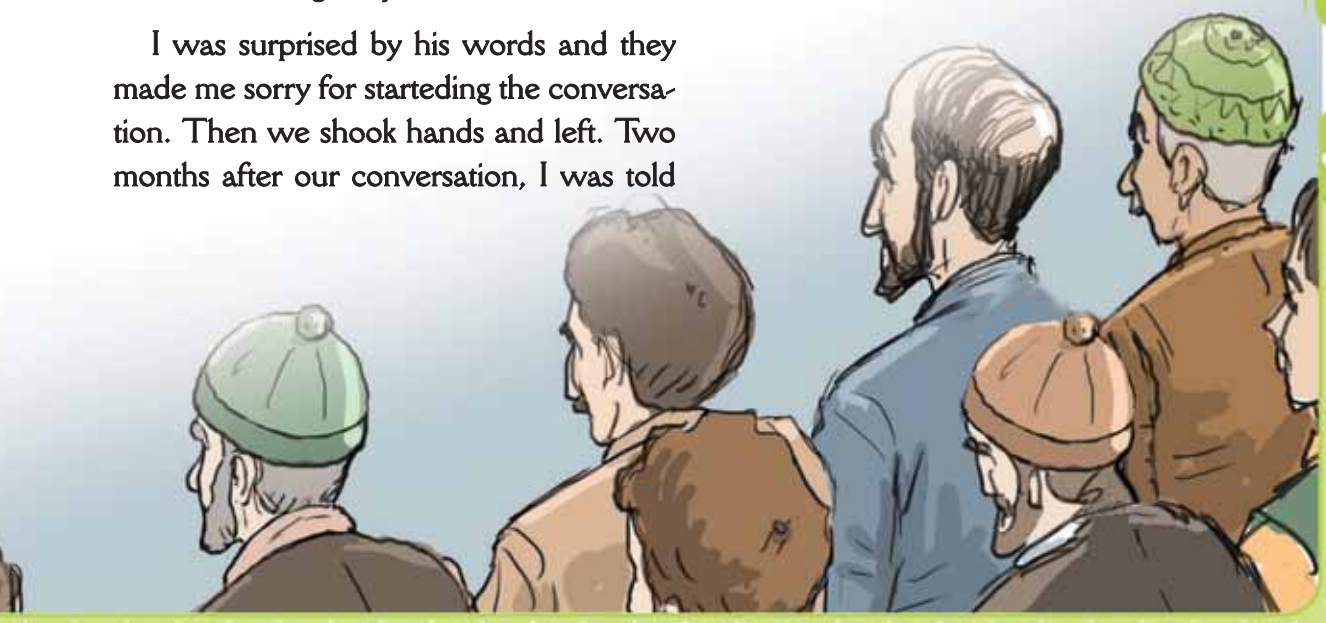
I was surprised by his words and they made me sorry for starteding the conversation. Then we shook hands and left. Two months after our conversation, I was told that my friend was in the mosque. I went right away. He was in front of the congregation and he had a green cover over him. I came close to him and told him in a low voice:

— Well, I thought you would not come to mosque.

He did not respond, because he was in a coffin covered with a green cloth on the musalla* stone waiting for the funeral prayer.

Cüneyd Suavi

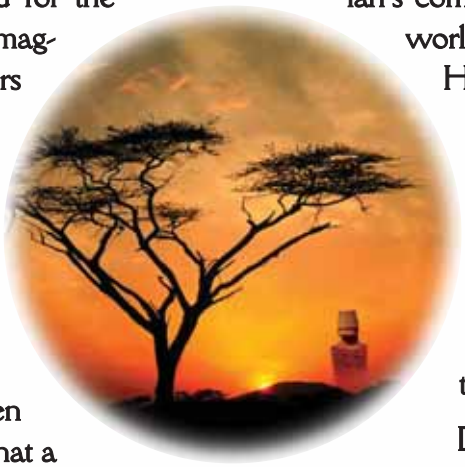
***Musalla* stone**: stone on which the coffin is placed during the funeral service



THE TIME WE LEAVE THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD: DEATH

A certain amount of time is given to every human being in this world. We complete our time in this world by way of death and go to another world. Death is the end of life on this world and the beginning of life in the Hereafter.

Just like life death is a blessing for us. It is a great blessing especially for the sick who have no hope to recover and for the old. For instance let's imagine that the grandfathers of our grandfather and their grandfathers are alive. Under such circumstances who could look after each other? Everybody would have to live under difficult and poor circumstances. Then we could understand what a great blessing death is and what a great pain living is for such people. Therefore we should not be afraid of dying but we should be afraid of not being able to do good deeds. Denying the Hereafter and being afraid of death will not prevent it. Disbelieving the Hereafter does not prevent going to the afterlife but it prevents entering Paradise.



Death carries the same meaning that birth carries for to us. People leave their mothers' womb and come to this world. They are likewise born into the Hereafter from this world. While they are closing their eyes from this world, they open them to the other world. Our coming to this world happen with Allah's command. Our leaving from this world will, too, happened with His command.

Death is like going into sleep. This is why sleeping is called the "little brother of death." Those who go into the sleep of death close their eyes to this world and open them to a new life.

Death does not mean the end of existence but rather the beginning of a new existence. It is a migration from one life to another. When we die, we leave this world where we came for a short period of time to be tested. And we go to our eternal abode. The grave is the gate that opens to this new abode.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Every soul must taste of death, then to Us you shall be brought back."

(Ankabut 29; 57)

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Wherever you are, death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high ..."

(Nisa 4; 78)



DEATH IN AUTUMN

First a leaf fell from a tree. Then others followed it. Leaves fell successively. the ones whose time is up either went under the earth or got mixed in waters.

Many people left these places along with leaves. Roses withered; birds stopped singing; butterflies disappeared. Trees turned into skeletons and forests turned into graveyards. A few months ago every inch of this place was full of life, but now only the funeral staff is walking around. Those who left this place had once come to it smiling. All of them were happy to be here. Then why did they leave? Because they had to. They did not have the choice. Just like they did not have the choice to come. There is One bringing and sending them. When they come with His command, earth was embellished with all sorts of beauties. Now it is stripped from its ornaments and it has worn its white shroud.

Ümit Şimşek

THE WORLD'S GATE TO THE HEREAFTER: THE GRAVE

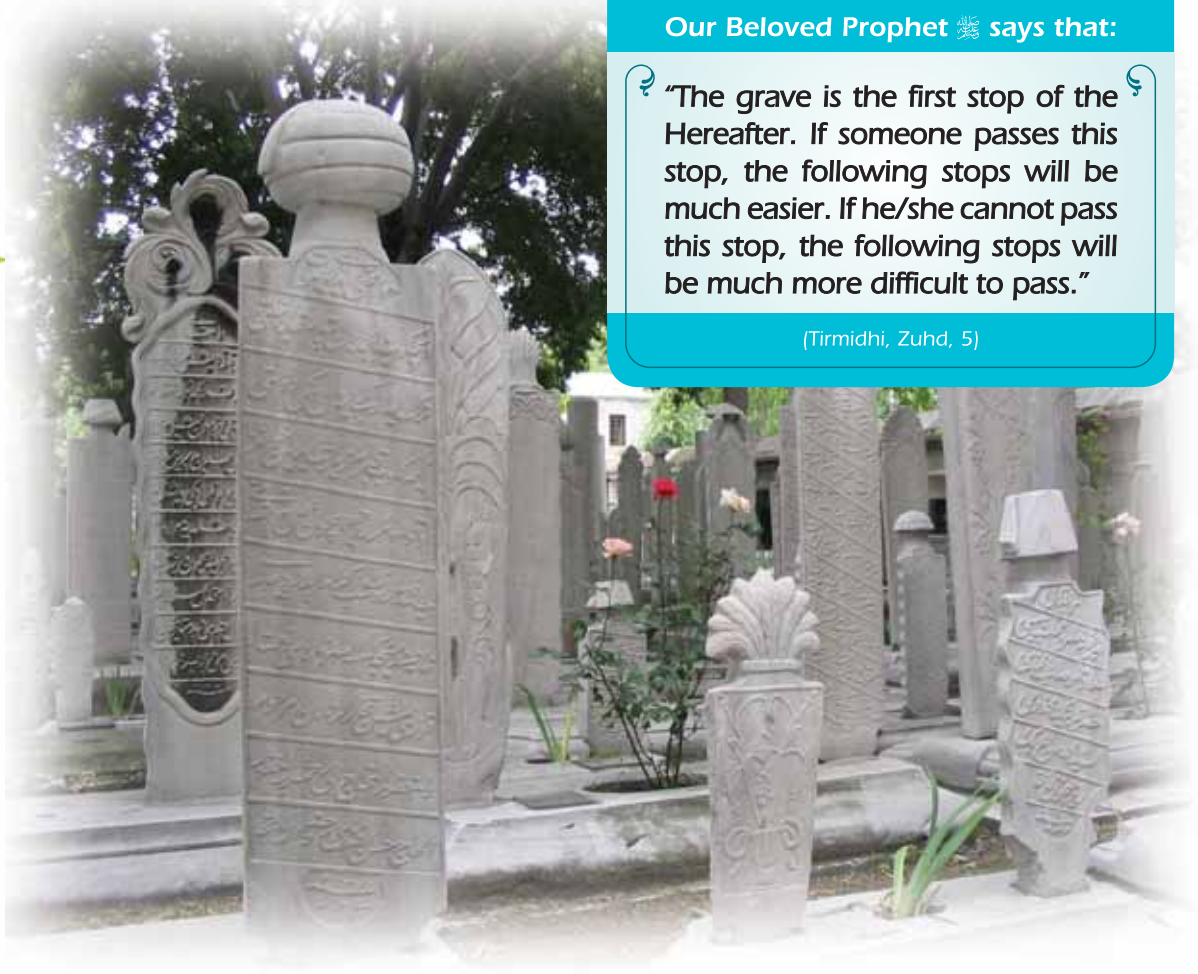
The grave is the first stop on the path to the new life which begins with death. The period between death and the resurrection is called "the life of grave." All people will go through the life of grave even if they are not buried in a grave. It is also called "the world of *barzakh* (obstacle)" for it prevents from coming back to this world.

People will be treated in their grave in accordance with their deeds in this world. Two angels, named **Munkar** and **Nakir**, will come to the dead and ask: **"who is your Lord? Who is your Prophet? What is your religion?"** Those who do good deeds in this world will give the correct answers to these questions and a window to Paradise will be opened for them. Their grave will be vastly widened. Unbelievers, polytheists, and hypocrites will not be able to give the correct answers to these questions. And thus a window from Hell will be opened to them and their grave will be tightened. Souls of unbelievers and hypocrites will suffer in their graves; whereas believers' souls will live a happy and comfortable life filled with all kinds of blessings.

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"The grave is the first stop of the Hereafter. If someone passes this stop, the following stops will be much easier. If he/she cannot pass this stop, the following stops will be much more difficult to pass."

(Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 5)



Are We Ready for the Hereafter?

In order to prepare ourselves for the Hereafter using our time most efficiently is the most important thing that we need to pay attention to. Our only capital in this world is the limited time given to us. Everything can be bought with money; but buying time is impossible. Dying as a believer should be our greatest goal. This is commanded to us by Our Lord Almighty in the following verse: **"O you who believe! Observe your duty to Allah with right observance, and do not die unless you are Muslims."** (Al-i Imran 3; 102) This is why we should live our entire life in a way that would enable us to give our last breath as a believer.

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"You will die as you live and you will come to the presence of Allah as you die."

(Fayd al-Qadir, V, 663)

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"An intelligent person is the one who questions his actions and gets ready for the life after death."

(Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 25)

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"Grave is either a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Hell."

(Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 26)



NIGHTMARE

Since my childhood years I have always feared being in confined spaces and run away from such places. Later I realized that this was an illness, but I could not recover from it. Soon I was going to enter such a confined space, even if I did not want to. I was wrapped into shrouds and placed in a coffin. I was hearing people's talks and somehow I could see them even if my eyes were closed. They were saying:

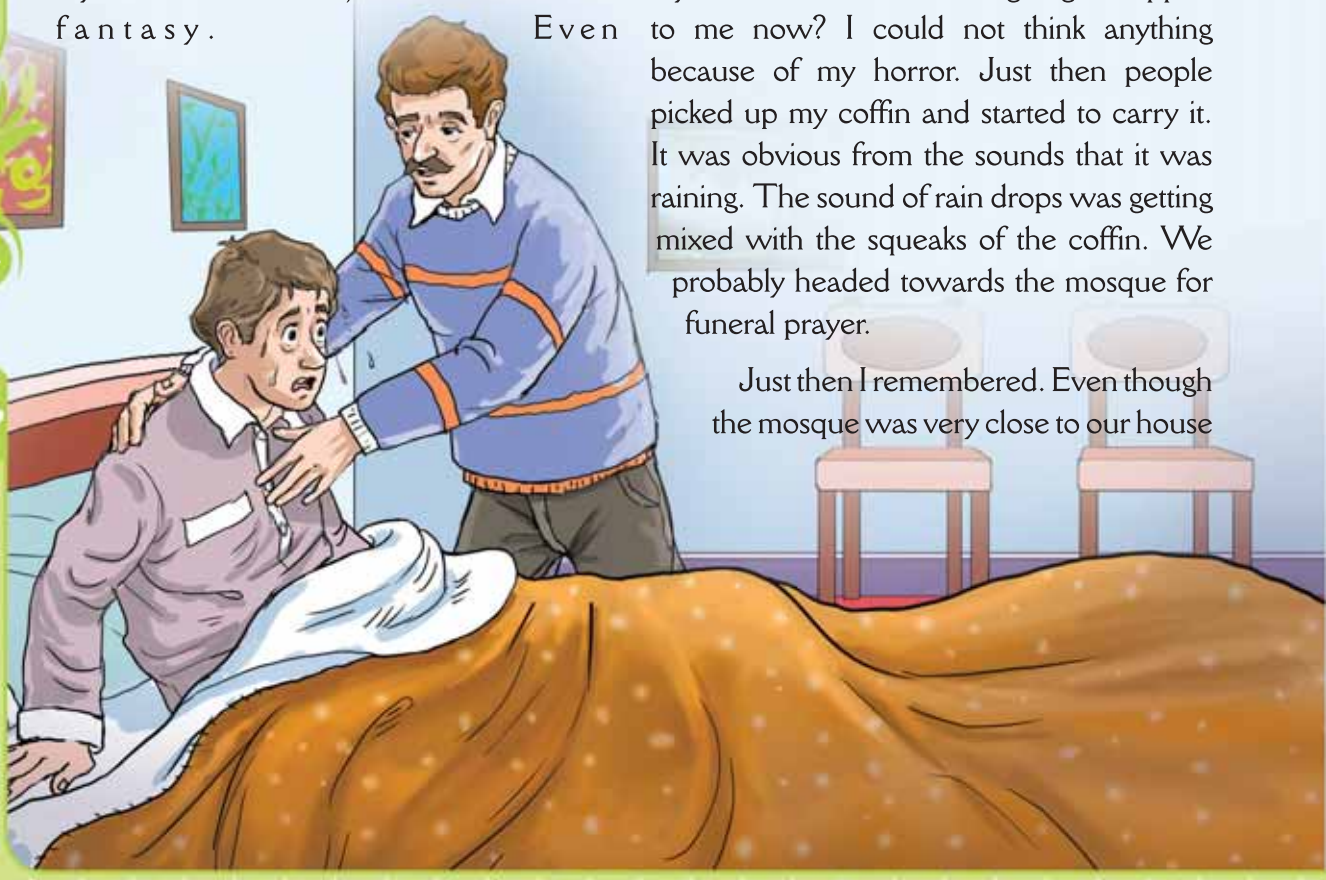
— Poor boy! He passed away at a very young age, whereas he had so many things to do ahead of him.

It was true that I had so many works left unfinished. For instance I was planning to open a place for my son to run. I have not finished my TV's and car's installments, yet. Now my plans to establish a big firm and gather my friends there have just turned to a mere fantasy. Even though winter was at our door, I could not arrange the fuel for it; I could not however manage to repair the roof. When I was thinking about my unfinished works, I was startled by a sound coming from the speaker. The sound was reverberating in the deepest corners of my brain saying:

— "It is too late now." I wished it were not too late. I still could not understand how that accident had happened, whereas I was such a good driver.

While I was trying to remember what had happened, I saw my friends closing my coffin. I wanted to stop them and tried to scream as loud as I can; but I could neither move nor make a sound. Soon I was in darkness of my coffin. I gazed at the light leaking through the cracks of my coffin. "O my God" I said. What was going to happen to me now? I could not think anything because of my horror. Just then people picked up my coffin and started to carry it. It was obvious from the sounds that it was raining. The sound of rain drops was getting mixed with the squeaks of the coffin. We probably headed towards the mosque for funeral prayer.

Just then I remembered. Even though the mosque was very close to our house



and I had been invited to it five times a day, I did not find the time to go there. As I always said, I was thinking to start praying and to give up all my bad habits when I became fifty years old.

Yes, yes! If that accident had not happened, I would have been a wonderful person. The voice which I had heard before repeated once more:

— "It is too late now. Time is up."

Meanwhile my funeral prayer was over and people picked my coffin up again. While we were passing by the coffee house where I used to play cards with my friends every day, I could hear their joyful laughs from inside. I thought that the news of my death probably had not reached them yet. Then voices began to fade away. When I felt that I was being carried slanted, I realized we were climbing the ramp leading to the cemetery. I was aware that the heavy rain was leaking from the cracks of my coffin and my shroud got wet. Still I listened carefully to what people were talking about. Some of my friends were talking about the stagnation in the markets while some others were praising the national teams play in the final game. Another one was whispering to his friend's ear:

— "Grumpiness of the deceased can be seen from the day he dies. We are all soaked." I could not believe what I was hearing. It should be a mistake. Were they not my friends for whom I sacrificed my nights and sleep? Soon our journey was over and my coffin was put down on the ground. It was opened and my lifeless body was grabbes by some arms and was lowered into a hole where some rain had been accumulated at the bottom. I looked around. O my God! Wasn't this my grave? Why should I have not thought by now that one day I was going to go into this hole. My voiceless screams could not be heard by anybody and I could sense my friends' hurry to fill my grave. Once again I was in the middle of darkness. I began to pray with all my weakness. I was saying:

— Dear Lord! Can't You give me another chance so that I can be a servant just like You want and turn my grave into a garden of Paradise?

Same voice repeated more fiercely this time:

— "It is too late now. Everything is over." My grave was covered with boards and the noise of the soil hitting these boards was terrifying me. I spent the remaining of my energy and opened my eyes. Then I realized I was sleeping in my comfortable bed. I was seeing a nightmare. My next door doctor neighbor was trying to wake me up saying:

— It is over. Look it is over. You have nothing to worry about.

I slowly sit up. I was soaked in sweat. I thought I had lost twenty thousand kilos at once. There was a storm outside and my house was shaking by thunder claps. While I was trying to recover from the effects of my nightmare, I was also praying:

— Dear Lord! Thousands of thanks to You! What would happen, if You did not give me a second chance to be a good servant.

Cüneyd Suavi

OUR REAL AND ETERNAL LIFE: THE HEREAFTER

The Hereafter is the term used for the life which will come after death. Believing in the Hereafter is one of the principles of faith mentioned in the Qur'an several times along with believing in Allah. One who denies resurrection, the calling into account for worldly deeds after death, existence of Paradise and Hell apostasizes from Islam and becomes a disbeliever.

Afterlife and the events which will occur in the Hereafter are matters related to the unseen. We cannot feel them by our senses and explain them by experiments. The Noble Qur'an and the sayings of our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) are our only sources of information about the life of the Hereafter. Our responsibility is to believe in them; to accept the truth informed by our Lord Almighty; and not to forget that we will be held accountable for our actions.

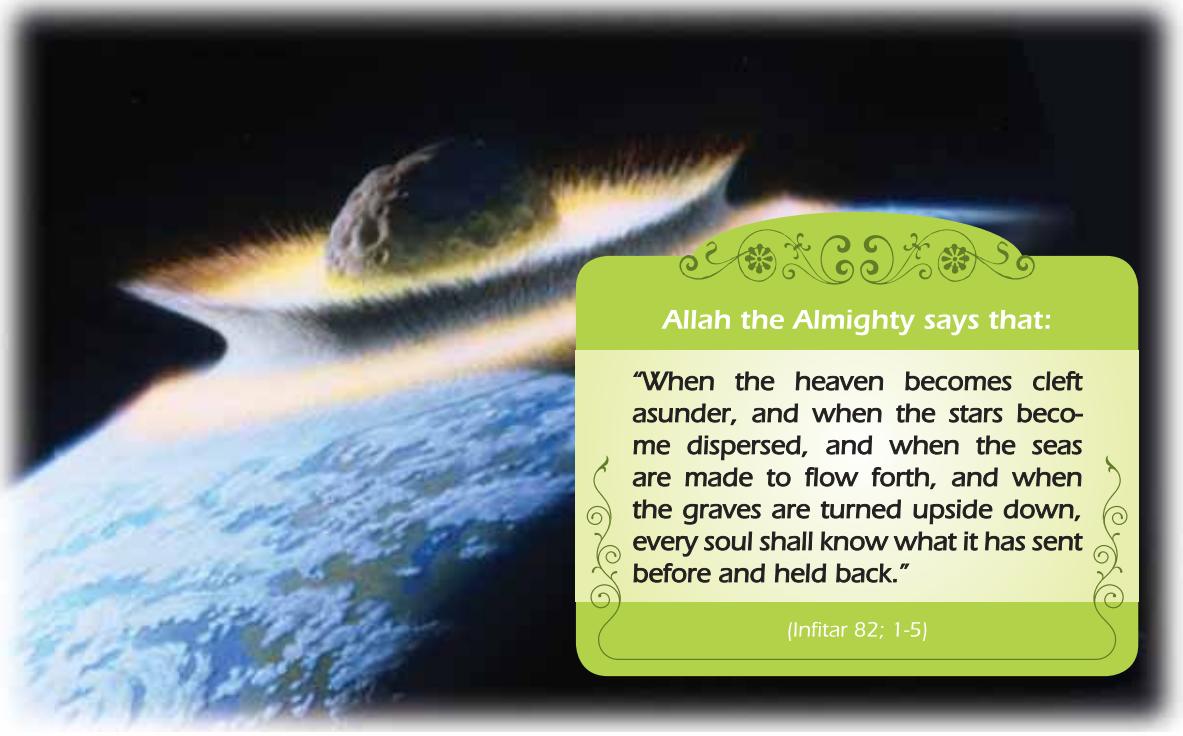
The End of the life and the Order in the Universe:

Judgment Day

Just like every other living being on earth, the earth itself has a limited lifespan. A Living being whose time is over dies. When earth's time of death comes, it will be Judgment Day.

The *qiyamah* means the end of life and known order in the universe. It will happen by one of the four Archangels or Israfil's blow to an instrument called *sur* whose nature we don't know of. This will be the first blow of *"sur."* When *qiyamah* occurs, there will be no living being left on earth and the order of earth and heavens will be disrupted. The Sun will die down; stars will be dispersed; seas will boil; and mountains will be collided to each other. That Day everything will be disrupted and the order in the universe will be disrupted.

Nobody but Allah the Almighty knows



Allah the Almighty says that:

"When the heaven becomes cleft asunder, and when the stars become dispersed, and when the seas are made to flow forth, and when the graves are turned upside down, every soul shall know what it has sent before and held back."

(Infitar 82; 1-5)

when Judgment Day will happen. This is clearly stated by the Noble Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet. Our beloved Prophet only talks about some signs pointing out that Judgment Day is approaching. In fact it is not necessary for us to know when Judgment Day will occur. Our responsibility is to make necessary preparation for our afterlife which we will begin with our death. In other words our job is to be ready for the afterlife as if we are going to die tomorrow.

We will be resurrected like the seeds scattered on earth:

The pronouncement of faith includes the part "**"wa'l ba'thu ba'd al-mawt"** meaning that I believe that there is resurrection after death." This principle constitutes one of the fundamentals of faith in Islam. Soon after the end of the world, Israfil will blow the *sur* once more at a time that our Lord Almighty wishes. Upon this second blow all living beings which have lived from the creation of the world till the end of it will be resurrected.

Questions, like "What will happen to us? Is resurrection possible?" have always occupied people's minds. Trees which lose their leaves in the fall revive in the spring. Lifeless seeds scattered on earth began to germinate and grow. Lifeless seeds that fall turn into big and living trees. Every day thousands of cells die in our body and new ones replace them. If we carefully examine and think deeply about ourselves and our universe, we can find many examples showing the possibility of resurrection after death.

Our Lord Who takes and gives lives explains this reality in the Noble Qur'an through examples. These examples vividly present the resurrection which can be observed in every moment of our lives:

Resurrection

"O mankind! If you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then lo! We have created you from dust, then from a drop of seed, then from a clot, then from a little lump of flesh shapely and shapeless, that We may make [Our power] clear to you ...

And you see the earth sterile land, but when We send down on it the water, it stirs and swells and brings forth of every kind a beautiful herbage.

This is because Allah is the Truth and because He gives life to the dead and because He has power over all things

And because the hour is coming, there is no doubt about it; and because Allah shall raise up those who are in the graves."
(Hajj 22; 5-7)

Allah the Almighty says that:

"And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) creation: he says, Who can give life to (dry) bones when they are rotten? Say, He will give them life Who created them for the first time. For He is Knower of every kind of creation."

(Yasin 36; 78-79)

REVIVAL IN THE SPRING

There was no sign of life on earth and in the beings on it. The last living being around here got mixed with earth months ago; there was not even a sign from the leaves fallen from the trees. Only the dead trees were left; only the lifeless trees remained like skeletons. They did not show the slightest sign of life.

Then came the glad tidings of the earth's revival. Skies reverberated by this news. Sun smiled because of this news. And earth began to take its shrouds off.

Those who left had not even reft a trace behind. Some came but it was not known from where they had come. They appeared one by one like they were coming out of nothingness. Look at the signs of the Mercy of Allah! How He revives the dead!

Skeletons revived one by one. Leaves, flowers, and fruits sprouted from the dry branches. By hundreds of thousands of tongues every one of them began to chant the name of he Who has given them life. Look at the signs of the Mercy of Allah! How He revives the dead! How He embellishes them! How He gives them speech.

Every flower was an invitation of love for the butterflies. Every one of them hosted thousands of guests in their chests. They presented sweets from the treasures of their Lord's mercy. Butterflies in return carried the future of the flowers that had hosted them; so the earth might be able to smile with new flowers in the next revival.

These flowers and butterflies may be long dead when you are looking at them. It does not matter. There will be the new ones revived in their place. Those who leave before and those who come after; in other words all creation will speak in unison about the Giver of life. They again will say that "we are mortal" and they will show Allah as the sole Eternal to those who can see Him through their hearts. And every time earth is revived, The Qur'an's sound will reverberate in the universe:

"Look then at the signs of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death, most surely He will raise the dead to life; and He has power over all things." (Rum 30; 50)



The Last Judgment

In order to be questioned we will gather in the presence of Allah the Almighty:

When we will be resurrected, we will rise from our graves and we will gather in the presence of Allah in order to be questioned for what we did in the world. This gathering is called **"hashr"** and the place of gathering is called *"mahshar."*

On the day of *mahshar* we will be gathered and begin to wait in the presence of Allah the Almighty on an endless plain under scorching heat. Our Lord narrates that day for us as follows:

"And the day on which We will cause the mountains to pass away and you will see the earth a leveled plain and We will gather them and leave not any one of them behind. And they shall be brought before your Lord, standing in ranks: Now certainly you have come to Us as We created you at first. Nay, you thought that We had not appointed to you a time of the fulfillment of the promise." (Kahf 18; 47-48)

Every soul will be concerned with its own problems on the day of mahshar. It will be a very difficult day for people. It is going to be a very distressful, frightening, and horrifying day. That day we will not even have the opportunity to check and be concerned with our closest relatives:

"The day on which a man shall flee from his brother, and his mother and his father, and his spouse and his son; Every man that day will have concern enough to make him heedless (of others). (Many) faces on that day shall be bright, laughing, rejoicing at good news; and (many) faces on that day, on them shall be dust, Darkness shall cover them. Those are the disbelievers, the wicked." (Abasa 80; 34-42)

Our Beloved Prophet says that:

"Allah will give shade, to seven, on the Day when there will be no shade but His. (These seven persons are):

- a just ruler,
- a youth who has been brought up in the worship of Allah (i.e. worships Allah sincerely from childhood),
- a man whose heart is attached to the mosques (i.e. to pray the compulsory prayers in the mosque in congregation),
- two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake and they meet and part in Allah's cause only,
- a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth for illicit intercourse with her and says: I am afraid of Allah,
- a man who gives charitable gifts so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (i.e. nobody knows how much he has given in charity),
- And a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes are then flooded with tears. (Bukhari Adhan, 36)

THE MAN WHO DENIES ALLAH AND THE HEREAFTER

Once there were two friends. One of them had healthy children and a huge amout of wealth. That man owned two big vineyards. His vineyards were encircled by date-palms. There were vast fields watered by rivers between his gardens.



It was summer time and the grapes and dates had already ripened. The rich man one day invited his friend and wanted to show him his wealth. He was planning to take his friend on a tour around his fields and gardens so he was going to get the chance to show his wealth.

The Owner of the gardens was walking his friend around his fields and gardens and telling him about the fruits and their qualities. He was really enjoying showing off his wealth. He was so engrossed in his wealth that it never occurred to him that Allah was the One who gave him all this wealth. He was only thinking about his wealth. With the pride of his property, he said to his friend:

— I have more wealth than you do and I am also more honorable than you are in respect to having children.

Then they entered into the other garden. Ripe fruits were dazzling. The wealthy man began to boast about this garden, too, saying:

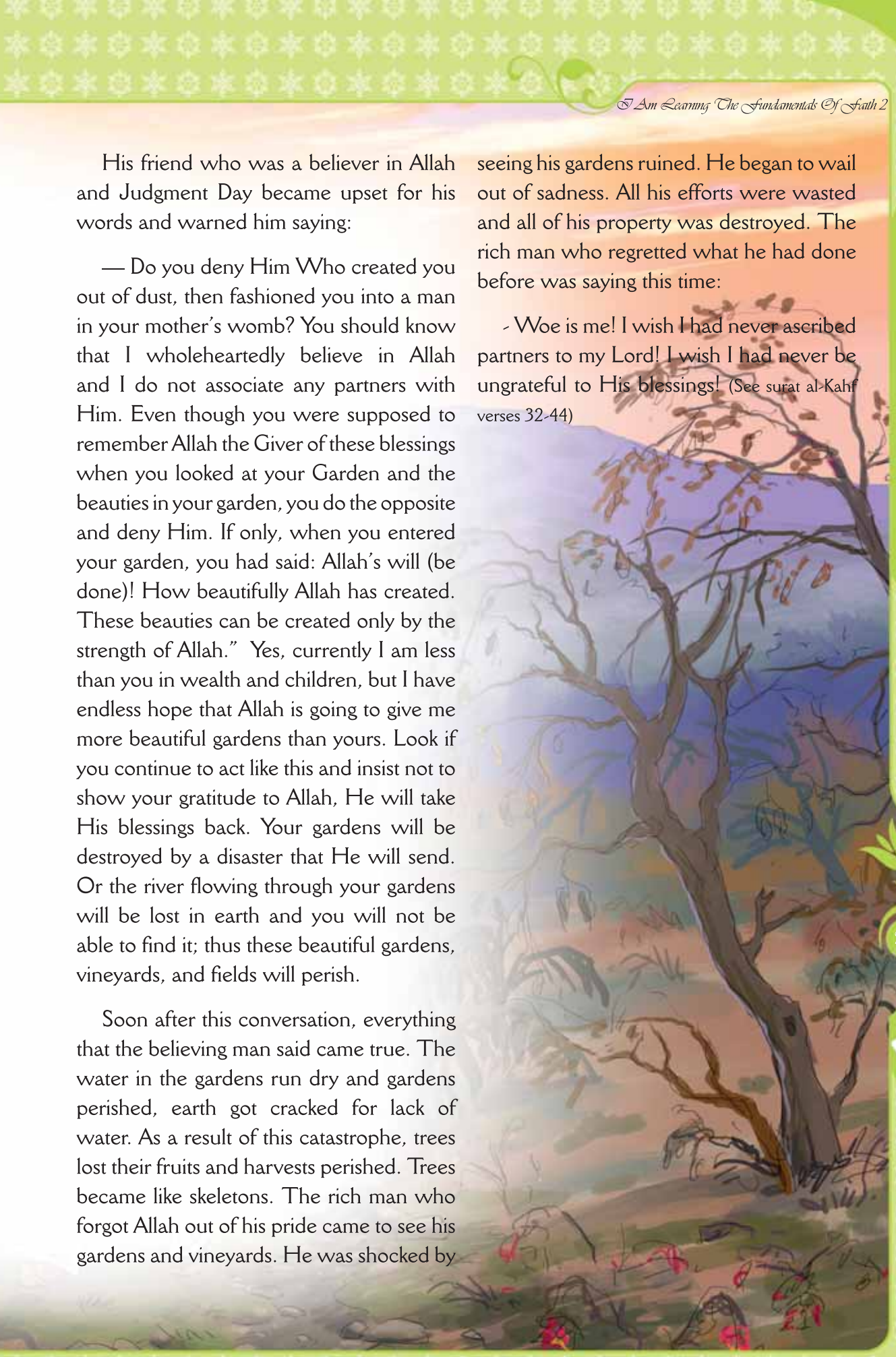
— I do not think that this garden will ever perish. I do not believe that this world will ever end, either. Even if this world were to end, Allah will give me a better garden for I am a respected and wealthy man. Allah would certainly give me because of my affluence.

His friend who was a believer in Allah and Judgment Day became upset for his words and warned him saying:

— Do you deny Him Who created you out of dust, then fashioned you into a man in your mother's womb? You should know that I wholeheartedly believe in Allah and I do not associate any partners with Him. Even though you were supposed to remember Allah the Giver of these blessings when you looked at your Garden and the beauties in your garden, you do the opposite and deny Him. If only, when you entered your garden, you had said: Allah's will (be done)! How beautifully Allah has created. These beauties can be created only by the strength of Allah." Yes, currently I am less than you in wealth and children, but I have endless hope that Allah is going to give me more beautiful gardens than yours. Look if you continue to act like this and insist not to show your gratitude to Allah, He will take His blessings back. Your gardens will be destroyed by a disaster that He will send. Or the river flowing through your gardens will be lost in earth and you will not be able to find it; thus these beautiful gardens, vineyards, and fields will perish.

Soon after this conversation, everything that the believing man said came true. The water in the gardens run dry and gardens perished, earth got cracked for lack of water. As a result of this catastrophe, trees lost their fruits and harvests perished. Trees became like skeletons. The rich man who forgot Allah out of his pride came to see his gardens and vineyards. He was shocked by seeing his gardens ruined. He began to wail out of sadness. All his efforts were wasted and all of his property was destroyed. The rich man who regretted what he had done before was saying this time:

- Woe is me! I wish I had never ascribed partners to my Lord! I wish I had never be ungrateful to His blessings! (See surat al-Kahf verses 32-44)



Deliverance of the Books of Deeds

We will receive the records of our actions in this world:

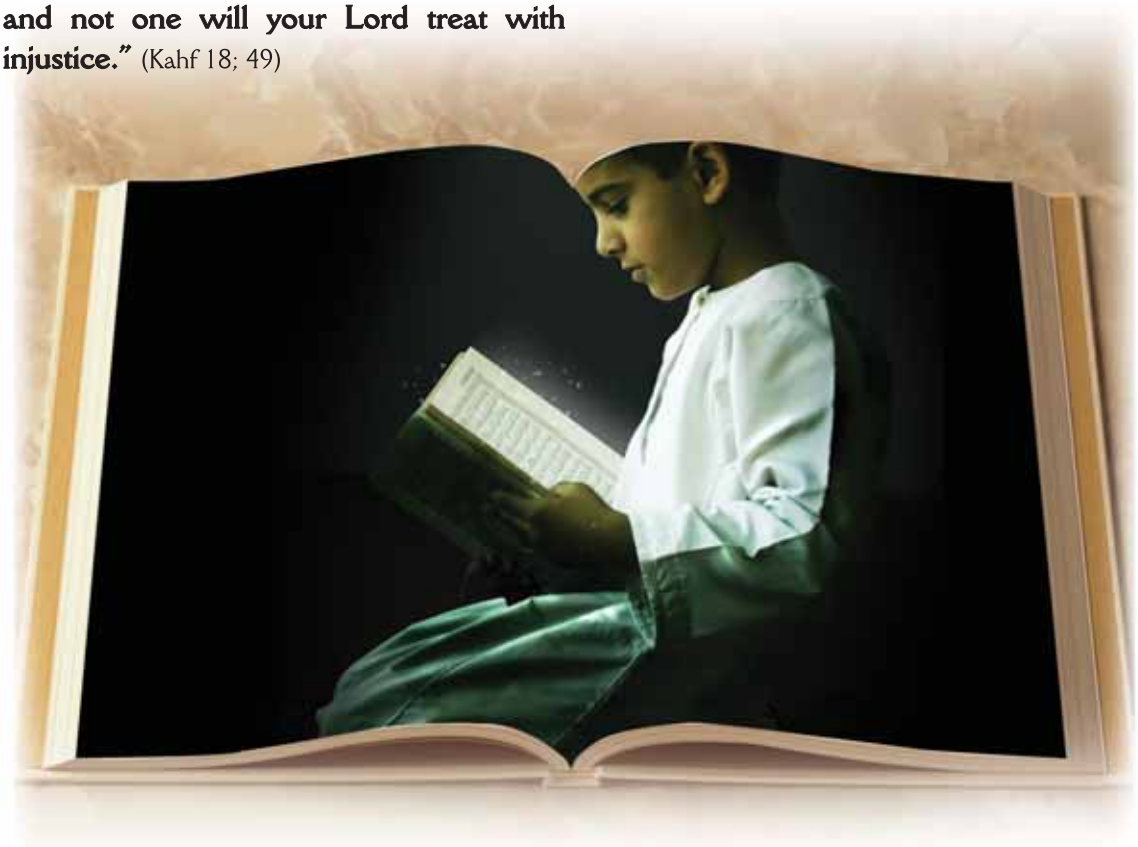
After we will gather in the place of *mahshar*, we will receive the records of our worldly deeds. In these books recorded by angels called *Kiraman Katibin* all of our good and bad actions are written with the slightest detail. All of our sins and kindnesses, little and big, are written in them. Our Lord Almighty expresses the surprise and fear felt by the guilty servants when they receive their records as follows:

"And the Book (of deeds) will be placed (before you); and you wilt see the sinful in great terror because of what is (recorded) therein; they will say, Ah woe to us what a book is this it leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof they will find all that they did, placed before them: and not one will your Lord treat with injustice." (Kahf 18; 49)

Receiving the book of deeds from right is good news, whereas receiving it from left or behind is the sign of punishments. In other words people of Paradise will receive their books from their right, while people of Hell will get their books from their left or behind.

That day nobody will be able to deny what is written in their books. Everybody will see their deeds there and will confess the things that he had done by testifying against himself:

"And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open: Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day." (Isra 13-14)



We will be held accountable for what we do in this world:

In the plain of *mahshar* we will, impatiently, fearfully, and excitedly, wait to be questioned under the burning sun of Judgment Day. Eventually questioning will begin and we will stand before our Lord with our book of deeds in our hands. Then each and every one of us will start to be questioned at the same time by our Lord Almighty. We will be asked about all of our actions and behaviors from the time of our adolescence (age of responsibility) till the time of our death.

Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) emphasized that no one will be able to go further before answering the questions about following five matters:

1. How and where he spent his life;

2. How he spent his youth;

3. Wherefrom he acquired his wealth,

4. And in what way he spent it;

5. And whether or not he lived in accordance with his knowledge. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 1)

"Question yourselves before get questioned. Get ready for the great trial. The trial in the Hereafter will be light and easy for those who question themselves in this world."
(Umar ibn al-Khattab)

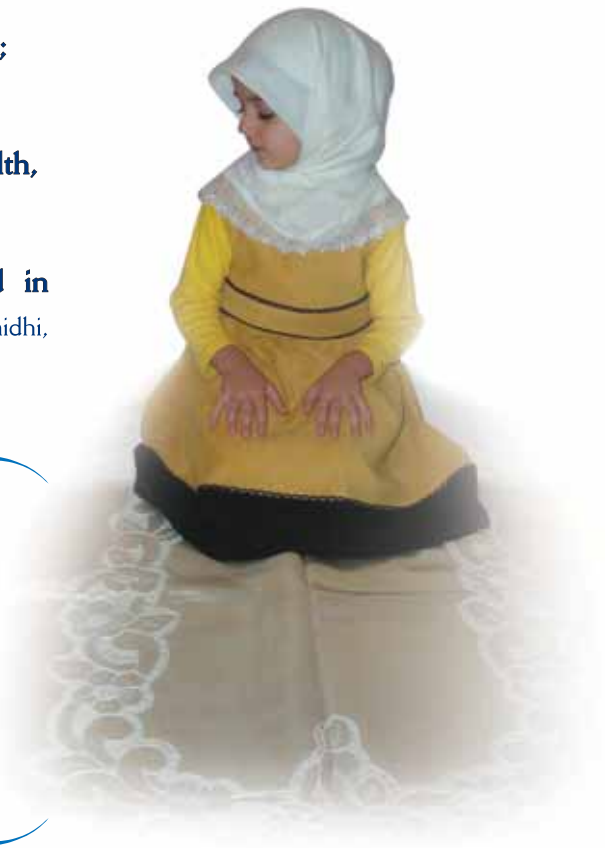
Reckoning and Questioning

No one will be treated unfairly in the questioning and reckoning of Judgment Day. Everybody will get what they deserve; the oppressor and the oppressed will confront each other. Those who harm and do wrong to the others will face a very difficult questioning. People oppressed in this world will get their rights and their oppressors will be punished for their evil deeds.

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"The first thing about which the people will be called to account out of their actions on the Day of Judgment is prayer."

(Abu Dawud, salat, 145)



Mizan (the Scale of the Hereafter)

Our good and bad deeds will be measured by Allah's scale of justice:

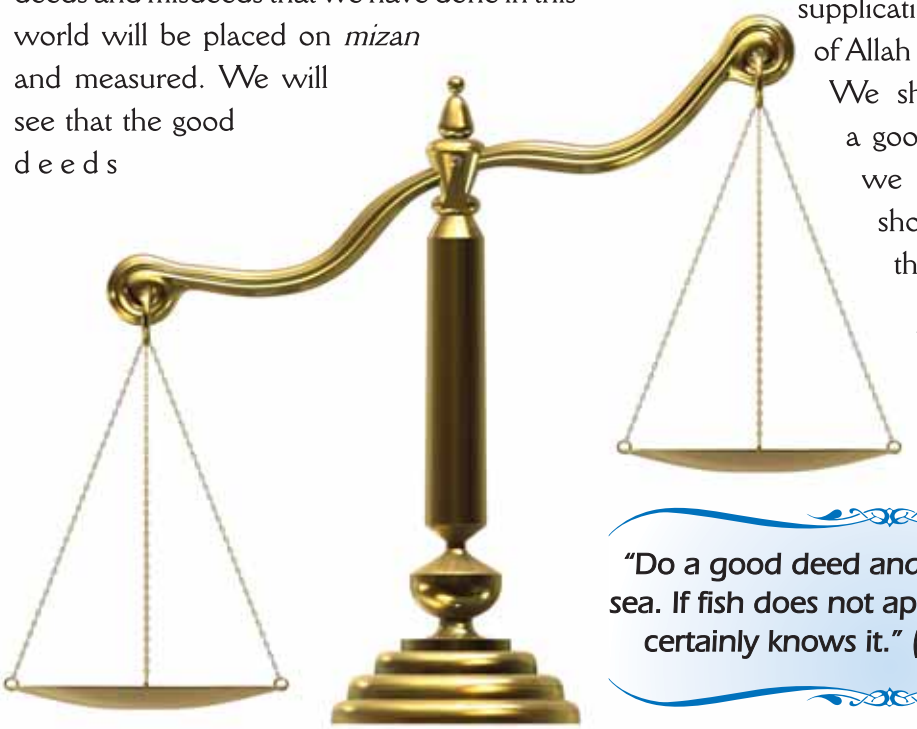
Mizan is a kind of scale whose nature is known only by Allah the Almighty. It is a scale that will measure our good and bad deeds after the phase questioning and reckoning. If our good deeds weigh more on the *mizan*, then we will be among the people who attain salvation. Those whose bad deeds weigh more will be the miserable ones. Our Lord Almighty describes this state as follows:

"We shall set up scales of justice for the day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, we will bring it (to account): and enough are we to take account." (Anbiya 21; 47)

No scale is a accurate as *mizan*. Our good deeds and misdeeds that we have done in this world will be placed on *mizan* and measured. We will see that the good deeds that we really intended to do but could not actually do placed on the *mizan*, also.

The sentences that we utter by our tongue such as "al-hamdulillah" or "subhnallah" will also be measured on *mizan*. Our efforts on the path of Allah, our sufferings and tiredness in spreading the message of our religion Islam, even the dust on our feet that we get on our way to do something good are going to be measured on the *mizan*. A smiling face, a piece of chocolate we offered to a friend, a glass of water we brought to our elders, a piece of bread that we placed in front of a kitten will be placed among our good deeds.

Who knows! Maybe a good thing that we regard as little will cause our good deeds weigh more on the *mizan*. This is why we should try to do good deeds as much as possible in our lives. We should keep saying the phrase of tawhid, repentance, supplication, and the names of Allah as much as possible. We should never belittle a good deed. Whenever we get a chance, we should do something that we may win Allah's pleasure.



"Do a good deed and throw it into the sea. If fish does not appreciate it, Creator certainly knows it." (Turkish proverb)

The Bridge to Paradise

We will cross over the Sirat Bridge built over Hell:

The Sirat is the bridge that is built over Hell and all human beings will cross over it. It is said that this bridge will be thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword. Our way of passing over the Sirat Bridge will depend upon our belief and actions in this world. Some believers will cross over it with the speed of light; some of them will pass it very fast, some others will pass it running while some others walking. There will even be believers passing over the Sirat crawling. Unbelievers and people whose misdeeds are heavier than their good deeds will not be able to pass across. They will stumble and fall into Hell.



Paradise

We will be given the best reward for our good deeds:

Paradise is the prize that Allah has prepared for His believing servants. It is the eternal abode of peace and happiness for the believers. There is no death in Paradise. Life is endless in there. Those who enter Paradise will find everything they want. They will taste whatever they want and they will be given as much as they want.

In Paradise there will be similar but not exactly the same blessings of this world. There will be various fruits, vegetables, cloths, mansions and palaces with rivers flowing in their gardens. There will also be many unimaginable blessings and beauties. Allah the Almighty describes Paradise and the blessings in it in the Noble Qur'an. Translations of some of the verses in this regard are as follows:

"O My servants! There is no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve. Those who believed in Our revelations and were self-surrendered, enter the Garden, you and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing. There shall be sent round to them golden bowls and drinking-cups and therein shall be what their souls yearn after and (wherein) the eyes shall delight, and you shall abide therein. And this is the garden which you are given as an inheritance on account of what you did. For you therein are many fruits of which you shall eat." (Zuhruf 43; 68-73)

There will be no sadness, grudge, hate, or enmity in Paradise. Everybody will love and respect to each other. Everybody will visit each other, sit in nice and comfortable chairs, and have wonderful conversations. As it is expressed by our beloved Prophet:

"There would be no dissension amongst them and no enmity in their hearts. Their hearts would be like one heart, glorifying Allah morning and evening." (Muslim, Jannah, 17)

When the Messenger of Allah talked about the blessings of Paradise, he summarized the life in Paradise as follows:

"There would be an announcer in Paradise who would make this announcement to the dwellers of Paradise:

Verily herein you will live (forever) and not die. You will be in everlasting health and you should never fall ill and you will remain young forever and never grow old. And you will always live in affluent circumstances and never become destitute."
(Muslim, Jannah, 22)



Hell

The Destination of unbelievers and oppressors:

Hell is the place of pain and punishment. Unbelievers, polytheists, hypocrites, oppressors, and sinners will serve their punishments there.

In Hell there will be Allah's torment. Those who do not believe in Allah and the Hereafter will dwell in Hell forever and will be devoid of Allah's mercy and contentment because of their denial. Sinning believers will serve their punishments in Hell, but they will not stay there forever. After their punishment, they will enter Paradise.

When guilty servants arrive at Hell, it will emit big sparks and its roar will be heard from

afar distance. As a drink the thirsty will be served blood, pus, and boiling water which will rip the intestines apart.

There will be no coolness in Hell. The only shade that people will be able to take shelter in will be the one of bursting fire. There will either be freezing cold or burning and wearying fire. The skin of those who get burned in Hell will be replaced by new ones. So they will repeatedly be punished by Hell-fire.

Dwellers of Hell will see the dwellers of Paradise and ask their help, but this request will be refused:

"And the dwellers of the Fire cry out unto the dwellers of the Garden: Pour on us some water or some of what Allah has provided you. They say: Lo! Allah has forbidden both to disbelievers." (A'raf 7; 50)

Dwellers of Hell will be very sorry what they had done in this world. Their greatest wish will be to go back to the world. They will wish to go back in order to proclaim their faith, to worship, and to be a good person. And thus they will wish to gain Paradise, but it will be too late for them. They will not be able go back to the world.

As a servant being aware of Paradise and Hell, it should be the greatest goal of our life to obtain Allah's love and contentment. This goal can only be achieved by living as a believer and doing good deeds. Therefore we should spend our entire life by living as a believer. We should follow a life in accordance with Allah's commands and prohibitions. We should perform the acts of worship and live in good manners. We should keep the rights of Allah and His servants. We should repent for our sins immediately and ask Allah's forgiveness. In this way we can protect ourselves from Hell-fire. We should not be devoid of Allah's mercy and forgiveness in the Hereafter.



ALLAH'S MERCY and COMPASSION IS ENDLESS



When we say "bismillahirrahmanirrahim (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)" we mention the name of Allah with His attribute of Mercy and Beneficence.

Allah is indeed Merciful. This is why He treats all His creation with His Mercy. He bestows His blessings without making any discrimination as believer or unbeliever among His creation. Allah's Mercy encompasses everything. Even though His servants commit all kinds of sins, He still gives them His blessings; and this is out of His Mercy.

Allah is Beneficent. On the Day of Judgment His Mercy to the believers will be endless. Our Lord Almighty will treat His believing servants with mercy in the Hereafter as in this world. His Mercy in the Hereafter will be much more than His Mercy in this world. Those who have even the slightest amount of faith in their hearts will benefit from Allah's Mercy and enter Paradise. Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) defines the vastness of Allah's Mercy as follows:

"Allah divided Mercy into one-hundred parts and He kept its ninety-nine parts with Him and sent down its one part on

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Say: O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving the Merciful."

(Zumar 39; 53)

the earth, and because of that single part, His creations are merciful to each other, so that even the beast treats its young one with affection. And Allah has reserved ninety-nine parts of mercy with which He would treat His servants on the Day of Resurrection." (Bukhari, Adab, 19; Muslim, Tawba, 17)

If one part of the Mercy of our Lord Almighty has this power, imagine what ninety nine parts of it would do. If the source of entire mercy in this world is that single part, Allah's mercy in the Hereafter will be unimaginably vast. This good news should not, however, deceive us. It should not be forgotten that dying as a believer depends upon living as a believer. Otherwise Satan and our inner selves may deceive us and keep us away from performing acts of worship saying: "you are a faithful person, Allah will surely forgive you. You may be punished in Hell a little and then you will be released." In this way they may lead us to commit some sins. They may even take us out of the borders of faith.

On the other hand we should not also forget that we are human beings and we may commit sins. Therefore we should never cease hope from Allah's Mercy. Whatever happens, we should turn to our Lord and ask His forgiveness.

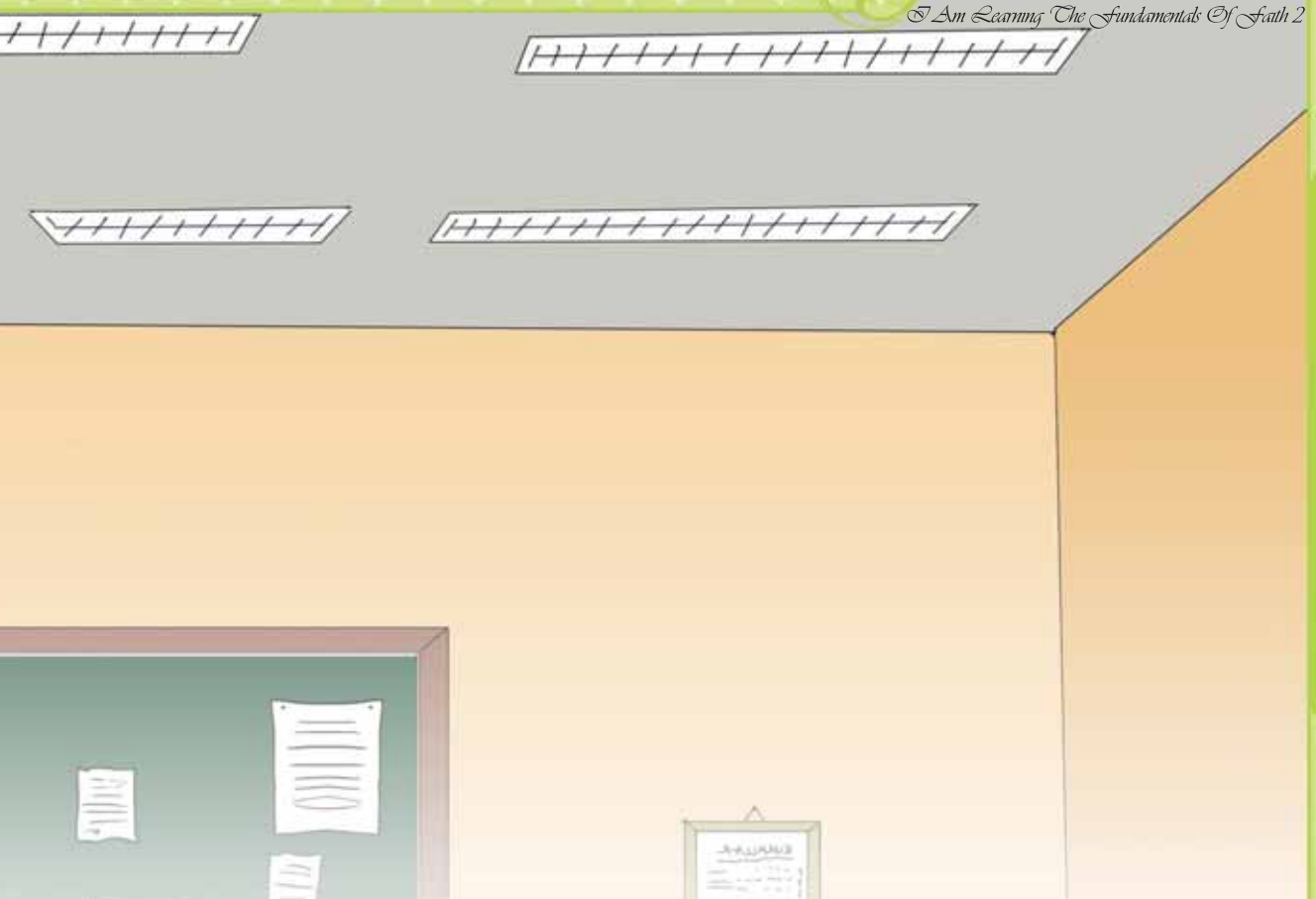
Therefore, as believers, we should live between fear and hope. We need to have concerns about losing Allah's love and receiving His punishment; but we also need to remember that Allah is the Most Merciful and Forgiving. We should never fall in despair because of our sins and mistakes.



IBRAHIM'S CONCERN

While exiting the classroom Ibrahim saw that Selim dropped his money out of his pocket; but he did not tell this to Selim. He waited for everybody to leave the room. After everybody left he picked the money up and quickly put





it in his pocket making sure not to let anybody see. From that moment on, however, he began to feel uneasiness in his heart. Then the bell rang and everybody came back to the classroom. The teacher began his lecture. But because Ibrahim's mind was busy with Selim's money, he could not concentrate on what the teacher was saying. He was worried about what would happen if they found out that he took the money.

Just then his teacher's lecture about the faith in the Hereafter attracted Ibrahim's attention. He was saying that everybody was going to be questioned about their actions and see their results in the Hereafter. These words increased Ibrahim's uneasiness.

Ibrahim began to wait for the end of the class so as to ease his soul by giving Selim's money back. After some stressful minutes the bell finally rang. Ibrahim got exited. The uneasiness that he felt the entire class caused by his mistake had devastated him.

When everybody was leaving the room, he said to Selim quietly:

— Selim, you dropped this money during the last break and I took it. I am sorry that I could not have the chance to give it back to you.

Selim thanked his friend for giving his money back. Ibrahim, on the other hand, was thanking Allah for saving him from this burden. Now he understood how believing in the hereafter that, one will be questioned concerning his actions was affects someone's acts in this world. Then he promised himself not to make such mistakes again.

M. Yaşar Kandemir

THINGS THAT WE GAIN FROM FAITH IN THE HEREAFTER

FAITH IN THE HEREAFTER

- Improves our sense of responsibility
- Helps the ideas of equity and justice to become dominant in the society
- Protects us from selfishness
- Keeps us away from unlawful and gets us closer to lawful earnings.

Believing in the Hereafter means to have faith that we will be held accountable in the Hereafter for everything that we have done in this world. In other words it means that we believe that we are in a big test. Such faith makes us recognize that we have responsibilities towards Allah, towards our society, and towards other creations. We believe that those who do good deeds will be rewarded and those who commit misdeeds will see the punishment of their actions. In other words faith in the Hereafter **improves our sense of responsibility.** It helps us to check our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

When we act by the sense of responsibility we strive to be ready for the big test on Judgment Day. We fulfill our tasks in the best way we can. And we pay attention to our words and behaviors. We try to gain Paradise and save ourselves from the Hell-fire. We treat our family and friends nicely; we do not treat anybody unjustly and we become honest people.

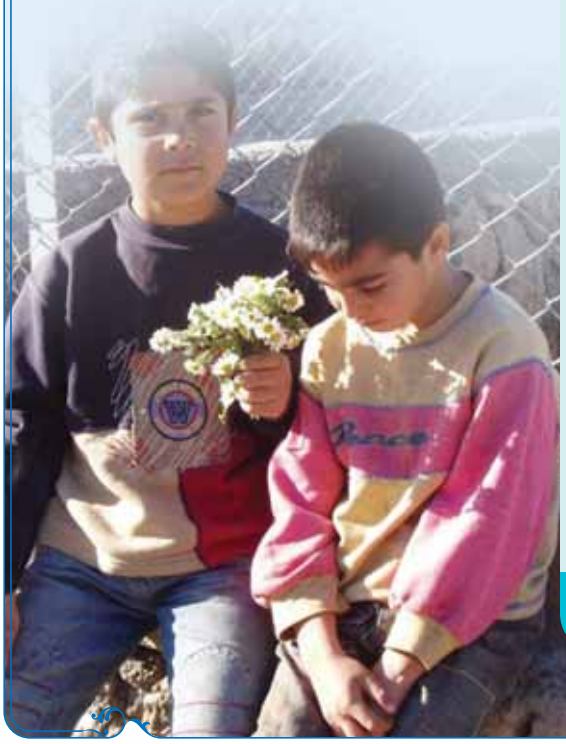
Allah the Almighty says that:

"Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth belongs to Allah; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it; then He will forgive whom He pleases and chastise whom He pleases, and Allah has power over all things."

(al-Baqara 2; 284)

It is very important that people in a society trust each other. Trust can be achieved by righteousness and justice. This would be much easier in a society constituted from people who have strong faith in the Hereafter; since believing that we will be held accountable for what we have done in this world affects our view of this world. This faith directs our relationship with other people and it also **helps the ideas of equity and justice to become dominant in the society.**

If we have a strong faith in the Hereafter, we do not violate other people's rights. We pay attention to our actions and behaviors. We abstain from ugly and heartbreaking talks. We do not treat people unfairly. We treat the poor and orphans nicely. Just as we pay attention to our own rights, we protect other people's rights. We do not give harm other people's property, life, chastity, rights, and freedom. We do not betray other people's trust. In short we become such trustworthy people that nobody gets harmed from our words and actions.



Resulullah sallallahu aleyhi ve sellem,

"Do you know who is bankrupt?" They (the Companions of the Holy Prophet) said:

"As far as we know a bankrupt man is one who has neither dirham with him nor wealth; or one who lost all his property and ruined financially."

He (the Holy Prophet) said:

"The bankrupt of my ummah would be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with prayers and fasts and Zakat but (he would find himself bankrupt on that day as he would have exhausted his funds of virtues) since he hurled abuses upon others, brought calumny against others and unlawfully consumed the wealth of others and shed the blood of others and beat others, and his virtues would be credited to the account of one (who suffered at his hand). And if his good deeds fall short to clear the account, then their sins would be entered in (his account) and he would be thrown in the Hell-Fire."

(Muslim, Birr, 59)

Helping each other is one of the most important factors in a society that provides peace and tranquility. Helping others and taking care of their needs build bridges of love among us.

When we have faith in the Hereafter, we do not just think about ourselves but about others, as well. Faith in the Hereafter **protects us from selfishness.** We love and help the people created by Allah in the perfect form. We try to do good deeds which not just have effects in this life but also continue after our death. We run to help and take care of the needs of the poor and needy with our alms and charity.

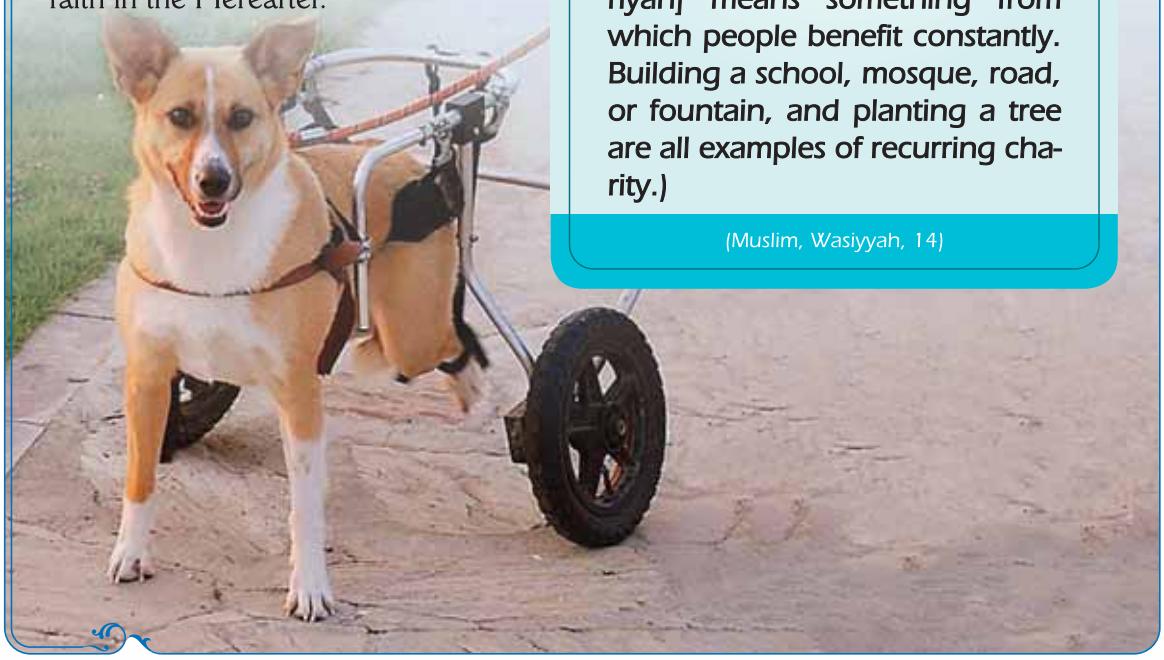
Muslims have established a civilization of endowments and left immortal monuments. They have donated these monuments' rights of use to others for the sake of Allah. They have founded soup kitchens, hospitals, and fountains for the poor, the needy, the widow, and the orphans. They have even founded special endowments to cure the wounded animals and to take care of the thirsty animals' need for water. They have thought of the life after death while they are alive. And they have left works which would bring rewards even after their death. Such thoughts and ideas are the results of faith in the Hereafter.

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or knowledge (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, who prays for him (for the deceased)."

(Recurring charity [sadaqa jariyah] means something from which people benefit constantly. Building a school, mosque, road, or fountain, and planting a tree are all examples of recurring charity.)

(Muslim, Wasiyyah, 14)



Those who forget death and do not believe in the questioning after death do not hesitate to commit sins. Because such people think that life is just eating, drinking, and having fun. They behave greedily. They are not satisfied with what they have. They can do anything for the sake of earning money, and getting rank and fame. They earn money without thinking about whether its source is lawful or unlawful. They would even steal, shed blood or kill just for a little money.

Faith in the Hereafter teaches us to be contended with what we have. It brings the blessings of lawful and clean earnings. It gives us the strength to bear the burden of earning our life from lawful sources. It places in our hearts the belief that we will get the return of such life style in the Hereafter. It **keeps us away from unlawful and gets us closer to lawful earnings.** It purifies our hearts from negative attributes like greediness and discontentedness. It helps to improve our feelings to help and serve other people.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"...And for those who fear Allah, He (ever) prepares a way out, And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And if any one puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him..."

(Talâk sûresi, 2-3. âyetler)



THE BALANCE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE AFTERLIFE IN OUR PROPHET'S LIFE

Our beloved Prophet has been the best exemple for us as for understand this world and readying ourselves for the Hereafter. His views about this world and the Hereafter were as follows:

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) would benefit from the lawful and pure blessings of this world; but he would never attach his heart to this world and everything in it. Living in consciousness of *"O Allah! There is no life worth living except the life of the Hereafter …"* (Bukhari, Riqaq, 1) he **shaped his worldly life in accordance with the requirements of the Hereafter.** He would not forget that he was going to be held accountable for his actions and would not be in any behaviors that he could not explain. He knew his responsibilities towards Allah and he always fulfilled his acts of worship. He was always the best exemple for his followers.

He would never hurt people, treat them unfairly, and show approval of people treating each other unfairly. He was **very careful about other people's rights.** He always feared the thought of going in the presence of Allah on Judgment Day with the burden of other people's rights. This was why he always advised his followers to pay people's rights in this world and ask their forgiveness if there had been any injustices. Allah's Messenger said, *"Whoever has oppressed another person concerning his reputation or anything else, he should beg him to forgive him before the Day of Resurrection when there will be no money to compensate for*



wrong deeds, but if he has good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him in the extent of his oppression which he has done, and if he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be loaded on him." (Bukhari, Mazalim, 10; Riqaq, 48)

Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) **lived his life in accordance with the verses of the Qur'an**. The command of our Lord Almighty *"And serve your Lord till the inevitable comes to you."* (Hijr 15; 99) was one of the basic principles of his life. He worshipped Allah and fulfilled all the requirements of his servitude until the end of his life. His worldly life was formed in accordance with the meaning of the following verse: *"Say. Surely my prayer and my sacrifice my life andmy death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds."* (Anbiya 5; 162) Even in his death bed, he continued performing his acts of worship, conveying his message, and educating his companions.

Allah's Messenger knew that **life and death are only in the hands of Allah**. He never lost his hope and courage. He had strong faith in which nobody would neither benefit nor harm him unless Allah wishes. Because of this faith, he never feared from death and he was always in the front rows during the hardest times of battles.

Our beloved Prophet would always **observe a balance between this world and the Hereafter**. He would neither turn completely towards this world and neglect the Hereafter nor turn utterly towards the Hereafter and neglect this world. He would not approve total abstinence from the blessings of this world. He always advised his companions to keep a balance between this world and the Hereafter. Three of his companions once agreed to perform acts of worship continuously. According to their agreement, one of them was going to fast everyday; the second one was going to pray the entire night; and the third one was not going to marry at all. When Allah's Messenger heard their agreement, he warned them saying:

"Are you the same people who said so-and-so? By Allah, I am more submissive to Allah and more afraid of Him than you; yet I fast and break my fast, I sleep and I also marry women. So he who does not follow my tradition in religion is not from me (not one of my followers)." (Bukhari, Nikah, 1)

Our beloved Prophet **never regarded any goodness in this world as little**. He said that goodness protects people from the Hell-fire. Even the smallest goodness done in this world was not going to be left unreciprocated in the Hereafter. He said *"and so, each one of you should save himself from the fire even by giving half of a date-fruit (in charity)."* (Bukhari, Zakat, 9) He informed that all good deeds, big or little, was going to be a reason to enter Paradise and gave striking examples for this. One of these examples is as follows:

"While a man was going on his way, he saw a thorny branch. He said that by Allah he was going to remove it from the way for not to harm any Muslims. He picked it up and Allah became pleased by his action and the man was placed in Pardise." (Bukhari, Adhan, 32; Mazalim, 28)

Allah's Messenger **would never stay away from working, struggling, and doing good deeds.** He always advised to be in good hopes and constant effort. And he also

advised to do good deeds. The following saying is the best example in this regard: *"try to plant a tree even if it is the end of the world."* (Ahmad bin Hanbal, Musnad, III, 191)

Our beloved Prophet always asked health and welfare from Allah the Almighty. And he lived a clean and neat life. He would **never show impatience before difficulties and sicknesses**. Hardships and illnesses faced with patience will be a reason for that person's sins to be forgiven. He taught his followers that visiting the sick and attending believers' funerals were among the important duties of the believers towards each others. He would follow this principle carefully in his own life, visit the sick and pray for them. The he would advice them to be patient and give them the good tidings of the rewards awaiting them in the Hereafter. Thus he would cheer them up.



Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) advised us to *"remember the death which cuts the worldly pleasures like a knife"* (Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 4) and to live our lives without forgetting death and the afterlife. He always kept death in mind and lived his life always ready for it. **He would remind of the unity of Allah and the vastness of His mercy and forgiveness to the sick people who were on their death bed. He would nicely urge them to say that there is no god but Allah.** In this way he would help them to leave this world as believers. He suggested to his companions to *exhort to recite "There is no god but Allah" to those of them who were dying.* (Muslim, Janaiz, 1)

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon was **very patient before the deaths of his relatives and loved ones. He knew and accepted that those were tests from Allah. And he would wait the reward of his patience from Allah the Almighty.** He witnessed and endured the pain of many of his loved ones' deaths including his beloved wife Khadijah. His three sons and three of his daughters passed away during his life. Similarly some of his friends and relatives, such as Jafar al-Tayyar and his uncle Hamza became martyrs. He became sad and shed tears for losing them; but he never lost his patience and strength to bear their lost. He manifested the perfect living example of how a believer should behave under such circumstances. He submitted himself to his Lord's Will. He did not forget that Allah is the One Who gives and takes life back. He did not rebel against Allah's Will by wailing and shouting out.

When the Prophet and his friends entered the house where the prophet's son Ibrahim was in his last breaths, the eyes of Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) started shedding tears. Abdur Rahman bin Awf asked,

"O Allah's Apostle, even you are weeping?" He said,

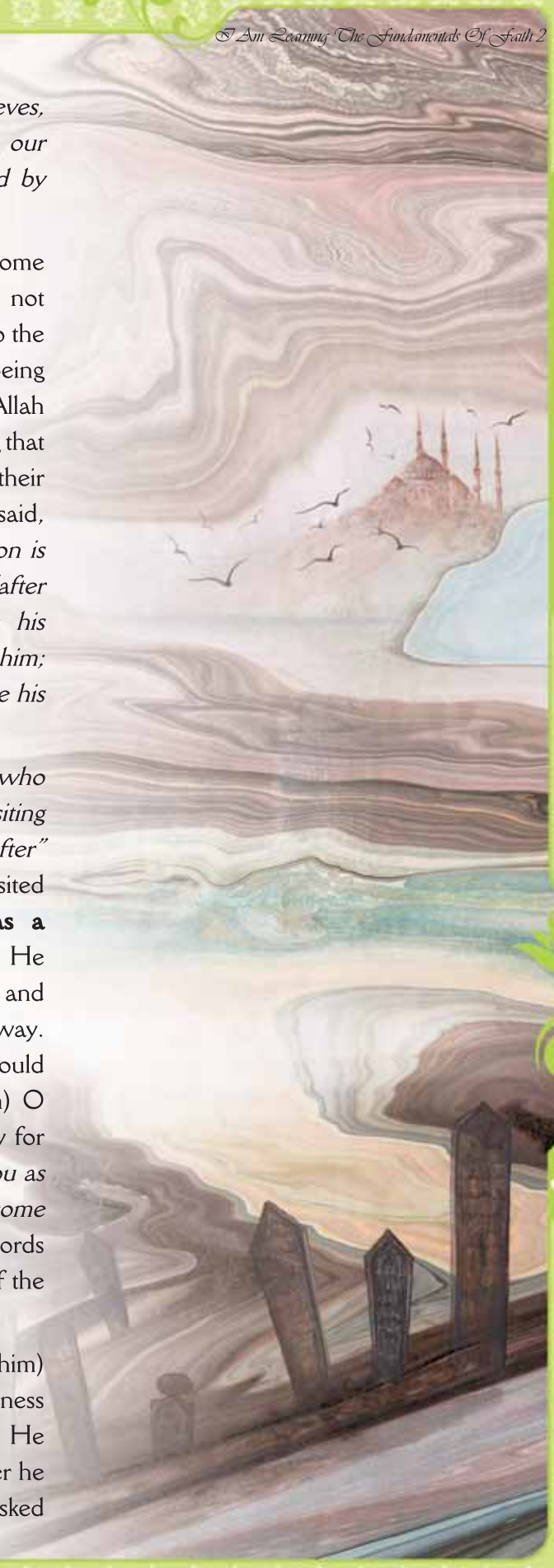
"O Ibn Awf, these tears are the signs of mercy." Then he wept more and said,

"The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation." (Bukhari, Janaiz, 43)

Allah's Messenger informed us that some misdeeds like gossiping about people or not being careful about the manners of going to the bathroom were going to be the reason for being punished in the grave. He took refuge in Allah from being tortured in the grave. Reminding that people were going to be left alone with their deeds in their graves Allah's Messenger said, *"When carried to his grave, a dead person is followed by three, two of which return (after his burial) and one remains with him: his relative, his property, and his deeds follow him; his relatives and his property go back while his deeds remain with him."* (Bukhari, Riqaq, 42)

Our beloved Prophet said that *"Those who would like to visit graves may do so; for visiting graves reminds us of the life in the Hereafter"* (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 60) and he often himself visited graves. **He regarded visiting graves as a reminder of death and the Hereafter.** He would visit the cemetery of Jannat al-Baqi and pray for the believers who had passed away. When he entered in a cemetery, he would say "Peace be upon you (salaam alaikum) O residents of this graveyard!" and then pray for them saying: *"May Allah forgive us and you as well. You went before us and we will come after you."* (Tirmidhi, Janaiz, 59) By thse words he would think about death and the life of the Hereafter.

Our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) would ask from Allah the Almighty goodness both in this world and in the Hereafter. He would never pray just for himself but rather he would pray for his entire ummah. He asked



from Allah that his questioning on Judgment Day be easy, that he to be saved from Hell and that he enter Paradise. He asked Allah's mercy and forgiveness and hoped be forgiven. But he would never neglect to get ready for Judgment Day and the Hereafter by just trusting the endless mercy of Allah the Almighty. He said that intelligent people are the ones who question themselves before dying and get ready for the life after death.

One day a man from the *ansar* came to the Messenger of Allah. After greeting the man asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Which believer is more virtuous?" Allah's Messenger replied:

"The one who is better in morals" The man asked again:

"O Messenger of Allah! Which believer is more intelligent?" Upon this the Prophet answered:

"The one who remembers death most and makes the best preparation for the life after death." (Ibn Majah, Zuhd, 31)

Our beloved Prophet **knew that every good deed done in this world would please Allah the Almighty; so he would act accordingly.** He would regard good deeds as the paths to obtain Allah's mercy and forgiveness. He talked to his Companions about the beauties of Paradise and the tortures of the Hell. He gave examples showing how important the good deeds are in earning Allah's pleasure and drew attention to the significance of balance between this world and the Hereafter. One of these examples is as follows:

"Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection:

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"O Allah, set right for me my religion which is the safeguard of my affairs. And set right for me the affairs of my world wherein is my living. And set right for me my Hereafter on which depends my after-life. And make the life for me (a source) of abundance for every good and make my death a source of comfort for me protecting me against every evil."

(Muslim, Dhikr, 71)

"O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me." The son of Adam would say:

"O my Lord! How could I visit You whereas You are the Lord of the worlds?"

Thereupon He would say:

"Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him? O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me." The son of Adam would say:

"My Lord, how could I feed You whereas You are the Lord of the worlds?" He said:

"Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side?" Allah the Almighty would say again:

"O son of Adam! I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me." The son of Adam would say:

"My Lord, how could I provide You whereas You are the Lord of the worlds?" Thereupon Allah the Almighty would say:

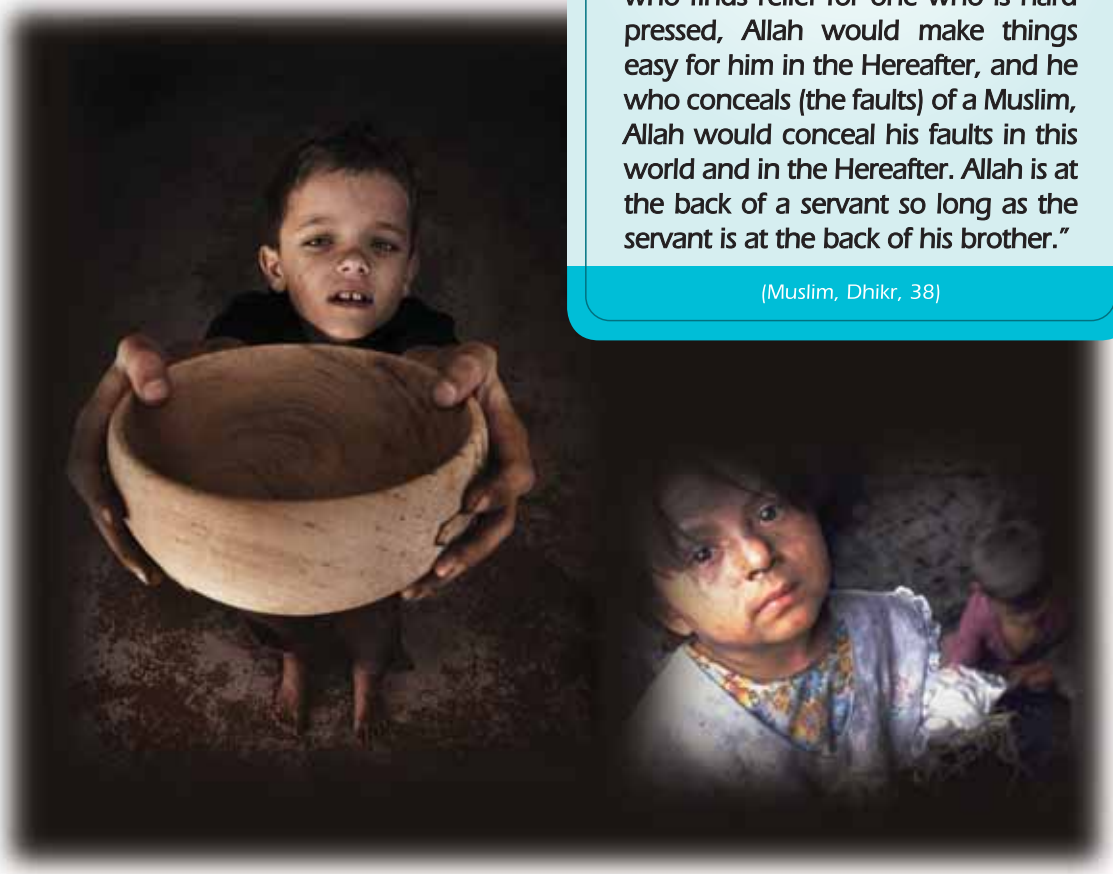
"Such and such of servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me." (Muslim, Birr, 43)

In conclusion our beloved Prophet established a nice balance between this world and the Hereafter. This balance formed his living style and was reflected in his acts of worship and behaviors. He would perform his responsibilities towards his Lord in the best way. He would look at people and other creation with the eyes of mercy and compassion. He caressed mercifully the orphans' heads and compassionately approached the kids. He helped the poor. He stood by the oppressed. He always had a smiling face. He treated his friends, family, and relatives with compassion. He never forgot that the real source of whole mercy in this world is Allah, Most-forgiving and Beneficent.

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"He who alleviates the suffering of a brother from the sufferings of this world, Allah would alleviate from him a suffering from the sufferings of the Day of Resurrection, and he who finds relief for one who is hard pressed, Allah would make things easy for him in the Hereafter, and he who conceals (the faults) of a Muslim, Allah would conceal his faults in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah is at the back of a servant so long as the servant is at the back of his brother."

(Muslim, Dhikr, 38)



Zainab, the daughter of the Prophet (peace be upon him), sent a messenger to the Prophet requesting him to come as her child was dying; but the Prophet returned the messenger and told him to convey his greeting to her and say:

"Allah is the One Who gives and takes it back. And everything with Him has a limited fixed term in this world and so she should be patient and hope for Allah's reward."

She again sent a messenger for him, swearing that he should come. The Prophet got up, and so did some of his companions. When they entered the house the child was dying. He was breathing heavily. Thereupon the eyes of the Prophet (peace be upon him) started shedding tears. Sad bin Ubadah said,

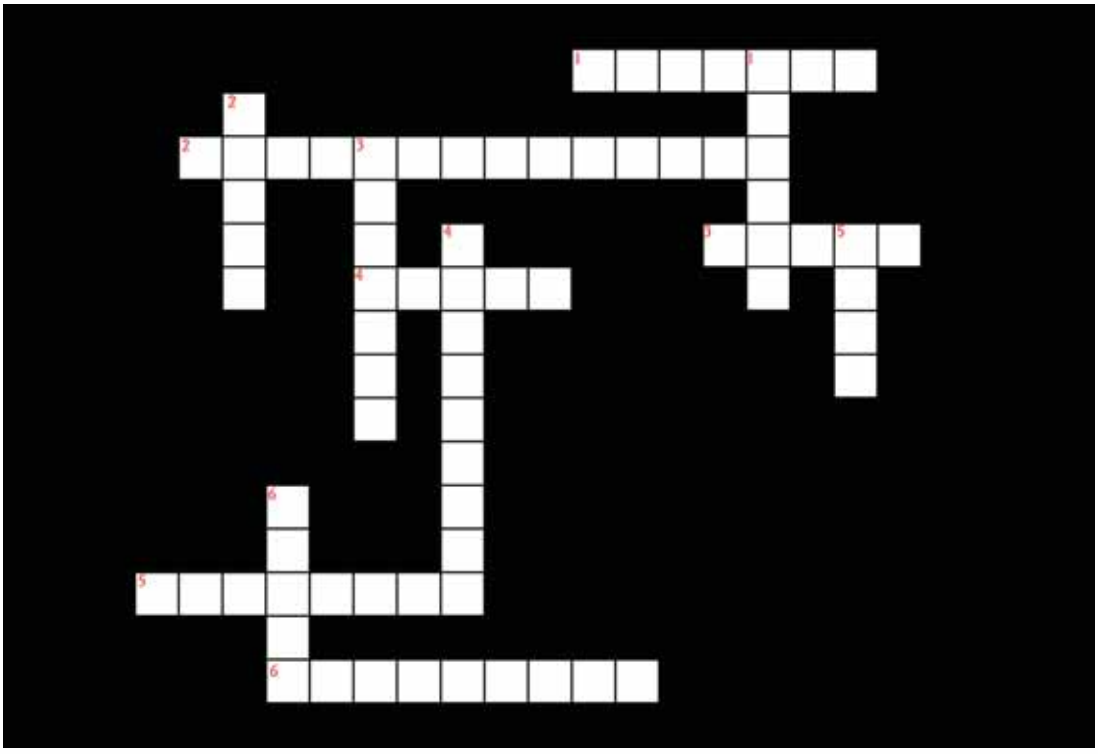
"O Allah's Apostle! What is this?" He replied,

"It is mercy which Allah has placed in the hearts of His slaves, and Allah is merciful only to those of His slaves who are merciful to others." (Bukhari, Janaiz, 33)



QUESTIONS

Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. The Arabic term used for the end of this world and universe
2. The name of the angels recording our good and bad deeds in this world
3. The Arabic term used for resurrection after death
4. The Arabic term used for the bridge standing over Hell
5. The term used for the place prepared by Allah for His believing servants as a reward in the Hereafter
6. The term used for life after death

Down

1. One of the angels who will ask questions in the grave
2. The term used for the scale which will measure the good and bad deeds after judgment
3. The Arabic term used for the Place where all human beings ever lived will first be gathered for judgment in the Hereafter
4. The term used for the period of time between death and judgment
5. The term used for the place where sinners, unbelievers, and hypocrites will get their punishment in the Hereafter
6. End of Life in this world

Find the Correct Match

1	The beauties of this world		if fish does not appreciate it, Creator certainly knows it.
2	People who do not appreciate the value of their limited time in this world		do not hesitate to commit sins.
3	Death does not mean end of existence		and leads us to earn our livings from the permissible ways.
4	Receiving the book of deeds from right is good news,		have been entrusted to us for a certain period of time.
5	Do a good deed and throw it into the sea		and justice settle in our society.
6	Believing in the Hereafter keeps us away from forbidden things		will surely regret after death.
7	Believing in the Hereafter helps the ideas of righteousness		but beginning of a new existence.
8	Those who forget death and deny questioning after death		whereas receiving it from left or behind is the precursor of the punishments.

Let's Test Ourselves

1. Which one of the following is not one of the benefits of believing in the Hereafter?

A) To keep us away from committing misdeeds

B) To encourage us to do good deeds

C) To cleanse the selfishness out of one's heart

D) To encourage telling lies

2. Which one of the following is not one of the names of Judgment Day?

A) The Day of Questioning

B) The Day of Ashura

C) The Day of Mahshar or Hashr

D) The Day f Resurrection

3. Which one of the following statements is incorrect?

A) The incident which will end life and order in this universe is called *qiyamah*

B) *Mizan* is a term about measuring the deeds

C) The period between death and the resurrection is called "the life of grave"

D) A person's soul continues to live after his/her death in another person's body

4. What does "wa'l ba'thu ba'd al-mawt" mean?

A) There is no god but Allah

B) In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

C) There is resurrection after death

D) One is not allowed to worship anyone but Allah

5. Which one of the following information about the belief in the Hereafter is incorrect?

A) Sinners will stay in Hell forever

B) Sirat is the name of the bridge built over Hell

C) All people will be resurrected after the second blow of *Sur*

D) The life in this world will end with the first blow of *Sur*

6. According to Islamic faith, which one of the following thoughts is wrong about this world and the afterlife?

A) This world and the Hereafter make a whole and neither of them should be neglected

B) This world is the end and death means ceasing to exist

C) Gaining the Hereafter depends upon our deeds in this world

D) Death is the beginning of our endless journey in the Hereafter

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

(Who created them, who prays for, may try, to Us, life, dry bones, the faults, soul, knowledge, the mercy)

1. "He Who created death and ……. , that He ……. which of you is best in deed" (Mulk, 67; 2)

2. "Every …… must taste of death, then ……. you shall be brought back." (Ankabut 29; 57)

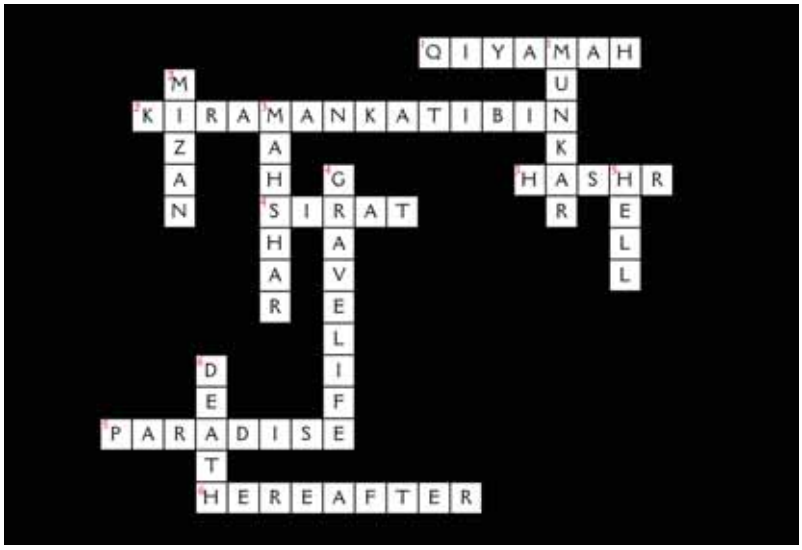
3. "And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own (origin and) creation: he says, Who can give life to the …… when they are rotten? Say, He will give them life …… for the first time." (Yasin 36; 78-79)

4. "do not despair of …… of Allah; surely Allah forgives ……. altogether; surely He is the Forgiving the Merciful." (Zumar 39; 53)

5. "When a man dies, his acts come to an end, but three, recurring charity, or ……. (by which people) benefit, or a pious son, ……. him (for the deceased)." (Muslim, Wasiyyah, 14)

ANSWERS

Let's solve a crossword puzzle





Find the Correct Match

1	The beauties of this world	5	if fish does not appreciate it, Creator certainly knows it.
2	People who do not appreciate the value of their limited time in this world	8	do not hesitate to commit sins.
3	Death does not mean end of existence	6	and leads us to earn our livings from the permissible ways.
4	Receiving the book of deeds from right is good news,	1	have been entrusted to us for a certain period of time.
5	Do a good deed and throw it into the sea	7	and justice settle in our society.
6	Believing in the Hereafter keeps us away from forbidden things	2	will surely regret after death.
7	Believing in the Hereafter helps the ideas of righteousness	3	but beginning of a new existence.
8	Those who forget death and deny questioning after death	4	whereas receiving it from left or behind is the precursor of the punishments.

Let's Test Ourselves

1: D
2: B
3: D
4: C
5: A
6: B

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

1: Life, may try
2: Soul, to Us
3: Dry bones, Who created them
4: The mercy, the faults
5: Knowledge, who prays for





DIVINE PROGRAM

PREDESTINATION

- *Fate and Predestination*
- *Free Will*
- *Work, Sustenance, and Trust in Allah*
- *Sickness and Death*
- *The Things That We gain from the Faith in Predestination*
- *Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would regard everything coming from Allah as Good*





MARK MY WORDS

Elif was curious girl who loved to learn new things. She would ask her grandpa everything that she wondered, and curiously listened to what he said. Her grandfather loved her curious questions and attention. When answering the questions, Grandpa Ahmad was getting help from what he had read, learned, and experienced in his life. Sometimes his old memories would come to his help.

One day Elif and her grandfather were having a nice chat. This time Elif was asking questions about fate and destiny. Her questions took Grandpa Ahmad to his childhood memories. He began to talk in a soft voice:



"My curious girl! When I was little I was a curious boy just like you are. Between you and me, I was a little bit naughty. I used to walk around. Some days I would go hunting birds and some other days I would go fishing in the creek. I loved to walk and run around, climb the mountains, and walk in the forests. It was a different joy to watch the beauties of the nature up from the mountains; however my parents would not let me go alone for I was too young. I was allowed to go with the company of an adult.

My nephew Husain was a good hunter. With the intention of hunting, he liked going into the forests and mountains. One day I wanted Husain to take me with him. Husain said:

— "Okay Ahmad! Be ready early tomorrow morning." I told my mother and asked her to get permission from my father. My mother said:

— "This is going to be difficult but let's try."

It was the first time that I was going to be in forests and mountains that I had never seen before. I was very excited."

My mother went to my father. I was waiting impatiently. Then I heard my father's angry voice:

— "No! He does not even properly play in front of the house, how do you think he will act on the mountains? I am sure if he sees snakes, he may even try to play with them."

My poor mother – may Allah have mercy on her soul – was making all kinds of excuses and asking him to let me to go.

Imagine my anxiety just outside the door. I was trying to hear every word they talked. I was worried that my father would not let me go. Finally my father said:

— "Okay then, since you also want him to go; but let me tell you what will happen tomorrow. Your son will climb up all of the trees and will poke his nose in every place. And in the end he will come back home injured and in a terrible state."

My mother was again trying to calm my father down:

— "Don't worry! I am sure he will not do what you thought. Is he so naughty?" My father insisted:

"He will! Mark my words." This was the thing of my father, may Allah have mercy on his soul. He would say "mark my words" and then move his index finger like he was writing his words on the wall.

Anyway, finally I got the permission. I was so happy. I could not sleep for thinking the wonderful things waiting for me the next day.

Husain, I, his hunting buddies and I set out for the journey. We went for several kilometers deep into the forests. We climbed over hills and mountains. I was so happy that I was not even aware how tired I was. My clothes were torn and I was in terrible shape; but I did not care. I could not even remember my father's words.

Do you know, Elif, when I remembered my father's words? I remembered them when I was going back home in worse shape than he had guessed the previous night. What was I going to tell him? What kind of excuse was I going to use? What kind of lies was I going to tell? I was in a really miserable situation when I entered into my parents' presence. My mother, my poor mother, was more miserable than I was. My father turned to my mom:

— Look! Do you see what your son did? Did not I tell you?"

Just then I thought a devilish idea, but I could not tell my father rather I was ashamed to tell him.

Elif impatiently asked:

— "What were you going to tell him, grandpa?"

— "I was going to tell him that "Daddy! I do not have any sins. You knew what I was going to do. You told my mother the day before. You even pretended writing your words on the wall; so I did what you had thought about me. If I had done anything wrong, it would have been listening and following your words." Elif began to giggle:

— "I am glad you did not tell. What a childish thought! They were all nonsense. Your father did not tell those words for you to do. He did not force you to do them, either."

Grandpa Ahmad was happy to hear Elif's words.

— "Good for you my smart girl! This is what I have been trying to explain to you about fate. You see how my old memories have solved another problem."

"My girl! Allah's knowledge is endless. His knowledge about what we are going to do does not mean that He forces us to do them; for Allah has given us intellect, ability to think and shown us the right and wrong. He has bestowed on us the free-will to choose among them the ones we want. He has done one more favor and warned us saying "these things are bad. I do not like them. If you do, it will be very bad for you."

Therefore, would it be right if we commit bad things and then blame Allah for our own actions? Who would believe us, if we say "what can I do? I did it because Allah had known that I would do it. This is my fate."

Before anybody else, we should ourselves believe them, should not we?"

— "Yes" said Elif faithfully. But then she thought something else.

— "Grandpa! If Allah wishes, He can easily stop us from doing bad things. He loves us so much but why does he not prevent us from committing sins?"

Grandpa Ahmad liked Elif's question. He was happy to hear such smart questions from his granddaughter. The he replied her question:

— "Allah's greatest favor for us is to give us free-will and let us do whatever we choose. If Allah did not give us the power

to do bad things or if He prevented us from doing bad things, what would be the meaning of Hell and Paradise or the rewards waiting in the Hereafter? What would be the meaning of sending messengers and Divine messages? These are all connected to each other.

If Allah prevented us from committing sins, this time we would complain saying "are we slaves? Why can't we do anything? Why can't we choose whatever we want?"

Allah's creation of us in the state that we are, in His evaluation of our deeds and giving us what we deserve in accordance with our deeds are all part of our fate.

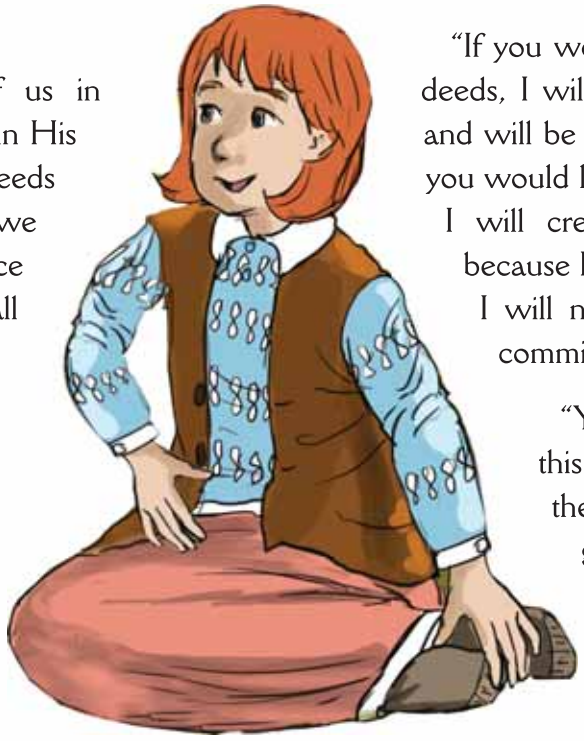
Elif?

— "Grandpa! I know I have given you a hard time today, but I have one more question. If you answer this one, I will have no more questions. Sometimes my mom says: "all good and evil come from Allah." Is this true? If it is, then would it not be unfair to be punished for something coming from Allah?"

"Yes, my beautiful girl it is true, but people misinterpret these words? Let me tell you where they make a mistake. As you know, in this universe there is only one Creator Who is Allah the Almighty."

"Of course"

"Since Allah is the only Creator, the He is the one Who has created everything including good and evil. We cannot, however, say what our crime is, because Allah creates good and evil in accordance with our choices. So we reach the same point. Allah has given us intelligence and free-will to choose. He has also shown us the paths to Hell and Paradise and said:



"If you would like to do good deeds, I will create good deeds and will be pleased with you. If you would like to do bad deeds, I will create them for you; because I am the Creator, but I will not be happy if you commit evil."

"You see my little girl this is the meaning of the saying that both good and evil come from Allah. In other words, Allah creates good and evil but He creates them according to our choices. This is why He holds us accountable for what we do."

Elif was happy and relieved for getting the responses for all her question. Her faith in Allah got stronger.

M. Yaşar Kandemir
(Quoted with some adaptations)

FATE and PREDESTINATION

At sea level water boils at 100 Celsius. 	All plants live in the extent of the life span determined for them. 	There can be no peace and tranquility in societies where immorality and injustice prevail 
Things that are tossed into the air fall down to the ground with the influence of gravity. 	Every animal acts according to its nature 	There will be chaos in societies where wealth is distributed unfairly 
Water has the power to lift things up (buoyancy) 	Every living being dies 	Societies that do not consider science and knowledge important stay behind. 

We may add hundreds more to the above mentioned examples. All of these examples show us that every being in this universe is created in accordance with a plan, program, and measure. They fulfill their task and continue to live according to this plan and program.

Allah, Who has created everything in accordance with a measure, has adorned them with necessary features and capabilities. He has created nothing aimless in this universe. Everything is created with His knowledge, will, and power. This Divine all-encompassing knowledge and His plan and program designed for the creation is called **predestination or Qadar**. And the creation of a thing when its time comes in accordance with the Divine knowledge is called **fate or Qada.**.

For instance let's think about rain. Allah the Almighty has determined a certain program for rain and related it to some causes.

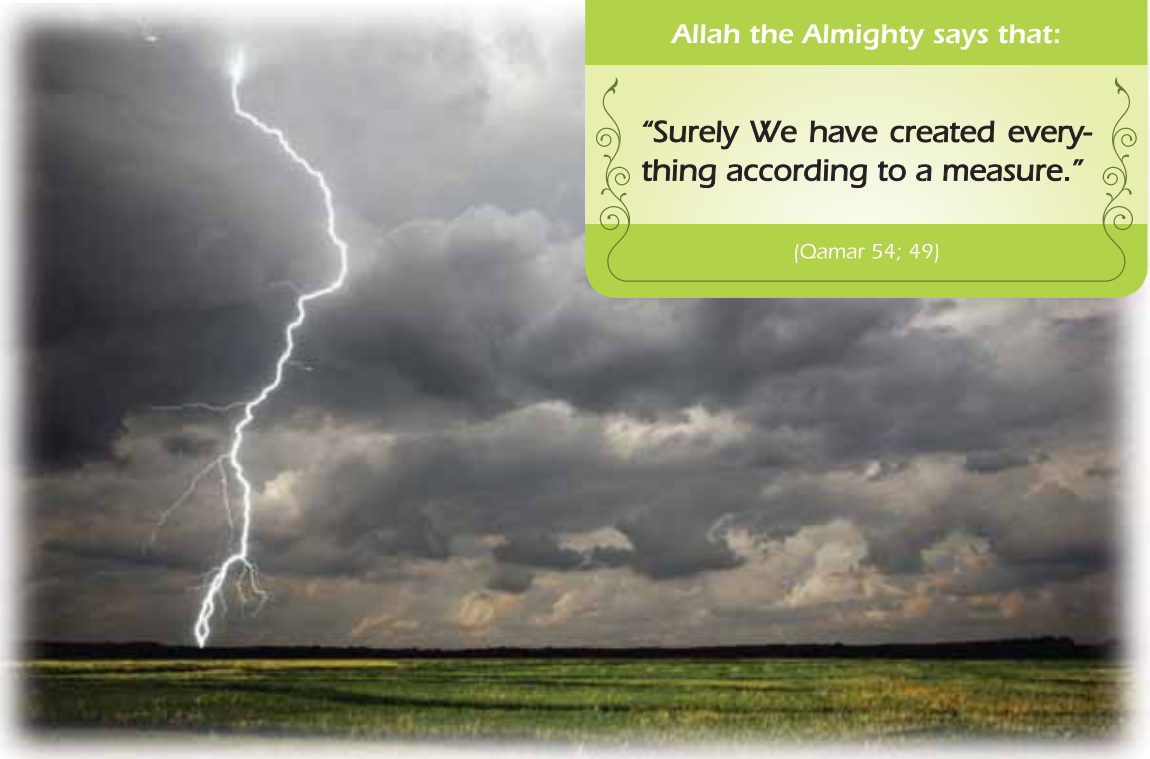
- Water on earth evaporates with the influence of Sun and goes up to the atmosphere.
- When the clouds meet cool air in the atmosphere, the water vapor eventually condenses, forming tiny droplets in clouds.
- These water droplets form the clouds.
- When they become big enough, precipitation (rain, sleet, or snow) is triggered, and water returns to the land (or sea) under the influence of gravity.

This cycle designed for water by our Lord Almighty is its destiny. Since the creation of this universe, this is the program that rain comes into existence. Allah, Who has determined this measure for rain, also knows best where, when, and how much it will rain.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Surely We have created everything according to a measure."

(Qamar 54; 49)



EMRE'S FATE

One day Emre was studying at home while his parents were having a conversation. Emre was not aware of what they were talking about. Then he heard his father saying:

"It is the predestination of Allah. It is fate. What can we do?" These words attracted Emre's attention. He turned towards his father and asked:

— "Daddy! What are you talking about?"

— "Which one? Is it predestination of Allah or fate?



— "Yes, both of them."

— "Okay, I will tell you about them, but they might be a little difficult for you to understand."

— "Daddy, I was reading and trying to understand the same issue from my book; but I could not understand the issue of predestination."

— "Bring your book. Let's have a look together."

Emre gave his book to his father. His father read carefully the definitions of predestination and fate. He thought a little and then turned to Emre:

— "Well, my son! I think there can be no simpler definition of predestination and fate than the ones in your book; however, the reason why you do not understand them is not because the definitions are complicated but because they are very difficult issues.

— "Well, Daddy! How am I going to manage to understand them? The Preparation section of my book requires learning from our parents what "predestination" and "fate" mean and writing them down. Our teacher also wanted us to learn them and come to the class ready. I have read them from my book, but I could not understand them well.

Emre's father thought for a short while and then:

— "Emre, can you bring the calendar? Let's examine it. Tell me what day is today?"

— "Sunday"

— "Why did you not go to school today?"

— "Because it is Sunday. Are not Sundays vacation days?"

— "What day will tomorrow be?"

— "It is Monday and I will go to school and you will go to work."

— "Tell me why you did not go to school and I did not go to work today. And tell me why we will go tomorrow." Emre was puzzled. He looked at his father's face as if he was saying what kind of question that was. Then he said:

— "But, daddy …." Upon this his father said:

— "Emre! Let me ask you one more question. Did you not go to school today, becaue it is written on the calendar that today is Sunday?"

— "Yes"

— "How did the people who wrote this calendar know that today was going to be Sunday?"

— "They probably made some calculations and found it out."

— "How did they figure it out? It is through their knowledge, isn't it?"

— "Of course daddy, it cannot happen without knowledge."

— "Let me ask you another question. What would have happened, if they had written on the calendar "Sunday. Sunday, Sunday …" on each and every page? Would we have vacation every day?"

— "Of course not."

— "Why?"

— "Because everyday cannot be Sunday. And don't people who prepared this calendar know that?"

— "Good job Emre. You are right. They knew it very well that it cannot be Sunday consecutively. Now listen to me carefully. We do not have vacation because it is written Sunday on the calendar. They calculated it and wrote it down a year ago that today is going to be Sunday. Now Sunday has come and you did not go to school. They also calculated that tomorrow is going to be Monday and you will go to school tomorrow. In short, Allah's knowledge about what will happen to us in this life on earth and recording them – just like preparing a calendar – is called destiny. Incidents written as our destiny happen when their day and hour come. And this is called fate.

— "Would you like me to give you another example?"

— "That would be great daddy."

— "You see that it is written in this calendar when the Sun will rise. And it rises at that time just like it is written. The Sun does not rise at that time because it is written on the calendar but because it has to rise. Human life is just like this. By living, people have an active role in their fate. It is a little bit complicated but I hope you understand it."

— "Yes, daddy, I am a little bit confused, but I think I got it. I will think about the examples you have given. If anything happens, I will ask you again. Thank you.

— "May Allah give you a clear mind."

Emre went back to his homework. His parents continued to their chat.

Mustafa Öcal



The Knowledge of Allah and Predestination

Allah the Almighty is Alîm in other words He knows both the events that happened in the past and the events which will happen in the future. His knowledge encompasses everything. Nothing can be outside His knowledge and nothing can happen outside His Will.

We, however, should not forget that Allah's knowledge is not the same as our knowledge. We know only the part of the past and the present that reach us. We cannot know, but only guess what will happen in the future; whereas Allah's knowledge is eternal; it does not have any time limits. Therefore Allah sees and knows yesterday, today, tomorrow, the next day, the Last Day, and the Hereafter at the same time. In fact He is the One Who ordains and creates all of them.

Human beings are a part of the universe created by Allah the Almighty. Just like the rest of the creation they, too, come into existence and continue to live because of the Will of our Lord Almighty. Our Lord, the Knower of All, has created human beings adorned with will. He has given them the freedom to choose their behavior. Allah has created this to test human beings.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"By the name of Allah who inspired it [the soul] to understand what is right and wrong for it, he will indeed be successful who purifies it, and he will indeed fail who corrupts it."

(al-Shams 91; 8-10)

Allah the Almighty says that:

"And with Him are the keys of the unseen (Ghaib)–none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and the sea, and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book."

(An'am 6; 59)

People's Freedom to Choose: Free Will

We can classify our actions in two groups:

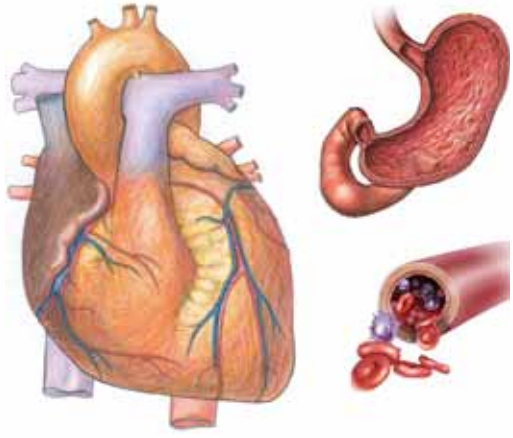
1. Actions and behaviors that happen outside our will

2. Actions and behaviors that take place by our will

Our Lord Almighty has created our organs and determined a system for them to function.

Functions like

- Our heart's function
- Our stomach's function
- Circulation of blood through our veins



take place outside our will. Every one of our organs fulfills the responsibility given to it by Allah.

The situations like

- Choosing our parents
- Deciding the time of our birth
- or deciding the color of our skin

are also outside the limits of our will. In such cases we do not have the possibility to choose. **And we are not responsible for the things concerning which we have no choice.**

There are also actions and behaviors that happen as a result of our will. We choose them by our free-will. Actions like eating, drinking, sitting, studying, and performing acts of worship depend upon our will. We eat and drink when we want. We also decide what we eat and drink. Speaking or being quiet also depend on our choices. We can also choose to tell the truth or lie when we speak. In short as a human being we can use our free-will either for good or bad; or to choose either right or wrong. **We are responsible from the actions that we have the power to choose.**

Let us explain the relationship between will and responsibility with the help of an example:

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability; for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought..."

(al-Baqara 2; 286)



Imagine that we have found one of our friends' wallet. In such a case we may choose to do one of the following:

1. To return the wallet to its real owner thinking "This money does not belong to me. It is not the right thing to spend somebody else's money without his permission."

2. To put the money in our pocket and spend it.

Choosing one of these two options is in our hands and the responsibility of our choice belongs to us. If we choose the first option, we do something right and good. Our Lord will reward us for this good deed. If we choose the second one, we violate one of the prohibitions of Allah and commit a sin. Because of this sin, we will be held accountable in the Hereafter.

Allah the Almighty holds us accountable for the beliefs, actions, and behaviors which take place within our free-will.

I AM RUNNING AWAY FROM THE FATE OF ALLAH TO HIS FATE

During his caliphate Umar bin Al-Khattab departed for Damascus. And when he reached Sargh, the commanders of the Muslim army, Abu Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah and his companions met him and told him that an epidemic had broken out in Damascus.

Umar said,

"Call for me the early emigrants (muhajirun) and helpers (ansar)." So Umar called them, informed and consulted them about the situation. Companions differed in their opinions. Some of them said,

"We have come out for a purpose and we do not think that it is proper to give it up," while others said,

"There are other people and the companions of Allah's Apostle are with you so we do not advise that we take them to this epidemic." Umar said to them,

So Umar made an announcement,

"I will ride back to Medina in the morning, so you should do the same and come with me" Abu Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah asked to Umar,

"O Caliph! Are you running away from the fate of Allah? If Allah ordains for us to die from this epidemic, we die. If He does not, nothing can happen to us." Umar replied,

"I wish someone else had said such a thing, O Abu 'Ubaida!"

Abu Ubaidah was a good friend of Umar. This was why Umar did not want to oppose his opinion. Then Umar continued his words saying:

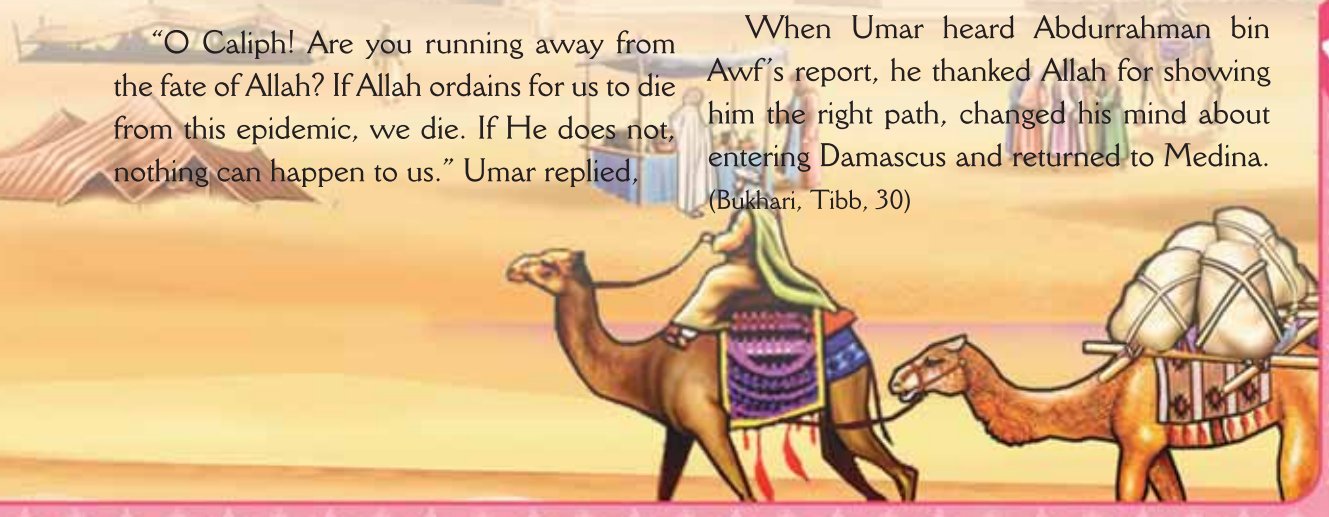
"Yes, we are running from the fate of Allah back to His fate. Don't you agree that if you had camels that went down a valley having two sides, one green and the other dry, you would graze them on the green one only if Allah had ordained that, and you would graze them on the dry side only if Allah had ordained that?"

Umar's words convinced Abu Ubaidah. Just then Abdur-Rahman bin Awf, who had been absent because of some job, came and said,

"I have some knowledge about this. I have heard Allah's Messenger saying,

If you hear about an outbreak of plague in a land, do not go to it; but if plague breaks out in a country where you are staying, do not run away from it.

When Umar heard Abdurrahman bin Awf's report, he thanked Allah for showing him the right path, changed his mind about entering Damascus and returned to Medina. (Bukhari, Tibb, 30)



WORK, SUSTENANCE, AND TRUST IN ALLAH

Work and Sustenance

All living beings on earth act according to the plan ordained by Allah the Almighty. They fulfill their tasks in accordance with the goal for which they have been created. They work and look for the sustenance ordained for them by Allah. Birds that leave their nests hungry early in the morning come back in the evening with their stomach full. All living beings, from the animal in the forest to the fish in the seas, continue their lives according to the measures ordained for them. Bees collect pollens and make honey; Ants work hard and gather food; Lions chase and try to catch their prey; Turtles slowly but persistently look for food; Fish swim around the seas to reach their food; In short all animals are in continuous work and effort to feed themselves.

Would it be appropriate for a human being to sit lazily while all living beings try and work so hard to fulfill their duties? Of course not!

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

"Nobody has ever eaten something better than the one from his earnings of his manual work. Allah's Messenger David (peace be upon him) would never eat except from the earnings of his manual work."

(Bukhari, Anbiya, 37)

This is because Allah the Almighty informs us that He will give their sustenance to all living beings. He has ordained one measure to obtain from this sustenance. According to this Divine measure established for human beings, Allah will give sustenance to those who work and strive for it. Our Lord Almighty informed us about this measure saying in the Qur'an that: **"And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for"** (al-Najm 53; 49) Therefore it is the duty of human beings to strive hard, to look for their sustenance, and to hold tight to the causes of earning it.



THE TREE THAT YIELDS FRUIT TWICE A YEAR

— One day when Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid saw an old man trying to plant a tree, he asked the old man:

— Father! You are very old. You will not see the fruits of this tree. So why are you bothering so much?

The old man replied:

— Dear son! Those who were before us planted trees and we have eaten their fruits. And now we should plant trees, so the ones who will come after us may eat their fruits.

Harun al-Rashid was so pleased to hear such a respond that he gave the old man a bag of gold. The old man said:

— Did you see, my son? My tree has already begun to yield fruit.

Sultan Harun Rashid was again so happy to hear such an answer that he gave the man another bag of gold. The old man started to laugh. When the sultan asked him why he was laughing, he said:

— Don't you see, my son? Plants usually yield fruit only once a year, mines have already yielded twice.



Our Lord has connected everything on this world to some causes and created the principle of cause and effect. According to this principle one needs to sow seeds in order to get produce; and one needs to plant trees in order to get fruits. In order to be successful one needs to work hard. In order to enter Paradise, people need to have faith and worship and to obey the orders and prohibitions of Allah.

Our Lord, who ordained holding to causes and working as the prerequisite of success, wanted from us to direct our will towards working hard. People who use their will for working are certainly going to get the reward of their efforts. Therefore as believers who have strong faith that everything happens according to Divine ordainment, we work within the limits of the rules created about the universe and do the task given us. After that, we expect to get the result of our actions from our Lord. After taking all the necessary measures, we put our trust in Allah and leave the rest to our Lord Almighty. We pray and ask help from Allah to make what we ask happen. And then we wholeheartedly place our trust in nobody but Him.



Allah the Almighty says that:

"Say: Surely my Lord amplifies the means of subsistence for whom He pleases of His servants and straitens (them) for whom (He pleases), and whatever thing you spend, He exceeds it in reward, and He is the best of Sustainers."

(Saba' 34; 39)

Work and Trust in Allah

Tawakkul or trust in Allah means to place trust in Allah after taking the necessary measures and fulfilling our obligations. It also means remembering that Allah is with us while striving to do our duties and leaving their results to Him.

Tawakkul does not mean to show laziness and to leave our responsibilities to Allah. Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him) told a man who had left his

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in the affair; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust."

(Al-i Imran 3; 159)

camel untied and claimed that he had put his trust in Allah: *"First tie your camel then put your trust in Allah."* (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 60) By this saying Allah's Messenger corrected the man's wrong understanding of the concept of tawakkul.

According to this, if we are a farmer, we need to plow our land at the appropriate time and prepare it to sow the seeds. Then we sow the seeds again at the appropriate time. We provide what our plant needs, like water, fertilizer, and pesticides. Then we pray Allah to give us nice and abundant produce. We trust in Allah and expect to get the best result from Him.

It was during the days of Umar's caliphate. A group of people were sitting in the mosque and having a conversation, when Umar stopped by the mosque. He asked them why they were sitting in the mosque. They said:

"O Caliph! We are from those who put their trust in Allah. We believe in that Allah will send our food to us." Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) got upset from this response. He drew those people who sat in the mosque lazily instead of working to earn their livelihood out of the mosque saying:

"You are not from those who place their trust in Allah but you are just lazy people who eat without deserving their food."



One day Salim who was a student at a boarding school told his friends:

"Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an that: "There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance depends on Allah." So why should I be worried about food? Whatever is in my share will certainly come to me so long as I place my trust in Allah."

His friends tried to warn him saying that his was a wrong idea, but he did not listen to them.

When it was the time of breakfast, Selim's friends got their plates and began to wait in line. Selim, however, did not join them in line. He thought that the cook would come and give his breakfast." After the cook distributed the breakfast to those in line, he asked if there was anybody left who did not get the breakfast. And because nobody answered his call, he cleared the food for breakfast and Selim went hungry. Same thing happened at lunch. Selim was thinking that his sustenance would come at dinner. Again the cook distributed the food to those who were waiting in to line and asked in the end if there was anybody left. Again Selim did not respond the cook's call. When he saw the cook was clearing up food for dinner, Selim coughed realizing that he was going to go hungry. When the cook heard his cough, he told Selim:

"Why are you coughing? If you want food, give me your plate." So Selim got his dinner and satisfied his hunger. Then he turned to his friends and said: Allah has informed us that He is going to provide our sustenance; but we, at least, need to cough to get it."



THE LION AND THE FOX

Once upon a time a man left his village to earn his livelihood. It had already got dark when he reached a forest; so the man decided to spend the night in the forest. Because he feared from beasts, he climbed up a big tree. He prepared for himself a place to sleep on the branches. Just then he heard a soft wailing. He wonderingly looked around and saw a crippled fox down the tree. He wondered how that fox would be able to find its food.

Then he saw a lion was approaching from a distance. The lion was holding a deer in its mouth. Pulling its prey, it came



closer to the tree in which the man was. Then it tore the deer into pieces under the tree and satisfied its hunger. When the lion left, the crippled fox came crawling. It filled its stomach with the leftovers of the lion. The man was amazed to see this scene and he thought:

— "How merciful Allah is! He sends the food of a crippled animal to its feet and does not leave it to starve. So why should I worry about working and earning my livelihood? Would it be worth it to spend my days and nights working so hard? Just as this crippled fox, my sustenance would come to my feet. I should have learned the meaning of trust in Allah from this fox. From now on, I should stay and wait for my food.

The man spent the night there having such thoughts. The next day he stopped by a cave on his way. He began to wait his food. He waited for three days in that secluded cave, but nobody came. Nobody brought him food nor drink. Finally the man fainted because of hunger. He woke up by a deep voice:

— "Wake up you lazy man! Why are you lying and waiting? You are healthy;so what is this laziness? Why do you want to be like the crippled fox? Go and work like the lion. Eat yourself and feed others with your leftovers.

When the man heard these words, he realized his mistake. He left the cave and continued his journey to find a place to earn his livelihood.

Sa'di Shirazi



SICKNESS and DEATH

Our Almighty Lord has bestowed different characteristics to living beings. As a living being, humans are born, grow up, and pass away when the time comes just like the rest of the living beings. They suffer from various diseases during their lifetime. Some of these diseases happen for unavoidable reasons; but some others happen because of their own mistakes and negligence.

Sickness is something that may happen to any of us. Our beloved Prophet taught us a Divine principle in this respect saying that *"Allah the Almighty has created the cure of every disease He created."* (Muslim, Salam, 26) According to this principle both diseases and their cures come from Allah. Allah is the only One who heals the sicknesses. The statement that was taught by Abraham reading **"And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me"** (Shu'ara 26; 80) reminds us this truth.

It is the order of our religion to go to doctor, use medicine and get medical treatment when we get sick. It is necessary for us to pray Allah, ask healing from Him, and place our trust in Him only after getting the necessary treatment. These are the worldly and spiritual causes that will help our sickness to heal. However, it is wrong to forget Allah and think that the doctor is the one who cures. Our job isn't "not to get sick at all" but "to take the necessary precautions" in order to protect ourselves from getting sick. And our responsibility is also to look for a cure when we get sick. After

Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that:

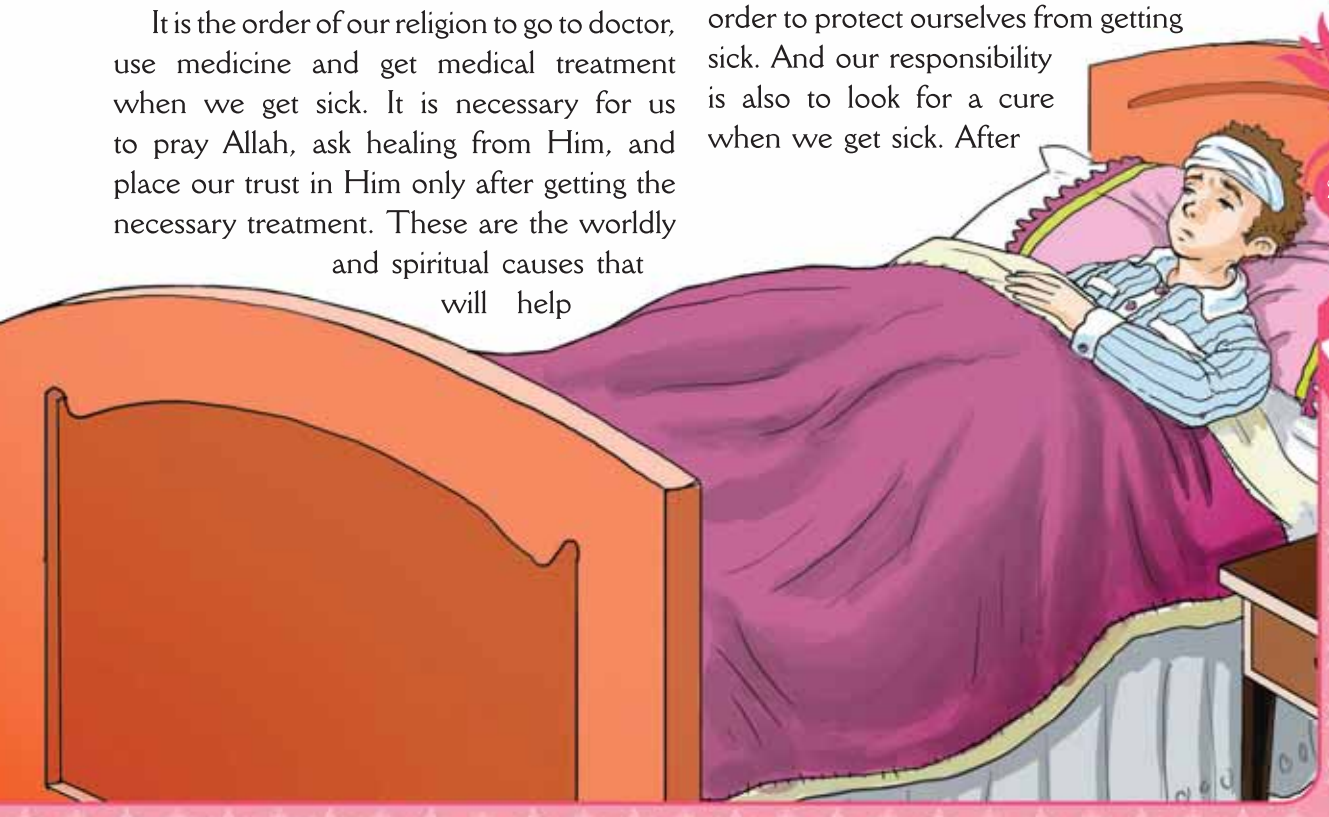
"A companion asked our beloved Prophet:

- O Messenger of Allah! We take precautions to protect ourselves from sickness. We pray and get medical treatment. Do these change our fate?"

Our prophet's respose was very meaningful:

- "Taking precaution, praying, and getting treatment are all Allah's fate."

(Tirmidhi, Tib, 21)



all these steps we need to pray and place our trust in Allah.

Another issue which is as important as getting medical treatment for our diseases is not to revolt against Allah because of our diseases. Believing in fate is our most powerful helper to prevent such a revolt against Allah. Knowing that everything comes from Allah at the time of illnesses and expecting the cure from Him will support us spiritually and increase our hope and strength to endure. And our patience during difficult times will cause us to gain Allah's pleasure and rewards.

One of the laws of our Lord Almighty related to living beings is that someday they will all taste the death. The verse **"Every soul will taste of death..."** (Al-i Imran 3; 185) tells us this Divine law.

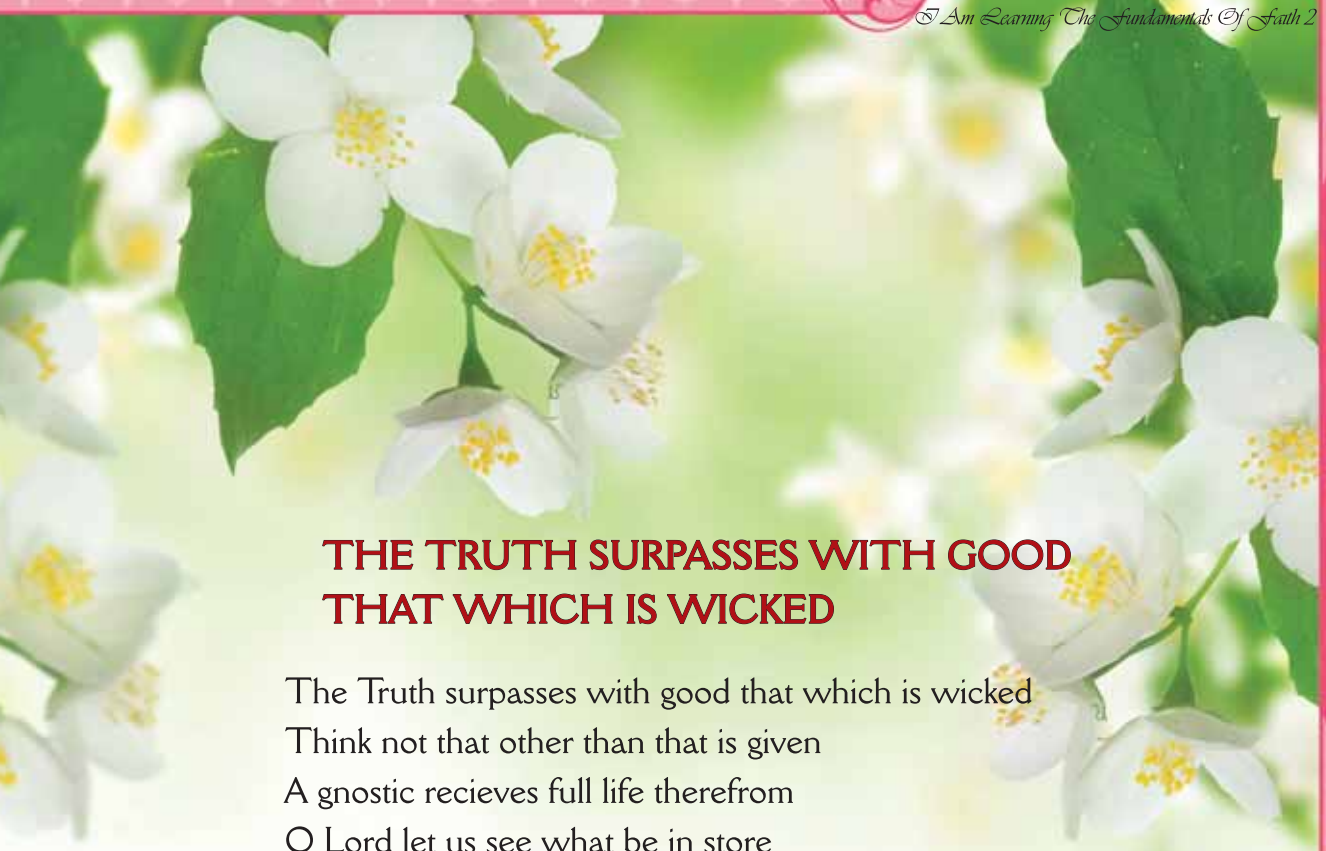
There is a certain life span for every human being. Everybody dies when their life span ends. Both life and death are in the hands of Allah. He is the One Who gives life and takes it back. Therefore how we behave when we experience the death of someone close to us is the reflection of the faith in our hearts. Showing patience and not disobeying Allah under such circumstances are among the best behaviors loved by Allah.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"...and give good news to the steadfast who says, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return."

(al-Baqara 2; 155-156)





THE TRUTH SURPASSES WITH GOOD THAT WHICH IS WICKED

The Truth surpasses with good that which is wicked
Think not that other than that is given
A gnostic recieves full life therefrom
O Lord let us see what be in store
Whatever it be let good come therefrom

Say not why such is so and so
It is what it is then let it be so
We will see it to its end, give us patience
O Lord let us see what be in store
Whatever it be let good come therefrom.

Look down upon no one
Feel no sorrow destroy not your heart
Be not also partial to yourself
O Lord let us see what be in store
Whatever it be let good come therefrom.

I swear by God that He has done good
Such it is I swear by God that He has done good
So it is I swear by God that He has done good
Open up to the plan of God as such is clear
Such is clear that He has done good.

Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı

THE THINGS THAT WE GAIN FROM THE FAITH IN PREDESTINATION

FAITH IN PREDESTINATION

- helps us to realize that there is a Divine wisdom behind all incidents taking place in this universe.
- reminds us that everything in this universe comes into existence by the will and power of Allah
- helps us to earn Allah's contentment by being contented from everything coming from Him
- saves us from pointless fears and concerns about future

We try to interpret the incidents happening around us within the limits of our limited knowledge and strength; whereas the incidents that happen around us do not just consist of the ones that we can see. There are parts in those incidents that we cannot recognize and understand. Only Allah knows the inner side of them. Believing in fate means to believe in Almighty Allah who knows everything and has power over all things in this universe. Such a faith **helps us to realize that there is a Divine wisdom behind all incidents taking place in this universe.** This kind of faith changes our view to life. We begin to evaluate differently what happen around us. Rank and fame, which we like very much, may turn into means of gaining spiritual rewards; or they may cause us to boast. This is why we ask from Allah to give us what is best for us. Sometimes things that may appear as bad like fever and headache might have prevented us from catching a worse illness. An accident that we had might have prevented a worse accident. We thank Allah under any circumstances if we act with such consciousness. And we ask from Allah to save us from worse accidents and calamities.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"…But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and ye know not."

(al-Baqara 2; 216)

Our Lord Almighty with His endless knowledge and omnipotence has established a balance and measure in this universe. Every event taking place in this universe is within His knowledge. Everything happens by His will, power, and creative ability. Since the creation of this world the Sun rises from the East and sets in the West. Gravity and buoyancy continues to this day. Living beings get and maintain their liveliness from water. Such laws have been established by our Lord in this universe and they are great blessings for us. By means of these natural, biological, and social laws, this world has become a livable planet for us. Knowing this and having such a faith in destiny helps us to recognize the perfect order in this universe. **It reminds us that everything in this universe comes into existence by the will and power of Allah.**

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Say: Have you thought, if Allah made night everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, is there a god beside Allah who could bring you light? Will you not then hear? Say: Have you thought, if Allah made day everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection, is there a god beside Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest? Will you not then see? It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you Night and Day, that you may rest therein, and that you may seek of His Grace and in order that you may be grateful."

(al-Qasas 28; 71-73)



When we meet with someone we love, we become happy. And when we lose someone we love, we become sad. Allah tests us in this world sometimes with happiness and sometimes with sorrow; because this world is a testing place. If we act without forgetting this fact, our happiness and sorrow turn into an opportunity to gain Allah's contentment. We thank for our Lord's blessings and keep our patience in the face of hardships. We become satisfied with what Allah the Almighty has ordained for us. Being satisfied with what is given to us makes us contented. It cleanses our hearts from bad feelings like jealousy, grudge, and envy. Therefore faith in predestination **helps us to earn Allah's contentment by being contented from everything coming from Him.**

Allah the Almighty says that:

"No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for Allah: So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be jubilant at what He has given you; and Allah does not love any arrogant boaster."

(al-Hadid 57; 22-23)

Those who do not trust in their Lord have worries about their future. This is why they are afraid to lose what they have. They forget the blessings they have and live in a fear of poverty. They forget their health and have concern to become sick. Thinking to reach their wants and desires keeps their mind busy. Sometimes they cannot even sleep and they lose their health because of their concerns about the future.

Allah the Almighty says that:

"Say: Nothing will afflict us save what Allah has ordained for us; He is our Patron; and on Allah let the believers rely."

(Tawbah 9; 51)

Trusting in Allah and believing in His predestination **saves us from pointless fears and concerns about future.** Because when we believe in predestination we know that nothing can happen to us except what Allah has already ordained our regard. And if something is ordained for us, nobody can stop it from happening. We can overcome the hardships and obstacles with the help of our Lord. As His servants, what we need to do is to trust in Him and ask help from Him.

OUR PROPHET WOULD REGARD EVERYTHING COMING FROM ALLAH AS GOOD

Our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was someone who could look at things positively and see the beauties of life. He had an optimistic character. He would see a positive side in everything and thank Allah. **He believed that everything taking place in this universe happens with Allah's will and permission.** He defined faith as being *"that you affirm your faith in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Apostles, in the Day of Judgment, and you affirm your faith in the Divine Decree about good and evil."* (Muslim, Iman, 1)



Allah's Messenger knew that **Allah was with him all the time and trusted in Him**. The best example of this was lived during his migration from Mecca to Medina. Our beloved Prophet and Abu Bakr hid in the cave of Sawr. Meccan polytheist came in front of the cave. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was really scared that the polytheists would harm to the Prophet. Even under such difficult conditions, our beloved Prophet said to Abu Bakr with full confidence: *"O Aba Bakr! Don't fear. Allah is with us."*

Allah's Messenger knew that everything occurs within the knowledge and observance of Allah. He would look for Allah's contentment in everything he did. **He believed in the fact that no beings could neither benefit nor harm him unless Allah the Almighty wills.** He advised his companions and his other followers to do the same. He once said to young Abdullah bin Abbas *"My dear son! Let me teach you some principles …"* and then he summarized

the basic principles of his faith in Allah and the predestination saying:

"Observe the commands of Allah so that Allah would protect you.

Hold Allah's sake before everything so that you would find Allah before you.

When you need something ask it from Allah. If you need help ask it from Allah.

Know that if all of humanity got together to help you, they can only give you the help that Allah has ordained for you.

Again if the entire humanity got together to harm you, they cannot give you any harm except what Allah has ordained for you." (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 59)

Our beloved **Prophet's trust in Allah led him to work harder and to do more acts of worship**. This faith never led him to laziness and irresponsibility. He prayed a lot saying *"O Allah! I take refuge in You from weakness, laziness, and cowardliness."* For the Prophet (peace be upon him) laziness and negligence cannot be a Muslim's way of life and thinking.

Our beloved Prophet always acted knowing that everything takes place by Allah's power. When he was going to do something, he would do his part and then ask help from Allah. **He always emphasized the wrongness of attributing the results of someone's own negligence and laziness to Allah's fate.** This is why he did not like the following response of a companion whom he had advised to get up in the middle of the night for *tahajjud* prayer: *"O Allah's Apostle! Our souls are in the hands of Allah and if He wants us to get up He will make us get up."* (Bukhari, Tahajjud, 5) Because, even if it is in the hands of Allah to make a servant get up, it is the responsibility of the servant to take the necessary precautions to get up.

Allah's Messenger would do everything he could do before something happened. After it happened **he would show contentment to the Will of Allah and willingly accept everything coming from Allah.** He would often express his trust in Allah and that he was contended with Allah's decision. He would frequently recite *hasbunallahu wa ni'ma al-wakil "Allah is enough for us. What a nice Guardian He is."* He would never show disobedience against Allah and would never give up in the face of hardships. He always expressed that "whatever has been ordained for us by Allah is good for us and our job is to be thankful for the blessings and to be patient before the hardships. He would regard all kinds of good and bad experiences as opportunities to obtain Allah's contentment and say:

"Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it." (Muslim, Zuhd, 64)

Allah's Messenger would stay away from useless and pessimistic talks. **He would abstain from the talks and actions which might not affect the result.** He gave the following advice to his companions:

"A strong believer is better and is more lovable (to Allah) than a weak believer, and there is good in everyone, (but) cherish that

which gives you benefit (in the Hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart, and if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don't say: "If I had not done that, it would not have happened so and so," but say: "Allah did that what He had ordained to do" and "your word if" opens the gate of Satan." (Muslim, Qadr, 34)



Our beloved Prophet stated that sicknesses, sufferings, and hardships will be atonement for and purification of sins. He expressed that those who show patience before hardships and sufferings will receive great rewards and their levels will be elevated in the Hereafter. He emphasized that the end will be better for the believers if they show patience.

"No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that." (Bukhari, Marda', 1, 3)

Our Prophet's understanding of fate, trust in Allah, and patience was not just a blind submission and powerless acceptance. He would struggle against the hardship. He would take the necessary precaution and leave the rest to Allah the Almighty. **He would submit himself to Allah's will only after fulfilling what he was required to do.** One of the best examples showing his understanding of fate was the following attitude in the Battle of Trench:

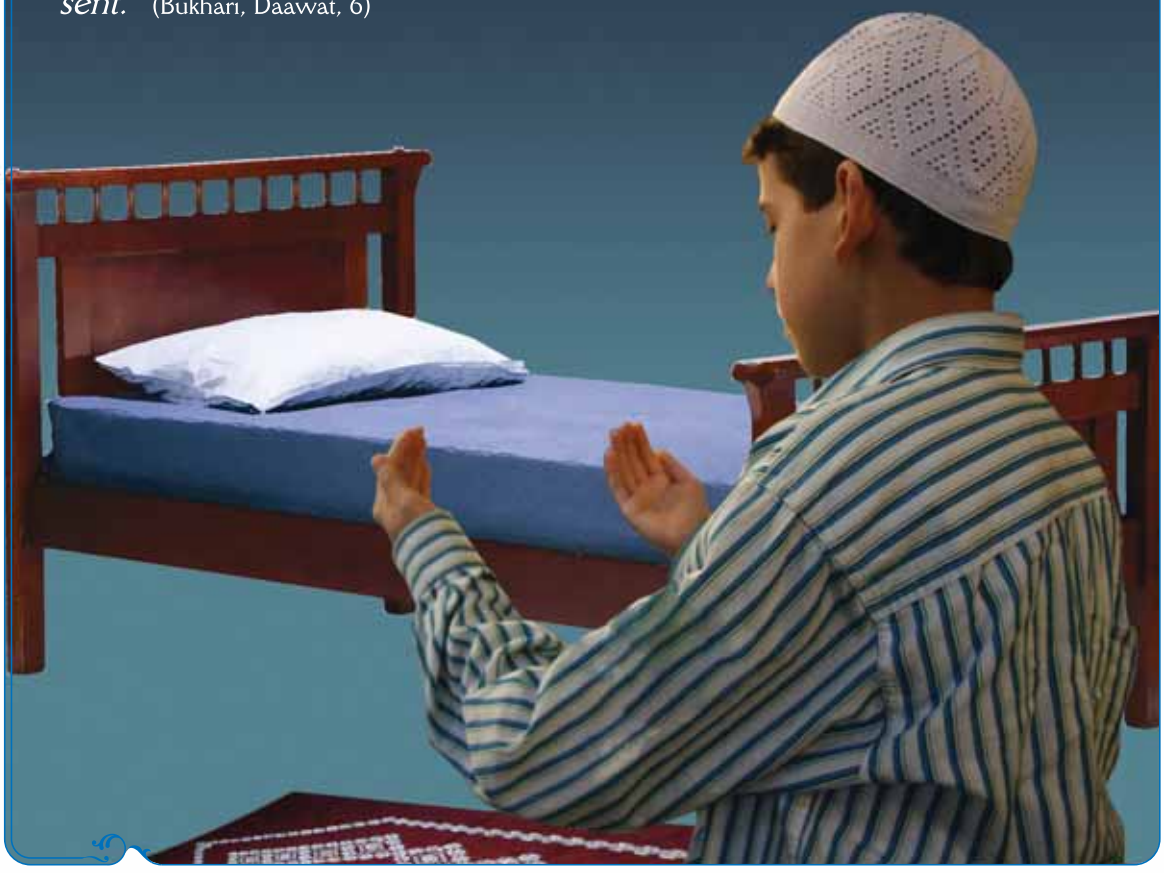
When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him heard that the Meccan polytheists were going to attack Medina, he immediately gathered his companions. He consulted his companions as to what he would do and what kind of precautions they could take. In accordance with Salman al-Farisi's suggestion, he decided to dig a trench around the city. This was a method unfamiliar to Arabs in those days. It was at the same time a very tiring task. Allah's Messenger personally worked in digging the trench. Under icy cold weather he worked for days. he even tied rock on his belly to appease the pain of his hunger. Even though he knew that Medina was going to be sieged by a powerful army, he never lost his hope in Allah. He did everything he could as a servant and then he prayed his Lord for help and victory. Polytheists came to Medina with a big army but they could not pass the trench and take over Medina. After a days-long-siege, Allah's help arrived. As a result of a powerful windstorm polytheists' tents destroyed.

Allah the Almighty never let His Messenger and His believers' efforts and trusts down. Our Prophet's attitude in the Battle of the Trench and in similar incidents has become the perfect example in faith, patience, struggle, and trust in Allah for Muslims till the Last Day.

Bara' bin Azib, one of the young companions, loved the Prophet very much. His heart was full of love and respect to the Messenger of Allah. Our beloved Prophet taught Bara' the following supplication about putting his trust in Allah and advised him to recite it every night:

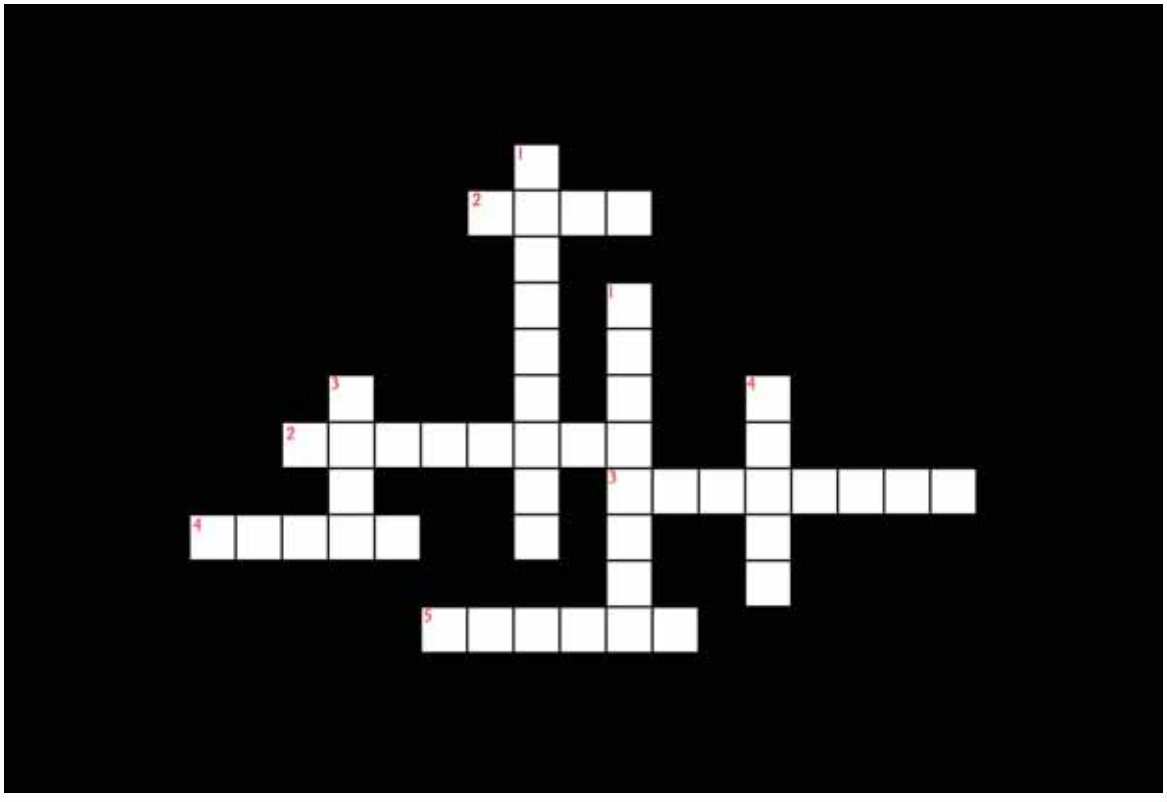
"O Allah! I surrender to You and entrust all my affairs to You and depend upon You for Your Blessings both with hope and fear of You. There is no fleeing from You, and there is no place of protection and safety except with You. O Allah! I believe in Your Book (the Qur'an) which You have revealed and in Your Prophet (Muhammad) whom You have sent." (Bukhari, Daawat, 6)





QUESTIONS

Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. The Arabic term used for Allah's attribute to know everything past, present and future
2. The word used for enduring hardships
3. The Arabic term used for doing everything one can and then placing trust in Allah for the result
4. The Arabic term used for Allah's predestination
5. Another word used for supplication

Down

1. The word used for everything given us by Allah in this world
2. The word used for the period of time given each living being in this world to live
3. The Arabic term used for actual happening of events predestined by Allah
4. The term used for things that no one knows but Allah

Find the Correct Match

1	Faith in predestination saves us		that we have the power to choose.
2	Allah tests us sometimes with happiness and sometimes with sorrow;		according to the measures ordained for them
3	Muslims believe that everything taking place in this universe		from pointless fears and concerns about future.
4	Nobody has ever eaten something		that there is a Divine wisdom behind all incidents taking place in this universe.
5	The best earning is the one		happens with Allah's will and permission.
6	Faith in predestination helps us to realize		because this world is a testing place.
7	We are responsible from the actions		better than the one from his earnings of his manual work.
8	All living beings continue their lives		that one earns by his own hands

Let's Test Ourselves

1.

I- "Surely We have created everything according to a measure." (Qamar 54; 49)

II- "The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed." (Rahman 55; 5)

According to these verses, which conclusion is the one that we cannot reach?

A) Everything is created by Allah the Almighty

B) Sun and moon move according to a course

C) There is an order in the creation of everything

D) This universe has accidently come into existence

2.

I- He/she does everything he/she can and then be content with what is given by Allah

II- He/she believes in that Allah ordains everything and he/she cannot do anything

III- He/she never loses his/her hope and strives and works

Which options are true about someone who believes in predestination?

A) I-II B) I-III

C) II-III D) I-II-III

3. Which one of the following is the one that we can choose by our free-will?

A) The time of our birth

B) Our parents

C) Our friends

D) The time of our death

4. Which one of the prophetic saying expresses that one should strive for his/her sustenance?

A) Prayer is the pillar of Islam

B) Purity is half of faith

C) The one who spends the night with full stomach while his neighbor is hungry is not one of us

D) Nobody has ever eaten something better than the one from his earnings of his manual work.

5. Which one of the following is the one that one cannot be held responsible for?

A) Slandering

B) Lying

C) Holding grudge

D) Losing consciousness

6. Tariq would never care his tasks and let things ride. And he would say to those who criticize this behavior "if it is my destiny, it will happen."

Tariq's behavior does not fit to which one of the following principle of faith?

A) Faith in Prophets

B) Faith in Angels

C) Faith in fate and predestination

D) Faith in Divine books

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

(Calamity, expiates, a measure, good for you, its ability, created, our return, a duty, bad for you, a Muslim)

1. "Surely We have ……. everything according to……." (Qamar 54; 49)

2. "Allah does not impose upon any soul …….but to the extent of ……." (al-Baqara 2; 286)

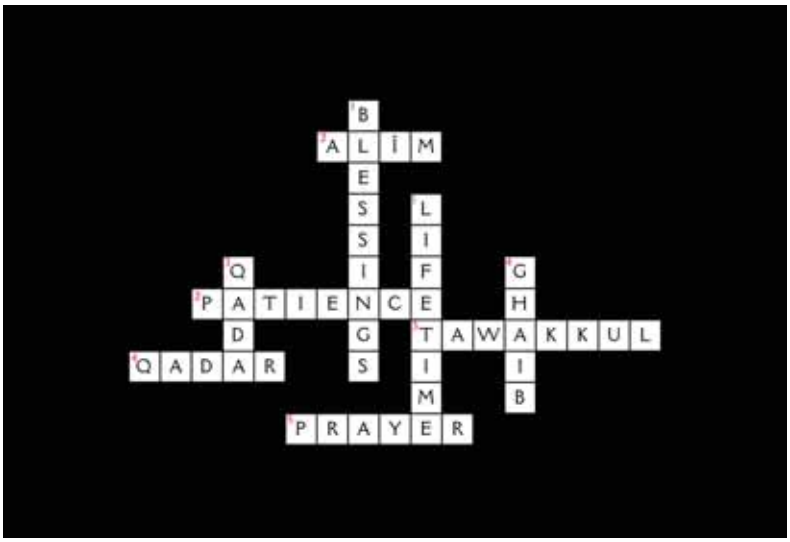
3. "The steadfast who says, when afflicted with ……..: "To Allah we belong, and to Him is ……." (al-Baqara 2; 156)

4. "But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is ……., and that you love a thing which is …….. But Allah knows, and ye know not." (al-Baqara 2; 216)

5. "No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls ……., even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah …… some of his sins for that." (Bukhari, Marda', 1, 3)

ANSWERS

Let's solve a crossword puzzle





Find the Correct Match

1	Faith in predestination saves us	7	that we have the power to choose.
2	Allah tests us sometimes with happiness and sometimes with sorrow;	8	according to the measures ordained for them
3	Muslims believe that everything taking place in this universe	1	from pointless fears and concerns about future.
4	Nobody has ever eaten something	6	that there is a Divine wisdom behind all incidents taking place in this universe.
5	The best earning is the one	3	happens with Allah's will and permission.
6	Faith in predestination helps us to realize	2	because this world is a testing place.
7	We are responsible from the actions	4	better than the one from his earnings of his manual work.
8	All living beings continue their lives	5	that one earns by his own hands

Let's Test Ourselves

1: D **4: D**

2: B **5: D**

3: C **6: C**

Let's fill in the blanks with the given words:

1: Created, a measure

2: A duty, its ability

3: Calamity, our return

4: Good for you, bad for you

5: A Muslim, expiates