على الخطى الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم

Principal hadiths covering
areas of the faith

# Understanding and Implementation

## Volume 1

Rabwah

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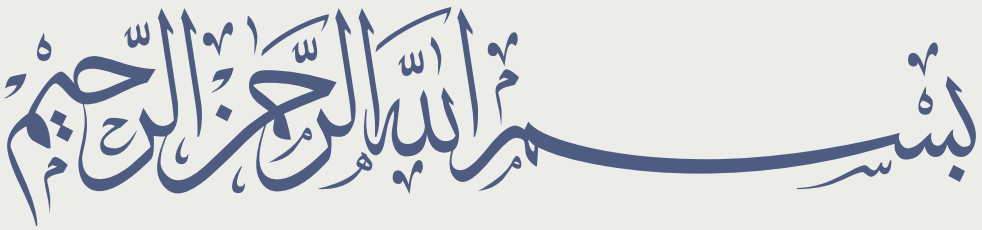
Principal hadiths covering areas of the faith

**Volume 1**



In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

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# Introduction

This project aims to facilitate for every Muslim the implementation of what is essential of the Prophet's guidance. It is hoped that it will make it easier for Muslims to follow the Sunnah, ensuring that their worship and their conduct in daily life is consistent with Islamic values and standards. It is hoped that it will be available in several languages, to help non-Arabic speaking Muslims and to enlighten non-Muslims about Islam and its religious and social values. We pray for God's help and guidance.

The book includes a total of 150 hadiths, selected for their important themes which every Muslim should know. The text of each hadith is divided into numbered sentences or phrases, so that each one highlights a particular point. A biographical note is given for the first narrator of the hadith, who is normally a companion of the Prophet, and this is repeated every time a hadith is given by the same narrator. However, an effort is made to add a different piece of information about the narrator whenever this is possible.

A summary of the meaning of the hadith is given in a separate box, highlighting its general import in simple language. A few verses of the Qur'an are also included because they refer to the same theme the hadith addresses.

The commentary on the hadith is given in two parts. The first part, under the heading 'message and meaning', is divided into paragraphs given the same numbers as the those of the sentences and phrases of the hadith text. The meaning is given in general, rather than stating an explanation of each word. Plain and simple language is used so that the full meaning of the hadith is easily gathered.

If a hadith is stated on a special occasion, or in relation to a particular incident or occurrence, this is mentioned. Similarly, special care is taken to ensure that no misunderstanding of the hadith is entertained. If there is need to relate the hadith to a verse in the Qur'an or to another hadith, this is also stated. However, no detailed discussion is given in relation to its rulings or linguistic import.

The second part of explanation is included under the heading, 'implementation'. Here we highlight what the hadith requires or recommends of action, whether mental or physical, so that the users can understand what they should do in order to implement the hadith. Examples from daily life are given so as to show that the Prophet's guidance applies in all life situations, at home, with one's family, at work and social life generally.

Every point in this section is given a number, and wherever possible, the first point(s) are linked to the quoted verses of the Qur'an. The points in this section are arranged, as far as possible, in the same order as the sentences and phrases of the hadith, but several points may be included in this section in relation to any particular sentence or phrase in the text of the hadith. Wherever possible direct instruction is avoided, so that readers can relate the points to their own lives as they see how they are applicable to them. Yet general encouragement is maintained, because the idea of the book is to show that the implementation of the Sunnah is easy for every Muslim.

We pray that this effort will serve as a good example of the application and implementation of the Prophet's guidance in Muslims' practical, daily lives.

This project of understanding and implementing hadiths is a part of a multi-faceted project named 'Principal Hadiths'. Every hadith is discussed in different formats: full explanation, educational programme, video and audio recordings, cards, translations, etc.

This project is in turn a part of one of the major initiatives of Usool, namely, 'Following God's Messenger's guidance'. It is dedicated to present and explain the sunnah to a worldwide audience in various languages.

There are other products and services which may be perused in the appropriate platform.

All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.

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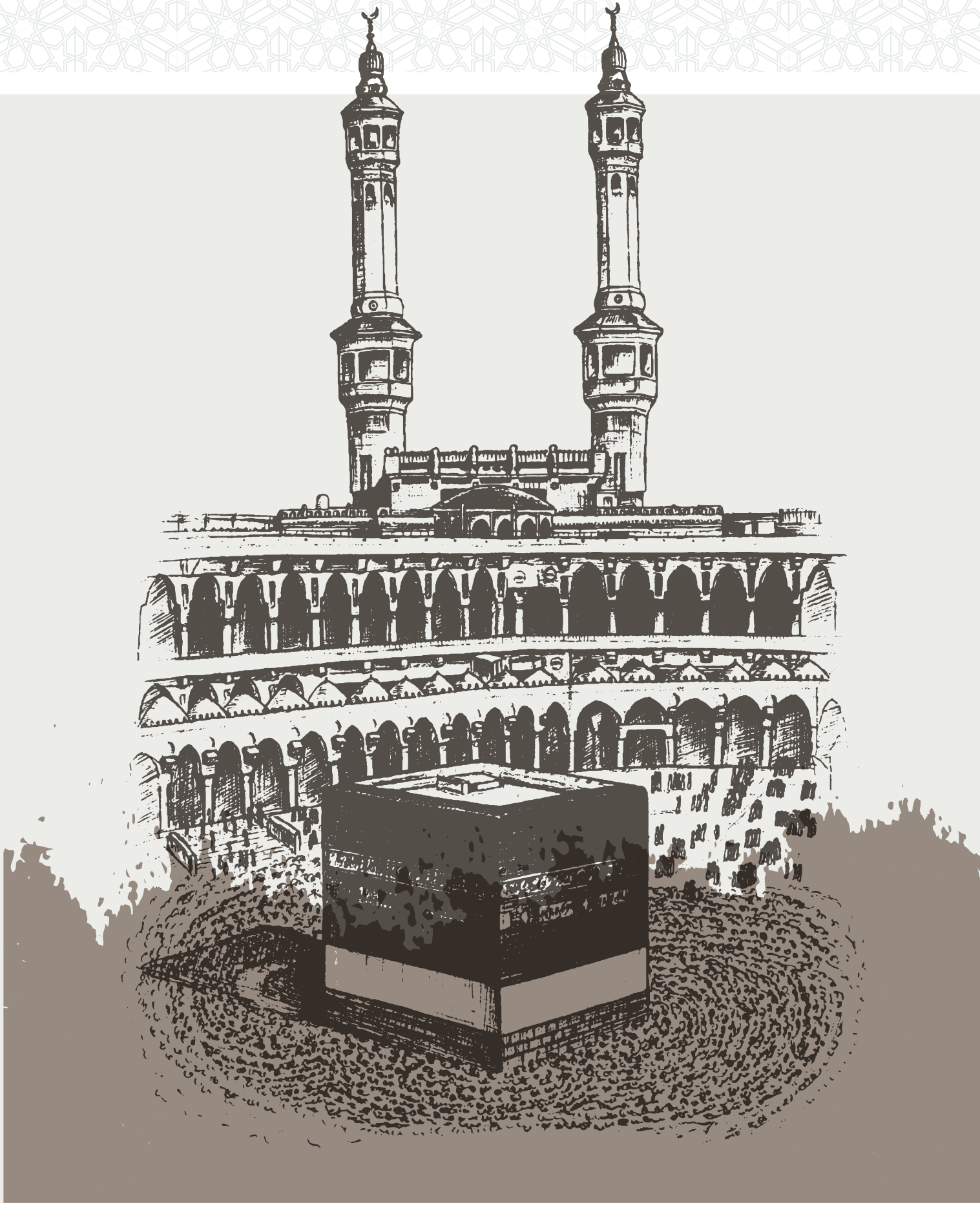

# Hadith

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said to Mu‘ādh when he sent him to Yemen:

1. You shall come upon people who follow earlier revelations.
2. Call on them to declare that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God’s Messenger.
3. If they obey in this, tell them that God has made it a duty binding on them to offer five prayers every day and night.
4. If they obey in this, then tell them that God has made it obligatory that a *ṣadaqah* is taken from the rich among them and paid to their poor.
5. If they obey in this, then do not touch the best of their property.
6. Guard yourself against a prayer by a victim of injustice, because nothing stops such a prayer from going straight to God[1].

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1496; Muslim, 19.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Before your time We never sent a messenger without having revealed to him that there is no deity other than Me. Therefore, you shall worship Me alone.﴾ (21: 25)
- ﴿Keep up prayer when the sun is on its decline, in the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur’an at dawn, for the recitation of the Qur’an at dawn is indeed witnessed.﴾ (17: 78)
- ﴿Take a portion of their money as charity, so that you may cleanse and purify them thereby; and pray for them: for your prayers are a source of comfort for them. God hears all and knows all. (103) Do they not know that it is God alone who accepts repentance from His servants, and He is truly the One who takes charitable offerings, and that God is the only One to accept repentance and bestow mercy.﴾ (9: 103-104)
- ﴿Charitable donations are only for the poor and the needy, and those who work in the administration of such donations, and those whose hearts are to be won over, for the freeing of people in bondage and debtors, and to further God’s cause, and for the traveller in need. This is a duty ordained by God, and God is all-knowing, wise.﴾ (9: 60)
- ﴿Or who is it that responds to the one in distress when he calls out to Him, and who removes the ill, and makes you inherit the earth? Could there be any deity alongside God? Little do they reflect!﴾ (27: 62)

## The Narrator

Abu al-‘Abbās ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, belonged to the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh and resided mostly in Madinah. He was born in the Hāshimī quarter in Makkah three years before the Prophet’s migration. He was the leading scholar of the Muslim community and the one who explained the Qur’an best. He was the Prophet’s cousin. He was nicknamed *al-baḥr*, which means ‘the sea’, because of his broad knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) included him in his prayers, saying: ‘My Lord, grant him insight into the religion’.[1] He was one of the Prophet’s companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He embraced Islam at a young age and he remained very close to the Prophet after the takeover of Makkah. He lost his eyesight when he became old. He died at Taif in Year 68 AH 688 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu‘ādh to Yemen and outlined for him how he should call on people to embrace Islam. The first thing he was to advocate was God’s oneness. If they responded and embraced Islam, Mu‘ādh was to tell them that prayer was obligatory. Subsequently, he was to tell them the obligation of zakat.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then informed Mu‘ādh that he must not take the best of their property when he collected their zakat. He should neither take the best nor the worst, but should choose what was of medium quality. The Prophet (peace be upon him) finally warned Mu‘ādh about a supplication by someone suffering injustice. A prayer by such a person is certain to be answered.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143 (his text); Muslim, 2477.

# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu‘ādh to Yemen as an advocate of Islam and a governor, towards the end of the Prophet’s life.

1. The Prophet told him as he was about to leave to take up his post that he would be dealing with Jewish or Christian people, and that they had their own revelations, namely the Torah or the Gospel. He wanted Mu‘ādh to be ready to speak to such people, as they had a good measure of knowledge.[1]

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then told him to start by calling on them to declare their belief in God’s oneness and that Muhammad was God’s Messenger. This declaration is the most essential belief. Without it, nothing of the details of the religion is valid. Therefore, people are required to accept this essential principle. The Jews and the Christians do not fulfil the requirements of the declaration of God’s oneness and Prophet Muhammad’s message. They associate either Ezra or Jesus with God, and they deny Prophet Muhammad’s message.

3. The Prophet then tells Mu‘ādh that if such people give a positive response, declaring their belief in God’s oneness and acceptance of the Prophet as God’s Messenger, he should tell them that God requires them to offer five obligatory prayers every day and night, and he should teach them how to offer these prayers.

   That the Prophet (peace be upon him) says to Mu‘ādh, ‘If they obey in this’, indicates willing acceptance and acting on it, not the mere admission that this is obligatory. They must realize that prayer is an obligation and must be fulfilled and offered on time.

4. Having established the duty of prayer and obtained their acknowledgement of it, Mu‘ādh was to inform them of the duty of zakat. The Prophet ordered him to tell them that God has made it obligatory to take zakat from the rich among them and to distribute it to their poor. Zakat is a small percentage of what they have and it is collected annually.

5. If the people of Yemen obeyed Mu‘ādh and declared their wealth for him to take the zakat duty, the Prophet commanded him to avoid taking the best of their property which they love and treasure. A person may have a female sheep which he likes best because it yields plenty of milk, or for some other reason. The zakat collector should not take it as an act of kindness towards the zakat payer. God does not accept unfairness to the rich in order to be kind to the poor. If the zakat payer is willing to give some of his best property in zakat, it is permissible for the collector to take it.

   ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb once sent someone to collect zakat. He gave him detailed instructions which included the following: ‘Do not take a sheep which is being fattened for people’s eating, nor the one reared at home because it is dear to its owners, nor the one which is pregnant and about to give birth, nor a ram’.[2]

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1 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 3, p. 358.

2 Related by Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa’*, Vol. 2, p. 372; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, 6395. Al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū‘*, Vol. 5, p. 427.

6 The Prophet (peace be upon him) finally warns Mu‘ādh against injustice, whether in zakat collection or in any other matter of government and judgement. That he warns him against supplication by a person who suffers injustice means that he must always be fair to all people. Injustice will always cause the sufferer to pray against the one who caused him such injustice. Such prayer is definitely answered. The gates of the seven heavens are opened for it, and there is nothing to impede its being answered. The Prophet says: ‘Three types of people shall never have their prayers unanswered: a fasting person until he ends his fast, a just ruler, and a sufferer of injustice. The prayer of a person suffering injustice is raised by God above the clouds and He opens the gates of heaven for it. God will say: “By My might, I shall support you, even though it be after some time”’.[1]

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3598; Ibn Mājah, 1752.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal to Yemen when he was in his twenties. He undertook such responsibility and lived away from his people and family to serve God’s message, obeying the Prophet (peace be upon him). He provides an example for us all to emulate.

2. God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) used to assign grave tasks and serious responsibilities to his companions when they were only young men. They did not evade undertaking such responsibilities. It is important that parents, teachers and educators should train those who are under their care to undertake responsibility. They should not think that they are too young for such tasks. Such young people should also ensure that they are worthy of such trust.

3. Implement the authentic hadiths, including those narrated by one transmitter. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mu‘ādh to spread the most important matters of belief and Islamic law, giving him a wide scope of authority, including levying zakat on believers’ property. All this confirms that what is singly narrated and authentic must be upheld.

4. Learn the nature of the people you are likely to meet. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Mu‘ādh that he would be meeting people who had received earlier divine revelations, so that he would know what to observe when he called on them to accept Islam.[1] He should arrange his priorities, gather evidence and select the best methods, because they had knowledge and could argue their case. Therefore, it is important for us to gather the relevant information when we undertake any meaningful task.

5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) took care to admonish those to whom he assigned responsibility. Before sending Mu‘ādh to Yemen, he explained to him the situation on the ground and his order of priorities. He commanded him to ensure justice and warned him against injustice. Yet Mu‘ādh was among the most distinguished companions of the Prophet in his religion and scholarship. Therefore, do not ignore admonishing your subordinates, and they should not disdain to be so admonished.

1 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 3, p. 358.

6 The Prophet (peace be upon him) attached importance to the essentials and took a gradual approach to their implementation. He did not order Mu'ādh to start with sins that people frequently commit in their lives, even though these are important. Instead, he focused on the essence of religion and the key to faith, which is the declaration of God's oneness, then prayer, then zakat. We must follow the same method in our education and advocacy of Islam, and indeed in all our projects: we should start with the most important issue, then we go to the next most important. 'Ā'ishah said: 'The first Qur'anic revelation was one of the shorter surahs, which mentions Heaven and Hell. When people accepted Islam, legislation of what is lawful and what is forbidden began to be revealed. Had the first revelation been an order not to drink wine people would have said that they would never abandon drinking. Had it been an order forbidding fornication and adultery, they would have said that they would never abandon these'.[1]

7 Belief, prayer and zakat are the main essentials of faith, and they are often mentioned together in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They earn great reward and their influence in the life of a believer is so great that its extent is known only to God. Even when people are fulfilling their obligation in these three essentials, they should work harder to make them more perfect.

8 The Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed Mu'ādh not to take the best of people's property and those which they treasure as part of their zakat. He ordered him to be fair. Not seeking to take these is fair and shows a good understanding of people's feelings. This is important for every advocate of Islam, parent, educator and official to observe and implement.

9 Make sure that when you go to bed in the evening, there is no one who is sleepless because of something you said or did, whether that person is your spouse, child, student, servant, a shop assistant, or a driver. Never belittle injustice to anyone whom you consider inferior, even though he is a habitual sinner. The Prophet warned Mu'ādh against injustice even in dealing with unbelievers, and even if some of them continue to disbelieve in Islam.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4993.

2

# Hadith

# THE TESTIMONY THAT THERE IS NO DEITY OTHER THAN GOD

Mu'ādh ibn Jabal narrated:

1 I was behind the Prophet riding a donkey.

2 He said to me: "Mu'ādh, do you know what people owe to God by right, and what right is due to them from God?"

3 I said: "God and His Messenger know best".

4 He said: "The right people owe to God is that they must worship Him associating no partners with Him,

5 and the right due to people from God is that He shall not punish whoever does not associate partners with Him".

6 I said: "Messenger of God, may I tell people so that they will rejoice". He said: "Do not tell them, for then they will slacken".[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2856; Muslim, 30.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God contrives an awesome sin indeed.﴾ (4: 48)
- ﴿Unbelievers indeed are those who say: 'God is the Christ, son of Mary'. The Christ himself said: 'Children of Israel, worship God, my Lord and your Lord'. Whoever associates partners with God, God shall forbid him entrance into Paradise and his abode will be the Fire. Wrongdoers will have no helpers.﴾ (5: 72)
- ﴿Say: My prayers, my worship, my living and my dying are for God alone, the Lord of all worlds. (162) He has no partner. Thus have I been commanded, and I shall be the first of those who surrender themselves to Him.﴾ (6: 162-163)

## The Narrator

Abu 'Abd al-Raḥmān Mu'ādh ibn Jabal ibn 'Amr was of the Anṣār. He was 18 years old when he embraced Islam. He attended the pledge given by the Anṣār at 'Aqabah to the Prophet (peace be upon him), when they invited him to migrate with his companions to Madinah. He was the best of the Prophet's companions in his study of what is permissible in Islam and what is forbidden. He memorized the Qur'an during the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet appointed him Governor of Yemen. He died at the time of the epidemic known as 'the 'Amwās Plague', during 'Umar's reign. His death took place in Year 18 AH, 640 CE, when he was 38, or perhaps 34 years old.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that all people have a duty which they owe to God by right, namely, to worship Him alone, associating no partners with Him. He further tells us that God, Mighty and Exalted, has promised that He will not punish anyone who does not associate partners with Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told Mu'ādh not to spread this information so that people would not rely on it and stop doing good work.

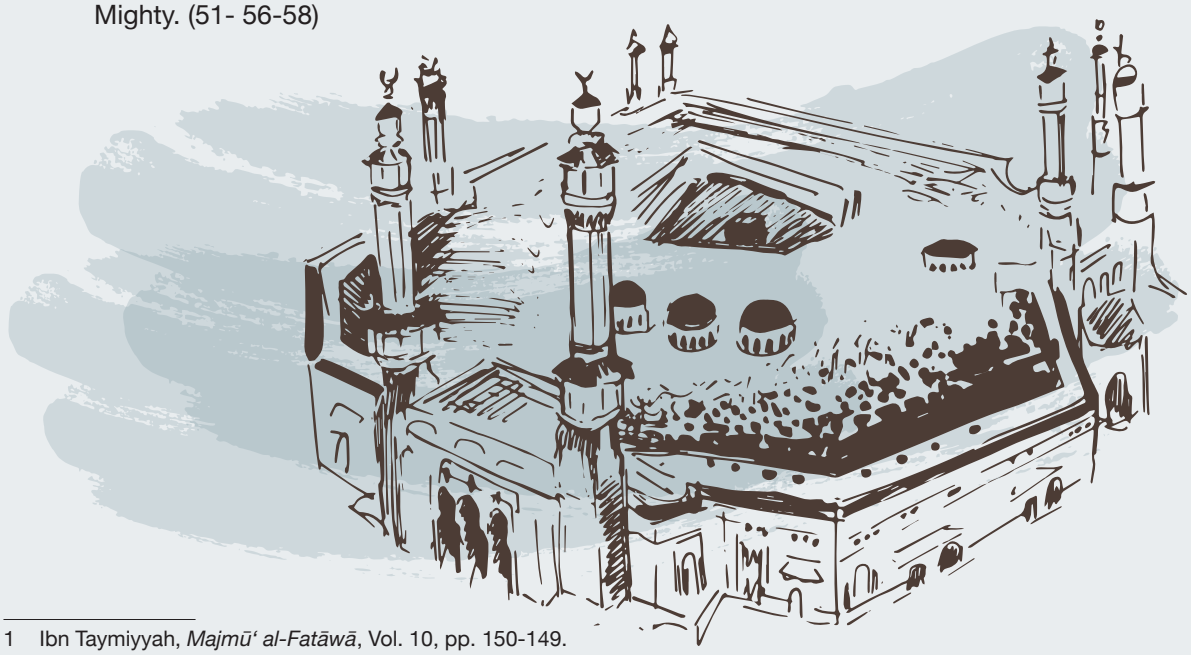
# Message and Meaning

1. Mu‘ādh was with the Prophet (peace be upon him) riding behind him on the same donkey.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted to draw his attention so that he would learn the information he wanted to give him. He asked him whether he knew what is due to God from His creation, as an obligatory duty, and what is the right due to His servants which God has bound himself to give them.

3. Mu‘ādh answered saying: ‘God and His Messenger know best’. This is the same as saying: ‘I do not know’. This answer is given when the question pertains to matters of religion. As for a question about something related to this world or to what is beyond the realm of human perception, etc. which God’s Messenger might not have known, the answer should be: ‘God knows best’.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the answer saying that the right owed to God, Mighty and Exalted, by His servants is their duty to address all worship to Him alone. Worship is a general name that includes all that God accepts and loves of words and deeds, done secretly and openly.[1] This is a state of humility, obedience and submission to the Worshipped One. In addition to such worship, it is obligatory that people must not associate any partner with Him to share in such worship, whether such a being is a prophet, angel, saint or devout person. No such association of partnership is admissible, however little, even though it may be only verbal. Such worship belongs by right to God alone, as He says: ‘Your Lord has ordained that you shall worship none but Him’. (17: 23) ‘I have not created the jinn and mankind to any end other than that they may worship Me. (56) No sustenance do I require of them, nor do I require that they should feed Me. (57) God is indeed the Provider of all sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Ever-Mighty. (51- 56-58)



1 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 10, pp. 150-149.

5 People's right due to them from God is something He has committed Himself to, as a gesture of His grace.[1] It is that whereby if they worship Him alone, associating no partners with Him, He will not punish them in Hell. Thus, 'whoever meets God [on the Day of Judgement] having associated no partner with Him enters Heaven, and whoever meets Him having associated partners with Him enters Hell'.[2] God says: 'Whoever associates partners with God, God shall forbid him entrance into Paradise and his abode will be the Fire. Wrongdoers will have no helpers'. (5: 72)

What this means is that a Muslim who believes in God's oneness will not be in Hell forever. If his or her good deeds are greater than their bad deeds, they are admitted into Heaven and will never be in Hell. Those who often indulge in sin and their bad deeds are preponderant will have their fate determined by God. If He so wills, He may punish such a person for any duration He determines, then send him or her to Heaven. Alternatively, He may forgive them their bad deeds and admit them into Heaven. A person who continues to associate partners with God until he dies will not be admitted into Heaven. He remains in Hell forever and ever, with no intermission in his punishment. God says: 'For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners are associated with Him. He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God contrives an awesome sin indeed'. (4: 48)

6 When Mu'ādh heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) giving him this good news, he wanted to tell all the people. He first sought the Prophet's advice, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him not to do so. When this becomes common knowledge, some people will rely on the fact that they believe in God's oneness but will be lazy in doing what pleases God.

Other versions of this hadith show that Mu'ādh understood the Prophet's response as a recommendation so that people do not slacken in their worship. However, it does not prohibit reporting it as part of Islamic knowledge. Mu'ādh, therefore, narrated the hadith before his death, fearing that unless he did, he would be committing the sin of suppressing knowledge.

1 Al-Kurānī, *Al-Kawthar al-Jārī ilā Riyāḍ Aḥādīth al-Bukhari*, Vol. 5, p. 438.
2 Related by Muslim, 93.

# Implementation

1. A Muslim should not disdain to use a simple means of transport. No Muslim should disdain to sit with humble people or share a meal with them, as this would be a mark of arrogance, whether open or secret. We note in this hadith that the Prophet shared riding a donkey with Mu'ādh. Needless to say, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is our role model in his humility and easy relations with all people.

2. Do not disdain to use animals which God has facilitated for man to use. Use them in an easy and moderate way. The hadith shows that the Prophet (peace be upon him) shared his mount with his companion, Mu'ādh.

3. Use the Prophet's method in educating Mu'ādh, asking a question of him in order to urge him to use his mind, and to ensure that he learns the answer well, and in the way the Prophet (peace be upon him) would explain to him. An advocate of Islam should choose the means and ways that motivate people to use their minds and pay close attention.

4. There is nothing shameful in having no knowledge of something, whether it pertains to matters of this world or to matters of religion. Mu'ādh was the most knowledgeable of the Prophet's companions about what is lawful and what is not. He did not hesitate to say about something that he did not know it. It is wrong for a Muslim to pass an opinion on a matter of religion if he does not know it, motivated by a sense of conceit or shamefulness. God says: 'Mankind, eat of what is lawful and wholesome on earth and do not follow Satan's footsteps: he is indeed an open enemy for you. (168) He enjoins you only to commit evil and indecency and to attribute to God something of which you have no knowledge'. (2: 168-169) 'Do not say – for any false thing you may utter with your tongues – that "This is lawful and this is forbidden", so as to attribute your lying inventions to God. Indeed those who attribute their lying inventions to God will never be successful. (116) Brief is their enjoyment [of this life], and grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come].' (16: 116-117)

5. Every right you demand or others demand from you is inferior to another right, namely, God's right, which is greater and more plentiful than every favour and blessing He has done you. Remember Him always and let your life be a pursuit of what pleases Him: 'Say: My prayers, my worship, my living and my dying are for God alone, the Lord of all worlds. (162) He has no partner. Thus have I been commanded, and I shall be the first of those who surrender themselves to Him'. (6: 162-163)

6. God wants you to not associate partners with Him; none whatsoever. People can make sure of refraining from the obvious forms of associating partners with God [i.e. *shirk*], such as the worship of idols, appealing to stars for help, or seeking support by some subtle forces, etc. A Muslim must also refrain from all minor and subtle forms of such association of partners, or *shirk*, such as swearing by anyone other than God, not even by the Prophet (peace be upon him), or seeking to prevent the evil eye by wearing some beads, etc. Such subtle *shirk* may

even be in the form of seeking good reputation through demonstrating one's devotion or prayer, etc. In a sacred [i.e. *qudsī*] hadith, the Prophet quotes God as saying: 'I am the least in need of partners. Whoever does something in which he associates a partner with Me, I abandon him to his associate'.[1]

7 Watch what you entertain in your heart and mind and resist every aspect of associating partners with God that may creep in. If you do, you stand to receive much that is good. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'On the Day of Judgement, God will select a man from my community and place him before all creation. He will spread before him ninety-nine records [of sinful actions], each of which is as long as eyes can see. He will then ask him: "Do you deny any of these? Have my recording angels been unfair to you?" He will say: "No, my Lord". God will ask him: "Do you have any excuse?" He will say: "No, my Lord". God will say: "This is untrue. You have a good deed kept with us. You shall suffer no injustice today". A card will then be produced in which is written: "I bear witness that there is no deity other than God; and I bear witness that Muhammad is God's servant and Messenger". God will say to the man: "Attend the process of weighing". He will say: "My Lord, what will this card weigh against all these records?" God will say: "You shall suffer no injustice". The card will be placed on one scale and the records on the other. The records will be of very little weight while the card will be heavy. Nothing will be heavier in weight against God's name'.[2]

8 Hadiths that speak of relaxation of duties should not be widely circulated, because some people will misunderstand them. Mu'ādh heard this hadith from the Prophet, but it served to motivate him to increase his diligence in doing what pleases God and he became even more God-fearing. Anyone who does not have a similar understanding might slacken.[3] This is similar to what Ibn Mas'ūd said: 'If you say to people something they cannot comprehend, then some of them will be misguided'.

1 Related by Muslim, 2985.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2639; Ibn Mājah, 4300.

3 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 11, p. 340.

3

# Hadith

# THE TESTIMONY THAT MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM) IS GOD'S MESSENGER

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **All my community shall be admitted into Heaven except those who refuse.**

2 **People asked: 'Messenger of God, who will refuse?'**

3 **He said: Whoever obeys me enters Heaven and whoever disobeys me refuses.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (3: 31)
- ﴿He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost.﴾ (3: 85)
- ﴿If you obey him, you shall be rightly guided. The Messenger is not bound to do more than clearly deliver his message.﴾ (24: 54)
- ﴿So let those who would go against His bidding beware, lest some affliction or painful suffering befall them.﴾ (24: 63)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of his hadiths, because he committed himself to remain close to the Prophet. He was keen to learn the Prophet's hadiths and he remained for a long time in Madinah. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains in this hadith that all people of his community will be admitted into Heaven except those who refuse. He further explains that only those who disobey him and do what is contrary to his Sunnah refuse to enter Heaven.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7280.

# Message and Meaning

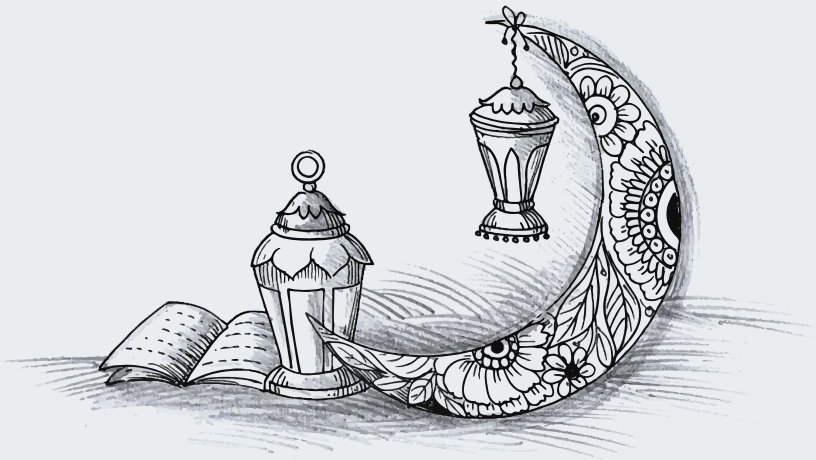
1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that all his community will go to Heaven except those who refuse. What is meant here by the word 'community' includes everyone, human and jinn, who received his message. This applies to all those who have heard of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his message and received God's revelation and religion. They are all included in the community to which he has been sent.

2. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) said this, his companions were amazed. They wondered how anyone could refuse to go to Heaven which promises luxuries and comforts the like of which no eye has seen, no ear has heard of and no mind has ever imagined. Their rhetorical question expressed amazement.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the meaning of his statement. He said that whoever followed him, doing whatever he commanded and refrained from whatever he prohibited would earn entry into Heaven. By contrast, whoever disobeyed him, acted contrary to what he ordered, refused his Sunnah and urged others to discard it, condemned himself, through his own deeds and beliefs, to be barred from entry into Heaven.

The one who is described as refusing to enter Heaven may be an unbeliever who rejects Islam totally. Such a person will never be admitted into Heaven as God says: 'He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost'. (3: 85) 'For those who deny Our revelations and scorn them the gates of Heaven shall not be opened; nor shall they enter paradise any more than a thick, twisted rope can pass through a needle's eye. Thus do We reward the evil-doers'. (7: 40)

Alternatively, such a person may be a Muslim, but he is one who pursues the satisfaction of his desires through unlawful ways and neglects what God has ordered. Such people follow the ways of transgressors, or they invent a way of life which God does not approve of. They do not remain in Hell forever, because a Muslim is not permanently condemned to Hell. Yet they do not go to Heaven with the goodly people who are the first to enter it. They first have to suffer punishment, or at least a rebuke.



# Implementation

1. Abu Hurayrah narrated a greater number of hadiths than any other companion of the Prophet, because he dedicated himself to learning from the Prophet. He used to stay in the mosque at night, with the Suffah people,[1] eating with them, so that nothing would distract him from remaining close to the Prophet all the time. This speaks much of his determination and tireless effort. Whoever wants to excel in Islamic learning or attain excellence in any discipline or profession should emulate Abu Hurayrah in his dedication to his purpose.

2. The hadith starts with a statement of general meaning that requires explanation. The Prophet purposely did this so that people would pay attention to what comes next and learn it fully. His companions immediately put their questions forward, requesting explanation. Teachers, educators and advocates of Islam should always use methods that alert people to pay full attention and help them to retain what they learn.

3. Entry into Heaven is a great prize, and it requires what is easy and feasible, namely, following the Prophet's teachings and obeying his orders. Whoever neglects such a great prize ends up an utter loser through his own doing.

4. This is indeed a very clear and easy way which involves no hardship. It simply means obeying God through commitment to obey His Messenger. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'We follow and do not initiate. We emulate and do not deviate. We shall never go wrong as long as we follow the way marked for us'.[2]

5. It is a well-known maxim, passed across many generations that 'Unless you follow Muhammad, you are unwise. For what is there in this world if you are destined to die?' Essentially, then, since this is a temporary life, its luxuries are trivial. It, therefore, behoves you to make determined efforts to gain the prize in the next life.

1 The Suffah people were individuals who accepted Islam and left their tribes to join the Prophet in Madinah. They were homeless and poor. The Prophet dedicated an area behind the mosque where they were housed, and this area came to be known as al-Suffah. They did some odd jobs and were looked after by the Prophet. They were part of the Muslim community. – Editor's note.

2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, Vol. 4, p. 115.

4

# Hadith

## LEVELS OF FAITH

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated:

1 One day while we were sitting with God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black. No sign of journeying was to be seen on him and none of us knew him.

2 He walked up and sat down by the Prophet, resting his knees against his [i.e. the Prophet’s] knees, and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs.

3 He said: ‘Muhammad, tell me about Islam’.

4 God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: ‘Islam is to testify that there is no deity other than God

5 and Muhammad is God’s Messenger,

6 to attend regularly to prayers,

7 to pay the zakat,

8 to fast in Ramadan

9 and to offer the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to do so’.

10 He said: ‘You have spoken rightly’. We were amazed at him asking and confirming the answer.

11 He then said: ‘Tell me about *īmān*’. The Prophet said: ‘It is to believe in God,

12 His angels,

13 His books,

14 His messengers,

15 and the Last Day,

### From the Qur’an

- ﴿Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the east or the west, but truly righteous is he who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets; and gives his money, much as he may cherish it, to his kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, a stranded wayfarer, beggars, and for the freeing of slaves; who attends to his prayers and pays zakat; and [truly pious are] they who keep their promises once made, and are patient in misfortune and adversity and in time of peril. Such are those who have proved themselves true, and such are the God-fearing.﴾ (2: 177)
- ﴿The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers. And they say, ‘We hear and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord; to You we shall all return’.﴾ (2: 285)
- ﴿Believers! Believe in God and His Messenger, and in the Book which He has bestowed from on high upon His Messenger, and in the Book which He sent down in earlier times. Anyone who denies God, His angels, His revealed books, His messengers, and the Last Day has indeed gone far astray.﴾ (4: 136)
- ﴿We have created everything in due measure.﴾ (54: 49)
- ﴿Yet they were ordered to do nothing more than to serve God, to worship Him alone with sincere dedication and purity of faith, to attend to their prayers and to pay their zakat. That is surely the right religion, pure and straight.﴾ (98: 5)
- ﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.﴾ (2: 183)
- ﴿Pilgrimage to this House is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it.﴾ (3: 97)

# Hadith

16 and to believe in *Qadar* or divine decree, both the good and the evil of it'. He said: 'You have spoken rightly.

17 Then tell me about *iḥsān*'. The Prophet said: 'It is to worship God as though you see Him, and while you do not see Him, He certainly sees you'.

18 He said: 'Then tell me about the Hour'. The Prophet said: 'The one questioned about it knows no better than the one putting the question'.

19 He said: 'Then tell me about its signs'. The Prophet said: 'That a slave girl gives birth to her mistress,

20 and that you will see the barefooted, naked, destitute herdsmen competing in constructing lofty buildings'.

21 Then the man left and I stayed for a while. The Prophet then said to me: 'Umar, do you know who the one putting these questions was?' I said: 'God and His Messenger know best'. He said: 'That was Gabriel. He came to you to teach you your religion'.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 8.

## The Narrator

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb belonged to the 'Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and one of the ten companions of the Prophet given the assurance of admittance into Heaven. Prior to Islam, he was the Quraysh ambassador: when war occurred between Arabs, they would appoint him to work out the settlement of the dispute and the terms of peace. He embraced Islam in Year 6 of the start of the Islamic message, and his conversion to Islam was a mark of added strength for Islam and Muslims. He participated in all military expeditions with God's Messenger (peace be upon him). He succeeded Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq as caliph in Year 13 AH, 634 CE. He was renowned for fairness and justice, as well as firmness, courage and defence of what is right. During his reign, many countries, including Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, were liberated and became parts of the Islamic State. He became a martyr when he was assassinated in Year 23 AH, 645 CE. He was buried in 'Ā'ishah's apartment, next to the graves of the Prophet and Abu Bakr.

## Summary

This hadith sums up all the fundamentals of the Islamic faith. It explains the essentials of our religion, which are: Islam, *īmān* and *iḥsān*. It also mentions some of the portents of the Day of Judgement.

# Message and Meaning

This is a great hadith as it explains the different grades of the Islamic faith and states its fundamentals. *Qadi* 'Iyāḍ said: 'This is an extremely important hadith which states all duties, apparent and subtle. All disciplines of Islamic Studies are based on it and branch from it'.[1] 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrates that:

1. As they were sitting with the Prophet (peace be upon him), a stranger of unusual appearance came over. He was a young man with very black hair. He was not known as one of the Prophet's companions, but he did not look as someone who had travelled to see the Prophet. None of the marks of a journey, such as uncombed hair, dusty features and attire, was seen on him.

2. Yet this man came through the circle until he sat down facing the Prophet, with his knees touching the Prophet's knees. He put his palms on his own thighs, preparing himself to seek important information. Thus, his attitude was one of humility before the Prophet (peace be upon him).

3. He then said: 'Muhammad, tell me about Islam'. He called the Prophet by his own name, Muhammad, so as to give an impression that he was a bedouin. Bedouins called the Prophet by his own name because they did not have the fine manners of the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār who obeyed God's order: 'Do not address God's Messenger in the manner you address one another'. (24: 63) They were ordered not to address him as they would address friends and siblings, but as God's Messenger.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained to him that Islam has the five well-known pillars. The first is the declaration that there is no deity other than God. This is the principle of God's oneness which constituted the essence of the message of all prophets and messengers of God. It must be stated verbally, believed in mentally, and acted upon practically. Thus, no worship is addressed to anyone other than God who is the only One to be feared or appealed to. No one else may be His partner in love, hope, pledges or any act of worship. A Muslim must believe that God is the only One who grants benefits or causes harm. No one else can be of any benefit or the cause of any harm to any of His creation except by His permission. He is the One who deserves to be worshipped and all other worship is false.

5. The declaration of God's oneness implies believing His Messenger (peace be upon him) in what he stated. This means that we must believe that he was sent by God, true in whatever he stated as coming from God. Thus, we must believe in what he legislated and obey him in all that he ordered or prohibited. We must respect, honour, support and defend him, and also strive for the success of his message.

6. The second pillar of Islam is 'to attend regularly to prayers'. This means attend to it as it should be performed, after having fulfilled its conditions and essentials. Thus, one must be humble when praying, reminding oneself of God's glory. This is the reason why the Prophet did not say: 'to do your prayers' but said attend to them regularly.

1 *Qādī* 'Iyāḍ, *Ikmāl al-Mu'lim*, Vol. 1, p. 204.

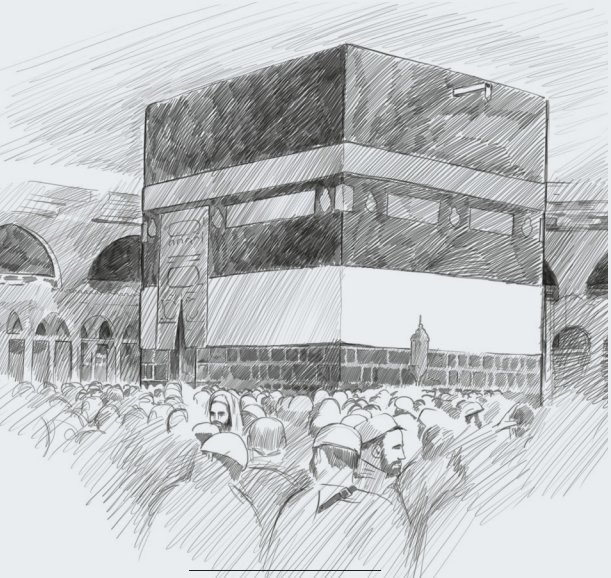
7 The third pillar is the payment of zakat, which is the annual duty a Muslim must pay out of what God has given him of means of livelihood, according to the details outlined by Islamic law. A Muslim pays his zakat willingly, believing that it is his incumbent duty to pay it, and hoping for its reward which is stored with God. A Muslim does not choose the worst of his property to give in zakat, but rather pays it to please God and earn His reward.

8 The fourth pillar of Islam is fasting during the month of Ramadan, which means abstention from whatever invalidates fasting, namely eating, drinking and sexual intercourse, every day of the month from the break of dawn till sunset. This is explained in detail in books of Fiqh, i.e. Islamic law. A Muslim fasts in obedience of God, feeling neither compulsion nor aversion to this act of worship.

9 The fifth pillar of Islam is the pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and its associated rituals and acts of worship, according to specific rules. It is an obligation to be performed once in a Muslim's lifetime, provided that the condition of physical and financial ability to undertake the journey is met.

It should be noted that in his definition of Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned its five pillars upon which it is built. These are specified in a hadith narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar who quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'Islam is built on five: the declaration that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, regular attendance to prayer, payment of zakat, pilgrimage to the House and fasting during Ramadan'.[1]

This does not mean that Islam is limited to these five types of worship. They are indeed its pillars without which it is not firmly established. The other types of worship are complementary to the structure of Islam. If these are missing, the structure of Islam continues to stand, but its image suffers, while absence of the pillars means the collapse of the structure altogether.



10 When the Prophet finished his answer, the man said to him: 'You have spoken rightly'. The Prophet's companions were amazed at him enquiring about something and then confirming the answer as true. A person who confirms an answer is supposed to have perfect knowledge of it, not one who is asking a question in order to learn.

11 The man then asked the Prophet about *īmān*, which is the second level of faith after accepting Islam. The Prophet told him that it means 'to believe in God'. This means that one should believe in Him as the Lord, Creator, Provider, Owner of the universe and Conductor of all affairs, and to believe in Him as the worshipped and obeyed deity. It further requires believing that to Him belongs all fine names and attributes.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 8; Muslim, 16.

# Message and Meaning

12 Next, the Prophet mentions belief in the angels. This means that a Muslim believes that they exist and that they have been created out of light and that they do not disobey God in whatever He may command them, and they do what He bids them. A Muslim must also believe in those of them who have been mentioned by God in name and task: Gabriel, the chief angel who delivers revelations to prophets; Michael is in charge of rain and plant life; Isrāfīl who blows the Trumpet; Mālik the keeper of Hell, etc.

13 The Prophet also mentions belief in God's books, which means that these scriptures were revealed by God. This also means believing what they mention and implementing what is confirmed of their rulings. However, the Qur'an abrogates all earlier codes of law. Moreover, those scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospel, suffered distortion.

14 The belief in God's messengers is also included by the Prophet. This means believing in what they preached, and that God gave them His commands through revelation. They are the best of mankind. We believe in them all including those we are informed about and mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah and those about whom we know nothing. We do not draw any distinction between them. God says: 'Those who deny God and His messengers, and want to make a distinction between [belief in] God and [belief in] His messengers, and say: 'We believe in some but we deny others', and want to pursue a path in-between: (150) those, in truth, are unbelievers. We have prepared for unbelievers humiliating suffering. (151) As for those who believe in God and His messengers and make no distinction between any of them – to them He will give their reward. God is indeed much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (4: 150-152)

15 Belief in the Last Day is also part of *īmān*, and it means believing in the resurrection, reckoning, Heaven, Hell, the path which all people have to go along and the scales by which their deeds are weighed, the Prophet's intercession and his lake, as well as whatever is mentioned in authentic hadiths about it.

16 The last aspect of *īmān* is to believe in *Qadar* or divine decree. This means believing that God, Mighty and Exalted, knew the deeds of all his creation and what happens to them in life. He has recorded all this in the Imperishable Tablet before He created anyone. Therefore, people's actions occur as was previously known to Him and as was recorded. All people's actions, including belief and disbelief, obedience and disobedience are created by God.[1]

17 The Prophet's visitor then asked him about *iḥsān*, which is the third level of the faith. The Prophet told him that it means that a Muslim should worship God in the most perfect manner, as though one can see Him close. If one cannot attain such a degree of alertness and fear of God, then one should remember that God is watching him. God says: 'Place your trust in the Mighty One, the Ever-Merciful (217) who sees you when you stand, (218) and [sees] your movement among those who prostrate themselves [before Him]. (219) It is He alone who hears all and knows all. (26: 217-220)

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 103.

These levels of religion interlap: Islam is broader than both *īmān* and *iḥsān*, and both these two are parts of Islam. *Īmān* is more general than *iḥsān*. This means that a person who is outside the area of *īmān* remains a Muslim, and the one who does not attain the grade of *iḥsān* remains at the level of *īmān*. God says: 'The bedouins say: 'We have attained to faith'. Say [to them]: 'Believers you are not. Rather say, 'We have submitted ourselves', for true faith has not entered your hearts'. (49: 14)

18 The young man then asks the Prophet about the Last Hour and when it occurs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in answer: 'The one questioned about it knows no better than the one putting the question'. In other words: what I know about it is no more than what you know, because none knows its timing except God Himself. He says: 'Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come'. (31: 34)

19 Therefore, the Prophet's interlocutor put forward a different question, asking about its signs. The Prophet told him that one of these signs is that 'a slave girl gives birth to her mistress'. This means that slavery will increase to the extent that a slave girl would give her master a daughter who would be a free woman while her mother remained in bondage. Other suggestions about the meaning of this sign are that slave women would give birth to kings, or that Arabs would be born to non-Arab parents, since the Arabs rank highly among mankind.[1]

20 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions another sign which tells of poor people who used to walk barefoot and thinly clad because of their poverty and the lack of assistance, and bedouin shepherds becoming very rich building towers and skyscrapers. Perhaps this refers to the meaning of the hadith that says: 'When government is in the hands of people who are not qualified for it, the Last Hour is to be expected'.[2] This has now happened, with ignorant, rough bedouins assuming power, wealth and respect.

21 Then the man left and 'Umar stayed for a short while. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: 'Do you know who the one putting these questions was?' 'Umar said: 'God and His Messenger know best'. He said: 'That was Gabriel. He came to you to teach you your religion'.

God granted the angels the facility to assume the shape of humans as also other forms. Gabriel came often to the Prophet in the form of his companion Diḥyah al-Kalbī.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol.1, pp. 137-136.

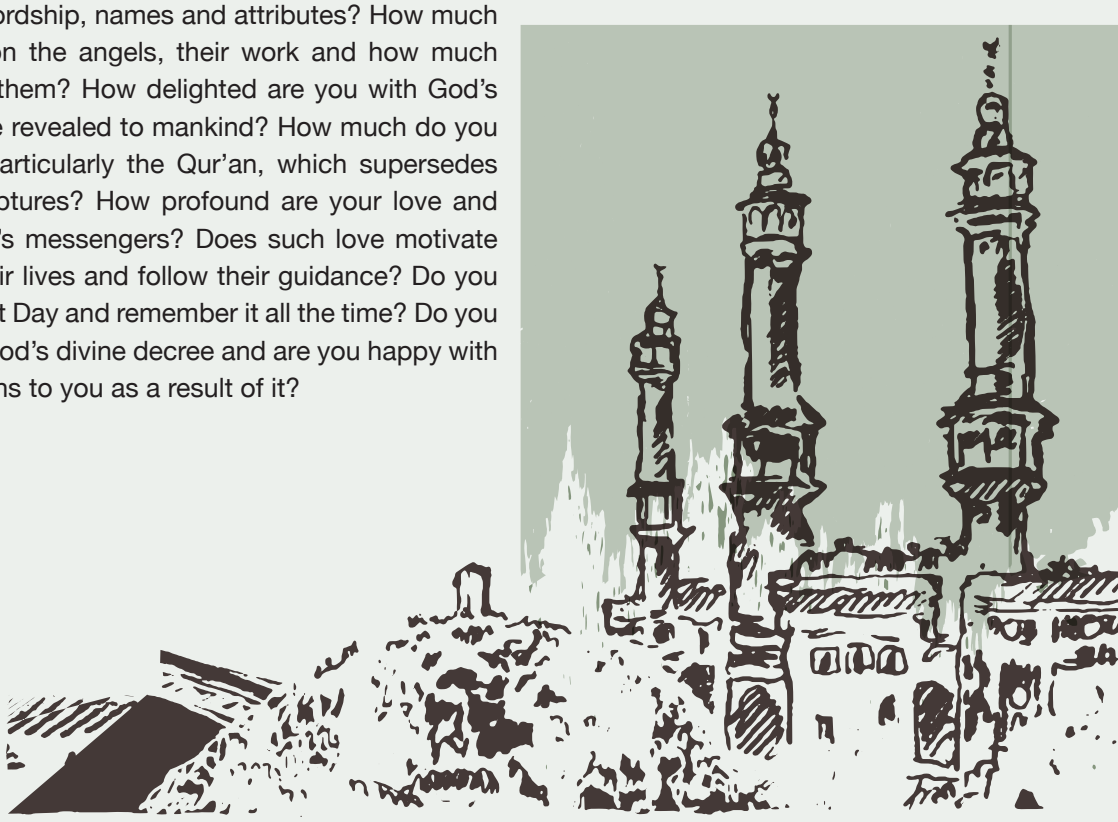
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 59.

# Implementation

1. When Gabriel came to see the Prophet (peace be upon him) he sat as a student seeking to learn. He was attentive, ready to receive the information he would be given. He did not seek to impress the people present with his high position of honour as the angel entrusted with bringing God's revelations to His Messengers and being the Holy Spirit. Everyone who seeks information from a scholar should observe good manners. He must not ask questions that assume an arrogant posture or speak in an unbecoming way.

2. The pillars of Islam are among the most important matters to which a Muslim must give priority in his daily and annual plans. Every Muslim must periodically take stock of their implementation. They must perfect each of these pillars by doing them well and add what is recommended of the same type. Muslims should consider their declaration of God's oneness and perfect it with frequent glorification of God. They must do their obligatory prayers well and complement these with recommended prayers such as the *Witr* and Sunnah prayers as well as repeating the glorifications of God included in the prayers and afterwards. They should pay their zakat in full, with pleasure, and add some voluntary donations, or *ṣadaqah*. They fast during Ramadan and ensure not to spoil their fasting by committing sin. They should add whatever is convenient of voluntary fasting. They must perform the pilgrimage at least once during their lifetime and add what is easy for them of hajj and 'umrah.

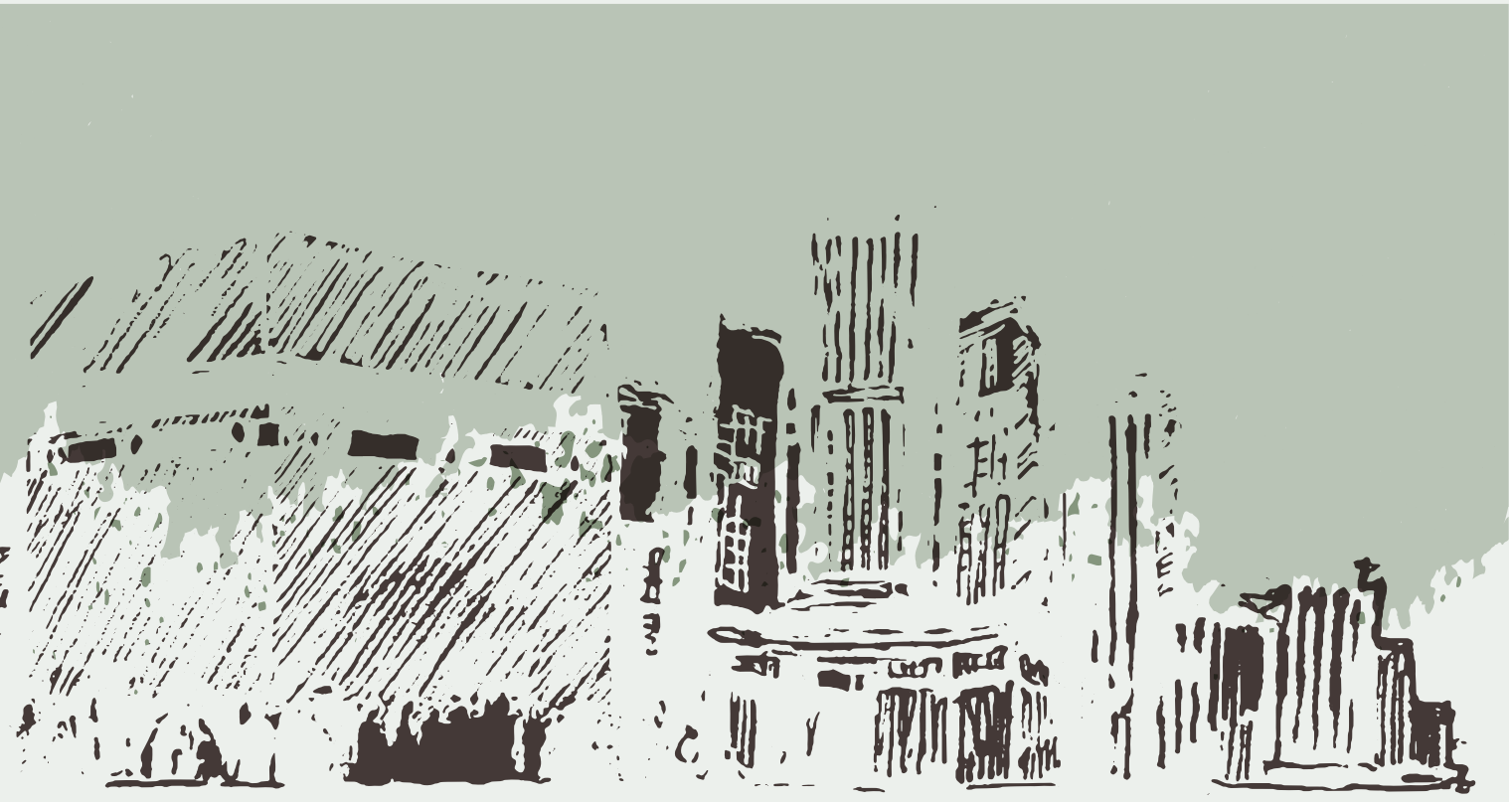
3. Reflect on every one of the essentials of *īmān* and how you feel about each of them. How strong is your belief in God, His Godhood, Lordship, names and attributes? How much do you reflect on the angels, their work and how much do you respect them? How delighted are you with God's books, which He revealed to mankind? How much do you respect them, particularly the Qur'an, which supersedes all previous scriptures? How profound are your love and respect for God's messengers? Does such love motivate you to study their lives and follow their guidance? Do you venerate the Last Day and remember it all the time? Do you truly believe in God's divine decree and are you happy with whatever happens to you as a result of it?



4 *Iḥsān* is the highest grade of religion. Have you tried to worship God as if you can see Him? If you cannot achieve this, try to worship Him knowing that He is looking at you. This, in itself, is far greater than if the world's cameras are focused on you. Do not belittle the fact that God is seeing you.

5 When man is firm in his belief and aware that God is always with him, seeing and watching him, he will be ashamed to show himself to God as approaching good deeds lazily, let alone being seen committing a sin. God says: 'Place your trust in the Mighty One, the Ever-Merciful (217) who sees you when you stand, (218) and [sees] your movement among those who prostrate themselves [before Him]. (219) It is He alone who hears all and knows all. (26: 217-220)

6 Islam gives special importance to the Last Day. It does not tell us when it will take place, but gives us some signs of it. Such signs, as well as other indications, should motivate us to always remember it. Do we, when we are alone reflecting on our affairs, remember that it will inevitably come?



5

# Hadith

# RELIGION IS SINCERITY

Tamīm al-Dārī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Religion is sincerity.**
2. **We asked: To Whom?**
3. **He said: To God,**
4. **His Book,**
5. **His Messenger,**
6. **to the leaders of the Muslims**
7. **and their common folk.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Let there become of you a nation who invite to all that is good, enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong. Such are they who shall prosper.﴾ (3: 104)
- ﴿You are the best community that has ever been raised for mankind; you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God.﴾ (3: 110)
- ﴿Why do not their devouts and their rabbis forbid them to make sinful assertions and to devour the fruits of unlawful gain? Evil indeed is that which they contrive.﴾ (5: 63)
- ﴿No blame shall be attached to the weak, the sick or those who do not have the means, if they are sincere towards God and His Messenger. There is no cause to reproach those who do good.﴾ (9: 91)

## The Narrator

Abu Ruqayyah Tamīm ibn Aws ibn Khārijah al-Dārī belonged to the Lakham tribe, but one of his ancestors was called al-Dār. He was a Christian from Syria and visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Year 9 AH, 631 CE. He embraced Islam and the Prophet gave him the land of Ḥabrā and Bayt 'Aynūn in Syria. Tamīm became a companion of the Prophet and joined him on military expeditions. He also narrated his hadiths. He remained in Madinah but later left for Syria. He died in Palestine in Year 40 AH, 661 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasizes that religion is based on sincerity. Every person should do whatever they can to establish the truth towards God, His Book, His Messenger and the leaders and common folk of the Muslim community.

1 Related by Muslim, 55.

# Message and Meaning

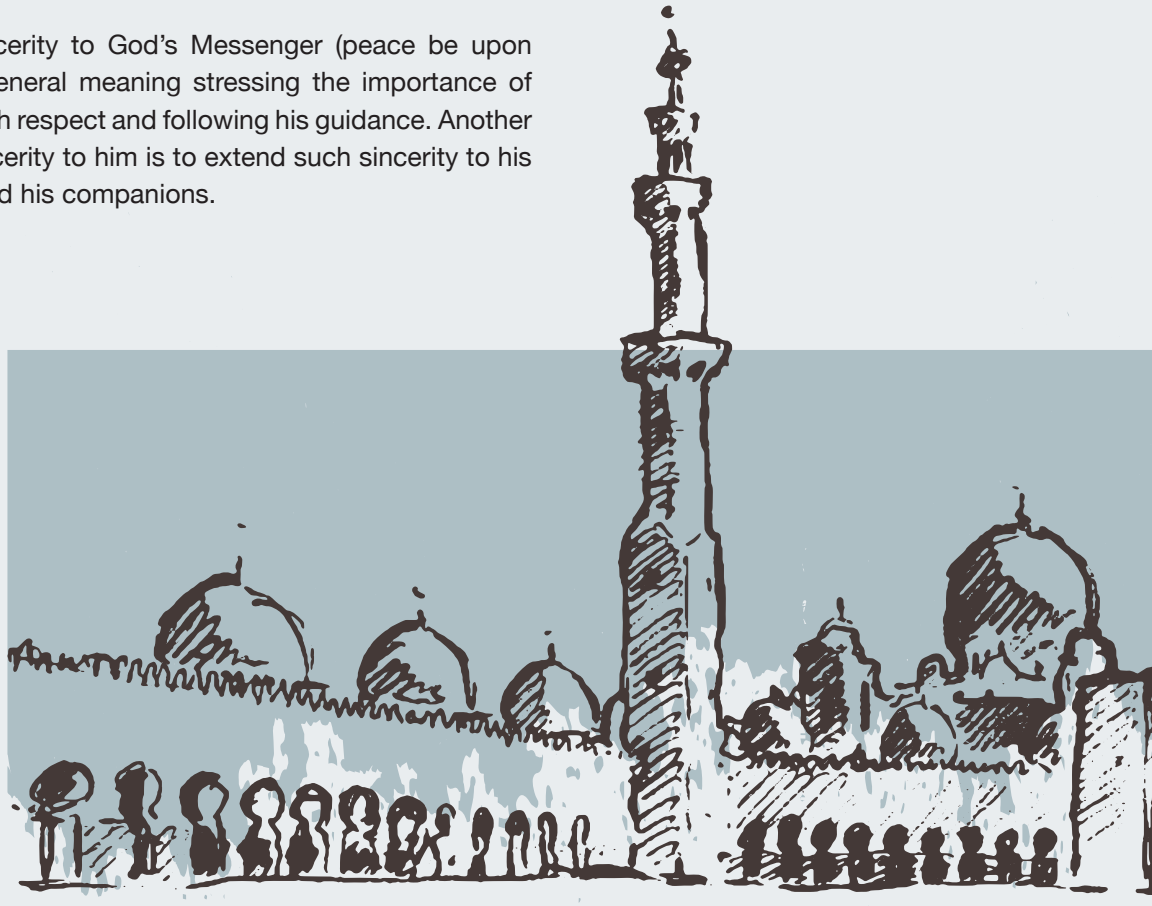
1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that religion is sincerity. This is a general word which implies that a Muslim sincerely extends goodness to other people, just like honey which is both curative and nutrient. The Prophet expresses his meaning in this way to stress the importance of sincerity. Needless to say that religion includes other values and principles, but this is a style of Arabic speech when we wish to glorify a concept. The Arabs of old used to say 'Real wealth is in camels', stressing the value of camels.

2. The Prophet's companions asked to whom sincerity was due. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered, giving the details of those to whom sincerity was due.

3. The Prophet said: 'To God'. Sincerity to God, Exalted and Mighty, has a general meaning signifying the exertion of sincere efforts and ensuring that whatever He requires of us in matters of belief and action is done sincerely for Him.

4. Sincerity to His Book also has a general meaning stressing the importance of action that reflects our respect, love and implementation of what it requires.

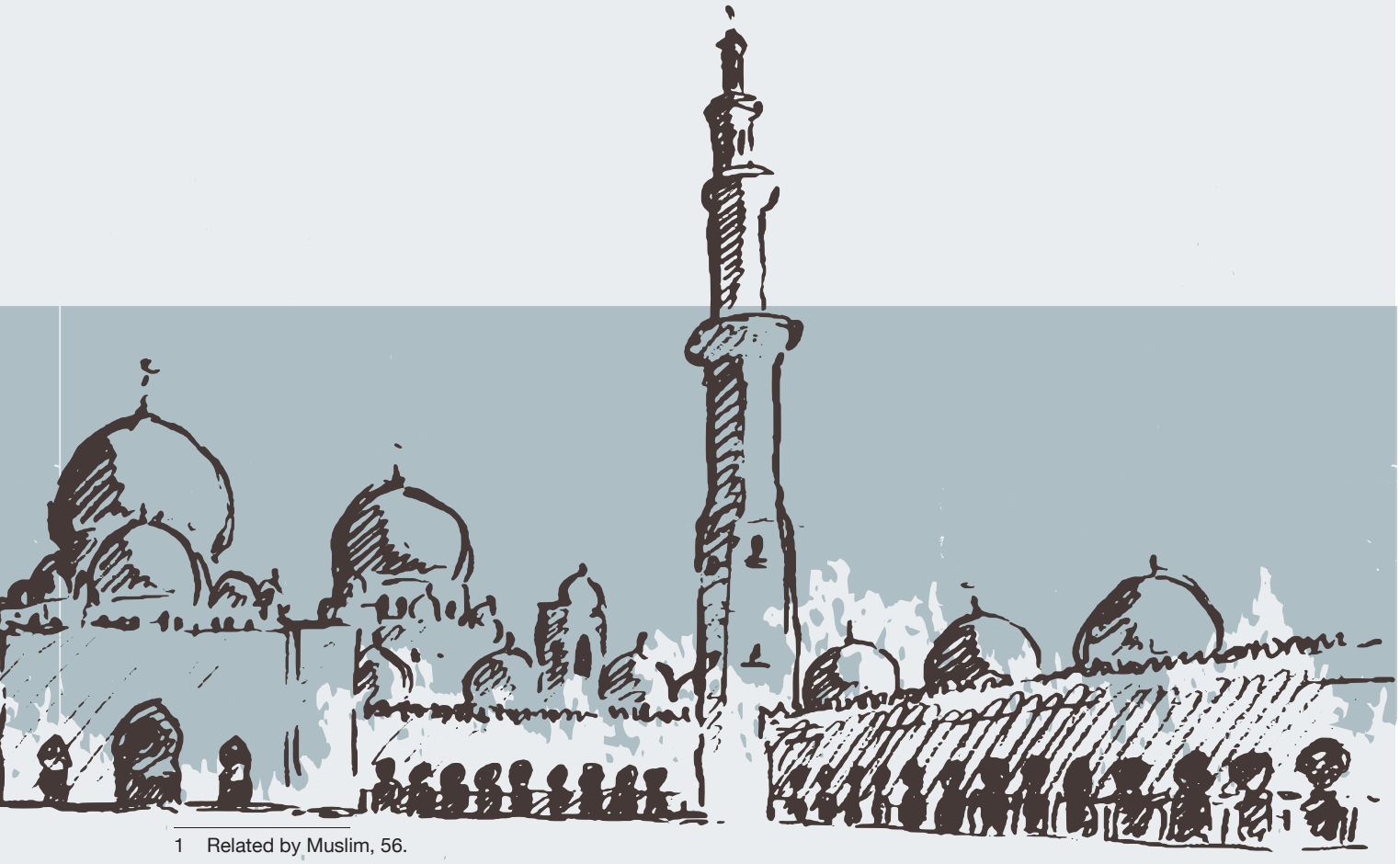
5. Likewise, sincerity to God's Messenger (peace be upon him) has a general meaning stressing the importance of loving him with respect and following his guidance. Another aspect of sincerity to him is to extend such sincerity to his household and his companions.



6 The leaders of the Muslims are their rulers and scholars. Sincerity to them means doing one's best in whatever God has ordered to be done towards them. This includes obedience in what is reasonable and fair, giving help in doing good, praying with them, fighting alongside them and refraining from rebellion against them. It also includes that we do not highlight their errors, but give them good counsel whenever this is feasible. We should also defend them according to what is right.

7 Sincerity towards other Muslims generally means that we endeavour to do what God has ordered to be done to serve their religious and life interests. This is a very general concept. It is for this reason that the Prophet required his companions to pledge to him that they act sincerely towards Muslims. Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh al-Bajalī narrated: 'I pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to listen and obey. He instructed me to add "in what I can" and to be sincere to every Muslim'.[1]

The fact is that sincerity will rebound on the person himself. He will reap God's reward for it. As for God, He is in no need of anyone's sincerity.



1 Related by Muslim, 56.

# Implementation

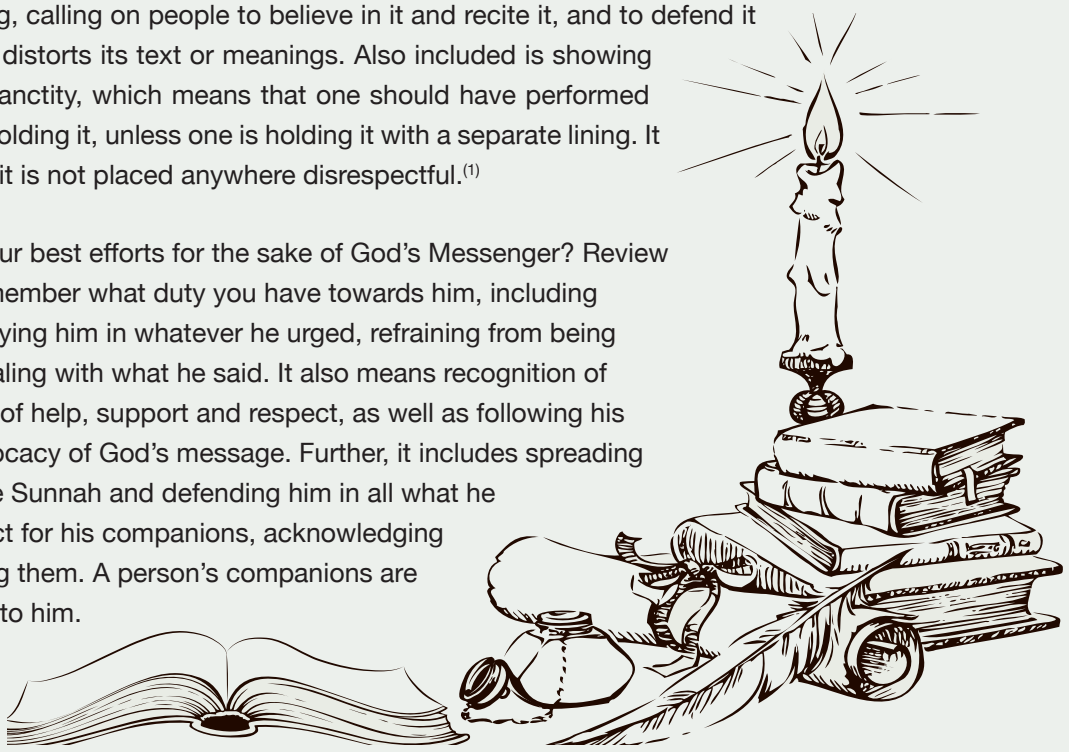
1. Tamīm al-Dārī was a Christian who converted to Islam towards the end of the Prophet's blessed life. He joined him on some military expeditions. He was devout, offering night worship and reciting the Qur'an. All this was possible for one who was originally a non-Muslim. Therefore, a Muslim should never despair of mending his ways or persuade others to do so, but it needs determination.

2. Shouldering one's responsibility and doing one's task faithfully are aspects of true sincerity which is due to God, His Book, Messenger and the leaders and commoners of the Muslim community.

3. Have you exerted your best efforts for God's sake? Take stock of what you do and remember what duty you owe to God, including believing in Him, abandoning all aspects of associating partners with Him, obeying Him, fulfilling the obligations He has given you such as prayer, and doing all His bidding and refraining from what He has prohibited faithfully, loving Him and submitting to Him with great devotion.

4. Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of God's Book? Review your actions and remember what duty you have towards the Qur'an, including believing in it, reciting it often with proper understanding, calling on people to believe in it and recite it, and to defend it against anyone who distorts its text or meanings. Also included is showing due respect for its sanctity, which means that one should have performed the ablution before holding it, unless one is holding it with a separate lining. It further includes that it is not placed anywhere disrespectful.[1]

5. Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of God's Messenger? Review your actions and remember what duty you have towards him, including believing in him, obeying him in whatever he urged, refraining from being presumptuous in dealing with what he said. It also means recognition of what is owed to him of help, support and respect, as well as following his footsteps in the advocacy of God's message. Further, it includes spreading the knowledge of the Sunnah and defending him in all what he said, showing respect for his companions, acknowledging their rights and loving them. A person's companions are those who are close to him.



1 Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Mufhim*, Vol. 1, p. 243. Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 2, p. 388.

6 Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of the leaders of the Muslim community, including rulers, scholars and those who are in similar positions of authority? This includes obeying them in what is right, helping them in serving the interests of life and religion, reminding them of what they overlook or do not know, praying to God to keep them following the right way. Sincerity towards them means refraining from lying to them, exaggerating their praise or tempting them to do what is wrong.

7 Have you exerted your best efforts for the sake of the Muslim community generally. This includes advising them of what is good for them, helping them with word and deed in matters of life and religion, reminding the oblivious, educating the ignorant, supporting the needy, covering their faults, helping them to stay safe from harm, securing what benefits them in faith and life, wishing them well in this life and the life to come. It also includes stopping what is harmful for them and loving for them what one loves to have oneself.

8 One aspect of sincerity is to alert a person to an error he might have done. If such an error is committing what is disapproved of by Islam, one should take issue with that, according to the degree of disapproval and the benefit of taking such issue. This should be done, even if it requires putting the matter to the ruler or some other authority, because it comes under sincerity to God, Mighty and Exalted. The guidance provided by the Prophet and his companions is to give advice in private. If a person is advised in public, the advice becomes a matter of rebuke. Hence, al-Fuḍayl ibn ʻIyāḍ said: ʻA believer keeps the matter private and gives advice, while a transgressor publicizes and rebukes'.[1]

9 Giving sincere advice to rulers and people in power is required of a person in whatever way they are able to do so. If he is certain that he will come to no harm, he should give such advice. If he fears being harmed as a result, it is sufficient that he should secretly disapprove. If he is unable to give advice, he should not do what others may take as support. To do so is to be dishonest and to encourage their errors. It will spoil his faith.

10 It is wise to give the advice indirectly. It should be clearly stated only to a person who does not understand it when given indirectly. Moreover, when giving advice, one should not stipulate that it must be accepted. A Muslim gives advice to do his duty. If the addressee acts on his advice, well and good. If not, the adviser will receive his reward from God for having given his Muslim brother sincere advice.

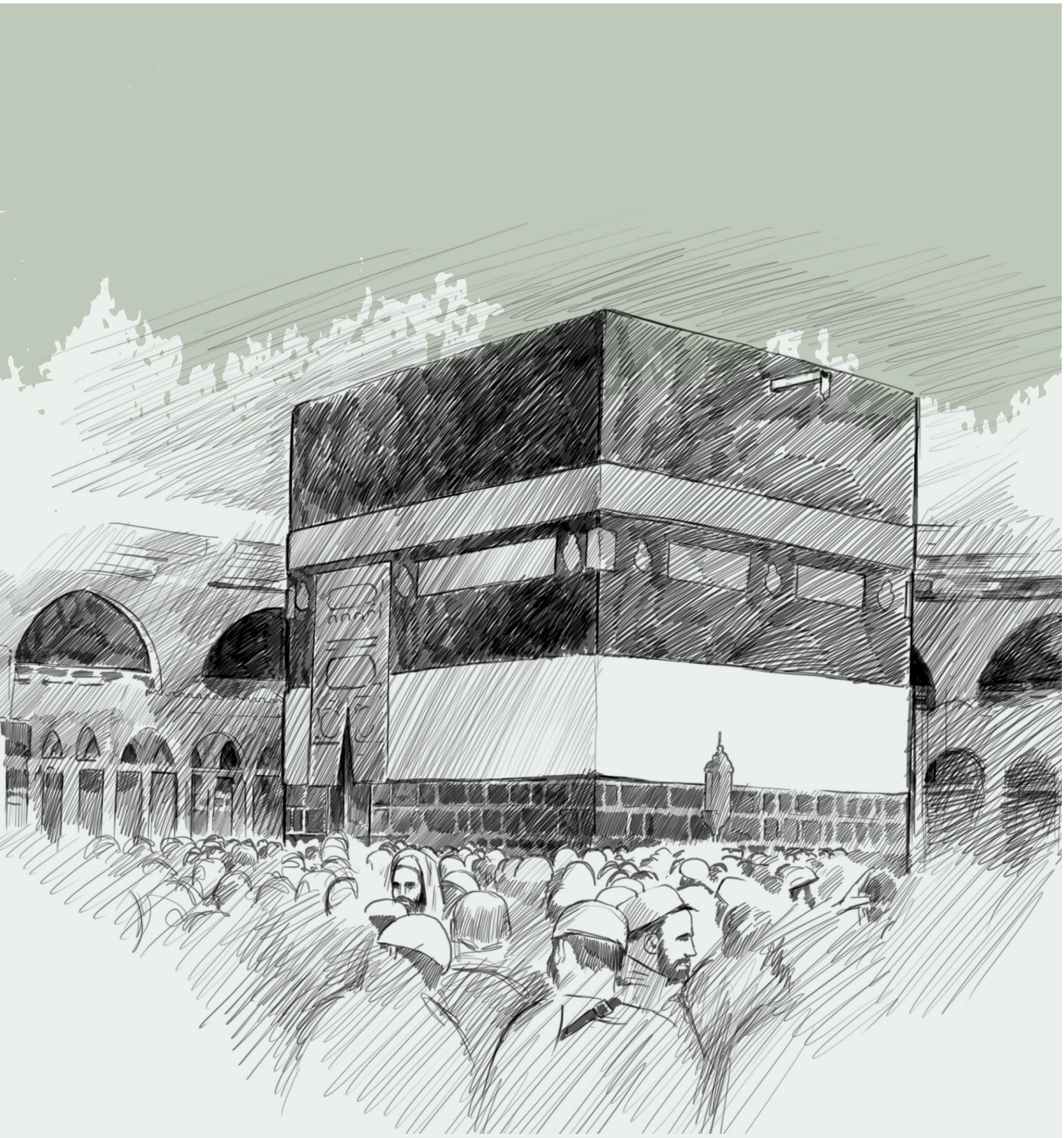
1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʻ al-ʻUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 225.

# Implementation

11 Among the ways of giving sincere advice is to explain which hadiths are authentic and which lack authenticity, and to explain to people the status of narrators, if he has sound knowledge in this subject, showing them who is reliable and who is not. Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked whom he considered better: a person who offers voluntary prayers, fasting and *i'tikāf*, or one who exposes the followers of deviant ways? He said: A person who volunteers prayers, fasting and *i'tikāf* benefits himself, while the one who exposes deviation benefits the Muslim community. His work is better.[1] Therefore, scholars and advocates should explain such matters with sincere intention whereby their action is one of sincerity to God and His Messenger.

12 Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh used to sell goods. He would tell the buyer of any defect in the article he was buying and give him the choice to buy it or not. Some people said to him that if he continued to do so, he would sell nothing. He said: We have pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that we will give sincere advice to every Muslim. Sincerity and good counsel are not limited to expressing views and giving advice in matters of religion only, but they apply to all matters of life. A worker practices sincerity by doing his job as best as he can; a trader informs his clients of any defects in his merchandise; a doctor does his best to diagnose the condition of his patient and prescribe the most effective medicines; a student should be keen to acquire knowledge and help his fellow students to benefit himself and his community. The same applies to all walks of life.

1 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, Vol. 28, p. 231.



# 6 Hadith

# EXPERIENCING THE TASTE OF FAITH

Al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib narrated that he heard God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) say:

1. **Whoever accepts God as his Lord,**
2. **Islam as his faith**
3. **and Muhammad as [God’s] Messenger**
4. **experiences the meaning of faith.**[1][2]

## From the Qur’an

**﴿Among them there are those who speak ill of you concerning the distribution of charity. If they are given a share of it, they are pleased, but if no share is given to them, they are enraged. (58) Yet [how much better it would have been for them] had they contented themselves with what God and His Messenger have given them, and said: ‘God is sufficient for us. God will give us out of His bounty, and so too will His Messenger. To God alone do we turn in hope’.﴾** (9: 58-59)

**﴿We have sent every messenger so that he should be obeyed by God’s leave. If, when they have wronged themselves, they would but come to you and pray to God to forgive them, and the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would surely find that God is the one to accept repentance, ever-merciful. (64) But no, by your Lord! They do not really believe unless they make you judge in all disputes between them, and then find in their hearts no bar to an acceptance of your decisions and give themselves up in total submission.﴾** (4: 64-65)

## The Narrator

Abu al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf of the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh tribe was the Prophet’s uncle. He was born in Makkah in Year 56 BH 567 CE. He was one of the main nobility of the Quraysh before and after Islam, as he was in charge of the maintenance and management of the Ka‘bah and the Grand Mosque. It is reported that he embraced Islam before the Prophet’s migration but kept this secret until he joined the Prophet shortly before the takeover of Makkah. He died in Year 32 AH, 653 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that faith yields a fruit which has a sweet taste. Its taste is experienced only by a person who takes his faith seriously and lives it. He accepts God as his Lord and submits to Islam as a faith and creed. He acknowledges Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet and adheres to his message, believing in him as God’s Messenger.

1 The numbering in this case follows the original Arabic text. The difference in the arrangement is due to the different construction of the sentence between the source and target languages. – Editor’s note.

2 Related by Muslim, 34.

# Message and Meaning

Al-'Abbās narrates this hadith which he heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him) giving the following message:

1. Faith has a fine taste which appeals to all people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the Arabic word *dhāqa* in reference to faith, even though faith is not material. The Arabic word means 'taste', and the Prophet uses it to make his meaning clear. Everyone enjoys food and drink when they have a fine taste. Likewise, a believer feels the effects of faith within himself when faith shapes his life.

   The sweetness of faith is experienced through personal satisfaction, absence of worry and the pleasure of reliance on God. The result of all this is that sin becomes less attractive and easier to avoid and refrain from, while obligations become easier to carry out and implement. A believer is always hopeful of receiving God's mercy and he accepts whatever happens in his life since it is by God's will. Such pleasure and happiness cannot be achieved unless certain conditions are fulfilled.

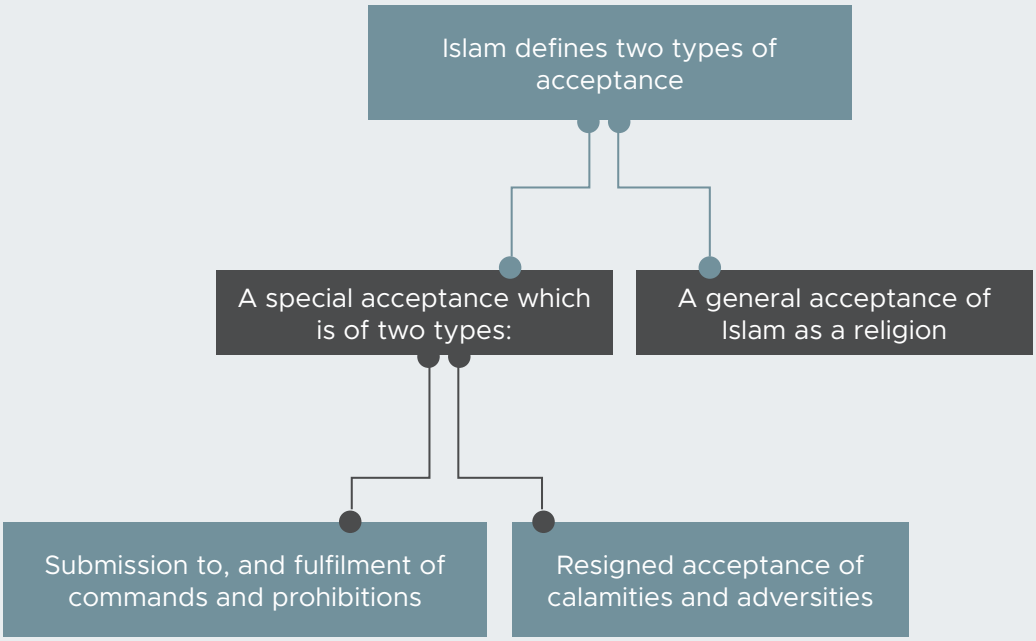
2. The first condition is 'to accept God as one's Lord'. Such acceptance means conviction and satisfaction. It also involves believing in whatever God has told us, and to submit to Him in all religious rulings, and accept with patience, resignation and reassurance all that occurs by His will.

   The acceptance of God as one's Lord does not mean the mere acknowledgement of God's existence or His Lordship. Such acknowledgement is an essential requirement of Islam, and it is accepted by many unbelievers. It is a special type of acceptance meant here, namely, to accept that God is the Creator, Master and Legislator. We accept His rulings and legislation, worship and love Him, rely on Him and turn to Him in repentance, fear none but Him in private, feel satisfied with whatever He determines and say nothing that displeases Him.

3. The second condition is to 'accept Islam as one's faith'. This means acceptance of Islam as a code of law, doing what it bids us and refraining from what it forbids. It also means choosing Islam in preference to all other religions, making it the principle that determines a Muslim's life. Thus, a Muslim befriends people or considers them enemies on its basis, and is ready to sacrifice all for his faith.

4 The third condition is to accept Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet and a Messenger of God. This means complete acknowledgement and belief in his message and acceptance of all commands and prohibitions he has given us as coming from God. Thus, a Muslim accepts this code of law given by the Prophet, submits to it and puts it into practice. Such is the acceptance of the people who love the Prophet and follow him, obey him and stick to his guidance. They love him, yearn to meet him and defend his Sunnah with all their resources.

This shows that no one really attains to faith unless they combine the three fundamentals of the Islamic faith, namely belief in God, His Messenger and His religion.



# Implementation

1. Al-‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib believed in his nephew, Muhammad (peace be upon him), although he was older than him. He persevered, knowing the enmity of his people. He, thus, showed that wisdom requires that we accept the truth, whether it is stated by one who is young or old, strong or weak, rich or poor.

2. During the Battle of Ḥunayn, the majority of the Prophet’s companions were in retreat, but al-‘Abbās remained firm, staying with the Prophet (peace be upon him). This proved his firm conviction of Islam and that he really experienced the sweetness of faith. What can be said about a person who is born into a Muslim family, or has been a Muslim for many years, yet he is still in a precarious position in his faith. We must fulfil the meaning of faith and be as God describes: ‘Among the believers are people who have always been true to what they have vowed before God’. (33: 23)

3. Faith generates a feeling of happiness which may not be felt by someone who has been a believer for some time, because he does not fulfil its requirements or because he does not appreciate how it compares with other situations. Whoever prefers the pleasures of this present life to the sweetness of faith should remind himself of the latter and work hard to achieve the happiness of faith.

4. You will happily accept God as your Lord when you remember that He is the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful, the Mighty, the Wise who knows all, as well as His other attributes which make us realize that what He says is the truth and submit to His commands and prohibitions. All this is further emphasized when we remind ourselves of God’s favours and blessings, whether apparent or inconspicuous, and that what we do not know of His favours, blessing, creation and wisdom in all that are greater than what we know.

5. You will happily accept Islam as your religion when you remember that it is the message of God who is far superior to all others in His knowledge, wisdom, grace and mercy. A wise person knows that the perfection that appears to him in some aspects of the Islamic faith is a good proof that what he does not know is also perfect.

6. You will happily accept the Prophet (peace be upon him) as God’s Messenger when you remember that he was perfect in every human trait. His knowledge and wisdom were perfect. He was granted God’s support that kept him free of error. You should also remember that he was most caring, compassionate and generous to the Muslim community. Were we to compare him to anyone alive now or at any time in history, he would be infinitely superior to all others.

7 Full as it is of trials, hardship and calamities, the life of this world becomes a rose garden to a believer who combines belief with submission and acceptance. Hence the wise saying: 'Acceptance is the garden of this life where those in the know find their comfort'. We will be wise to plant our garden of this life with the hand of acceptance. When a Muslim suffers a calamity or misses out on some good thing or improvement of means, he surrenders himself to God and remembers that nothing befalls anyone of us except what God has determined. Thus we regain serenity, allow no room for despair or regret and do not grieve for what we might have missed.

8 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz used to say in his prayer: 'My Lord, enable me to accept what You have determined for me, and grant me Your blessing for what You have willed for me, so that I do not wish to hasten what You have delayed nor delay what You have put forward'.[1]

9 Yaḥyā ibn Mu'ādh was asked: What does a person need to attain the status of acceptance? He answered: He must establish his relationship with his Lord on four principles. He says to Him: I accept whatever You give me, and I am happy with what You deny me. If You leave me, I shall worship You, and whenever You call me, I respond. We need to question ourselves: do we implement these four principles? When we accomplish a measure of any of them, we attain a measure of acceptance.

1 Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī, *Adab al-Murta'ā fī 'Ilm al-Du'ā*, p. 164.

7

# Hadith

# THE PERFECTION OF RELIGION

Ṭāriq ibn Shihāb narrated:

1 A Jew came to ‘Umar and said: ‘*Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, you recite a verse in your Book. Had it been revealed to us, Jews, we would have made its day of revelation a time of celebration’.

2 He said: ‘Which verse?’ He said: ‘This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you’. (5: 3)

3 ‘Umar said: ‘I know the day when and the place where it was revealed. It was revealed to God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) at Arafat, on a Friday’. [1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Do they, perchance, envy other people for what God has given them out of His bounty? We have indeed given revelation and wisdom to the House of Abraham, and We did bestow on them a mighty dominion. (54) Some of them believe in him and some turn away from him. Sufficient scourge is the fire of Hell.﴾ (4: 54-55)
- ﴿This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you.﴾ (5: 3)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. His line of descent joins with that of the Prophet at Ka‘b ibn Lu’ay. He was nicknamed al-Fārūq. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and the first to have the title *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, i.e. Prince of the Faithful. He was constantly very close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). At the time of his death, the Prophet was very pleased with him. He died in Year 23 AH 645 CE.

## Summary

The Jews envied the Muslims that this verse was revealed to them and wished that a similar verse had been revealed to their own prophets. This is the verse in which God states that He has perfected the religion of Islam. ‘Umar told them that he knew the time and place of its revelation and that all Muslims honour that place and that day.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 45; Muslim, 3017.

# Message and Meaning

1 A rabbi came to see ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. His name was Ka‘b ibn Māti‘, better known by his nickname, Ka‘b al-Aḥbār. He said to ‘Umar that he envied the Muslims a certain Qur’anic verse. The Jews would have loved for a similar verse to have been revealed to them. They would have made the day of its revelation one of celebration and commemoration.

2 In answer to ‘Umar’s question, Ka‘b told him that it is ‘This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you’. (5: 3)

The Jews noted this verse because they pay attention to religious matters. Needless to say, the revelation of this verse is an occasion of celebration because it states the great news that the religion of Islam has been completed and perfected. This is so because all its legislation, including mandatory punishments and inheritance legislation, have clearly been stated. Also, the idolaters were removed and banned entry into the Sacred Mosque in Makkah; Islam prevailed while polytheism and its adherents were defeated and humiliated; Muslims no longer feared any enemies; and Makkah came under Islam and its rule. Moreover, the religion of Islam was given its final status: there can no longer be any abrogation of its legislation, and no further creed will be given from on high. Islam is the final message from God. Its perfection is further manifest in the fact that there is no contradiction between its texts, nor between it and sound reason or logic. It is a religion that is suitable for humans and jinn, in all places and generations. Its legislation meets the needs of mankind and ensures a life of peace and good order for all.

Moreover, God bestowed the full measure of His blessings, making His religion prevail and spread throughout the earth, giving people peace and security. God also states that He has chosen Islam as the religion to be followed by mankind. It will never be abrogated or superseded by any other religion.

3 ‘Umar tells Ka‘b al-Aḥbār that Muslims attach greater importance to divine revelation than the Jews. We know the time when this verse was revealed and the place of its revelation. Both are marked by us. It was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was in attendance at Arafat during his hajj, and the day was Friday. As such, the occasion marked two Eids at the same time: the weekly one, which is Friday, and the Day of Arafat. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘The Day of Arafat, the Day of Sacrifice and the Tashrīq days are the time of Eid and celebration for us, Muslims. They are days of eating and drinking’.[1]

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 2419; al-Tirmidhī, 773; al-Nasā’ī, 4186.

# Implementation

1. The enemies of Islam study it carefully, searching for points of ambiguity in order to raise doubts about it. Every scholar should be ready to defend Islam and refute the doubts they raise.

2. Muslims should not be deceived by unbelievers' apparent cordiality towards them. They harbour strong grudges against Muslims for what God has given them.

3. Non-Muslims envy us the revelations God has given us, yet many Muslims neglect its recitation and make no attempt to understand its meanings.

4. Every Muslim should know that Islam is a complete and perfect religion that is free from defects. There is no internal contradiction in its texts, nor between its texts and sound logic and reason. Anyone who feels confused about something should refer to scholars who will be able to sort it out for him, clarifying any imagined or perceived contradiction.

5. The Eids are not determined by personal view or occasion. They are determined by religious text. A Muslim should not mark any of the occasions celebrated by other communities.

6. Every Muslim should be proud of his faith, and learn about it. He should not allow anyone to let him appear as one whose religion is unknown, or as one who does not understand his own faith.

8

# Hadith

# THE BRANCHES OF FAITH

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. Faith is seventy-something, or sixty-something, branches.
2. The best of these is to say 'there is no deity other than God',
3. and the lowest in rank is to remove a harmful object from people's way.
4. Modesty is a branch of faith.[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿True believers are only those whose hearts are filled with awe whenever God is mentioned, and whose faith is strengthened whenever His revelations are recited to them. In their Lord do they place their trust.﴾ (8: 2)
- ﴿Whenever a surah is revealed, some of them say: 'Which of you has this strengthened in faith?' It certainly strengthens the believers in their faith, and so they rejoice. (124) But as for those whose hearts are diseased, it only adds wickedness to their wickedness, and so they die unbelievers.﴾ (9: 124- 125)
- ﴿Before your time We never sent a messenger without having revealed to him that there is no deity other than Me. Therefore, you shall worship Me alone.﴾ (21: 25)
- ﴿It is He who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers, so that they may grow more firm in their faith.﴾ (48:4)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī was from a branch of the Azd tribe. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. Abu Dāwūd said: 'Scholars of Hadith are in agreement that he was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths'. He was appointed governor of Bahrain. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

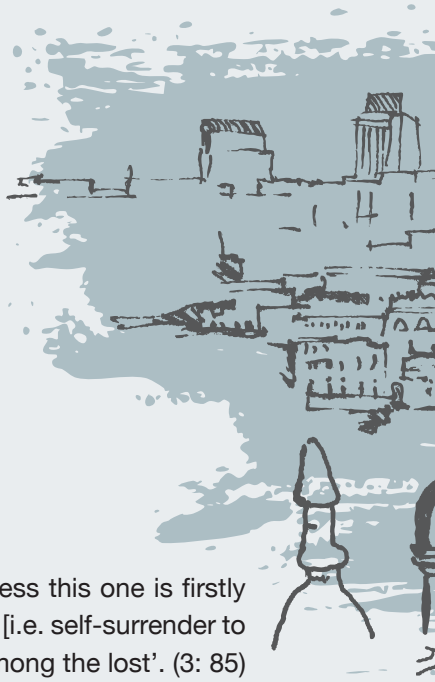
## Summary

In this hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that faith comprises many parts which differ in merit and importance. The most important one is belief in God's oneness and the lowest in importance is the removal of harmful objects from people's way. The other parts, including modesty, fall in between these two.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 9; Muslim, 35.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that faith is like a tree with branches. Some of these are higher and more important than others. He mentions that there are seventy-odd branches. The Arabic word *biḍ'*, translated in the text of the hadith as 'something', refers to a figure ranging from three to nine. Thus, the text of the hadith means that faith is between seventy-three and seventy-nine branches.



The hadith mentions that faith is 'seventy-something, or sixty-something' branches. This is the narrator's doubt. That different reports give different figures should be overlooked, because the important point is that there are many branches of faith. Some scholars have tried to establish what these branches are, identifying the good deeds mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but their conclusions are only good estimates.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then explains that the best of these is the conviction that there is no deity other than God. This is not a mere verbal expression. It should be a conviction based on knowledge, sincerity, love obedience and commitment, as well as rejection of any belief in anything other than God, the Exalted, and steering away from associating partners with God, whether openly or covertly.

This is the essence of faith. None of its other branches is acceptable unless this one is firstly and firmly established. God says: 'He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost'. (3: 85)

3 The least in importance among the branches of faith is the removal from people's way of anything that may cause them harm, such as thorns, stones, rubbish, nails, wheels or abandoned objects. If we are required to remove harmful objects from people's way, leaving such harmful objects on people's way is to be more diligently avoided.

4 The Prophet mentions that modesty is one of the branches of faith. It is a personal trait that encourages good works and avoidance of what is wrong and unbecoming. This may be a personal trait which a person should nurture and retain, or it may be consciously acquired through self-training. Modesty is a feeling which a person recognizes within himself, even if only on some occasions. Its outcome which sums up its significance is to ensure that God does not see you where He has forbidden you to be and does not miss you where He has bidden you to be.

All this confirms that faith comprises verbal expression, practical action and inner conviction. When we say, 'there is no deity other than God', this is a verbal expression of what we believe in. It is followed by what we do in practice to confirm it. The removal of harmful objects from people's way is a practical action. Modesty is something that is placed within oneself but its practical effects are seen through action.

**Two types of modesty**

- acquired through personal effort
- natural, present from birth
- **Modesty may be**
  - 1. Obligatory, such as fearing that God see one doing what is forbidden or contrary to His oneness. Also, to carry out a duty, such as covering one's private parts.
  - 2. Recommended, such as diligence in voluntary worship, for example, not falling short in thanking God for His favours or not appearing in unbecoming attire.

# Implementation

1. Abu Hurayrah was a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and a distinguished scholar. He became governor of some important cities in the Muslim state. Nevertheless, he combined humility and soft-heartedness with voluntary worship. Do we show the necessary humility as we enjoy what God has given us of knowledge, position or wealth?

2. Faith is the most important thing, and it is what God requires of His creation. However, it is broad, having many branches. We should learn these and should work diligently to improve ourselves doing what God requires of us in the areas marked by these branches. We must not limit ourselves to some branches and ignore others.

3. Some people criticize others for neglecting some branches of faith, forgetting that they themselves may neglect other branches. Some people are keen to do well in some acts of worship, such as prayers and fasting, but they neglect others, such as good manners and attending to the needs of their families. Some may place their emphasis on good manners and ignore the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil. All this should make us more gentle with others and take stock of our own action according to the standards of divine law.

4. Faith has different grades, with some lower than others. All these grades are parts of the faith which is loved by God, but we should not focus on the lower grades, neglecting the higher ones. There are more than seventy grades between the highest and the lowest. Hence, our effort and financial contribution in regard to the top grade is more important and more rewarding. Therefore, we need scholars so that we learn more of the Qur'an and the Sunnah so as to become fully aware of the priorities of faith.

5. The best of all branches of faith is the declaration: 'there is no deity other than God'. We, therefore, need to learn its meaning fully and how to make it a full reality in our lives. We must say it with hearts full of love and submission, ready to accept all that it requires of us in belief, verbal declaration and action.

6. Removal of harm from people's way may involve different types of action in people's daily life, including the removal of what may cause harm to people or vehicles, such as stones, nails, pieces of tyres, etc. whether one takes action to remove it oneself or speaks to the responsible authority to remove it.

7. Since the removal of harm from people's way and other places is a part of faith, then to refrain from placing such harm is a good action, while harming people with any type of object is a bad deed. Harm is a general word which may include what is physical and what is abstract. It, thus, includes things like throwing away tins and what is left in them, disturbing noises, foul smells, driving with no consideration to other road users, wrongful parking, etc. Moreover, since the presence of harmful objects in people's way is unacceptable, then by contrast, it is recommended to make things easier for people on their way, such as placing ways for relaxation

at intervals, such as a canopy or an umbrella, or services stations on highways. The following hadith illustrates this meaning, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says to his companions. 'Beware of sitting by the roadside.' They said: 'Messenger of God! We cannot dispense with our sitting places, as we sit to talk together.' He said: 'Since you refuse, you must give the road its due right.' They asked: 'What is its right?' He said: 'To lower one's gaze, refrain from what causes harm to anyone, return greetings, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.'[1]

8 God rewards the removal of harm from people's way, although people do not live on the road, and they may only pass through rapidly. Needless to say, the removal of harm from places where people meet and stay is more important. Such places include workplaces, schools and places of learning, as well as homes. Cleaning the family home is particularly important because it ensures that members of the family are comfortable. Mosques are even more important, because they are God's houses which He has ordered to be built. We, therefore, should ensure that this type of good deed is done in our daily lives.

9 Since the removal of harm from people's way is an aspect of faith, its removal from people's hearts is more important. This is accomplished by educating them, removing their doubts and evil thoughts and clearing their anxiety and depression.

10 Modesty is especially mentioned as a branch of faith because of its effects. It is a trait that encourages many good characteristics and stops bad ones. It may be present in a person's mind but he does not feel it; and it may weaken and die without this being felt, particularly if it dies out gradually when it is surrounded by many aspects of impudence and vulgarity. Therefore, we should watch this trait within ourselves and nurture it.

11 Modesty is not a negative action such as being shy at what one might have done. It is a positive trait encouraging doing what is good and refraining from what is bad and evil. A person may feel ashamed of himself in front of God because He has given him knowledge and he has not spread that knowledge, or He has given him wealth and he does not give to charity, or He has given him a facility or easy expression and he does not use them in advocating God's cause. By contrast, a person may not feel ashamed at exposing what God has ordered to be covered of one's body, or at openly doing what is forbidden, or betraying a bad characteristic such as cowardice, stinginess or laziness.

12 The best form of modesty is one's modesty in front of God. To explain this meaning and how it is demonstrated in life, we quote: 'I recommend you to be ashamed in front of God as you may feel ashamed in front of a pious man of your own people'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2465; Muslim, 2121.

2 Related by Ahmad in *al-Zuhd*, 46; al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, Vol. 6, p. 145.

9

# Hadith

# THE ONENESS OF GOD'S LORDSHIP

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated:

1 I visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) and tied my she-camel at the door.

2 Some people from the Tamīm tribe came in and he said to them: ‘Accept the happy news, Banī Tamīm’.

3 They said: ‘You have given us happy news, so give us’. They repeated it twice.

4 Then people from Yemen came in, and he said: ‘Accept the happy news, people of Yemen, as the Tamīm people have not’.

5 They said: ‘We accept it, Messenger of God’.

6 They then said: ‘We have come to ask you about this matter’.

7 He said: ‘There was God, and there was nothing other than Him.

8 His throne was on water.

9 He wrote everything in the Record,

10 and He created the heavens and the earth’.

11 Someone called out: Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn, your she-camel has gone. I went out, and it was not to be seen.

12 By God, I wish I had abandoned it.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3191.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, whereas His throne has rested upon water, so that He may test you [to make manifest] which of you is best in conduct.﴾ (11: 7)
- ﴿It is We who will bring the dead back to life. We record whatever [deeds] they send ahead, as well as the traces they leave behind. We keep an account of all things in a clear record.﴾ (36: 12)
- ﴿Say: ‘Do you indeed disbelieve in Him who has created the earth in two Days? And do you claim others to be His equals? It is He who is the Lord of all the worlds. (9) He it is who placed on the earth firm mountains towering above it, and bestowed His blessings on it, and measured out its varied provisions in four days, ensuring equity for all who seek [such provisions]. (10) Then, He applied His design to the sky, which was but smoke; and said to it and to the earth: ‘Come, both of you, willingly or unwillingly’. They both said: ‘We do come willingly’. (11) So He decreed that they become seven heavens in two days, and assigned to each heaven its task. We adorned the sky nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.﴾ (41: 9-12)
- ﴿We have created everything in due measure.﴾ (54: 49)

## The Narrator

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn ibn ‘Ubayd’s appellation was Abu Nujayd. He belonged to the Khuzā‘ah tribe. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, 629 CE, which witnessed the Battle of Khaybar. He carried the banner of the Khuzā‘ah in the Muslim army which took over Makkah. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent him to Basrah to teach Islam to its population. He was known to have his supplication answered. He did not participate in the events and troubles that led to the assassination of the third caliph, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. He died in Year 53 AH 671 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) speaks about some matters known to God only, including some of His attributes and actions. He mentions that God was always in existence, before the creation of anything, and that His throne was on water before He created the heavens, earth and the universe. He also mentions that God wrote in the Imperishable Tablet all that will happen to His creation. He then created the universe.

# Message and Meaning

1. ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), but before he entered he tied his camel’s front leg with its back leg so that it would not be loose or run away.

2. As ‘Imrān was sitting with the Prophet (peace be upon him), a delegation from the Tamīm tribe came in. The Prophet said to them that he had some happy news for them. They would have done well to accept the Prophet’s happy news whatever it might have been. This is particularly true as he intended to give the news that whoever accepts Islam shall not remain forever in Hell, no matter how grave his sins may be.

3. When the Tamīm people heard the happy news they became inclined to request some gain. They said to the Prophet: ‘You have given us happy news; now give us’. The Prophet was displeased with them because they did not show much care for the happy news, but rather hoped for some immediate material gain. The only happy news they understood was such gain.

4. A little later, the Ash‘arīs, who were Abu Mūsā’s people, came in and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to them: ‘Accept the happy news, people of Yemen, as the Tamīm people have not’. The people of Tamīm had accepted Islam, but because they were newcomers to Islam, they did not show the proper acceptance of the good news the Prophet wanted to give them. They coupled their acceptance with a request for money. As such, they were in the same position as that of rejecting it.

5. The people of Yemen were better informed than the Tamīm people. They accepted the happy news without making any conditions or putting forward any requests. The Prophet says: ‘Faith is Yemeni and wisdom is Yemeni’.[1]

6. Having accepted the happy news, they asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the universe, or what is seen of God’s creation. Their question did not express what they were actually asking about, but it became apparent through the Prophet’s answer.

7. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered their question saying that God existed but there was nothing of the universe we see, including the heavens and earth. This does not preclude that God had created other things. God’s throne was created before that and it existed as appears later in the hadith. God creates what He wills.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3499; Muslim, 52.

8 The Prophet then informs them that God's throne was on water before He created the heavens and earth. God says: 'He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, whereas His throne has rested upon water, so that He may test you [to make manifest] which of you is best in conduct'. (11: 7) When God created the heavens and earth, He established Himself on the throne above the heavens. God says: 'Your Lord is God who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne'. (7: 54)

God's throne is the highest, greatest and largest of all God's creation. The word 'throne' means the 'seat of dominion'.

9 The Prophet then explains that God wrote the events that would happen to people and what takes place throughout the universe. This written record is in the Imperishable Tablet. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ said: I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: 'God recorded the destiny of His creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and earth. He said: His throne rested on water'.[1]

10 The Prophet then tells us that God Almighty created the universe after He had created water and the throne, and that He recorded the destiny of His creation in the Imperishable Tablet. God gives us some information about the creation of the heavens and the earth. He says: 'Say: Do you indeed disbelieve in Him who has created the earth in two Days? And do you claim others to be His equals? It is He who is the Lord of all the worlds. (9) He it is who placed on the earth firm mountains towering above it, and bestowed His blessings on it, and measured out its varied provisions in four days, ensuring equity for all who seek [such provisions]. (10) Then, He applied His design to the sky, which was but smoke; and said to it and to the earth: 'Come, both of you, willingly or unwillingly'. They both said: 'We do come willingly'. (11) So He decreed that they become seven heavens in two days, and assigned to each heaven its task. We adorned the sky nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All-Knowing'. (41: 9-12)

11 Someone then told 'Imrān that his she-camel had broken loose and gone. He went out to look for her, but she was not to be seen. Something like a mirage prevented him from seeing her.

12 'Imrān regretted having left God's Messenger without listening to the rest of the Prophet's hadith.

1 Related by Muslim, 2653.

# Implementation

1. ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn tied his she-camel at the door of the Prophet’s mosque. This is what is required to rely on God, the Exalted. We should always take the necessary measures and then rely on God’s care. In this way, ‘Imrān did not just leave the camel loose and say that he relied on God.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) liked to give his companions some happy news. It is good to add all types of good news when one speaks to other people. One may highlight the happy news of what God has prepared for people of faith and perseverance when they encounter adversity. They will experience a taste of heaven in this life and will be in Heaven in the life to come. Another happy news is that distress and worries will certainly disappear. Teachers and scholars must not limit their discourse to explaining Fiqh rulings in different matters, but rather need to add what appeals to people’s hearts.

3. Success in the life to come cannot be matched by any other success. This explains why the Prophet disliked the Tamīm people’s attitude when they were not content to have the happy news but requested some gifts. We lose much when we look for reward in this life and pray for the luxuries of this world, ignoring the life to come and its far greater world.

4 It is important not to be too shy in asking about anything related to religion, whether it relates to its rulings of what is lawful and what is unlawful, or about what happens on the Day of Judgement or about the accounts of past communities.

5 Expect much good from your Lord, for He is the One who is able to give you all that you wish for. We should always be mindful that the One who has created this vast universe and holds it in His hand is able to answer prayers.

6 Since God, Mighty and Exalted, wrote what would happen to people before He even created the heavens and earth, it is not right for anyone to lament any good thing he has missed or to worry about some evil he may encounter. Anyone who does so expresses displeasure with God's will.

7 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn regretted having left during the Prophet's hadith in order to look for his camel. This shows that learning about Islam and understanding its principles and details is better than being occupied with worldly matters, however important these may be. It would be wrong for anyone to ignore this excellent accomplishment.

10

# Hadith

# THE ONENESS OF GODHEAD

Abu Dharr narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him), as part of what he narrated from God, Blessed and Sublime, that He said:

1. My servants, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and have made it forbidden among you. So, do not be unjust to one another.
2. My servants, all of you are led astray except for those I have guided; so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you.
3. My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you.
4. My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing from Me and I shall clothe you.
5. My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you.
6. My servants, you shall not attain the ability to harm Me, and you shall not attain the ability to benefit Me.
7. My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one person of you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything.
8. My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one person of you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything.
9. My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to rise up in one place and make requests of Me, and were I to give everyone what they have requested, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases the sea if dipped into it.
10. My servants, it is but your deeds that I reckon up for you and then recompense you for. So, let him who finds good praise God and let him who finds otherwise blame none but himself. [1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2577.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Indeed God does not wrong anyone by as much as an atom's weight. And if there be a good deed, He will multiply it, and will bestow a great reward out of His grace.﴾ (4: 40)
- ﴿It is He who has created me, and is the One who guides me. (78) He is the One who gives me to eat and to drink. (79) When I fall ill, He is the One who restores me to health, (80) and will cause me to die and then will bring me back to life. (81) It is He also who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgement'.﴾ (26: 78-82)
- ﴿Say: '[Thus speaks God]: You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (39: 53)
- ﴿Everyone in heaven and earth entreats Him. Everyday He manifests Himself in some wonderful way.﴾ (55: 29)
- ﴿As for those who disbelieve, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds.﴾ (3: 97)

## The Narrator

Abu Dharr Jundub ibn Junādah al-Ghifārī was an aesthetic and truthful person, a distinguished and honourable companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He used to engage in worship at night for nearly three years before the start of the Islamic message. He embraced Islam in Makkah in the early days of the message, and some reports mention that he was the fourth person to become a Muslim. When Abu Bakr died, Abu Dharr left Madinah for Syria and remained there until 'Uthmān became caliph. 'Uthmān invited him back and told him to settle at al-Rabadhah. He died there. His funeral prayer was led by another companion of the Prophet, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd. He died in Year 32 AH, 653 CE.

## Summary

God, limitless is He in His glory, mentions that He has forbidden injustice and commanded people not to resort to it. He then tells His servants that He is the One who provides guidance and sustenance and that He forgives sins and bestows mercy. He further tells us that none of His creation can ever harm Him or cause Him benefit. He tells us of His limitless treasures which are never exhausted. God then states that what everyone will receive is only the fruit of their own deeds.

# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) narrates a *qudsī* hadith, which means that it is the word of God. It is different from the Qur'an in so far as its meaning comes from God, but is expressed in the Prophet's own words. The Qur'an, on the other hand, is God's word and meaning.

1 God calls on mankind with an address of mercy, as He attaches them to Himself, saying: 'My servants'. He tells them that He has forbidden Himself injustice, although He is able to inflict it. He says of Himself: 'Indeed God does not wrong anyone by as much as an atom's weight'. (4: 40) The entire universe is His own dominion, and He is the Creator who controls everything. Yet, He does not wrong anyone in any way. This is stated as preliminary to making it clear that He has forbidden injustice among people. In essence, then, it is forbidden for everyone to be unjust to anyone else.

Injustice means departure from what is right, replacing it by something else. God has forbidden idolatry and the association of partners with Him, describing it as 'gross injustice'. Every type of injustice among humans, whether related to life, property or honour, is very strictly forbidden, even if it involves something very trivial. God clearly warns those who are unjust, saying: 'Never think that God is unaware of what the wrongdoers are doing. He only grants them respite till the Day when eyes will stare fixedly in horror, (42) when they will be dashing in confusion, with their heads lifted up, unable to turn their eyes from what they behold, and their hearts an utter void'. (14: 42-43) He further commands that justice should be extended even to those who are hostile to us. He says: 'Believers, be steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity. Never allow your hatred of any people to lead you away from justice. Be just, this is closer to righteousness'. (5: 8)

2 God again calls on His servants, telling them that all creation are going astray except those to whom He has explained the truth and enabled them to embrace it. All of them are born knowing nothing. Given that his abilities are finite, man cannot be absolutely certain that his view is always right, or that he knows everything or that he is able to do anything. People hold different views and ways of thinking. There are many confusing things and conflicting desires. Human intelligence is not sufficient to determine the truth. Many intelligent people have erred. It is God's guidance that keeps people on the right track. Therefore, God tells people to seek His guidance.[1]

Guidance is not limited to the mere acceptance of Islam. It also includes knowledge of the rulings and laws of Islam and submission to what the Prophet tells us of obligations and prohibitions. Hence, God orders the believers to repeat in their prayers: 'Guide us on the straight path'. (1: 6)

3 Addressing His servants again, God tells them that all creation are hungry except those He feeds. Therefore, they need to seek their food with Him. God can, if He so wishes, make all the food on earth go bad, or keep man in want, or make food inaccessible to him because of illness or detention or some other reason. No human being gets the food they need except by God's favour.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 40.

4 God further addresses His servants telling them that they all are naked except those whom He clothes. As such, they need to seek clothing from Him. He can, if He so wishes, deny them any clothing.

Both food and clothing are two types of provision from Him. All God's creation are in need of God and what He provides them with, just as much as they are in need of His guidance. He says: 'God is indeed the Provider of all sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Ever-Mighty'. (51: 58)

5 In yet another address to His servants, God reminds them of their weakness, as they continue to commit sin day and night. Nevertheless, He forgives them their sins, however numerous. They need to appeal to Him for forgiveness. He says: 'You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (39: 53) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God stretches His hand during the night so that the person who did badly the previous day may turn to Him in repentance; and He stretches His hand during the day so that the person who did badly during the previous night may turn to Him in repentance. This will continue until the sun rises from the west'.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2759.

# Message and Meaning

6 Again God addresses His servants, telling them that they are powerless in front of Him. They cannot harm Him by their disbelief, or by their power or anything they have, as they are within His kingdom. Nor can they benefit Him by their belief or support. He has no need for them or anything they have or can offer. God then gives even more examples of His being in no need of them or anyone else.

7 God then tells His servants that their worship and obedience is of no benefit to Him. Were all humans and jinn to have the same strength of faith as the Prophet himself, this would not increase God's kingdom in any way. He says: 'Whoever strives hard [for God's cause] does so for his own good. For certain, God is in no need of anything in all the worlds'. (29: 6)

8 Again addressing His servants, God tells them that their disobedience and sins do not harm Him in any way. Had their disbelief and sins been at the same level as those of Satan himself, it would not decrease His kingdom in anything. God says: 'Be not grieved by those who hasten on to disbelief. They cannot harm God in any way. It is God's will not to assign to them any share in the [blessings of the] life to come. Grievous suffering awaits them. (176) Indeed, those who have bought disbelief at the price of faith cannot harm God in any way. Painful suffering awaits them'. (3: 176-177)

9 God then describes His great bounty and countless favours which He bestows on His servants. Referring to all creation, from the time when He created the universe up till the Day of Judgement, God says that were they to stand together and each one of them prays to Him for whatever favours that person wants and were God to grant every single one of them their requests, this would not decrease His kingdom in any way. It would not diminish His bounty and blessings. He gives an example of this, citing a small needle being dipped in the sea: would it decrease its water? The same is the case with God's bounty; it is boundless.

10 God, Exalted and Glorious, then states that man's destiny is dependent on his actions. God records our deeds and recompenses us for them. Therefore, whoever finds that God has prepared a good abode for him should praise God for having guided him to faith and facilitated for him doing good. A person who finds otherwise should only blame himself, for what he gets is only the result of his own deeds.

# Implementation

1. Every Muslim should beware of committing injustice, because it is the worst of sins. We need to understand its meaning so as to guard against unwittingly committing it. Idolatry, which means associating partners with God in what belongs to no one other than Him, is a clear example of injustice. Even if it is only of the type of lesser idolatry, such as by dissimulation and trying to impress people with one's prayer, knowledge or some other thing. Injustice also means taking away something that belongs to another person without valid justification, such as unfairly punishing an employee by taking away a portion of his salary, parking one's car in the wrong place, or making a sarcastic remark. A very bad example of injustice is that which one does to oneself, incurring God's punishment for the mere indulgence in a fleeting forbidden pleasure.

2. Always think about the different outcomes of whatever you do, remembering always to appeal to God alone for guidance and sustenance. He alone grants these and He loves to hear His servants' supplication.

3. Do not limit your supplication to what belongs to the life to come. We are in need of God in every moment. We remain naked and hungry unless He bestows His favours on us.

4. God created us so that we will obey Him. He has given us the night and the day so that we worship Him in such hours. Yet we often commit sins in broad daylight or under the cover of the night. We should remedy this with constantly praying for God's forgiveness and increasing our worship, particularly at the two ends of the day.

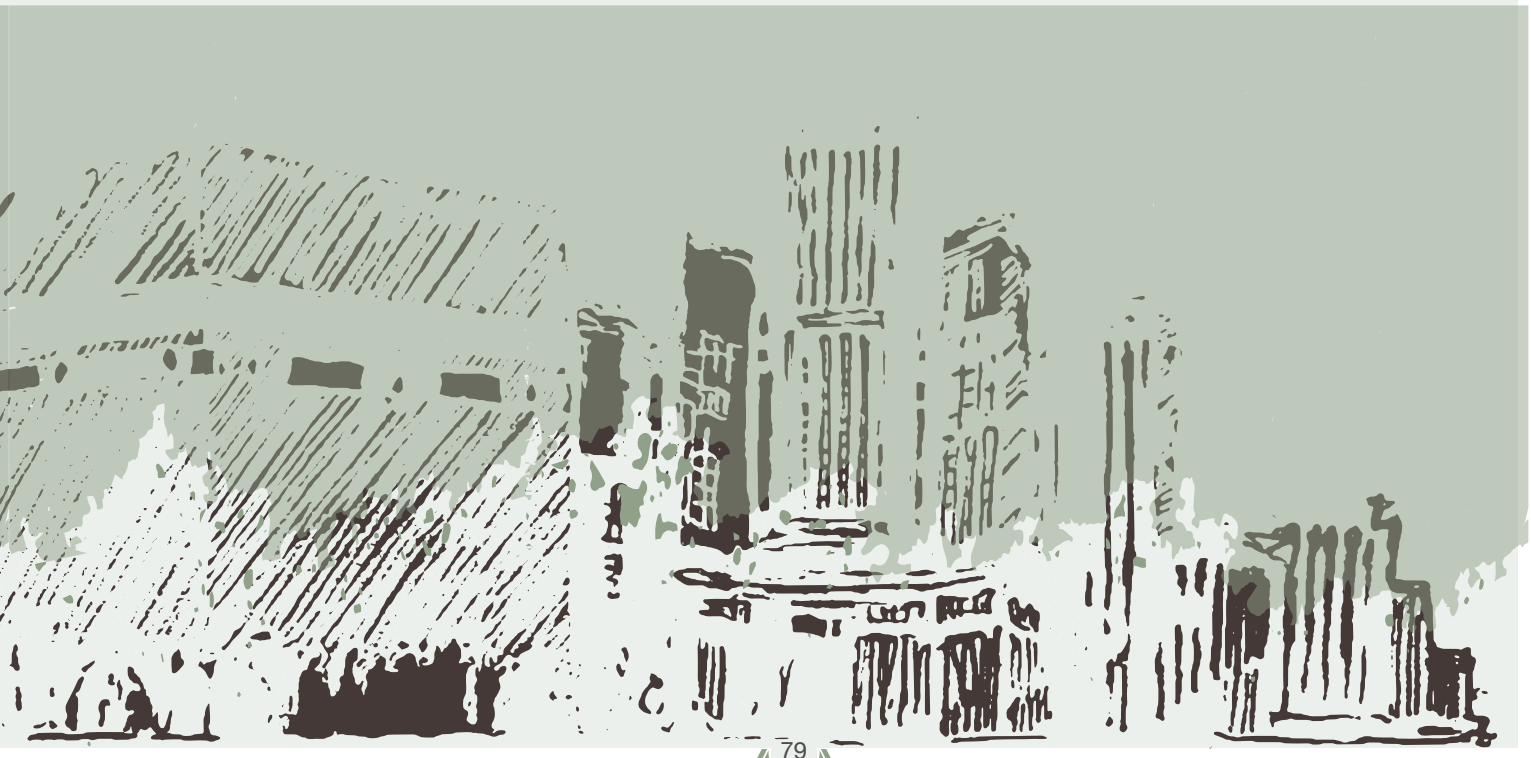
5 When you do some good deed, do not consider it a favour you do for God. Nor should you think that it earns you the right to have your prayer answered. It is you who needs God and God is in no need of you or anyone else.

6 Do not grieve or weaken if you see sins being committed, or disbelief spreading. None of this harms God in anyway. Had God so willed, none of this would be committed. We should attend to our duties of worship and give advice to people, but we need not grieve for them.

7 No one need think that they have asked God too much. Nothing is too great or too precious for God to give. God says of Himself: 'Everyone in heaven and earth entreats Him. Everyday He manifests Himself in some wonderful way'. (55: 29) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God's right hand is full, undiminished by nights' and days' spending, overflowing. Have you considered what He has spent ever since He created the heavens and earth? That did not diminish what His right hand holds'.[1]

8 Using similes and metaphors is a very effective way to explain one's meaning. Consider how the concept of God's ever-flowing bounty is illustrated through the simile of a needle being dipped into the sea and how much the sea water is decreased as a result. Essentially, we too need to learn how to make things easier for people to understand.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7419; Muslim, 993.



11

# Hadith

## SOME OF GOD'S NAMES

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **God has ninety-nine names:**
2. **one hundred minus one.**
3. **Whoever learns them all goes to Heaven.**
4. Adding in a different narration: **He is one and loves oneness.**[1]

### From the Qur'an

- ﴿**God has the finest names, so appeal to Him by these and stay away from those who blaspheme against His names. They shall be requited for all they do.**﴾ (7: 180)
- ﴿**Say, 'Call upon God or call upon the Lord of Grace. By whichever name you invoke Him, His are the most gracious names'.**﴾ (17: 110)
- ﴿**He is God: there is no deity other than Him. It is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of anyone's perception, as well as all that which can be witnessed. He is the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful. (22) He is God: there is no deity other than Him, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Giver of Faith, the Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, to whom all greatness belongs. Exalted is God in His limitless glory above anything they associate as partner with Him. (23) He is God: the Creator, the Maker who gives shape and form to all. His are the most gracious names. Everything in the heavens and earth extols His limitless glory. He alone is the Almighty, the Wise.**﴾ (59: 22-24)

### The Narrator

Most probably Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī who emanated from a branch of the Azd tribe. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to gather knowledge. He asked the Prophet: 'Who will be the happiest of people to earn your intercession on the Day of Judgement?' The Prophet said to him: 'Abu Hurayrah, seeing how keen you are to learn the hadiths, I thought that no one would ask me this question ahead of you'. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of his hadiths'. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) informs us in this hadith that God has ninety-nine fine names and that whoever learns them all, with their full meanings, and implements what they signify will be in Heaven.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2736; Muslim, 2677.

# Message and Meaning

This is one of the main hadiths that mention or refer to God's fine names.

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that God, the Exalted, has ninety-nine names.

Scholars are in agreement that the hadith does not state a total number for the names of God, Mighty and Exalted. The hadith simply mentions that whoever learns these ninety-nine of His names enters Heaven. It is not intended as specifying a total number. God Almighty has countless good names and fine attributes, as mentioned in the Prophet's supplication: 'My Lord, I appeal to you by every name that belongs to You, whether You have applied it to Yourself, or revealed it in Your Book, or taught it to anyone of Your creation, or kept it to Yourself'.[1]

2 These names which the Prophet is referring to in this hadith are 'one hundred minus one', to confirm that the number is intended, so that no listener or reader will be in doubt.

3 God, Mighty and Exalted, bestows His favour on His servants by making entry of Heaven the reward for learning these names. That is a great favour indeed and a handsome reward. The learning that ensures such entry has several meanings which are evidenced by the Qur'an and Arabic speech. These include memorization, reciting, acting on what they suggest, understanding through the recitation of the Qur'an in full because it includes all these names.

Thus, what is meant by the hadith is that admittance into Heaven is secured for any person who believes in God's ninety-nine names, learns them fully and acts on what they signify and entail. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify these names so that people use their minds to understand the Qur'an and the Sunnah, enjoy searching for these names, attaining their goal and increasing their knowledge of God's Book and its meaning. The fact that the Prophet did not state these names in detail is similar to the fact that he did not specify the time when supplication is answered on Friday and the timing of the Night of Power.

4 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions one of God's great names, which is *al-Witr*, which means 'one, single, odd, etc.' God, Mighty and Exalted, has neither partner nor similar. He loves oneness. Therefore, He prefers good deeds to be in odd numbers. Thus, we have five daily prayers; we perform ablution washing each organ three times, we perform the *ṭawāf* in seven rounds, while the *Tashrīq* days are three, and the heavens and earths are seven each.

1 Related by Ahmad, 4318; Ibn Ḥibbān, 972.

الخالق
الواسع
العزيز
الحكيم
المتكبر
الجبار
الودود
المجيب

# Implementation

1. Gods bestows His favours on His servants. He tells us what pleases Him when they address Him, saying: ‘God has the finest names, so appeal to Him by these’. (7: 180) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that whoever appeals to God by these names enters Heaven. It does not behove any Muslim of sound mind to neglect these names when he or she realizes that God loves to be appealed to by these names and that He has made admittance into Heaven the reward given to those who appeal to Him by them.

2. Happy is the person who uses his mind, studies God’s Book and the Prophet’s Sunnah to deduce God’s fine names, understands and implements the significance of these names, appeals to Him by them to ensure being admitted into Heaven.

3. One way to gain a proper learning of these names is to mention them in one’s supplication. Thus, we need to increase our supplication by God’s names and call Him by the names that suit our situation. Thus, we may say, for example: ‘my Lord, the Ever-Merciful, grant me Your mercy; my Lord, the Much-Forgiving, forgive me; my Lord who gives everyone their provisions, grant me my provisions, etc.’

4. Another aspect of the proper learning of God’s fine names is that one is able to fulfil what is due to them and to conduct one’s behaviour on what they impart. For example, proper learning of God’s name, the Ever-Merciful, includes that the learner hopes to receive God’s mercy and is merciful towards God’s creation, so that their Creator will be merciful to him. Proper learning of God’s name, the Provider, means that one is absolutely certain that God will give him his provisions. It also means that one loves God for the favour He bestows and one does not seek his provisions through what God has forbidden. All provisions are from Him and He gives without reckoning.

5 If something happens to you, whether a blessing or a calamity, or indeed a matter that requires careful thinking, remember God's fine names and find out which names apply to your situation and then appeal to God using these names. You will then feel comfort and real reassurance.

6 Reflect on the meanings of God's names and consider which of them apply to man such as the Merciful, Generous, Forgiving, Thankful, etc. and try to emulate them in your life. As for those names which apply only to God, such as the All-Great, we should leave those to the One to whom they apply. We should recognize our humility when we reflect on these and fear God.

7 Take the time to reflect, alone or with your family or friends, on one of God's fine names. You should think deeply about it and understand its broad significance, and how it works. Refer to reliable books that explain the meanings of God's fine names, based on what the Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained and what the early leading scholars have illustrated. Never refer to works that are based on mere conjecture.

12

# Hadith

# SOME OF GOD'S ATTERIBUTES

Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated, saying: **'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) addressed us stating five points. He said:**

1. **"God, the Mighty and Exalted, does not sleep**
2. **and it is not for Him to sleep.**
3. **He puts the balance down and up.**
4. **The works of the night are presented to Him before the works of the day, and the works of the day before the works of the night.**
5. **His screen is light". (In a different narration: the fire.)**
6. **Were He to remove it, the light and splendour of His face would have burnt all creatures in His sight'.**[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 179.

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿God: there is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.﴾** (2: 255)
- **﴿Yet there are guardians watching over you, (10) noble recorders, (11) who know all that you do.﴾** (82: 10-12)
- **﴿To Him ascends all good words, and He exalts the good deed.﴾** (35: 10)
- **﴿God is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light may be compared to a niche containing a lamp; the lamp within a glass, the glass like a radiant star; lit from a blessed tree – an olive tree that is neither of the east nor of the west. Its very oil would almost give light even though no fire had touched it. Light upon light! God guides to His light him that wills [to be guided]. God propounds parables for all people, since God alone has full knowledge of all things.﴾** (24: 35)
- **﴿When his Lord revealed His glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down. Moses fell down senseless.﴾** (7: 143)

## The Narrator

Abu Mūsā, 'Abdullāh ibn Qays ibn Salīm al- Ash'arī (named after Ash'ar, an ancestor of the clan) was a prominent imam and renowned scholar. He was a companion of the Prophet who migrated twice, both to Abyssinia and to Madinah. He was appointed Governor of Basrah during 'Umar's reign. He taught the people of Basrah, helping them to acquire an insight into Islam, the Qur'an and its recitation. His recitation of the Qur'an reflected that his was the best and more melodious voice among the Prophet's companions. He died in Year 50 AH, 670 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us some of the attributes of God, Mighty and Exalted. One such attribute is that He does not sleep. Indeed sleep does not apply to Him, because sleep is a quality of weakness and no weakness may attach to God. He accepts good deeds, elevating these to Himself, and rejects those that are not good. The angels present to Him the deeds done during the night before the start of the day, and present the deeds of the day before the start of the night. The Prophet further tells us that God's screen from His creation is made of light – or from fire. Were He to remove it, the light of His face would burn all creation.

# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the people, and five points of his address speak of God, the Exalted. These are:

1. The first is that God does not sleep. Sleep is indicative of weakness, and no weakness may affect God or be attributed to Him. A created being needs sleep because of tiredness and fatigue, but none such applies to God. He created the universe without feeling any tiredness. He says of Himself: 'God: there is no deity but Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him'. (2: 255)

2. The second statement confirms the first, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that it is impossible for sleep to affect God. Thus, the first statement means that sleep does not occur to God, while the second means that this is impossible in the first place. It is impossible because sleep involves absence of attention, which is contrary to His awareness of all His creation at all times, and that He holds the heavens in His hand. Were He to sleep, heaven would fall on earth and the system of the universe would become dysfunctional.

3. The third point states another attribute, namely that He conducts matters fairly. He grants some people abundant sustenance while giving others in scant measure, or He may give some people high position while keeping others in humble positions, but all this He does according to His wisdom and justice. Likewise, He fairly weighs people's deeds which are presented to Him, elevating the good deeds and rejecting those that are not good. He says: 'To Him ascends all good words, and He exalts the good deed'. (35: 10)

4. Point number four tells us that all people's deeds are presented to Him every day. The angels whose task it is to record people's deeds done during the day present these to God, Mighty and Exalted, before the start of the night, while the deeds done during the night are presented to Him before the start of the day. There is no delay or slackness. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Angels take turns in attending you through the night and through the day. They meet together during the Fajr and 'Aṣr Prayers. Then those who were with you during the night ascend. Their Lord will ask them, yet He knows better than them: How did you leave My servants? They will say: "We left them praying, and they were praying when we joined them"'.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 555; Muslim, 632.

5 The fifth point states that God is screened from His creation with a screen of light, while another version suggests that the screen is made of fire. He describes Himself thus: 'No power of vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all vision; He is above all comprehension, yet is all-aware'. (6: 103)

There is no contradiction between the two versions describing the screen as being of light or fire, because the fire has both qualities of giving light and burning. It is possible that God takes away the quality of burning, giving His screen only the quality of light, while the fire of Hell burns but has no light. By contrast, all lights of our world, whether natural like the sun or manufactured, have both qualities of light and burning.

6 Were God to remove that screen, the beauty and splendour of His face would burn everything that sees God or God sees it. This, in effect, means the burning of all creation. When He revealed Himself to the mountain, which is solid rocks, the mountain went crashing down: 'When his Lord revealed His glory to the mountain, He sent it crashing down. Moses fell down senseless'. (7: 143) What would happen if God reveals Himself to man?

# Implementation

1. The best thing speakers do is to speak about God, the Exalted. It is important, therefore, for our speech to be adorned with mentioning Him, speaking at times about His names and attributes and at others about his commands and prohibitions. Muslims can also speak about the accounts He gives us of former people and their fate, so that we can take heed.

2. God's attributes are matters beyond our knowledge. We should take them from what God and His Messenger say. We simply take this and limit ourselves to it, even though it may appear little. We believe in these attributes, neither treating them as devoid of meaning nor comparing them to the qualities of created beings. We limit ourselves to God's own description of Himself: 'Nothing bears even the slightest comparability to Him. He alone hears all and knows all'. (42: 11)

3. When you go to bed, assign your affairs to God and go to sleep in security. God does not sleep, and sleep does not apply to Him. He is the best of guardians, and of all those who show mercy, He is the Most Merciful. Hence, the Prophet recommends us to say in our supplication as we go to bed: 'My Lord, I surrender my face to You; I submit myself to You; I place my back under Your protection; in hope and fear of You. There is no refuge and no safety from You except with You'.[1]

4. Always remember that God is near and that He sees all. He does not sleep when an oppressor or watchguard sleeps, allowing some people to be tempted to commit some sin. Nor is He unaware of you when you wake up to spend time in night worship and pray to Him to bestow mercy on You and to grant you of His favours.

5. Be satisfied with what God determines for you, making your sustenance plentiful or scanty, or granting you success or failure, whether in study, business, reputation, job or position. God gives everyone their shares on the basis of His wisdom and justice. Muslims should always be careful to do their best in what pleases God.

6. Everyone should hasten to turn to God in repentance and seek His forgiveness of any error they might have committed, so that repentance is expressed before deeds are presented to God. Remember that the 'works of the night are presented to Him before the works of the day, and the works of the day before the works of the night'.

7. It is important to do some good every night and day. Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī said: 'The night and day are stages at which people stop, one stage after another, until they reach the end of their journey. If you can have at each stage some provisions for what comes next, do so, because the end of your journey is really close. Indeed it is quicker than you think. Equip yourself for your journey and complete what you want of your affairs, because it may all end suddenly'.[2]

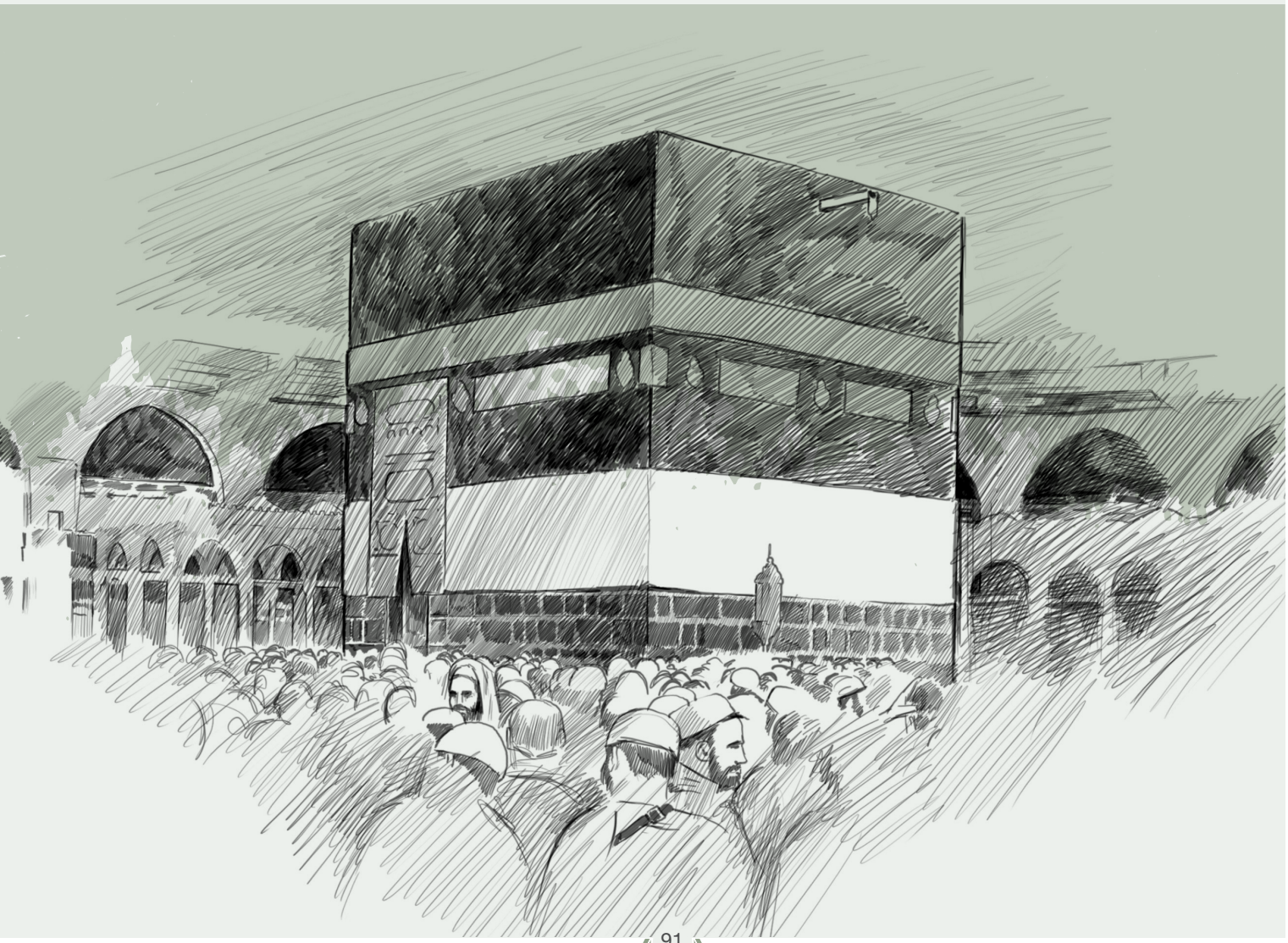
1 Related by al-Bukhari, 247; Muslim, 2710.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 382.

8 People love beauty in everything, whether it is the beauty of self and qualities. None and nothing is more beautiful than God. His screen is light.

9 Be mindful to surrender yourself to God in all He says and in all His rulings. There are matters which God has determined in His infinite wisdom, but we do not know their reasons. Hence anyone may ask: Why do we not see God in this life of ours? Whoever asks this question does not know that the reason is that we are weak and lack the necessary strength for that. God's screen is light. Were this screen to be removed, the beauty and light of His face would burn everything that sees God or is seen by Him.

10 A well-known Arab maxim says: What remains after having known God except diligence in what earns His pleasure?



13

# Hadith

# THE CREATION OF THE ANGELS

‘Ā’ishah narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. **The angels were created from light,**
2. **while the jinn were created from raging flames of fire.**
3. **Adam was created from what you have been told.**[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2996

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿**Indeed, We have created man out of sounding clay, out of black mud moulded into shape, (26) whereas the jinn We had created before him out of the fire of scorching winds.**﴾ (15: 26-27)
- ﴿**Indeed, We create man out of the essence of clay, (12) then We place him, a gamete, in a safe place of rest. (13) Then We create out of the gamete a clinging cell mass, and out of the clinging cell mass We create an embryo. Then We create within the embryo bones, then We clothe the bones with flesh. We then bring this into being as another creation. Exalted be God, the best of creators.**﴾ (23: 13-14)
- ﴿**He created man from dried clay, like pottery, (14) and created the jinn from raging flames of fire.**﴾ (55: 14-15)
- ﴿**Believers! Guard yourselves and your families against a fire fuelled by people and stones, over which are appointed angels, stern and mighty, who never disobey God in whatever He commands them and always do what they are bidden to do.**﴾ (66: 6)

## The Narrator

Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah bint Abu Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Quḥāfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir belonged to the Taym branch of the Quraysh. She was pure and her innocence was revealed from on high. The Prophet (peace be upon him) married her in Makkah two years before his migration, but her wedding took place in Madinah, on his return from the Battle of Badr. This was in the month of Shawwāl in Year 2 AH. She was the only one of his wives who was a virgin on her marriage. He loved her more than any other woman. According to authentic reports, she died in Madinah in Year 57 AH, 677 CE, aged 66.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the origin of some of God’s creation, stating that the angels were created from light and the jinn from fire. He further mentions that Adam was created from clay, as clearly mentioned in the Qur’an.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God, the Exalted, created the angels from light. The angels are a special creation of God, having gentle bodies made of light and who are able to take different shapes and forms. They have great powers and can travel at great speed. They have been created in very large numbers which are known only to God. He chose this creation so that they would worship Him and execute His will. They do not disobey God in whatever He commands and they do what they are bidden.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that the jinn, who are another type of creation whom humans do not see, were created from flames of fire.

3. The Prophet further states that God created Adam, the father of mankind, out of what is described in the Qur'an and given in detail in the Sunnah. Thus, the Prophet puts Adam's creation in a nutshell, referring his audience to the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Indeed Adam's creation is mentioned on several occasions in the Qur'an. His origin was dust, then water was added to make a sticky clay of it. It was left until it became black and smelly, referred to in the Qur'an as 'black mud'. It was then exposed to fire until it dried and became like pottery.

   The Prophet also mentions that God, Mighty and Exalted, took several handfuls from the soil of the earth to create Adam. Hence, humans have different races and characters. Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: 'God created Adam from a handful He took from all parts of the earth. Hence, Adam's offspring reflect the whole of the earth: they include red, white and black people and those in between. Among them are those who are easy-going, hard, good and evil'.[1] Moreover, there were various types that made up the creation of man: Adam's creation was unlike the way Eve was created, and Jesus' creation was different from the creation of either Adam or Eve. These three were created differently from the rest of mankind.

1 Related by Ahmad, 19582; Abu Dāwūd, 4693; al-Tirmidhī, 2955.

# Implementation

1. Believing in the angels and the jinn is part of believing in what is beyond our faculties of perception. An important result of believing in God and His Messenger is to believe them in what they tell us of such matters. God praises the believers on this count, saying: 'This is the Book, there is no doubt about it: a guidance for the God-fearing. (2) Those who believe in what lies beyond the reach of human perception'. (2: 2-3) Having thus believed, a Muslim does not need further studies and research to prove the existence of the angels and the jinn. He believes the information stated by God, as numerous and valid evidence confirm that whatever He says or His Messenger says is absolutely right.

2. This hadith gives us an impression of God's infinite power, as He has created three types of creation from three totally different materials, each of which has its own qualities. Reflection on God's work strengthens belief and our sense of fearing God. Hence, many verses in the Qur'an call on people to reflect on His creation.

3. God makes clear that the angels are honourable, having created them from light. This requires us to love and honour them. A Muslim should refrain from whatever is contrary to this, such as keeping a dog or statues in one's home, because the angels do not enter such a house. Furthermore, a Muslim should never persist in sin, knowing that the angels record his deeds.

4. Both teachers and advocates of Islam should speak in detail about what people do not know, and keep short what they know, see and has become common knowledge. To speak at length on the latter makes one's discourse of little benefit.

# THE START OF REVELATIONS

‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of the Believers, narrated that

1. The first aspect of revelation to God’s Messenger was that his dreams came true. Whatever vision he might have had in his sleep would come true as clearly as the break of dawn.

2. Then, he began to enjoy seclusion.

3. He used to retreat alone into the Cave of Ḥirā’, where he would spend several days in devotion before going back to his family. He used to take some food with him, and when he came back he would take a fresh supply for another period.

4. He continued to do so until he suddenly received the truth while in the Cave of Ḥirā’. The angel came to him and said: “Read”. He replied: “I am not a reader”.

5. [The Prophet] says: “He held me and pressed hard until I was exhausted, then he released me and said: ‘Read’, and I replied: ‘I am not a reader’. So he held me and pressed me hard a second time until I was exhausted, then he released me and said: ‘Read’. I replied: ‘I am not a reader’. He then held me and pressed hard for a third time until I was exhausted, then he released me. Then he said: ‘Read, in the name of Your Lord Who created. It is He Who created man from a clinging cell mass. Read! Your Lord is the most bounteous’”. (96: 1-3)

6. The Prophet returned home trembling right until he entered Khadījah bint Khuwaylid’s place, and said: “Wrap me! Wrap me!” They wrapped him and his fear subsided.

7. He turned to Khadījah and related to her what happened and said: “I fear for myself”,

8. Khadījah replied: “No, by God. God will never let you suffer humiliation,

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Read, in the name of Your Lord Who created. It is He Who created man from a clinging cell mass. Read! Your Lord is the most bounteous, who has taught the use of the pen. He has taught man what he did not know.﴾ (96: 1-5)
- ﴿You enfolded one! (1) Stand in prayer at night, all but a small part of it, (2) half of it, or a little less, (3) or add to it. Recite the Qur’an calmly and distinctly.﴾ (73: 1-4)
- ﴿By the bright morning hours, (1) and the night when it grows still and dark, (2) your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you’.﴾ (93: 1-3)

## The Narrator

Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah bint Abu Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Quḥāfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir, belonged to the Taym branch of the tribe of Quraysh. She was pure and her innocence was revealed from on high. The Prophet (peace be upon him) married her after the death of his first wife, Khadījah. She was the only one of his wives who was a virgin at the time of her marriage.[1] He loved her more than any other woman. According to authentic reports, she died in Madinah in Year 57 AH, 677 CE, aged 66.

1 Every one of the Prophet’s wives was a woman of good moral conduct. However, ‘Ā’ishah was the only one who was a virgin at the time of her marriage to the Prophet. All his other wives had been married before they joined the Prophet’s household.

# Hadith

9 because you are kind to your relatives,

10 you assist anyone in need,

11 you are generous to the poor,

12 you are hospitable to your guest

13 and you help in every just cause".

14 Then she took him to Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn 'Abd al-'Uzzā, her paternal cousin who was a Christian convert and a scholar with a good knowledge of Hebrew. He used to write from the Gospel in Hebrew whatever God willed him to write. He had lost his eyesight, as he had grown very old.

15 Khadījah said to Waraqah: "Uncle, would you like to hear what your nephew[1] has to say?" Waraqah said: "Well, nephew, what have you seen?" The Prophet related to him what he saw. [When he had finished], Waraqah said: "It is the same angel as was sent down to Moses.

16 I wish I was a young man so that I might be alive when your people turn you away from this city".

17 The Prophet exclaimed: "Would they turn me away?" Waraqah answered: "Yes! No man has ever preached a message like yours and was not met with enmity.

18 If I live till that day, I will certainly give you all my support".

19 Waraqah died soon afterwards, and revelations were discontinued for a while.[2]

1 Waraqah was not, in fact, the Prophet's uncle. Khadījah's reference to Muhammad as his nephew was in accordance with the standards of politeness which prevailed in Arabia at the time.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3; Muslim, 160.

## Summary

In this hadith, 'Ā'ishah, the Prophet's wife and Mother of the Believers, gives the details of the start of revelations to the Prophet (peace be upon him), starting with having true dreams. She then mentions the Angel Gabriel's visit when he was spending time in devotion at Ḥirā' Cave. He was then given his first revelations. The hadith further mentions Khadījah's words of reassurance and what Waraqah ibn Nawfal said to him.

# Message and Meaning

1. ‘Ā’ishah reports that the first revelation given to God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) was in the form of having true dreams. He would see something in his dream and then it would occur in real life just as he saw in the dream. It was absolutely clear like daylight. His dreams were nothing like confused images or medley of dreams people normally see while asleep. All his dreams came true, as though they were the prelude of something very serious.

   It is confirmed that revelation started with such early good signs, including the true dreams he saw, his hearing little stones in Makkah glorifying God and this happening before he received his message, and a stone greeting him calling him prophet, etc. All this was to prepare him for what was soon to come, and such that he would be ready for some great event that would occur to him. Thus, he would not be surprised by the angel in a way that would be too difficult for other human beings. Indeed, the angel came to him when he had enough early signs to reassure him.[1]

2. Next he came to like seclusion. He felt comfortable being alone, away from people’s society. Such seclusion may be a very good way of discarding the concerns of life. It helps to give a person clear thinking and refined manners.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started to spend many nights in a cave in Mount Ḥirā’ in Makkah, where he spent his time in devotion. He would go to this cave taking with him food that was enough for a few days. When his supply of food was exhausted, he would go back home and collect a fresh supply for a similar number of days.

4. As God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) was once in such devotion, he was given clear revelations. The Angel Gabriel, who was entrusted with bringing God’s revelations to prophets, came to him and said: ‘Read’. The Prophet answered: ‘I am not a reader’, which meant that he had not learned how to read. The Prophet was unlettered and could neither read nor write. God describes him as such: ‘Believe, then, in God and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in God and His words’. (7: 158)

5. When the Prophet gave him this answer, he held him tight until he was exhausted, then released him and said again: ‘Read’. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the same answer and the angel held him tight again then released him. He said once more the same order and the Prophet gave him yet the same answer. He held him tight a third time, then released him and said: ‘Read, in the name of Your Lord Who created. It is He Who created man from a clinging cell mass. Read! Your Lord is the most bounteous, who has taught the use of the pen. He has taught man what he did not know’. (96: 1-5) These five short verses were the first of the Qur’an to be revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

1 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 2, pp. 198-197. English edition, The Islamic Foundation and ICMG Australia, Vol. 2, p. 307.

6. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then went back to Khadījah, his wife, feeling scared and his heart beating fast out of fear. He entered his home and asked his wife to cover him. When a person experiences a feeling of fear, he feels very cold, particularly in his limbs and joints. She covered and wrapped him until he calmed down and his fear subsided.

7. He then told his wife what happened to him at the cave. He expressed his feeling, saying: 'I feared for myself'. He meant that he felt his heart might burst out of fear as he beheld the angel.

8. Khadījah reassured him, saying that God would never cause him harm, and that what happened to him could not be bad or something done by a devil. Good deeds protect a person from evil. She went on and outlined his principal good characteristics.

9. He maintained good relations with his relatives, visiting them and enquiring after them.

10. He helped whoever needed assistance, such as weak people, orphans and others.

11. He was generous with his money, giving to those who were in need.

12. He was hospitable to his guests, serving them with food and drink.

13. He helped people who suffered some calamity through no fault of theirs. Such help should not be extended to people whose calamity is the result of their disobedience of God and indulgence in what He has forbidden.

14. Khadījah then took him to her cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who had abandoned idolatry and embraced Christianity. He knew both the Torah and the Gospel, and he learnt writing and was proficient in Hebrew. He could write the Gospel in Hebrew. Waraqah was by this time very advanced in age, and he had lost his eyesight.

15. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) related to Waraqah what he saw, the latter told him that he saw the trusted angel whom God sent to Moses, meaning Gabriel (peace be upon him). Waraqah gave Gabriel this description because he was the only angel entrusted with delivering God's revelations. Thus, Waraqah's explanation meant that Muhammad (peace be upon him) became a prophet sent to his people in the same way as Moses was a prophet sent to the Children of Israel.

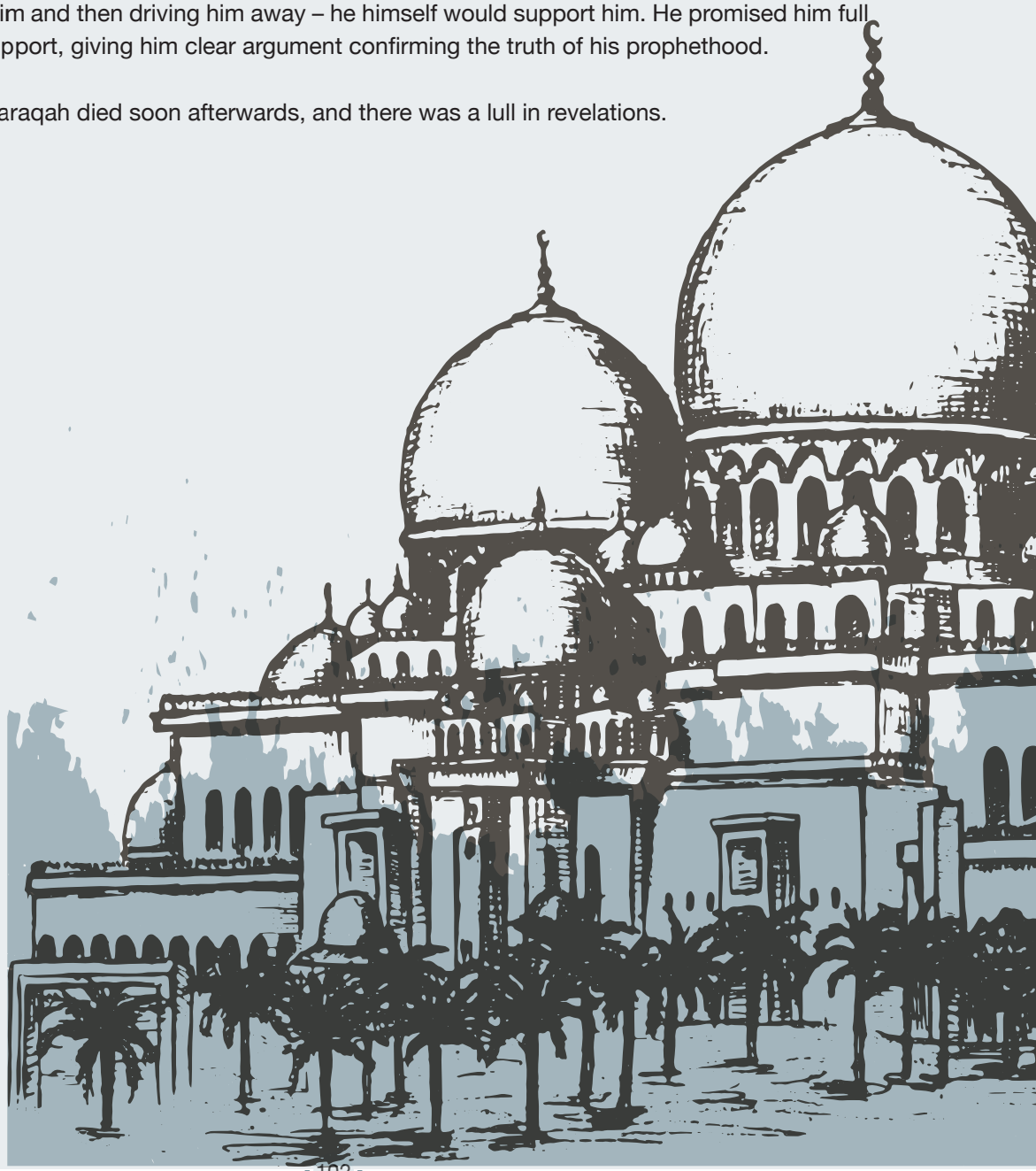
16. Waraqah also told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that his people would deny him and show him determined opposition and hostility until they drove him out of his hometown. Waraqah lamented his gone youth and wished that he would be alive and strong at the time so that he could defend the Prophet and fight alongside him.

# Message and Meaning

17 The Prophet (peace be upon him) was surprised with what Waraqah said and felt it very strange that his people would drive him out when he was calling on them to believe in God's oneness and to save themselves from God's punishment. He felt it strange that they should resort to such a measure when they were well aware of his truthfulness and honesty. Waraqah informed him that this was the case with all prophets. Every prophet was met with hostility and enmity.

18 Waraqah then told him that should he be alive when Muhammad's prophethood was known and his faith was attracting followers – and perhaps he meant when his people would go to extremes in denying him and then driving him away – he himself would support him. He promised him full and clear support, giving him clear argument confirming the truth of his prophethood.

19 However, Waraqah died soon afterwards, and there was a lull in revelations.



إقرأ
بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) married ‘Ā’ishah when she was young. When these verses were revealed to him: “Prophet! Say to your wives: ‘If you desire the life of this world and its charms, I shall provide for you and release you in a becoming manner. (28) But if you desire God and His Messenger and the life of the Hereafter, know that God has readied great rewards for those of you who do good’”. (33: 28-29) He started with ‘Ā’ishah and told her to consult her parents. She refused and said: ‘Messenger of God, would I consult my parents concerning you? I definitely choose God, His Messenger and the life of the Hereafter’.[1] She was still young at the time. However, in choosing God and His Messenger, she provides a good example for us to follow.

2. ‘Ā’ishah narrated this hadith which outlines the merits of Khadījah, concerning whom she had said: ‘I was never jealous of any of his wives as much as I was jealous of Khadījah’.[2] Jealousy is a natural feeling for women generally, but ‘Ā’ishah’s jealousy did not prevent her from narrating this hadith. It does not behove any person to conceal or deny someone else’s merit or right because he is his competitor or rival, whether in work or life generally.

3. That Gabriel pressed the Prophet hard and said to him, ‘Read’, several times shows that it is desirable to repeat something that is important for the listener to understand, and to start with something that will remove any distraction and help to focus the listener’s attention. This is very useful for advocates, teachers and educators generally. They should try to remove whatever may cause their audience to be distracted.

4. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned home and met his wife, feeling scared at what had happened, he told her to cover him. However, she did not panic and was not at a loss. She did not bother him by asking what had happened. Instead, she was quick to cover him and ensure that he regained calmness. She neither showed disbelief nor doubted his sanity. On the contrary, she believed him and reassured him that a person with his fine qualities would never be disgraced by God. She used very affirmative words, such as ‘No, by God; never’. She reassured him, citing his good qualities. She took a further step, taking him to her cousin who would give him a good explanation of what he had experienced. She was then the first person to believe in him. She was the perfect example of a good wife who helps her husband and comforts him in the face of life’s problems and burdens.

5. Wise and intelligent, Khadījah realized that it is the pattern of God’s action in life that He helps a person who helps other people. He would not cause disgrace to such a person. Therefore, one should not withhold one’s effort, money, time or ideas from others. Do your good deeds with an open heart, dedicating them for God’s sake, and do them in your time of ease, so that God will help you when you encounter difficulty.

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4785; Muslim, 1475.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3816; Muslim, 2435.

6 Try to emulate those fine qualities of the one who was the best of mankind. These deeds were not something that was done once or on the odd occasion. They were consistent practices that became his natural qualities. These qualities then that we should seek to emulate are: kindness to relatives demonstrated by visits, enquiries, help and similar fine gestures; a willingness to help those in need, whether because of their physical weakness or lack of experience; financial help to needy people or helping them to gain some means of income; hospitality to guests at home or the place of work, and supporting whoever is suffering a calamity.

7 The rule is to avoid praising people in their presence, because such praise may lead to conceit or a negative change of motive. However, Khadījah's action shows that it is permissible for a Muslim to praise someone in his presence for some good reason, such as giving that person encouragement when facing a difficulty, or highlighting the fact that he will gain reward for perseverance during times of hardship, etc. This is particularly relevant if the one saying such praise knows that such praise will not cause the praised one to think too highly of himself.

8 Waraqah said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'No man has ever preached a message like yours and was not met with enmity'. This makes it clear that people's opposition to religious people and advocates of faith is not a new trend. Indeed, it has always been the pattern. Prophets and people who followed their example in advocating the divine message suffered such enmity. No advocate of Islam should stop his work because he faces strong opposition.

9 The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to love attending to worship in seclusion, when he would not be bothered by worldly desires or concerns. Seclusion is beneficial at times, provided that it does not involve negligence of other people's dues and interests. A Muslim should not abandon his work or other affairs to go into seclusion, as done by followers of some deviant creeds, or devote his seclusion to some devotion which is not a proper act of worship.

15

# Hadith

# ISLAM IS THE FAITH OF ALL PROPHETS

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. **I am the closest of all people to Jesus son of Mary in both this life and the life to come.**

2. **Prophets are siblings, having different mothers, but their faith is one.**

3. Another version adds: **There was no other Prophet between us.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers.﴾ (2: 285)
- ﴿The only true faith acceptable to God is Islam [i.e. man's self-surrender to Him].﴾ (3: 19)
- ﴿It is He who has chosen you, and has laid no hardship on you in [anything that pertains to] religion; the creed of your forefather Abraham. It is He who has named you Muslims, in bygone times and in this [Book], so that the Messenger might bear witness for you, and that you might bear witness for all mankind.﴾ (22: 78)
- ﴿And also Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'Children of Israel! I am God's messenger to you, [sent] to confirm the Torah revealed before me, and to give news of a messenger that will come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad'.﴾ (61: 6)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He migrated to Madinah and remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that he is the closest to Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). No other prophet was sent by God in the intervening period between them. Moreover, all prophets are brethren because they preached and advocated the same faith.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3443; Muslim, 2365.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that he is the closest of all people to Jesus, son of Mary, in both this present life and the life to come. Of all prophets, he only mentions Jesus in this context, and this is for several reasons. One reason is that no other prophet was sent in the intervening period between the two. Moreover, Jesus highlighted the news of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon both of them), preparing his followers for Muhammad's message. God says: 'And also Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "Children of Israel! I am God's messenger to you, [sent] to confirm the Torah revealed before me, and to give news of a messenger that will come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad"'. (61: 1) Moreover, Jesus will return at the end of time and he will follow Prophet Muhammad and judge according to the Islamic message. He will fight the Impostor leading an army of Muslims.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) likens the relationship between prophets as that of siblings having the same father, but different mothers. Their religion, which is the same, is like the one father of them all, but their codes of law differ, as their mothers are different.

   This religion which brings them together is Islam, i.e. self-surrender to God, the One and only God, and obeying Him. God says: 'The only true faith acceptable to God is Islam'. (3: 19) All prophets urged people to accept Islam and they affiliated themselves to it because in essence, Islam is submission to God in all that He commands and tells. As for legislative details, what was given to different prophets varied. God says: 'To every one of you We have given a code of law and a way of life'. (5: 48)

3. In the version related by Muslim, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explains his closeness to Jesus, son of Mary, as the fact that no other prophet intervened between them. Thus, Jesus was the one who brought the news of the imminent message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), so that people would be ready to receive him.

# Implementation

1. If you wish to explain important things to your children, students or other people, it is useful to use similes, particularly those that are well known. Alternatively, you may look for the closest similarity to what you are highlighting. Such usage makes your point easier to understand and absorb. In this hadith, the Prophet likens the relationship between prophets to that of siblings who have different mothers but the same father.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained the close relationship between him and Prophet Jesus by the facts that the essence of their religions is the same and that he was Jesus' successor in the line of prophethood. It is important in matters that are not readily apparent that when a person is giving some order to children, students, employees, etc. that the reasons for so doing are explained. Thus, the recipient knows the purpose and is ready to comply.

3. When you realize that you belong to a nation and its history, remember that your history extends to all prophets. They are all the brothers of the Prophet you believe in and follow. Thus, you feel a warm relationship with them and you love them. God says: 'The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of His messengers'. (2: 285) It is especially helpful to follow their guidance and study their history with your family and friends.

4. God's oneness is the essential principle parents, advocates of Islam, teachers and those who carry out social projects should make their top priority. It is the central belief all prophets preached. Everyone should learn what faith entails, discuss its details, promote it and give examples of what is involved.

5. The close relationship between prophets, as they are siblings, is a particularly beautiful one. We should try to develop close relationships with our brethren in faith, particularly those of them who are closer to us, such as our relatives and colleagues.

6. One useful approach of advocacy, particularly in the case of Christians, is to remind them of the brotherhood of prophets and that the closest person to Jesus is Muhammad (peace be upon them both). Both delivered clear and practical guidance given by God Almighty.

16

# Hadith

## TO KNOW GOD'S MESSENGER

Ibn ʻAbbās narrated:

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was given his message when he was forty years of age.
2. He continued to live in Makkah receiving revelations for thirteen years.
3. He was then commanded to migrate and he stayed in his place of migration for ten years.
4. He passed away when he was sixty-three years old.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3851; Muslim, 2351 (al-Bukhari's text.).

### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Muhammad is only a messenger: all messengers have passed away before him. If, then, he dies or is slain, will you turn about on your heels? He that turns about on his heels will not harm God in any way. God will reward those who are grateful [to Him].﴾ (3: 144)
- ﴿Anyone who migrates for God's cause will find on earth many places for refuge and great abundance. He who leaves his home, fleeing from evil unto God and His Messenger, and is then overtaken by death, his reward is reserved for him with God. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (4: 100)
- ﴿If you do not help him [the Prophet]; God [will, as He] supported him at the time when the unbelievers drove him away. He was only one of two. When these two were alone in the cave, he said to his companion: 'Do not grieve, for God is with us'. Thereupon God bestowed on Him the gift of inner peace, and sent to his aid forces which you did not see. He brought the word of the unbelievers utterly low, while the word of God remained supreme. God is mighty, wise.﴾ (9: 40)
- ﴿Read in the name of your Lord who has created (1) – created man out of a clinging cell mass. (2) Read – for your Lord is the most Bountiful One, (3) who has taught the use of the pen, (4) taught man what he did not know.﴾ (96: 1-5)

### The Narrator

Abu al-ʻAbbās ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻAbbās ibn ʻAbd al-Muṭṭalib, belonged to the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh and resided mostly in Madinah. He was born in the Hāshimī quarter in Makkah three years before the Prophet's migration. He was the leading scholar of the Muslim community and the one who explained the Qur'an best. He was the Prophet's cousin. He was nicknamed *al-baḥr*, which means 'the sea', because of his broad knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) included him in his prayers, saying: 'My Lord, grant him insight into the religion'.[1] He was one of the Prophet's companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He embraced Islam at a young age and he remained very close to the Prophet after the takeover of Makkah. He lost his eyesight when he became old. He died at Taif in Year 68 AH 688 CE.

### Summary

Ibn ʻAbbās mentions some of the important points in the Prophet's life. He states that his prophethood started when he was forty years of age. He migrated from Makkah to Yathrib, which was subsequently named Madinah, thirteen years later. He stayed in Madinah for ten years and then passed away to be with his Lord when he was sixty-three.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143 (his text); Muslim, 2477.

# Message and Meaning

Islam is based on the declaration: 'I bear witness that there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God's Messenger'. The more we know of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the better we believe in him, because he had the most sublime character and he did us the greatest favour of all. In this hadith, Ibn 'Abbās tells us of the most important points in God's Messenger's life.

1

The Angel Gabriel brought the Prophet his first revelations and the command to deliver God's message when he had attained forty years of age. This means that the Prophet was born in Year 53 BH (i.e. before the hijrah or migration), 570 CE. That year is called the Year of the Elephant. He received his first revelations and became God's Messenger in Year 13 BH, 609 CE.

God chose Makkah to be the birthplace and residence of His Messenger. He was the descendent of a noble lineage. His father was 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib of the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh tribe, and his mother was Aminah bint Wahb ibn 'Abd Manāf ibn Zuhrah of the Quraysh. Thus, he had the noblest line of descent among the Arabs. He said: 'God chose Kinānah from among Ishmael's descendants, then chose the Quraysh from Kinānah, then from the Quraysh He chose Banī Hāshim, and He chose me from Banī Hāshim'.[1] His father died before the Prophet was born, and as such he was an orphan[2] at birth. He lived with his mother, but she died when he was a six-year-old child. He continued to live under the care of his grandfather, but his grandfather died when Muhammad was eight years old. He was then looked after by his uncle Abu Ṭālib.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) lived in Makkah for forty years, being reared by God and prepared for the task for which he was chosen. God says to him: 'Has He not found you an orphan and given you a shelter? (6) And found you in error, and guided you? (7) And found you poor and enriched you?' (93: 6-8) He lived among his people and was renowned for his fine manners and morality. He took part in every good thing and stayed away from every evil.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) married Khadījah bint Khuwaylid who gave him six children. These were al-Qāsim, 'Abdullāh, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthūm and Fāṭimah. His only other child was born to him by Maria, a Copt, when he was in Madinah. Gabriel came to him for the first time when he was in seclusion at Cave Ḥirā' and gave him God's first revelations: 'Read in the name of your Lord who has created (1) – created man out of a clinging cell mass. (2) Read – for your Lord is the most Bountiful One, (3) who has taught the use of the pen, (4) taught man what he did not know'. (96: 1-5) He undertook his full responsibilities as a Messenger of God.

2

The Prophet lived in Makkah for thirteen years receiving revelations and calling on people to believe. He was met with an hostile reception and various forms of harm. Those who believed in him were also subjected to torture and various forms of hostility. When this became unbearable, the Prophet told his companions to migrate to Abyssinia where they could find safety. This

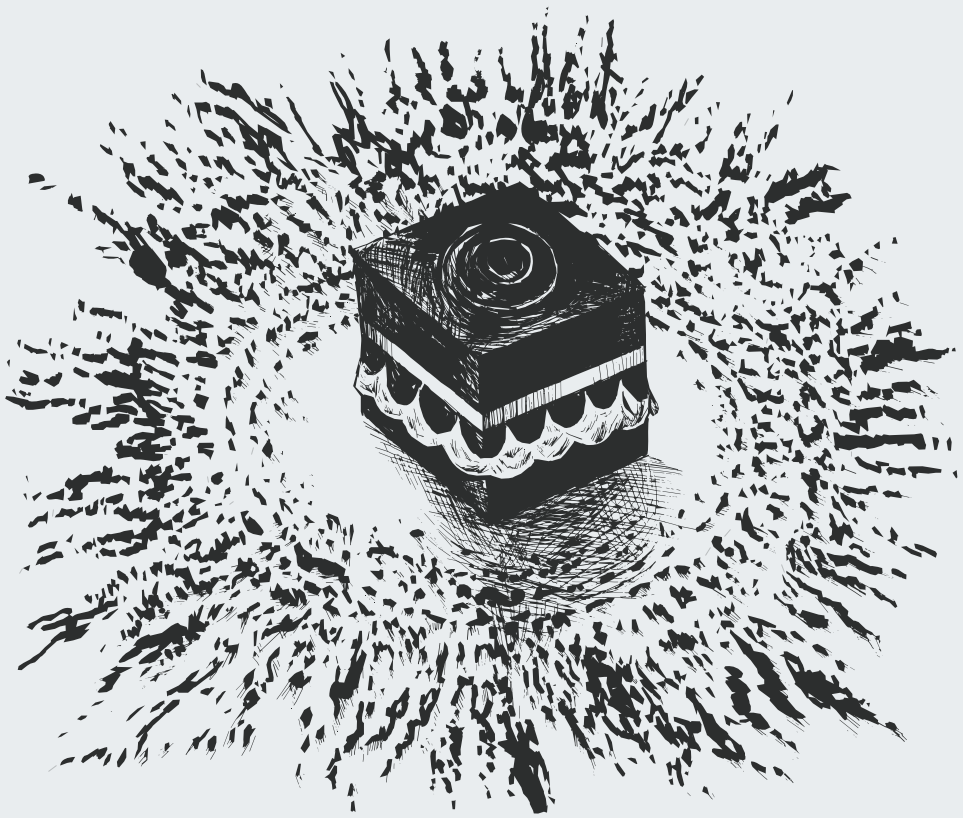
1 Related by Muslim, 2276.

2 In Arab culture, an orphan is a child who has lost his father. This is different from the definition of 'orphan' in English, which is a child who has lost both parents. – Editor's note.

took place in the fifth year of the start of his prophethood. They migrated more than once. The Prophet himself stayed on in Makkah. God gave him the support of his uncle Abu Ṭālib and his wife Khadījah, but both of them died in Year 10 of prophethood. He travelled to Taif, looking for support for his faith, and he spoke to people during the pilgrimage season and at other times, but he always faced negative responses.

3 When the Prophet (peace be upon him) completed thirteen years in Makkah, God chose Madinah as the place to which he migrated, accompanied by Abu Bakr. Many of his companions migrated to Madinah before him and others who were able to migrate followed him. He stayed in Madinah ten years advocating his message, striving for God's cause and looking after his community. As this period came to a close, God had perfected His blessing on His Messenger and people had embraced the divine faith in their thousands.

4 Ibn ʻAbbās then states that the Prophet was sixty-three when he passed away, having spent his last twenty-three years advocating his message, thirteen of which were in Makkah and ten in Madinah. He passed away in his wife, ʻĀ'ishah's, apartment on Monday, 12 Rabīʻ I, in Year 11 AH, 632 CE.



# Implementation

1. Be certain of God's Lordship and His mercy, and seek His help. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was an orphan when he was born, and his mother and grandfather died when he was still a young child. He was looked after by his uncle who was poor and had a large a family. In many cases, such an orphan feels deprived and suffers lack of care, but God determines all affairs. Hence, this orphan child became the most honourable of mankind. Therefore, no one should ever despair of receiving God's grace, no matter how difficult one's circumstances are. Everyone must be confident that it is God who determines all affairs and He only needs to say to anything, 'Be', for it to become a reality.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) remained in Makkah for thirteen years advocating his message, calling on people in the market and meeting places to believe in God. He never tired or despaired of ultimately persuading his people to accept Islam. He was not troubled by his people's rejection and false accusations. On the contrary, he maintained his gentle address, treated his people with kindness and compassion, prayed to God to guide them to the truth. He also helped with people's needs, such as safekeeping their valuables for them. He did not panic when his uncle who supported and protected him passed away, nor when his loving wife, Khadījah, who comforted him and supported him physically and financially, died shortly afterwards. In all this, he provides the best example to follow for advocates of God's message, scholars and preachers: they should always be patient when they encounter adversity. They should remember that whatever they may endure, it is much less than what he endured for God's cause.

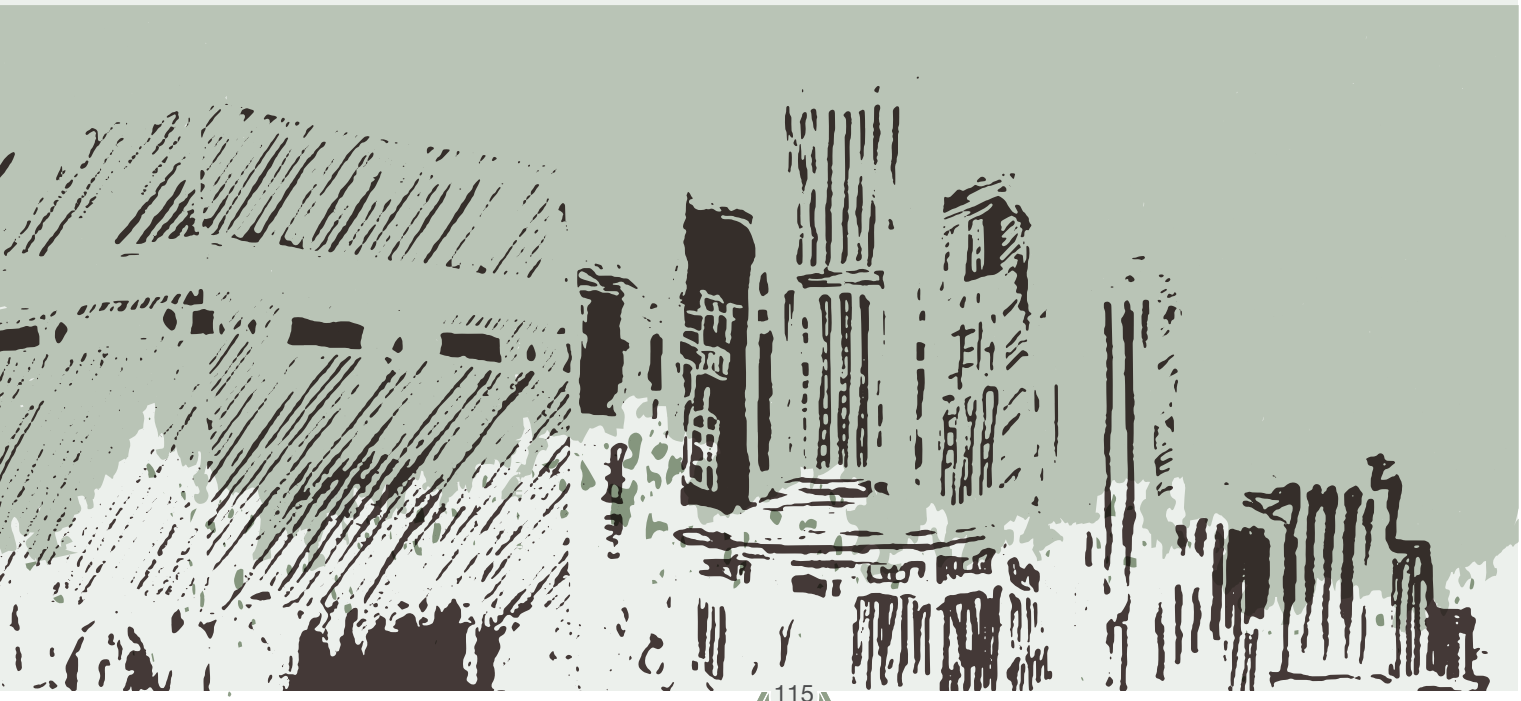
3. When God commanded His Messenger (peace be upon him) to migrate, he did not grieve at departing his hometown and his people. He obeyed God's command, even though it was hard for him. Such is the attitude of every believer towards any hardship he is called upon to endure for God's sake.

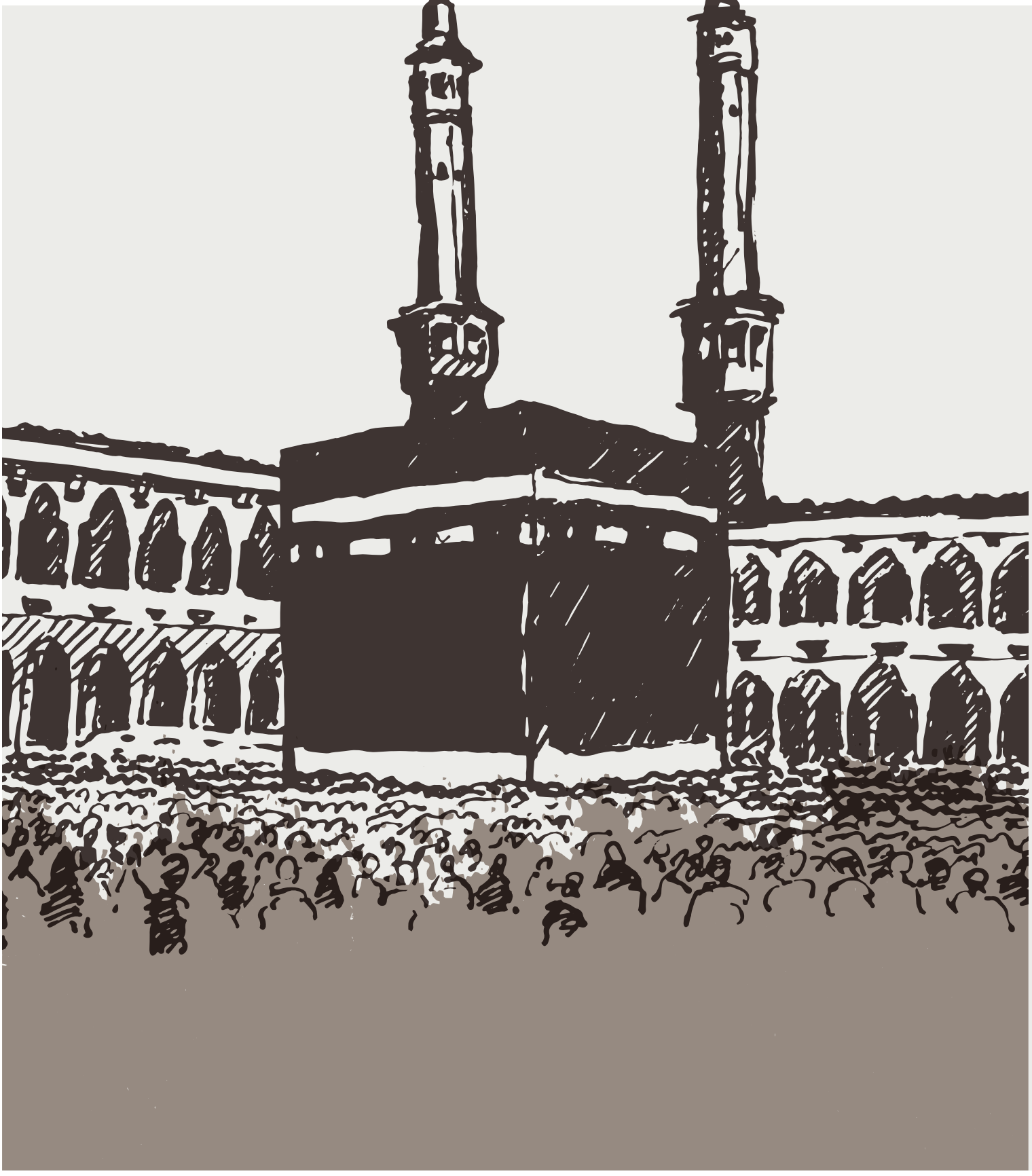
4. Migration may provide an ample opportunity. Migration need not be from one country to another; it may be to take up a job in an environment that is more likely to please God.

5. The Prophet's life witnessed different stages and circumstances, varying between ease and hardship, poverty and good means, war and peace, secrecy and publicity, weakness and power, etc. Thus, it comprised all situations of human life and provided a perfect example to emulate, with acceptance of God's will.

6. Death is inevitable and applies to even the most noble of people and those endowed with the best minds, strength and health. It also applies to one who continuously prays for safety from all ills, and to one who extends best benefit to all people. May God grant peace and blessings to Prophet Muhammad who combined all good qualities. Therefore, no rational person should overlook the fact that we will all die. No one should panic at the death of a close relative, a loved person, a scholar or reformer.

7. Ḥassān ibn Thābit was a fine poet and a companion of the Prophet. In his poetry, he praised his people, the Anṣār, for supporting the Prophet, welcoming him in their city and fighting against his enemies who tried to suppress the message of Islam. The Anṣār were distinguished as the most welcoming people who extended exemplary generosity towards the Muhājirīn who migrated to join them in their city.





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# Hadith

# THE DUTY OF FOLLOWING GOD'S MESSENGER

Al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dī karib narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Perhaps someone is told a hadith I have said when he is reclining on his couch and he says: 'Here is God's Book between us: whatever we find in it to be permissible we will accept as permissible and whatever we find in it as forbidden we will accept as forbidden".**

2. **Know that what God's Messenger has forbidden is just as God has forbidden.**

3. **In Abu Dāwūd's version: Know that I have been given the Book and its like with it.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, obey God and obey the Messenger and those from among you who have been entrusted with authority. If you are in dispute over anything, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you truly believe in God and the Last Day. This is the best [for you], and most suitable for final determination.﴾ (4: 59)
- ﴿He who obeys the Messenger obeys God thereby. As for those who turn away – We have not sent you to be their keeper.﴾ (4: 80)
- ﴿We have now bestowed on you the reminder so that you may elucidate to mankind all that has been bestowed on them, and that they may take thought.﴾ (16: 44)
- ﴿Say: 'Obey God, and obey the Messenger'. But if you turn away, he will have to answer only for whatever he has been charged with, and you, for what you have been charged with. If you obey him, you shall be rightly guided. The Messenger is not bound to do more than clearly deliver his message.﴾ (24: 54)
- ﴿He does not speak out of his own fancy. (3) That [which he delivers to you] is nothing less than a revelation sent down to him.﴾ (53: 3-4)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)

## The Narrator

Abu Karīmah al-Miqdām ibn Ma'dīkarib ibn 'Amr al-Kindī was one of the Prophet's companions. He visited the Prophet in Madinah and stayed there for forty days. He later lived in Homs in Syria. Yaḥyā and al-Ḥasan, Jābir's sons, reported hadiths from him, as did 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abi 'Awf. He died in Syria in Year 87 AH 706 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet makes clear that no one should deny the status of the Sunnah, claiming that the Qur'an is sufficient. Like the Qur'an, the Sunnah is part of the revelations given to the Prophet.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4604; al-Tirmidhī (his text), 2664; Ibn Mājah, 12.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns his community against following their own whims in religious matters. He sets the example of a man who is bereft of knowledge, turning away from scholars and their circles, preferring a life of comfort and laziness, reclining on his couch and giving a blanket verdict on religion. He says: the Qur'an is enough for us as it sets God's commandments and prohibitions. Whatever is stated as permissible in the Qur'an is lawful and permissible, and whatever is stated as forbidden is certainly prohibited.

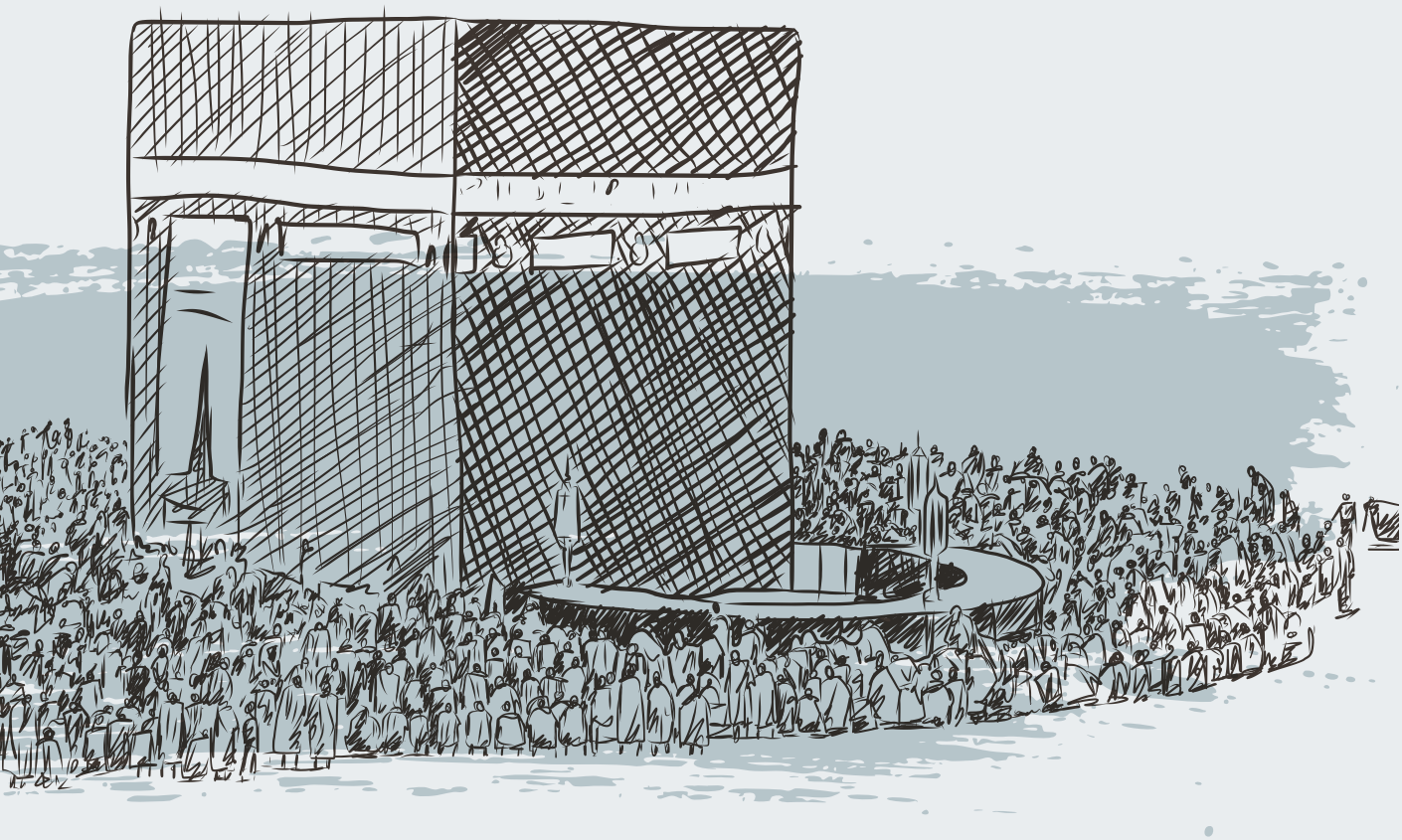
   This has taken place in the Muslim community, with the emergence of al-Khawarij, the Shia, the ones who reject everything other than the Qur'an, the secularists and similar groups. These stick to the Qur'an and its apparent meaning, refusing to consider the Prophet's Sunnah. In their ignorance, they refuse to implement authentic hadiths and turn away in blind arrogance.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) criticizes their attitude. He states that the Prophet's orders and prohibitions are binding on Muslims and must be obeyed in the same way as God's orders and prohibitions. He does not speak out of his own fancy. Far from him. His Sunnah is part of the faith and must be implemented, as God says: 'Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution'. (59: 7)

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that God, Exalted and Mighty, has given him the Qur'an, revealed to him through the Angel Gabriel. It is God's Book whose recitation is an act of worship, and which has been transmitted in the highest and most authentic way. It is an eternal challenge, and this challenge applies to every surah of the Qur'an. The Prophet further states that God has given him the Sunnah, which explains the Qur'an and gives details of its rulings and teachings. God says: 'We have now bestowed on you the reminder so that you may elucidate to mankind all that has been bestowed on them, and that they may take thought'. (16: 44) Thus, God describes the Sunnah as 'the reminder', and He tells us that He has revealed it to His Messenger.

The Sunnah is distinguished by the fact that it sets out rulings that the Qur'an does not mention. These include the prohibition of wearing gold by men, the choice available to buyer and seller in commercial transactions, the prohibition of marrying a woman and her aunt, paternal or maternal, at the same time, the prohibition of eating donkey meat, the permissibility of eating dead fish and locusts, etc.

None of these rulings is given by the Prophet's own decision. They are stated as revelation sent down to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The difference is that the Qur'an is revelation in word and meaning, while the Sunnah is revelation in meaning only, and the Prophet expresses this meaning in his own words. God says: 'He does not speak out of his own fancy. (3) That [which he delivers to you] is nothing less than a revelation sent down to him'. (53: 3-4)



# Implementation

1. Learning about religion is necessary for every Muslim. Therefore, turning away from it and refusing to listen to scholars as they explain religious matters is an attitude of arrogance. It is the cause behind the emergence of deviant creeds.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned against turning away from his Sunnah. Every Muslim should heed this warning.

3. This hadith implies a strong reproach to those who reject the Sunnah, claiming to adhere to the Qur'an only. Needless to say, the reproach is even stronger in the case of those who place reason ahead of the Prophet's hadiths. When such a person is informed of an authentic hadith, he claims that he need not implement it as he has a different view on its subject matter.

4. No Muslim may take a complacent attitude about what the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibits or commands. His prohibition has the same force as a prohibition by God, and incurs the same punishment for its violation. Besides, denying the Prophet's legislation incurs its own consequences.

5. Rejecting what the Prophet says means rejecting what God says and refusing to obey His commandments. Every Muslim should beware of doing so.

6. Like the Qur'an, the Sunnah is divine revelation. Whatever is authentically stated of the Sunnah is binding on us to believe in and implement.

7. How can a person claim to believe in the Prophet and refuse to follow him?

8. It is not a condition that an authentic hadith should set exactly the same limits as the Qur'an. Many statements by the Prophet add details to what is in the Qur'an. When a hadith is authentic and attributed to the Prophet, it must be implemented.

9. Had it been the case that it is not obligatory to obey the Prophet in what is additional to the Qur'an, then the order to obey him becomes superfluous. If our duty is to obey him only in what is the same as the Qur'an, but not what is beyond it, then there would be no specific order to obey him. Yet God clearly says: 'He who obeys the Messenger obeys God thereby'. (4: 80)

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# Hadith

# ABROGATION OF EARLIER MESSAGES

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **By Him who holds Muhammad's soul in His hand,**

2 **anyone in this nation who hears of me,**

3 **whether Jew or Christian,**

4 **and then dies without believing in what I have been sent with, shall be among the dwellers in the Fire.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿The only true faith acceptable to God is Islam [i.e. man's self-surrender to Him]. Disagreements spread, through mutual aggression, among those who were given revelations only after knowledge had been granted to them. He who denies God's revelations will find that God is indeed swift in reckoning.﴾** (3: 19)
- **﴿He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost. (85) How shall God guide people who have lapsed into disbelief after having accepted the faith and having borne witness that this messenger is true, and after having received clear evidence of the truth? God does not guide the wrongdoers. (86) Of such people the punishment shall be the curse of God, the angels and all men. (87) Under it they shall abide. Neither their suffering shall be lightened, nor shall they be granted respite.﴾** (3: 85-88)
- **﴿As for him who, after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, puts himself in contention with God's Messenger and follows a path other than that of the believers – him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell. How evil a journey's end.﴾** (4: 115)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the major Arabian tribe of Azd. The Daws used to live at Ma'rib, but later dispersed and lived in different areas. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, 629 CE, moving to Madinah and remaining close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to acquire Islamic knowledge and memorize the hadith. He narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet states an oath that no one who is his contemporary or lives later and hears of him and his message, but who still refuses to believe in him will be accepted by God. Whoever consciously disbelieves in Prophet Muhammad is destined to Hell, even though such a person be a Jew or a Christian.

1 Related by Muslim, 250.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states an oath emphasizing a very serious matter, saying: By God, who holds my soul in His hand and who will give me life or cause my death by His will.

2. The purport of the oath is that belief in his message is obligatory to all those who receive the Prophet's message. This applies to every individual belonging to the nations addressed by his message, namely, mankind and the jinn, Arabs and non-Arabs, from his own generation and all succeeding generations, up to the Day of Judgement.

   Receiving the message means that the individual understands that Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared that he was a messenger of God, calling on people to believe in God's oneness and prohibiting the association of partners with Him, explaining all this. This applies to everyone who receives the message, whether they are convinced of the same or not. It is sufficient for the obligation to be binding on any person that such a person receives a proper understanding of the existence of such a messenger. A person who does not receive the message correctly is not one whom we consider to have such an obligation. God says: 'We would never inflict punishment [on anyone] until We have sent a Messenger [to give warning]'. (17: 15)

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the Jews and Christians in particular because they are the ones who are best aware of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They were foretold about his prophethood. Moreover, mentioning them in particular shows that nothing is acceptable as a substitute to believing in Prophet Muhammad's message, not even the claim that a person follows a divine religion. Needless to say, this applies more clearly to polytheists and atheists. The hadith thus provides evidence confirming that the message of Islam supersedes all earlier messages.

4. All those who receive the message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and who are rational adults, yet die unbelievers, having refused to believe in him and the message he delivered from God, will be among the permanent dwellers of Hell. They will not benefit by any good deed they do, or by anything such as line of descent, nobility or position. God says: 'He who seeks a religion other than Islam [i.e. self-surrender to God], it will not be accepted from him, and in the life to come he will be among the lost'. (3: 85)

# Implementation

1. Abu Hurayrah travelled a very long distance from his place of residence to migrate and join the Prophet (peace be upon him), even though it would have been good enough for him to embrace Islam and continue to live with his own people in his own town. He became the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths, despite the fact that he was a relative latecomer to Islam. We should learn from his example how much we can give for God's sake, and how close we are to the Prophet's Sunnah, which is his heritage.

2. Let us give due importance to the question of faith and accept what God's Messenger (peace be upon him) says, whether it coincides with what we desire or not. In this hadith, he swears by the One who controls his own life and death to confirm a certain principle of faith.

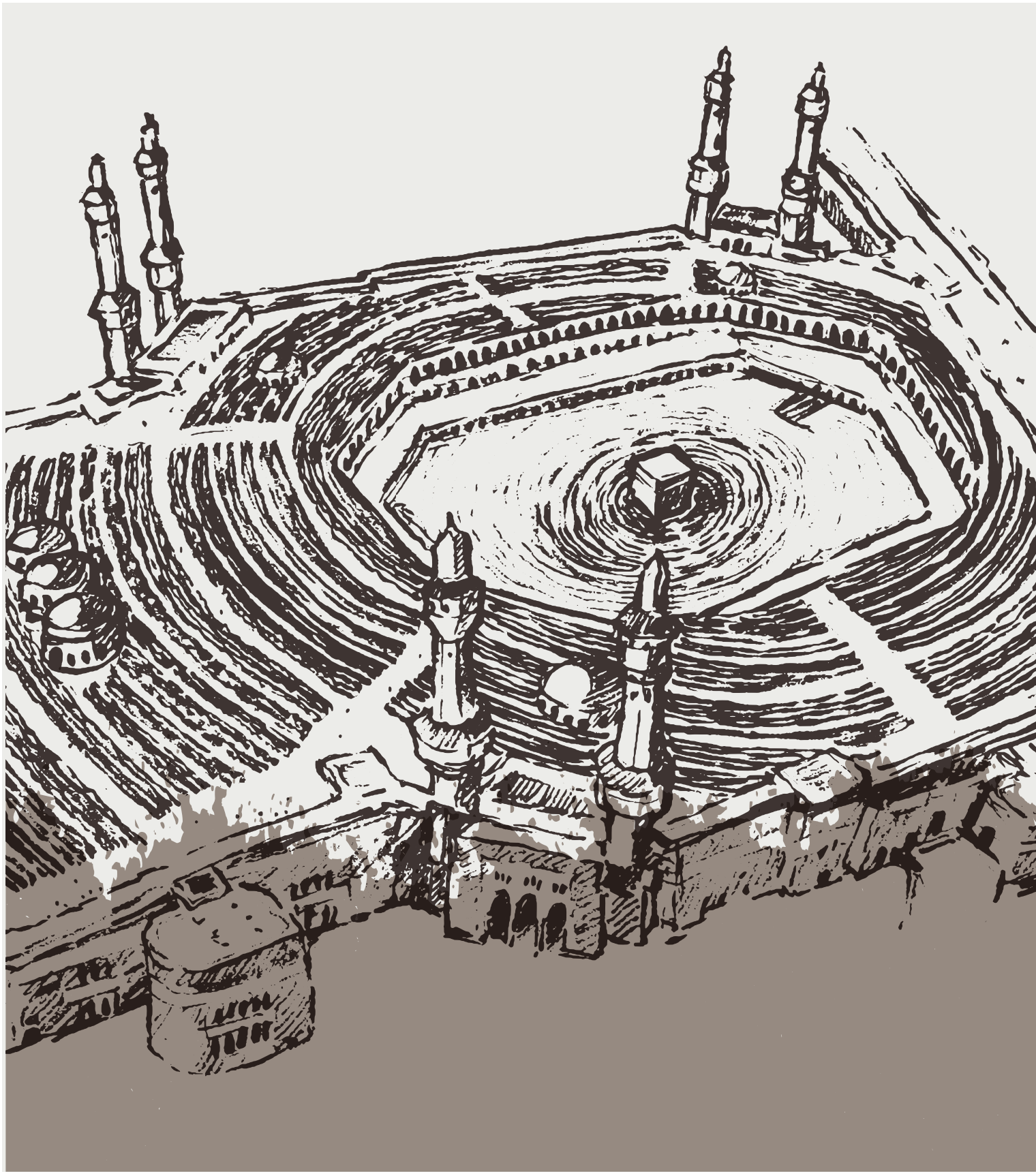
3. Whoever has a Jewish or Christian relative or friend should do that person a favour, calling on him gently to accept Islam, because continuing with his own religion will not benefit him on the Day of Judgement. If he accepts Islam, both he and the one who calls on him to do so receive double rewards. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Three categories of people are given double reward: a person who belonged to the people of earlier revelations and believed in his prophet, but lived to the time of Prophet [Muhammad (peace be upon him)] and believed in him and followed him. He has double reward…'.[1]

4. A Muslim should be more proud of his faith than anyone else. People may take pride in their cultures, civilizations or faith, but the followers of all other faiths will end up losers unless they follow Islam, if they receive its message. We praise and thank God for having made us Muslims and guided us to the truth, although people hold great differences about it.

5. The greatest act of mercy is that a person endeavours to save himself, his family and other people from everlasting punishment. The point is that no one will enter Heaven until they believe in Prophet Muhammad and his message and implement his guidance. Those who advocate the divine faith are the most merciful to all people. They strive with their advocacy, wealth and knowledge in order to save them from God's punishment. Theirs is a high position which behoves every Muslim to join by advocating God's message.

6. Believers understand well that they should follow the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the best of mankind, because this is the way to ensure a person's safety on the Day of Judgement.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 97; Muslim, 154.



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# Hadith

# LOVING GOD'S MESSENGER AND WHAT IT ENTAILS

Anas ibn Mālik narrated, saying:

1. As I was with the Prophet, coming out of the Mosque, a man met us near the shaded area of the mosque. He said: 'Messenger of God, when is the Last Hour?'
2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'What have you prepared for it?'
3. The man appeared to hesitate.
4. He then said: 'Messenger of God, I have not prepared much in the way of fasting, prayer or charity,
5. but I love God and His Messenger'.
6. The Prophet said: 'You are with those you love'. (1)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7153; Muslim, 2639.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things.﴾ (31: 34)
- ﴿Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'.﴾ (3: 31)
- ﴿All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these!﴾ (4: 69)
- ﴿Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, and the property you have acquired, and the business in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God shall make manifest His will. God does not provide guidance to the transgressors'.﴾ (9: 24)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār, was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and his devout mother took him to the Prophet to be his servant. He took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He gave numerous fatwas and narrated many hadiths. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

## Summary

One companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him about the timing of the Last Hour. The Prophet drew his attention to what is more important than knowing its timing, which is known only to God. This is preparing for it. The man said that he did not do much by way of preparation, but he loved God and His Messenger. The Prophet told him that this was sufficient to ensure that he would go to Heaven and be a companion of the Prophet there, if he was true in his love.

# Message and Meaning

1. Anas ibn Mālik narrates that he was with the Prophet as they were leaving the mosque when they were met by a man close to its wall where there is shade. The man asked the Prophet about the timing of the Last Hour. Some reports suggest that he was the bedouin who earlier urinated in the mosque.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not give him an answer to his question, but drew his attention to what is of greater importance, asking him: What have you prepared for it? Have you volunteered much in the way of worship so that you will be ready for its inevitable coming?

   The Prophet's purpose was to draw attention to what is required of Muslims, namely, preparing for the time when they face the reckoning of their deeds and that they ensure they have done what secures them entry into Heaven. No one is required to know the timing of the Last Hour. Besides, no one knows its time except God, Mighty and Exalted.

3. The man humbly hesitated, realizing that his good deeds did not amount to much and he acknowledged that he fell short of what is required; yet he was asking a question he should not have asked.

4. The man acknowledged that he had not done much by way of preparation. He did not do many voluntary acts of worship, which would draw him closer to Heaven and distance him far from Hell. He simply stuck to the obligatory duties which every Muslim must do. His response might have been a matter of humility, underrating his good deeds, or thinking that whatever he did fell short of what was possible. He might also have thought that all this would count less than his sincere love of God and His Messenger, which is superior to all good action.

5. The man realized that his best deed which would benefit him on the Day of Judgement was his love of God and His Messenger. Such true love should also be demonstrated in practical obedience.

6. The Prophet told him that if his love was sincere and he fulfilled its requirements, he would join those he loved. This means that he would be with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions in the highest Paradise. God says: All who obey God and the Messenger shall be among those upon whom God has bestowed His blessings: the prophets, and those who never deviate from the truth, and the martyrs and the righteous ones. How goodly a company are these! (4: 69) Hence Anas said: 'I love God, His Messenger, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and I hope to be with them, even though I fall short of what they did'.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3688; Muslim, 2639.

# Implementation

1. Neither Anas nor his family had any reservations against Anas serving the Prophet (peace be upon him), even though Anas was a free person, not a slave. Service was at the time a matter for slaves, not sons of distinguished families. His mother took him to the Prophet so that he would be his servant. A Muslim may observe social habits and traditions, and may try to prevent people's gossip about his actions, but he will not allow these to prevent him from doing what would bring him good returns in both the present life and the next.

2. Anas was keen to stay close to the Prophet and to serve him, despite being young. Some hadiths mention that he might even have played with other boys at times. This shows that training a young person to do good work should not deprive him of the chance to occasionally play with children of a similar age.

3. The man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the time of the Last Hour, but the Prophet did not answer his question. He drew his attention to a different aspect which is of more benefit to the questioner, which is doing the proper preparations for its arrival. This method is known among linguists as 'a wise man's style'. This invites a person to give an answer that gives information that is greater or more important than what the questioner is seeking, so as to alert the questioner to what he has missed. A similar case is that of one of his companions who asked the Prophet if it was permissible to perform the ablution with sea water. He referred to the sea and said: 'Its water is absolutely pure and its dead animals are lawful to eat'.[1] The Prophet's answer makes it clear that it was perfectly proper to perform the ablution with sea water, but added further information saying that the flesh of dead sea animals are permissible to eat. Advocates of Islam should be aware of what people need, wise in what they say and what answers they give. They should not feel pressed by people's questions. Rather, they should speak to people about what benefits them both in their lives and religion. They should avoid what causes trouble and what is useless.

4. The Prophet turned his questioner's thinking from what should not be of concern to him, or from questions that cannot be answered, such as the exact time of the Last Hour, to that whereby he could focus on practical matters. This he did by asking the man about his preparation for the Last Hour. Imam Mālik disliked speaking about non-practical matters and he mentioned that earlier scholars focused on what was practical. Indeed most of people's arguments, particularly those that participate in a common project, concern non-practical matters. Therefore, it is better to move on and ask what is useful, such as: what shall we do next?

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 69.

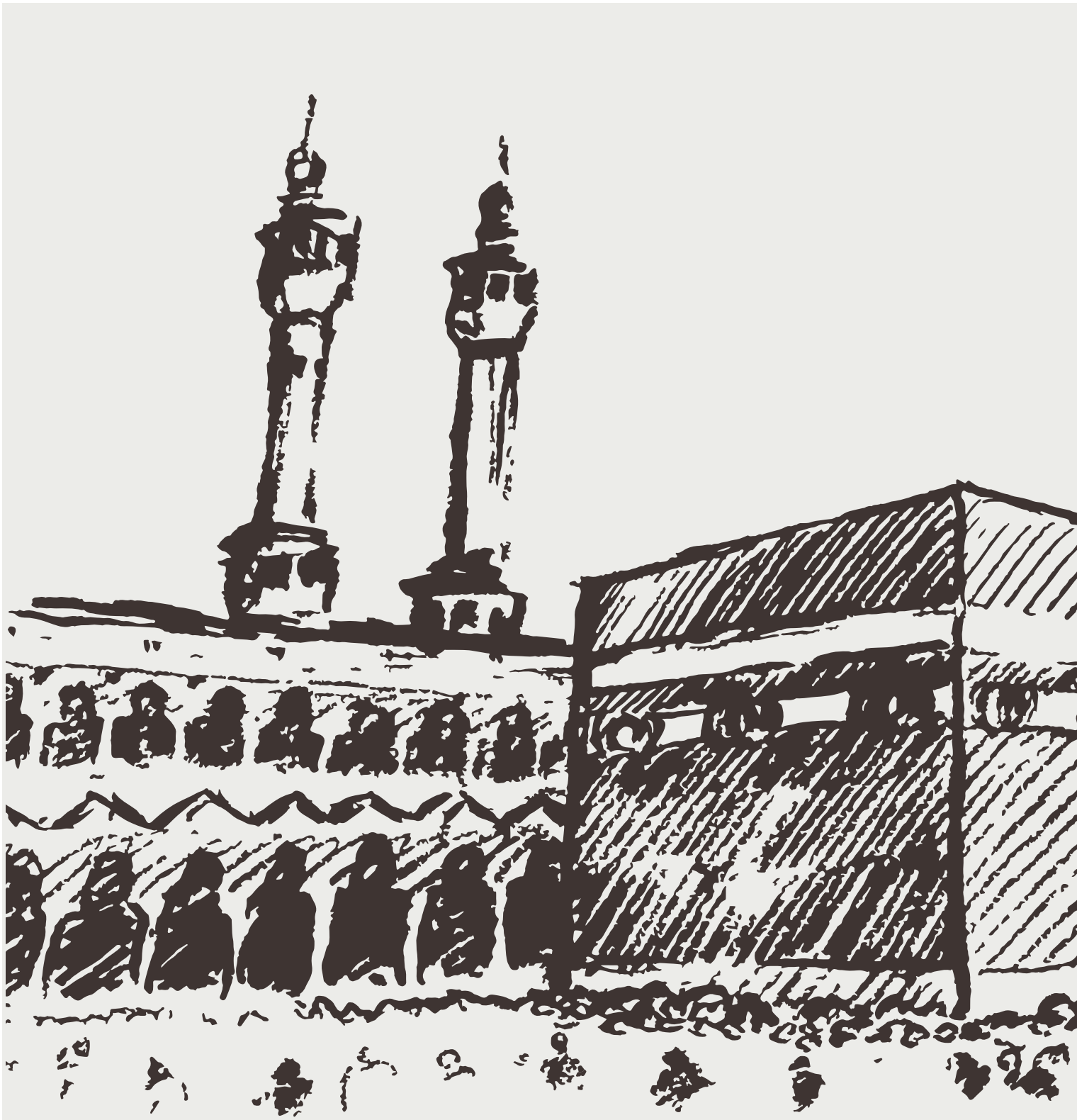
5 The Prophet's question, 'What have you prepared for it?' should be the focus of every Muslim's attention as he plans his course in life. He should take stock of his actions every day, asking himself: how will I be meeting God? Will He be pleased or displeased with me?

6 To love God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) is not a matter of idle words or emotions. It is a feeling that fills one's heart and makes him eager to please the loved one by obeying him. It develops and strengthens until it takes priority over one's relatives, property, children and all other people. Whoever claims to love God and His Messenger should look within himself for evidence confirming such love. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: 'Some people claim to love God, the Exalted. Therefore, God tests them with the Qur'anic verse that says: "Say: 'If you love God, follow me; God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'". (3: 31)

7 No matter how deeply you indulge in sin, let it never detract from your glorification of God and your love of Him and His Messenger. None of us can attain the position of the prophets (peace be upon them all) in Heaven. Theirs is a superior position due to their great merit, sustained efforts, sincere belief and determination to do God's bidding, despite all the trials they went through. However, we can be with them in the life to come through truly loving and respecting them, following their practices, and ensuring that we love them better than we love anyone else. This is the good news for everyone who is ready to make the effort. Hence Anas said in comment about the Prophet's saying to the man who said that he loved God and His Messenger: 'Having embraced Islam, nothing delighted us more than the Prophet's words: "You are with those you love"'.[1]

8 Endeavour to strengthen your love of God and His Messenger through the right means such as your frequent remembrance of God and praying to Him to grant peace and blessings to the Prophet. Keep your feeling of their love alive in your heart through reminding yourself of their great favours and your determination to make obeying them your top priority. Whenever you see or hear of someone seeking to please his loved ones, endeavour to make your love of God and His Messenger greater. God says: 'Yet there are people who worship beings other than God, giving them a status equal to His, loving them as God alone should be loved; whereas the believers love God more than all else'. (2: 165)

1 Related by Ahmad, 12032.



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# Hadith

# THE STATUS OF THE PROPHET'S COMPANIONS

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **Do not revile my companions. Do not revile my companions.**

2 **By Him who holds my soul in His hand, were any of you to spend the like of Mount Uḥud in gold, he would not equal the *mudd* of any of them, nor even half that.**[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3673; Muslim, 2541.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿God has assuredly turned in His mercy to the Prophet, the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār, who followed him in the hour of hardship, when the hearts of a group of them had almost faltered. Then again He turned to them in mercy; for He is compassionate towards them, ever-merciful.﴾ (9: 117)
- ﴿As for the first to lead the way, of the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār, as well as those who follow them in [the way of] righteousness, God is well-pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens through which running waters flow, where they shall abide forever. That is the supreme triumph.﴾ (9: 100)
- ﴿Muhammad is God's Messenger; and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the unbelievers, full of mercy towards one another. You can see them bowing down, prostrating in prayer, seeking favour with God and His good pleasure. They bear on their faces the marks of their prostrations. This is how they are pictured in the Torah. And in the Gospels, they are like a seed that brings forth its shoot, strengthens it, grows thick and stands firm on its stem, delighting the sowers. Through them God will enrage the unbelievers. To those of them who believe and do righteous deeds God has promised forgiveness and a rich reward.﴾ (48: 29)
- ﴿Those of you who gave and fought [for God's cause] before the victory are not like others: they are higher in rank than those who gave and fought afterwards, although God has promised the ultimate good to all of them. God is well aware of all that you do.﴾ (57: 10)
- ﴿[Such war gains are for] the poor migrants who have been driven out of their homes and possessions, seeking God's favour and His goodly acceptance, and who help God and His Messenger. These are the ones who are true. (8) And to those who were already firmly established in the Home and in faith, those who love the ones that seek refuge with them and harbour no desire in their hearts for whatever the others may have been given. They give them preference over themselves, even though they are in want. Those who are saved from their own greed are truly successful.﴾ (59: 8-9)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He was appointed Governor of Bahrain during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, but he then relinquished his post and lived in Madinah until he died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet prohibits reviling his companions. Their great services for the cause of Islam give them the greatest reward among all mankind.

# Message and Meaning

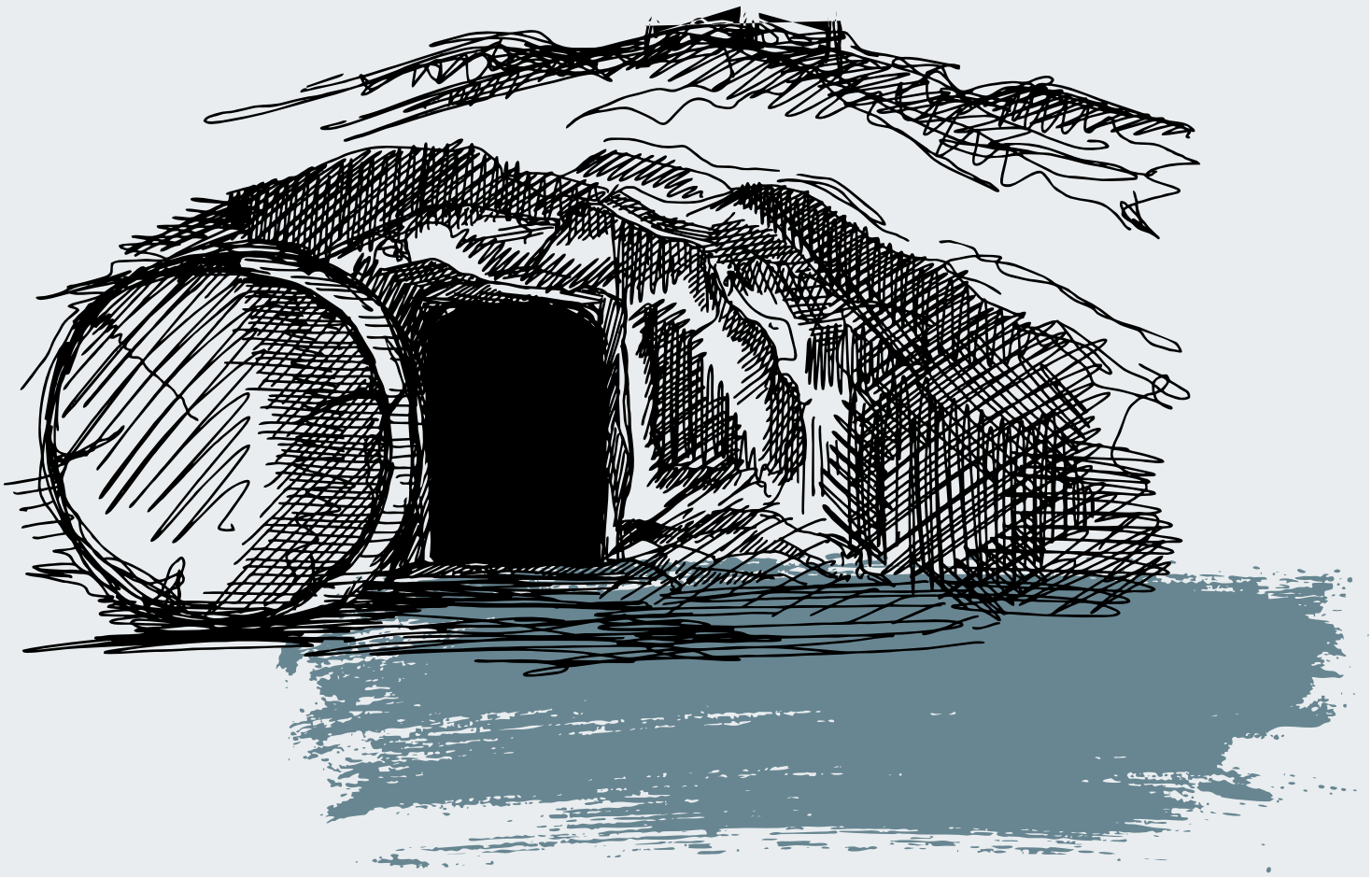
1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibits reviling his companions who met him, believed in him and died as Muslims. They were the best of people, next only to prophets. They were the ones who shouldered the responsibility of spreading Islam over a wide area of the world. They defended the Prophet (peace be upon him) and supported him against opposition by their own peoples. They gave him unlimited support against all his enemies, even those who were their own relatives. Just like God chose Muhammad to be the last of His prophets, He chose his companions to be his supporters. Ibn Mas'ūd said: 'God looked at people's hearts and He found Muhammad's heart the best of the hearts of all His servants. He chose him for Himself, and sent him with His message. God then looked at people's hearts next to Muhammad's heart, and He found that his companions had the best of hearts. He therefore, made them the supporters of His Prophet, fighting for the cause of His faith'.[1]

God, Mighty and Exalted, praises the Prophet's companions in several places in the Qur'an, stating that they were better than all other people, and that He was pleased with them and had forgiven them their sins. Therefore, to revile them and speak ill of them is absolutely forbidden. It is indeed a grave sin, constituting evidence of hypocrisy and heresy. None hates the Prophet's companions except a transgressor who is known to be a hypocrite, or an unbeliever who pretends to be a Muslim. Some scholars are of the view that a person who reviles the Prophet's companions may be liable to capital punishment.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains that he prohibits reviling his companions, stating their distinctive merit and superior grade. He swears by God, who holds all people's souls in His hand, doing with them whatever He wills, that the reward God grants for the Prophet's companions is unequalled by the reward of whatever other people may do of good deeds. Should anyone spend in charity and for God's cause the weight of a mountain like Uḥud in gold, he would not earn the reward given to a companion of the Prophet spending the fill of his cupped hands, or even one hand.

This difference in reward is due to the fact that the Prophet's companions used to give their all, although they were in poverty and great need. Moreover, they were the first generation which undertook the delivery of the Islamic message, fighting on several fronts to ensure that people were free to choose their faith. They were the generation which witnessed the revelation of the Qur'an and accompanied God's Messenger on all occasions. Thus, they merited the greatest and richest reward. God Himself highlights their excellent characteristics. He says: '[Such war gains are for] the poor migrants who have been driven out of their homes and possessions, seeking God's favour and His goodly acceptance, and who help God and His Messenger. These are the ones who are true. (8) And to those who were already firmly established in the Home and in faith, those who love the ones that seek refuge with them and harbour no desire in their hearts for whatever the others may have been given. They give them preference over themselves, even though they are in want. Those who are saved from their own greed are truly successful'. (59: 8-9)

1 Related by Ahmad, 3600.



# Implementation

1. No Muslim should ever revile the Prophet's companions or speak ill of them. To do so is to disobey God and His Messenger (peace be upon him).

2. How can a Muslim revile people whom God praises and highlights their excellent characteristics? It was He who chose them to be His Messenger's companions.

3. It is not appropriate for any Muslim to question the Prophet's companions' attitudes during the time of strife and trouble that ensued among them. All of them acted according to what they thought best for the Muslim community. They are all forgiven and God is pleased with them.

4. Every Muslim should educate his family and children to love and respect the Prophet's companions.

5. Since the Prophet's companions were the best of mankind next to prophets, and since they were the ones who witnessed the revelation of the Qur'an, and learnt what was permissible and what was forbidden, we do well to follow their example. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar said: 'Whoever wishes to have an excellent example to follow should choose someone who has passed away. Those were Muhammad's companions, the best of the Muslim community: they were the most kind-hearted, having the most profound knowledge and the least pretentious. They were the people God chose to be His Messenger's companions and transmit His religion. You will do well to emulate them in their morals and manners. The Prophet's companions were the followers of the straight, right guidance'.[1]

6. Every Muslim should study the life of the Prophet's companions, what they did and how they behaved, in order to understand why their grade is very high. Some people requested al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī to describe the Prophet's companions. He was tearful before he said: 'All signs of goodness appeared on them in their appearance, manners, truthfulness and diligence in following right guidance. Every aspect of their conduct confirmed their goodness: they economized choosing rough clothing. They were humble in manners. Their actions confirmed what they professed. They chose only the food and drink that is permissible. They submitted to their Lord with full obedience, and to the truth in all situations. They upheld the truth even if it was contrary to their own immediate interests. They spared no effort in serving the cause of Islam, caring little for people's displeasure if their action would earn them God's pleasure. They did not deviate from the truth when they were angry. They never gave an unfair judgement, always abiding by God's ruling as stated in the Qur'an. They busied themselves with God's remembrance. They laid down their lives when the Prophet needed support, and they gave all they had when he wanted them to donate. They never feared other people. Their manners and morals were perfect, and their requirements were simple. They needed little in this world, hoping for much the life to come'.[2]

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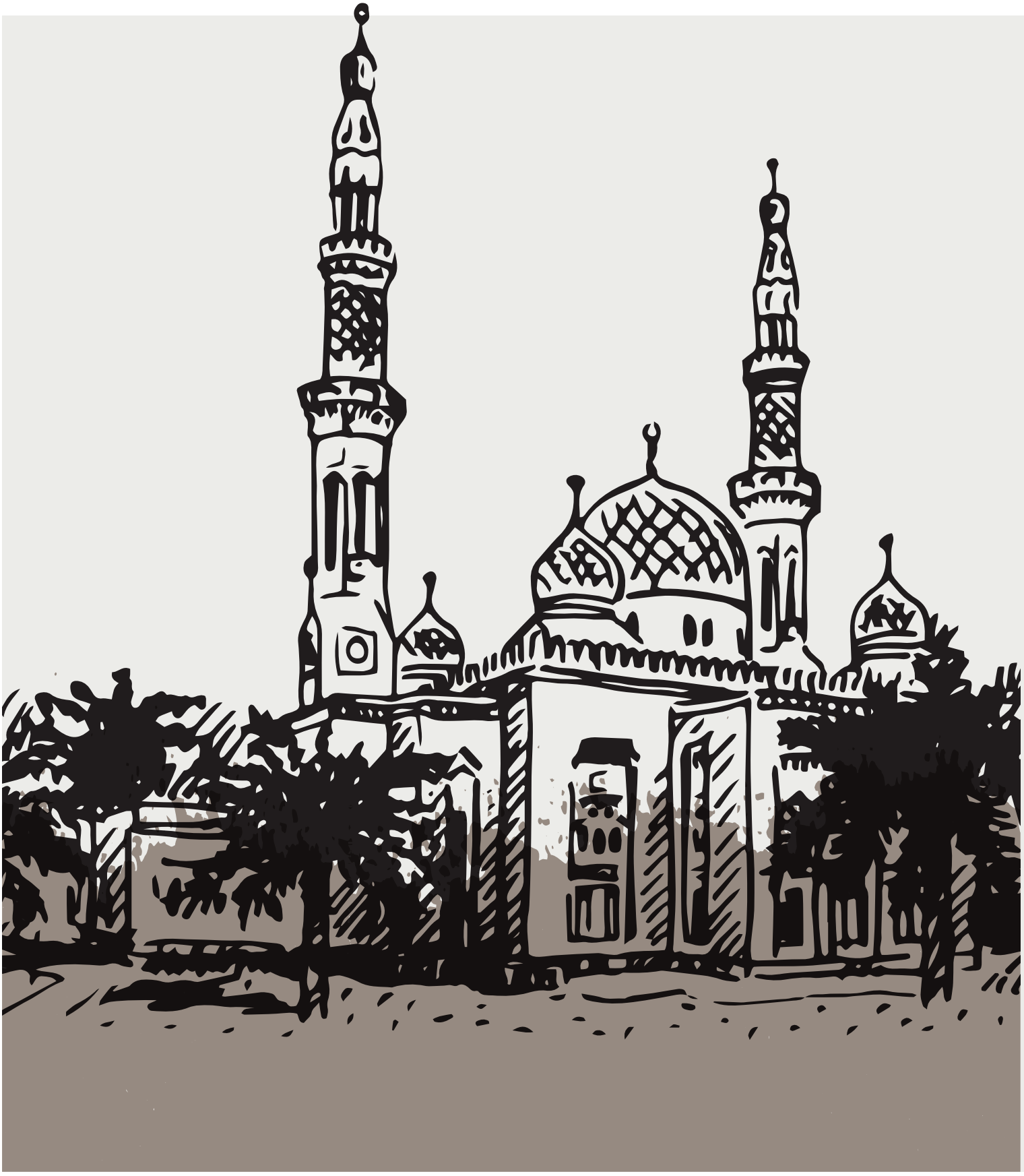
1 Related by Abu Nu'aym in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, Vol. 1, pp. 306-305.

2 Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 150.

7 It is permissible to say an oath in order to emphasize one's statement, even though one is not asked to swear by it.

8 Quantity is not the sole measure. Certainty of faith is the right measure. A small charity may earn more of God's reward than a much larger one. Hence, a person of limited means should not be deterred by the feeling that he cannot match others in their generosity. A small amount a person gives away of his limited income may go a long way and secure a rich reward.

9 Every Muslim should remember that the Prophet's companions are the best Muslim generation in God's sight. How can anyone imagine they have the right to judge them?



# 21 Hadith

# THE DISTINCTION OF THE EARLIER GENERATIONS OF MUSLIMS

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. The best of my community are my generation,
2. then those who follow them,
3. then those who follow.
4. ‘Imrān said: I am unsure whether God’s Messenger said twice or three times after his generation.
5. Then there will come after them people who bear witness without being asked;
6. are untrue to a trust,
7. pledge but do not fulfil,
8. and obesity will spread among them. [1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3650; Muslim, 2535.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿As for the first to lead the way, of the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār, as well as those who follow them in [the way of] righteousness, God is well-pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens through which running waters flow, where they shall abide forever. That is the supreme triumph.﴾ (9: 100)
- ﴿Believers, do not betray God and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray the trust that has been reposed in you.﴾ (8: 27)
- ﴿[And the true servants of God are] those who never bear witness to what is false, and whenever they pass by [people engaged in] frivolity, pass on with dignity.﴾ (25: 72)
- ﴿They are the ones who fulfil their vows and stand in awe of a day of woes that fly far and wide.﴾ (76: 7)

## The Narrator

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn ibn ‘Ubayd emanated from the Khuzā‘ah tribe. His appellation was Abu Nujayd. He embraced Islam together with Abu Hurayrah in Year 7 AH, 629 CE, which witnessed the Battle of Khaybar. He was in the Prophet’s army on several military expeditions. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sent him to Basrah to teach Islam to its population. Ibn Sīrīn said: ‘We have not seen anyone among the Prophet’s companions who excelled ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn’. He was known to have his supplication answered. He did not participate in the troubling events that led to the assassination of the third and fourth caliphs, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. He died in Year 53 AH 671 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the best of people are his companions who were his contemporaries. Next were the *tābi‘īn*, i.e. the generation that followed the Prophet’s companions, and then the generation that followed. He then said that corruption would spread after those noble generations. Then there would be people who would be unscrupulous in their testimony, untrue to their trust, and who would not honour their commitments. They would prefer to enjoy the pleasures of this life, and this would leave its mark on them.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that the best of all people are the believers who were his contemporaries. They are his companions who met him, believed in him as God's Messenger and remained Muslims to the end of their lives. They are the ones who shouldered the responsibility of delivering the message of Islam far and wide. They strove for God's cause, sacrificing their all for it, and were always ready to give all their support to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

   God praises them in several places in the Qur'an, as in the verses that says: 'As for the first to lead the way, of the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār, as well as those who follow them in [the way of] righteousness, God is well-pleased with them, and well-pleased are they with Him. He has prepared for them gardens through which running waters flow, where they shall abide forever. That is the supreme triumph'. (9: 100) In other verses of the Qur'an, God makes clear that He has accepted their repentance of whatever error they might have committed. Consider the verse that says: 'Say: All praise be to God, and peace be upon His servants whom He has chosen'. (27: 59) Ibn 'Abbās says that the verse refers to the Prophet's companions, whom 'God has chosen to support His Messenger'.[1]

2. Next to the Prophet's companions in superior merit are the *tābi'īn* who met the Prophet's companions and learnt from them. They transmitted God's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah from the Prophet's companions, and reported their views in respect of explaining the Qur'an, Fiqh and theology.

3. Next in rank is the generation that followed that of the *tābi'īn*. They transmitted the knowledge of the Islamic faith and took good care to preserve the Sunnah and to record the hadiths of the Prophet. They were the ones who ensured the spread of Islam into all corners of the world.

   God, Mighty and Exalted, praises all three generations. Concerning the Prophet's companions, He says: '[Such war gains are for] the poor migrants who have been driven out of their homes and possessions, seeking God's favour and His goodly acceptance, and who help God and His Messenger. These are the ones who are true. (8) And to those who were already firmly established in the Home and in faith, those who love the ones that seek refuge with them and harbour no desire in their hearts for whatever the others may have been given. They give them preference over themselves, even though they are in want. Those who are saved from their own greed are truly successful'. (59: 8-9) And of the *tābi'īn* and their followers, He says: 'Those who come after them pray: 'Our Lord! Forgive us and forgive our brethren who preceded us in faith. Leave no malice in our hearts towards those who believe. Lord, You are compassionate, ever-merciful'. (59: 10)

1 Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'an*, Vol. 19, p. 482.

4 ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn, the narrator, doubted whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) added another generation after these two of the *tābi‘īn* and the next generation. Most versions do not include such doubt. They confirm the two generations without adding a third.

5 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then speaks about the corruption and wrong practices that would be witnessed among his community after those generations. There would be people who would come forward as witnesses, without being asked for a testimony. This would not be due to any strong desire to state the truth and ensure that right was done; it would rather occur due to their complacency and readiness to give false evidence. This is confirmed by another version of the hadith, narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd, which includes: ‘Then there will come after them a generation when a person’s testimony precedes his oath, and his oath precedes his testimony’.[1] This means that they would be careless about their testimony and not bothered if they were considered reliable or unreliable. As for those who would come forward to testify in order to ensure justice and support the oppressed, these would be the best of witnesses, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ‘Shall I tell who the best of witnesses is? He is the one who gives his testimony before being asked’.[2]

6 Another characteristic of such people is that they are untrue to their trust. Therefore, people will not entrust them with anything regarding themselves or their property.

7 The Prophet (peace be upon him) adds another description of them, stating that they do not honour what they commit themselves to do, whether it is for God’s sake or for others. If any of them pledges himself to do some act of worship or gives a promise to another person, they do not honour such a commitment.

These characteristics are stated by the Prophet as belonging to hypocrites. He said: ‘Among the marks of a hypocrite are three [characteristics]: when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he reneges; and when he is placed in a position of trust, he betrays’.[3]

8 The last characteristic of such people mentioned in this hadith is that they care only for the pleasures of this world and this is marked on their bodies. Obesity is common among them, and this is evidence of carelessness and seeking worldly pleasures. This does not mean that every fat person is a transgressor or that every hypocrite is obese. It is a description that applies to many of them, showing them as preoccupied with worldly cares.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2652; Muslim, 2533.
2 Related by Muslim, 1719.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 33; Muslim, 59.

# Implementation

1. Every educator, advocate of Islam and every person in a position of authority should promote love and respect of the Prophet's companions in people's hearts.

2. Every Muslim should learn the history of the Prophet's companions and try to emulate them in the strength of their faith and in their values. Ibn 'Abbās rightly describes them saying: 'They raised the banner of Islam, and endeavoured to choose the best for the Muslim community. Thus, they showed the ways and standards of *ijtihad* and determining the proper way for Muslims. As they did that, God's blessings became clearly apparent, and His faith was well established and clearly identified. Through the Prophet's companions, God reduced disbelief to absolute disgrace, removing its stalwart advocates and pillars. God's word became supreme, while the word of disbelievers was brought utterly low. God's peace, grace and blessings be to those pure and sublime souls. In life, they were God's devoted servants, and after death, their heritage remained alive. They gave sincere counsel to all mankind. They aimed for the life to come before reaching it, and they departed this world when they were still alive'.[1]

3. Every Muslim must make sure never to be disrespectful of the Prophet's companions and never revile them. They were the Prophet's dear companions and, next to the prophets, were the best of mankind.

4. For every Muslim, the safe attitude is to overlook the conflict that took place between them. Everyone of them tried to do what they felt to be right.

5. Loving the Prophet's companions is the mark of a true believer, while hating them is a mark of hypocrisy. Everyone should consider his position by this standard.

6. Everyone is recommended to read the history of the main figures of the *tābi'īn*, so as to learn how they became the best of people after the prophets and the Prophet's companions.

7. The proper conduct for a Muslim is to pray to God to grant His acceptance to the Prophet's companions and bestow mercy on the *tābi'īn* and those who follow them with clear conscience. We all should pray that God will bring us alongside them in company with the Prophet in Paradise.

8. True scholarship requires that a person should acknowledge his doubt or error on a particular point, rather than try to arbitrarily press his point, going into error and misleading others.

9. Testimony is a very serious matter which should never be underestimated. It is important that one should be absolutely clear and certain of what he says before standing as a witness.

1 Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, Vol. 1, p. 371.

10 This hadith does not contradict the strong recommendation to come forward to testify about something a person knows for certain. Such a person need not wait to be called as a witness in order to bring about what is right and fair. This is particularly applicable when someone is the only person who has such information and can give such true testimony.

11 It is most important to be true to one's trust. God has forbidden all betrayal of trust. He says: 'Believers, do not betray God and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray the trust that has been reposed in you'. (8: 27)

12 Betrayal of trust includes that a person does not do his work to the best of his ability, cheating in examinations, sales and commercial transactions. It also includes giving misleading information to patients so as to pay for unnecessary tests.

13 Being true to one's promise is a characteristic of believers. God says in reference to good believers: 'They are the ones who are true to their bond with God and never break their covenant'. (13: 20) Every Muslim should stick to the characteristics of believers and discard those of hypocrites.

14 Making a pledge, i.e. *nadhr*, to do some good deed, such as voluntary fasting or giving a charitable donation, is discouraged because it commits a person to do what is not obligatory for him. This commitment may become a burden. However, when one makes such a pledge, one must fulfil it. God says: 'Let them fulfil their pledges'. (22: 29)

15 A Muslim should not pursue all types of worldly pleasures. He should take only what is legitimate and sufficient. To give most of one's attention to worldly matters will divert a person from what Islam recommends.

22

# Hadith

# DEATH AND THE GRAVE

Anas ibn Mālik narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. When a man is laid in his grave, and his friends turn away, he hears the noise of their shoes.
2. Two angels come to him and sit him up. They ask him: 'What did you say about this man, Muhammad?'
3. He said: "As for the believer, he will say: I bear witness that he is God's servant and Messenger". He will be told: "Look at your place in Hell. God has replaced it for you with a seat in Heaven". The Prophet said: "He will see both".
4. As for the unbeliever, or the hypocrite, he will say: I do not know. I said what other people said.
5. He will be told: May you have never known or said.
6. He will then be hit by an iron hammer in between his ears. He shall send out a cry which will be heard by those close to him, but not by humans or jinn. (1)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1338; Muslim, 2870.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿As for him who, after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, puts himself in contention with God's Messenger and follows a path other than that of the believers – him shall We leave to that which he himself has chosen, and shall cause him to endure Hell. How evil a journey's end.﴾ (4: 115)
- ﴿Before the Fire they are brought, morning and evening, and then on the Day when the Last Hour comes, it will be said: 'Cast Pharaoh's people into the worst suffering'.﴾ (40: 46)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger for ten years. The Prophet prayed to God to bless his life, and God gave him plenty of wealth and children and he attained to a very old age. Anas was one of the last of the Prophet's companions to die. He took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, as also the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the interrogation by two angels when a person is buried. Everyone is asked about the Prophet (peace be upon him). If he is a believer, he will be made to see his seat in Heaven, and his grave is made wider for him. If he is an unbeliever, he will see his seat in Hell and will suffer torment in the grave until the Day of Judgement.

# Message and Meaning

1. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells his companions about something of the realm beyond our human perception. He tells them about the interrogation that is carried out when a deceased person is buried in the grave, and about the comfort or torment faced in the grave. He mentions that when the deceased is stowed in the grave and relatives and family begin to leave, his soul is returned so that he is in a stage of a special type of life which is called the *barzakh* life, or life of the intervening stage. The Prophet mentions that this happens a very short time after burial, so that the deceased will have heard the steps of his relatives who followed his funeral procession to the graveyard as they depart.

2. Then two angels attend him, whose names are said to be Munkar and Nakīr. They sit him up and ask him about God's Messenger (peace be upon him) and what he thinks about him. Did he believe in him and follow his faith, or disbelieve in him and discard his religion?

   Authentic hadiths mention that the deceased is questioned about God, his religion and the Prophet. In this hadith, however, only the question about the Prophet is mentioned. Believing in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) necessarily means believing in God, and accepting Islam as one's faith.

3. If the deceased is a believer, he will answer that Muhammad was God's Messenger and that he believes in him and follows his religion. The two angels will then give him the happy news that he will be in Heaven. They show him the place he would have occupied in Hell had he disbelieved, then they show him his place in Heaven which God has prepared for him for being a good believer. He will be delighted with the news and his grave will be given extra space.

4. If the deceased is an unbeliever or a hypocrite, he will say: 'I do not know. I said what other people said'. An unbeliever used to say what other unbelievers said about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), describing him as a sorcerer, poet, liar, madman, etc. A hypocrite used to say what believers said, but he merely repeated it without being convinced of its truth. He did not believe in the Prophet as God's Messenger.

5. The two angels respond by a supplication that he may never have known or followed anyone who knew, and may never have benefited by the Qur'an when it was read or heard. This because he never tried to find out or know the truth.

6 He will then be hit powerfully on the head with an iron hammer. He will send out a very loud cry heard by all animals, but not by humans or jinn. These two are excepted by an act of God's grace. Were they to hear it, it would spoil their lives. Zayd ibn Thābit narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'This community is tested in its graves. Were it not that you may stop burying your dead, I would have prayed to God to enable you to hear what I hear of the torment in the grave'.[1]

Were they to hear such cries, they would have been compelled to believe and refrain from sin. This is contrary to the purpose of making this life a test for mankind.

The fact of the torment in the grave and the interrogation by the two angels are confirmed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Every Muslim must believe in this even though we cannot perceive it. Being spared such torment in the grave serves as a good tiding that a person will be safe on the Day of Judgement. Whoever is spared torment at this stage will find the next stage easier.

1 Related by Muslim, 2867.

# Implementation

1. Try to review some admonition and circulate it to others. Seek such admonition in God's Book and in the Prophet's statements. Such admonition is now easy to find in published books, audio recordings and videos. We would all do well to remind ourselves time and again of the life to come, starting with the grave, so that we prepare ourselves to what will inevitably come.

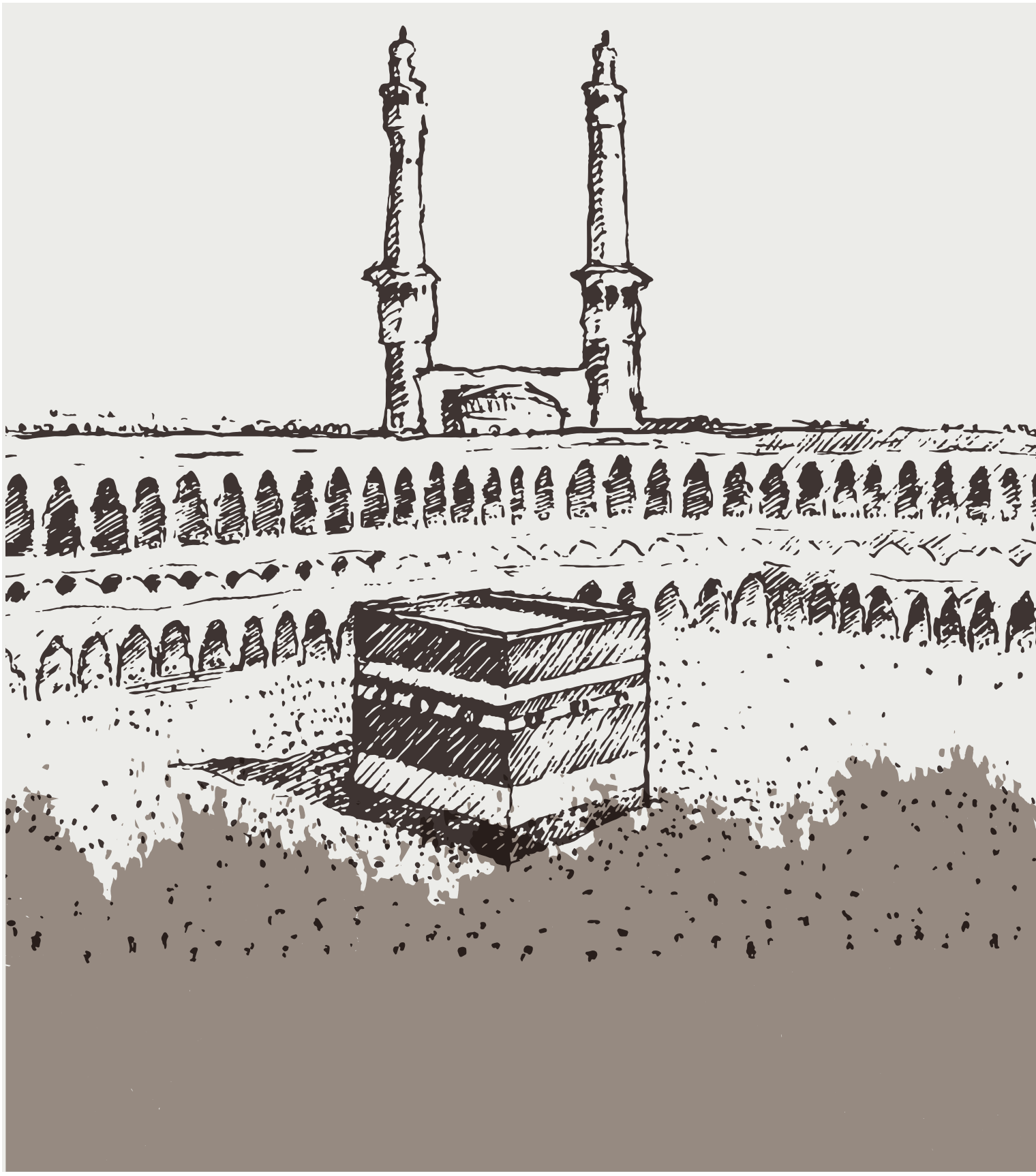
2. When you hear some information given by God or His Messenger, you should reflect on what measures you need to take. When you believe in the torment in the grave and the interrogation by the two angels, you need to prepare for this and have your answers ready. You should also hasten to do good deeds and commit yourself to obedience of God, so that such matters will intercede on your behalf and confirm you in your answers.

3. When in the grave, a person will give the answers that he was convinced of in his life. A hypocrite used to declare his belief in Muhammad (peace be upon him) as God's Messenger, but he will not give this answer when he is in his grave, because his heart was full of falsehood and hypocrisy. It is necessary, therefore, that we should confirm our belief in God and be absolutely convinced that 'there is no deity other than God and that Muhammad is God's Messenger'.

4 The person who deprives himself of entry into Heaven which is so vast that its width is the same measure as the heavens and earth, and exposes himself instead to torment in the grave and abiding in Hell forever is certainly not wise. What he gains in return is nothing more than enjoying a few days or even years, or perhaps a few hours or minutes, in this present life.

5 A believer sees his place in both Heaven and Hell while he is in his grave. This serves as clear evidence that both are in existence now. We should remind ourselves that this is what will certainly happen in the life to come. Are we prepared for it?

6 Preparation for interrogation in the grave and praying for shelter from its torment are aspects of our faith. This is extremely serious. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to add a supplication for protection from it in every prayer, just before he finished a prayer with *salām*.



23

# Hadith

# SOME OF THE MINOR SIGNS OF THE LAST HOUR

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **The Last Hour shall not arrive until knowledge has been withdrawn;**
2. **Earthquakes increase;**
3. **Time draws closer;**
4. **Temptations will be prevalent;**
5. **Homicide – which is murder, murder – increases;**
6. **And your wealth becomes plentiful, too plentiful.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿If only, when the misfortune decreed by Us befell them, they humbled themselves! Rather, their hearts were hardened and Satan made their deeds seem goodly to them. (43) Then, when they had clean forgotten what they had been reminded of, We threw open to them the gates of all good things, until just when they were rejoicing in what they had been granted, We suddenly took them to task; and they were plunged into utter despair.﴾** (6: 43-44)
- **﴿We never send signs for any purpose other than to give warning.﴾** (17: 59)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He migrated to Madinah and endured much trouble on the way. His slave ran away. He used to say: 'What a long and hard night! Yet it saved me from the land of unbelief'. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet nicknamed him Abu Hurayrah because he saw him carrying a cat in one of his sleeves. He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

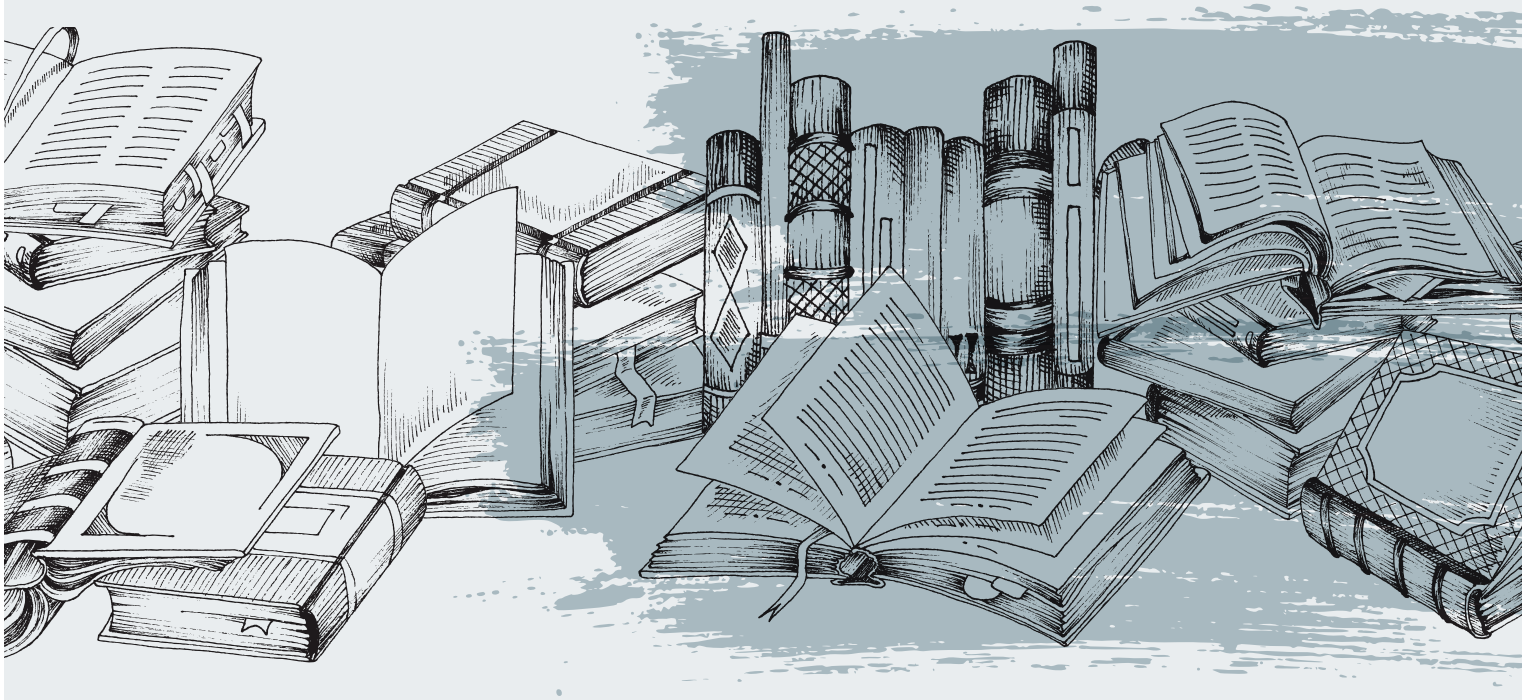
The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith about some of the minor signs of the Last Hour. These are: knowledge becomes scarce, earthquakes increase, time draws closer, temptations will be prevalent, killing increases and wealth becomes too plentiful.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1036.

# Message and Meaning

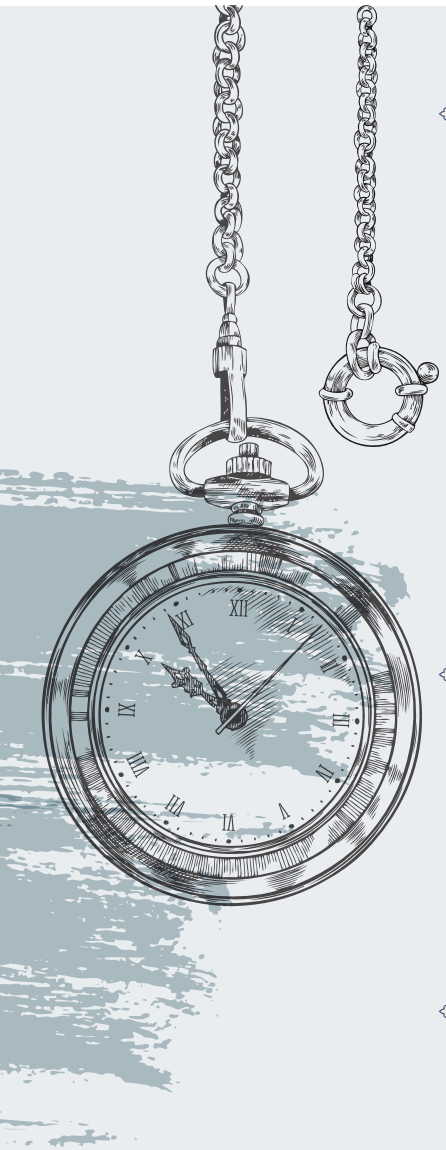
1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions several of the minor signs of the approach of the Last Hour. The first of these is that knowledge is withdrawn and becomes scarce. This will happen as many scholars will die and there will not be enough pursuing knowledge to carry on with their heritage.

2. Another sign is that earthquakes will increase and affect all regions of the earth. It is common knowledge that earthquakes cause destruction, which varies according to the magnitude and depth of such quakes.



3. Yet another sign is that time will draw closer. People will have shorter lives and markers for the passage of time will become shorter. Thus, time will move quicker towards the Day of Judgement, as God will determine all this by His will. This is akin to a hadith which quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying: 'The Last Hour will not arrive until time has drawn closer: a year will be like a month; a month like a week; a week like a day; a day like an hour; and an hour like the burning of a weed'.[1]

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2332.



4 Another sign is that temptations become prevalent. The Prophet says: 'Hasten to do good deeds before troubles come thick like patches of night darkness, when a man may be a believer in the morning and becomes an unbeliever in the evening, or may be a believer in the evening, then become an unbeliever in the morning. He sells his faith for some worldly gain'.[1]

The Prophet also mentions that strife will increase in intensity in the period leading to the Last Hour, so that a believer will wish for death because of the hard troubles he encounters on account of his faith. The Prophet says: 'By Him who holds my soul in His hand, the world shall not end until a man will pass by a grave and throw himself over it saying: "I wish I was in place of the dweller of this grave". This is not for any religious reason, but rather because of his distress'.[2]

5 Along with increased temptations, another sign of the Last Hour appears, which is increased killing. People will consider it lightly, or its causes will increase. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned that the unlawful killing of a Muslim is one of the seven worst sins. God, Mighty and Exalted, gives a very stern warning against it. He says: 'He who deliberately kills a believer, his punishment is Hell, therein to abide permanently. God will be angry with him, and will reject him, and will prepare for him a dreadful suffering'. (4: 93)

6 The last sign mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that wealth will be plentiful, so that all or the great majority of people will be well off. A rich person may not find someone who will accept his zakat. The Prophet says: 'Give *ṣadaqah*. There will come a time when a man will walk around [offering] his *ṣadaqah*, but the one who is offered it will say to him: "Had you come yesterday, I might have taken it. Today, I have no need for it". He will not find anyone to accept it'.

1 Related by Muslim, 118.
2 Related by Muslim, 157.

# Implementation

1. This hadith provides evidence confirming the Prophet's status as God's Messenger. He tells us in this hadith several signs, and some of these have actually happened. It behoves us that whenever we see evidence of this in our lives we should feel proud of our faith and do whatever strengthens that belief.

2. The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us about the trials and troubles that will occur towards the end of time serves as a directive to every Muslim to have good knowledge and insight, so that he avoids being exposed to such troubles. Whenever one hears of such trouble, one should take stock and do whatever is necessary to fulfil what God requires.

3. One of the signs of the Last Hour is the withdrawal of knowledge and the increase of ignorance. Many ignorant people who are devoid of Islamic knowledge will even give fatwas, ignorantly attributing their views to God. It is very important to distance oneself from such people. As Muslims, we should be careful in our choice of whom to learn our religion from. We need not fear such ignorant people, nor unwisely try to check them. This is an aspect of the test God sets for us.

4. Muslims should work hard to acquire Islamic knowledge and ensure that it is preserved. Islamic scholarship will continue to decrease, which means that the need for it will always increase.

5. If you experience or hear of an earthquake, let that be a reminder to you of the Day of Judgement.

6. If shorter life is one of the signs of the Last Hour, everyone should hasten to turn to God in repentance and increase one's good deeds, before death comes all of a sudden, or time provides less chances to perform acts of voluntary worship.

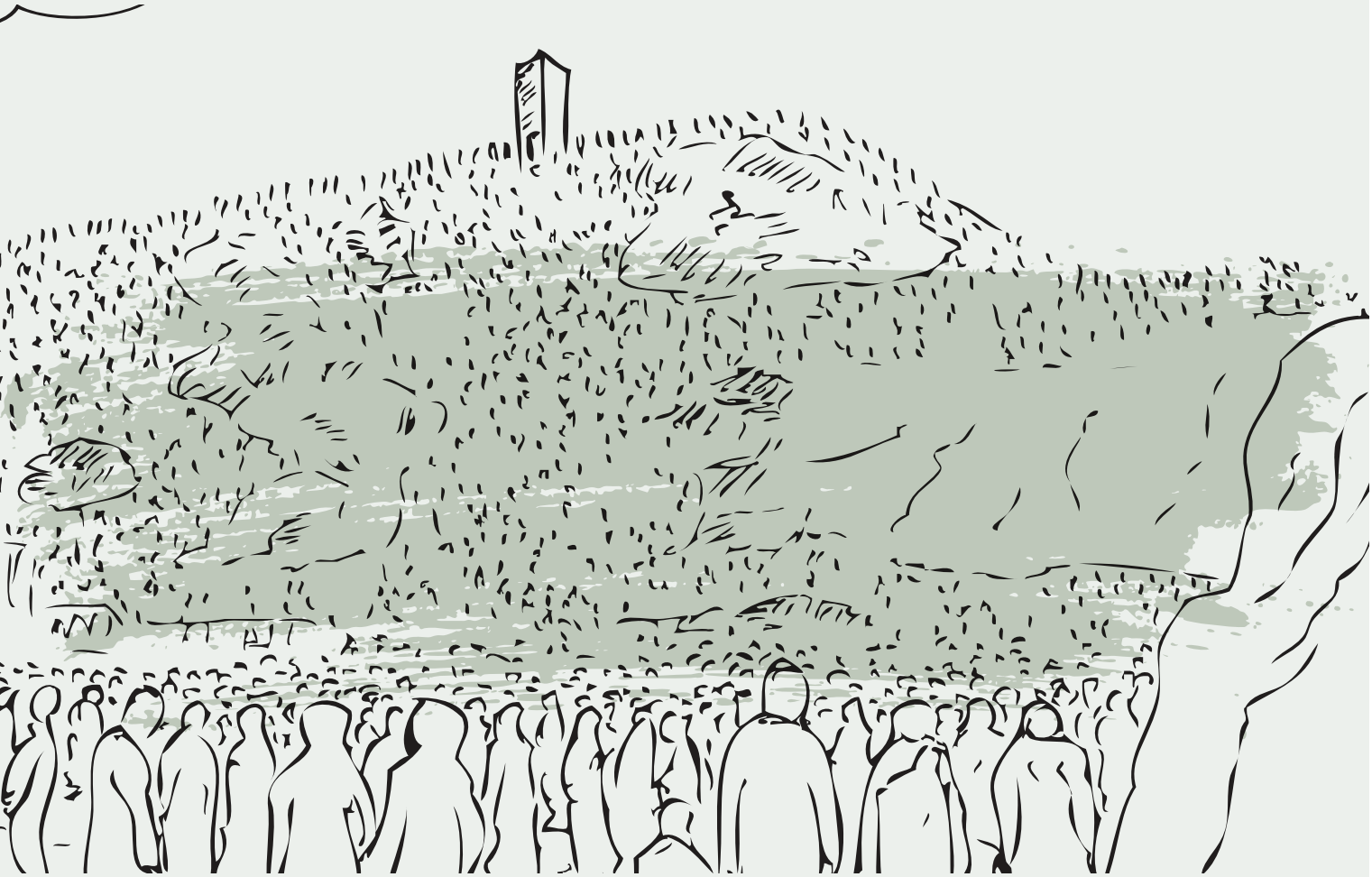
7. Every Muslim should hold on to his faith and not succumb to temptation and desire. It is advised that he resists these as strongly as he can. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Temptations are held before hearts, one by one, like a straw mat. A heart which takes one will have a black spot and a heart which rejects one will have a white spot until there are two types of heart: one is white and solid like al-Ṣafā which will not be shaken by any test as long as the heavens and earth endure, and the other is black with little whiteness, like an overturned cup which neither distinguishes what is good nor rejects what is evil, except what it may fancy'.[1]

8. An aspect of the Prophet's guidance is to seek God's refuge from all temptation. Zayd ibn Thābit narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Seek God's shelter from all temptation: apparent and discreet'.[2]

1 Related by Muslim, 144.
2 Related by Muslim, 2867.

9 One cause of increased killing is that it will be taken too lightly, for various reasons including: weakness of faith, irrational zeal in the defence of oneself, community or country, unlawful competition for wealth or women, careless attitudes towards lethal weapons, and the frequent watching of violence in films and games by youngsters. It is incumbent on individuals and society to combat all these.

10 That wealth becomes plentiful and people lead comfortable lives are not indicative of good times. The Prophet's time was the best period in human history, but such affluence was not prevalent. We should endeavour to make our time one of reform and good conduct.



24

# Hadith

# SOME OF THE MAJOR SIGNS OF THE LAST HOUR

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Hasten to do good deeds before six events:**
2. **the Impostor,**
3. **the smoke,**
4. **the beast,**
5. **the rising of the sun from the west,**
6. **the general matter,**
7. **and one's private matter.**[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2947.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing.﴾ (3: 133)
- ﴿On the Day when certain of your Lord's signs do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not believe before, or who did not put its faith to good uses. Say: 'Wait if you will; we too are waiting'.﴾ (6: 158)
- ﴿When the Word comes to pass against them, We will bring forth to them out of the earth a beast which will say to them that mankind had no real faith in Our revelations.﴾ (27: 82)
- ﴿Wait, then, for the Day when the skies shall bring forth a kind of smoke which will make things clear. (10) It will envelope the people. Painful is this suffering! (11) [They will cry]: 'Our Lord! Relieve us from this suffering; for, indeed, we are believers'.﴾ (44: 10-12)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. The Prophet prayed for him that he would not forget what he learnt. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some of the signs of the Last Hour which come all of a sudden. He orders his community to hasten to do good deeds before any of these signs appear.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges us to do good deeds before we witness six events that will preoccupy people and prevent them from doing good deeds. He particularly tells us to do such good deeds before the sun rises from the west, an event which closes the chance of doing a rewarded good deed or repentance being accepted.

2 The first of these events is the appearance of the Impostor. This would be the greatest trouble ever. The Impostor is a man of large stature with one blind eye. The word *kāfir*, which means 'unbeliever', is written on his forehead. He appears towards the end of time and claims to be God – yet his claim is very far from the truth. God will give him the power to do some miraculous things, to add to the severity of the test people will face. Thus, the Impostor will point to the sky and rain will fall, and point to the earth and it will bring forth its plants. He will point to barren land and its treasures will follow him. He will cut a man in two halves and stand between them, then he will call on the man and he will regain full life. There are other reports about him. Then Jesus, son of Mary, will return and lead the Muslim army and kill the Impostor.

The Prophet mentions the Impostor first because when he appears, the beads indicating the approach of the Last Hour will split, and the signs will occur, one after the other, until the Hour happens. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The signs are beads held together by a string. When the string is split, those which it holds will follow each other'.[1]

3 The second sign of the imminent approach of the Last Hour is the appearance of smoke which will cover the earth for forty days. Believers will be affected in a way similar to having a cold. It will be much harder for unbelievers and hardened sinners: it will go through their noses, pierce their ears and keep them short of breath. It is a breath from Hell. God says in the Qur'an: 'Wait, then, for the Day when the skies shall bring forth a kind of smoke which will make things clear. (10) It will envelope the people. Painful is this suffering! (11) [They will cry]: "Our Lord! Relieve us from this suffering; for, indeed, we are believers"'. (44: 10-12)

4 The third sign is the beast that will be brought forth and will speak to people. God says: 'When the Word comes to pass against them, We will bring forth to them out of the earth a beast which will say to them that mankind had no real faith in Our revelations'. (27: 82) Neither the Qur'an nor the Prophet's hadiths give us further details about this beast and what it will look like. God knows best.

The beast will be brought forth shortly after the sun rises from the west. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'The first sign to appear is that the sun will rise from the west; and the beast coming out in mid-morning [to speak] to people. Whichever of these two comes first, the other will come shortly after'.[2]

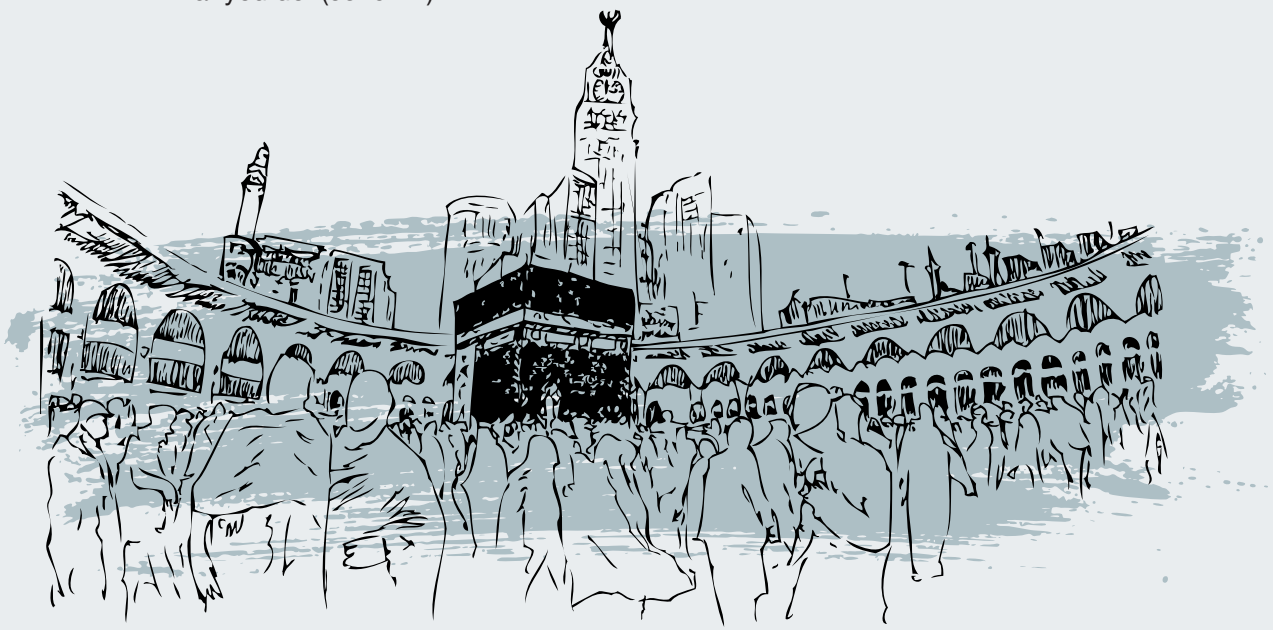
1 Related by al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*, 8639.
2 Related by Muslim, 2941.

5 The fourth sign is that the sun will rise from the west, which is the opposite of its usual course as it rises from the east. In an authentic hadith: 'When the sun sets it runs until it reaches its destination beneath the Throne, where it prostrates itself. It requests permission to do so and it is granted. However, a time will soon come when it is about to prostrate itself but it is prevented, and it requests permission but it is denied. It is told to go back to whence it came. It is then that the sun rises from the west'.[1]

6 Sign number five is resurrection, which the Prophet describes here as 'the general matter', because it applies to everyone without exception. When resurrection takes place, everyone will regret having fallen short of what is required. A believer will wish that he had done more deeds that please God, while an unbeliever will wish to go back in time and repent.

7 The last of the six signs is death, which the Prophet calls 'everyone's private matter'. He calls it a private matter because it concerns everyone on his or her own. As such, it is different from resurrection which occurs to all together.

God orders His servants to turn to Him in repentance of their sins and to do good deeds before they die. He says: 'Believers! Do not let your riches or your children make you oblivious of the remembrance of God. Those who do so will surely be the losers. (9) Give, then, out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to any of you, and then he says, 'My Lord, if You would grant me a delay for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous'. (10) God does not grant a delay to any soul when its term has come. God is fully aware of all that you do. (63: 9-11)



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3199; Muslim, 159.

# Implementation

1. We should remember the Prophet's care, compassion and mercy and how he extended these to his community. He told them of the time when it will no longer be useful for an unbeliever to declare his acceptance of Islam. It is important for everyone to follow the Prophet's order and to hasten to do good deeds before the appearance of any of these signs.

2. The Prophet's companions learnt these hadiths which contain information that will be very strange to any human mind. However, as they were intelligent firm believers, they accepted the information given to them. Their acceptance was based on their knowledge that God's Messenger only said the truth, and that the One who sent him His message had complete and perfect knowledge. Every wise person who comes later will accept this information without question, and will not be ashamed of teaching others.

3. Every believer should be prompt in turning to God in repentance and seek His forgiveness of his sins, and should hasten to do good deeds before his time of life is over. God is much-forgiving: He opens His hands during the night so that a person who has committed sin during the day will turn to Him in repentance. He also opens His hands during the day so that a person who has committed sins during the night will turn to Him in repentance. He forgives all sins.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has warned his community of the Impostor on several occasions, because he knew the great danger he represents.

5. An important task advocates of Islam and scholars should attend to is that they should give due importance to what happens to the Muslim community and to explain to them the trials that may befall them. They should educate them in what God wants them to do when new events take place. Their sermons, speeches and writings should not be far removed from what people face in life.

# 25 Hadith

# THE IMPOSTOR

Anas ibn Mālik narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Every Prophet warned his community against the one-eyed liar.**
2. **He is certainly one-eyed,**
3. **and your Lord is not one-eyed.**
4. **Between his eyes '*kāfir*' is written.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers.﴾** (9: 128)
- **﴿Surely, those against whom your Lord's word [of judgement] has come true will not believe, (96) even though every sign should come to their knowledge, until they are faced with the grievous suffering.﴾** (10: 96-97)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and his mother, Umm Sulaym brought him to the Prophet to serve him. He stayed with him and took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, as also the pledge to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives us some description of the Impostor Misīḥ, who will provide the hardest trial on earth. Every prophet warned his people about him and the hardship that comes with him. He is one-eyed, and in between his eyes the word *kāfir*, meaning 'unbeliever', is written and this will be read by every Muslim.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7131; Muslim, 2933.

# Message and Meaning

1 Like earlier prophets, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) took care to explain the trial represented by the Impostor Misīḥ, because it is the hardest trial that will ever be witnessed on earth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Nothing that happens in between Adam's creation and the Last Hour will be harder than the trial of the Impostor'.[1] Therefore, every prophet warned his community about him and explained to them the trial associated with him. This trial is hardest because of the numerous preternatural things God lets him do. These will be most amazing to all rational people. He is called the Misīḥ because one of his eyes is swept over. It is also said that he is given this name because he travels the whole earth in forty days. He is referred to as *al-Dajjāl*, i.e. the Impostor, because of all the lying, falsehood and deception he resorts to. He claims to be God. God lets him do such things that amount to an incredibly difficult test for people.

In several hadiths the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the Imposter's actions and the travels he undertakes, covering the entire earth, apart from Makkah and Madinah which are out of bounds for him. The Prophet further gives some physical description of him, and tells a Muslim what he should do if he meets him. He then mentions that Jesus (peace be upon him) will then return, join the Muslim imam in prayer, and then join the Muslim army that will fight the Impostor. He will ultimately kill him at Lydda near Jerusalem. The emergence of the Impostor is given in the most authentic way, *mutawātir*, stated by more than forty companions of the Prophet who report it from him directly. Thus, it is certainly a confirmed report and there is no logical argument to preclude it.

2 The Prophet then mentions the most distinctive of his features, saying that one of his eyes is blind and the other protruding over his face, with a thick piece of skin projecting over it. Both are defective, but one of them is totally gone.

In other hadiths the Prophet mentions that his hair is very curly, and that he is short with his eye looking like a floating grape.[2]

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) made clear that none of these descriptions applies to God. As the Impostor claims to be God, being one-eyed is a defect that cannot apply to God. The same applies to the rest of his description. Every one of his features is a defect which invites people's sarcastic remarks. Yet they are combined in him. We know that to God only fine attributes of perfection apply.

4 Another feature distinguishing the Impostor is that the word *kāfir*, which means 'unbeliever', is written between his eyes. Every Muslim, whether lettered or unlettered, will be able to read it. This is confirmed in another hadith quoting the Prophet: 'Every Muslim will read it'.[3] The word 'every' indicates 'all'. The writing is certainly true, as God makes it one of the signs that categorically assert that he is a liar unbeliever. The writing is made apparent to every Muslim, but God does not show it to unbelievers whom He leaves to their own devices. There is nothing to prevent any of this.

1 Related by Ahmad, 16373.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3441.
3 Related by Muslim, 2933.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained to his community the nature of the trial involving the Impostor, and he explained what would protect them from it. Indeed the Prophet has shown us every good thing and warned us against every evil. As such, he deserves all our love, obedience and allegiance as well as our giving priority to his Sunnah above anything other people say.

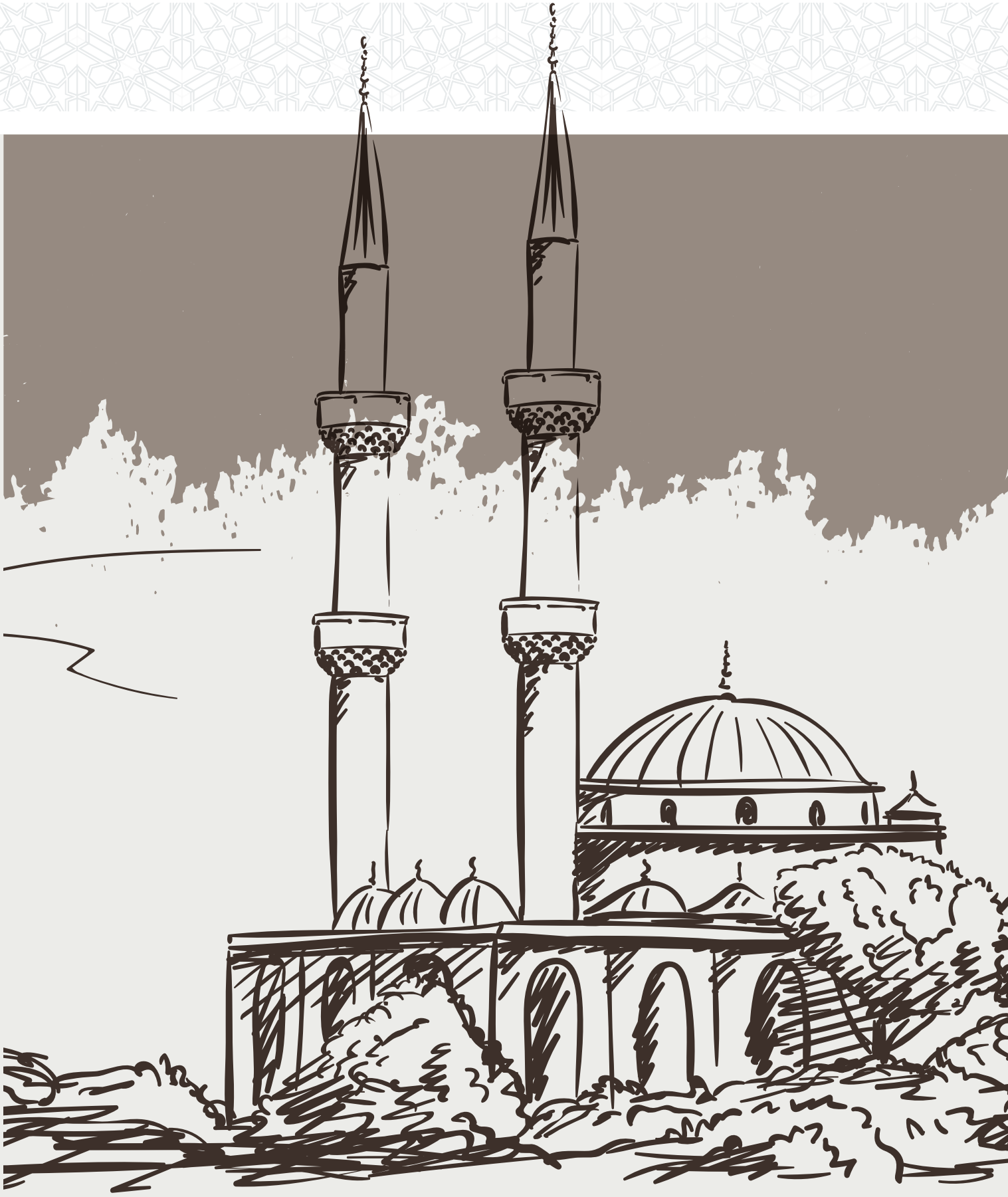
2. One thing the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us will protect us from the trial of the Impostor Misīḥ is to memorize the first ten verses of Surah 18, The Cave. He said: 'Whoever memorises ten verses from the beginning of Surah The Cave shall be protected from the Impostor'.[1] Another hadith narrated by al-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān quotes the Prophet: 'Whoever of you encounters him should recite against him the opening of Surah The Cave [Surah 18]'.[2]

3. The Prophet used to seek God's refuge from the trial of the Impostor. 'Ā'ishah narrated that God's Messenger used to include in his supplication in every prayer: 'My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the torment in the grave; and I seek refuge with You from the trial of the Impostor Misīḥ; and I seek refuge with You from the trials of life and death. My Lord, I seek refuge with You from sin and the burden of debt.'[3] If this was done by the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is appropriate for us to do the same and often pray to God to protect us from the trial of the Impostor.

4. Advocates of Islam and teachers should follow the example of prophets and warn people against trials that may be manifest or concealed.

5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that God protects believers from the trial of the Impostor, enabling them to read the word *kāfir*, i.e. unbeliever, written between his eyes. The most assured protection a believer has against the Impostor is to be firm in his belief.

1 Related by Muslim, 809.
2 Related by Muslim, 2937.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 832; Muslim, 589.



# 26 Hadith

# THE IMPOSTOR

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. The Last Hour will not arrive until the sun has risen from the west.
2. When it rises from the west all mankind will believe.
3. At that time 'to believe will be of no avail to any human being who did not believe before, or who did not put its faith to good use'. (6: 158)[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿**Are they waiting for the angels to come to them, or for your Lord [Himself], or are they certain of your Lord's signs to appear? On the Day when certain of your Lord's signs do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not believe before, or who did not put its faith to good uses. Say: 'Wait if you will; we too are waiting'.**﴾ (6: 158)
- ﴿**And when they saw Our might, they said: 'We believe in God alone, and we renounce those we used to associate as partners with Him'. (84) But accepting the faith after they had seen Our might was not going to benefit them at all.**﴾ (40: 84-85)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was practically the leading reference in Hadith and was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that a major sign of the arrival of the Last Hour is that the sun will rise from the west. When this happens, it will be too late to repent of one's sins. Repentance will not be acceptable from anyone after seeing this sign.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4635; Muslim, 157.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the last sign of the arrival of the Last Hour, which is that whereby the sun rises from the west, which is the opposite of its normal rising place. In an authentic hadith, the Prophet says: 'When the sun sets, it runs until it reaches its destination beneath the Throne, where it prostrates itself. It requests permission to do so and it is granted. However, a time will soon come when it is about to prostrate itself but it is prevented, and it requests permission but it is denied. It is told to go back to whence it came. It is then that the sun rises from the west'.[1]

2. When the sun rises from the west, all people will believe in God, Mighty and Exalted. However, this will be a belief by force, not by choice. What was kept from people's knowledge will have been manifest and all people will realize that the Last Hour has arrived. They will declare their belief, hoping for safety.

3. However, the time for repentance will now be over. No repentance by any sinner will then be accepted, and no declaration of accepting Islam will be accepted from any unbeliever. The reason being that such belief is necessitated by this new happening. It is a fruitless belief, like that of he who is in his final death throes. God says: 'Repentance shall not be accepted from those who indulge in their evil deeds and, when death comes to any of them, he says: I now repent"'. The Prophet said: 'God will accept anyone's repentance as long as he has not reached the point of death'.[2] It is the same as the belief of a person who is overwhelmed by God's punishment. God refers to what Pharaoh said when he was about to drown: 'And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea; but Pharaoh and his legions pursued them with tyranny and aggression. But as he was about to drown, Pharaoh said: 'I have come to believe that there is no deity other than Him in whom the Children of Israel believe, and to Him I surrender myself'. (90) [But God said:] 'Only now? But before this you were rebelling [against Us], and you spread corruption in the land'. (10: 90-91)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3199; Muslim, 159.
2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3537; Ibn Mājah, 4253.

# Implementation

1. God has concealed the timing of the Last Hour so that everyone should endeavour to take the necessary preparations for it at all times, increasing his devotion and improving his standing. Likewise, he kept the Night of Power unknown so that a believer should seek it throughout the last ten days of Ramadan. It does not benefit any person to know the exact time of the Last Hour. What will benefit him is to prepare for it by adding to his good deeds. When someone asked the Prophet, 'When is the Last Hour', the Prophet's answer was: 'What have you prepared for it?'[1]

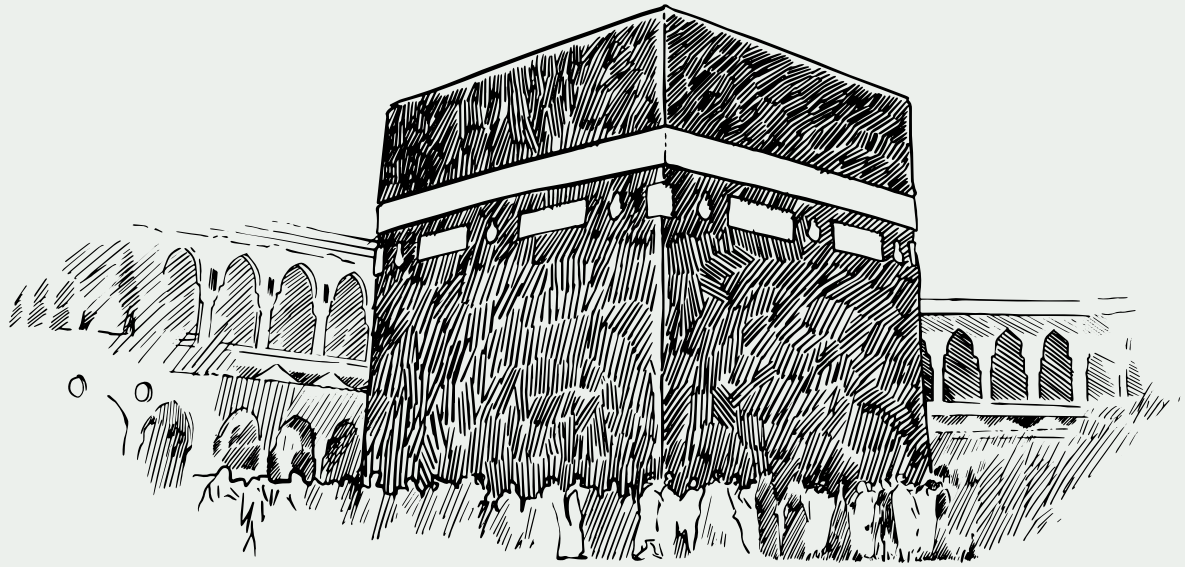
2. It is important, therefore, to make sure to take the matter of the Last Hour very seriously. It is the time when the universal system is altered, and the sun will rise from the west. We should be mindful of this event and be apprehensive of its arrival.

3. Everyone should hasten to repent of their sins before death overtakes them or prevents them from turning to God in repentance. Bakr al-Muzanī said: 'Every day and every night God brings into this world give us the reminder to make the best use of them. They may be our last day or night and we may not have another after they have gone.[2]

4. Imam al-Bukhari related this hadith, and he certainly made the best of his life. He used to repeat two well-known Arab maxims:

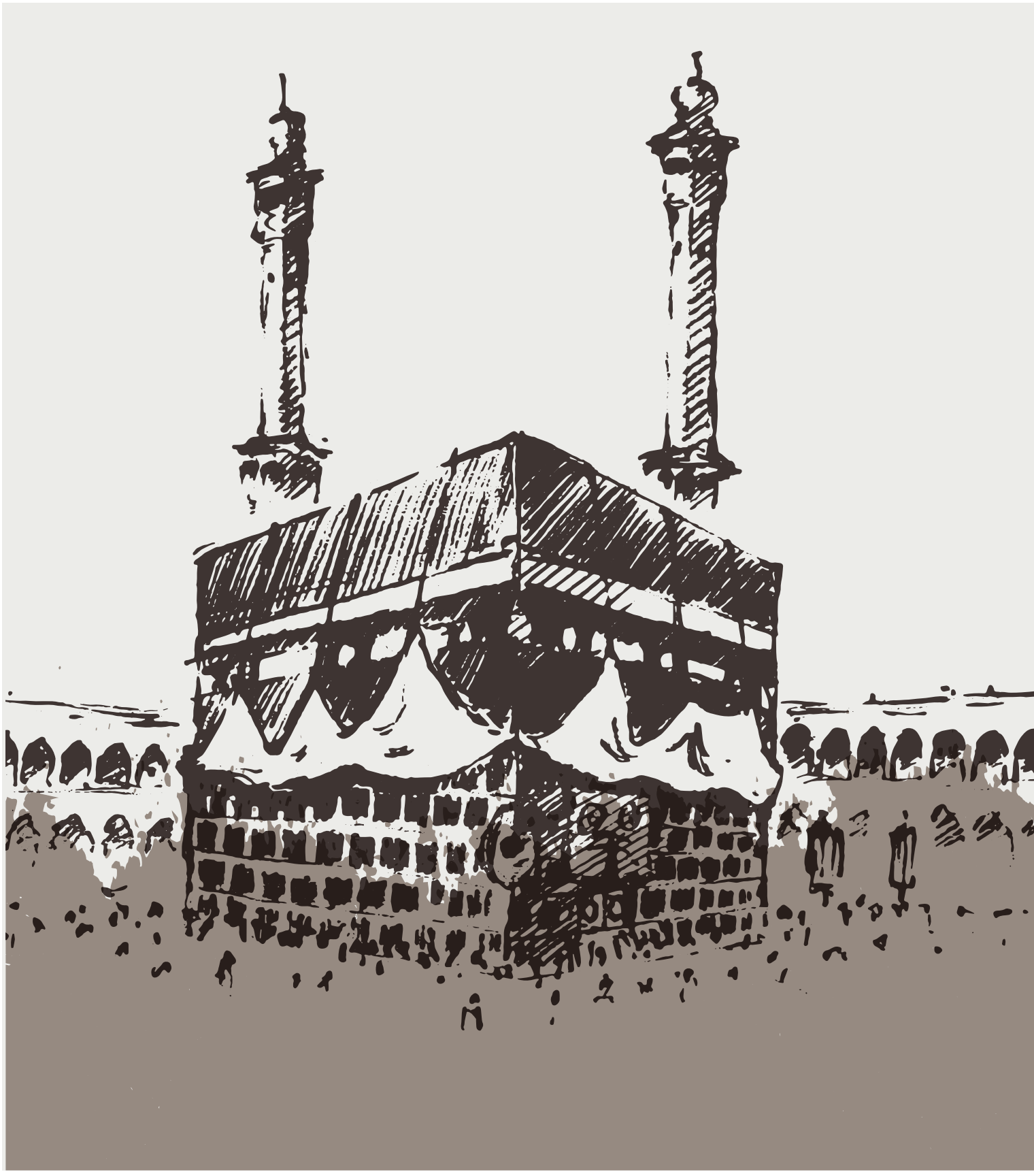
   When you have time to spare, use it in voluntary prayer. You never know but your death might come all of a sudden.

   Many a healthy person died without having suffered any illness.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7153; Muslim, 2639.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 391.



# THE RESURRECTION AND THE RECKONING

‘Adiy ibn Ḥātim narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. God shall speak to every single one of you, with no interpreter between Him and you.
2. A person shall look to his right and will see nothing but what he has done; and shall look to his left and will see nothing but what he has done; and shall look in front of him and only see the Fire facing him.
3. Guard yourselves against the Fire, even with half a date.
4. Whoever does not find that, then even with a good word.[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Do you not see how God compares a good word to a good tree? Its roots are firm and its branches reach to the sky. (24) It yields its fruits at all times by its Lord’s leave. Thus does God set parables for people so that they may reflect.﴾ (14: 24-25)
- ﴿On the Day of Resurrection, every one of them will appear before Him all alone.﴾ (19: 95)
- ﴿Believers! Guard yourselves and your families against a fire fuelled by people and stones, over which are appointed angels, stern and mighty, who never disobey God in whatever He commands them and always do what they are bidden to do.﴾ (66: 6)
- ﴿On that Day you shall be brought to judgement and none of your secrets will remain hidden.﴾ (69: 18)

## The Narrator

Abu Ṭarīf ‘Adiy ibn Ḥātim ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Sa‘d al-Ṭā’ī was the son of Ḥātim al-Ṭā’ī who was renowned for his generosity. ‘Adiy was a Christian who visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) and noticed his character. He embraced Islam in Year 9 or 10 AH, 631 or 632 CE. When God’s Messenger passed away, he brought the zakat due from his tribe and handed it over to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. This was during the time that several Arabian tribes had reverted to disbelief. ‘Adiy and his people remained faithful to Islam. He took part in the liberation of Iraq. He passed away in Kufah, Iraq, in Year 67 AH 687 CE, at the age of 120.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that on the Day of Judgement everyone will stand in front of his Lord for the reckoning. God will speak to everyone without an interpreter or middle person. Nothing will benefit a person then other than his or her own good deeds.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7512; Muslim, 1016.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that every single person shall stand before God who will hold him to account for his deeds. God will speak to every person without an intermediary or an interpreter. Everyone will come alone, with none to defend or intercede for them. God says: 'And now, indeed, you have come to Us individually, just as We created you in the first instance; and you have left behind all that We conferred on you. Nor do We see with you those intercessors of yours whom you had claimed to be partners in your affairs. Broken are the ties which bound you, and that which you have been asserting has failed you'. (6: 94)

2. When a person stands in front of his Lord, he will have no support from any quarter except his own deeds. He will look around, seeking support from anyone who could save him the hardship of reckoning. The Prophet says: 'Whoever is made to go through the reckoning is doomed'.[1] He looks to the right and left, but he sees nothing other than his own deeds. He then looks in front of him and he will only see the Fire facing him. The reason is that Hell will be ahead of him and he cannot evade it, because he must go along the path.

3. Since this will be the situation faced by everyone on the Day of Resurrection, then it is wise to guard against Hell and hope for safety from it. He should then present the best of good deeds and be keen to draw closer to God at all times, not disdaining any good deed, however small or simple. One such easy deed is to give whatever one can in charity, i.e. *ṣadaqah*, even if it is merely half of one date.

4. If one has nothing to donate, then a good word said to please God may be all you need to save yourself from the Fire.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4939; Muslim, 2867.

# Implementation

1. Remember that you will stand in front of God, alone, with none of your family or friends giving you support, and having nothing of your wealth, position or social status to assist you. We all need to be ready for this event, but we should also remember that 'for those who stand in fear of their Lord's presence there shall be two gardens'. (55: 46)

2. It is important not to disdain any deed, whether good or bad nor however trivial it looks. The largest mountains are composed of heaps of sand and pebbles. God says: 'Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it then, (7) and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it then also. (99: 7-8)

3. One of the most effective deeds that remove a person from Hell is charity, i.e. *ṣadaqah*. Hence, the hadith urges it. Moreover, God says: 'Give, then, out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to any of you, and then he says, "My Lord, if You would grant me a delay for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous"'. (63: 10)

4. Do not delay giving a needy person even a drink of water, or saying a single glorification of God, or reciting even a single verse of the Qur'an. Do not say that you want to prepare yourself to do more. Things occur to distract you and draw your attention to something else. 'A beggar knocked at 'Ā'ishah's door. She said to her servant to give him some food. The servant went then came back and said: "I found nothing to give him". 'Ā'ishah told her to try again and find something. The servant did so and brought one date. 'Ā'ishah said to her: "Give it to him. It consists of many atom weights, if it is accepted by God"'.[1]

5. Many are the good deeds that are equal to, or greater than, half a date, such as pleasing one's parents or family with some conversation or service, carrying an elderly or weak person's heavy article, giving a poor person a needed article of clothing, taking care of a widow or an orphan, etc. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Do not belittle any act of kindness, not even that you meet your brother with a cheerful face'.[2]

6. A person's tongue may either take that person to an eternal Heaven or may drive him to Hell. Thus, a person's destiny is determined by his own tongue which will either save or condemn him.

7. Sit down with your family or your students and discuss the good deeds that you are able to accomplish, without placing yourselves under undue strain or hardship. Thus you will be able to motivate one another.

1 Related by al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, 3190.

2 Related by Muslim, 2626.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **This fire of yours which a person lights up has the heat of one out of seventy portions of Hell's heat.**

2. **People said: By God, it would have been sufficient [as it is], Messenger of God.**

3. **He said: It is made greater by sixty-nine portions, each is similar to it in heat.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿**Nay! It is the Last Hour that they deny. For those who deny the Last Hour We have prepared a blazing fire. (11) When it sees them from a far-off place, they will hear its fury and its raging sigh. (12) And when, chained together, they are flung into a tight space within, they will pray for extinction there and then.**﴾ (25: 11-13)
- ﴿**Believers! Guard yourselves and your families against a fire fuelled by people and stones, over which are appointed angels, stern and mighty, who never disobey God in whatever He commands them and always do what they are bidden to do.**﴾ (66: 6)
- ﴿**We have heavy fetters and a blazing fire, (12) food that chokes and painful suffering .**﴾ (73: 12-13)
- ﴿**Hell stands as a vigilant watch guard, (21) a final resort for those who transgress all bounds. (22) Therein they shall abide for ages, (23) tasting neither coolness nor any drink, (24) except boiling fluid and decaying filth: (25) a fitting recompense.**﴾ (78: 21-26)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī emanating from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He stayed close to the Prophet. His mother was an idolator, and she used to speak ill of the Prophet, which grieved Abu Hurayrah and he wept on account of this. He went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to pray for his mother. The Prophet did and she believed in Islam. He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) states that the burning power of the fire of Hell is seventy times as much as the fire of our world.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3265; Muslim, 2843.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) draws a comparison between the fire we have in this world and the fire of Hell, stating that the heat of the fire people use is only one portion, while the fire God has made ready for the punishment of unbelievers and sinners is seventy times as intense.

2. The Prophet's companions considered this very grave. They said that were the fire in the Hereafter to be the same in intensity as the fire in our world, it would be enough to deliver severe punishment and provide the right incentive to steer away from sin. It, of itself, would suffice to burn people, animals, plants and all types of inanimate objects.

3. The Prophet confirms that the fire in the Hereafter is sixty-nine times more intense and hotter than the fire familiar to them.

# Implementation

1. Whoever addresses people – whether a parent, an advocate of Islam, a teacher, etc. – should seek to illustrate his ideas, using similes, numbers, metaphors and other methods of expression in order to help his audience to understand him fully.

2. Reminding people of Heaven and Hell is a very effective method of admonition. The Qur'an uses it often. We will do well to resort to it in our own discussions in mosques, homes, gatherings and via the media.

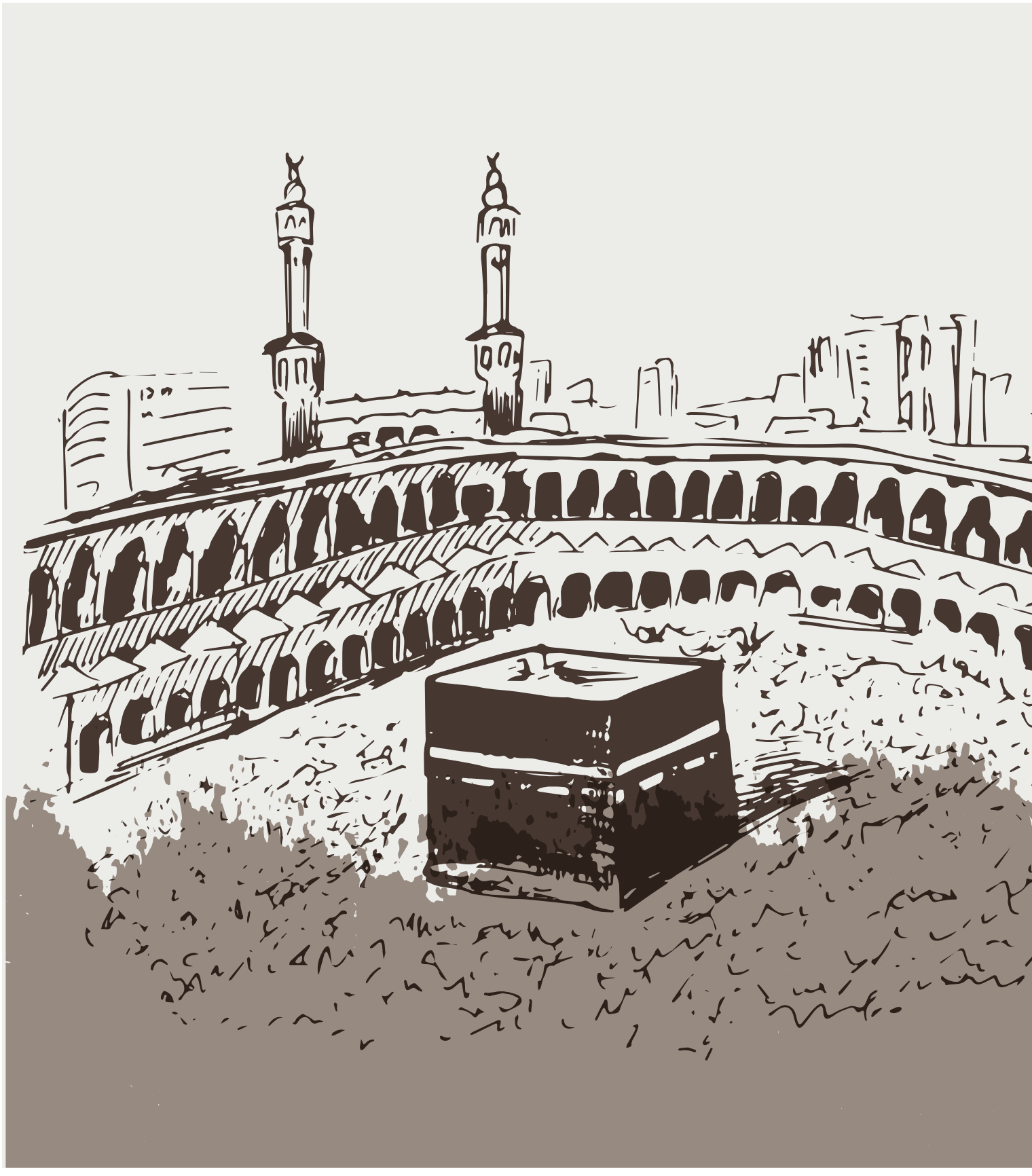
3. It behoves man to run away from a fire which is seventy times more intense in heat than the fire of our world. Everyone should do more of good deeds that keep him away from the Fire. Real success is to save oneself from the Fire and ensure admittance into Heaven. God says: 'He who shall be drawn away from the Fire and brought into paradise shall indeed have gained a triumph'. (3: 185)

4. To take measures to avoid burning in our world is perfectly right. The Prophet (peace be upon him) recommends such measures, even if it means putting out a small flame lest it might lead to the burning of a home. Therefore, it is wise to take precautions and close every way that leads to the spread of fire, although the use of fire is perfectly legitimate. Taking measures to protect oneself from the Fire of Hell is far more important.

5. To save people from fire in this life is a heroic and good deed which deserves thanks and gratitude. Advocates of Islam and scholars save people from a much fiercer fire. They deserve greater thanks and appreciation.

6. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray for God's refuge from the heat of Hell. Abu Hurayrah narrated that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say in his prayer: 'My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the trial in the grave; and from the trial of the Impostor; and from the trials of life and death; and from the heat of Hell'.[1] The Prophet was guarded and God forgave him whatever sin he might have committed at any time in life. Nevertheless, he prayed for God's refuge from Hell. It behoves every Muslim to always pray for such refuge.

1 Related by al-Nasā'ī, 5520.



# HEAVEN

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. God said:
2. ‘I have prepared for My devout servants what no eye has ever seen,
3. no ear has ever heard of
4. and no human mind has ever thought of’.
5. Read, if you will: ‘No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do’. (32: 17) [1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿For those who do good there is a good reward, and more besides. Neither darkness nor any disgrace will overcast their faces. These are destined for paradise, where they will abide.﴾ (10: 26)
- ﴿No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do. (17) Is, then, the one who is a believer to be compared to one who is wicked? The two are certainly not equal. (18) Those who believe and do righteous deeds will have the gardens of repose for an abode in recompense for what they used to do.﴾ (32: 17-19)
- ﴿Let all this be a reminder. The God-fearing will certainly have a good place to return to: (49) gardens of perpetual bliss, with gates wide open to them. (50) They will be comfortably seated there, and they will call for abundant fruit and drink, (51) having beside them well-matched mates of modest gaze. (52) This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning: (53) this, Our provision for you will never end.﴾ (38: 40-54)
- ﴿Such is the Paradise which the God-fearing are promised: In it are rivers of water for ever pure, rivers of milk the taste of which never alters, rivers of wine, a delight for those who drink, and rivers of honey pure and clarified. In it they shall have all kinds of fruit. And there they receive forgiveness by their Lord. Are they to be compared to those who are to abide in the Fire and be given a drink of scalding water that tears their bowels?﴾ (47: 15)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah’s name was ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, who emanated from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He embraced Islam through al-Ṭufayl ibn ‘Amr al-Dawsī. He stayed close to the Prophet for nearly four years. He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet’s hadiths. He was the Prophet’s companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

God, Mighty and Exalted, informs us that He has prepared for his righteous servants a great variety of comforts and luxuries, the like of which no human being has ever seen or heard of, or even imagined.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3244; Muslim, 2824.

# Message and Meaning

1. This is a hadith which the Prophet (peace be upon him) narrates as stated by God, Mighty and Exalted, but it is not part of the Qur'an. It is called *qudsī* hadith, i.e. a sacred hadith.[1]

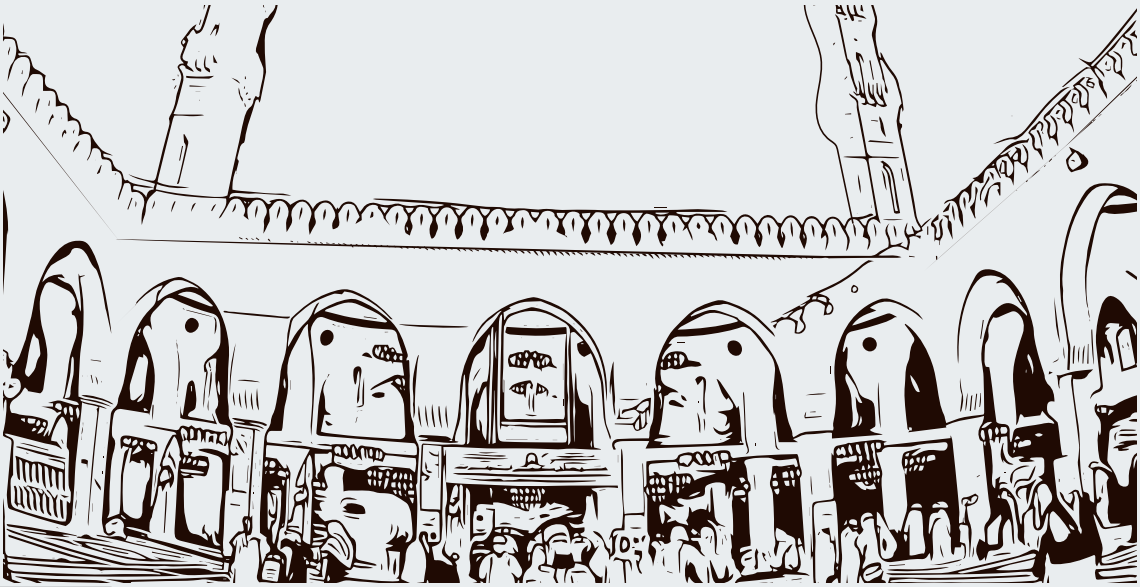
2. God, Blessed and Exalted, states that He has prepared for His devout servants, as reward for their obedience and worship, what they have never seen. They have hardly seen things that bear the same names, such as trees and rivers, as well as palaces made of gold, silver, carved pearls, etc.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasizes that the luxuries of Heaven are unlike anything in our world. Indeed, no one has ever heard of what they are like.

4. God confirms that what He has prepared will never be known to humans in this life. Since they have never experienced anything like it through their two faculties of perception, i.e. seeing and hearing, they cannot imagine the nature of such a splendid life. Whatever people may imagine of types of luxury and comfort, they cannot visualize what they will have.

5. God further confirms all this quoting His own revelation and inviting us to read: 'No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them'. (32: 17) This means that no one knows what God keeps in store for the believers among His servants: it is all happiness, riches, luxuries that delight the eyes and please the souls.

The Qur'an frequently speaks about Heaven and its happiness. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A little place in Heaven where only a whip may be placed is better than this world and all it contains'.[2]



1 Although a *qudsī* hadith is revealed by God, it is expressed by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Unlike the Qur'an, such a hadith may not be recited in prayer. Moreover, its reading is not an act of worship. – Editor's note.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3250.

# Implementation

1. The best love is to love righteous and devout people, because they are with God, 'He loves them and they love him'. (5: 54) They present to Him their acts of obedience and worship, but He has no need of that, and He prepares for them what no eye has seen, no ear has heard of and no mind has ever imagined. It behoves every believer to stick to such people. Whenever one feels lazy or complacent, one should remember the fine abode God has made ready for them.

2. Al-Ḥasan said: 'Such people concealed their [good] deeds in this present life; so God has concealed for them what no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard of'.[1] In this case, every Muslim should do in private what no one knows except the One who has prepared that abundance of secret luxury.

3. Heaven is already in existence, and God has prepared it for his righteous servants. If some worldly but forbidden pleasure is offered to you, remind yourself that Heaven is already waiting and it is only a matter of perseverance for a short time before you will be taken there.

4. Many people feel the temptation of worldly pleasures, imagine themselves enjoying them and hope to have them, even though the entire pleasures and enjoyments of this world, real and imaginary, cannot equal a hand span in Heaven. A wise person will keep reminding himself of Heaven and what it offers in order to keep yearning for it.

5. You, as well as your family and friends, should often remember Heaven and its description, and remind others of it. God has made this easier nowadays with easier ways of learning and communication.

6. The greatest blessing of all in Heaven is seeing God, Mighty and Exalted, even though we do not see Him in this life. God says: 'Some faces will on that Day be radiant with happiness, (22) looking towards their Lord'. (75: 22-23) Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh narrated: 'We were sitting with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) when he looked at the moon on a night when it was full and said: "You shall indeed see your Lord as you see this moon, and you shall not be barred from seeing Him"'.[2] The worst suffering that will be inflicted on the wretched ones is that they will be deprived of seeing Him. God says: 'No indeed! On that Day they shall be shut out from their Lord'. (83: 15)

1 Al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, Vol. 3, p. 513.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 554; Muslim, 633.

30

Hadith

# MERCY AND JUSTICE IN GOD'S DECREE

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1 **When God brought His creation into existence, He wrote in His Book,**

2 **which is with Him above the Throne:**

3 **My Mercy prevails over My Wrath.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿**Your Lord has committed Himself to bestow grace and mercy: if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and then repents and mends his ways, He will be much-forgiving, ever-merciful.**﴾ (6: 54)
- ﴿**My grace encompasses all things; so I will confer it on those who steer away from evil, and spend in charity, and who believe in Our signs.**﴾ (7: 156)
- ﴿**Our Lord! You embrace all things with [Your] grace and knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn to You in repentance and follow Your path, and shield them from the suffering in the blazing Fire.**﴾ (40: 7)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, from a branch of the Azd, a Yemeni tribe. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. Despite being very far away, he migrated to Madinah and remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the Prophet's companion who narrated the largest number of hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that when God, Mighty and Exalted, completed His creation, He wrote in the Imperishable Tablet which is with Him above the Throne: My Mercy prevails over My Wrath.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3194; Muslim, 2751.

# Message and Meaning

1. When God, Mighty and Exalted, willed to bring His creation into existence, which, as explained in another hadith, means that before He actually created them, He wrote all that happens to His creation. He wrote it all in the Imperishable Tablet or in some other great book He keeps.

2. This record is imperishable and kept with God, above His throne. The throne is a great creation placed above the seven heavens. It is carried by great angels. The word throne means the seat of dominion. This is evidence of His sublimity and that He – limitless is He in His glory – is above His heavens, established on the throne, as He says: 'The Lord of Grace, established on the throne of His almightiness'. (20: 5)

3. God Almighty wrote in that record: 'My Mercy prevails over My Wrath'. This means that what His creation will receive of His Mercy is more than what they receive of His Wrath. It is indeed what they receive in their varied situations. God says: 'If God were to punish people [at once] for the wrongs they do, He would not leave a single living creature on the surface of the earth'. (35: 45) Had it not been for God's mercy, none of His creation would have merited entry into Heaven. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'No one's deeds shall ensure entry into Heaven. People said: 'Not even you, Messenger of God?' He said: 'Not even me, unless God bestows on me favours and mercy'.[1]

   One aspect of the prevailing of His mercy is that He gives time to sinners to repent and inspires them to pray for forgiveness. When they do, He forgives them their sins.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5673; Muslim, 71.

# Implementation

1. Be reassured of God's grace. Just as He wrote the lots of His creation in the Imperishable Tablet, He also wrote in it the mercy He bestows. Therefore, we should not regret what happened in the past and should not worry about the future. We should always rely on God.

2. This record in which people's fate is written also includes the details of God's mercy. God keeps it with Him above His throne. This stresses the great importance of this record. It behoves every rational person to give this record its proper status and focus on this very grave matter, rather than trivial thoughts.

3. God's mercy prevails over His wrath. He accepts the repentance of sinners no matter how grave their sins are. Let everyone look at himself, and he will find that he has done numerous sins involving all his organs and faculties, such as sight, hearing, speech, hands and legs. Yet we only need to listen to God's gracious address: 'You servants of Mine who have transgressed against their own souls! Do not despair of God's mercy: God forgives all sins; He alone is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (39: 53)

4. Draw closer to God's mercy, even by the length of a hand span. A hadith mentions: 'A man from the Children of Israel killed ninety-nine people. He then asked whether he could repent. He went to a priest and asked him. The priest told him that his repentance would not be acceptable, so he killed the priest. He continued to ask. Someone told him to go to a particular village. On his way, he was overtaken by death. He leaned towards it with his chest heading forward, then he died. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed his case. God inspired the one [village] to come nearer and the other to go farther, and He told the angels to measure the distance between them. He was found to be nearer [to the village of good people] by a hand span, and he was forgiven his sins'.[1]

5. To God belongs all dominion and knowledge and He has the throne and the record that contains everything. Yet to Him belongs all mercy and grace. When people have some authority, through ownership, knowledge, position, parenthood, physical strength, wealth, etc. they may use their power to dominate those below them and they treat them unfairly. It behoves everyone to examine their conduct.

6. People will inevitably commit some wrong, because they cannot be perfect. To set their conduct to perfection requires the combination of mercy and wrath. True perfection requires that mercy should be greater and more dominant than wrath. Therefore, a Muslim should endeavour to acquire the pattern set in this hadith, so that his mercy prevails over his anger. Since man is weak, he should seek God's help to strengthen his mercy.

7. A person who hopes for God's mercy should be merciful to others, seeking only God's reward. He should always remember that God, the Lord of Grace, only extends His grace to those who are merciful.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3470; Muslim, 2766.

# 31 Hadith

# SOME TYPES OF GOD'S DECREE

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd narrated: God's Messenger, the truthful and who is given the truth, said:

1. **The creation of any one of you is brought together in his mother's womb for forty days, then he is a clinging cell mass for a similar period, then he is an embryo for a similar period.**

2. **Then God sends him an angel who is commanded to write four words: he writes down his means of livelihood, lifespan, actions and whether he is happy or unhappy.**

3. **Then the breath of life is blown into him.**

4. **Any one of you may behave like the people of Hell until there is but an arm's length between him and it, but that which has been written overtakes him. He will behave like the people of Heaven and thus he enters it.**

5. **And any one of you may behave like the people of Heaven until there is but an arm's length between him and it, but that which has been written overtakes him. He will behave like the people of Hell and thus he enters it.’**[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3332; Muslim, 2643.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Indeed, We create man out of the essence of clay, (12) then We place him, a gamete, in a safe place of rest. (13) Then We create out of the gamete a clinging cell mass, and out of the clinging cell mass We create an embryo. Then We create within the embryo bones, then We clothe the bones with flesh. We then bring this into being as another creation. Exalted be God, the best of creators. (14) And then, after all this, you are destined to die; (15) and then, you shall be restored to life on the Day of Resurrection.﴾ (23: 12-16)
- ﴿[It is God], the Almighty, the Ever-Merciful, (6) who makes most excellent everything that He creates. He begins the creation of man out of clay; (7) then He causes his progeny to be begotten out of the essence of a humble fluid; (8) then He fashions him and breathes into him of His spirit. Thus He endows you, mankind, with hearing and sight and hearts. Yet seldom are you grateful!.﴾ (32: 6-9)
- ﴿They question you about the spirit. Say, ‘The [knowledge of the nature of the] spirit belongs to my Lord alone. You, [mankind], have been granted but little knowledge’.﴾ (17: 85)
- ﴿Some people worship God on the border-line [of faith]. If good befalls such a person, he is content; but if a trial assails him, he turns away utterly; thus losing this world and the life to come. This is, indeed, a loss beyond compare.﴾ (22: 11)
- ﴿Never will God let people go astray after He has given them guidance until He has made plain to them all what they should avoid. God has perfect knowledge of all things.﴾ (9: 115)

## The Narrator

In this hadith, the Prophet mentions some stages of the development of a human pregnancy and when life is blown into it, as well as the writing of what God has determined for it.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that the final deeds a person does determine that person's fate in the life to come. Whoever concludes his life doing what the people of Heaven do will be in Heaven and whoever concludes his life doing as the people of Hell will join them there.

## Summary

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ibn Ghāfil ibn Ḥabīb who belonged to the Hudhayl tribe was one of the very early companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was the first to recite the Qur’an in public in Makkah. He migrated to Abyssinia, then to Madinah and took part in the Battle of Badr and all other military expeditions with the Prophet. He took care of the Prophet's sandals, helping him to wear them when he moved, and kept them for him when the Prophet sat down. He died in Madinah in Year 32 or 33 AH, 654 CE.

# Message and Meaning

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd is narrating here a hadith that includes some matters that are known only to God, as they relate to the realm beyond our human perception. Therefore, Ibn Mas‘ūd describes the Prophet as ‘the truthful, and who is given the truth’. This applies to whatever he tells of this world or the world beyond.

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the stages of development of a human embryo during its mother’s pregnancy. It starts as the woman’s egg fertilized by the man’s sperm in the mother’s body. As it reproduces, it becomes a cell mass that clings to the uterus. It then develops into an embryo.

2 When it has become an embryo, God commands the angel who looks after pregnancies to write down what is assigned to that person: its livelihood, life span, actions and whether happy or unhappy.

The angel writes other things as well, such as whether the embryo is to be a male or female,[1] its physical form, temperament and manners.[2] However, the hadith mentions only the first four because they are the most important, while the others are incorporated to them.

What the angel writes is different from what God has written in the Imperishable Tablet kept with Him. The angel’s writing is liable to be erased, changed or replaced for reasons God determines, such as answering prayers and the person’s good deeds. What God states in the Imperishable Tablet, which is also called *Umm al-Kitāb* or the Mother Book, is never changed. God says: ‘God annuls or confirms what He pleases. With Him is the source of all revelation’. (13: 39)

3 After this, God blows the spirit into the embryo and it becomes alive by God’s will. How the spirit is blown is something that God keeps to Himself. He has not given us any information about it. He says: ‘They question you about the spirit. Say, ‘The [knowledge of the nature of the] spirit belongs to my Lord alone. You, [mankind], have been granted but little knowledge’. (17: 85) We believe in what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has told us as given by God and we most certainly believe in God’s limitless power, as He describes it: ‘When He intends something to be, He only says to it, ‘Be’, and it is’. (36: 82)

This occurs when the embryo has taken human form. God says: ‘Mankind! If you are in doubt as to the resurrection, remember that We have created you out of dust, then out of a gamete, then out of a clinging cell mass, then out of an organized and unorganized embryo, so that We might make things clear to you’. (22: 5) The organized embryo is that which has been given human shape and form, while the unorganized one is an embryo that has not yet been given complete form.

4 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tell us that man’s deeds are considered on the basis of his final ones. What is decided is what God had originally known and willed for a person of happiness or misery. Thus, a person may for a long time do what the people of Hell normally do, but when his time of death draws near, repentance is facilitated for him by God, and He accepts such repentance. That person then concludes life with some good deeds and, therefore, he is

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3333; Muslim, 2646.

2 Related by Isḥāq ibn Rāhawayh in *al-Musnad*, Vol. 2, p. 344; al-Ajirī in *al-Sharī'ah*, P. 365.

admitted into Heaven. This is in line with what God has written in the Imperishable Tablet for that person, and what the angel writes when God sends him to the embryo which is still in its mother's belly.

5

The reverse is also true, with a person doing like the people of Heaven for a long time, but when he draws near to it, as his time of life is approaching its end, he is overtaken by what God had written for him. He will then do like the people of Hell and die doing such deeds. As such, he goes to Hell.

This does not mean that a believer may unintentionally go astray after having followed God's guidance, having done nothing wrong. It is an act of God's wisdom and justice. For example, such a man may worship God in ignorance and for personal gain: if he feels that he is given in plenty, he will express thanks, but if his circumstances are straitened, he will deny God's favour and be ungrateful. God describes such a person thus: 'Some people worship God on the border-line [of faith]. If good befalls such a person, he is content; but if a trial assails him, he turns away utterly; thus losing this world and the life to come. This is, indeed, a loss beyond compare'. (22: 11) Another example of such a person is that of a hypocrite, as the Prophet says: 'A person may appear to people to do what the people of Heaven do, but he is really one of the people of Hell; and another may appear to people to do what the people of Hell do, but he is really one of the people of Heaven'.[1]

That a person turns into someone who does badly after having being thought to be pious is very rare. Nonetheless, it does happen, demonstrating that the determining factor is the type of deeds one does towards the end of one's life. Therefore, no one should think too highly of one's own deeds. All this is an aspect of God's favour and abounding grace. People change course starting to do good after having done badly, and this happens frequently. As for abandoning what is good and picking up evil, this is very rare. Otherwise, people would be tempted.[2]

What happens frequently and consistently is that the happy people naturally choose to do good deeds, while the wretched immerse themselves in sin. 'Alī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'For every one of you, for every created being, God has assigned its place in Heaven or Hell, and has been recorded either wretched or happy'. A man said: 'Messenger of God, should we not, then, be resigned to what has been recorded and exert no effort?' He said: 'Whoever belongs to the people who will be happy will turn up doing as the happy people do, and whoever belongs to those who will be wretched will turn up doing as the wretched people do. Therefore, do what you can, as everyone's way is facilitated. Those who will be happy are inclined to do what happy people do, and those who will be wretched are inclined to do what wretched people do'. He then recited: 'As for him who gives and is God-fearing and believes in the truth of the ultimate good, We shall smooth the way to perfect ease. But as for him who is a miser and deems himself self-sufficient, and rejects the truth of the ultimate good, We shall smooth the way to affliction'. (92: 5-10)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2898; Muslim, 112.

2 Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, *Sharḥ al-Arbaʿīn al-Nawawiyyah*, p. 39.

# Implementation

1. Referring to the Prophet, Ibn Mas'ūd described him as 'the truthful who has been given the truth'. This indicates total belief in him, confirming and believing in what he says, even though it may be contrary to logic or cannot be proved or disproved. This is an example showing the fact that the Prophet's companions were the best of people, apart from prophets. They provide the example to follow in their belief in the Prophet and adherance to his guidance.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions the stages a human being goes through during pregnancy, long before the development of medicine and the use of advanced technology. Yet all these recent developments and advanced knowledge confirm the accuracy of what he said. A believer's faith is thus strengthened by the confirmation of advanced, modern knowledge of Qur'anic and Hadith statements.

3. Reflect on God's limitless power and how He takes an embryo stage by stage until its full formation, and how He determines everything. This should inspire belief in God Almighty and His great power and submission to Him.

4. If something happens to you in your work or livelihood, or if you wish for something different to what you do, do not waste time remonstrating with the divine will, or lamenting your lot. Accept what God has willed for you, and know that He determined it before you were born, and even before that. Hence, you can do nothing better than submit to God's will and do what pleases Him.

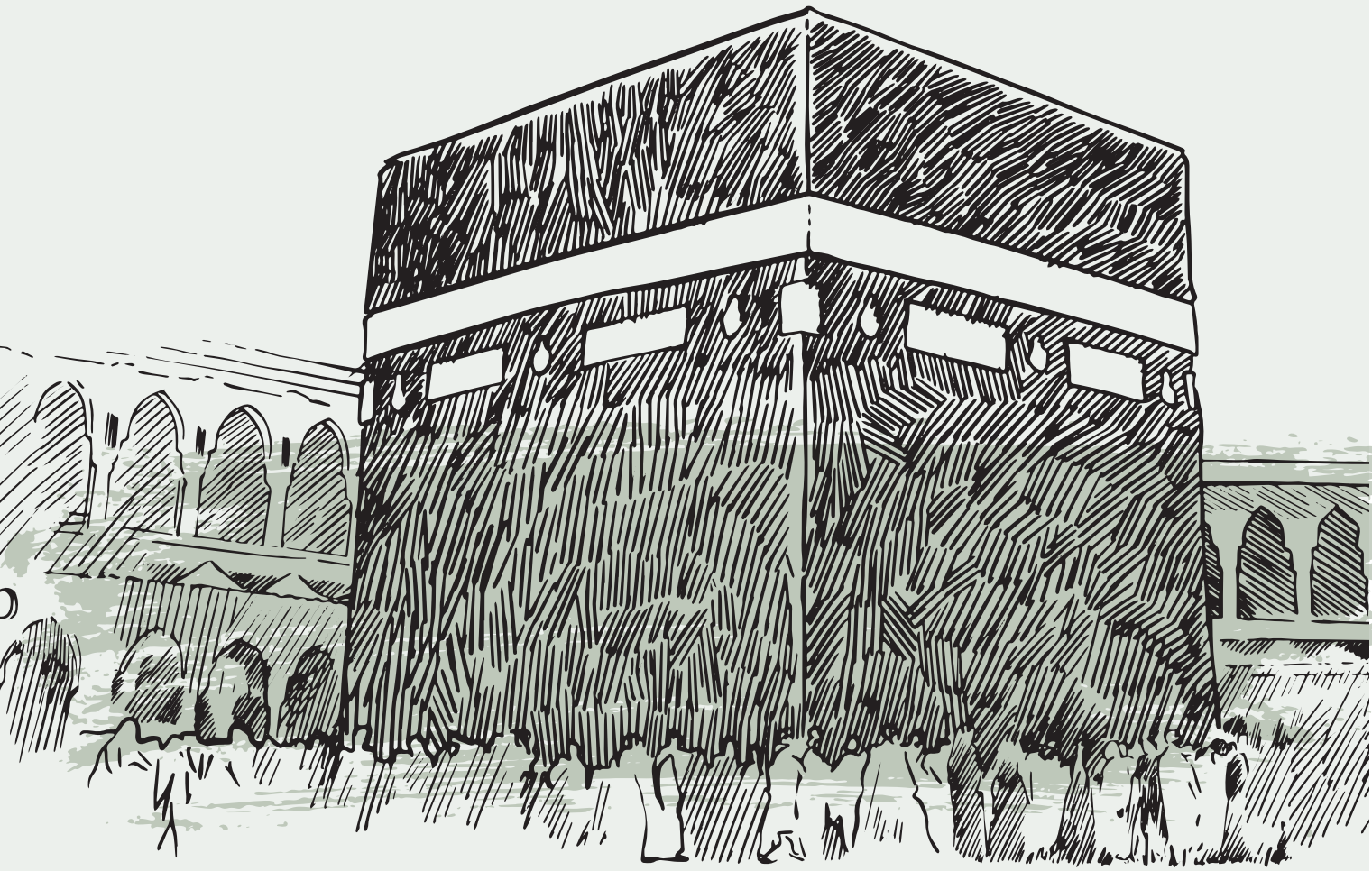
5. No one may say that any particular person will be in Heaven or Hell. This is determined by God alone. It is He who determines how everyone will end. A person who is now wretched may become happy, while the one who is now happy may later be wretched.

6. Man should never feel assured that his deeds are fine, taking things easy and slackening. It is the final deeds that determine results. Sufyān al-Thawrī used to weep and say: 'I fear lest I am written 'wretched' in the Imperishable Tablet'. He also said: 'I fear that I may be denied faith before death'.

7. A Muslim should always include in his supplication the prayer that God keep him firm in doing what pleases Him, and that he does not leave him to go astray. The Prophet often said in his supplication: 'My Lord who turns hearts over, confirm my heart in Your faith'.

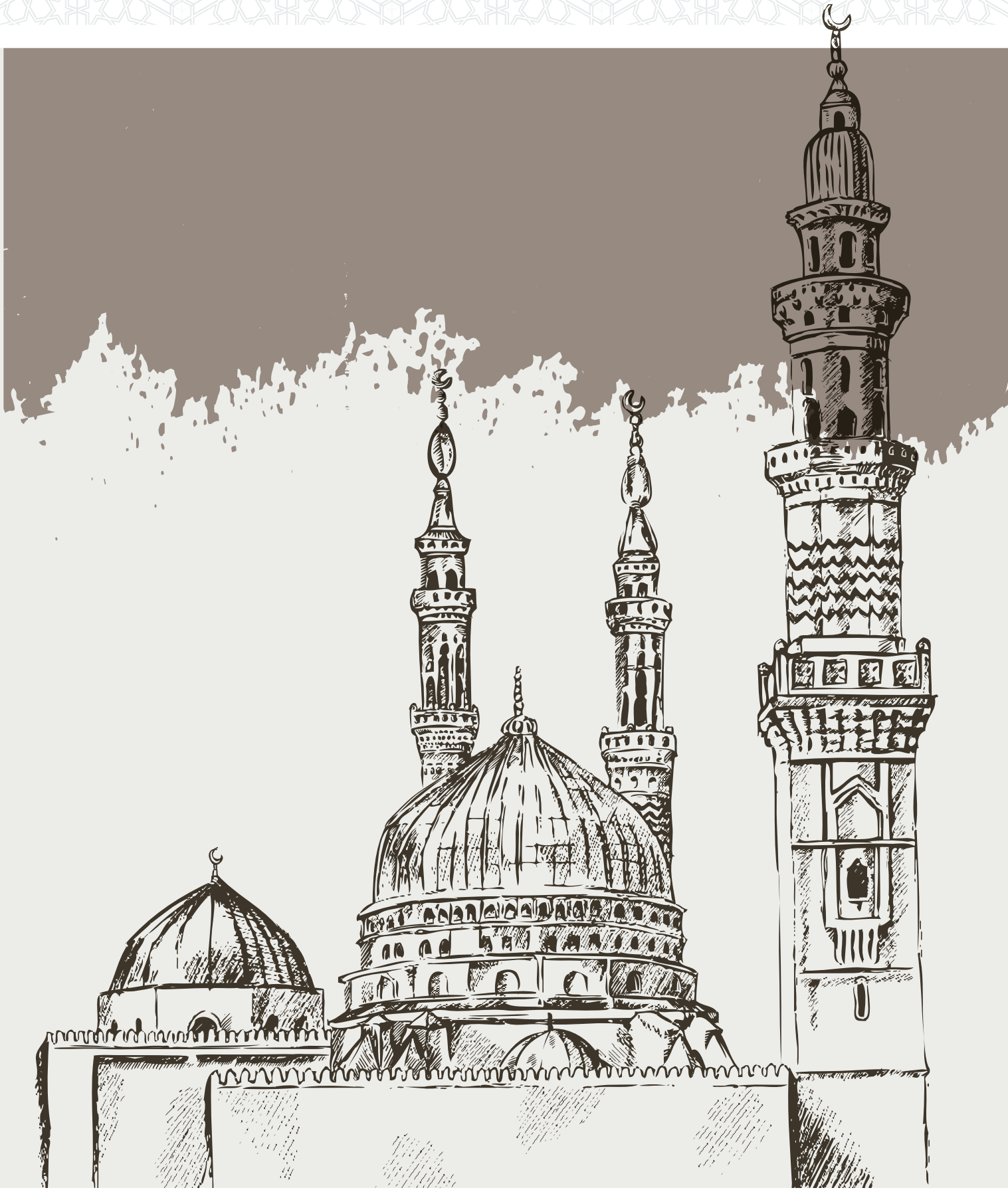
8 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) mentioned that 'a certain person said: By God, God shall not forgive so-and-so. God, the Exalted, said: 'Who is this one who is swearing concerning Me, saying that I must not forgive so-and-so? I have forgiven so-and-so and reduced your own action to nothing'.[1]

9 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said: 'Beware of following other people. A person may do what the people of Heaven do, but then may change, because of what God knows of him. He will then do like the people of Hell and die as one of the people of Hell. A man may do what the people of Hell do, but then may change, because of what God knows of him. He will do like the people of Heaven and die as one of the people of Heaven. If you have to emulate others, then choose some deceased people, who are no longer alive'.[2]



1 Related by Muslim, 2621.

2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, Vol. 2, p. 135.



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# Hadith

# SOME EFFECTS OF BELIEF IN THE DIVINE DECREE

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated: One day I was riding behind God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) when he said to me:

1. Young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]:
2. Be mindful of God,
3. and God will protect you.
4. Be mindful of God and you will find Him in front of you.
5. If you ask, ask of God;
6. If you seek help, seek God’s help.
7. Know that if the entire community collaborates to benefit you with anything, they shall benefit you only with something God has already willed for you; and if they collaborate to harm you with anything, they shall harm you only with something God has already willed for you.
8. All pens have been lifted and all scrolls have dried.[1]

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2516.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help.﴾ (1: 5)
- ﴿Fulfil your covenant with Me and I will fulfil Mine with you.﴾ (2: 40)
- ﴿Should God afflict you with any hardship, none other than He can remove it; and if He wills any good for you, none can withhold His bounty.﴾ (10: 107)
- ﴿Thus We averted from him [i.e. Joseph] evil and indecency. He was truly one of Our faithful servants.﴾ (12: 24)
- ﴿Your Lord says: ‘Call on Me, and I shall answer you’.﴾ (40: 60)
- ﴿No incident can take place, either on earth or in yourselves, unless it be recorded in a decree before We bring it into being – that is easy for God.﴾ (57: 22)

## The Narrator

Abu al-‘Abbās ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib belonged to the Hāshim branch of the Quraysh and resided mostly in Madinah. He was born in the Hāshimī quarter in Makkah three years before the Prophet’s migration. He was the leading scholar of the Muslim community and the one who explained the Qur’an best. The Prophet (peace be upon him) included him in his prayers, saying: ‘My Lord, grant him insight into the religion’.[1] He was one of the Prophet’s companions who narrated a large number of hadiths. He embraced Islam at a young age and he remained very close to the Prophet after the takeover of Makkah. He lost his eyesight when he became old. He died at Taif in Year 68 AH 688 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) gives his young cousin, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās, concise and comprehensive advice, telling him to have a clear aim. Therefore, whatever he needs, he should ask it of God only, and whatever help he requires, he should appeal to God for it. He should be clear in his mind that all matters are in God’s hand. Therefore, no one will ever cause him benefit or harm except by what God has willed for him.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 143 (his text); Muslim, 2477.

# Message and Meaning

Ibn ‘Abbās was riding behind the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the same mount.

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) wanted to teach his young cousin, Ibn ‘Abbās, the real meaning of faith. Therefore, he wanted him to focus his attention on what was to come. He started by addressing him as was suitable for his age, as Ibn ‘Abbās was at the time between eleven and fourteen years of age. He then told him that he was about to teach him some words of advice. He was to learn, understand and implement these words.

2. The first thing the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught him was to ‘be mindful of God’. This means that he should be fully aware of God’s commands and the bounds He has set for His servants. He must fulfil what God bids and refrain from what He forbids. God describes his devout servants as those ‘who keep within the limits set out by God’. (9: 112) God says: ‘This is what you have been promised; this is for everyone who used to turn to God and to keep Him in mind, (32) who used to stand in awe of the Lord of Grace although He is beyond the reach of human perception, and who comes before Him with a heart full of devotion’. (50: 32-33)

3. When man observes the limits God has set for him and fulfils what He commands, he will be rewarded in ways that mirror his own actions. Just like he is mindful of God and His orders, God will protect him. Such protection is total, including the protection of his body, organs, senses, mind and his whole being. God says: ‘Each has guardian angels before him and behind him, who watch him by God’s command’. (13: 11) God’s protection is not limited to the person himself, but is rather extended to his family. God says: ‘Let those who, if they themselves had to leave behind weak offspring, would feel fear on their account, be afraid [to wrong the orphans in their charge], let them fear God and speak in a just manner’. (4: 9)

In the story of Moses and al-Khaḍir mentioned in Surah 18, they are denied hospitality by the people of a village, yet they find a collapsing wall there and al-Khaḍir builds it back up to prevent its further collapse. He later explains his action to Moses saying that the wall belonged to two orphan boys and beneath it there was a treasure that belonged to them. ‘Their father had been a righteous man. So your Lord has willed it that when they come of age they should dig up their treasure by your Lord’s grace. I did not do any of this of my own accord.’ (18: 82)

The most perfect manifestation of God’s protection is that He protects a believer’s faith, shielding him from Satan’s whispering and prompting. In reference to Prophet Joseph, God says: ‘Thus We averted from him [i.e. Joseph] evil and indecency. He was truly one of Our faithful servants’. (12: 24) God also says: ‘Know that God comes in between a man and his heart’. (8: 24) Explaining this statement, Ibn ‘Abbās said: ‘God thus stops a believer from committing a sin that drags him into Hell’.

4 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions another aspect of the reward granted to a person who is mindful of God and stays within the limits marked by Him. Such a person will find that God is with him in all situations: He supports, strengthens and defends him, accepts his deeds and answers his prayers. In a *qudsī* or sacred hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) quotes God: 'My servant does not draw near to Me with anything I love more than the religious duties I have made obligatory on him. My servant continues to draw near to Me with voluntary worship so that I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his eyesight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. If he asks something of Me, I will certainly give it to him, and if he seeks refuge with Me, I will certainly grant him that'.[1]

5 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then points out to Ibn 'Abbās a very important aspect of proper belief in God's oneness, which is to address all one's requests to God only. Supplication is an act of worship which should always be addressed only to God. The Prophet said: 'Supplication is worship', and then recited: 'Your Lord says: 'Call on Me, and I shall answer you. Those who are too proud to worship Me shall enter Hell humiliated'. (40: 60) Supplication demonstrates the supplicant's need and humility, as well as his recognition that the One he addresses is able to give him what he desires and prevent harm. Humility and the need for help should only be shown to God, because this is the essence of worship.[2]

6 The Prophet (peace be upon him) also orders Ibn 'Abbās to seek help only from God. This is an act that requests assistance so that one can achieve one's objective. Seeking God's help demonstrates one's reliance on God. That help is to be sought from God alone is based on the verse that says: 'You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help'. (1: 5) As God commands His servants to obey Him, He instructs them to supplicate to Him alone and to seek His assistance in the fulfilment of their obligatory duties and in refraining from what He has forbidden.

However, seeking people's help in what they can do is perfectly permissible. A person may ask someone else's help to carry a heavy load, or to attend to some other task that is within people's ability. Islam urges Muslims to help their brethren in whatever way they can. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'To help a man with his mount, lifting him onto it or hoisting up his belongings onto it is a charity'.[3] What is forbidden in this area is to seek help in what belongs to God, as when people supplicate to some dead person, or at graves for help, or when they appeal to dead people for recovery from illness, success in their lives, or to grant them children, etc.

7 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then teaches his young cousin the essence of true submission

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6502.
2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 481.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2989; Muslim, 1009.

to God, acceptance of His will and true reliance on Him. Everything is in God's hand, and whatever happens to any person, whether good or bad, is by God's will. He determined all this long before He created the universe. Were all creation to collaborate in preventing what God has willed, they cannot do so. Were they to put all their efforts together in trying to cause someone any benefit or harm God has not willed for that person, they will never achieve such purpose. God says: 'Should God afflict you with any hardship, none other than He can remove it; and if He wills any good for you, none can withhold His bounty'. (10: 107)

This sentence sums up the message the Prophet teaches us in this hadith. When a person is convinced that nothing will ever happen to him other than what God has willed for him, and that whatever people may do contrary to that is of no use whatsoever, he will then truly rely on God. He will fear none but Him, and will seek help from none other than God. He will submit to Him and give priority to what God says, ahead of all others. This necessarily means doing what He bids and refraining from what He forbids.

8

The Prophet then states that the pens which wrote the fortunes of all people have been lifted and stopped writing. The records in which people's events have been written are now complete. There shall be no amendment in these scrolls or in the Imperishable Tablet. God says: 'No incident can take place, either on earth or in yourselves, unless it be recorded in a decree before We bring it into being – that is easy for God'. (57: 22) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'God recorded the destiny of His creation fifty thousand years before He created the heavens and earth'.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2653.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) utilized all his time and his companions' time, even when traveling on his mount, in what earns God's pleasure.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was keen to teach this hadith to Ibn 'Abbās, young as he was, so that he would learn these great values related to behaviour, God's will and His oneness. It is important not to ignore teaching young people, particularly those who show clear intelligence. Everyone should be addressed in the style suited to them, particularly when we try to strengthen their belief in the fundamentals of faith. They are the young men and women of the near future, and they will be the ones who look after people's interests.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) starts with an address that alerts the attention of his addressee, using words that are few in number, broad in meaning. They attract attention and formulate good understanding. Whoever wants to give important advice should start with some words that make his listener eager to learn.

4. The Prophet kept his teaching short, expressed in a few, short sentences. As such, they are more likely to be fully understood and acted upon, even by young people.

5. If you want to look after yourself, then be mindful of God and He will protect you. One of the early scholars said: 'Whoever is God-fearing protects himself, and whoever does not fear God is lost, and God is in no need of him'.[1] Even if you want to look after your health, be mindful of God. A scholar still retained his physical strength in old age. He was more than 100 years old when he was walking with some of his students. They came across a stream with no crossing place in sight. The old scholar made a great jump which amazed his students. He said to them: 'We protected our limbs from sin when we were young, and God has kept them safe for us in our old age'.[2]

6. A woman joined a Muslim army on a jihad mission, leaving behind her twelve goats and her weaving needle. When she returned home, she discovered that one goat and her weaving needle were missing. She said: 'My Lord, You have guaranteed Your protection for whoever joins an expedition for Your cause. One of my goats and my weaving needle are missing'. She kept appealing to God, Mighty and Exalted. One morning, she found her missing goat with another like it, and her weaving needle and another like it.

7. If a person wants God to protect him, his family and property, he must remain God-fearing. Ibn al-Munkadir said: 'For a pious person, God protects his children, grandchildren and those around him, and they will continue to enjoy God's care'.[3] Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib said to his son: 'I increase my prayer for your sake, hoping that God will protect you. He recited from the Qur'an: 'Their father had been a righteous man'.[4] (18: 82)

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1 Ibn Rajab, *Nūr al-Iqtibās fī Waṣiyyat al-Nabī li Ibn 'Abbās*, p. 54.
2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 466 ,1.
3 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 467.
4 Ibid.

8 New forms of appealing to people and other creatures occur at different times. In our time, such new forms include appealing to universal forces and deceased parents. Such forms are often used in films, children's books, training courses related to the universe. We should be careful lest some aspect of attributing partners to God creeps into our lives, but under some other name.

9 Avoid asking other people even for a small thing, but train yourself to attend to whatever you need. The Prophet (peace be upon him) accepted a pledge of allegiance from a group of people, stating certain things and he included: 'and that you do not ask of people anything'. The narrator adds: 'I have seen some of these people and any of them might drop his whip but he would not ask anyone to pick it up and hand it to him'.[1] Requesting people's help in normal situations like these is definitely permissible. 'However, the Prophet wanted to teach us the best of good manners, and that we do not ask other people for favours, undertake whatever we need even though it may be inconvenient, preferring always that we ourselves attend to what we need. When the Prophet stipulated this condition for those people, they implemented it in all situations, including those which people are ready to do for others without hesitation.'[2]

10 It is important to seek God's help in attending to whatever you need, whether this pertains to religion or to life's affairs, including night worship, improving one's manners, study, seeking a job, etc. Nothing is more effective than seeking God's help. The Prophet gives us this great advice: 'Make sure to have what benefits you, seeking God's help. Do not feel helpless'.[3] Every Muslim should always pray to God for help. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Mu'ādh ibn Jabal: 'I urge you, Mu'ādh. Do not ignore saying after every prayer: My Lord, help me to remember You, thank You and to worship You well'.[4]

11 How much do we look up to people, and how much do we look up to God? Wahb ibn Munabbih said to a man who used to visit rulers: 'How come that you go to those who shut their doors before you, who show you that they are poor and hide their riches? Yet you ignore the One who opens His gate to you in the middle of the night and the middle of the day, showing you His boundless treasures, and says to you: "Pray to Me and I will answer you"'.[5]

12 It behoves us all to learn this hadith and implement it. Teach its message to your family, children and other people, using with each the language that suits their age and understanding. The hadith includes great wisdom. A scholar said that when he contemplated the meanings of this hadith, he was overwhelmed with its message. How poor those who ignore learning it are![6]

1 Related by Muslim, 1043.
2 Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Mufhim*, Vol. 3, p. 86.
3 Related by Muslim, 2664.
4 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1522; al-Nasāʾī, 1303.
5 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 481.
6 Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 462.

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# Hadith

# HUMAN ACTION AND THE BELIEF IN THE DIVINE DECREE

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. A strong believer is better and dearer to God than a weak believer,
2. but there is goodness in both.
3. Make sure to have what benefits you.
4. Seek God's help and do not feel helpless.
5. If something happens to you, do not say: had I done this, such-and-such would have happened.
6. Rather, say: This is God's will and whatever God wills shall happen.
7. Expressions of regret open the gate for Satan's work.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2664.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Make ready against them whatever force and war mounts you can muster, so that you may strike terror into the enemies of God who are also your own enemies, and others besides them of whom you may be unaware, but of whom God is well aware.﴾ (8: 60)
- ﴿Those of the believers who remain passive, other than the disabled, are not equal to those who strive hard in God's cause with their possessions and their lives. God has exalted those who strive hard with their possessions and their lives far above the ones who remain passive. To each God has promised the ultimate good, yet God has preferred those who strive hard over those who remain passive with a mighty reward.﴾ (4: 95)
- ﴿Do good, so that you may be successful.﴾ (22: 77)
- ﴿You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help.﴾ (1: 5)
- ﴿Many a prophet has fought with many devout men alongside him. They never lost heart on account of what they had to suffer in God's cause, and neither did they weaken nor succumb. God loves those who are patient in adversity.﴾ (3: 146)
- ﴿They say: 'Had we had any say in the matter, we should not have been slaughtered here'. Say: 'Had you stayed in your homes, those of you who were destined to be killed would have gone to their deathbeds'.﴾ (3: 154)
- ﴿No incident can take place, either on earth or in yourselves, unless it be recorded in a decree before We bring it into being – that is easy for God – (22) so you need not grieve for what you miss or be overjoyed at what you gain.﴾ (57: 22-23)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah is best known by this appellation. It is reported that his name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, a Yemeni from a branch of the Azd. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He migrated to Madinah to join the Prophet (peace be upon him). He requested that the Prophet pray for his mother, and he did. She, thus, embraced Islam. Then he requested the Prophet to pray for both of them, and the Prophet said: 'My Lord, endear this little servant of Yours and his mother to believers, and endear the believers to them'. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

A person who is firm and strong in his faith and learns what is good is better than one who is weak. Therefore, a Muslim should be keen to acquire what will be of benefit to him. He should pray to God to help him in this, and not be lazy or feel helpless. When a Muslim does or obtains something good, he should thank God. If not, he should not wish to have a second chance. Instead, he should say: 'This is God's will and whatever God wills is done'.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that a strong believer is dearer to God than a weak believer. Strength in this context means strength of faith and what complements it and helps achieve its goals, such as physical and spiritual strength, solid learning, etc. When these are combined in a person, they help him to attend to worship and to fulfil what is required of man in life, jihad and the fulfilment of life's duties as well as attending to his personal interests and the interests of others. God says: 'Make ready against them whatever force and war mounts you can muster, so that you may strike terror into the enemies of God who are also your own enemies, and others besides them of whom you may be unaware, but of whom God is well aware'. (8: 60) These strengths enable a person to persevere in the fulfilment of whatever earns God's pleasure, steering away from sin and unlawful temptations. They urge him to enjoin what is right and stand against what is evil, and they enable him to bear the harm caused by other people and life's adversities.[1]

2. That a strong believer is better than a weak one does not mean that the latter is devoid of goodness. He is certainly good, but he misses out on a greater status.

3. Having stated that the strong believer is better, the Prophet explains the goal to which such a believer should direct his strength. This is an example of the Prophet's unique style of concise wording and broad meaning. He tells a strong believer to devote his ability to all that will benefit him in both this life and the life to come, focusing his attention on this, and not allowing distractions to take him away from it.

4. When a Muslim is keen to have what benefits him concerning his religion and his life, he should pray for God's help, relying on Him, to achieve what he hopes for. He must not be complacent or allow himself to fail, protesting that it is God's will, or that he lacks what is needed, when in fact he has not tried hard enough.

5. If a believer exerts his best efforts but the result turns out to be different from what he hoped for, he should not regret what he did. Nor should he lament, saying: 'Had I done this, such-and-such would have happened'. This is an expression of dissatisfaction with what God has willed for him. Alternatively, it indicates that he thinks that had he acted differently, matters would be different. This is incorrect, because what happens to us is according to what God has written well before He created the universe. However, man is required to take every necessary measure and leave the results to God to determine.

1 Al-Nawawi, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 16, p. 215. (paraphrased)

6 What a believer should say in this case is: ‘This is God’s will and whatever God wills shall happen’. In other words, he should attribute matters to God, accepting whatever happens, knowing that it happens by God’s will which is always done.

This does not mean that anyone may attribute his sin to God and persist in it, saying that he only committed it by God’s will. When the unbelievers claimed that they worshipped other deities by God’s will, God rejected their argument. He says: ‘Those who associate partners with God will say: “Had God so willed, neither we nor our fathers would have associated any partners with Him; nor would we have declared anything as forbidden”. In like manner did those who have lived before them deny the truth, until they came to taste Our punishment. Say: “Have you any certain knowledge which you can put before us? You follow nothing but conjecture, and you do nothing but guess”’. (6: 148)

7 The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges us not express such regrets because it opens the way for Satan and his whisperings. A person’s thoughts may tend to deny the divine decree and express displeasure with it. A person may also start to blame himself and consider himself unworthy or useless. This ushers in depression which weakens a person, wastes time and lets good opportunities go astray.

This does not mean that it is forbidden to say, ‘if only’, or similar phrases, at any time. It is forbidden as an expression of regret, blame or the like. If it is said to explain what went wrong, or to state a religious ruling, or in reference to the future, then it is perfectly permissible. Prophet Lot said: ‘Would that I had the strength to defeat you, or that I could lean on some mighty support’. (11: 80) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: ‘Were it not that I would make things hard for my community, I would have ordered them to use a toothbrush’.[1] Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq said when he and the Prophet were hiding in the cave: ‘Were any of them to look where his foot was, he would see us’.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7240.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3653; Muslim, 2381.

# Implementation

1. An upright person normally leans towards what is best in every good matter. Such aspiration motivates a person to try to achieve better status. A Muslim should motivate his children, students, workers or employees to seek what is best. He should help them by providing guidance and support.

2. Strength is a means to achieve goals. Train yourself to patiently shoulder what may be hard and try to acquire the strengths that lead to what pleases God, Mighty and Exalted. Prayer, zakat, fasting, the hajj, jihad, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is evil, dutifulness to parents, kindness to relatives and other virtues of action or omission need different strengths which may be physical, mental or those that relate to study and research, etc. Whatever strength you acquire, you should thank God for it, and whatever you cannot, seek God's help for.

3. If you see someone feeling depressed because of his weakness in knowledge, trade or physical strength, console him and tell him that he does well to try to acquire what he lacks.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith: 'Seek God's help and do not feel helpless'. This short statement combines two essential principles that together form the concept of reliance on God. These are: 1) taking the necessary measures; and 2) placing one's trust in God. This is in line with what God says: 'All authority over all matters belongs to Him alone. Worship Him, then, and place your trust in Him alone'. (11: 123) A student should do his best to learn, a project manager should take every measure to ensure success, and a teacher should follow the best methods to ensure that his students understand what he teaches them. Yet they all seek God's help to ensure that their efforts are crowned with success and that they achieve what they hoped for.

5 The feeling of helplessness leaves many people short of achieving what they want. They may wish to do something good, but then they magnify that thing in their minds and experience a feeling of weakness. They may take the initial steps but then they slacken and stop. Therefore, everyone should pool their resources, take the initiative and persist in their efforts.

6 It is not permissible for anyone to say what incurs God's wrath, such as cursing one's lot, or saying: why this person and not me? Nor is it permissible to lament helplessly: 'If only', or 'had I'.

7 Everyone should be keen to achieve what is of benefit to him in all his religious and life affairs. While doing all his religious duties, he should not neglect the affairs of his life and his family and dependants. He must be keen to learn whatever he needs in his profession, ensure that he only earns what is lawful, and protect his health, etc.

8 If you commit an error, seek God's forgiveness; and if you suffer a calamity, say: 'To God we all belong, and to Him we shall all return'. Say also: 'This is God's will and whatever He wills shall happen'. You must stop blaming yourself or keep thinking about the opposite of what God has willed. Such blame and thoughts cause dissatisfaction with God's will, weakness and depression. Whatever has happened cannot be altered. Therefore, it is important to focus on the future, consider what is feasible and pray for God's help.

34

# Hadith

# BAD AND GOOD OMEN

Anas ibn Mālik narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1 There shall be no disease transmission

2 and no ill omen.

3 I like good omens. People asked: 'What is a good omen?' He said: 'A good word'.[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Do not, with your own hands, throw yourselves to ruin.﴾ (2: 195)
- ﴿Whenever something fine came their way, they would say: 'This is our due', but whenever affliction befell them, they attributed their ill omen to Moses and those who followed him. Surely, whatever befalls them has been decreed by God, though most of them do not know it.﴾ (7: 131)
- ﴿Say: 'Nothing will befall us except what God has decreed for us. He is our guardian. In God alone should the believers place their trust'.﴾ (9: 51)
- ﴿No incident can take place, either on earth or in yourselves, unless it be recorded in a decree before We bring it into being – that is easy for God.﴾ (57: 22)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah, or perhaps Abu Thumāmah, Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār, was born ten years before the Prophet's migration to Madinah. He was the servant of God's Messenger for ten years. The Prophet prayed to God to bless his life, give him an abundance of wealth and children, give him a long life and to forgive him his sins. Anas became very rich and had many children. He was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Baṣrah. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) corrected people's beliefs inherited from the time of ignorance. He states in this hadith that diseases are not transmitted by nature. Their transmission is rather by God's will. He prohibited associating ill thoughts with any particular time, place or person. He liked optimism and having a good feeling when hearing a good word.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5776; Muslim, 2224.

# Message and Meaning

God sent Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to call on people to worship God alone and to eradicate all traces of ignorant beliefs. This hadith highlights some of these.

1

The first thing the Prophet corrects is the notion of disease transmission. He tells us that we must not attribute the transmission of disease from a patient to a healthy person to the disease itself. The hadith does not negate that some diseases are contagious, but simply states that they are not transmitted by themselves or by their nature. It rather happens by God's will. This is confirmed by the fact that if God wills the disease to be transmitted from a patient to a particular healthy person, it will; and if he wills to keep the healthy person safe, the disease will not be transmitted to him through contact. Other evidence of this is that the first outbreak of the disease was not through such contact.

Muslims are commanded to take all beneficial and necessary measures, and to abandon whatever causes harm. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructs us to care for our health and to stay away from people who have contracted communicable diseases. He said: 'Run away from a leper as you run away from a lion'.[1] He also said: 'If you hear of the plague spreading in a certain land, do not go in, and if it breaks out where you are, do not leave to escape it'.[2] He also said: 'No sick flock should be brought close to healthy ones'. This means that no ill person or animal should be brought close to a healthy one, causing his illness to be transmitted to the healthy one.

The message here is that a Muslim should take both measures. He should avoid risk, as God said: 'Do not, with your own hands, throw yourselves to ruin'. (2: 195) Furthermore, he should continue to believe that nothing happens to a person other than what God has willed for him or her, as God says: 'Say: 'Nothing will befall us except what God has decreed for us. He is our guardian. In God alone should the believers place their trust'. (9: 51)

2

'And no bad omen.' This is an order that we must not be pessimistic and have ill thoughts as a result of anything we see or hear. For example, a person may intend to travel to another country, but he sees a crow or hears of some accident or death or anything similar. He will treat this as an omen and become pessimistic, abandoning his intention to travel, or perhaps continue to entertain forebodings while he is on his journey.

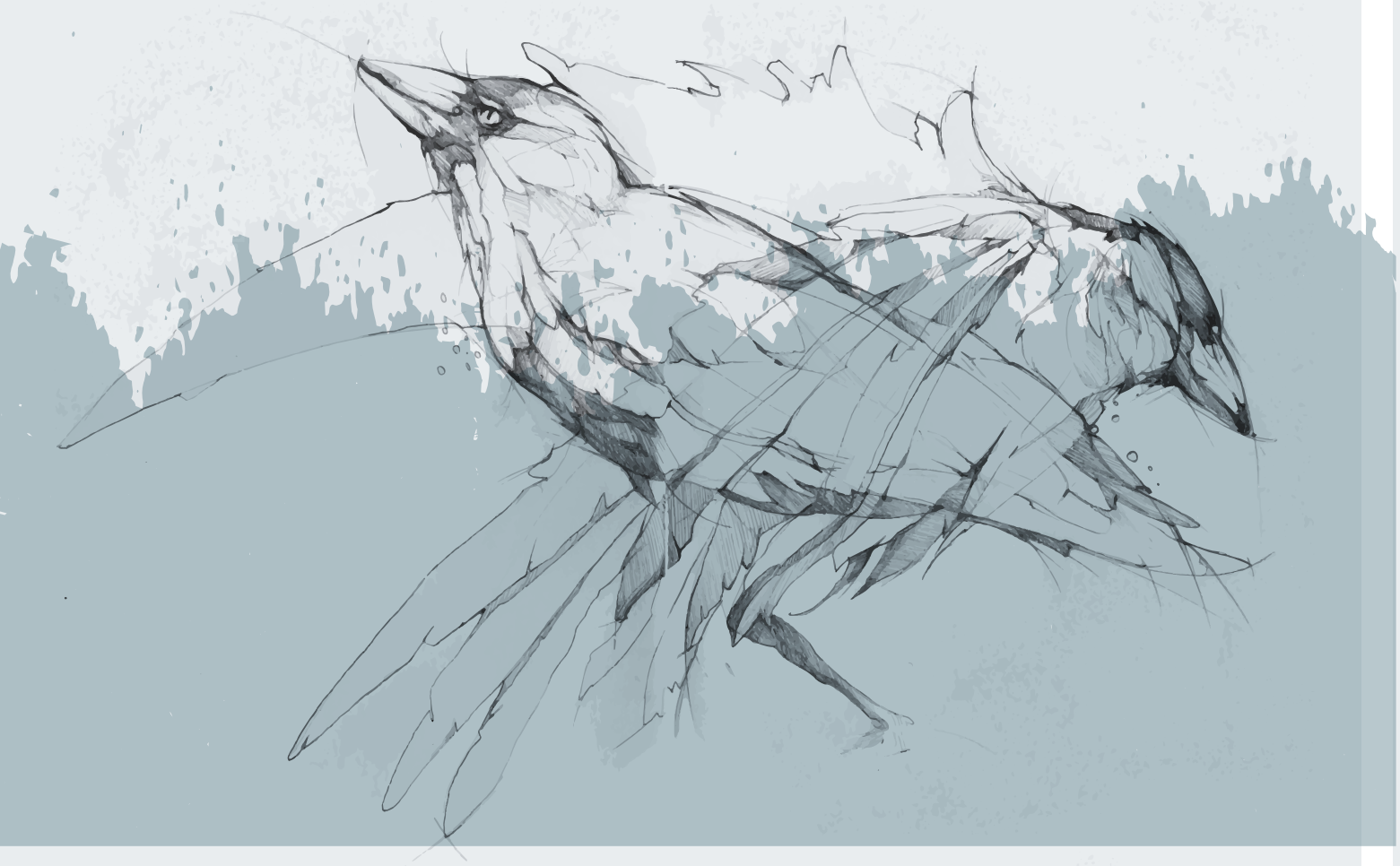
The Arabic word for 'bad omen' is *ṭiyarah*, a word derived from a root that refers to birds and flying. In pre-Islamic days, the Arabs took their omens from birds. If they were about to undertake a serious matter, such as going on a journey, they would get a bird and scare it. If it flew to the right, they thought this was a good omen and they would go ahead with their journey. If it flew to the left, they would take it as a bad sign and abandon their journey. They also associated certain birds, such as the crow and the owl, with bad omens. If a crow cawed on top of a house, they thought it was an announcement of a death in that house. The Prophet also said: 'There shall be

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5707.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 5728; Muslim, 2218.

no disease transmission, no ill-omen, no *hāmah,* and no Ṣafar.'[1] The word *hāmah* refers to the bird bringing bad omens, while Ṣafar is the name of the second month of the lunar year. They used to think that this brought bad omens.

3 The Prophet then informs us that he liked a good omen, which is a good word felt by the listener to be pleasant. For example, a person might be attending to his business when he hears a man calling his brother by his name, Muwaffaq, and he is pleased because the name means well-guided, successful, etc..

A good word gives a pleasant feeling and motivates a person to do what he needs. The Prophet liked such good omen because it does not contradict belief in God's oneness and does not weaken faith. When Suhayl ibn 'Amr came to negotiate a peace treaty with the Prophet, the Prophet felt his arrival as a good omen. He said to his companions: 'Your affair is about to get easier'. He said this because the name Suhayl is derived from a root that means ease.



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5757; Muslim, 2220.

# Implementation

1. A Muslim should feel strong, ready to undertake good measures, knowing that everything happens by God's will. Man's role is to rely on God, take the necessary measures and do what he needs to do.

2. Taking the measures that protect us from diseases is perfectly legitimate and is not contrary to the firm belief in God's will, or that what happens could not have been averted. A Muslim should do what he needs to do, knowing that everything is in God's hand and by His will.

3. True reliance on God presupposes acceptance of His will and submission to His commands. Bishr al-Ḥāfī said that a man claims to rely on God, but in actuality his claim is false. Had he really relied on God, he would have accepted whatever God wills.

4. When an epidemic occurs, such as the plague, Muslims should observe all quarantine measures. They should not enter the affected city, and should not leave it if they happen to be there. A Muslim should always submit himself to God's will. 'Ā'ishah reported that she asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the plague and he told her that 'the plague was a scourge God inflicted on whomever He willed, but then He made it a cause of mercy for believers. When there is an outbreak of a plague and a believer stays patiently in his town, knowing that nothing will happen to him other than what God has willed for him, he will earn the same reward as a martyr'.[1]

5. Just as he has instructed us to take the necessary measures for safety from communicable diseases, the Prophet also urged us to protect ourselves against bad manners and morality, because these are also contagious. The Prophet told us not to mix socially with immoral people, likening such a person to one who is blowing the fire. He said: 'A good companion and a bad companion may be compared to a person carrying musk and an ironsmith blowing with bellows. The carrier of musk may give you a little of it, or you may buy from him, or you may merely perceive a pleasant scent from him. The one blowing with bellows may either burn your clothes, or you may only receive a bad smell from him'.[2]

6. Some communities associate bad omens with some animals, forms, numbers or events. These may be transmitted to Muslim societies through films or stories. If some harm occurs and it happens to fit with any of these, Satan may use it in his whispering. Only the wise reject all such associations.

7. Acting on a bad omen is not only contrary to the basic principle of submission to God and His will and decree; it is also an evil that affects one's heart and mind, deters a person from pursuing his interests, or at least keeps him unsure and confused. He is not assured that nothing happens to him except what God has willed for him. The remedy is to ignore bad omens and try to strengthen one's trust in God and submission to Him and to continue pursuing one's interests.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5734.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 5534; Muslim, 2628.

8 It may happen that a person unintentionally is pessimistic about some particular thing. This is not blameable, but what incurs blame is to accept it and act on it. Ibn Mas'ūd said: 'A bad omen is an act of *shirk*, [i.e. associating partners with God]. Every one of us may experience it, but God removes it through our reliance on Him'.

9 A Muslim may feel that a good word he hears marks a good omen, such as someone saying to him: 'You will be fine', or he may hear a fine name. A good omen does not repel God's will, but it gives a fine feeling and encourages action. The Prophet liked good omens.

35

# Hadith

# CONTENTEDNESS WITH THE DIVINE DECREE

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. Look at those below you
2. and do not look at those above you.
3. You will then be less likely to belittle God's favour.[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿We have made all that is on earth as an adornment in order to test people as to which of them are best in conduct.﴾ (18: 7)
- ﴿Do not turn your eyes covetously towards whatever splendour of this world's life We have allowed many of them to enjoy in order that We may test them thereby. Whatever provisions your Lord may give are indeed better and longer lasting.﴾ (20: 131)
- ﴿And so he [i.e. Qārūn, or Korah] went forth before his people in all his pomp. Those who cared only for the life of this world said: 'Oh, would that we had the like of what Qārūn has been given! He is certainly a man of great fortune!' (79) But those who had been granted true knowledge said: 'Woe to you! God's reward is by far the best for any who believes and does what is right. Yet none can attain this other than those who are patient in adversity'.﴾ (28: 79-80)
- ﴿Is it they who apportion your Lord's grace? It is We who deal out to them their livelihood in the life of this world, and raise some in rank above others, so that some of them may take others into their service. Your Lord's grace is better than all that they can amass.﴾ (43: 32)

## The Narrator

The best reports suggest that Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī who emanated from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He was born about twenty years before Hijrah and embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and was satisfied to have the most simple food. He was very keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He was Governor of Bahrain for a while, but spent most of his life in Madinah. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) orders his companions to look at people who are less favoured than themselves in life's fortunes, such as those who are poorer and weaker than them. They should not look up to those who are more favoured in their livelihood, health and other riches. If they act on the Prophet's advice, they will be better able to appreciate what God has given them.

1 Related by Muslim, 2963.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) urges his companions, and later Muslims, to look at those who are less favoured than them in wealth, personal qualities and abilities, etc. They should look at the lot of the poor, weak, ill and those who need special care. Then they will realize that they have much of God's blessings bestowed on them and that they are favoured above many other people.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us not to look up to those who are richer, stronger and healthier. This is given in the same order as that in the Qur'anic verse: 'Do not turn your eyes covetously towards whatever splendour of this world's life We have allowed many of them to enjoy in order that We may test them thereby. Whatever provisions your Lord may give are indeed better and longer lasting'. (20: 131)

3 The Prophet explains that when people heed what he tells them, they will be less likely to despise the favours God has given them. When man looks at those who are less favoured in life's matters, he will know that God has given him more than many other people. He will then praise and thank God for His favours and blessings, help others and express his gratitude by improving his worship. If man looks at those who are richly favoured and contemplate how God has given them things in plenty, he will start comparing his lot with theirs, and this may lead him to disdain what God has given him. It may also lead him to harbouring grudges and being envious of others.

The hadith does not mean that people should ignore life's comforts or that they should not benefit by what God has given them. What it means is that a believer should not allow life's luxuries to be the focus of his interests, leading him to be discontented with what God has given him.

# Implementation

1. A person my see or hear of someone who is better than himself in some aspect of life. He should deal with any unhealthy thoughts he may have as a result by looking at someone who is less favoured. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advises us: 'When any of you looks at someone who has been more favoured in wealth and form, let him look at someone who is below him over whom he is favoured'.[1]

2. A believer should always think of the life to come. He should not give much attention to the luxuries of this present life and should not frequently look at the style of life of those who are affluent. He should remember that God 'has prepared for His devout servants what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of and no human mind has ever thought of'.[2] If one is attracted by some luxury or feels a strong eagerness to have it, he should not dwell on such feelings, but rather remind himself of the splendid life God has prepared for His God-fearing servants.

3. We should change our value system by which we judge the things we see. We should remember that real happiness and true high status are found only in Heaven, where life is forever. In this life, things that people compete for or wish to have are always changing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'No envy is acceptable except in two things: a person to whom God has granted money and enabled him to spend it in what is right and a person to whom God has granted wisdom and he rules according to it and teaches it'.[3]

4. When Qārūn, i.e. Korah, treated his people unfairly and behaved arrogantly, some weaker elements in his community looked at his riches and said: 'Oh, would that we had the like of what Qārūn has been given! He is certainly a man of great fortune!' (28: 79) They neither protected themselves against the lure of his riches, nor gained a portion of those riches. Their situation is aptly described by the well-known Arabian saying: 'You see something the like of which you cannot achieve in full; yet without it, you are unhappy with your lot'.

5. Ibn 'Awn said: 'I mixed with rich people, but I disdained my clothes and mount when I compared them to theirs. Then I mixed with poor people and I felt comfortable'.[4]

6. When a believer realizes that God has given people their provisions according to His wisdom, he feels easy and does not look at what God has given to all, raising some people above others.

7. What gives a Muslim a genuine feeling of true happiness is to appreciate the numerous favours God has bestowed on him, and to frequently review them and look at the situations of those who are less favoured. He should always remember the Prophet's hadith: 'Whoever wakes up in the morning feeling secure in his dwelling place, enjoying good personal health and having enough food for the day is like one who has the world at his disposal'.[5]

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6490; Muslim, 2963.

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 3244; Muslim, 2824. It is Hadith 40 in this book.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 73; Muslim 816.

4 Al-'Irāqī, *Ṭarḥ al-Tathrīb fī Sharḥ al-Taqrīb*, Vol. 8, pp. 146-145.

5 Related by al-Tirmidhi, 2346.

8 When man goes through some trial or suffers a calamity and he looks at those who are less favoured than himself, he feels his calamity to be lighter and the trial easier. He will then be able to endure his trial or calamity with patience and he will thank God for having spared him what is worse.

9 Unanimous religious poetry includes: ‘I discovered that contentedness is a gem of riches, and I thus clung to it. It soon gave me a fine suit that always looks new. I, thus, feel rich, yet have nothing, preserving my dignity like a king’.

36

# Hadith

# ONLY GOD KNOWS WHAT LIES BEYOND HUMAN PERCEPTION

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. There are five keys to the world beyond the reach of human perception. These are known to no one other than God.
2. None other than God knows what tomorrow will bring.
3. No one other than God knows by how much the wombs may fall short in gestation.
4. No one other than God knows at what time rain will come.
5. No soul knows in what land it will die.
6. And only God knows when the Last Hour takes place.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 4697.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿With Him are the keys to what lies beyond the reach of human perception: none knows them but He. He knows all that the land and sea contain; not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth’s deep darkness, nor anything fresh or dry but is recorded in a clear book.﴾ (6: 59)
- ﴿They ask you about the Last Hour: ‘When will it come to pass?’ Say: ‘Knowledge of it rests with my Lord alone. None but He will reveal it at its appointed time. It will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth; and it will not fall on you except suddenly.’ They will ask you further as if you yourself persistently enquire about it. Say: ‘Knowledge of it rests with God alone, though most people remain unaware’.﴾ (7: 187)
- ﴿Say: ‘None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God. Nor can they ever perceive when they shall be raised from the dead’. (65) Indeed the total sum of their knowledge stops short of comprehending the Hereafter. Nay, they are in doubt of it. Nay, they are blind to it.﴾ (27: 65-66)
- ﴿Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things.﴾ (31: 34)
- ﴿Blessed is He to whom sovereignty over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them belongs, and with whom the knowledge of the Last Hour rests, and to whom you shall be brought back.﴾ (43: 85)
- ﴿He alone knows that which is beyond the reach of human perception, and He does not disclose His secrets to anyone (26) except to a messenger whom He has been pleased to choose. He then sends watchers to walk before and behind him.﴾ (72: 26-27)

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. He narrated much useful information from the Prophet, and also from his father ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Bilāl, Ṣuhayb and other companions of the Prophet. He issued many fatwas and narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God has kept for Himself the knowledge of certain things which will always remain unknown to anyone else. These are the keys to the realm that lies beyond the reach of the human faculties of perception. These keys are what happens in future; the embryos in their mothers’ bellies and what happens to them, the time when rain falls, the time and place of death of every person, and the timing of the Last Hour.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God, Blessed and Exalted, has kept for Himself the knowledge of certain matters that belong to the realm beyond the reach of human perception. He alone knows these. He says: 'Say: None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God. Nor can they ever perceive when they shall be raised from the dead'. (27: 65) 'He alone knows that which is beyond the reach of human perception, and He does not disclose His secrets to anyone (26) except to a messenger whom He has been pleased to choose. He then sends watchers to walk before and behind him'. (72: 26-27)

The five things mentioned in the hadith are not the only things that are known to God alone. They are mentioned as examples, rather than giving a full list. Or perhaps they are mentioned by the Prophet as the most important of things known only to God. Histories of the early prophets and their communities include things known only to God. He says: 'Have you not received accounts of what befell those who lived before you? The people of Noah, the 'Ād, and Thamūd, and those who came after them? None knows them all but God'. (14: 9) There is also much information that God has kept for Himself about the jinn, the angels and their tasks, as also His marvellous creation in the universe, etc.

As for man's learning some of the matters that are beyond human knowledge, there are two possibilities:

- Some matters can be learnt through the means, tools and ways God has enabled man to use, such as knowledge of the time of sunrise and sunset, times when prayers fall due, the timings of solar and lunar eclipses, and similar matters that occur according to regular patterns and natural laws.
- Certain matters are known to God alone. These belong to the realm which is totally beyond man and his perception. These include the five mentioned in the hadith and referred to in the Qur'anic verse: 'Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things'. (31: 34)

That God calls these matters 'keys to the realm beyond' is merely a figure of speech. Indeed, what is kept beyond human knowledge cannot be attained except by the use of the keys that lead to them. If the keys themselves are unknown to any human being, how about the things that are beyond and cannot be reached without the use of those keys?

2 The first of the five matters mentioned in the hadith is that God knows what will happen to man in the immediate and distant future, including his provisions, benefits and adversities, as well as what he does of good or foul deeds.

3 The second is that God knows what is conceived in wombs and what happens to these. He knows which pregnancies fall short in gestation and whether a pregnancy ends in abortion or completes its term until birth. He knows everything that takes place in the womb and whether

the embryo receives full nourishment or not, the sex of the embryo, and how it will be after birth in features, its physical and mental abilities, and whether it will have a happy or miserable life in this world and the next. He says: 'God knows what every female bears, and by how much the wombs may fall short [in gestation], and by how much they may increase. With Him everything has its definite measure'. (13: 8)

This is not contradicted by recent developments through which doctors can know the sex of the embryo in the later stages of pregnancy. This is an aspect of what God has enabled His servants to discover through the advancement of their knowledge. Moreover, modern knowledge can only find out the sex of the embryo after four months of gestation, and whatever is known remains uncertain and within the realm of probability. Still, doctors may know the sex of a number of embryos, but God knows everything about every pregnancy at the same time. Doctors remain unable to determine the length of a woman's pregnancy and whether a delivery will be premature or full term.

The third of the five keys is knowledge of the time of rainfall. No one on the face of the earth knows the exact time or place of rainfall or its volume.

Weather centres are now able to predict the approximate times and areas of rainfall, using modern equipment and facilities, but their predictions are based on the observation of various natural phenomena, such as the formation of clouds, speed of wind and atmospheric pressure. Some knowledge of this was available in the past, but modern advancements has made such predictions better and more accurate.

The fourth key is God's knowledge of the time and place of every person's death. He says: 'No one knows in what land they will die'. (31: 34) God has not fixed a term for mankind, so that a human being dies when this term falls due. Nor has He made a single cause of death that ensures its occurrence. A person with a serious disease may regain his health, while a strong, able-bodied person dies suddenly. A young man may suffer a fatal accident, while an elderly man lives to a very advanced age. A person may be very close to death through drowning or an high fall or something similar, but survives, while another is comfortable and secure at home, yet dies.

The last of the five keys mentioned by the Prophet in this hadith is the knowledge of the timing of the Last Hour. This is something God has kept for Himself, giving the information to no angel or prophet. God says: 'They ask you about the Last Hour: 'When will it come to pass?' Say: "Knowledge of it rests with my Lord alone. None but He will reveal it at its appointed time. It will weigh heavily on the heavens and the earth; and it will not fall on you except suddenly". They will ask you further as if you yourself persistently enquire about it. Say: "Knowledge of it rests with God alone, though most people remain unaware"'. (7: 187) The Angel Gabriel asked Prophet Muhammad about it and its timing, but the Prophet's answer was: 'The one questioned about it knows no better than the one asking the question'.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 50; Muslim, 9.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us about matters which are known to no one other than God Almighty. It is not permissible for a Muslim to entertain a different idea, or to believe any ignorant fortune teller who claims otherwise.

2. Since no one knows what will happen tomorrow except God, Glorious and Exalted, then everyone must do their best. No one should slacken, relying on what lying fortune tellers say. No one should entertain a pessimistic view as a result of seeing or hearing something that causes them to abandon what they need to do.

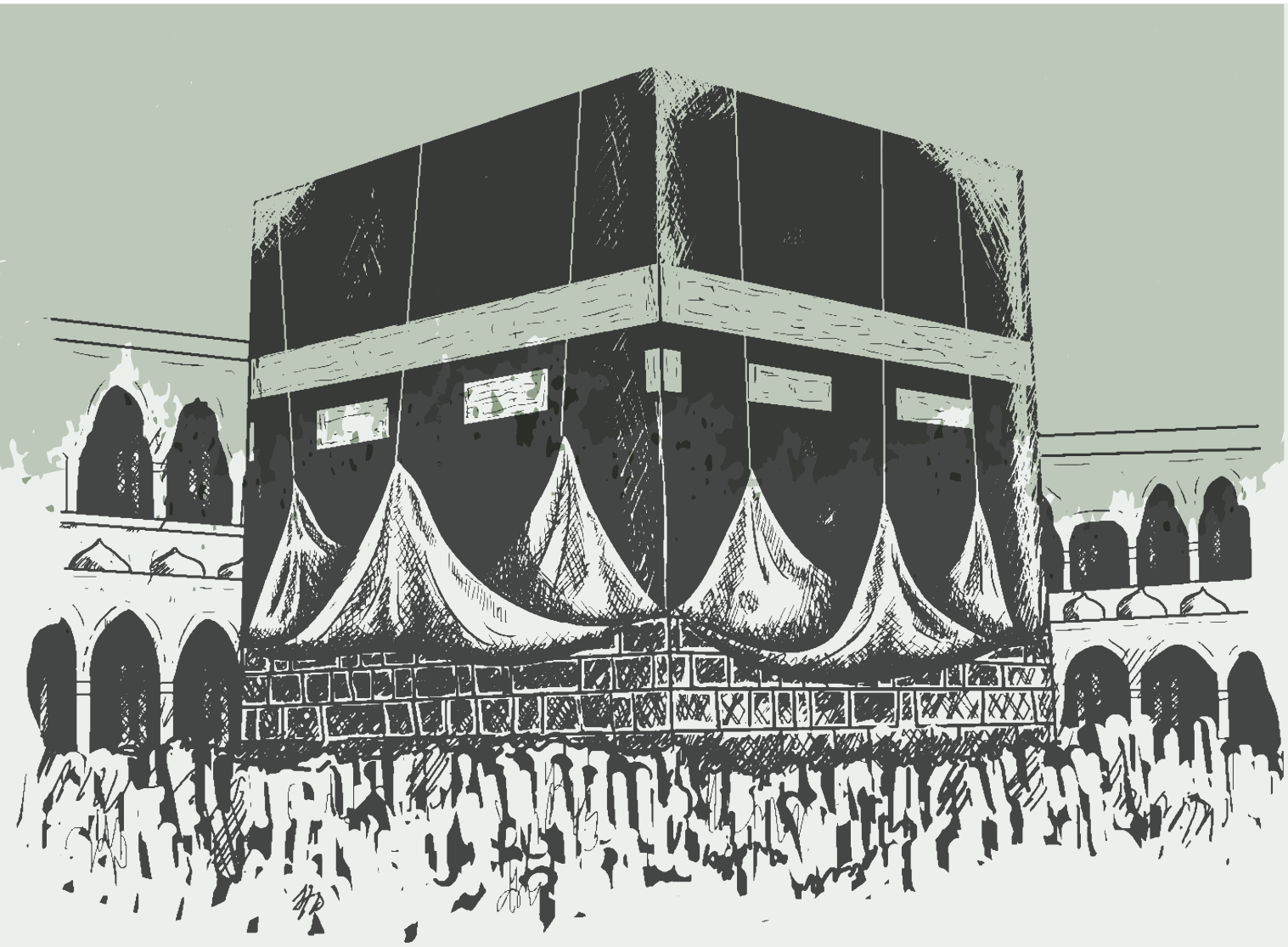
3. God has kept from mankind the knowledge of what will happen in future. No one may attribute to God's will or decree falling short of their duty or indulging in what God has forbidden. To do so is to emulate the unbelievers who used to say: 'Had God so willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Him, nor would we have declared anything forbidden without a commandment from Him'. (16: 35)

4. A person who hopes for God's bounty should appeal to Him alone. It is He who is the Provider, the Giver.

5. There is no harm in a woman asking her doctor to tell her the sex of her unborn child. This is something God has enabled doctors to learn through certain procedural scans. They get such knowledge after the embryo has been given its organs. Prior to that, there is no way to discover the sex of the unborn child.

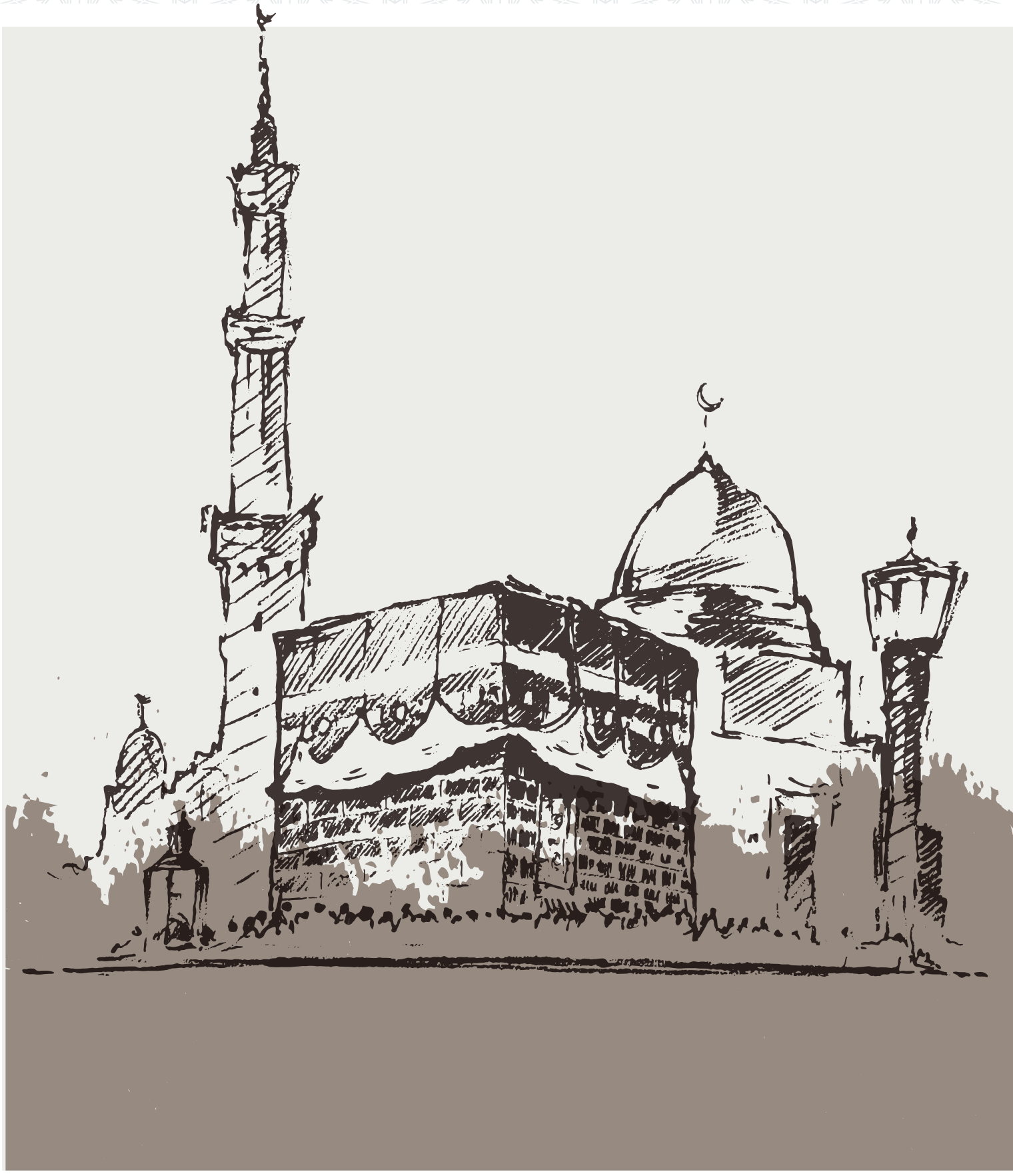
6. Rain, which is the cause for the growth of agricultural produce and our means of sustenance, is controlled by God who alone knows its time, volume and place. We should know that our provisions are determined by God alone. Therefore, we worship Him alone, placing our trust in Him and endeavour to secure what He has determined for us.

7. God has withheld from all mankind their time and place of death. Were man to know that he will die on a particular day, life would go wrong and human progress would be stifled. Man would be weeping awaiting the day of his death. God has withheld such knowledge from us so that we continue to cherish hopes and endeavour to build up life on earth. This is an aspect of God's wisdom. He has a purpose for whatever He does, whether such a purpose is known to man or not.



8 God has withheld from mankind the timing of the Last Hour, so that they will always expect it and always prepare for it, throughout their lives, doing good deeds. Thus, they will always try to do what earns God's pleasure. For the same reason, He has withheld from them the knowledge of the Night of Power, and the time of answering prayers on Fridays.

9 Belief in such matters which belong to the world beyond our perception, limiting ourselves to the knowledge of what God has revealed to us, gives us comfort and hope. It enhances our faith and strengthens our reliance on God.



37

# Hadith

## THE STRICT PROHIBITION OF BLACK MAGIC AND ALL CLAIMS OF HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS BEYOND HUMAN PERCEPTION

A bu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

**Whoever goes to a fortune teller or soothsayer and believes what he says disbelieves in what has been revealed to Muhammad.**[1]

### From the Qur'an

- **﴿With Him are the keys to what lies beyond the reach of human perception: none knows them but He. He knows all that the land and sea contain; not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything fresh or dry but is recorded in a clear book.﴾** (6: 59)
- **﴿We have indeed set up in the heavens constellations, and endowed them with beauty for all to behold, (16) and We have guarded them from every cursed devil, (17) so that anyone who tries to eavesdrop is pursued by a flame clear to see.﴾** (15: 16-18)
- **﴿Say: 'None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God. Nor can they ever perceive when they shall be raised from the dead'. (65) Indeed the total sum of their knowledge stops short of comprehending the Hereafter. Nay, they are in doubt of it. Nay, they are blind to it.﴾** (27: 65-66)
- **﴿Indeed with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come; and He it is who sends down rain; and He knows what the wombs contain; whereas no one knows what they will earn tomorrow, and no one knows in what land they will die. God alone is omniscient and takes cognisance of all things.﴾** (31: 34)

### The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that whoever goes to a fortune teller or anyone who claims to know what God has kept for Himself, and believes him in what he says, his action takes him to disbelief. It may even take him totally outside the religion of Islam or bring him very close to such.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3904; al-Tirmidhī, 135; al-Nasā'ī, 9017; Ibn Mājah, 639.

# Message and Meaning

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns his community against believing fortune tellers and other liars who claim to know things beyond the human world. He tells us that whoever goes to any such person who has contact with the jinn, learning from them what they might have heard about future events that no human being can learn, or others who use various means of deception, such as horoscopes or star readings, etc. and believes their claims actually disbelieves in God and His Messenger.

Such a person is an unbeliever because his action implies disbelief in what God says: 'None in the heavens or earth knows what is hidden except God'. (27: 65) However, the person who believes such people, thinking that what they say is something that humans may learn, unaware that it is something that God has kept for Himself, may not be considered as an unbeliever.

God has made this a part of the trial that distinguishes believers from unbelievers. A fortune teller may come up with some true information. An ignorant person who notes this will imagine that the fortune teller truly knows the future. Yet the reality is different. Some of his companions asked the Prophet about fortune tellers. He said: 'They are nothing'. They said: 'Messenger of God, sometimes they say something and it turns out to be true'. He said: 'That is a word he hears from a jinni. The jinni would have snatched it and knocks it into his crony's ear like the clucking of a hen, but they mix with it more than a hundred lies'.[1]

The jinn used to climb up towards the sky, mounting one on the back of another, thus enabling the top one to listen stealthily to angels. He would then pass what he heard to the one below him and it went down until it reached the one who whispered it to the fortune teller, and the fortune teller then added to it. At the dawn of Islam, as the Qur'an was being revealed, the skies were guarded and shooting flames were sent on the jinn. The only thing left to them was their stealthy listening and what the top jinni snatches and passes on before the shooting flame hits him. This is referred to in the Qur'an: 'We have adorned the skies nearest to the earth with stars, (6) and have made them secure against every rebellious devil. (7) Thus, they cannot eavesdrop on the ones on high, but shall be repelled from all sides, (8) driven away, with lasting suffering in store for them. (9) If any of them stealthily snatches away a fragment, he will be pursued by a piercing flame'.[2] (37: 6-10)

A person who goes to a fortune teller or a similar claimer out of curiosity and does not believe what he says ruins his good deeds for forty nights. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever goes to a fortune teller and asks him about something, none of his prayers will be accepted for forty nights'.[3]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5884.
2 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 10, p. 216.
3 Related by Muslim, 2230.

# Implementation

1. In olden days, people would go to a fortune teller. Today, with easier ways of communication, the fortune teller comes to you on your smart phone or a website, or a news item you read or listen to, or a horoscope you consult. The ways of fortune telling today are numerous, but they all constitute lies and deception. All of them must be shunned.

2. Included in fortune telling is the practice when a person goes to someone who claims to use a method to cure illness. He asks his visitor for a piece of his clothing, or asks his name and his mother's name, then writes for him some symbols or incomprehensible words or gives him a charm or something similar. Such people are also false fortune tellers and they must not be consulted.

3. People are of two types: followers of God's messengers and followers of fortune tellers. No person can follow both. Indeed, a person removes himself away from God's Messenger (peace be upon him) by as much as he draws closer to a fortune teller. He denies God's Messenger in as much as he believes the fortune teller.[1]

4. The essence of faith is that a person believes in God alone, submitting himself totally to Him, looking for none else, entertaining no hope of benefit or protection from harm by anyone other than Him.

5. Beware of going to fortune tellers of any type and believing them. This means loss of faith and disbelief in the religion of Islam.

6. The hadith makes clear that believing fortune tellers means disbelief in Islam, and that going to them without believing them is a major sin. It is not permissible for a Muslim to visit them or visit their websites, either in earnest or in jest.

7. Accept what God has given you. Know that what God has concealed from us is only for our own comfort. Therefore, we must not try to remove the curtain from what has been concealed, because this will only increase our burdens and problems.

1 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Maṣāyid al-Shayṭān*, Vol. 1, p. 253.

# 38 STATUS OF HEART'S ACTION

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **God does not look at either your bodies or forms.**

2 **He only looks at your hearts. He pointed with his fingers to his chest.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Let me not suffer disgrace on the Day when all shall be raised from the dead; (87) the Day when neither wealth nor children will be of any benefit; (88) but only the one who comes to God with a sound heart [will be happy].﴾ (26: 87-89)
- ﴿Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing.﴾ (49: 13)
- ﴿When you see them, their outward appearance may please you; and when they speak, you listen to what they say.﴾ (63: 4)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

Neither body nor form nor appearance is of any importance. It is the heart that counts and whether it is full of faith or unbelief.

1 Related by Muslim, 4779.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that God does not consider a person's appearance, form or physical build. In His consideration, there is no distinction between white and black, rich and poor or strong and weak. A person may have a pleasant face, good physical shape, and he may be able to put forward a strong argument and express himself well, but nothing of this will be of any significance with God, as He states about the hypocrites: 'When you see them, their outward appearance may please you; and when they speak, you listen to what they say'. (63: 4)

2. What counts with God is a person's heart, because the heart is where faith and righteousness are settled. Real distinction between people is based on righteousness and good deeds. God says: 'Truly, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most genuinely God-fearing'. (49: 13) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab; nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor a white person over a black one; nor a black person over a white one; except through righteousness'.[1]

   A person may look ugly but he may have high status with God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A person with dishevelled hair may be one who is pushed away from people's doors, yet were he to say an oath to God, God will honour it'.[2]

   However, some people may cite this hadith in support of their claim that the fulfilment of religious obligations and good deeds are of little importance. They may claim that if one's heart is full of faith and certainty, this will be sufficient and deeds become unnecessary. This is a false claim. Good deeds are part of faith and serve as its manifestation. No one's faith is truly established unless confirmed by their right deeds.

1 Related by Ahmad, 23489.
2 Related by Muslim, 2622.

# Implementation

1. The hadith makes clear that shapes and forms are of no significance. Therefore, we should not judge people on the basis of their appearance. Appearances can be deceptive.

2. The hadith tells us that a person should not give undue importance to his own form and how he looks, while taking little attention of what is in his heart. On the contrary, he should attach moderate importance to his body and physical appearance, and focus most on what has the strongest bearing on the final scales, namely, one's heart. He should ensure that he keeps his heart on the right track.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) draws our attention to the need to purge our hearts of any wrong ideas and misunderstandings that may open the way to wrong beliefs and pursuit of worldly luxuries. We should remember that God looks only at our hearts.

4. Every Muslim should ensure to have only good intentions. It is intention that determines one's reward or punishment. Therefore, a Muslim should be diligent and make strenuous efforts to always have the right intention. This is not an easy task. Early Muslims used to learn the formulation of right intention in the same way as people normally learn to do other things.

5. Those who focused on earning God's pleasure attached their top priority to their hearts so that they could ensure that they were on the right track. Truly pious people looked primarily at the defects that crept into hearts and how to set them right. In relation to other organs, the heart is like an absolute king with his obedient soldiers. They do what the king bids them and the king uses them at will. Hence, the heart determines whether they follow the right path or swerve away from it. The heart issues the commands and the organs do as they are bidden.

6. It is one's intention that qualifies a person for a reward or makes him incur a punishment. A person may do something good but he does it to please someone other than God. He, thus, incurs a punishment. On the other hand, a person may intend to do something for God's sake, but then finds himself unable to carry out his intention. He will be given a reward for his mere intention. Therefore, it is important to ensure having the right intention behind whatever we do.

7. Advocates of Islam and educators should always draw people's attention to the need to give due importance to the heart and purge it of any defects or ills.

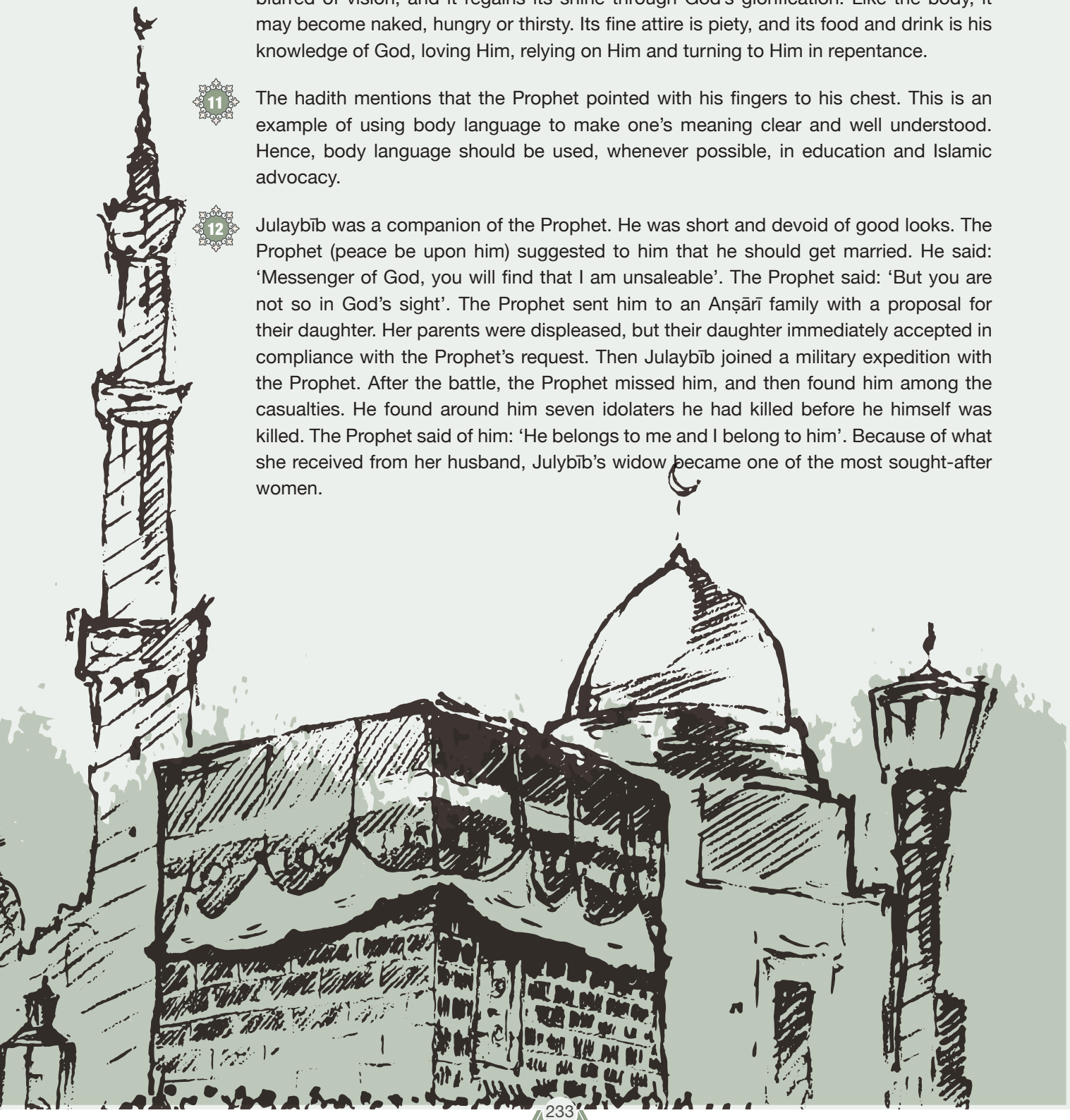
8. Every Muslim should adopt the standard acceptable to God, the Exalted. Thus, true merit is attached to faith and righteousness, not to form, appearance, fine talk, wealth or social standing.

9. A Muslim should base his judgement of any person on that person's faith and piety. It is the standard a Muslim man or woman should apply when looking for a spouse. The same applies if one is looking for an employee, partner, tenant, etc. He should always prefer a religious, God-fearing person.

10 The heart may become unwell, like the body, and its cure is repentance. It may become blurred of vision, and it regains its shine through God's glorification. Like the body, it may become naked, hungry or thirsty. Its fine attire is piety, and its food and drink is his knowledge of God, loving Him, relying on Him and turning to Him in repentance.

11 The hadith mentions that the Prophet pointed with his fingers to his chest. This is an example of using body language to make one's meaning clear and well understood. Hence, body language should be used, whenever possible, in education and Islamic advocacy.

12 Julaybīb was a companion of the Prophet. He was short and devoid of good looks. The Prophet (peace be upon him) suggested to him that he should get married. He said: 'Messenger of God, you will find that I am unsaleable'. The Prophet said: 'But you are not so in God's sight'. The Prophet sent him to an Anṣārī family with a proposal for their daughter. Her parents were displeased, but their daughter immediately accepted in compliance with the Prophet's request. Then Julaybīb joined a military expedition with the Prophet. After the battle, the Prophet missed him, and then found him among the casualties. He found around him seven idolaters he had killed before he himself was killed. The Prophet said of him: 'He belongs to me and I belong to him'. Because of what she received from her husband, Julybīb's widow became one of the most sought-after women.



39

# Hadith

## GOD'S WORSHIP AS MANIFESTED IN LOVE, HATE, ALLIANCE AND DISSOCIATION

Anas narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Three qualities: when combined by a person, ensure that that person will experience, through them, the sweetness of faith:**
2. **that God and His Messenger are dearer to him than anyone else;**
3. **that he loves a person for no reason other than for God's sake;**
4. **and that now that God has saved him from disbelief, he hates to return to it just as he hates to be thrown into the Fire.**[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 16; Muslim, 43.

### From the Qur'an

- **﴿Believers, if you renounce your faith, God will bring forth [in your stead] people whom He loves and who love Him, humble towards the believers, proud towards the unbelievers. They will strive hard for God's cause and will not fear to be censured by any critic. Such is God's favour which He grants to whom He wills. God encompasses all and knows all. (54) Your patron is only God, and His Messenger and those who believe - those who attend to their prayers, pay their zakat and bow down in worship. (55) Those who ally themselves with God and His Messenger and the believers [will find that] the party of God will be victorious.﴾** (5: 54-56)
- **﴿Believers, do not take your fathers and brothers for allies if they choose unbelief in preference to faith. Those of you who take them for allies are indeed wrongdoers. (23) Say: 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, and the property you have acquired, and the business in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God shall make manifest His will. God does not provide guidance to the transgressors.﴾** (9: 23-24)
- **﴿As for anyone who denies God after having accepted the faith – and this certainly does not apply to one who does it under duress, while his heart remains true to his faith, but applies to him who willingly opens his heart to unbelief: – upon all such falls God's wrath, and theirs will be a tremendous suffering. (106) This is because they love the life of this world better than the life to come. God does not bestow His guidance on those who reject the truth. (107) Such are those whose hearts and ears and eyes are sealed by God; such are the heedless. (108) Without doubt, in the life to come they will be the losers.﴾** (9: 106-109)

### The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār, was a distinguished scholar, *mufti*, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he was 20 when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away. He took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, and he took part in the pledge given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions three qualities which ensure that a person who combines them will experience the sweetness of faith. The first is that such a person loves God and His Messenger more than anyone and anything else. Secondly, that he should love others for God's sake, not for any personal interest of any type. Thirdly, that he hates to revert to disbelief more than he hates anything whatsoever. Such hate should be as much as hating to throw oneself into the Fire.

# Message and Meaning

This hadith expresses some fundamentals of Islam and is one of the most concise and expressive of the Prophet's statements:

1

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that whoever has these three qualities will experience the sweetness of faith. This is a feeling akin to what a person may feel when he eats delicious food. This hadith is similar to the other hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Whoever accepts God as his Lord, Islam as his faith and Muhammad as [God's] Messenger experiences the meaning of faith'.[1] This is the same as the feelings of happiness and enlightenment a believer experiences as he increases his knowledge of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). He will feel the pleasure of doing what pleases God and he will be ready to bear hardship for God's sake, preferring it to life's luxuries.

Faith provides nourishment and strength to people's hearts in the same way as food nourishes and gives strength to the body. Needless to say, the human body enjoys food when it is in health. When a person is ill, he does not enjoy the food that benefits him. Indeed, he may fancy what harms him or what is tasteless. The same is the case with man's heart. It is denied the sweetness of faith when it is unhealthy. If a person's heart is free of erring desires and sinful actions, it will certainly experience the sweetness of faith. When it indulges in such actions and desires, such sweetness becomes out of reach. On the contrary, it will find sins attractive, although sinful deeds will inevitably send him into perdition. The one whose faith is sound will enjoy its sweetness and find abstention from sin very easy.[2]

2

The first of these qualities is "that God and His Messenger are dearer to him than anyone else". What is meant by loving God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) is a recognized feeling that makes a person mention his loved one very often, yearning for their meeting, doing what they like and refraining from what they dislike. This feeling of love continues to grow and increase until it becomes stronger than all feelings of love a person has. Indeed, it becomes so strong that it motivates a person to prefer what his love wants, even though it is contrary to what he himself prefers.

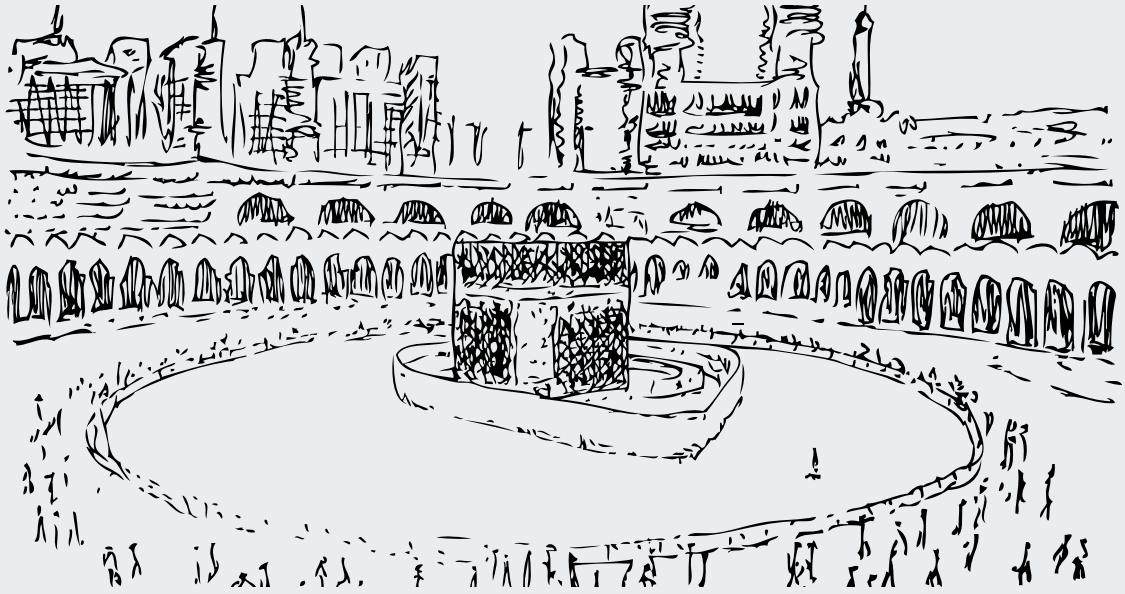
The love of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) must be preferred to all other feelings and considerations, so that a Muslim will not incur God's displeasure and become liable to His punishment. God says: 'Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, and the property you have acquired, and the business in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you take pleasure, are dearer to you than God and His Messenger and the struggle in His cause, then wait until God shall make manifest His will. God does not provide guidance to the transgressors'. (9: 24) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'None of you attains to faith unless I am dearer to him than his parents, children and all mankind'.[3]

1 Related by Muslim, 34.
2 Ibn Rajab, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 1, pp. 51-50.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 15; Muslim, 44.

3 The second quality is that God determines whom a person should love or not love. Thus, he will love someone for no reason other than that God loves that person or orders that he be loved. One hadith quotes the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'The strongest bond of faith is that you love for God's sake and hate for His sake'.[1] Thus a believer submits to God's will in every feeling of love he entertains. God says: 'You have a good example in Abraham and those who followed him, when they said to their people: "We disown you and what you worship instead of God. We reject you. The enmity and hate that have arisen between us and you will last until you believe in God alone"'. (60: 4) Another hadith mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A person who loves and hates for God's sake, gives and withholds for God's sake, is one who has perfected his faith'.[2]

4 The third quality is to hate to disbelieve and indulge in sinful actions, whether a person used to do so in the past or not. A person who truly believes and truly loves God and His Messenger will feel that abandoning faith and disbelieving in God is as hateful a situation as that of being thrown onto a fire.

The essential aspect of hating sinful actions is that a believer should bring himself to dislike them and stay away from them. He should also resolve not to indulge in them because of his knowledge that God dislikes them. That one may entertain a desire for some sinful acts, without painting them in an alluring image or actually doing them is not punishable. In the Qur'an, God praises those who forbid themselves their base desires. This shows that a person may desire what is forbidden, but a believer will stop himself from such indulgences.[3]



1 Related by Ahmad, 18,524.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4681.

3 Ibn Rajab, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 1, p. 58.

# Implementation

1. Umm Sulaym took her son, Anas ibn Mālik, to the Prophet so that he would be the Prophet's servant. Her act was an indication of her great love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). She dearly loved her son who was a free person, not a slave. She was not seeking a paid job for her son, but rather volunteering a service. As Muslims we need to look at ourselves and think how we should serve God's Messenger's message, hadiths and Sunnah.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) often uses words and phrases that attract the attention of his audience. The hadith starts with stating a specific number of qualities to be highlighted, so that the listener is fully attentive and counts them. The Prophet also uses the word 'sweetness' so as to encourage people to acquire these qualities so that they can experience such sweetness. Advocates and preachers should follow the Prophet's example and use methods to attract people's attention.

3. Whenever you feel that your good deeds fall short of what is required, make careful to strengthen your love of God and His Messenger. Anas ibn Mālik narrated that 'a man asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him) about the Last Hour? He said: 'What have you prepared for it?' The man said: 'Nothing much, but I love God and His Messenger'. The Prophet said: 'You are with those you love'. Anas said: 'Having embraced Islam, nothing delighted us more than the Prophet's words: "You are with those you love". I love God, His Messenger, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and I hope to be with them, even though I fall short of what they did'.[1]

4. Whenever you hear of some fine deeds people do for their loved ones, try to do something better towards God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Such love is of different grades. One grade of love motivates a person to do what is obligatory and refrain from what is forbidden. A higher grade of love further motivates a person to do what is recommended and voluntary and to steer away from what is doubtful.

5. It is important that we learn and teach others how to increase and strengthen our feelings of love of God and His Messenger (peace be upon him). The way to acquire such a loving of God, Mighty and Exalted, includes knowledge of His names and attributes as well as the perfection of His deeds, contemplation of His fine creation, remembrance of His great blessings and favours, as well as appreciation of His abounding grace and mercy which He bestows on us although we commit grave sins. Similar things may be said about acquiring the love of God's Messenger (peace be upon him), which is gathered through knowing him, studying his fine character and his tireless striving to establish God's message as a reality. Besides, we should always remember that he is the means to guide us along the way to God and His favours.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3688; Muslim, 2639.

6 Everyone can work to acquire the love of something or to dislike it. Therefore, it is important that we all examine and urge ourselves until we place the love of God's Messenger (peace be upon him) above everything else. The Prophet held 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb by the hand. 'Umar said to him: 'Messenger of God, I love you better than everything else apart from myself'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: 'No. By Him who holds my soul in His hand, not until you love me more than you love yourself'. 'Umar said to him: 'It is so now. By God, I love you more than I love myself'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'You have got it now, 'Umar'.[1]

7 When one Muslim loves another, he should let this love be reflected in such ways as come naturally and easily, such as through meetings, visits, gifts, etc. A hadith mentions that 'A man went to visit a brother of his residing in a different village. God sat an angel on his route to watch him. When he passed by, the angel said: "Where are you going?" He said: "I am visiting a brother of mine in this village". The angel asked him: "Does he owe you a favour and you seek its return?" He said: "No. I only love him for God's sake". The angel said: "I have been sent to you by God to tell you that God loves you because you love your brother for His sake"'.[2]

8 When you love a friend for God's sake, make sure to always keep such a bond purely for God's sake. When love is for a particular purpose, it disappears when that purpose is fulfilled or deemed unobtainable. Love for God's sake is perfect when it is neither increased by mutual kindness nor decreased by estrangement.[3]

9 Train yourself to see sinful actions as ugly and unbecoming, and to dislike them because they lead to what is repugnant. Beware of imagining them as fine or beautiful. Such thoughts are the key to willingness, and willingness is the key to action.

**Abu Qays, an Anṣarī poet, refers to the Prophet's migration to Madis nah in the following lines:**

*He lived among the Quraysh for a score of years, reminding people and whoever was willing to listen.*
*When he came to us and settled among us, feeling comfortable and happy at Taybah;*
*We placed our wealth at his disposal, and we fought hard when called for battle.*
*We take his side against all who are hostile to him, even though they may be our sincere and close friends.*

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6632.
2 Related by Muslim, 2567.
3 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 1, p. 62.

# 40 Hadith

# NO SIMILARITY WITH OPPONENTS

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **You shall follow the ways of those who were before you,**
2. **inch by inch, cubit by cubit.**
3. **Even if they go into a lizard's hole, you will follow their suit.**
4. **We said: "Messenger of God, the Jews and Christians?' He said: 'Who else?"**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Guide us on the straight path, (6) The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray.﴾ (1: 6-7)
- ﴿Is it not time for believers that their hearts should feel humble at the remembrance of God and the truth that has been bestowed from on high, and not to be like those who were granted revelations before them and whose hearts have hardened with the passing of time? Many of these are now transgressors!﴾ (57: 16)

## The Narrator

Abu Sa'īd Sa'd ibn Mālik ibn Sinān al-Anṣārī belonged to the Khazraj tribe and to Madinah, and is known as al-Khudrī. He took part in the Encounter of the Moat and joined God's Messenger on another twelve military expeditions. He also took part in the pledge given to the Prophet under the tree. He narrated a large number of hadiths, and was a distinguished scholar, known for his wisdom. He issued fatwas. He died in Year 74 AH, 694 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that his community will follow in the footsteps of earlier communities, the Jews and Christians. They will invent practices that are unacceptable from the religious perspective and will commit sinful actions. Thus, they will blindly imitate them.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3456; Muslim, 2669.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that his community will blindly follow the same pattern as earlier communities, inventing some deviant religious practices and committing sinful actions. This certainly took place after he had passed away. Many people resort to sham excuses to evade their obligations, take usury, imitate others in their clothing and slogans, punish the weak for their offences while letting the rich and powerful get away with their behaviour, etc. Some even worship deceased people, considering them devout and saintly, instead of addressing worship purely to God alone.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that this blind following shall be 'inch by inch, cubit by cubit'. He emphasizes that some Muslims will imitate unbelievers in everything. He says: 'My community will suffer the same deviation from the right path as the Children of Israel did, step by step; even if there were among them some who commit incest publicly with their mothers, there will be in my community some who will do the same'.[1] What is emphasized here is following their sinful practices, not going as far as disbelief in God or associating partners with Him.

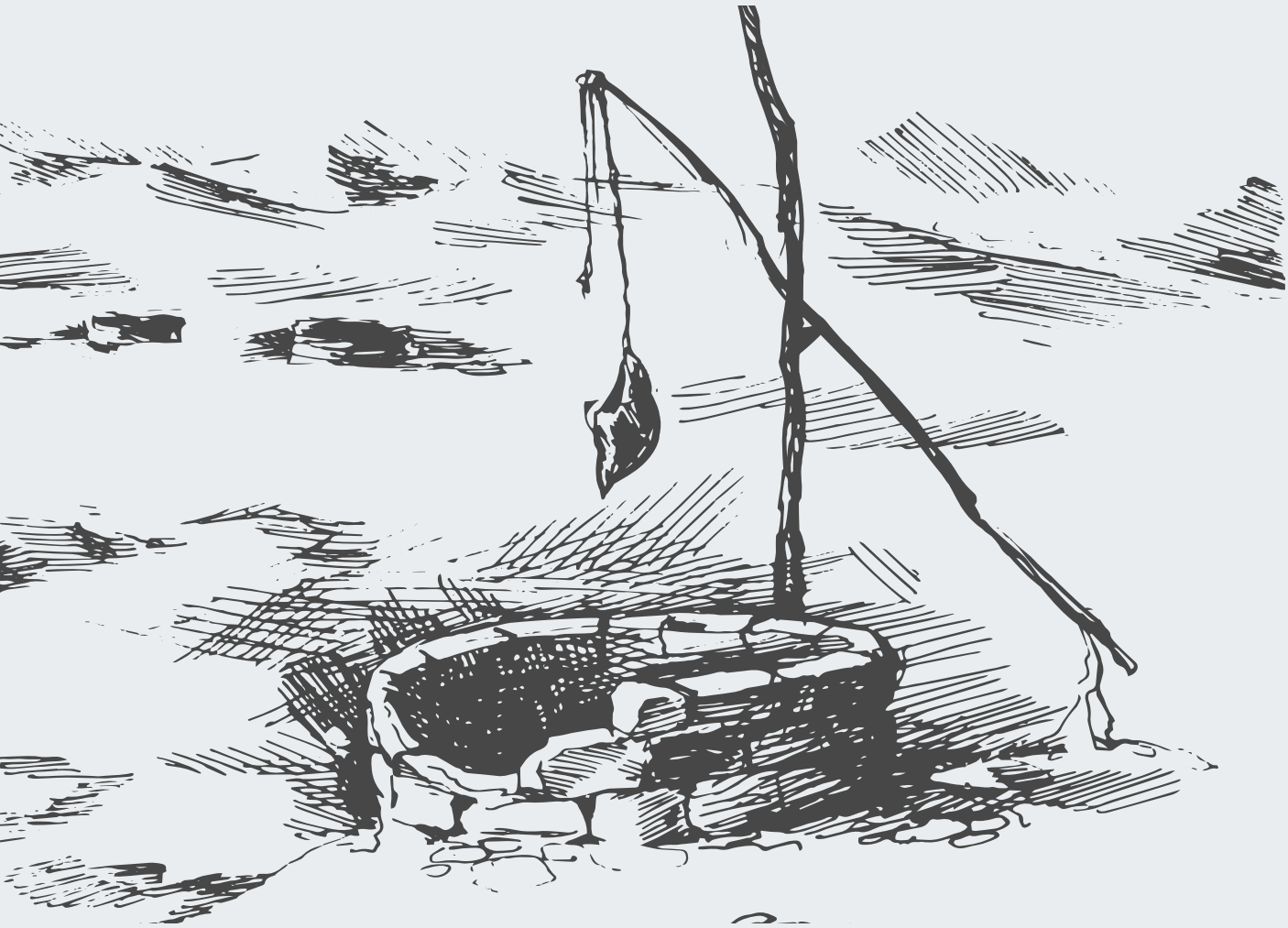
The fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us about this does not signify approval of it. It is, in fact, a warning against following their example. Indeed, the Prophet orders us in several hadiths to stick to our way, in opposition to them.

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2641.

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then gives us a simile illustrating this blind following of earlier communities. He says that were they to enter a lizard's hole, many Muslims would do the same. The Prophet mentions a lizard's hole because it is narrow and foul smelling. Thus, if they were to enter a tight, uncomfortable and foul-smelling place, some Muslims would do the same. This is actually happening with some Muslims imitating unbelievers in their sinful ways and foul deeds which no sound mind could ever approve of.

4 The Prophet's companions asked him whether he meant the Jews and Christians, feeling that it would be especially strange for Muslims to follow the ways of the Jews and Christians who had gone too far in error, when they had God's guidance clear and simple. The Prophet confirms that he meant these and none else.

This information given by the Prophet is general, but applies to some people only. Not all Muslims will follow the ways of earlier deviant communities. Many of them will hold on to the right way and remain God-fearing. What the Prophet meant is that there will be within the Muslim community some who will follow in the footsteps of earlier communities.



# Implementation

1. Addressing his companions, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'You shall follow the ways of those who were before you'. Yet his companions were the farthest of people from following the Jews or Christians. This occurred more in later generations. However, the Prophet's statement points to the unity of the Muslim community and urges that Muslims should always cooperate in following the truth.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses similes and figures of speech to get his meaning across to his audience. This is very useful in illustrating meanings, and it should be used by scholars and advocates of Islam.

3. The Prophet preferred not to mention the unbelievers and transgressors, referring to them only as 'those before you'. It is, therefore, preferable not to mention them by name except when there is need, as this may be useful when mentioning some of their history by way of admonition.

4. It is important not to follow non-Muslims in their way of life and what they eat and dress, let alone their religious habits and rituals. Muslims should endeavour to follow their own distinctive line.

5. This hadith and similar ones should strengthen our belief, as it serves as confirmation of the Prophet's status. What the Prophet warned against has actually happened with Muslims following unbelievers in matters of lifestyle and religion. This should strengthen our belief in God and His Messenger.

6. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns us against following the ways of earlier communities. Such warning aims to support, increase and confirm the group that continues to adhere to the truth and will receive God's support. It strengthens their determination to adhere to their faith. We should always aim to be in this group that adheres to the truth.

7. The hadith refers to the evil consequences of imitating others. Indeed, Muslims suffered a great deal through imitating others. Whole generations lost their true identity and went far adrift into error.

8. The metaphor referring to entering a lizard's hole indicates that some of the unbelievers' deeds are contrary to sound human nature and good reasoning. Yet some Muslims imitate them. All praise is due to God for giving us the blessings of reason and faith.

9. The Qur'an and the Sunnah make clear that there will always remain a group within the Muslim community that will continue to follow the truth and uphold it until the end of human life. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'There will always remain a group of my community holding on to the truth, unperturbed by those who let them down. They will remain thus until God's

decree is done'.[1] The Prophet also mentions that God will always bring up some Muslims who will maintain the way of obeying Him,[2] and that these will never be in agreement on an error.[3] Every Muslim should be keen to join this group.

10

The Prophet's companions found it extremely strange that Muslims should follow the footsteps of Jews and Christians, after their errors had become manifest. There is no doubt that whoever imitates them goes farther in error, despite the fact that the way of truth is made very clear.

1 Related by Muslim, 4988.

2 Related by Ahmad, 17787; al-Bukhari in *al-Tarīkh al-Kabīr*, Vol. 9, p. 61.

3 Related by Ahmad, 27224; al-Tirmidhī, 2167.

41

# Hadith

# STEERING AWAY FROM APOSTASY

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **Hasten to do good deeds before troubles come thick like patches of night darkness,**

2 **when a man may be a believer in the morning and becomes an unbeliever in the evening, or may be a believer in the evening, then become an unbeliever in the morning.**

3 **He sells his faith for some worldly gain.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Hasten, all of you, to the achievement of your Lord's forgiveness, and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing.﴾ (3: 133)
- ﴿Beware of temptation that does not lure only those among you who are wrongdoers. Know that God is severe in retribution.﴾ (25)
- ﴿Believers! Do not let your riches or your children make you oblivious of the remembrance of God. Those who do so will surely be the losers. (9) Give, then, out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to any of you, and then he says, 'My Lord, if You would grant me a delay for a short while, I would give in charity and be one of the righteous'. (10) God does not grant a delay to any soul when its term has come. God is fully aware of all that you do.﴾ (63: 9-11)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah's name is given differently in different reports, but it is said that he was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī, from a branch of the Yemeni Azd. He was an orphan at birth and embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He migrated to Madinah, despite having to go through a tough journey. He remained close to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and earned wide reputation for his knowledge of Hadith and for his fatwas. He had many students and was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) directs his community to hasten to do good deeds before they have a time when troubles come thick and fast, causing people to go astray or weaken their faith. A person may be a good believer, but a day or a night passes and he becomes an unbeliever.

1 Related by Muslim, 118.

# Message and Meaning

1 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) directs the believers to hasten to do good deeds and voluntary acts of worship before they encounter hard trials which he likens to patches of darkness on a very dark night with no visible moon. At such a time, people may not be able to distinguish between truth and falsehood. The Prophet also said: 'This community of yours is such that its best condition is at its beginning. Later, it will experience oppression and matters that you will reject. There will be waves of oppression which will make one another seem light. A wave of oppression may make a believer say: This will destroy me. But then it is lifted. Another then will come and a believer will say: This is certainly the one'.

The Prophet has urged us to do good deeds before the occurrence of trials because during times of oppression and strife, voluntary worship becomes difficult given people are burdened with worry. Therefore, the Prophet said: 'Worship during the time of turmoil is like migration to join me'. He also said: 'There will come a time when people feel that a person holding on to his faith is like one who is holding burning coals in his hand'.[1]

2 The Prophet then tells us that those trials will be very severe. If one afflicts a Muslim, it may turn him away from his faith very quickly. It is as if it turns him away overnight, 'because people's hearts often seek to run loose from the strain of sticking to the truth and frequently look up to ways that lead astray. If they are attacked by some confusing thoughts, these will find ready recipients'.[2] 'When trials and hardships come thick and fast, they confuse people and have a strong influence on them.'[3]

3 In such a situation, a person may sell his faith for a paltry price, which may come in the form of money, position, or some other worldly gain.

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2260.

2 Ibn Hubayrah, *al-Ifṣāḥ 'an Ma'ānī al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, Vol. 8, p. 163.

3 Al-Qurṭubī, *al-Mufhim Limā Ashkal min Kitāb Muslim*, Vol. 1, p. 326.

# Implementation

1. Start your good works now and attend to your worship and other rewarding actions, such as learning, teaching, marriage, maintaining good relations with relatives, etc. Do not think you have much time and delay such good work till tomorrow, or the day after, or 'until I am older', or 'until I have achieved this or that', etc. Hard times may come upon you and these may divert you from doing what is good and what your faith requires. Therefore, it is better to start now, without delay, lest impediments occur.

2. It often happens that a person delays some good work, hoping to be able to do it more perfectly in future, but then he does not offer any real progress. Thus, an author may delay publishing his book until he can get it absolutely perfect, or delay giving his wife a gift until he can buy the one she would like best, or delay reciting the Qur'an until he is in the best condition for such worship, etc. He continues to delay things but then he is overwhelmed with duties, or becomes weaker, etc. Had he done what was available and possible, he would have gathered much that is good.

3. Taking the initiative so as to do things without delay is a skill a person acquires by doing it several times. He may find it hard at first, and he may think that he is not doing well. Yet as time goes on, this becomes easier for him. He will be able to do good work with whatever is available to him. Therefore, it is important to acquire the habit of doing good work. Do not hesitate to offer even a good word or a small charitable donation or a casual, unplanned benefit you give to someone you know or to a stranger.

4. Get to know God in times of ease and prosperity, and He will know you in your time of adversity. Therefore, if you hasten to do good works when you have time, and are well and healthy, God will protect you during times of trial and hardship.

5. A Muslim should frequently pray to God to keep him firm in his faith and not to expose him to trials and temptation. The Prophet often said in his supplication: 'My Lord who turns hearts over, confirm my heart in Your faith'.[1]

6. When a man is in the midst of a trial involving temptation, he may not be aware that he is selling his faith for a worthless gain. He may be complacent in a financial transaction, or accept to receive money which he has not earned, or he may be guilty of backbiting or may listen to some backbiting to please his boss. It is important that we should watch ourselves and take stock of what we do. We must not ignore what detracts from our faith, remembering always that no one has anything more precious than faith.

1 Related by Ahmad, 12107; al-Tirmidhī, 2140; Ibn Mājah, 3834.

42

# Hadith

# STEERING AWAY FROM MINOR TYPES OF ASSOCIATING PARTNERS WITH GOD

Maḥmūd ibn Labīd narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. The thing I fear for you most is the lesser idolatry.
2. People said: What is the lesser idolatry, Messenger of God?
3. He said: Dissimulation.
4. When mankind are given the reward for their deeds on the Day of Judgement, God, Mighty and Exalted, will say to them:
5. Go to those for whom you dissimulated during your lives and find out whether they have some reward for you.[1]

1 Related by Ahmad in *al-Musnad*, 23630; al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, 6412.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Luqmān said to his son, admonishing him: 'My dear son! Do not associate any partners with God; for, to associate partners with Him is indeed a great wrong'.﴾ (31: 13)
- ﴿The hypocrites seek to deceive God, the while it is He who causes them to be deceived [by themselves]. When they rise to pray, they rise reluctantly, only to be seen by people, remembering God but seldom.﴾ (4: 142)
- ﴿Believers, do not render your charitable deeds worthless by vaunting your generosity and hurting others, as does he who spends his wealth to impress people, while he believes neither in God nor in the Last Day.﴾ (2: 264)
- ﴿It has been revealed to you, and to those before you, that if you ever associate partners with God, all your works shall certainly come to nothing, and you shall certainly be among the lost.﴾ (39: 65)
- ﴿As for those who desire only the life of this world and its bounties, We shall fully repay them in this life for all they do, and they shall suffer no diminution of their just dues. (15) It is they who, in the life to come, shall have nothing but the Fire. In vain shall be all that they have done in this world, and worthless shall be all their actions.﴾ (11: 15-16)
- ﴿Yet they were ordered to do nothing more than to serve God, to worship Him alone with sincere dedication and purity of faith.﴾ (98: 5)

## The Narrator

Abu Nu'aym Maḥmūd ibn Labīd ibn 'Uqbah al-Anṣārī belonged to the clan of 'Abd al-Ashhal, a branch of the Aws tribe. He was born in Madinah during the Prophet's lifetime. He did not listen to many hadiths directly from the Prophet (peace be upon him), because he was young. He narrated more from 'Umar, 'Uthmān and Rāfi' ibn Khadīj. The verse granting the concession for those who are unable to fast was revealed initially addressing the case of his father. He died in Madinah in Year 97 AH 716 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns against dissimulation and the lack of sincere devotion to God Almighty. He states that dissimulation makes a person's good work unacceptable to God. As such, God will not reward such action on the Day of Judgement because the person concerned did not dedicate it to Him alone, but rather addressed it to others as well.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns against something very serious, which ruins good work and renders it worthless. The Prophet (peace be upon him) called it 'the lesser idolatry' to distinguish it from full idolatry, which puts a person out of Islam altogether.

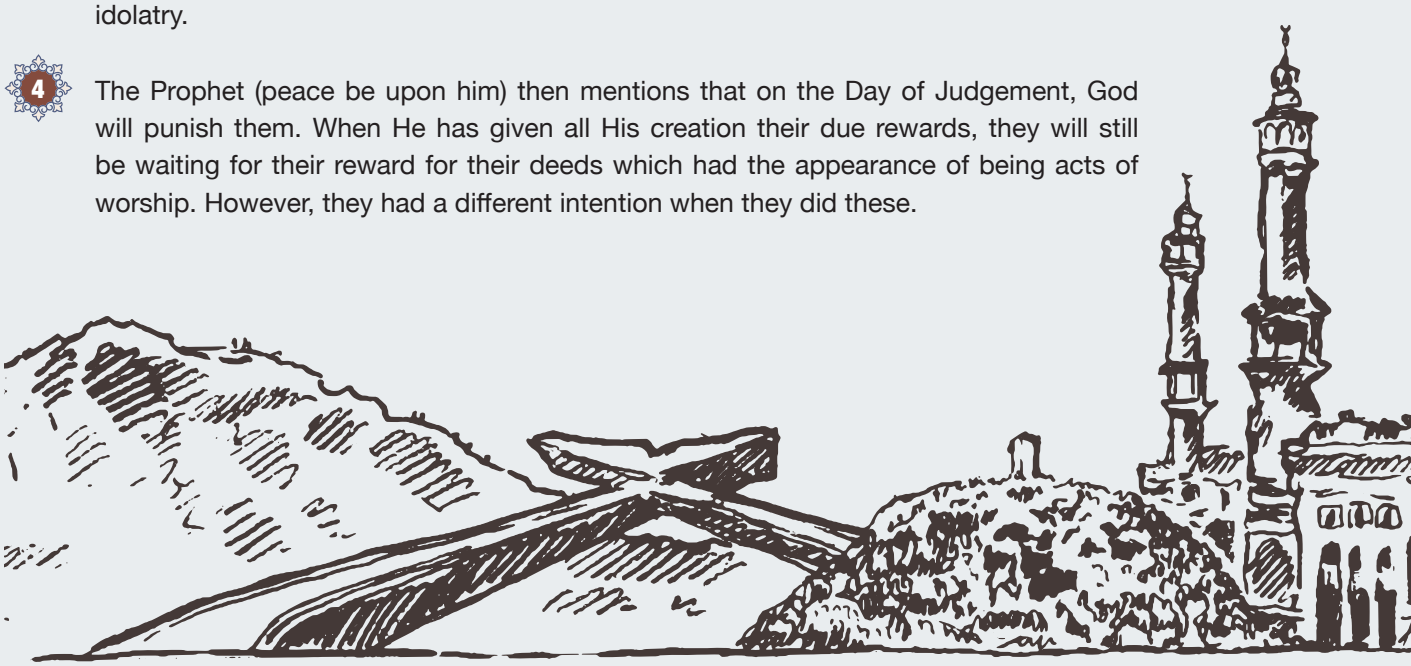
2. The Prophet's companions asked him to explain what this lesser idolatry meant. They knew what full idolatry meant, which is to associate partners with God in whatever does not apply to anyone other than God. However, distinguishing a lesser form from a larger one requires definition, or the citation of an example.

3. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) gave them an example, stating that what he feared most for them was dissimulation. In such a situation, a person may publicize his worship so that people know his deed and praise him for it.

   This is an example of lesser idolatry. Other examples include saying an oath by someone other than God, or to say: 'as God and so-and-so will', acting on a bad omen, using unsound supplications for recovery, etc. These are not totally and absolutely contrary to belief in God's oneness, but they are aspects of lesser idolatry.

   However, such actions may lead a person to full idolatry. A person swears by someone other than God believing in his superiority; or he believes fortune tellers thinking that they know what is beyond the realm of perception; or dissimulate in all matters or in his belief; or believes that charms and similar matters can prevent harm and cure illness, etc. All these are aspects of full idolatry.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions that on the Day of Judgement, God will punish them. When He has given all His creation their due rewards, they will still be waiting for their reward for their deeds which had the appearance of being acts of worship. However, they had a different intention when they did these.



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Therefore, God will tell them to go to those before whom they did their deeds of worship so that they will be seen doing them and earn due reputation. They should find out if they have any reward for them. Needless to say, this is said sarcastically. God renders their deeds worthless and invalid. In a *qudsī* hadith, the Prophet says: 'God, Blessed and Exalted, said: I am the least in need of having an associate. Therefore, whoever does something for someone else's sake as well as Mine will have that action rejected by Me and left to him and his associate'.[1]

The maximum that a dissimulator gains is some little praise, followed by humiliation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Whoever endeavours for reputation, God will publicize his case; and whoever acts hypocritically, God will make a display of him'.[2] This means that a person who wants his deeds to be known by people will have it known and God will make people see what that person does. However, He may also expose him and let people learn what that person does not like them to know.[3] The Prophet (peace be upon him) further explains that the first people to be thrown in Hell are a hypocrite, a reciter and one who goes on jihad, coveting praise. This because their deeds were only dissimulation, meant to acquire reputation. Therefore, they were worthless, earning no reward. They are unlike those whose actions are undertaken for God's sake, with the primary purpose of earning His pleasure and acceptance.

1 Related by Muslim, 2985.
2 Related by Muslim, 2986.
3 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 18, p. 116. English version, Vol. 14.

# Implementation

1. We will do well to learn from the Prophet's method of teaching. In this hadith, he resorts to raising a fear and starting with clear advice. Both elements are clearly apparent in his words: 'The thing I fear for you most'. This style alerts the listener and makes him focus his attention, eager to learn what will come next. Whoever wants to give advice should employ such methods of attracting attention.

2. Subtle idolatry may stealthily corrupt a person's heart, because he does not give due attention. A person may start a prayer, or a session of glorification of God or a recitation of the Qur'an, or intends to donate a *ṣadaqah*, or something similar. However, he may notice that some people are close by, and he would love that they should see his act of worship or hear him. If he strives to expel such thoughts from his mind, his action is credited intact to him. If he entertains such thoughts and allows his intention to become one of dissimulation, his action is rendered worthless. It behoves every Muslim to check how he offers his deeds and that he trains himself to keep his good deeds truly sincere.

3. Ṭalḥah ibn Muṣarrif was the leading reciter of the Qur'an in Kufah. When he felt that many people were eager to learn from him, he feared that dissimulation may creep into his work. To guard against this, he went to al-A'mash and recited the Qur'an to him, i.e. making him his teacher. Therefore, people flocked to learn the recitation from al-A'mash and left Ṭalḥah. Perhaps he meant to show them that al-A'mash was a reciter of very high standing. Ṭalḥah wanted them not to consider him the only available teacher, which might make him feel proud. He also wanted that people should learn from all those who could teach them.

4. A Muslim may do his worship publicly, but not for dissimulation. He may want to make Islamic worship known, or to revive a recommended practice that people might have forgotten, or may do something so that people might learn and practise it. None of this is dissimulation. Dissimulation means that a person does his worship primarily to show off and to give people the impression that he is sincere and devoted to his worship, earning some reputation.

5. An important factor that helps to dispel dissimulation is to remember God and His authority, sincerely relying on Him and seeking refuge with Him from all thoughts of dissimulation and hypocrisy. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned his companions against this and ordered them to seek God's refuge from it. Abu Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated: 'One day, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) addressed us and said: "People, guard yourselves against this type of idolatry, because it is more subtle than the sound of ants as they walk". Someone said to him: "Messenger of God, how can we guard against it when it is so subtle?" He said: "Say: Our Lord, we seek refuge with You against knowingly associating any partner with You, and seek Your forgiveness of what we may unknowingly do".[1]

1 Related by Ahmad, 19109.

6 A Muslim may do some good deed, with sincere dedication to God, but people may see him and praise him for what he has done. He may be happy with their praise. This does not detract from his work and does not make it an act of dissimulation, as long as his intention is clear. Abu Dharr said that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was asked: 'What about a man who does something good and people praise him for it?' The Prophet said: 'That is an early piece of good news for a believer'.[1]

7 A person may be encouraged or feel ashamed when he is with devout people, which leads him to abandon some sins, or encourage him to do some good deeds, without intending to earn their praise. His action is not one of dissimulation. It is indeed one of the benefits of associating with devout people.

8 Were a dissimulator to see his own position he would realize that the majority of those with whom he is eager to earn a reputation do not appreciate his deeds, or they may forget him after he has gone, or they may even be aware of his hypocrisy and he, thus, loses in their esteem. God may also punish him by further exposure. Therefore, the best way to safety is to dedicate all deeds sincerely to God alone and for His sake only.

1 Related by Muslim, 2642.

# 43 Hadith

# STEERING AWAY FROM HYPOCRISY

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Four qualities: whoever combines them is a total hypocrite, and whoever has one of them has a quality of hypocrisy unless he abandons it:**
2. **when he is placed in trust, he betrays;**
3. **when he speaks, he lies;**
4. **when he gives a pledge, he is treacherous;**
5. **and when he quarrels, he resorts to falsehood.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿God commands you to deliver whatever you have been entrusted with to their rightful owners, and whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice.﴾ (4: 58)
- ﴿The hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire, and you will find none who can give them support. (145) Excepted shall be those who repent, live righteously, hold fast to God, and are more sincere in their faith in God. These shall be with the believers. God will in time grant a splendid reward for the believers.﴾ (4: 145-146)
- ﴿Believers, be true to your contracts.﴾ (5: 1)
- ﴿Believers, be steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity. Never allow your hatred of any people to lead you away from justice. Be just, this is closer to righteousness.﴾ (5: 8)
- ﴿Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful.﴾ (9: 119)

## The Narrator

Abu Muhammad – or as some reports put it Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ ibn Wā’il belonged to the Sahm branch of the Quraysh tribe. He learnt writing before the days of Islam, and he mastered the Syriac language. He embraced Islam long before his father. He was a scholar and a devout memorizer. He fasted frequently and spent much of his nights in voluntary worship. He sought the Prophet’s permission to write down his hadiths and the Prophet granted him this. He was, thus, able to narrate a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 65 AH 685 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions four of the main characteristics of hypocrites. No Muslim may have any of these characteristics. Whoever combines all these four is a total hypocrite, and whoever has one of them is a partial hypocrite. These four are betrayal of trust, lying, treachery and being wild in a quarrel.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 34; Muslim, 58.

# Message and Meaning

Hypocrisy is one of the worst ills that affect individuals and communities alike. Islam gives very strong warnings against hypocrisy. It clearly states the hypocrites' characteristics so that believers should beware of them, ensuring that none such can be attributed to them.

1 In this hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions four qualities that must not belong to a Muslim. These are the qualities of hypocrites, and if all four happen to be combined by one person, then that person is a complete hypocrite.

Hypocrisy means that a person shows himself differently from his reality. It is of two types: the first is hypocrisy in belief, which means that a person pretends to be a Muslim but in reality he disbelieves in Islam. Such a person is not a Muslim. The following verses refers to such people: 'The hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire, and you will find none who can give them support. (145) Excepted shall be those who repent, live righteously, hold fast to God, and are more sincere in their faith in God. These shall be with the believers. God will in time grant a splendid reward for the believers'. (4: 145-146) The other type is practical hypocrisy, such as lying and reneging on one's promises and pledges, as mentioned in the hadith. This type does not take a person out of Islam altogether, but it gives him a quality of hypocrisy, making him similar to the hypocrite and equally liable to suffer God's punishment.

2 A person may not possess all four qualities combined, but he may have one or more of them. He, thus, harbours a measure of hypocrisy in proportion to what he has collected of these qualities.

3 The first of these qualities is that of betraying trust. Betrayal means to act unlawfully in respect of what is given to him on trust, such as selling an item, or denying having it, or taking a portion of it, or being careless about keeping it safe. 'Trust' refers to everything a person is entrusted with, which may be money or property, honour or a right due to someone else. It may also mean the entire religious message, because God has given this to us in trust so that we should implement it and teach it to others. God describes disobedience to His Book and the Prophet's Sunnah as betrayal. He says: 'Believers, do not betray God and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray the trust that has been reposed in you'. (8: 27)

4 The second quality is lying. God commands us to speak the truth. He says: 'Believers, have fear of God and be among those who are truthful'. (9: 119) The Prophet (peace be upon him) warns against the ultimate outcome of lying. He said: 'Lying leads to transgression, and transgression leads to Hell. A person will continue to lie until he is recorded with God as a liar'.[1] The Prophet saw in his dream a man whose mouth, nostrils and eyes were being slit open right up to his back. He asked about him and he was told that he would tell a lie and it is then reported throughout the world.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6094; Muslim, 2607.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6096.

5 The third of these qualities is being treacherous. A person may promise and give pledges, but he does not honour that promise. God has forbidden treachery and emphasized its prohibition in several places in the Qur'an. He says: 'Fulfil your covenant with God whenever you make a pledge. Do not break your oaths after you have confirmed them, and have made God your surety. God certainly knows all that you do'. (16: 91) 'Be true to all your promises, for you will be called to account for all that you promise.' (17: 34)

6 The last of these four qualities is that when having a quarrel, a person moves away from the truth, makes dishonest responses and tries to take what is not rightfully his. This is particularly true if he is eloquent and argumentative.

God has commanded all His servants to be fair in all matters. He further orders us not to allow our hostility to tempt us to treat our opponents unfairly. He says: 'Believers, be steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity. Never allow your hatred of any people to lead you away from justice. Be just, this is closer to righteousness'. (5: 8) The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us the ultimate outcome of one who wrongfully takes something that belongs by right to someone else. He said: 'You put your disputes to me, and it may be that some of you have a better argument than others. I will then judge for that party according to what I have heard from him. If I give anyone something of what rightfully belongs to his brother, he must not take it. I am only giving him a piece of fire'.[1]

These four qualities sum up the essential qualities of hypocrisy. There are other characteristics that may come under these four, such as being untrue to one's promises. In fact, hypocrisy comprises many characteristics, but all these come under the four main umbrellas outlined in this hadith. It behoves every Muslim to endeavour not to collect any of these qualities or characteristics.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2680; Muslim, 1713.

# Implementation

1. A distinctive feature of the Prophet's method of teaching is that he uses all aids to illustrate his meaning. One such aid is the use of numbers. When a person learns that the qualities that are about to be mentioned are four, he will be eager to listen and count, so that he subsequently remembers. Scholars and advocates of Islam should use such aids when they address people and teach their students.

2. Hypocrisy is the worst of all characteristics. Indeed, every part of hypocrisy is evil. A wise and true person will steer away from it, but does not claim immunity from it. Ibn Abi Mulaykah, who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation, said: 'I met thirty companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Every one of them feared that hypocrisy might creep into him. None of them said that his faith was as strong as that of the Angels Gabriel and Michael'.[1]

3. A Muslim should be a responsible person. He should be careful about whatever is given to him in trust, whether it is given by one's parents, managers at work, friends, or anyone else. If he fears that he may forget it or forget where he has put it, he should write it down. It is reported that some devout people used to write down anything given them in trust, even if it were nothing more than a pencil or a small sum of money.

4. To be faithful to one's trust is a quality of good and noble people. Prior to Islam, the people of Makkah gave the Prophet the nickname *al-amīn*, which means 'trustworthy'. Being true to one's trust requires patience, accuracy and care.

5. It is important to train oneself to be always truthful, even in simple and trivial matters. Truthfulness is a very good habit to acquire. One should not justify a lie as a joke, or a pleasantry, etc. Nothing is served by lying. A person may continue to lie until lying becomes a characteristic which he does not even try to avoid. He thus becomes known as a liar. Remember that lying is the worst characteristic. Abu Sufyān was still an unbeliever when he was interviewed by Heraclius about the Prophet. He could have lied, but he felt that it was a disgrace to lie, and he answered truthfully.

6. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered Muslims to remain true to their pledges, even when dealing with unbelievers at a time of war. Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān narrated: 'Noting stopped me from taking part in the Battle of Badr except that my father, Ḥusayl, and I marched, but we were taken by the unbelievers of the Quraysh. They asked us: "Are you going to join Muhammad?" We said: "We are not. We only want to go to Madinah". They took from us a firm pledge by God that we would go to Madinah and would not fight with him. We went to God's Messenger (peace be upon him) and told him. He said: "Go home. We honour the pledge given to them and we seek God's help against them"'.[2] It should be noted that the Prophet did not allow Ḥudhayfah and his father to join him in the battle against unbeliever enemies, honouring the promise that had been given to those very enemies.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, without a number, The Book of Faith.

2 Related by Muslim, 1787.

7 A treacherous party may achieve some victory or gain through such treachery, but he should not rejoice at this. The ultimate result is a great and shameful exposure. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'God shall raise a banner on the Day of Judgement for every treacherous person, and it will be said: This is the treachery of so-and-so'.[1] A treacherous person may be able to manage his affairs so that his treachery remains unknown to people in this life, but where will he hide on the Day of Judgement when a banner is raised over his treachery and beheld by all mankind?

8 It is important not to justify being untrue to trust, lying, treachery or resorting to falsehood in a quarrel on account that someone else has done the same. Do not do any of these to anyone who does it to you. A Muslim heeds God's commands and does not follow his own desires. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Deliver what is given to you in trust to the person who trusted you; and do not betray the one who betrays you'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3188; Muslim, 1735.
2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3534.

# STEERING AWAY FROM DEVIATION

‘Ā’ishah; she said that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

**Whoever introduces into this matter of ours something that does not belong to it will have it rejected.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

- **﴿Know that this is the way leading to Me, a straight path. Follow it, then, and do not follow other ways, for they cause you to deviate from His way. All this He has enjoined upon you so that you may remain God-fearing.﴾** (6: 153)
- **﴿As for those who have broken the unity of their faith and have become sects, you certainly have nothing to do with them. Their case rests with God. In time He will tell them the truth of what they were doing.﴾** (6: 159)
- **﴿Say: ‘Has God given you leave to do so, or do you fabricate lies against God?’﴾** (10: 59)
- **﴿Do they believe in alleged partners [of God] who ordain for them things which God has not sanctioned?﴾** (42: 21)

## The Narrator

Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah bint Abu Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Quḥāfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir. She belonged to the Taym branch of the tribe of Quraysh. She was pure and her innocence was revealed from on high. She was the Prophet’s beloved wife and was the leading scholar of the Muslim nation. She was the only one of the Prophet’s wives who was a virgin on her marriage. All his other wives had previous marriages. He loved her more than any other woman. No other woman in the Muslim nation, or indeed among all women achieved a higher status as a scholar. According to authentic reports, she died in Madinah in Year 57 AH, 677 CE, aged 66.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us in this hadith that acceptable worship is that which conforms to the Qur’an and the Sunnah. Whoever introduces something into Islam which is alien to it will have it rejected. It earns no reward. On the contrary, it incurs a sin.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2697; Muslim, 1718.

# Message and Meaning

This hadith is one of the most important hadiths as it serves as a basis for many rulings and essential rules of Islamic law. Imam Ahmad said: 'The fundamentals of Islam are based on three hadiths: 1) 'Actions are by intentions'; 2) 'Whoever introduces into this matter of ours something that does not belong to it will have it rejected'; and 3) 'What is lawful is plain and what is unlawful is plain'.

In this hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that following divine guidance is a condition for the acceptance of religious deeds. Whoever invents something new, without basis in the Islamic faith and the Prophet's Sunnah, will find his invention rejected, earning no reward. Indeed, it may even incur a punishment for being contrary to the Prophet's guidance.

Deviation is the introduction of a new matter which does not rely on a proper religious basis. This may be a matter of belief, such as negating *qadar*, i.e. the divine decree, or believing that a dead person can bring benefit to someone. Alternatively, it may be an action, which means offering worship in a way that is not a part of Islamic worship, such as celebrating the Prophet's birthday, or using phrases of worship that have no basis in the Qur'an or the Prophet's Sunnah, or devoting certain nights for worship such as the middle night of the month of Sha'bān. All such matters are due to ignorance, following personal desire, imitating non-Muslims and giving priority to one's own reasoning above religious rules.

God, Mighty and Exalted, has warned against the pursuit of desire and following deviant ways. He says: 'Do not follow the example of those who became divided and fell into conflict with one another after clear proofs had come to them. For these there will be grievous suffering'. (3: 105) Qatādah said: 'The ones who became divided and fell into conflict are those who follow deviant ways'. Ibn 'Abbās said that on the Day of Judgement 'the faces of the people who follow the Sunnah will be bright while the faces of those who follow deviant ways will be dark'.

God berates the idolaters for making things lawful or unlawful without His permission. He says: 'Say: Do but consider all the means of sustenance that God has bestowed on you! Some of it you then made unlawful, and some lawful'. Say: 'Has God given you leave to do so, or do you fabricate lies against God?' (10: 59)

At the beginning of his speeches, the Prophet used to say: 'the best of discourse is God's Book, and the best guidance is Muhammad's. The worst of matters are new inventions, and every deviation is errant'.[1] He urged his companions in the following terms: 'Adhere to my Sunnah and that of my rightly-guided successors. Hold on firmly to it. Beware of new inventions, for every such invention is a deviation and every deviation is errant'.[2]

1 Related by Muslim, 867.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4607; al-Tirmidhī, 2676; Ibn Mājah, 42.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against inventions in religion because this was the cause of the destruction of earlier communities. Moreover, the Jews and Christians altered their faiths, claiming that Ezra or Christ were sons of God. They also claimed that they are God's beloved children. They distorted their scriptures, the Torah and the Gospel, and stopped the implementation of mandatory punishments. They set their own reason against their religious laws.

This hadith refutes the argument of those who claim that some inventions are good. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has ruled that every invented practice in religion is rejected. This includes all invented practices. Some people cite the case of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb when he arranged for people who were offering the Tarāwīḥ Prayer during Ramadan to form one congregation and appointed Ubay ibn Ka'b to lead the prayer.[1] He then commented: 'How good is this *bid'ah*!' He used the word *bid'ah* in its linguistic sense, which refers to every new thing, whether it relies on some religious basis or not. In this linguistic sense, doing something new is not a religious deviation. What 'Umar did was not an act of deviation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) led such prayer with a congregation for a few days, then he feared that it might become obligatory on Muslims. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away, and no new revelation was to be given, what the Prophet feared no longer applied. Therefore, 'Umar's action in effect followed the Prophet's practice and Sunnah.[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) made his address specific, relating to 'this matter of ours', meaning the religion of Islam. Thus, invention and innovation in matters of this present life is neither wrong nor restricted. Indeed, many inventions are useful and contribute to life's progress. As such, this type of invention is to be encouraged.

1 The hadith narrating this is related by al-Bukhari, 2010.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 2, p. 128.

# Implementation

1. This hadith sets out an highly important and fundamental principle of the Islamic faith. It serves like a standard for the evaluation of man's actions as they appear on the surface. Likewise, the hadith that says, 'Actions are but by intention', is a standard for the evaluation of actions in essence. Every religious deed that is not intended for God's sake earns no reward. Likewise, every deed that is inconsistent with what God and His Messenger have established is rejected. Whatever is introduced into the religion of Islam remains alien to it unless it is sanctioned by God and His Messenger. Therefore, every Muslim should implement these two hadiths in evaluating his actions. He checks whether they are consistent with Islamic law and are intended for God's sake.

2. The hadith refers to the principle that all people's deeds must be consistent with the Islamic code of law. They are subject to the Islamic rulings of approval and prohibition. Any action that is consistent with Islamic law is accepted and whatever is not is rejected.

3. A Muslim must not judge Islamic rulings by his own reasoning. No one may permit what Islam prohibits or forbid what Islam makes lawful as he thinks fit. Islamic law is derived from God's Book, the Qur'an, and the Prophet's Sunnah.

4. To uphold the Sunnah is a great act which earns a Muslim his own reward and the equivalent of the reward of all those who follow his example in practising it. By contrast, an introduction of an unwarranted action in religion and calling on people to practise it is a very grave sin to which is added the burden of everyone who heeds such introduction and acts on it. Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever advocates right guidance earns the same reward as the reward of those who follow him, without diminishing their reward in any way; and whoever advocates error bears the same burden as the burdens of those who follow him, without diminishing their burdens in any way'.[1]

5. Al-Fuḍayl commented on the Qur'anic verse that says: '[God] has created death as well as life, so that He may put you to a test to show who of you is best in conduct'. (67: 2) He said: 'The best of conduct is the most sincere and most right. An action which is sincere but not right is unacceptable. Similarly, right but insincere action is unacceptable. To be accepted, action must be right and sincere. A sincere action is that which is done for God's sake, and right action is what follows the Sunnah'.[2]

6. Every question that relates to religion has a basis in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and a ruling is deduced for it through analogy. Therefore, reference to Islamic scholars is necessary to avoid deviation in matters of religion. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'Be followers, not deviators. You have been spared that. Every invented thing in religion is a deviation, and every deviation is errant'.[3]

1 Related by Muslim, 2674.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, pp. 72-71.

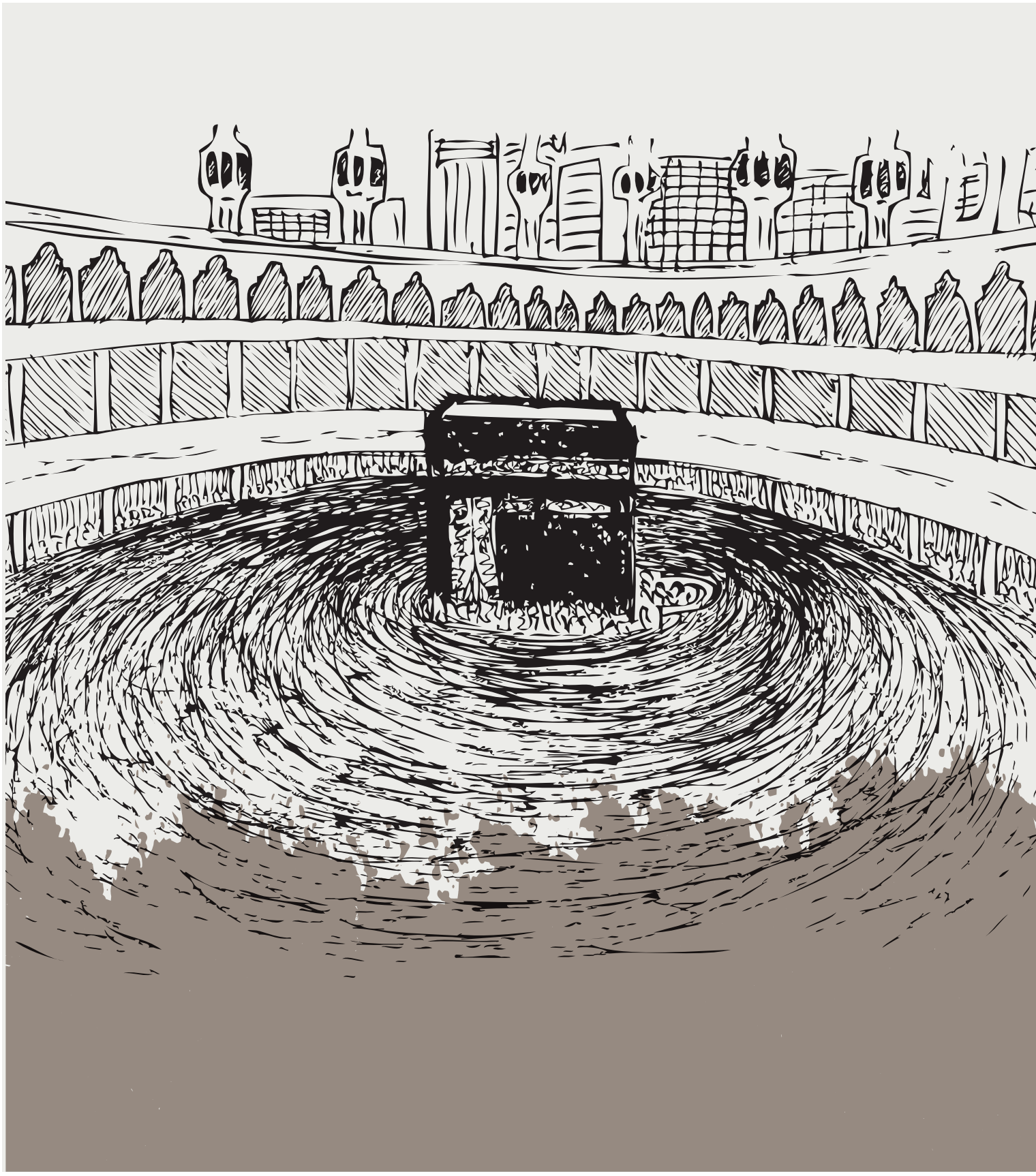
3 Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn 'an Rabb al-'Ālamīn*, Vol. 4, p. 115.

7 Muslims of the early generations were very keen to follow the example of the Prophet and his companions. Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī said: 'If I learn that in doing the ablution, i.e. *wudu*, the Prophet's companions did not exceed a finger nail, I would not exceed it. It is burden enough for anyone that their work is at variance with the work of their Prophet's companions'.[1]

8 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz said: 'Stop where they stopped; say the same as they said; and remain silent as they did. They stopped where their knowledge suggested, and refrained as their critical view indicated. They were better qualified to determine what was right, and more eager to ensure what was best for them'.[2]

9 The only way to remain safe from temptations and trials is to adhere to God's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah. Whoever holds on to God's Book, will find it sufficient as his guide and protection. The Prophet's Sunnah provides light along the way when the darkness of trials becomes very confusing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'After I am gone, you shall witness great controversy. Therefore, adhere to my Sunnah and that of my rightly-guided successors. Hold on firmly to it. Beware of new inventions, for every such invention is a deviation and every deviation is errant'.[3]

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 4607; al-Tirmidhī, 2676; Ibn Mājah, 42.



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# Hadith

# STEERING AWAY FROM EXTREMISM

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. This religion is easy.
2. No one shall pull against this religion but will be defeated.
3. Therefore, seek what is right and what is close to it,
4. and be happy.
5. Seek the easier two ends of the day and a portion of the night.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 39.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿God desires that you have ease. He does not desire that you be afflicted with hardship.﴾ (2: 185)
- ﴿God does not charge a soul with more than it can bear. In its favour shall be whatever good it does, and against it whatever evil it does. Our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden such as that You laid on those before us. Our Lord, do not burden us with what we do not have the strength to bear. Pardon us, and forgive us our sins, and bestow Your mercy on us. You are our Lord Supreme; grant us victory against the unbelievers.﴾ (2: 286)
- ﴿God wants to lighten your burdens; for man has been created weak.﴾ (4: 28)

## The Narrator

According to the best reports, Abu Hurayrah's name was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn and memorize the Prophet's hadiths. He was the companion who narrated the largest number of the Prophet's hadiths. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that the religion of Islam is easy because its rulings and obligations are easy. Whoever pulls against it and tries to impose on it a strict approach will not be a winner. The religion itself will defeat him and he will find himself unable to continue. Therefore, a Muslim should be keen to do what is right and try to be close to what is right. The Prophet gives us the happy news of receiving a rich reward for the same.

He then tells us about the best times for offering worship. These are the start and end of the day and towards the end of the night.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the religion of Islam has the distinctive quality of having easy rulings and obligations, so that they are within human ability. It does not place any hard obligations on people like those that were included in earlier religions. For example, it was legislated for the Children of Israel that if a man committed a sin, his repentance would not be accepted unless he was executed. If impurity fell on his clothing, the stained part had to be cut off. Hence, God describes Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the following terms: 'He lifts from them their burdens and the shackles that weigh upon them'. (7: 157)

Another aspect of the easy nature of the Islamic faith is that its obligations are subject to ability. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Abandon whatever I forbid you. When I give you an order, fulfil it as best you can'.[1] No zakat is due from a poor or needy person; it is an obligation only to those who own what is above the stated threshold of zakat. Hajj becomes an obligation only to a person who is able to perform it, and has the ability to cover the expenses necessary, the physical ability and means to ensure safe travel. The same applies to prayer. A Muslim who is unable to stand up in prayer may offer his prayers seated or reclining or in whatever position he can. A traveller and a sick person may not fast during Ramadan but they fast when the traveller returns home and when the patient has recovered. A person who suffers an incurable disease need not fast but he compensates for fasting by feeding a poor person for each day of the fasting. Such relaxation of rules applies to all religious duties.

Yet another aspect of the easy Islamic approach is that it gives concessions to those who need them. Thus, obligatory prayers are offered differently during battle. A traveller shortens some obligatory prayers and offers two prayers at the same time. After having performed his first ablution, i.e. *wudu*, of the day, a person may later replace washing his feet by wiping over his footwear. This concession is available for one full day for a resident and for three days and nights for a traveller.

2 Whoever resorts to hardship instead of ease in respect of Islamic rulings, imposing on himself what is hard will ultimately fail and find himself unable to continue. He may feel himself strong and able to persevere with his self commitment, but he will ultimately feel bored or burdened and will seek what is easy. The Prophet's guidance is the best guidance. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ said: 'I shall spend the night in worship and fast during the day throughout my life'. When the Prophet was told of this, he told him not to do so. Instead, he ordered him to fast three days a month and to sleep a part of the night and to do his voluntary worship during a part. 'Abdullāh appealed for more, relying on his strength. The Prophet told him to fast one day each three days, but he said he could do more. The Prophet ultimately told him to fast on alternate days. When 'Abdullāh attained to old age and found himself unable to keep up his fasting, he said: 'I wish I had accepted the three days a month God's Messenger (peace

1 Related by Muslim, 1337.

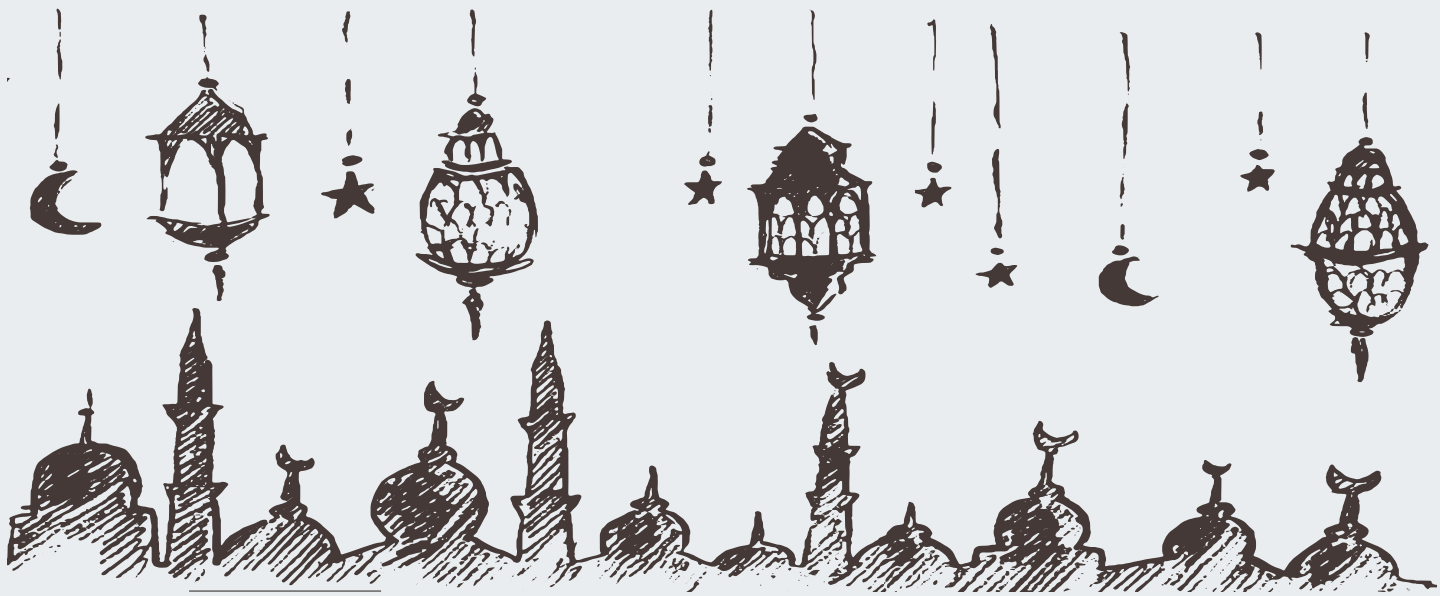
be upon him) suggested. That would have been dearer to me than my family and wealth'.[1] This occurred because he did not wish to change what he was doing during the Prophet's lifetime.

3 Therefore, it is important to abide by what is right, which is the middle way between exaggeration and complacency. If we cannot do what is right and best, then we should endeavour to do what is close to it.

This is an order by the Prophet to maintain a middle course in worship. If one is unable to do what is best of voluntary worship and good deeds, one should try to do what is close to it. What cannot be attained in full should not be mostly abandoned.

4 The Prophet then gives his community the happy news that even though they fall short of attaining the best standard in their worship, God has prepared a rich reward for them, keeping it complete, undiminished.

5 The Prophet was aware that people cannot attend to worship at all times. Therefore, he advised them to make the best use of the times when they are fresh, which are the beginning and end of the day. He also encouraged them to do their voluntary worship in the best and most rewarding time, which is towards the end of the night.[2]



1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1131; Muslim, 1159.
2 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. 1, p. 95.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the particle *inna* at the beginning of the hadith. It adds emphasis to the following sentence and it is frequently used in literary works and by writers and speakers. It is easy and proper to use by advocates of Islam.

2. When we consider Islamic religious duties and their easy fulfilment, as well as the concessions given to those who are ill or disabled, we realize the extent of mercy God has bestowed on us and the care He takes of us. We should respond, expressing our love of God and demonstrating that we are eager to please Him by the fulfilment of duties and by adding voluntary worship.

3. The hadith implies that refusing to avail oneself of a concession when it is needed betrays an overbearing attitude that leaves a person at a loss. When a person is in need of a concession, then the proper attitude is to follow the Sunnah and implement that concession. It is wrong to make things too hard for oneself. If a traveller during Ramadan finds fasting too difficult, he should not fast. An ill person who is burdened by standing up to pray, should pray seated. If one is starving and has nothing available except carrion or some other forbidden food, he eats of it what ensures his survival.

4. It is not permissible to be overscrupulous in matters of religion, imposing on oneself what God does not require. Excessive strictness in worship is pedantic.

5. The hadith does not say that a person who is diligent in worship does wrong. What is wrong is to charge oneself with a burden which is too heavy.

6. To adhere to the Prophet's Sunnah is better than adding to it. To fast on some days and not fast on others, and to spend a portion of the night in voluntary worship and go to sleep is a better way than fasting all the time and spending the whole night in worship. When some of his companions felt that his voluntary worship was too little and wanted to add to it, he said to them: 'By God, I am the most God-fearing among you, but I fast on some days and not on others; I spend some time at night in prayer and I go to sleep; and I marry women. Whoever dislikes my way does not belong to me'.[1]

7. The hadith provides evidence that the proper thing is moderation in voluntary worship, because imposing a hard task on oneself and tiring oneself leads to abandoning all. God has made this religion easy to follow, and therefore it will defeat anyone who pulls hard against it. Islam is based on making things easy, not hard.

8. It is far better for a dedicated believer not to overtax himself, which may eventually tire him out and cause him to stop his voluntary worship. He should be moderate so that he will continue for a long time. The Prophet says: 'The type of action God, the Exalted, loves best is what is done most regularly, even though it is little'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5063; Muslim 1401.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6464; Muslim, 783,

9 What is required of a Muslim is to exert his effort in obedience of God and to endeavour to achieve perfection in every good thing. He should endeavour to achieve perfect humility in prayer, and try to do things as best as he can. For example, a student should strive to understand all his lessons well. Everyone should endeavour to stay away from all sinful actions and fulfil all duties. Having exerted his best efforts, if he achieves most of his aims, he will have done well and gained good reward.

10 Following the Sunnah is following the middle course between two opposite extremes: too much and too little. Man should never impose too much on himself in worship, and must not neglect duties or do what is forbidden.

11 That advocates of Islam and scholars should give people the happy news that God rewards those who attend to their Islamic duties and add voluntary worship is an aspect of the Prophet's Sunnah. They must never lead a person to despair of receiving God's mercy.

12 Everyone should choose the time when he is comfortable and energetic to do his voluntary worship. If one feels lazy or tired, one should rest. One can resume when one is fresh and comfortable. This applies to worship, study and life affairs generally.

13 To spread deeds of worship over the whole day, so as to do a little at different times, is better than to do them all at one time, as one may feel physically and mentally drained at the end.

14 One aspect of God's mercy is that he has neither made night worship obligatory nor urged us to spend the entire night in worship. The Prophet says in this hadith that we should seek 'a portion of the night', so as to lighten the difficulty of night worship. Had he wished otherwise, he would have urged us to dedicate 'the night'.

15 'Ā'ishah narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) had a straw mat and he used to make of it a small compartment where he prayed at night. He would then leave it flat to sit on it during the day. People used to join him in his prayer, and then there were many of them. He turned and said [to them]: "People, do only what you can comfortably do. God is not bored until you are bored. The sort of action God loves best is what is done regularly, even though it may be little". When the people in Muhammad's household did something, they would then do it regularly'.[1]

16 Anas narrated: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) came into the mosque and saw a rope tied to two pillars. He asked: "What is this for?" They said: "It is for Zaynab, when she prays. If she felt lazy or sleepy, she would hold on to it". The Prophet said: "Take it off. Let everyone of you pray when he is fresh. If he feels lazy or sleepy, he sits down"'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5861; Muslim, 782.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 1150; Muslim, 784.

Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullāh narrated that

1 A man from the people of Najd, with dishevelled hair, came to God’s Messenger (peace be upon him). We could hear his voice [as he was coming] but did not understand what he said, until he was close to the Prophet. He was asking about Islam.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Five prayers during the day and night’. He asked: ‘Any more as a binding duty?’ The Prophet said: ‘No, unless you wish to voluntarily add more’.

3 God’s Messenger said: ‘And fasting during the month of Ramadan’. He asked: ‘Any more [fasting] as a binding duty?’ The Prophet said: ‘No, unless you wish to give more’.

4 The Prophet then told him about zakat. The man asked: ‘Any more duty?’ The Prophet said: ‘No, unless you wish to add at your own behest’.

5 The man turned to leave and said: ‘By God, I shall not do more than this and will not omit any of it’.

6 The Prophet said: ‘He will be successful, if he is true to his word’. A different version puts it: ‘He will be in Heaven if he is true to his word’.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 46; Muslim, 11.

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Attend regularly to your prayer and pay zakat; for, whatever good you do for your own sake you shall find it with God. God sees all that you do.﴾ (2: 110)
- ﴿It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur’an was revealed: a guidance for mankind and a self-evident proof of that guidance and a standard to distinguish right from wrong. Therefore, whoever of you is present in that month shall fast throughout the month.﴾ (2: 185)
- ﴿Take a portion of their money as charity, so that you may cleanse and purify them thereby.﴾ (2: 103)
- ﴿Keep up prayer when the sun is on its decline, in the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur’an at dawn, for the recitation of the Qur’an at dawn is indeed witnessed. (78) At night, rise from your sleep to recite it in prayer, as an additional offering from you. Your Lord may thus raise you to an honourable station.﴾ (17: 78-79)
- ﴿He who does good of his own account does himself good thereby.﴾ (2: 184)

## The Narrator

Abu Muhammad Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubaydullāh ibn ‘Uthmān of the Taym branch of the Quraysh, later belonged to Madinah. He was one of the ten companions given the happy news of being admitted into Heaven, and one of the first eight people to embrace Islam. He was one of five of the Prophet’s companions who accepted Islam through Abu Bakr, and one of the six-man committee of consultation, chosen on the basis that the Prophet was pleased with them to the end of his life. He was killed on the day of the Battle of the Camel in Year 36 AH 657 CE.

## Summary

A bedouin asked the Prophet about Islam and the Prophet’s answer detailed the well-known essentials, known as the pillars of Islam. Whoever fulfils them as they should be fulfilled, without addition or omission, will be successful and admitted into Heaven.

# Message and Meaning

1 The bedouin came from Najd, which is a plateau extending from Hijaz in the west to Yamamah in the east; today, it includes Riyadh, Qasim and Aflaj. He entered the mosque when the Prophet was sitting with his companions. He had dishevelled hair, was careless about his appearance, spoke aloud at a distance, giving his voice an echo that made it difficult to understand what he was saying. When he drew close to the Prophet, those seated with the Prophet understood him. Essentially, he was asking about Islam and its legislation.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him about prayer, which is the second pillar of Islam, coming immediately after the declaration of belief in God's oneness and Prophet Muhammad as His Messenger. The Prophet told him that there are five obligatory prayers stretching over each day and night. These are Fajr, Ẓuhr, 'Aṣr, Maghrib and 'Ishā. The bedouin asked whether he had any further duty of prayer once he had offered these five, with all their essentials, in the way and form they should be done. The Prophet told him that no other prayers were obligatory, but that he may voluntarily add to them, if he so wished.

Voluntary worship is offered in excess of what is obligatory, to draw closer to God and in the hope of enhancing one's status on the Day of Judgement. This is recommended, earning reward for the one who offers it, but no punishment is incurred for failure to do so.

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then mentions fasting, the fourth pillar of Islam. It means abstention from eating, drinking and other prohibitions from the break of dawn until sunset, with the right intention, dedicating one's action for God's sake. The Prophet tells his questioner that his duty is to fast during the month of Ramadan. The bedouin asked the Prophet whether he had any obligatory fasting other than this month? The Prophet told him that this is the only obligatory fasting, but he may voluntarily decide to fast on other recommended days.

4 The Prophet then tells him about the third pillar of Islam, namely zakat, which follows the declaration of God's oneness and prayer. He tells him that zakat is a duty and he explains to him its details.

Zakat is a financial act of worship constituting the payment of a portion of certain types of property to defined groups of people. It is called zakat, which is a word derived from a source meaning 'purity', because it purifies man's soul from the burden of sin. God says: 'Take a portion of their money as charity, so that you may cleanse and purify them thereby'. (2: 103)

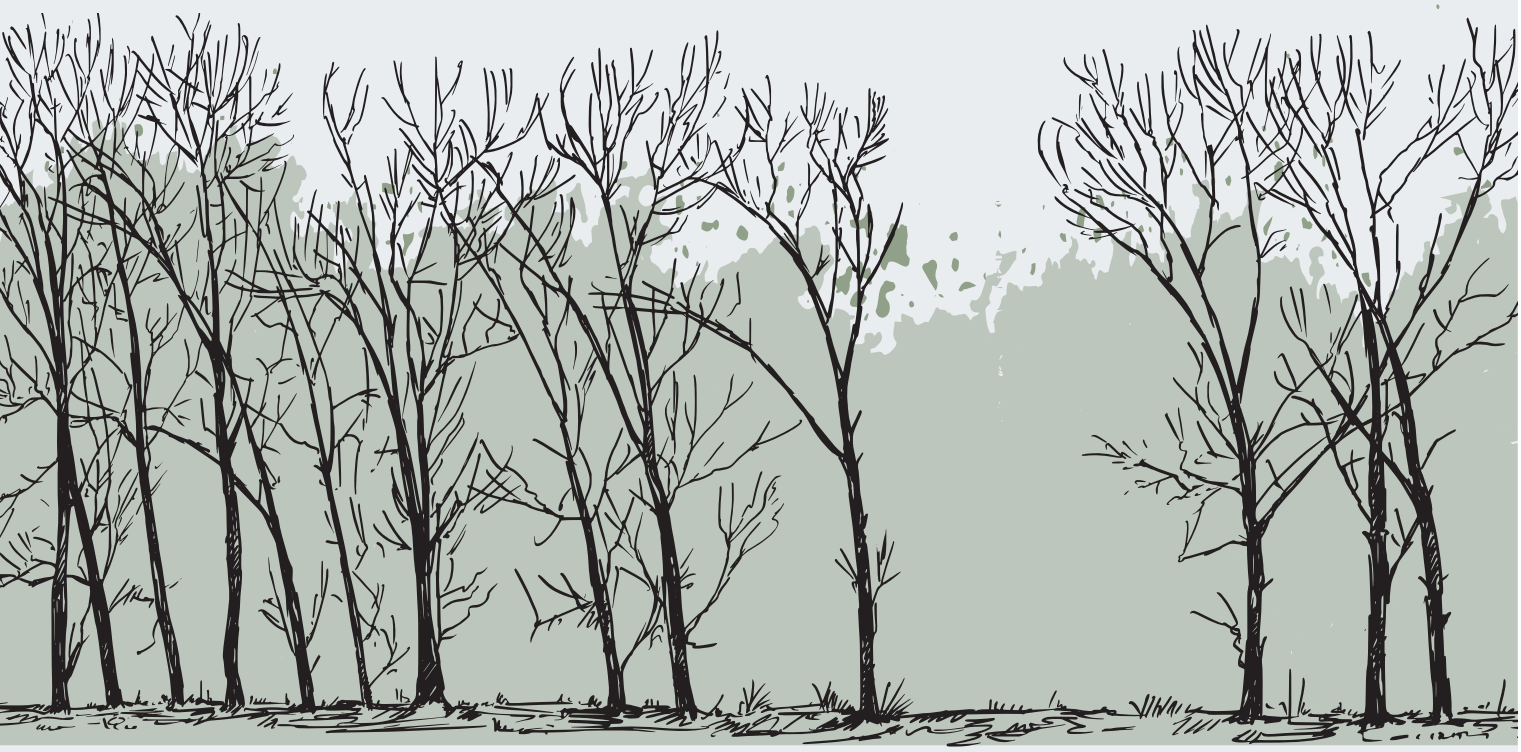
The man asks the Prophet whether he owed any financial duty other than this obligatory zakat. The Prophet told him that this is the only duty, but he may give further charity if he so wished.

5 The man left and said as he was walking away: 'By God, I shall not do more than this and will not omit any of it'. He meant that he would fulfil them as perfectly as he could, without addition or omission.

The man did not mean that he would do only these duties, but not other duties which the Prophet did not include in his answer, such as lowering one's gaze, maintaining one's chastity, stating the truth, etc. To say such a thing is wrong and unacceptable. The Prophet would not have agreed to it. The man simply asked the Prophet about the duties and obligations which would ensure his admittance into Heaven. Therefore, he did not tell him about prohibitions and the need to steer away from them.

6 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then says that if the man did as he promised and was true to his word, he would be successful and have much that is good.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention the declaration of belief in God's oneness and the Prophet's message, because he knew that the man was aware of it, or because he was asking about practical Islamic duties. The Prophet does not mention hajj, either because it was not yet legislated, or because it was not applicable to the man as a duty, or the Prophet might have mentioned it but the narrator left it out.



# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tolerated the rough manners of the bedouin even as he spoke too loudly. This suggests that educators, teachers and advocates of Islam should always be patient, tolerating the difficulties associated with their tasks. They may even be faced with strong disapproval and even harm. They should follow the example of the Prophet, enduring all this patiently.

2. An advocate of Islam, a scholar, an educator and a leader should realize that people differ mentally and psychologically. Therefore, he cannot treat them all in the same way. We note that the Prophet did not criticize the bedouin for raising his voice.

3. The man was keen to learn from the Prophet what was of benefit to him, speaking without hesitation. Every time the Prophet outlined an obligation, the man asked: 'Any more duty?' Everyone should seek to learn what is necessary, unhindered by either bashfulness or arrogance.

4. The hadith shows that a person who limits himself to doing what is obligatory and does the essential Islamic duties in the way acceptable to God will be safe on the Day of Judgement, even though he does not add any voluntary worship. God has made clear that His servants do not draw closer to Him by doing anything better than what He has made obligatory on them. However, neglecting recommended prayers means missing out on much reward. While a person will be safe by doing what is obligatory, adding what is recommended confirms success, enhances one's position and raises one's status.

5. Recommended prayers are many, but the most important are the confirmed sunnah prayers that are associated with the obligatory prayers. These are two *rak'ahs* before Fajr Prayer, four *rak'ahs* before Ẓuhr and two after it, two *rak'ahs* after Maghrib and two after 'Ishā. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever prays twelve *rak'ahs* during a day and night will have a home built for him in Heaven'.[1] Other recommended prayers include the midmorning prayer, i.e. *Ḍuḥā*, night worship, the *Witr* Prayer, etc. Referring to all these, and other voluntary prayers as well, God says in a *qudsī* hadith: 'My servant shall continue to draw near to Me with voluntary works so that I will love him. When I love him, I will be his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask something of Me, I will surely give it to him; and were he to ask Me for refuge, I will surely grant it to him'.[2]

1 Related by Muslim, 728.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6502.

6 Voluntary fasting is one the most rewarding actions a person does. God grants rich reward for it. Fasting on the Day of Arafat wipes away the sins of the outgoing year and the incoming one; and fasting on the Day of 'Āshūrā' wipes away the sins of the outgoing year.[1] 'Whoever follows Ramadan with fasting six days, starting from the month of Shawwāl, is like one who fasts one's entire life.'[2]

7 The Prophet (peace be upon him) also mentions zakat because it provides evidence of a person's faith. Only a believer pays out his zakat feeling pleased with his deed. The fact is that human beings love money and like to keep it for themselves. When a person sets aside his zakat duty, as the portion owed to God, Mighty and Exalted, this is a proof of faith and one's belief in God's promise and warnings. Therefore, a believer should test himself and the strength of his faith by paying zakat and voluntary charity, knowing that what God has in store for him is better and longer lasting.

8 The bedouin said: 'By God, I shall not do more than this and will not omit any of it'. He was assured that doing what is obligatory is sufficient to ensure admittance into Heaven. It is imperative that a Muslim should be firm and active in every good thing he does, hoping to receive its reward. He should not slacken after he has started. This applies to deeds done for the life to come and those for one's present life. A student should attend to his studies and a soldier should carry on with his duties. Perfection of one's work should be the motto of every worker, whether in a factory or a farm or a marketplace.

9 The Prophet's comments on what the man said is clearly applicable to every Muslim. Whoever attends well to all obligatory duties and refrains from whatever is prohibited ensures safety from Hell and admittance into Heaven. However, Heaven has grades and levels, the highest of which is to be in the company of prophets, the ones who never deviate from the truth, martyrs and righteous believers. Needless to say, this grade is not attained by merely fulfilling the obligatory part. Everyone is given according to one's deeds, and everyone should work to achieve one's ambition in the life to come.

10 We note in the hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) appreciated the position of his questioner. Therefore, he did not tell him more than what was obligatory, because these are what is essential for a person to be a true Muslim. Scholars and advocates of Islam should intelligently assess the condition of a questioner and give him the most suitable and right answers.

1 Related by Muslim, 1162
2 Related by Muslim, 1164.

47

# Hadith

# SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND HUMAN NATURE

‘Ā’ishah narrated that God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Ten practices are [aspects of] sound human nature:**
2. **trimming one’s moustache,**
3. **leaving one’s beard,**
4. **brushing teeth,**
5. **inhaling water,**
6. **clipping nails,**
7. **washing finger joints,**
8. **plucking armpit hair,**
9. **shaving pubic hair**
10. **And reducing water.**
11. **Muṣ‘ab said: ‘I have forgotten the tenth, but perhaps it is rinsing one’s mouth’.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

- **﴿God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure.﴾** (2: 222)
- **﴿Children of Adam, dress well when you attend any place of worship.﴾** (7: 31)
- **﴿Set your face steadily towards the true faith, turning away from all that is false, in accordance with the natural disposition which God has installed into man. Nothing can change God’s creation. Such is the ever-true faith; but most people do not know it.﴾** (30: 30)
- **﴿It is God who has moulded you into a comely shape.﴾** (40: 64)

## The Narrator

Mother of the Believers, ‘Ā’ishah bint Abu Bakr ‘Abdullāh ibn Abu Quḥāfah ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Āmir belonged to the Taym branch of the tribe of Quraysh. She was pure and her innocence was revealed from on high. She was the Prophet’s beloved wife and was the leading female scholar of the Muslim nation. Her mother was Umm Rūmān bint ‘Āmir. The Prophet married her sometime after his first wife, Khadījah, had passed away. She was the only one of the Prophet’s wives who was a virgin on her marriage. All his other wives had previous marriages. He loved her more than any other woman. No other woman in the Muslim nation, or indeed among all women achieved a higher status as a scholar. According to authentic reports, she died in Madinah in Year 57 AH, 677 CE, aged 66.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions in this hadith some of the practices that are associated with sound nature God has given to mankind, so that they will be in the best form and shape. The hadith mentions ten of these, namely, trimming one’s moustache, growing one’s beard, brushing teeth, inhaling water and blowing one’s nose, clipping nails, washing finger joints, plucking armpit hair, shaving pubic hair, washing one’s genitals and rinsing one’s mouth.

1 Related by Muslim, 261.

# Message and Meaning

1. Islam takes care of all human internal and external affairs. Therefore, it ensures that a Muslim should maintain a decent appearance. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some of the sound practices of human nature, which God made it natural for people to look after, so that they have a decent and comely appearance. These are approved by sound mind. However, some people may take a different line and corrupt their natural tendencies. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Every child is born with the true nature. Its parents then make it a Jew, Christian or Magian'.[1]

   However, the good practices of sound human nature are not limited to the ten mentioned in this hadith. Others are mentioned in other hadiths.

2. The first of these practices is trimming one's moustache. This should be trimmed because if it is overgrown, it may cause some harm through what is discharged through one's nose. It also interferes with drinking.

   Trimming the moustache is recommended, i.e. a sunnah. It is preferable to trim it back so as one's lip is clearly visible. It is not recommended to shave it altogether.

3. The second practice is to leave one's beard, which is a man's facial hair. What is meant is that it should be left and allowed to grow properly.

   Several hadiths use different Arabic words which together indicate an order to leave it to grow and that it is not permissible to shave it. As for trimming it somewhat, this is subject to different scholarly views.

4. Brushing one's teeth is the third practice. During the Prophet's lifetime and for many succeeding generations, this was with the use of a stick from the *arāk* tree. It was useful to clean and brush one's teeth and impart a healthy mouth smell.

   The use of such a toothstick is recommended at all times, particularly before prayers and on waking up. It is also recommended to remove bad mouth smells and when one's teeth change colour. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The use of a toothstick cleanses the mouth and pleases the Lord'.[2]

5. The fourth practice is inhaling water to blow one's nose and remove mucous.

6. Clipping one's nails is the fifth practice. A person should regularly clip one's nails in order not to leave any deposit of dirt under them.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1385; Muslim, 2658.
2 Related by al-Nasāī, 5.

7 The next practice is the washing of finger joints, because they may hold deposits of dirt, impurity or germs. This practice applies to all areas of the body which may gather dirt or germs. It is important to keep them clean.

8 The seventh practice is to remove armpit hair, because this is a point which gathers dirt and sweat, giving off a noxious smell.

This recommendation is fulfilled however the hair is removed, whether the area is shaved or the hair plucked. The important thing is to remove armpit hair. If one can pluck it, rather than shave it, this is better.

9 The eighth practice is shaving pubic hair. This applies to both men and women.

10 The ninth practice is expressed as 'reducing water', but it refers to the use of water to cleanse oneself after urination and defecation. It is also suggested that it means that a person sprinkles some water over one's penis and clothing to remove any thought that some drops of urine might have fallen on one's clothes.

11 One of the narrators forgot the tenth practice, and thought that most probably it was rinsing one's mouth.

Some scholars say that the tenth is circumcision, because it is mentioned in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah quoting the Prophet: 'Sound human nature includes five (or five practices are aspects of sound human nature): circumcision, shaving pubic hair, clipping one's nails, plucking armpit hair and trimming one's moustache'.[1]

Circumcision is a duty for boys, except in a case where it causes some harm. It involves cutting the foreskin that covers the top of the penis. If the foreskin is left uncut, it gathers traces of urine and impurity. No circumcision applies to women.[2]

It should be noted that for trimming the moustache, clipping the nails, removing armpit hair and shaving pubic hair, the proper thing is to do it as necessary, whenever it has grown. It is not recommended to wait for forty days. Anas ibn Mālik said: 'We have been instructed not to exceed forty nights in attending to trimming moustaches, clipping nails, plucking armpit hair and shaving pubic hair.'[3]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5889; Muslim, 257.
2 Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol. 5, p. 229.
3 Related by Muslim, 258.

# Implementation

1. Islam gives much attention to people's internal and external cleansing, taking care that a Muslim should have the best appearance. God says: 'God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure'. (2: 222) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Cleansing is half the faith'. Therefore, a Muslim should always make sure of cleansing his body and having good appearance. Needless to say, he must also make sure of the purity of his faith and heart.

2. God requires that when His servants stand before Him in worship they must be fully cleansed, with body and clothing clean, ready to address Him, pure internally by repenting their sins and cleansed externally by performing the ablutions and putting on clean clothes. Hence, when we perform the ablution, we say: 'My Lord, make me one of those who repent their sins and those who cleanse themselves'.

3. It is recommended that men should follow the Prophet's Sunnah, trimming their moustaches. When they do, they are recommended to start with the right side.

4. It is not permissible for a man to shorten or shave his beard. What is permissible is to keep it tidy.

5. Scholars mention that certain practices are discouraged to do with one's beard. These include dying it black except at the time of jihad, dying it yellow to give oneself an appearance of ascetism, whitening it to give an impression of being old, wise or scholarly, shaving or plucking it, plucking the white hairs, combing it to attract women, or leaving it uncombed, dishevelled to give an appearance of carelessness about oneself.

6. It is recommended to use a toothstick to clean one's mouth and remove any bad smell. Using a toothbrush and tooth paste is a proper alternative.

7. It is recommended to use a toothstick before every prayer, to implement the hadith quoting the Prophet: 'Were it not that I may be setting the believers – in Zuhayr's narration "setting my community" – a task that is too hard, I would have commanded them to brush their teeth at the time of every prayer'.[1]

8. Using a toothstick is not discouraged at any time. It is indeed encouraged when one is fasting. 'Āmir ibn Rabī'ah narrated: 'I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) countless times using a toothstick while fasting'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 887; Muslim, 252.
2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 725.

9 Inhaling water is an act of cleansing one's nose. Therefore, the Prophet ordered a person performing the ablution: 'Inhale water very well unless you are fasting'.[1]

10 Every Muslim should take care of his nails, clipping them and removing any dirt underneath them.

11 The Prophet mentions washing finger joints, but this includes every part of the body that could attract dirt, such as the back of the ear, wrinkles, in between one's toes and any spot where sweat and dust gather.

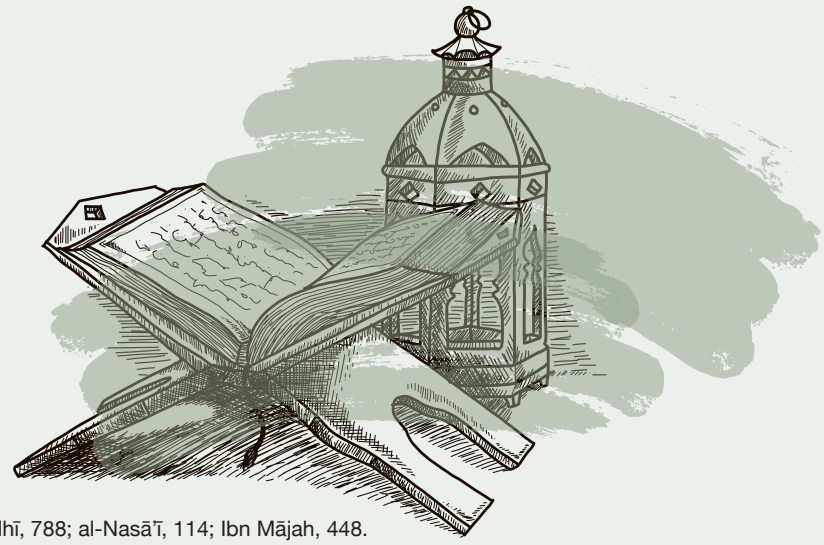
12 It is recommended that one should remove pubic hair regularly, wash hairy areas, clean the area at the top of one's thighs and ensure that every part of one's body is washed.

13 The use of water to wash the genitals after a discharge is much better than using solid objects such as toilet paper on its own. Washing with water ensures proper cleansing.

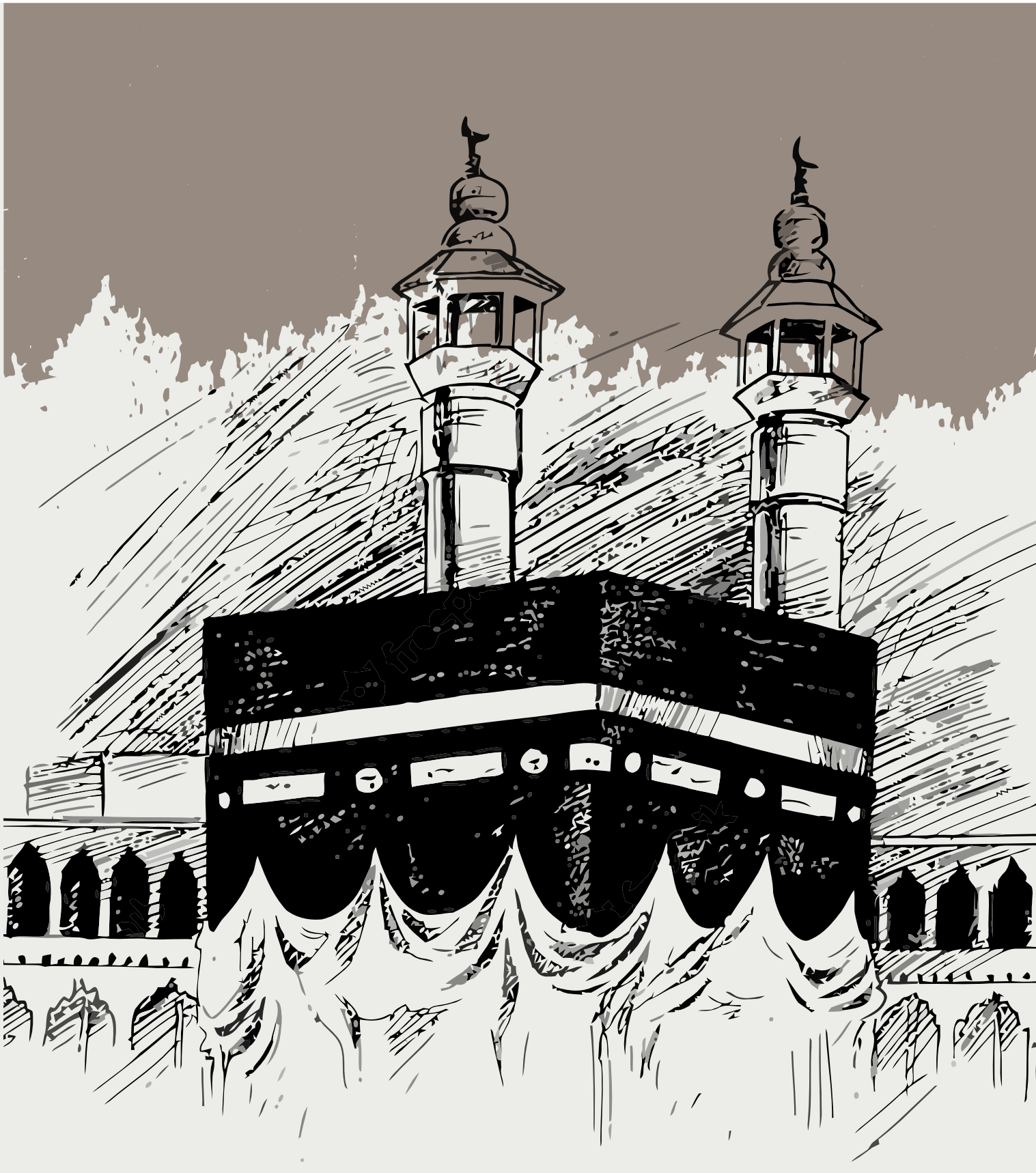
14 A Muslim must not be prevented by pride from stating the truth. We note that the narrator clearly states that he forgot the tenth practice. This is the proper attitude which is much better than saying what may be wrong, attributing it to God or His Messenger.

15 Rinsing one's mouth is a natural practice which a Muslim should do frequently. By doing so, he pleases God, gains the reward of following the Sunnah and makes his cleansing complete.

16 It is much better that circumcision should be done as early as possible. It is better done in early childhood, because it is the time when flesh grows quicker. Moreover, in early childhood, the child does not go through psychological pain.



1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 142; al-Tirmidhī, 788; al-Nasā'ī, 114; Ibn Mājah, 448.



Hadith

48

# WATER AS MEANS OF CLEANSING

Abu Hurayrah narrated saying:

1. A man asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him) saying: Messenger of God, we travel by sea and carry a small amount of water with us. If we use it for ablution, we will go thirsty. Can we perform the ablution with sea water?

2. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: [As for the sea] its water is pure;

3. And its dead [animal] is permissible to eat.[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure.﴾ (2: 222)
- ﴿Lawful to you is all water game, and whatever food the sea brings forth.﴾ (5: 96)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he would go with the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later, he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

A man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about using sea water for ablution, i.e. *wudu*. The Prophet told him that its water is pure and its dead are permissible to eat.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 83; al-Nasā'ī, 59; al-Tirmidhī, 69; Ibn Mājah, 386.

# Message and Meaning

1. One of the Prophet's companions asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about using sea water for *wudu*, or ablution. He mentioned that when they travelled by sea, they only carried a small amount of fresh water. If they were to use it for ablution, it would soon run out and they would have nothing to drink. Could they, in this scenario, perform ablution with sea water?

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that sea water is pure and usable for purification, even though it is different from fresh water in colour and taste.

3. The Prophet gives him further information, stating that it is permissible to eat the flesh of dead sea animals. This is an exception from the Qur'anic statement: 'Forbidden to you is carrion'. (5: 3) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Two types of dead animals and two types of blood are made lawful to you: the dead ones are fish and locusts; and the two bloods are the liver and spleen'.[1]

1 Related by Ibn Mājah, 3314.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet's companion stated his question distinctly and clearly. Rulings may change according to circumstances. Therefore, a questioner must make his question absolutely clear and a scholar must not give a ruling until he has understood the question with all its details.

2. The Prophet's companion was keen to fulfil his religious duty. Although he might be on a journey and could avail himself of the concessions available to travellers, such as combining two obligatory prayers at the same time, and delaying a prayer until the last part of its time range, so that he may pray on arrival, he was nonetheless keen to enquire further. He seems eager to offer his prayers on time. This is an example of ensuring that life matters should not distract us from our religious duties.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) answered saying: 'As for the sea, its water is pure'. He did not give a short answer such as saying, 'Yes'. Such an abbreviated response might have been understood to mean that it is permissible to use sea water for ablution in cases of need or emergency only, as when having little fresh water. It might also be understood to mean that it is not usable for removing impurity. Hence, the Prophet's answer gives a general ruling, stating that sea water is pure and can be used for cleansing, whether there is plenty of fresh water or not, and whether one is on a journey or in residence. This is an aspect of wisdom that is needed by scholars, as they need to give clear and definitive answers.

4. The Arabic wording of the Prophet's answer uses definite articles in both noun and adjective, 'water' and 'pure'. This gives further clarity to the answer. Scholars should always make their answers clear, leaving no room for doubt.

5. The hadith shows that it is right to give a questioner more information than merely answering his question, if the scholar sees that the questioner might need it even though he has not included it in his enquiry. In this case, the questioner frequently travelled by sea. It was possible that he might find dead fish floating on the surface. The Prophet tells him that it is permissible to eat these. It is right for advocates of Islam, scholars and educators to go beyond the terms of the question, if they realize that the questioner has overlooked a necessary aspect.

49

# ABLUTION, OR *WUDU*

Ḥumrān, ‘Uthmān’s *mawla* narrated that:

1 ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān called for water and he performed the ablution: he washed his hands three times, then rinsed his mouth and blew his nose. He then washed his face three times, then washed his right hand up to the elbow three times, then washed his left hand in the same way. He then wiped his head, then washed his right foot up to the ankle three times, then his left foot in the same way.

2 He then said: ‘I saw God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) performing the ablution in a way similar to what I have done

3 then God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever performs the ablution in a similar way to what I have done now, then stands up and offers two *rak‘ahs* during which he thinks of nothing [other than his prayer] is forgiven whatever sin he did”’.

4 Another version related by Muslim adds: ‘and his prayer and walk to the mosque will be a gain’.[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿God loves those who turn to Him in repentance, and He loves those who keep themselves pure’.﴾ (2: 222)
- ﴿Believers, when you are about to pray, wash your faces, and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and pass your wet hands lightly over your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or if you have been in intimate contact with women and can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands. God does not want to impose any hardship on you, but He wants to purify you, and to bestow on you the full measure of His blessings, so that you may be grateful.﴾ (5: 6)

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Amr, or Abu ‘Abdullāh, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ibn Abi al-‘Āṣ ibn Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams of the Quraysh tribe was the third caliph and known by his nickname Dhul-Nūrayn (i.e. the one with two lights). He was one of the earliest people to embrace Islam, and one of the ten companions of the Prophet given the happy news that they were certain to go to Heaven. He went on the two migrations to Abyssinia and Madinah. He was married to two of the Prophet’s daughters: Ruqayyah, and later Umm Kulthūm. The angels used to be diffident in his presence. He became the third caliph after the martyrdom of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in Year 24 AH 645 CE. During his reign, Arminia, Khurāsān, Tunisia and other areas were annexed to the Muslim state. He completed the collation of the Qur’an and unified its copies so that no disagreement could take place in different areas of the state. He was assassinated in Madinah and became a martyr in Year 35 AH 656 CE.

## Summary

‘Uthmān performed the ablution following the example of the Prophet as he performed it for prayer. He then told those present that the Prophet said that whoever performs the ablution in the same way and offers two *rak‘ahs* of prayer, with sincere devotion, will have his past sins forgiven. His prayer and his walk to the mosque will be considered as an additional act of worship that is gained.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 164; Muslim (his text), 226

# Message and Meaning

1 ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān took his place in public to teach people how to do the ablution, i.e. *wudu*. He called for water to be brought in, and started with his hands, washing them three times. He then took some water in his cupped hand and rinsed his mouth. He also inhaled some water and exhaled it to clean his nose. He did this three times. He then washed his face three times. The face extends vertically from the top of the forehead to the lowest point of the chin. It also comprises the area between the two ears. He then washed his arms up to the elbows, starting with the right hand washing it three times before washing the left arm three times. He then wet his hand and wiped the top of his head once only. The requirement concerning one’s head is to wipe it once, not to wash it. He finished with washing his feet and ankles three times, starting with the right foot and finishing with the left.

The narrator does not mention washing one’s ears, because they are washed, front and back, along with wiping one’s head. This was the Prophet’s confirmed practice.

In this hadith, ‘Uthmān mentions that the Prophet’s ablution showed that each part was washed three times. Other hadiths mention that the Prophet did the ablution washing each part once only, and on a different occasion he washed each part twice. The total sum of these hadiths is that the obligatory part is to wash each part once only, making sure that it is well washed. What is more than once is recommended, i.e. sunnah. He did not wash any part more than three times. He said: ‘Whoever does more than this misbehaves, does wrong and is unfair.’ This means that washing each part once is adequate, the second is sunnah and the third attains perfection. What is more is unfair.

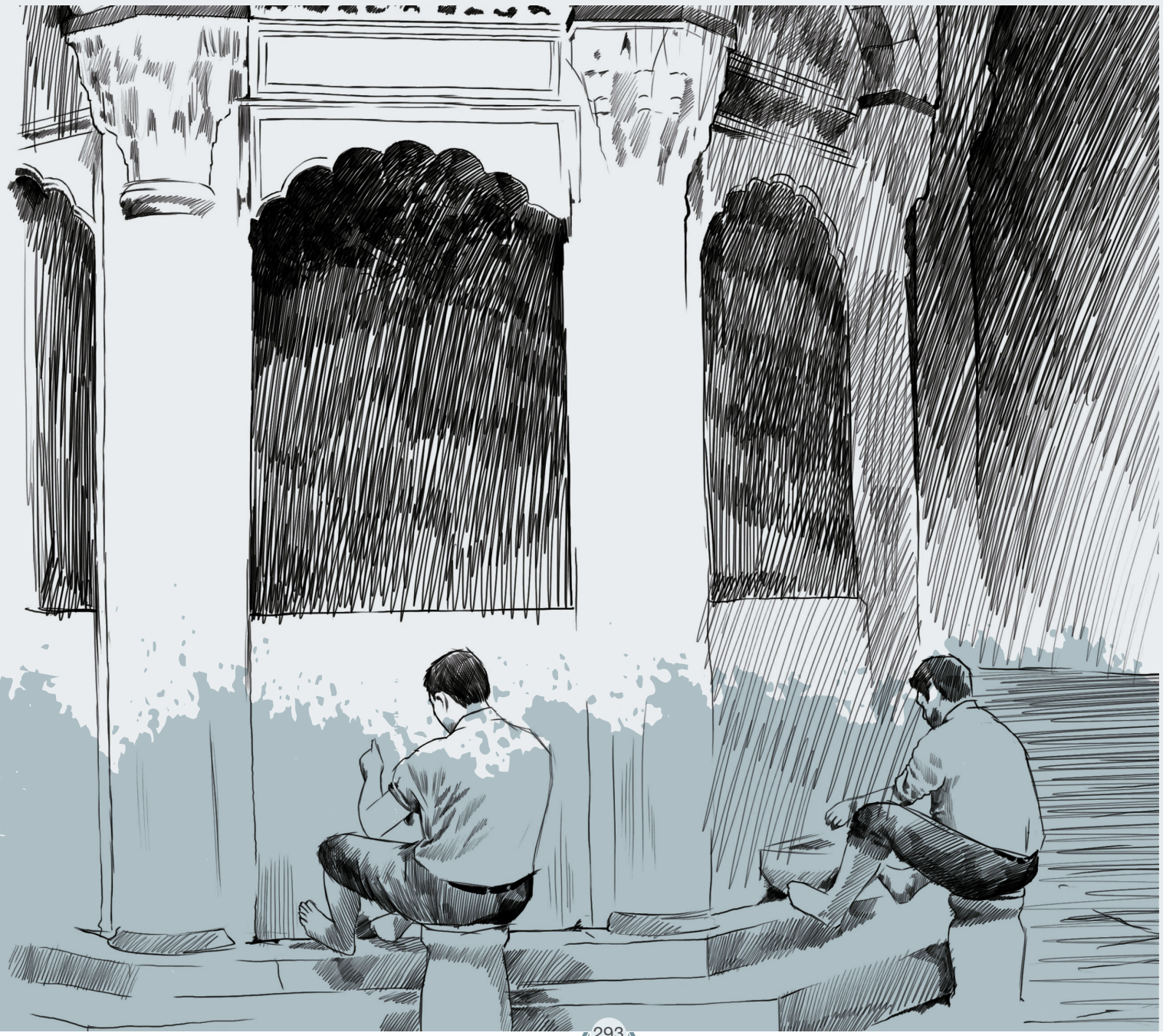
2 ‘Uthmān then states that he saw the Prophet performing the ablution in this way and that he wanted to teach people the Prophet’s practice as he saw it.

3 ‘Uthmān further adds that the Prophet told them that whoever performs the ablution in this manner then offers two *rak‘ahs* of voluntary prayer, calmly and sincerely, giving no thought to worldly matters and ignoring any sudden such thought, will be rewarded by the forgiveness of his past sins.

The apparent meaning of this hadith covers all sins, major and minor. However, similar hadiths specify the minor sins, excluding the major ones. One such hadith quotes the Prophet: ‘The five [obligatory] prayers, and Friday Prayer to Friday Prayer, and Ramadan [fasting] to Ramadan will wipe away what is committed between them unless major sins are committed’.[1] Scholars consider this condition mentioned in the hadith applicable to similar hadiths that do not specifically state it.

1 Related by Muslim, 233.

4 Since the forgiveness of sins is the reward of the ablution, the prayer and walking to the mosque are given additional reward. This means that a person who performs the ablution and offers a prayer of two *rak'ahs* will have his sins wiped away. He will also earn the reward of the following prayer and the walk to the mosque. The reward of these two is granted in full, unaffected by anything. How generous God is: He not only wipes away past sins, but also rewards His servant for both his prayer and his walk to the mosque.



# Implementation

1. ‘Uthmān was known to be a very shy person. However, he did not hesitate to perform the ablution in front of people, so as to teach them the Prophet’s method. A Muslim should not allow his shyness to stop him seeking or disseminating knowledge, correcting mistakes, enjoining what is right or prohibiting wrong.

2. This hadith teaches us the perfect way to perform ablution. We should be keen to always do it this way.

3. The best form of ablution is washing every part three times. We should all do this, adding nothing more.

4. Washing one’s hands is one of the recommended parts of the ablution and the Prophet consistently did it, although it was not mentioned in the Qur’an. Every Muslim should make sure to practise all the recommended aspects of *wudu*.

5. Rinsing one’s mouth, inhaling and exhaling water through the nose and wiping one’s ears are aspects of both the ordinary ablution, i.e. *wudu*, and the grand ablution, i.e. *ghusl*. They should be attended to, not neglected.

6. Doing the obligatory and recommended parts of the ablution in the right order is also obligatory and must be fulfilled.

7. It is important to do the whole of the ablution without interruption. Therefore, one must not disrupt one’s ablution and continue after a while. Indeed if one stops one’s ablution midway for a time and the washed parts dry up, then one should start afresh.

8. The elbows and the ankles are included in one’s ablution. Therefore, they must be included and washed.

9. The ankles are the two protruding bones at the lower ends of the shins. When the wudu is done hastily, some people may overlook washing them, which is wrong.

10. ‘Uthmān did not vocalize his intention to do the ablution, because intention is a mental action. To say it verbally is a deviation.

11. The way ‘Uthmān performed the ablution clearly indicates that the Prophet used not to say anything of the supplication people say during ablution. ‘It is not reported that he used to say anything when he performed ablution other than starting with *bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* [i.e. in the name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful]. When he finished it, he used to say: *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allah waḥdah lā sharīka lah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhū wa rasūluh. Allāhumma j‘alnī min al-tawwābīn wa j‘alnī min al-mutaṭahirrīn.* [i.e. I bear witness that there is no deity other than God. He has no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. My Lord, make me one of those who turn to You in repentance and one of those who purify themselves]’.

12 Educators and advocates of Islam should practically demonstrate the practices they want to teach, as ‘Uthmān did. Such practical demonstration is easier to understand and follow.

13 When a person is about to start an act of worship, he should remove from his mind all thoughts of life’s affairs. He should strive to focus on his worship. During prayer, a person unfortunately often experiences thoughts of immediate concern.

14 One should not pay attention to worldly concerns during worship. As for thoughts of the life to come, the Day of Judgement and what it involves of reckoning and other aspects, these are not reprehensible.

15 When thoughts of this present life and its concerns occur during one’s prayer, one should dismiss these and focus on the Qur’anic verses the worshipper or the imam is reciting.

16 What a great chance to have one’s sins wiped away: just performing the ablution and offering a prayer of two short *rak‘ahs*.

17 Every Muslim should be keen to do the ablution well. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: ‘Shall I tell what ensures that God will wipe away [people’s] sins and raise their grades?’ People said: ‘Yes, please, Messenger of God’. He said: ‘Doing the ablution full well despite difficulty, walking longer to mosques and waiting for one prayer after another. That is [equal to] standing guard’.[1]

18 Islam is a religion of purity, cleanliness and beauty. Self-purification is considered as one of the most important acts of worship by which a person gets closer to his Lord. It is a condition for the validity of many other acts of worship.

19 No one enters Heaven who is foul or having anything foul. Therefore, a person who purifies himself during his life and meets God having no impurity will enter Heaven without difficulty. A person who does not purify himself in this life either has an inherent impurity, such as a disbeliever has, or an acquired impurity. The one with an inherent impurity does not enter Heaven at all, but the one with an acquired impurity will be purified of it in the Fire and then come out. In fact when believers have crossed the fine line, they will be stopped over a bridge between Heaven and Hell, where they will be cleansed of traces left on them and kept them short of Heaven, but did not send them into Hell. When they have been thus cleansed, they will be permitted to go to Heaven.[2]

20 God bestows His favours on His servants, forgiving them their sins and rewarding them for their prayer and for their walk to the mosque. What a great blessing that no wise man should ever ignore.

1 Related by Muslim, 251.

2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān min Maṣāyid al-Shayṭān*, Vol. 1, p. 56.

50

# Hadith

# DRY ABLUTION, OR *TAYAMMUM*

‘Ammār ibn Yāsir narrated:

1 God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) sent me on an errand, and I happened to be in a state of ceremonial impurity, but could not find water. I soaked myself with dust just like animals do. When I later met the Prophet I mentioned this to him.

2 He said: ‘It would have been sufficient for you to do this with your hands’, and he then struck the earth with his hands once, and wiped his right hand with his left hand and wiped the back of his hands and face.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 347; Muslim, 368 (Muslim’s text).

## From the Qur’an

﴿If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves. But If you are ill, or on a journey, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or if you have been in intimate contact with women and can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands. God does not want to impose any hardship on you, but He wants to purify you, and to bestow on you the full measure of His blessings, so that you may be grateful.﴾ (5: 6)

## The Narrator

Abu al-Yaqẓān ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir ibn ‘Āmir belonged to the ‘Ans tribe, but he was *mawlā*, i.e. an ally, of the Makhzūm branch of the Quraysh and belonged to Makkah. He and both his parents were tortured by the unbelievers of Quraysh for embracing Islam. The Prophet passed by and saw them being tortured. He said to them: ‘You, Yāsir’s family, persevere. Heaven is your meeting place’. His mother, Sumayyah, was killed by Abu Jahl who stabbed her in her vagina with his spear. She was the first martyr in the history of Islam.

It was regarding his case that God revealed the verse that says: ‘As for anyone who denies God after having accepted the faith – and this certainly does not apply to one who does it under duress, while his heart remains true to his faith, but applies to him who willingly opens his heart to unbelief: – upon all such falls God’s wrath, and theirs will be a tremendous suffering’. (16: 106)

He might have migrated to Abyssinia, but this is not confirmed. However, he migrated to Madinah and took part in all military expeditions with the Prophet. He also took part in the Battle of Yamāmah against the apostates, and he suffered the loss of one ear in this battle. ‘Umar appointed him Governor of Kufah, and wrote to its people that ‘Ammār was one of the distinguished companions of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

‘Ammār was killed fighting with ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib in the Battle of Ṣiffīn in year 37 AH, 658 CE, and was buried there. The Prophet had told him: ‘You will be killed by the party in the wrong.’

## Summary

‘Ammār ibn Yāsir was in a state of ceremonial impurity when he was on a journey. He could not find water for his ablutions. He, therefore, needed to resort to dry ablution, i.e. *tayammum*, and he soaked himself in dust in order to be able to pray. When he went back to Madinah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explained to him how to perform dry ablution, which is to strike the earth with one’s hands and then wipe one’s hands and face.

# Message and Meaning

*Tayammum*, or dry ablution, is a concession God, Mighty and Exalted, has granted to His servants to make things easier for them. It replaces ablution when there is no water or water cannot be used. The Prophet says: 'God loves that His concessions be exercised just as He hates His commandments to be violated'.[1] Scholars define *tayammum* stating: 'Using dust to wipe one's face and hands with the intention of having permission to pray and do other things'. It is lawful, confirmed in the Qur'an, the Sunnah and by the unanimous view of scholars. It is a special privilege God has granted to the Muslim community. This hadith states how it is performed.

1 'Ammār mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent him on an errand. On his journey he had a wet dream and thus he was in a state of ceremonial impurity. He, therefore, rolled himself in dust which sticks to hands and body alike. Thus, the dust covered all his body. He did this so that he could pray, recite the Qur'an and perform other worship. When he returned, he told the Prophet (peace be upon him) so as to learn whether his action was right or not.

'Ammār did this, thinking that the dust replaces water in removing a state of ceremonial impurity. When using water, this is done by washing one's entire body. He, therefore, thought that in dry ablution, the dust should be applied to the whole body.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) told 'Ammār that striking his two hands on a dusty surface was sufficient. He should then wipe both his hands and face. This is what the relevant Qur'anic verse tells us: 'If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or if one of you has come from the toilet, or if you have been in intimate contact with women and can find no water, then have recourse to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your faces and your hands. God does not want to impose any hardship on you, but He wants to purify you, and to bestow on you the full measure of His blessings, so that you may be grateful'. (5: 6)

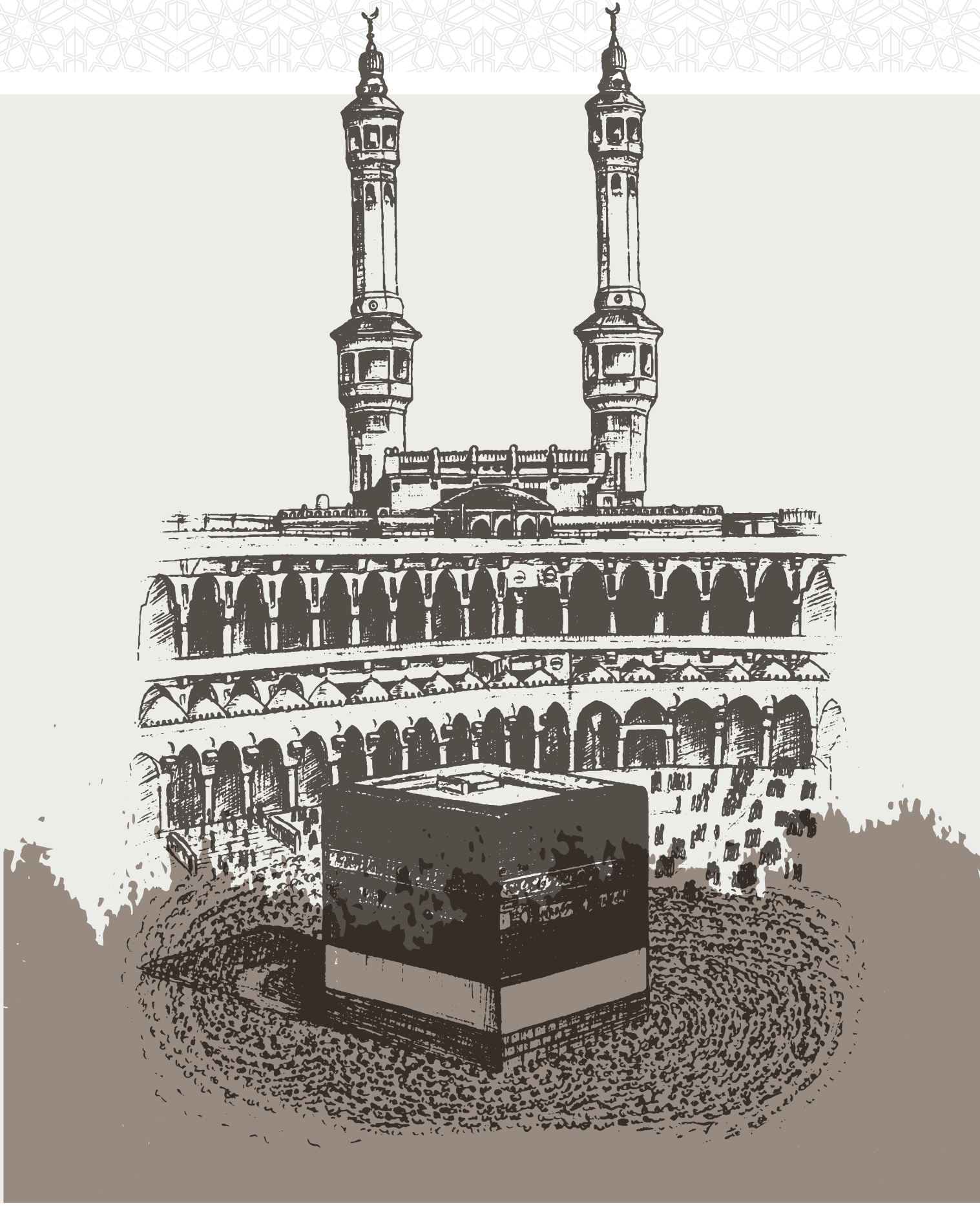
1 Related by Ahmad, 5866.

# Implementation

1. What ‘Ammār did shows that a Muslim who is unaware of the ruling concerning a matter he is facing, and does not know what scholars say about it, and has no access to anyone who can give him the Islamic ruling should try his best to determine what should be done. Then when he is able to ask about the ruling, he should do so in order to learn the proper answer to his question.

2. The hadith shows that if a person who is qualified to exercise scholarly reasoning, i.e. *ijtihad*, applies his view, which happens to be right in some way, does not need to repeat his duty if his view is not the right one. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not order ‘Ammār to repeat his prayer although he was mistaken about the form of dry ablution. His action covered it, but in an incorrect way.

3. The hadith makes clear that the Islamic code is based on providing what is good and easy. It does not require what is very difficult for a person to do. In this case, it provides the concession of dry ablution and makes it easy, needing only for the person to wipe his hands and face.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Jābir said: I heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) say:

**'What separates a person from disbelief and associating partners with God is negligence of prayer'.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿Attend regularly to your prayers, particularly the middle prayer, and stand up before God in devout obedience.﴾** (2: 238)
- **﴿Every soul is held in pledge for what it has wrought, (38) except for those on the right hand. (39) They will be in gardens, and will ask (40) about the guilty ones: (41) 'What brought you into the scorching Fire?' (42) They will answer: 'We were not among those who prayed'.﴾** (74: 38-43)

## The Narrator

Abu 'Abdullāh Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffīn alongside 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was also at one time the mufti of Madinah. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor of the Prophet's companions who had attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states clearly that the difference between Islam and unbelief is negligence of prayer. So, a person who does not pray is an unbeliever.

1 Related by Muslim, 82.

# Message and Meaning

Prayer is the second pillar of Islam, as the declaration of God's oneness and Prophet Muhammad's message is the first pillar. It is indeed the main pillar of the religion of Islam. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The top matter is Islam, i.e. self-surrender, and its pillar is prayer. Its highest point is jihad'.[1] It is the deed God loves best. 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'I asked God's Messenger (peace be upon him): Which action God loves best? He said: "Prayer on time".'[2]

Prayer is the distinctive mark of Muslims. Hypocrites find it a heavy burden and only offer it reluctantly, as God describes: 'The hypocrites seek to deceive God, the while it is He who causes them to be deceived [by themselves]. When they rise to pray, they rise reluctantly, only to be seen by people, remembering God but seldom'. (4: 142) Unbelievers reject it as a binding duty and do not offer it at all. Therefore, God warns those who neglect it, saying: 'Every soul is held in pledge for what it has wrought, (38) except for those on the right hand. (39) They will be in gardens, and will ask (40) about the guilty ones: (41) 'What brought you into the scorching Fire?' (42) They will answer: 'We were not among those who prayed'. (74: 38-43) In the same surah, God describes the 'scorching Fire' stating: 'I will cast him into the scorching Fire. (26) Would that you knew what the scorching Fire is like! (27) It leaves nothing, and spares nothing; (28) it appears before mankind, (29) guarded by nineteen'. (74: 26-30)

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) explains the verdict on a person who totally neglects prayer, stating that prayer is what distinguishes a Muslim from an unbeliever. The only thing that separates a person from disbelief and associating partners with God is negligence of prayer. This is similar to the Prophet's hadith: 'The bond between them and us is prayer. Whoever discards it goes into disbelief'.[3] 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: 'A person who neglects prayer has no share in Islam'.[4] 'Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq said: 'The Prophet's companions considered prayer as the only deed that takes a person into disbelief when neglected'.[5]

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2616; al-Nasā'ī, 11330.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 527; Muslim, 85.
3 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2621; al-Nasā'ī, 463; Ibn Mājah, 1079.
4 Related by Mālik in *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, Vol. 1, p. 39; al-Dāraquṭnī, 1750.
5 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2622.

# Implementation

1. Scholars unanimously agree that a person who discards prayer, denying it as a binding duty, is an unbeliever and apostate. However, they hold different views on one who neglects it out of complacency and laziness. Some say that such a person is an unbeliever while others consider him a transgressor who is required to declare his repentance and pray. Unless he does so, he incurs the death penalty. Others still consider him a transgressor, but one who does not incur the death penalty. A true Muslim who believes in God, Blessed and Exalted, and believes in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) does not put himself in such a position that ranges between disbelief and transgression, according to the different views of scholars. Rather, a true Muslim hastens to do what earns God's pleasure and tries to draw closer to Him by offering the recommended prayers after finishing the obligatory ones.

2. When 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was stabbed and taken home, his attendants tried to revive his consciousness, but could not do so. Some suggested: 'Nothing will make him come to except prayer'. They announced, 'O *Amīr al-Mu'minīn!* Prayer is due'. As he came to, he said: 'Yes. Anyone who neglects prayer has no share in Islam'. He prayed while continuing to bleed. This gives us an impression of the care the Prophet's companions attached to prayer.(1)

3. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ narrated that the Prophet mentioned prayer one day and said: 'Whoever maintains it well, it will serve him as light, proof and means of safety on the Day of Judgement. The one who does not maintain it will have neither light, nor proof, nor means of safety. On the Day of Judgement, he will be with Qārūn [i.e. Korah], Pharaoh, Hāmān and Ubay ibn Khalaf'.(2)

   Ibn al-Qayyim said: 'The Prophet mentioned these four in particular because they were the most hardened of unbelievers. The hadith includes a very interesting point. A person who neglects prayer is preoccupied with his wealth, kingship, high position or business. The one who is preoccupied with his wealth will be with Qārūn, while the one who is a king or leader will be with Pharaoh, the one preoccupied with his position or ministry will be with Hāmān, and the one preoccupied with his business will be with Ubay ibn Khalaf'.(3)

4. Why would anyone neglect prayer when God has made it the action that atones for a person's sins and errors: God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: 'Suppose that a river ran in front of the door of any of you and he washed himself in the river five times every day. Will that leave any dirt on him?' They said: 'Nothing of his dirt will remain'. He said: 'This is the same as the five prayers: God erases sins with them'.(4)

5. Referring to congregational prayer, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd said: 'There was a time when none stayed away from it except one whose hypocrisy was confirmed. A man might be brought to the mosque, leaning on two men, until he was stood in the row'.(5)

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1 Related by Mālik in *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, Vol. 1, p. 39; al-Dāraquṭnī, 1750.
2 Related by Ahmad, 6576.
3 Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ṣalāt wa Aḥkāmuhā*, p. 51.
4 Related by al-Bukhari, 528; Muslim 667.
5 Related by Muslim, 654.

# RULINGS APPLICABLE TO PRAYER

Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith narrated:

1. We came to the Prophet, a group of young men of roughly the same age, and stayed with him twenty nights. When he felt that we missed our people, he asked us about the families we had left behind and we told him.
2. God's Messenger was compassionate and kind. He said: "Go back to your people and stay with them,
3. Teach them and instruct them.
4. Pray as you have seen me pray.
5. When prayer is due, let one of you say the call to prayer [i.e. the *adhān*], and let your eldest lead the prayer".[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿It is by God's grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you.﴾ (3: 159)
- ﴿Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers.﴾ (9: 128)
- ﴿Enjoin prayer on your people, and be diligent in its observance.﴾ (20: 132)

## The Narrator

Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith al-Laythī, Abu Sulaymān's name was sometimes given differently by scholars. He later resided in Basrah. He visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a group of young men belonging to the same tribe. The Prophet taught them prayer and told them to teach their people when they returned home. He narrated several hadiths concerning prayer. He died in Year 94 AH, 713 CE.

## Summary

A number of young men visited the Prophet and stayed with him for twenty nights, learning about the religion of Islam. When he felt that they missed their families, the Prophet felt compassion towards them. He told them to return to their people and teach them what they had learnt of Islam. He also told them to attend to their prayer and to pray as they saw him pray. The eldest among them should lead the prayer.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6008; Muslim, 674.

# Message and Meaning

1 Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith visited the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a group of his people. They were all young men of similar age. They stayed with the Prophet for twenty nights, learning about Islam. When the Prophet felt that they missed their own people, he enquired about their families and they, in turn, told him about their relatives whom they had left behind.

2 Having learnt this from them, the Prophet ordered them to return, which was a gesture of his compassion which he felt towards all believers. God says describing him: 'Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers'. (9: 128)

The Prophet ordered them to return home because their visit was after the takeover of Makkah. When that takeover took place, migration to join the Prophet was ended. The Prophet said that there was no migration after the takeover of Makkah.[1] Staying in Madinah became a matter of choice. Anyone could choose either to stay or return home after having learnt what he needed of his faith, and he could then instruct his people accordingly.

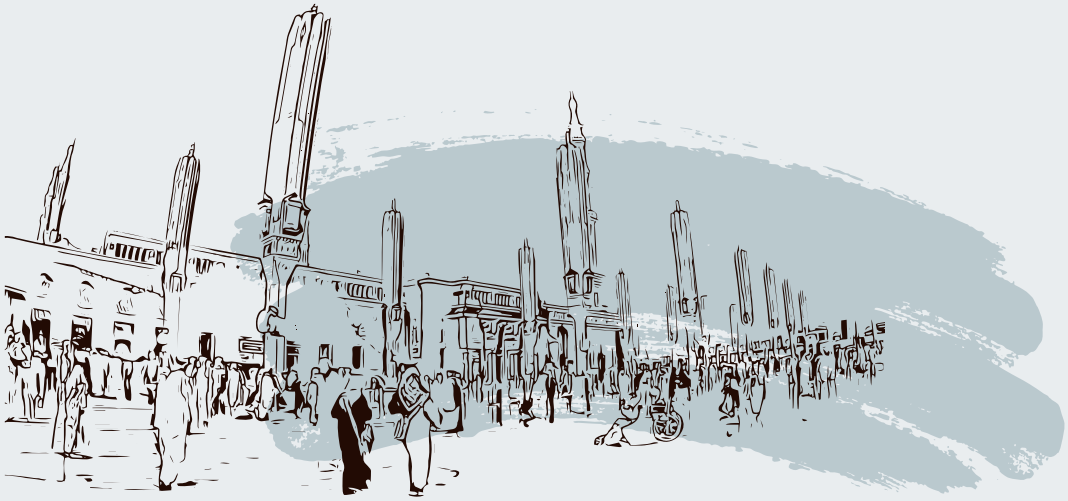
The Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted them to return, and indeed told them to return home because he was aware that they had learnt what was sufficient for them. Had they not had that knowledge, the Prophet would not have let them go back, let alone order them to instruct their people.

3 The Prophet not only ordered them to impart what they had learnt of the divine faith to their people, but also told them that this was not enough. Every one of them should instruct his family and watch them. He was responsible for them. God said: 'Enjoin prayer on your people, and be diligent in its observance'. (20: 132) The Prophet said: 'Every one of you is a shepherd and accountable for his flock'.[2] Instruction and follow up are duties in the same way as teaching one's family is a duty.

4 The Prophet then states the broad rule concerning religion and its rulings. This is the rule that requires following the Prophet's example in prayer, how it is offered, its rulings, what may be said during prayer and what invalidates it, and which omissions require two prostrations at the end. The Prophet's practice explains what God has stated in general terms in the Qur'an. There are no verses in the Qur'an that state the details of prayer, its number of *rak'ahs*, timings, essential and recommended parts, etc. The Qur'an merely orders attending regularly to prayers at their normal times. Other details are left to be explained by the Prophet's verbal and practical Sunnah. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Pray as you have seen me pray'.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2783; Muslim, 1353.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2409; Muslim, 1829.

This applies in all legislation. When he performed the pilgrimage, the Prophet gave the following order: 'Learn your rituals. I do not know but I may not perform the hajj after this hajj of mine'.[1] Scholars are in full agreement that when they are intended as showing the details of something stated in general terms, the Prophet's actions are understood as obligatory, unless there is special evidence confirming that they are not so. Therefore, such a duty applies to all Muslims, provided that it is confirmed that the Prophet continued to do so. If his continuity is not confirmed, the action is not treated as a duty.



5 The Prophet then tells the young men that when a prayer becomes due, one of them should call the *adhān*, and their eldest should lead the prayer.

The general rule concerning the choice of the imam is that the one who recites the Qur'an best should lead the prayer. A hadith narrated by Abu Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī quotes the Prophet: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "The one to lead a congregation in prayer is the one who recites God's Book best. If they are equally good in recitation, then the one who knows the Sunnah best. If they have equal knowledge of the Sunnah, then the one who migrated first, and if they are the same with regard to migration, then the one who embraced Islam earlier'.[2] 'Amr ibn Salamah led his people in prayer when he was only six years of age, because he was the best among them in reciting the Qur'an. The Prophet ordered this particular group to choose their eldest as their imam because he was aware that they were of the same standard in reciting the Qur'an. This is stated in another hadith: 'They were of similar standard in recitation'.[3] Since they embraced Islam at the same time, then most probably they were of the same standard in their knowledge of the Sunnah. Therefore, the Prophet chose the eldest as their imam.

1 Related by Muslim, 1297.
2 Related by Muslim, 673.
3 Related by Muslim, 674.

# Implementation

1. The hadith shows how the Prophet's companions were keen to learn about their religion and know the rulings that applied to them. They were prepared to undertake long journeys for this purpose, because they were aware of the great merit such knowledge imparts. It is important that a Muslim should not miss out on such reward, particularly because nowadays it is easy to acquire such knowledge without much effort or need to travel.

2. The Prophet took special care of young people and he was keen to teach them their faith, so that they became like ambassadors and advocates of Islam among their people. Young people are the mainstay of their community and the ones who ensure its progress. It is necessary, therefore, to guide them to what is most useful for them and their community.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was well aware of the psychological and emotional needs of young people. He, therefore, told this group of young men to return to their people. It is important to take special care of the needs of young people.

4. Advocates of Islam and educators should be compassionate and ensure that their advocacy is not in conflict with people's needs. They should endeavour to make things easy for people and make the best use of the time when they are most alert and active, allowing them enough time for rest and relaxation.

5. A wise advocate of Islam or educator does not assign to people tasks that are beyond their ability. He must make sure that they are well able to undertake what they are asked to do.

6. The proper thing is that a man should stay with his family and not reside away from them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered that when a traveller has completed his business, he should return home.

7. In this and other hadiths, the Prophet (peace be upon him) urges Muslims to present Islam to people and call on them to believe in it. In one such hadith the Prophet orders: 'Deliver what you learn from me, even if it is a single verse'.[1] An advocate of Islam is one who delivers the message of God and His Messenger, taking up a position similar to that of the Prophet, as he urges people to do what is good and refrain from evil, and explains the tenets of Islam and its code of law. Who does not like to have such a status?

8. The Prophet (peace be upon him) makes clear that presenting the message of Islam to people and calling on them to believe in it requires good and sustained efforts. It is not merely an explanation of commands and prohibitions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) worked extremely hard to deliver God's message. Therefore, advocates of Islam and scholars must work hard and persevere to ensure its implementation.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 3461.

9 The presentation and explanation of Islamic rules and rulings are the tasks of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They are not derived from people's statements, views or preferences. In worship, we learn from what the Prophet himself said and did. We may neither add to, nor omit from what he taught us.

10 Following the Prophet's method and practices means following the right guidance. It was through him that Muslims have learnt how and when to pray, as well as the essentials, form and details of prayer and all other acts of worship, including zakat, fasting and pilgrimage. A Muslim who does not follow the Prophet's Sunnah will remain at a loss, unable to find the right way.

11 When we speak of following the Prophet's example in prayer, we also include using the concessions he identified. Proper following of the Prophet means that an ill person prays seated or reclining, as is suitable to his condition, and that a traveller or a sick person does not fast during travelling and illness in Ramadan, and that a person on a journey shortens and combines his prayers. The same applies to other concessions the Prophet (peace be upon him) used, as he said: 'God loves that His concessions be exercised just as He hates His commandments to be violated'.[1]

12 The hadith indicates the need to treat older people with respect and to give them the status that suits them, provided that this is not contrary to Islamic rules and principles. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made age a factor in choosing the imam in prayer when people are similarly qualified in other considerations, such as reciting the Qur'an, knowledge of the Sunnah and history in Islam.

1 Related by Ahmad, 5866.

# SOME ASPECTS OF PRAYER

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

1 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) entered the mosque. A man came in and offered a prayer, then came forward and greeted God's Messenger (peace be upon him). The Prophet replied with a greeting then said: 'Go back and pray, for you have not prayed'.

2 The man went back and prayed in the same way as he prayed earlier. He then returned to the Prophet and greeted him. The Prophet said: 'And peace be to you'. He then said: 'Go back and pray, for you have not prayed'. He did this three times. The man said: 'By Him who sent you with the message of the truth, I know nothing better than this. Teach me'.

3 The Prophet said: 'When you stand up to pray, say *Allah-u akbar*.

4 then recite of the Qur'an what comes easy to you.

5 Then bow until you are well positioned in bowing, then raise yourself until you stand up well. Then you prostrate yourself until you are well positioned in prostration, then raise yourself until you are well positioned seated. Do this throughout your prayer'.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 757; Muslim, 397.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿It is by God's grace that you deal gently with them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would surely have broken away from you.﴾ (3: 159)
- ﴿Indeed there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves: one who grieves much that you should suffer; one who is full of concern for you; and who is tender and full of compassion towards the believers.﴾ (9: 128)
- ﴿Call people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner.﴾ (16: 125)
- ﴿Enjoin prayer on your people, and be diligent in its observance.﴾ (20: 132)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he would accompany the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of his hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later, he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

A man came into the mosque and prayed, then went to the Prophet and greeted him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) returned the greeting and ordered the man to repeat his prayer. The man complied and returned, but the Prophet again told him to repeat his prayer. He did this three times. The man told the Prophet that he knew no better. The Prophet then taught him how to pray.

# Message and Meaning

This hadith is one of the most important regarding prayer, as it details its most important and essential aspects. Fiqh scholars give it much attention and use it as evidence regarding many questions in their area of Islamic Studies. It is frequently referred to by scholars as the 'hadith concerning invalid prayer'.

1 A man entered the mosque and offered a prayer, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was watching. When he finished, he came to the Prophet and greeted him. The Prophet returned the greeting and ordered him to repeat his prayer, because it was invalid and did not fulfil his duty.

Had it not been invalid, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would not have ordered him to repeat it. He would have pointed out his mistakes to avoid them in future.

2 The man did as he was told and repeated his prayer, performing it in the same manner as he prayed the first time. When he went back to the Prophet, the Prophet again ordered him to repeat it. On the third occasion, the man said to the Prophet that he did not know anything better and requested that the Prophet teach him how to pray.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not point out to the man his errors at the beginning perhaps because he thought that the man was aware of the essential requirements in prayer but had not attended to them properly. Hence, he simply told him to repeat his prayer. When the man said that he did not know anything better than what he did, the Prophet taught him how to pray. Or perhaps the Prophet (peace be upon him) felt that teaching him the proper way after the man had done it wrongly several times would ensure that he would give greater attention to learning the proper way and would not commit mistakes in the future.

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) told the man that when he wished to pray, he should start with the initial *Allah-u akbar*. This means that this *takbīr* is essential for the validity of prayer. Without it, the prayer is invalid. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was teaching the man what makes his prayer valid. As this was a matter of teaching, it is better to limit it to the essentials, without adding recommended practices.

It should be noted that the Prophet did not mention intention, because the man was already aware of it. Intention is an essential requirement in all religious matters, and this is known to all Muslims, because all actions are subject to the intention behind them. This applies to all Islamic worship, including prayer, zakat, fasting, etc.

4 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then ordered the man to recite whatever came easy to him of the Qur'an. This does not mean that he recited any part of it. More details are given in other hadiths, indicating the obligation of reciting the first surah, *al-Fātiḥah*. The Prophet says: 'No prayer is valid if one does not recite the Opening Surah of the Book'.[1] Thus, the Prophet meant that what comes easy is the opening surah, because God has made it easy to remember for

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 756; Muslim, 394.

men, women and children. Alternatively, the meaning is to recite whatever comes easy after finishing the opening surah. The man must have known that reciting the opening surah is one of the essentials of prayer, and the Prophet indicated following it with whatever was easy.

5 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then ordered him to bow and ensured that he did it well, then to stand up and ensured that he was in a good standing position. Again he should be well positioned when prostrating himself. In all these movements, it is important to do it well, without being hasty. This is also an essential duty that must be observed; otherwise, very hasty prayer is invalid. This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered the man to repeat his prayer. The Prophet criticized a prayer that does not reflect a calm, comfortable approach, saying: 'That is the way a hypocrite prays. He sits down watching the sun, and when it is in between Satan's horns, he stands up to knock out four quick [*rak'ahs*], mentioning God in them only very little'.[1]

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some of the essential duties of prayer, omitting details of which prayer becomes invalid. He did not mention other essentials such as intention, the last sitting and ending the prayer with *salām*. The man apparently was aware of these, and the Prophet saw him doing them. He was only unaware of other things, which the Prophet pointed out to him.

1 Related by Muslim, 622.

# Implementation

1. The hadith shows that when a Muslim comes into a mosque and finds some people sitting there, it is recommended that he starts with the prayer of greeting the mosque, then greeting the people present.

2. Every Muslim must learn what he needs to ensure that his worship is valid. Otherwise, his worship may be invalid.

3. It is recommended that a scholar or advocate of Islam sits in a mosque and people gather around him. He will then admonish them and urge them to do what is good. He should describe the Prophet's prayer as he (peace be upon him) offered it.

4. For any deed to be accepted by God, it must be sincere and comply with the Prophet's Sunnah. Needless to say, lack of sincerity renders a good deed invalid. Likewise, when a deed is contrary to the Sunnah, its being done with good intention does not make it good.

5. An advocate of Islam or a scholar may delay explanation for a reason, such as making the listeners more eager to understand the religious ruling, or to ensure that more people arrive and listen to what he has to say, or for a similar need.

6. The hadith shows that spreading the greeting of peace, i.e. *assalām alaykum*, is recommended, and its return is a duty. It is also recommended to repeat the greeting if the meeting is renewed, even after a short period. It is a duty to return the greeting every time.

7. The hadith reflects the importance of treating learners and people lacking in knowledge gently and explaining the relevant matter, making the information clear and limiting it to the important aspect, without adding further details which may not be easy for them to remember and implement.

8. *Allah-u akbar* is the opening of prayer. When one says it, one is already in prayer. What is now due is to feel that He is greater than the universe and all there is in it. No worldly cares and concerns should distract the worshipper from his devotion and humility.

9. The hadith confirms the importance of making things easy for Muslims and not to burden them with what may be tiresome for them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells the man to recite of the Qur'an what comes easy for him. This is contrary to what some imams continuously do, reciting long surahs and making things hard for people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When any of you stands up to lead the people, let him make the prayer light. Among them are those who are weak, unwell and old. When he prays alone he may make his prayer as long as he likes'.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 703; Muslim, 467.

10 Calmness is an essential duty, without which a prayer is invalid. Its purpose is to understand the meanings of what is recited and stated of glorifications of God and supplication. Prayer is not the mere movements a Muslim performs.

11 One aspect of urging people to do what is right and refrain from what is wrong is to educate ignorant people and draw their attention to what is necessary. Zayd ibn Wahb mentioned that Hudhayfah, a companion of the Prophet, saw a man who did not do his bowing and prostration in prayer rightly. He said to him: 'You have not prayed. Were you to die doing this, you would die doing what is contrary to the right way God showed to Muhammad (peace be upon him)'. This is a case of strong rebuke.

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# Hadith

# THE IMPORTANCE OF RECITING THE OPENING SURAH, AL-FĀTIḤAH IN PRAYER

Abu Hurayrah narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him). He said:

1 If anyone offers a prayer without reciting the Mother of the Qur'an, it falls short'. He repeated it three times, 'not perfect'.

2 It was said to Abu Hurayrah: 'We are praying behind the imam'. He said: 'Recite it in silence.

3 I heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say: "God, the Exalted, said: I have divided prayer in two halves between Myself and My servant. My servant shall have what he requests.

4 When God's servant says: 'All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds', God will say: 'My servant has praised Me'. When he says: 'the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful', God will say: 'My servant has extolled Me'. When he says: 'Master of the Day of Judgement', God will say: 'My servant has glorified Me'. (In one narration: My servant has submitted himself to Me.)

5 When he says: 'You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help', God will say: 'This is between Myself and My servant. My servant shall have what he requests'.

6 When he says: 'Guide us on the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray', God will say: 'This is granted to My servant, and My servant shall have what he requests'".[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 395.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful (1) Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds, (2) The Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful, (3) Master of the Day of Judgement. (4) You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help. (5) Guide us on the straight path, (6) The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray.﴾ (1: 1-7)
- ﴿We have given you seven oft-repeated verses and this sublime Qur'an.﴾ (15: 87)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

Abu Hurayrah narrates this hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that a person who offers a prayer without reciting the Opening Surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, will find his prayer falls short of an important part that affects its validity. Abu Hurayrah was asked about reciting it when one is with a congregation. He said that it should be recited, due to the importance of a hadith in which the Prophet quotes God saying that He has divided *al-Fātiḥah* into two halves, retaining one half and giving the other to His servant.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that whoever offers a prayer but does not recite the Opening Surah, *al-Fātiḥah*, will find his prayer incomplete. In essence, it falls short of validity, which means that the acceptability of the deed is affected. This is confirmed by the Prophet's statement: 'No prayer is valid if one does not recite the Opening Surah of the Book'.[1]

This opening surah is also called the Mother of the Qur'an, because it sums up its essence. The meanings of all the Qur'an's surahs are related to it, as the Qur'an focuses on praising and glorifying God, serving Him, the promises and warnings about the Day of Judgement, and the accounts of past communities. By the same token, Makkah is called the 'mother town'.

2 Abu Hurayrah, the narrator of this hadith, was asked about reciting this surah by a person in the congregation. He answered that such a person recites it inaudibly. Although this answer is given by Abu Hurayrah, it carries the same status as though it were said by the Prophet. 'Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit reports: 'We were in congregation praying Fajr behind God's Messenger (peace be upon him). He recited the Qur'an but he sounded uncomfortable. When he finished the prayer, he said: "Perhaps you are reciting when you are behind your imam?" We said: "Yes, we do, quickly". He said: "Do not do it, except the Opening Surah, because no prayer is valid without reciting it"'.[2]

3 Abu Hurayrah then explains what he said. He mentions that God says in a *qudsī* hadith that He divided its recitation into two halves, one for Himself and the other for His servant.

This division applies to the meanings of what is being recited. Thus, God returns what His servant is saying with a similar phrase. Thus, when the worshipper says, 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds', God says: 'My servant has praised Me'. This division may also refer to the fact that one half of the surah is an acknowledgement of one's status as a servant of God, as well as a glorification of God, while the other half is a supplication and appeal for help. God has promised to answer supplications. The point of the division is the verse that says: 'You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help'. (1: 5) The first sentence of this verse and the preceding verses consist of glorification and praises of God, while the second sentence and the rest of the surah is a supplication for guidance and help.

That reciting *al-Fātiḥah* is referred to in this hadith as 'prayer' is a reference to the main part of something by the name of the total. This is the same as in the verse that says: 'Do not raise your voice too loud in prayer, nor say it in too low a voice, but follow a middle course in between'. (17: 110) What is meant refers to the recitation of the Qur'an in prayer: it must be neither too loud nor too quiet.

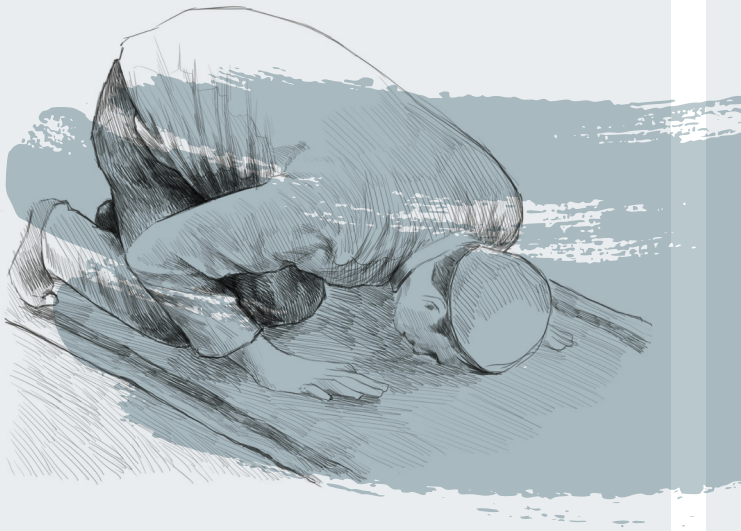
1 Related by al-Bukhari, 756; Muslim, 394.
2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 823; al-Tirmidhī, 311.

4 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then says that when God's servant says: 'All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds', God will say: 'My servant has praised Me'. When he says: 'the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful', God will say: 'My servant has extolled Me'. When he says: 'Master of the Day of Judgement', God will say: 'My servant has glorified Me'.

Praise, extolling and glorifying are similar in meaning. They all signify praise and the mention of fine attributes. The only difference is that praise does not relate to action. God says: 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds'. We praise Him because He is the Lord of all worlds. Extolling means the mention of those attributes that deserve to be extolled. Hence, God mentions this action when His servant refers to Him as 'the Lord of Grace, the Ever-Merciful'. Thus, God's attribute of grace and mercy invites that a person extols God. Likewise, when the Last Day is mentioned as well as that God is the Master of that Day who determines what happens then, this is aptly described as a glorification of God stressing His supremacy.

5 When the worshipper says: 'You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help'. (1: 5) God says: 'This is between Myself and My servant. My servant shall have what he requests'. The verse signifies humility before God, expressing one's need for His help and total devotion to Him. Worship covers all that God loves and accepts of words and actions, whether manifest or private. Moreover, the verse implies glorifying God and acknowledging His ability to grant what His servant requests.

6 When he says: 'Guide us on the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favours, not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray', God will say: 'This is granted to My servant, and My servant shall have what he requests'. This means that God will answer this supplication and grant the worshipper his request.



'Those who have incurred Your wrath' includes all people who deliberately and persistently disobey God and incur His displeasure. 'Those who have gone astray' includes all those who turn away from God's guidance, either through ignorance or deliberately.

# Implementation

1. Surah *al-Fātiḥah* is the Mother of the Qur'an, and it sums up its essence. All the meanings of all surahs refer to it. An intelligent person will identify its meanings, deduce its rulings and learn the reasons for its special merit.

2. All fields of knowledge of this life and the life to come are referred to in this surah. It refers to the disciplines of praise, Godhead, Lordship, multiple worlds, mercy, dominion, the reckoning of people's accounts, worship, seeking help, guidance, the path, the straight course of action, blessing, and what is to be avoided of incurring God's wrath, and the avoidance of going astray.

3. The hadith shows that it is obligatory to recite *al-Fātiḥah* in every *rak'ah*. It is not valid for a Muslim to pray without reciting it.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) repeated the words 'it falls short' three times, so that it would be learnt and held in memory. He also wanted to emphasize this for his audience. The Prophet frequently resorted to repeating his words. We all need to learn from him.

5. People asked Abu Hurayrah about reciting *al-Fātiḥah* by those in the congregation, thinking that it may have a different ruling. Abu Hurayrah did not object to their questioning. No one need be too shy to ask about something he does not know. Moreover, a scholar should not be irritated by questions, even if these are repeated or the answers are included in what he said.

6 God, limitless is He in His glory, referred to *al-Fātiḥah* as prayer because it is the most important part of prayer. Therefore, we must not read it casually or hastily, without reflecting on its meanings.

7 During the recitation of Surah *al-Fātiḥah*, one should reflect on the appeal one makes to God, Mighty and Exalted, and God's responses. It is important that we are fully attentive when we pray, so that we make the best of our prayer and discharge our duty fully. The best benefit of prayer accrues when one is fully attentive and feels one's humility before God.

8 God is pleased with His believing servants and presents them with pleasure. When they say, 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds', He says: 'My servant has praised Me'. He is pleased with His servant. What could anyone do that would bring more benefit or greater reward than an action that pleases God?

9 Every Muslim should reflect on the verse that says: 'You alone do we worship and to You alone do we turn for help.' (1: 5) It is said that this short verse sums up the very essence of all revealed scriptures. All creation have been brought into existence so that they worship God, as He says: 'I have not created the jinn and mankind to any end other than that they may worship Me.' (51: 56) Worship is a duty binding on God's servants and they cannot fulfil it unless God helps them to do so. Hence, this verse is shared by God and His servant: worship is a duty owed by His servants to God, and His help is a favour He bestows on them.

10 God ordered His servants that they should appeal to Him to guide them on the straight path, which is the one followed by prophets, devout people and martyrs. Whoever follows this path and keeps straight on it will achieve happiness in both this world and the next. He will also be able to traverse the fine path on the Day of Judgement. Whoever leaves it is either one who incurs God's wrath because he knows the way of guidance but does not follow it, or one who has gone astray, unable to determine the way of right guidance, such as idolaters.

11 God tells His servants to request His guidance on the straight path and to help them avoid the path of error. Therefore, we must ensure not to imitate those who have incurred God's wrath or those who have gone astray.

12 When the worshipper concludes reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, God answers his request saying: 'This is granted to My servant, and My servant shall have what he requests'. At this point, the angels confirm the worshipper's supplication saying: Amen. Therefore, it is recommended that the congregation should do the same as the angels, which is a formula ensuring answering the supplication.

# FRIDAY PRAYER

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar and Abu Hurayrah

narrated that they both heard God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) say as he was standing on the steps of his platform: **Some people shall stop neglecting Friday Prayer or else God will seal their hearts and then they will be among the heedless.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

**﴿Believers! When the call to prayer is made on Friday, go straightaway to the prayer and leave off your trading. This is best for you, if you but knew it. (9) When the prayer is finished, disperse in the land and seek God’s bounty. Remember God often so that you may be successful. (10) Yet when people see some trade or entertainment, they head off towards it, leaving you standing there. Say: ‘That which is with God is far better than any entertainment or trade. God is the best of providers’.﴾** (62: 9-11)

## The Narrator

The first narrator: Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was still a child below the age of puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. Zaynab bint Maẓ‘ūn, who was ‘Uthmān ibn Maẓ‘ūn’s sister, was his mother and the mother of his sister, Ḥafṣah the Mother of Believers. He narrated much useful information from the Prophet, and also from his father ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Bilāl, Ṣuhayb and other companions of the Prophet. He issued many fatwas and narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE

The second narrator: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father’s name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he used to go with the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet’s companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi‘īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet’s hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned in his address in the mosque against neglecting Friday Prayer. Whoever neglects it shall have his heart sealed by God, and he will go astray and be one of the heedless.

1 Related by Muslim, 865.

# Message and Meaning

- This hadith shows that Friday Prayer is obligatory for all Muslims. The hadith also warns against neglecting it and mentions the very severe punishment incurred by a person who does so.

- The hadith means that one of the two alternatives is certain to happen. Either people will stop their negligence of Friday Prayer or God will seal their hearts so that they will be unable to determine the truth and thereby join those who are heedless. A reference to such an eventuality is given in the Qur'an: 'God has sealed their hearts and ears; their eyes are covered; and a grievous punishment awaits them'. (2: 7)

- The message of this hadith is reiterated in the hadith quoting the Prophet (peace be upon him): 'Whoever abandons the Friday Prayer three times, in negligence, shall have his heart sealed by God'.[1]

- Friday Prayer is a personal duty applicable for every male Muslim who has attained puberty. God says: 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on Friday, go straightaway to the prayer and leave off your trading. This is best for you, if you but knew it'. (62: 9) The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Everyone who has attained puberty must go to Friday Prayer; and whoever goes to join the Friday Prayer should have had a bath'.[2]

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1052; al-Tirmidhī, 500; al-Nasā'ī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 1668; Ibn Mājah, 1125.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 342; al-Nasā'ī, 1371.

# Implementation

1. A Muslim who prays to God to grant him guidance on the right path does not expose himself to God's wrath and punishment. Thus he does not deserve to have his heart sealed and become heedless of what pleases God.

2. Serious matters require that commands and prohibitions are announced in public gatherings. Hence, it was especially suitable that the warning against neglecting Friday Prayer and congregational prayers was made when the Prophet addressed the people from the platform, thereby stressing the importance of what he said. Advocates of Islam, scholars and educators should give everything its proper importance. What is suitable as admonition in a general circle is different from what is suited for Friday Prayer.

3. The style employed by an advocate of Islam or an educator should differ in intensity so as to suit the occasion. In some cases, an implicit reference may be adequate, in others a clear advice may be better, while in different cases gentle remonstration and perhaps some blame is suitable. However, some situations call for an angry and firm attitude.

4. When giving strong advice, it is not right to publicly name the people being warned. To do so is to worsen the situation. It may be that criticizing some wrong behaviour will lead to an even worse behaviour. In this hadith, the Prophet uses the formula, 'some people shall stop…', without mentioning any of them.

5. Friday Prayer is obligatory, according to the unanimous view of all scholars. God has warned the one who neglects it with various types of punishment. Everyone should beware of incurring God's wrath and deserving His punishment.

6. Friday is the best day ever. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The best day on which the sun has ever risen is Friday: it is the day when Adam was created, and the day on which he was settled in Heaven and the day on which he was removed from it'.[1] Every Muslim should make sure that Friday will testify for him, not against him.

7. Everyone should go early to Friday Prayer. He is strongly recommended to take a bath and put on his best clothes. God's reward for so doing is indeed rich. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever on Friday takes a bath like the one required for [removing] a state of ceremonial impurity then goes is like one who gives a camel to charity, and whoever goes in the second period is like one who gives a cow to charity, and whoever goes in the third period is like one who gives a horned sheep to charity, and whoever goes in the fourth period is like one who gives a hen to charity, and whoever goes in the fifth period is like one who gives an egg to charity. When the imam comes out, the angels will attend, listening to God's glorification'.[2]

1 Related by Muslim, 854.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 881; Muslim, 850.

# THE EID PRAYER

Anas ibn Mālik narrated saying:

**When God's Messenger (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah, its people used to celebrate two days. He asked: 'What are these two days about?' They said: 'We used to celebrate them prior to Islam'. God's Messenger said: 'God has replaced them for you with two better days: the Day of [Eid] al-Aḍḥā and the Day of [Eid] al-Fiṭr'.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿You are, however, required to complete the necessary number of days and to extol and glorify God for having guided you aright and to tender your thanks.﴾** (2: 185)
- **﴿Give glory to God during certain appointed days. Those who hasten their departure after two days incur no sin, and those who stay longer incur no sin, provided that they are truly God-fearing. Have fear of God and know well that you shall all be gathered before Him.﴾** (2: 203)
- **﴿Do not substitute bad things of your own for their good things.﴾** (4: 2)
- **﴿Say: 'In God's bounty and grace, in this let them rejoice; for this is better than all that they may amass'.﴾** (10: 58)

## The Narrator

Abu Ḥamzah Anas ibn Mālik ibn al-Naḍr of the Anṣār was a distinguished scholar, mufti, excellent reciter of the Qur'an and a leading scholar of Hadith. He was the chronicler of Islam. He was the servant of God's Messenger and his household. Anas was the last of the Prophet's companions to die in Basrah. He was only ten years of age when the Prophet migrated to Madinah, and he was 20 when the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away. He took part in several military expeditions with the Prophet, as also the pledge given to the Prophet (peace be upon him) known as 'the pledge under the tree'. God's Messenger prayed to God to give him plenty of wealth and offspring. He died in Year 93 AH 712 CE.

## Summary

The people of Madinah used to celebrate two days annually in pre-Islamic days. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah and saw them celebrating them, he asked the cause of their celebration. They told him. He told them not to mark them anymore, because God has substituted these days for them with the two better days of Eid: al-Fiṭr and al-Aḍḥā.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1134; al-Nasā'ī, 1556.

# Message and Meaning

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Madinah, he found that the Anṣār celebrated two Zoroastrian days, namely, Nayrūz and Mahrajān. The Prophet wondered at these celebrations. They told him that this was a tradition going back long in pre-Islamic days and that they used to mark them with festivities. The Prophet then told them to stop this because God had given them two much better days: the two Eids of al-Fiṭr at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and al-Aḍḥā on the day of the hajj.

The hadith indicates an order not to celebrate the festive occasions marked by unbelievers and idolaters, whether they are following earlier revelations or not. This is a rule of association and dissociation. It should be noted that the Prophet mentioned that God replaced these with two better days. A replacement does not occur without abandoning what is replaced.

What confirms this prohibition is that these two celebrations have been totally removed. There is not a single mention of them during the Prophet's lifetime or during the reign of the four rightly-guided caliphs. Had the Prophet not ordered his companions to abandon marking them with whatever they previously did, their tradition would have survived. Traditions are not replaced unless something else is put in their place. Moreover, it is in the nature of women and children, as well as many men, that they look forward to a festive day when they have fun and entertainment.

# Implementation

1. The hadith implies that it is not permissible to celebrate the feasts and occasions of unbelievers. It is not permissible for a Muslim to celebrate such feasts, nor to emulate the unbelievers in their food and drink on such a day.

2. If the prohibition applies to the celebration of the feasts of unbelievers whose rituals are no longer marked and will not be revived until close to the end of time, then it is more applicable to the celebration of the feasts of the Jews and Christians, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) foretold that some of us would emulate them. He warned against this in clear terms.

3. The hadith makes clear that it is perfectly permissible to have fun and play during the days of Eid. The Prophet made clear that the Eid days replaced the old Zoroastrian days of play and fun. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) permitted the Abyssinian visitors to play with their spears on the Day of Eid. He allowed ‘Ā’ishah, the Mother of Believers, to watch them as long as she liked.

4. It is perfectly permissible to rejoice and play on the Days of Eid, provided that such fun and play does not involve anything forbidden, such as gambling and games of chance, or the unacceptable mixing of men and women, or distraction from religious duties.

5. Rejoicing and displays of pleasure on the days of Eid are recommended by Islam. It is encouraged to arrange games, fun activities, exchange of visits particularly with relatives, and providing more generously for one’s family so as to spread the feeling of pleasure and relaxation.

6. On the day of Eid, a Muslim should formulate the intention of marking this ritual of pleasure. Thus he earns a reward for his cheerful activities as well as for his food and drink.

7. Muslim rulers and advocates of Islam should look into people’s situations, habits and transactions so as to point out what is permissible and what is not. People may become used to a certain habit which originates from something that is forbidden or discouraged and they may be unaware of this. If the matter becomes clear for the ruler, advocate or scholar, he should tell the people of how God and His Messenger view this habit. They will then do what earns God’s pleasure.

8. Providing an alternative is the best way to abandon what is unlawful. If an educator wants his children and students to abandon some bad habits or practices, he should give them a good alternative that pleases them. God replaced the old festive occasions of the people of Madinah with the two Eid occasions Muslim celebrate every year.

9. Preventing the cause that leads to something forbidden is an established rule of Islamic law. The Prophet prevented play and fun activities on the occasions marked by the unbelievers to prevent a possibility that it might lead to participation in their religious rituals. It is important that scholars should observe this principle in their rulings and fatwas. A scholar may realize that it is better to stop something which is not prohibited in itself because this may lead to sinful action or even to disbelief.

# CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated that

God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **Congregational prayer is twenty-seven degrees better than that of a person praying alone.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

**﴿In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed; (37) who [only hope] that God may reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did, and lavish His grace upon them. God gives to whom He wills beyond all reckoning.﴾** (24: 36-38)

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was still a child below the age of puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. Zaynab bint Maẓ‘ūn, who was ‘Uthmān ibn Maẓ‘ūn’s sister, was his mother and the mother of his sister, Ḥafṣah the Mother of Believers. He narrated much useful information from the Prophet, and also from his father ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Bilāl, Ṣuhayb and other companions of the Prophet. He issued many fatwas and narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) states in this hadith that offering an obligatory prayer with a congregation is twenty-seven times better than offering it alone.

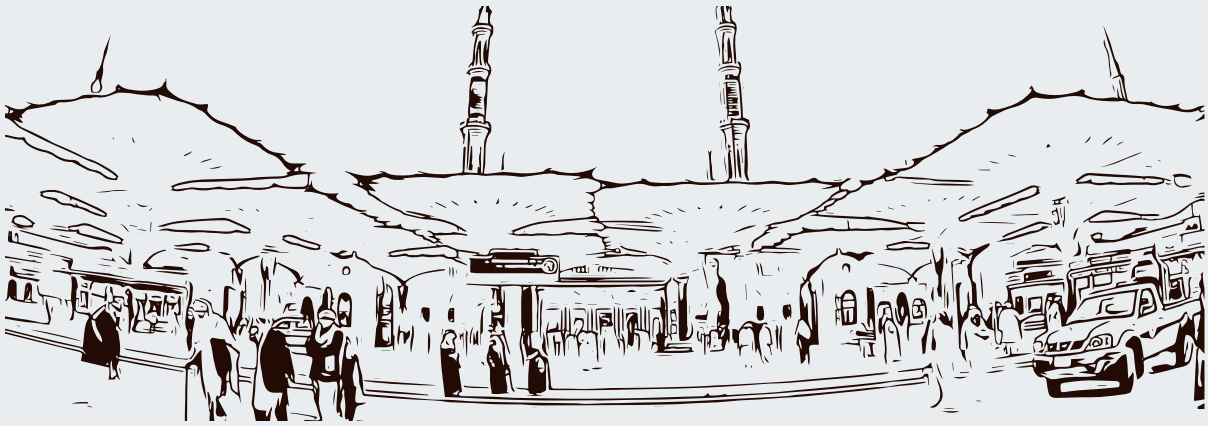
1 Related by al-Bukhari, 645; Muslim, 650.

# Message and Meaning

1. The hadith speaks about the greater merit of offering prayer in congregation and the much greater reward it earns the worshipper, as it states that it is twenty-seven degrees better.

2. There are other hadiths that mention different numbers, as the following hadith: ‘A person’s prayer with the congregation is twenty-five times better than his prayer at home or at his place of work. That is, when a person performs the ablution well and goes to the mosque, having no motive other than the prayer, then for every step he takes, God gives him a degree higher and removes a sin from him, until he enters the mosque. When he prays the angels pray for him, as long as he remains in the position where he prayed. They say: ‘Our Lord, bestow peace on him. Our Lord, bestow mercy on him’. Anyone of you is actually in prayer as long as you await the [congregational] prayer’.[1]

3. There is no contradiction between the two figures: the lower number does not contradict the higher one. It is explained as the small number was given first, then God increased His bounty, raising the figure from twenty-five to twenty-seven. Alternatively, the difference of two grades may be due to the perfection of prayer, keeping its form, showing humility, the size of the congregation, the importance of the place where it is offered, etc.



4. Scholars have looked at the reasons why congregational prayer is considered better than another form. Some have been mentioned above. We may also include responding to the call of prayer, i.e. *adhān*, by repeating its phrases, going early to the mosque at the beginning of the prayer’s time, walking calmly when going to the mosque, supplicating as one enters the mosque, offering the prayer of greeting the mosque on entry, waiting for the congregation to start, the angels’ prayer and testimony for the worshippers, responding to the announcement of the prayer i.e. its *iqāmah*, safety from Satan as he runs away when the announcement is made, standing in wait for the imam to begin the prayer or joining the imam at whatever position he may be, being in attendance at the start of the congregational prayer, and keeping the rows straight and leaving no gaps in them.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 647; Muslim, 649.

# Implementation

1. Every Muslim should be very keen to attend congregational prayers. Praying with the congregation is much better than praying alone. It is wrong to miss out on its much greater reward.

2. It is right that we should give a clear priority to praying in congregation, so that we may gain what God has prepared for such people. Abu Hurayrah narrated a hadith in which the Prophet says: 'For whoever goes frequently, morning and evening, to the mosque, God will prepare a home in Heaven, whenever he goes morning or evening'.[1]

3. Whoever loves that his sins are erased and his grade in Heaven is made higher should be keen to attend congregational prayers. The Prophet said: 'Shall I tell what ensures that God will wipe away [people's] sins and raise their grades?' People said: 'Yes, please, Messenger of God'. He said: 'Doing the ablution full well despite difficulty, walking longer to mosques and waiting for one prayer after another. That is [equal to] standing guard'.[2]

4. Happy is the one who ensures to join the congregational prayer in a mosque. One of the rewards God has prepared for it is that prayer with the congregation earns you a reward equal to that of performing pilgrimage. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever having performed the ablution leaves his home to join an obligatory prayer earns a reward similar to that of a pilgrim in consecration, and whoever goes out to the mid-morning prayer, with nothing else bringing him out, earns a reward equal to that of one who performs the 'umrah. One prayer after another, with no idle talk in between, earns enrolment among those in the high position'.[3]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 662; Muslim, 669.
2 Related by Muslim, 251.
3 Related by Ahmad, 22304; Abu Dāwūd, 558.

5 Angels attend congregational prayer. Who does not wish to be among the ones praised by angels and testified for in front of God, the Lord of all the worlds? The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Angels take turns in attending you through the night and through the day. They meet together during the Fajr and 'Aṣr Prayers. Then those who were with you during the night ascend. Their Lord will ask them, yet He knows better than them: How did you leave My servants? They will say: "We left them praying, as we joined them when they were praying"'.[1]

6 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd narrated: 'Whoever is pleased to know that he will be meeting God as a Muslim should make sure to offer these prayers where they are called. God has ordained for your Prophet the practices of divine guidance and these prayers are practices of divine guidance. If you pray in your homes like the person who so stays at home, you will have abandoned the practice of your Prophet, and if you abandon your Prophet's practice, you will go astray. When a person performs the ablution well, then goes to one of these mosques, then for every step he makes, God will credit him with a good deed and promotes him a step and removes a bad deed from him. There was a time when none stayed away from it [i.e. congregational prayer] except one whose hypocrisy was confirmed. A man might be brought to the mosque, leaning on two men, until he was stood in the row'.[2]

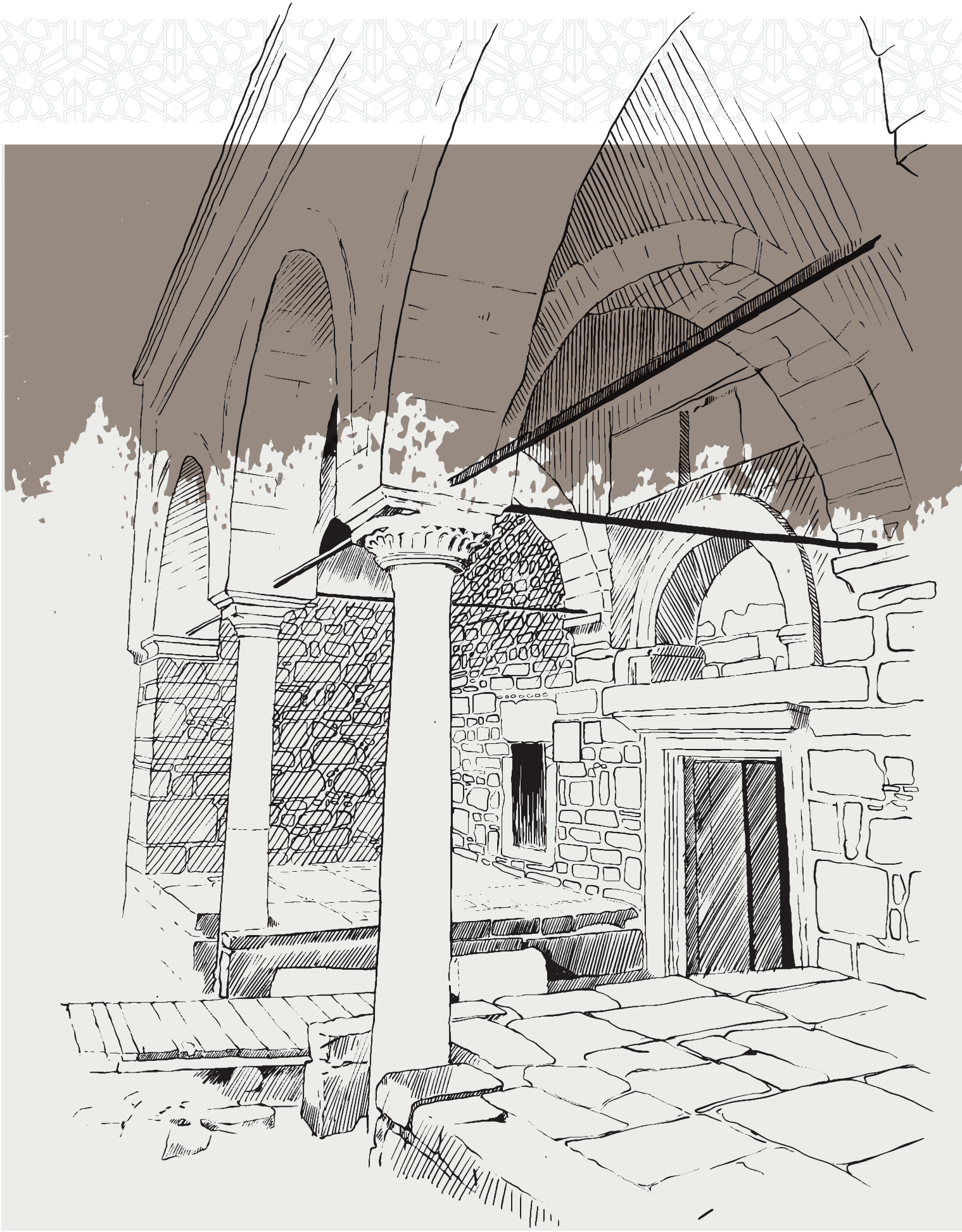
7 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar al-Qawārīrī said: 'I was extremely keen to offer the 'Ishā Prayer with a congregation. One day I had a guest and I was busy with him. Therefore, I went out seeking to join a congregation with any of the Basrah tribes, but all had already offered their prayers and there was none. I thought that it was reported that the Prophet said that a congregational prayer is twenty-five grades better than praying alone, and another report puts the figure at twenty-seven. I went home and offered the 'Ishā Prayer twenty-seven times, then went to bed. I saw a dream in which I was competing with people riding horses, with my horse similar to theirs. One of them turned to me and said: "Do not try too hard. You cannot catch up with us". I said: "Why is that?" He said: "Because we prayed 'Ishā with a congregation"'.[3]

8 The hadith indicates that delaying a prayer, hoping to join a congregation, is better than offering it early but alone. The only exception is that when a person fears that the time range for that prayer may be over. In this case, he should pray alone.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 555; Muslim, 632.

2 Related by Muslim, 654.

3 Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Tabṣirah*, Vol. 2, p. 221.



# MOSQUES

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **The places God loves best in all lands are their mosques**

2 **and the ones He most dislikes are their markets.** (1)

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Say: 'My Lord has enjoined justice, and that you set your whole selves [to Him] at every time and place of prayer, and call on Him, sincere in your faith in Him alone. As it was He who brought you into being in the first instance, so also [to Him] you will return'.﴾ (7: 29)
- ﴿God's mosques may be tended only by those who believe in God and the Last Day, are constant in prayers, pay zakat (the obligatory charity) and fear none other than God. It is those who are likely to be rightly guided.﴾ (9: 18)
- ﴿In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed; (37) who [only hope] that God may reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did, and lavish His grace upon them. God gives to whom He wills beyond all reckoning.﴾ (24: 36-38)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he used to accompany the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers among the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that the places God likes best are the mosques, where He is worshipped and often remembered. The places He dislikes most are the marketplaces, where people frequently swear false oaths and where cheating, unfairness and deception are often found.

1 Related by Muslim, 671

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) states in this hadith that the places God loves best are mosques, as they are the places of obeying God, the foundation of fearing Him, the cradle of all knowledge and the starting point of advocating the divine message.

Hence, the Prophet was keen to build his mosque in Madinah shortly after his arrival there. He himself carried the stones as did his companions.

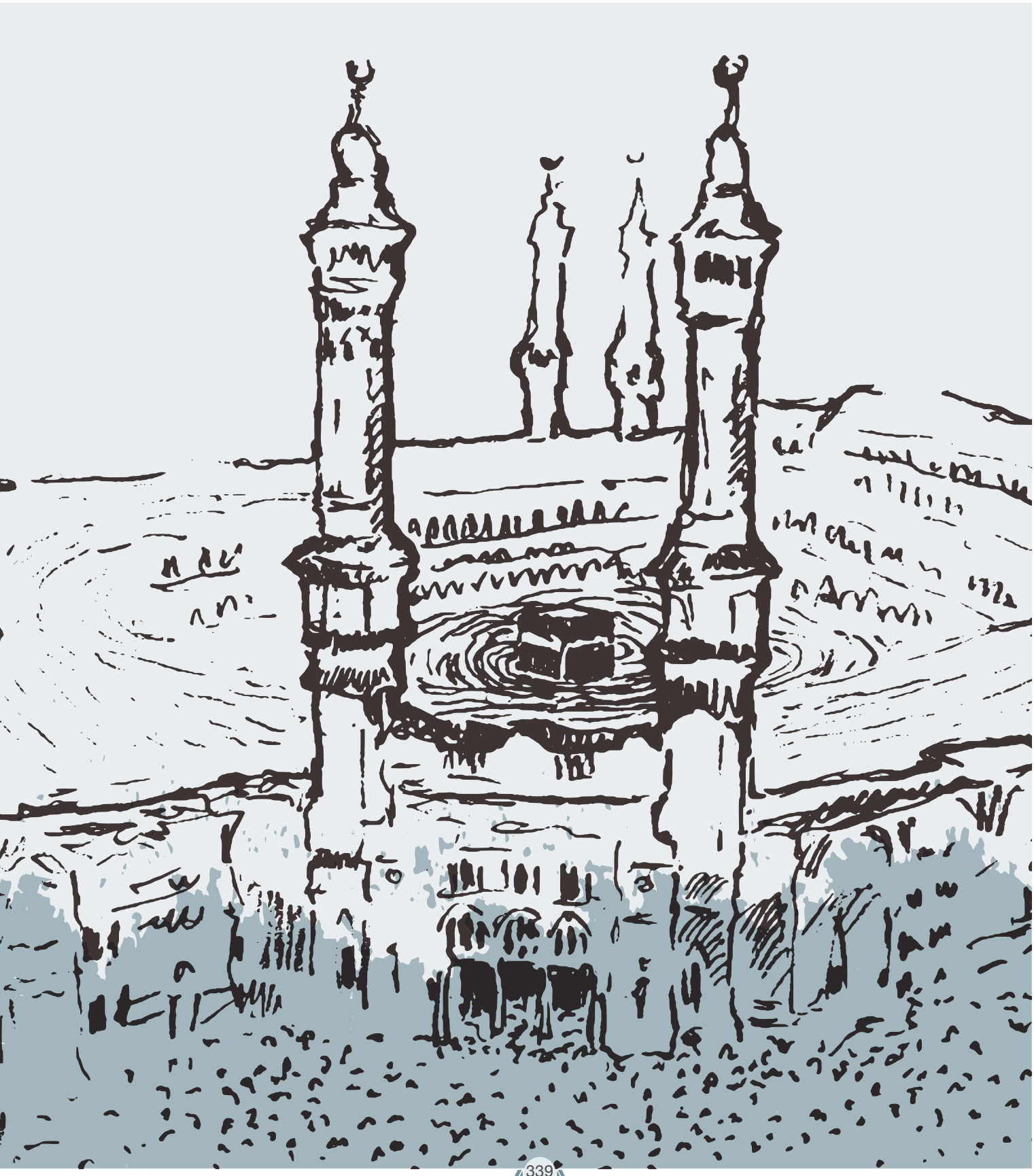
The mosque is the first step in the establishment of a Muslim state. From it the message of Islam spreads and in it, the laws of Islam are learnt. The Prophet (peace be upon him) managed the affairs of state in the mosque, and there he discussed with his companions war plans, received emissaries and delegations, assigned tasks to his messengers and expeditions and there he judged in disputes.

It is the people of faith who are God-fearing that frequent mosques. They are the ones God describes in His Book, saying: 'In houses which God has sanctioned to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there are [such as] extol His limitless glory, morning and evening (36) – people whom neither commerce nor profit can divert from the remembrance of God, and from attending regularly to prayer, and from paying their zakat; who are filled with fear of the day when all hearts and eyes will be convulsed'. (24: 36-37) He also describes them as the people of faith: 'God's mosques may be tended only by those who believe in God and the Last Day, are constant in prayers, pay zakat (the obligatory charity) and fear none other than God. It is those who are likely to be rightly guided'. (9: 18)

Therefore, paying for the building and running of God's houses is the best and most rewarding of payments. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever builds a mosque, dedicating it purely for God, God will build a home for him in Heaven'.[1]

2 The Prophet also mentions in this hadith that the places on earth God dislikes most are marketplaces where there is much idle talk, cheating, deception, false swearing, usurious transactions and little remembrance of God. Hence, the Prophet's companion, Salmān al-Fārisī, describes marketplaces as 'Satan's own battlefield where he raises his banner'.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 439; Muslim, 533.



# Implementation

1. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) tells us that mosques are the places God loves best. As such, worship in a mosque is better than worship elsewhere. Prayer in a mosque is better than the same prayer offered at home or one's workplace. Study circles held in mosques are better than those held elsewhere. Likewise, spending one's money on mosque building is better and earns greater reward than on other good causes.

2. The essence behind the rise of the Muslim community and its progress was the very active role the mosque played in education, character building and advocacy of Islam. When this role disappeared, ignorance became common among the Muslim youth to the extent that a great number of them became totally unaware of the most essential principles and legislation of Islam. If we really want to regain our lost position in human civilisation, we need to focus on the right education of our youth and give back to the mosque its prominent role in this regard.

3. Since the mosque is the place God loves best, spending time there with the intention of worship and waiting for prayers earns good reward, which no Muslim should miss out on.

4. God ranks frequenting mosques among the best actions that draws a person closer to his Lord, Mighty and Exalted. The Prophet (peace be upon him) includes among the seven types of people God covers with His shade on the Day when there is no shade other than His 'a person whose heart is inclined towards mosques'.[1]

5. Mosques are God's houses. Certain values and manners should be observed when visiting mosques, such as wearing decent clothes, attending to one's appearance, wearing perfume and refraining from eating anything that gives off a bad smell from the mouth, such as onions and garlic.

6. It is recommended that people say the recommended supplication on entering a mosque and on leaving it. The Prophet said: 'When any of you enters a mosque, let him say: "My Lord, open for me the gates of Your mercy", and when he leaves, let him say: "My Lord, I pray to You to grant me of Your bounty"'.[2]

7. It is recommended that on entering a mosque, a person does not sit down until he has offered a prayer of two *rak'ahs* as a greeting to the mosque. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'When any of you enters the mosque, let him not sit down until he has offered two *rak'ahs*'.[3]

8. Marketplaces are the worst places because of the many sins committed there including futile arguments and aggression. Any place that has the same characteristics shares the same verdict. If false swearing, cursing, verbal abuse and insults are said frequently at a person's home or workplace, then it is one of the worst places in God's view.

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 660; Muslim, 1031.

2 Related by Muslim, 713.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 444; Muslim, 714.

9 It is discouraged for a Muslim to frequent a marketplace for no purpose. If he goes there to buy or sell or do some other needful thing, then he may go without being discouraged. God says in the Qur'an: 'Even before you, We never sent messengers other than [men] who indeed ate food and went about in the market-places'. (25: 20)

10 Whoever needs to go to a marketplace should try not to be the first to enter nor the last to leave. This is to act on Salmān al-Fārisī's advice: 'If you can, do not be the first to enter the marketplace, nor the last to leave. It is Satan's battlefield where he lifts his banner'.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 2451.

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# Hadith

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ZAKAT

‘Abdullāh ibn Mu‘āwiyah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1. **Whoever does three things will experience the taste of faith.**
2. **To worship God alone [believing] that there is no deity other than God;**
3. **To give the zakat due on his property willingly and cheerfully, as it becomes due every year;**
4. **Not to give [in zakat] an old animal, or one with scabies, or a sickly one, or a small unwanted one;**
5. **But choose from among the average of your property. God has neither required you to give the best, nor told you to choose the worst.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

- **﴿Truly righteous is he who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets; and gives his money, much as he may cherish it, to his kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, a stranded wayfarer, beggars, and for the freeing of slaves.﴾** (2: 177)
- **﴿Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised.﴾** (2: 267)
- **﴿You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish.﴾** (3: 92)
- **﴿For a certainty, God does not forgive that partners should be associated with Him, but He forgives any lesser sin to whomever He wills. He who associates partners with God has indeed gone far astray.﴾** (4: 116)
- **﴿What prevents their offerings from being accepted from them is that they have disbelieved in God and His Messenger, and they only come to prayer with reluctance, and never donate anything [for a righteous cause] without being resentful.﴾** (9: 54)

## The Narrator

‘Abdullāh ibn Mu‘āwiyah al-Ghāḍirī belonged to the tribe of Ghāḍirat Qays and was a companion of the Prophet. He narrated only one hadith, which is the one we are discussing. Jubayr ibn Nufayl narrated from him. He stopped for some time in Homs and lived in Syria.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some matters that tell of a person’s faith. These are believing in God’s oneness, paying one’s due zakat willingly, seeking God’s pleasure and choosing what is of average quality from his property. If he has animals, then he should not give in zakat those that are ill, old or have clear defects.

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1582.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that whoever attends properly to three types of worship will have found faith, tasted it, and got it established in his heart. The Prophet uses the 'sense of taste' while referring to an abstract thing that cannot be eaten. The simile is used here because both give man a sense of enjoyment.

The Quran uses the same style, citing the sense of taste with punishment and suffering, as in God saying: 'Those who disbelieve in Our revelations We shall, in time, cause them to endure fire: every time their skins are burnt off, We shall replace them with new skins, so that they may taste suffering [in full]. God is indeed almighty, wise'. (4: 56) The Prophet also uses it in the hadith 'Whoever accepts God as his Lord, Islam as his faith and Muhammad as [God's] Messenger experiences the taste of faith'.[1]

The taste of faith a servant of God experiences is the endurance of hardship to please God, accepting His will and decree, preferring the life to come to the life of this world and being happy with all this.

2 The first of these things is belief in God's oneness, translated into the worship of God alone associating no partners with Him. Worship includes everything God loves, whether verbal or practical, open or done in private, such as love, hope, fear, supplication, appeal for assistance, offerings and pledges, and seeking God's pleasure through voluntary worship and recommended good deeds. None of any of this should be addressed to anyone other than God.

This is inherent in the messages of all prophets and messengers. God says: 'Before your time We never sent a messenger without having revealed to him that there is no deity other than Me. Therefore, you shall worship Me alone'. (21: 25) Therefore, God warns whoever turns their backs on belief in God's oneness that all their good actions will avail them nothing and that they will remain in Hell forever, regardless of their status in this life. God says to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): 'It has been revealed to you, and to those before you, that if you ever associate partners with God, all your works shall certainly come to nothing, and you shall certainly be among the lost. You shall worship God alone, and be one of those who give thanks [to Him]'. (39: 65-66)

3 The second quality is that one pays the zakat due on his property willingly, feeling happy and cheerful at this, as it becomes due year after year.

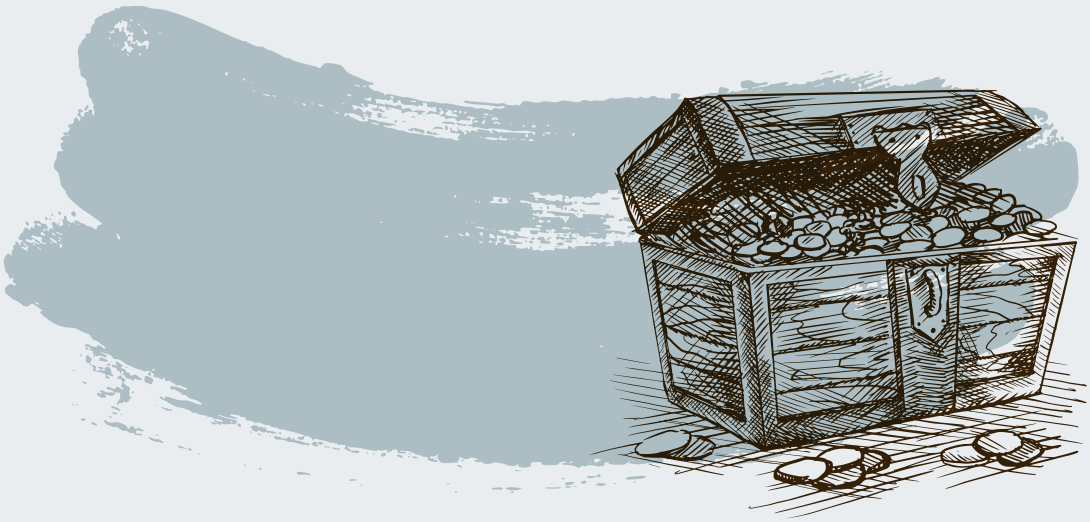
Zakat is mentioned in particular because people love money and property. They want to keep all of it for themselves. When a person gives it generously, in full obedience of God, his action testifies that he is a true believer. It is hypocrites who donate unwillingly and begrudgingly. God says: 'What prevents their offerings from being accepted from them is that they have disbelieved in God and His Messenger, and they only come to prayer with reluctance, and never donate anything [for a righteous cause] without being resentful'. (9: 54)

1 Related by Muslim, 34.

4 The last of these qualities relates to the one before it. It mentions that when a person wants to pay his zakat, he does not look for the worst of his property and select it as his payment. If he owns cattle, he should not choose the one which has grown old and weak, or the one with scabies or that suffers any other illness which makes it unsuitable to eat. Nor does he select one that has any defect that makes people unwilling to take it, such as a lame one or one which is too slim or too young, etc.

This does not mean that a Muslim cattle breeder whose cattle are all sick cannot give his zakat out of his cattle. The hadith only warns those who deliberately select the worst they have and give it away as zakat. This is stated in the following verse: 'Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised'. (2: 267)

A true believer who wants to experience the sweetness of faith is the one who understands the following verse and acts on it: 'You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish'. (3: 92)



5 The Prophet then explains that what is required in zakat is that a person pays it out of the average of his property. He should neither select the best he has nor the worst. Abu Bakr wrote to Anas ibn Mālik: 'A person should not choose the cattle that has grown too old or the one that has an obvious defect. Nor should he give a male goat unless the zakat collector wants to take it'.[1] When he sent Mu'ādh ibn Jabal to Yemen, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: 'Do not select that of their property which they treasure'.[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1455.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 1458; Muslim, 19.

# Implementation

1. Advocates of Islam and educators should select words and expressions that attract attention and make the audience eager to listen and understand what is being said. The Prophet (peace be upon him) started with a general sentence, referring to three things that ensure that whoever combines them is a perfect believer. Everyone in his audience would be eager to listen and understand each one of the three things, so that he would not miss out on any.

2. The first of these is the main one and the mother of the other two and all else. When a person is a true believer in God's oneness, he will feel relaxed and he will approach his various acts of worship with comfortable willingness. He realizes that what is stored for him with God is better and longer lasting. Therefore, duties and difficulties will be easier to fulfil.

3. One thing that every Muslim can check on with regard to himself is to establish whether he loves zakat and payments of *ṣadaqah*, i.e. voluntary charity. By nature, people love money. Therefore, when a person donates it willingly, this is a clear sign that he is a believer.

4. How can a believer give to a poor person something that he considers foul and discardable? He knows that what he gives away is received by God's hand before the poor person takes it in hand.

5. The early Muslims were keen to give in charity something of the best of their property. Abu Ṭalḥah al-Anṣārī heard the verse which says: 'You will never attain to true piety unless you spend on others out of what you dearly cherish'. (3: 92) He had a farm called Bayruḥā', and the Prophet used to go there and drink of its well. Abu Ṭalḥah donated the whole farm as a *ṣadaqah*.[1] Al-Rabī' ibn Khuthaym used to love sugar. He used to buy it and give it as *ṣadaqah*, to fulfil what the same Qur'anic verse says.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1461; Muslim, 998.

60

# Hadith

# CHOOSING GOOD PROPERTY FOR ZAKAT

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **People! [Know that] God is good and He only accepts what is good.**

2 **God has commanded the believers the same as He commanded messengers, as He says: 'Messengers! Eat of that which is wholesome, and do good deeds: I certainly have full knowledge of all that you do'. (23: 51) And: 'Believers, eat of the wholesome things We have provided for you'. (2: 172)**

3 **He then mentioned the case of a man who goes on a long travel, uncouth with dust on his body. He raises his hands to the sky and says, 'My Lord! My Lord!' Yet, his food is unlawfully earned; his drink is unlawfully earned; his clothes are unlawfully earned; and he was fed, when young, with what was unlawfully earned. How can such a supplication be answered?**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿Believers, eat of the wholesome things We have provided for you, and give thanks to God, if it is truly Him that you worship.﴾** (172)
- **﴿Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised.﴾** (2: 267)
- **﴿Say: 'Evil and good are not equal, even though the abundance of evil may be pleasing to you'.﴾** (5: 100)
- **﴿Messengers! Eat of that which is wholesome, and do good deeds: I certainly have full knowledge of all that you do.﴾** (23: 51)
- **﴿Whoever desires might and glory should know that all might and glory belong to God alone. To Him ascends all good words, and He exalts the good deed.﴾** (35: 10)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that God is good and He does not accept anything which is not good. Therefore, He has commanded all people to eat of wholesome good food. The Prophet tells us that buying food with earnings that are unlawfully made blocks the answering of a supplication.

1 Related by Muslim, 1015.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that God is good with no fault, defect or negative thing applicable to Him. The Arabic word *ṭayyib*, which is the equivalent of 'good', essentially denotes goodness, purity and freedom from whatever is foul.

Therefore, God accepts only what is good of deeds and people. He does not draw to Himself a wicked person who harbours hatred and enmity towards others, or one who ill-treats people and behaves ill towards them, or one who eats and drinks what is forbidden.

Likewise, God only accepts good deeds. He does not accept a deed that involves any aspect of polytheism or hypocrisy. Nor does He accept a charity taken from what has been unlawfully acquired. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever a person gives a *ṣadaqah* [i.e. charity] from good earnings – and God accepts nothing except what is good – God, the Lord of Grace will take it in His right hand. Even if it is as little as one date, it will grow in the Lord of Grace's palm until it becomes larger than a mountain, just like any of you rears his weaned cow or weaned camel'.[1] He also said: 'No prayer is accepted without ablution, and no charity from an unlawful source is accepted'.[2]

What is unwholesome and unacceptable to God is that a person selects the worst type of his property and pays his zakat out of it. God says: 'Believers, spend on others out of the good things you have earned, and out of that which We bring forth for you from the earth. Do not choose for your spending the inferior things which you yourselves would not accept without turning your eyes away in disdain. Know that God is free of all want, ever to be praised'. (2: 267)

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then shows that the divine command to select only what is good for what a person eats and drinks applies to prophets and God's messengers, and also to their followers who are the believers. God requires all people to eat of what is good and to do good deeds. This order applies to His prophets and messengers and also to all mankind. Everyone is required to seek what is lawful and abandon what is unlawful.

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells us that eating what is unlawfully earned is one reason for not answering a supplication, even though there may be other reasons for its answer. A person may undertake a journey for a religious purpose that earns God's reward, such as hajj, or jihad, or advocacy of Islam, etc. His appearance tells of the discomfort and fatigue of travel, and he stretches out his hands, appealing earnestly to God to answer his prayer. Yet, he does not scruple to take money unlawfully. What he eats, drinks and wears are purchased with unlawful earnings. How, then, could his supplication be answered?

The Prophet says at the end of the hadith: 'How can such a supplication be answered?' This is a question that expresses wonder and improbability. It is not a clear statement that such a supplication is never answered. It may be that God answers it out of His grace and generosity. Or He may answer his prayer to give him more respite. Therefore, it is understood from all this that indulging much in unlawful earnings and using them for one's living is a cause that precludes answering one's prayers.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1410; Muslim, 1014.
2 Related by Muslim, 224.

# Implementation

1. A believer is totally good: he is good at heart, in himself and in speech, and his goodness is the result of the faith established in his heart, God's glorification which he often repeats, and the good deeds he does using his different organs. Such words and actions are the fruit of his belief in God and reflected also in the fact that he is a believer. All these are good things which God accepts. Therefore, a Muslim should always try to strengthen his faith so that he increases his goodness.

2. God loves that His servants acquire some of His own attributes which are not exclusive to Himself, such as mercy, gentility, overlooking other people's faults, etc. He also loves to see His servant behaving as a good person, steering away from error and whatever is unbecoming.

3. Everyone should endeavour to ensure that what he eats, does and thinks is good, so that God will love him and accept his deeds. Wahb ibn al-Ward said: 'Were you to devote all your time to worship in the mosque, it will benefit you nothing unless you ensure that what goes into your belly is lawful, not unlawfully obtained.

4. An educator who wants his student to do something should himself provide the example. If he urges his student to attend congregational prayers, he himself should be among the early attendants. If he urges his student to offer the sunnah, i.e. recommended prayers, he should be seen doing it himself. Hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God's messengers were commanded to seek what is lawful and refrain from what is unalawful in all their affairs, in the same way as all believers. There is no distinction on this.

5. The hadith enhances the status of believers, as God gives them the same orders as He commands His messengers. They are worthy of this because of their faith.

6. The Prophet mentions that travel increases the possibility of answering prayers, because it adds to one's feeling of humility due to being away from home, and enduring the difficulties of travel. Humility is one of the most important causes of answering prayers.[1] The Prophet says: 'Three prayers are answered without doubt: a parent's prayer, a traveller's prayer and the prayer of one who suffers injustice'.[2] When a Muslim is on a journey, he should increase his supplication, as he is in a better position to have his prayers answered.

1 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 269.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1536; al-Tirmidhī, 1905; Ibn Mājah, 3862.

7 Stretching one's hands when supplicating earnestly improves the possibility of having one's prayer answered. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Your Lord, Blessed and Exalted, is generous and noble. When His servant raises his hands appealing to Him, He feels shy to let him go empty-handed'.[1] Therefore, a Muslim should raise his hands when supplicating, particularly at the places where the Prophet raised his hands.

8 Stressing one's need and urging one's appeal are causes for having one's prayer answered. Therefore, a Muslim should not be hasty, supplicating once and stopping. On the contrary, he should supplicate time and again, urging God's answer. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Your supplication is answered unless you are hasty, saying: I have prayed to my Lord but He did not answer my prayer'.[2]

9 Eating only what is lawful is one of the most important reasons for answering prayers, while eating what is unlawful is a cause to block such an answer. Hence, Wahb ibn Munabbih said: 'Whoever looks forward to his prayer being answered by God should ensure that he eats only of what is lawful'. Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ said: 'We have been told that a person's supplication is not raised to heaven because the supplicant eats what is unlawful'.[3]

10 When the prayer of a person who is travelling to do something in obedience of God and attending to all its requirements remains unanswered only because his food is of an unlawful source, what hope is there for one who is fully preoccupied with worldly concerns, or one who is unfair to others, or one who neglects different types of worship and goodness?

11 Muslims of the early generations were keen to ensure that what they ate was clearly lawfully obtained. They refrained from what was in doubt as to whether it was lawful or not. 'Ā'ishah reported: 'Abu Bakr had a servant who brought him every day what he earned for him, and Abu Bakr used to eat of what that servant brought him. One day he brought him something and Abu Bakr started eating. The servant said to him: 'Do you know what you are eating?' He said: 'No, what is it?' He said: 'In pre-Islamic days, I told the fortune of a certain person. I did not know how to tell the fortune, but I deceived the man. He later met me and gave me something. This is what I have served you now. Abu Bakr put his fingers in his mouth and threw up all that was in his belly'.[4]

1 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1488; al-Tirmidhī, 3556; Ibn Mājah, 3865.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 6340; Muslim, 2735.
3 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 275.
4 Related by al-Bukhari, 3842.

61

# Hadith

# ZAKAT AL-FIṬR

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar narrated that

1. God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) made Zakat al-Fiṭr at the end of Ramadan obligatory on people:
2. one *ṣā‘* of dates, or one *ṣā‘* of barley
3. for every Muslim, whether a free person or slave, male or female, young or old.
4. He ordered that it should be paid before people go out to join the [Eid] Prayer.[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿He does not desire that you be afflicted with hardship. You are, however, required to complete the necessary number of days and to extol and glorify God for having guided you aright.﴾ (2: 185)
- ﴿Take a portion of their money as charity, so that you may cleanse and purify them thereby.﴾ (9: 103)
- ﴿[Believers are those] who give a due share of their possessions (24) to the one who asks [for help] and the one who is deprived.﴾ (69: 24-25).

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh. He embraced Islam when he was young. He migrated to Madinah with his father when he was still a child below the age of puberty. At the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he was too young to fight. His first military effort was the Encounter of the Moat, i.e. al-Khandaq. He also participated in the pledge under the tree. Zaynab bint Maẓ‘ūn, who was ‘Uthmān ibn Maẓ‘ūn’s sister, was his mother and the mother of his sister, Ḥafṣah the Mother of Believers. He narrated much useful information from the Prophet, and also from his father ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, Abu Bakr, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Bilāl, Ṣuhayb and other companions of the Prophet. He issued many fatwas and narrated a large number of hadiths. He died in Year 74 AH 694 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains that Zakat al-Fiṭr is payable for every Muslim male or female, free or slave, young or old. For each one, its quantity is one *ṣā‘* of food. It must be paid out before the Eid Prayer.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1507; Muslim, 984.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) made Zakat al-Fiṭr, which is due at the end of Ramadan, a duty on all Muslims. Needless to say, a duty stated by the Prophet is the same as if it is stated by God, as He says: 'Whoever obeys God's Messenger obeys God'. (4: 80) It is a personal duty on all Muslims, according to the consensus of the majority of scholars.[1] The Prophet made it a reparative measure for any omission, forgetfulness or error that might have occurred during the fasting month of Ramadan. Its other purpose is the provision of plentiful food for the poor and needy, so that they do not have to beg on the Day of Eid. They will thus be able to participate fully in the happy occasion of Eid. Ibn 'Abbās said: 'God's Messenger (peace be upon him) established the duty of Zakat al-Fiṭr as purification from idle talk and unbecoming behaviour on the part of the fasting person and as food for the needy'.[2]

2 The amount of Zakat al-Fiṭr is one *ṣā'* of dates, barley, rice, or some other type of staple food, as Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī explains: 'We used to pay Zakat al-Fiṭr one *ṣā'* of food, or barley, or dates, or dried milk, or raisins.'[3] The *ṣā'* was a volume measure equal to the fill of the two cupped hands of an average man four times. It is estimated in weight at around 2.17 kilograms.

This and other hadiths indicate that the duty of Zakat al-Fiṭr requires paying it in kind not value. This was the practice of the Prophet and his companions. However, it is acceptable to give it in money which is used to buy food.

3 It is a binding duty on all Muslims: male and female, young and old. During the time of slavery, it was a duty on slaves as well, but the master paid it.

It is binding on everyone who owns what is in excess of his own and his family's food for the day and night of Eid. Thus, a man must pay it for himself, his wife, family, children and slaves.

It becomes a duty at sunset on the last day of the month of Ramadan. Thus, if a child is born before sunset on that day, his father must include that child in his Zakat al-Fiṭr. The same applies to one who goes through his marriage contract before sunset. He pays it for his wife. If either event takes place after sunset, then no Zakat al-Fiṭr is required for either child or wife. This is the same as the case of one who dies after his annual zakat becomes due. It must be taken out of his estate and paid to its beneficiaries.

The hadith makes clear that Zakat al-Fiṭr is not applicable to a non-Muslim, because its purpose is spiritual purification for Muslims.

1 Al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhadhdhab*, Vol. 6, p. 104.
2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1609; Ibn Mājah, 1827.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 1506; Muslim, 985.

4

The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded that Zakat al-Fiṭr should be taken out before people left home to join the Eid Prayer. He then added the concession that it could be paid out one or two days before the end of Ramadan.[1] If it is delayed beyond that time, it becomes unacceptable, and the person who delays it is accountable for his misdeed. This is based on Ibn ‘Abbās’s hadith: ‘God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) established the duty of Zakat al-Fiṭr as purification from idle talk and unbecoming behaviour on the part of the fasting person and as food for the needy. Whoever pays it before the [Eid] Prayer, it is counted as acceptable zakat. If it is paid after the Eid Prayer, it is a mere act of charity’.[2]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) limited the beneficiaries of Zakat al-Fiṭr to the poor and needy. It may not be paid to any of the other beneficiaries of zakat.

1 Ibn ‘Umar said: ‘They used to pay Zakat al-Fiṭr one or two days before Eid’. Related by al-Bukhari, 1511.

2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 1609; Ibn Mājah, 1827.

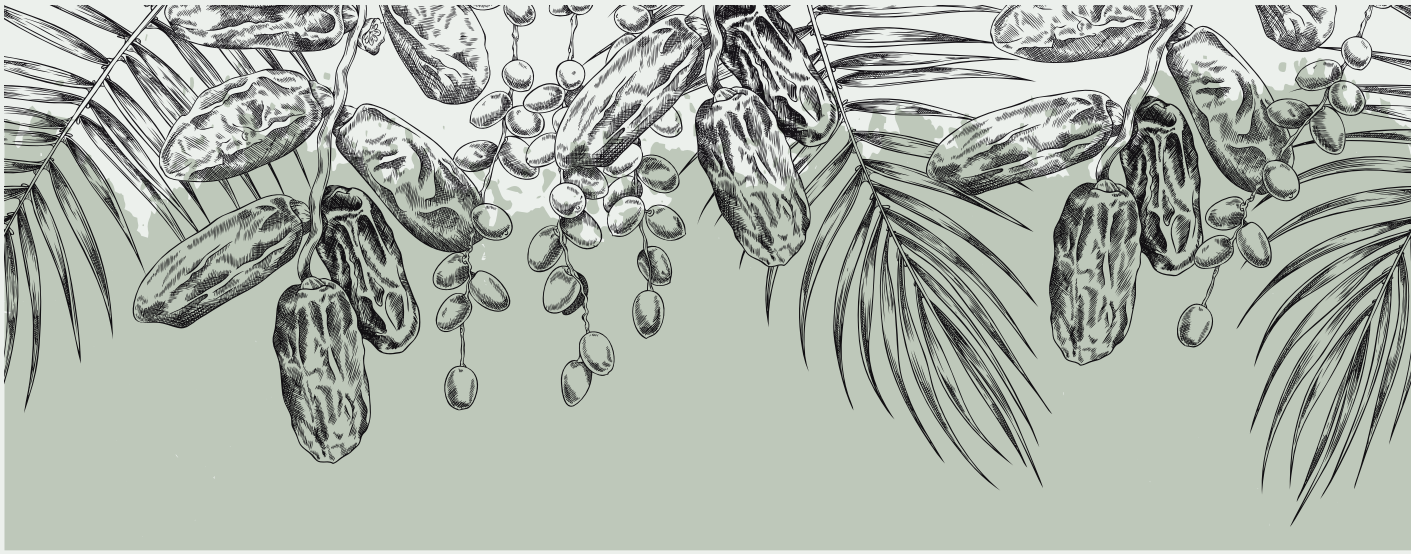
# Implementation

1. God has established Zakat al-Fiṭr to compensate for any short fall that occurs during the fasting month of Ramadan, such as idle talk or minor sins. Thus, paying it makes the fasting perfect and a Muslim earns his reward in full. Therefore, whoever wants to have the full reward of his fasting the month of Ramadan must pay his Zakat al-Fiṭr.

2. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made Zakat al-Fiṭr the means to make the poor self-sufficient on the Day of Eid, so that the festive occasion of the Eid is shared by all Muslims. Therefore, every Muslim should be keen to pay it, to earn his reward and to ensure that those around him are also happy.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made Zakat al-Fiṭr an act expressing gratitude to God, the Exalted, for enabling us to fast and attend to our worship during Ramadan. Therefore, every Muslim should hasten to thank God for His blessings and favours, as also for enabling him to attend to acts of worship many people fail to do.

4. Zakat al-Fiṭr is a small amount that does not burden a Muslim. No one should ignore or begrudge it.



5 Although the various types of zakat and *ṣadaqah* are small in amount, but they are offered directly to God. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever a person gives a *ṣadaqah* [i.e. charity] from good earnings – and God accepts nothing except what is good – God, the Lord of Grace will take it in His right hand. Even if it is as little as one date, it will grow in the Lord of Grace's palm until it becomes larger than a mountain, just like any of you rears his weaned cow or weaned camel'.[1]

6 Zakat al-Fiṭr is a duty binding on every Muslim who is alive during Ramadan until sunset on the last day of the month. Every Muslim must pay it for himself and his dependants.

7 It is not right for a Muslim to delay paying Zakat al-Fiṭr until people have left home to attend the Eid Prayer. It is far better to pay it early, before he is distracted by other duties and liable to miss its time. It is invalid when its time is gone.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1410; Muslim, 1014.

62

# Hadith

# THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1. God, Mighty and Exalted, said: 'All man's actions are his except fasting: it is Mine and I reward it'.
2. Fasting is a shield.
3. If any of you is fasting, he must neither say what is obscene nor shout. If someone abuses him verbally or quarrels with him, he should say: 'I am a fasting person'.
4. By Him who holds Muhammad's soul in His hand, the changing mouth smell of a fasting person is sweeter in God's view, on the Day of Resurrection, than the smell of musk.
5. A fasting person has two occasions to rejoice: when he ends his fast he rejoices at having completed his fast, and when he meets his Lord, he rejoices at having fasted.[1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1904; Muslim, 1151.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.﴾ (2: 183)
- ﴿Say: 'In God's bounty and grace, in this let them rejoice; for this is better than all that they may amass'.﴾ (10: 58)
- ﴿Those who are patient in adversity will be given their reward in full, beyond reckoning'.﴾ (39: 10)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions some of the merits of fasting. One of these is that God assumes rewarding it without telling anyone what reward He gives for it. Another is that fasting is a shield protecting a person from indulging in sin. The mouth smell of a fasting person is fine in God's estimation, even though people may find it different. The Prophet also states that a person who attends to the worship of fasting will rejoice on the Day of Judgement when he sees the reward God has prepared for His fasting servants, and he is pleased in this life that God has enabled him to fast.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that God, Mighty and Exalted, said: 'All man's actions are his except fasting: it is Mine and I reward it'. The fact is that all acts of worship belong to God, but in this hadith God gives special mention to fasting as belonging to Him. This is to enhance the status of fasting giving it specific honour. It is the same as calling the Grand Mosque in Makkah 'God's House', or calling the she-camel which was the miracle given to Prophet Ṣāliḥ 'God's she-camel'. (91: 13)

Fasting is given this special status because it is the one act of worship that is totally free of hypocrisy. It is the one act of worship that is possible to be totally hidden from angels and humans. Moreover, it involves physical hardship, humility and endurance of hunger and thirst. It also combines all types of perseverance not only in terms of accomplishing this worship, but also in resisting temptation and sin as fasting stops man from indulging in all manner of sin.

Hence, God has kept the reward for fasting a secret known only to Himself. He has informed the recording angels of the details of reward for prayer and zakat. However, He has not informed them of the reward for fasting, so that He will administer it Himself on the Day of Judgement.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells us that fasting is a protective shield. It keeps a person away from the Fire on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whenever a servant of God fasts a day when he is on God's cause, God will, in return for that day set his face seventy autumns away from the Fire'.[1]

Fasting is also a shield keeping a Muslim away from sin and disobedience of God, as it serves as a restraint, weakening temptation and sexual desire. Hence the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'Young people, whoever of you can meet marriage requirements, should get married. For marriage helps to lower one's gaze and maintain chastity. Whoever cannot, may resort to fasting, and it will be of help'.[2]

3 Given fasting protects a person from Hell and keeps him away from sin that takes him closer to it, the Prophet points out what a fasting person must avoid, such as intercourse and foreplay, vulgar speech and quarrels, etc. If someone abuses him verbally or seeks to quarrel with him, he should only say: 'I am a fasting person'. He first says this to himself so that he will not attempt what is not permissible for a fasting person. He also says it clearly to his opponent so that the other knows that he is refraining from returning his abuse because he is fasting. Otherwise, he would be more than a match for him. This may be enough to restrain an opponent, as he will realize that the man's silence is not a sign of weakness. Moreover, the other person may also be fasting, and this remark reminds him of his fasting and what is not permissible during this time

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2840; Muslim, 1153.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 5065; Muslim, 1400.

4 The Prophet, who always said the truth and never deviated from it, swears by God, that the mouth smell of a fasting person is in God's sight better than the smell of musk. Fasting causes a change to a person's mouth smell, making it unpleasant. However, it is acceptable to God and draws the fasting person closer to Him. He rewards His servant giving him on the Day of Judgement a fine smell which is better than the best we have in our world. This is the same as God rewarding a martyr by giving his blood the smell of musk. In our present life, God rewards a person for applying musk or perfume when attending Friday, congregational or Eid prayers. However, a fasting person is compensated for his changing mouth smell by a reward greater than that given to the one applying musk when attending congregational prayers.

5 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then tells us that a fasting person has two occasions to rejoice. The first is when he breaks his fast at the end of the day. He is delighted with having good food and drink after a day of hunger and thirst. It is a natural and permissible feeling. Moreover, he rejoices at being able to complete his fast, and that God has helped him to ensure that his fast is correct.

The other occasion for rejoicing is when the fasting person meets God Almighty and sees what He has prepared for him of reward that has been kept unknown to any of His creation.

# Implementation

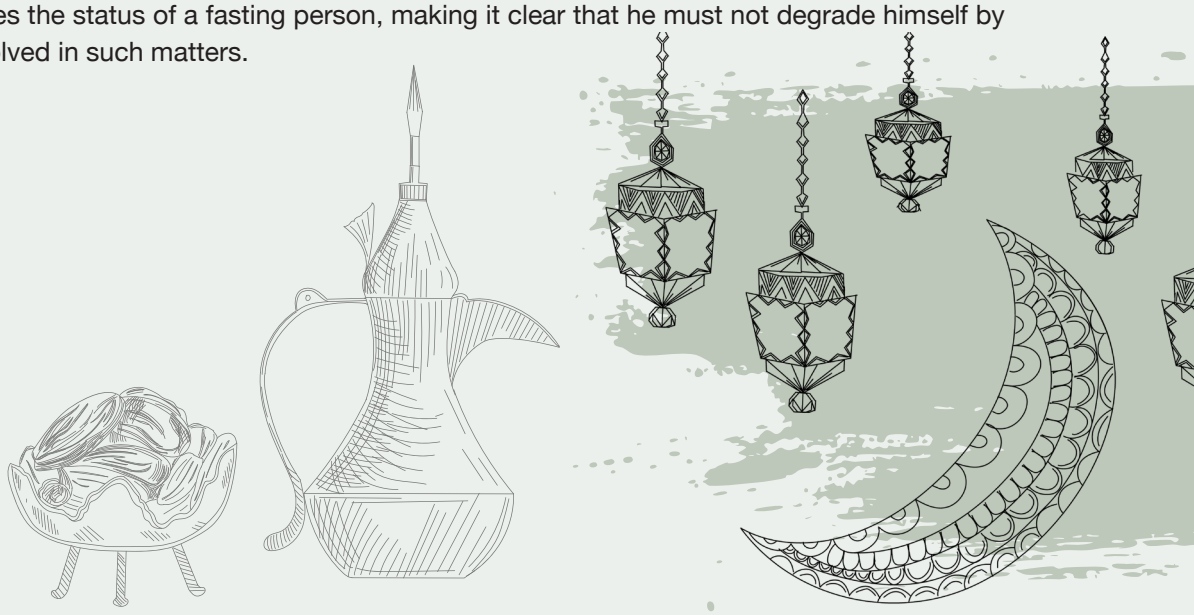
1. God has given fasting a special kind of merit as He kept it for Himself, with its exceptionally rich reward unknown to anyone else. Hence, every Muslim should make the best use of this and fast voluntarily as often as he can.

2. It is a great merit that God has given to fasting, making it His own. A Muslim cannot do much better than making the most of this honour by increasing his voluntary fasting in addition to obligatory fasting.

3. Fasting provides a protective shield from Satan and his temptations. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) highlights this aspect for young people who cannot afford to get married. He tells them that fasting helps in resisting temptation.

4. Fasting protects the worshipper from the Fire which is fuelled by humans and stones. God states that 'whoever is drawn away from the Fire and brought into paradise gains a great triumph'. (3: 185)

5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that a fasting person must not get involved in verbal abuse or quarrels. Such matters are not permissible to anyone, but the Prophet's order emphasizes the status of a fasting person, making it clear that he must not degrade himself by being involved in such matters.



6. It is permissible for a person to speak about some aspects of his worship, if this is intended to achieve something good or to repel what is bad or foul, involving no element of pretence and hypocrisy. Therefore, it is permissible for a fasting person who finds himself at the receiving end of verbal abuse to say to the other party that he is fasting.

7 The Prophet, who always says the truth, confirmed his statement adding an oath by God. Sometimes it is suitable for an advocate of Islam or an educator to do the same, but not frequently.

8 If a fasting person is inconvenienced by the change of his mouth smell, he should remember that such a foul smell is considered good by God, and that he himself gains a reward for it.

9 The hadith does not imply any discouragement of using a toothstick during fasting. The changed smell emanates from the stomach, not the mouth. Moreover, the hadith does not order a fasting person to leave that smell without trying to change it. It only reassures the fasting person.

10 The hadith implies that rejoicing at the end of the fasting day, and that one is now able to eat and drink, is neither reprehensible nor forbidden. It is a natural and permissible feeling, because it is an aspect of human nature to be delighted with food and drink.

11 Rejoicing at having food and drink after a fasting day is permissible. However, man's rejoicing at having received God's help to complete his fast is an act of thanking God for His blessings and favours. This, in itself, is an act of worship that earns a reward.

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Hadith

# THE SPECIAL STATUS OF THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

Abu Hurayrah narrated that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

1 **Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan, out of faith and with dedication, shall have his past sins forgiven,**

2 **and whoever spends the Night of Power in worship, out of faith and with dedication, shall have his past sins forgiven.**[1]

Abu Hurayrah also narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

3 **Whoever attends to night worship during Ramadan, out of faith and with dedication, shall have his past sins forgiven.**[2]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1901; Muslim, 760.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 37; Muslim, 759.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing. (183) [Fast] on a certain number of days. But whoever of you is ill, or on a journey, shall fast instead the same number of days later on. Those who find fasting a strain too hard to bear may compensate for it by feeding a needy person. He who does good of his own account does himself good thereby. For to fast is to do good to yourselves, if you only knew it. (184) It was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed: a guidance for mankind and a self-evident proof of that guidance and a standard to distinguish right from wrong. Therefore, whoever of you is present in that month shall fast throughout the month; but he who is ill or on a journey shall fast instead the same number of days later on. God desires that you have ease. He does not desire that you be afflicted with hardship. You are, however, required to complete the necessary number of days and to extol and glorify God for having guided you aright and to tender your thanks.﴾ (2: 183-185)
- ﴿*Ḥā. Mīm.* (1) By the Book that makes things clear! (2) We have bestowed it from on high on a blessed night; for, indeed, We have always sent warnings. (3) On that night every matter of wisdom is made clear.﴾ (44: 1-4)
- ﴿From on high have We bestowed it [the Qur'an] on the Night of Power. (1) Would that you knew what the Night of Power is! (2) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. (3) On that night the angels and the Spirit by their Lord's leave descend with all His decrees. (4) That night is peace, till the break of dawn.﴾ (97: 1-5)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that whoever fasts during the month of Ramadan believing that it is a duty incumbent on him, dedicating his worship to God, (limitless He is in His glory), shall have all his past sins forgiven. Likewise, the one who spends the Night of Power in worship, out of faith and in dedication, shall have his past sins forgiven. The same applies, even in a greater degree, to one who attends to night worship throughout the month of Ramadan. He is also forgiven all his past sins.

# Message and Meaning

1 The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that a believer fasts the month of Ramadan believing that God, Mighty and Exalted, has made such fasting a duty binding on him, holding as true what God has promised those who fast for His sake, looking for his reward from God only, looking for reward from no-one else. He only seeks to please God, neither seeking reputation nor indulging in hypocrisy, and he starts the month with a delightful mood, using his time to draw closer to God. Such a person shall have the reward of having all his past sins erased and forgiven.

Fasting means abstention from eating, drinking and sex with the intention of fulfilling an act of worship. Such abstention lasts from the beginning of Fajr Prayer, or dawn, up to the time when the Maghrib Prayer falls due. This is in implementation of the Qur'anic statement: 'Eat and drink until you can see the white streak of dawn against the blackness of the night. Then resume the fast till nightfall'. (2: 187) In a *qudsī* hadith, God says of a fasting person: 'He abandons his desire and food for My sake'.[1]

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then states that whoever spends the Night of Power in worship, including prayer, supplication, glorification of God, reciting the Qur'an, etc. and doing all this out of faith and in dedication and devotion, shall have all his past sins erased. It is not a condition that a person spends the entire night in worship; a portion of it is sufficient, even though it may be a short portion. This is in line with the general meaning of *tahajjud*, i.e. night worship, or joining the imam leading a prayer of night worship.

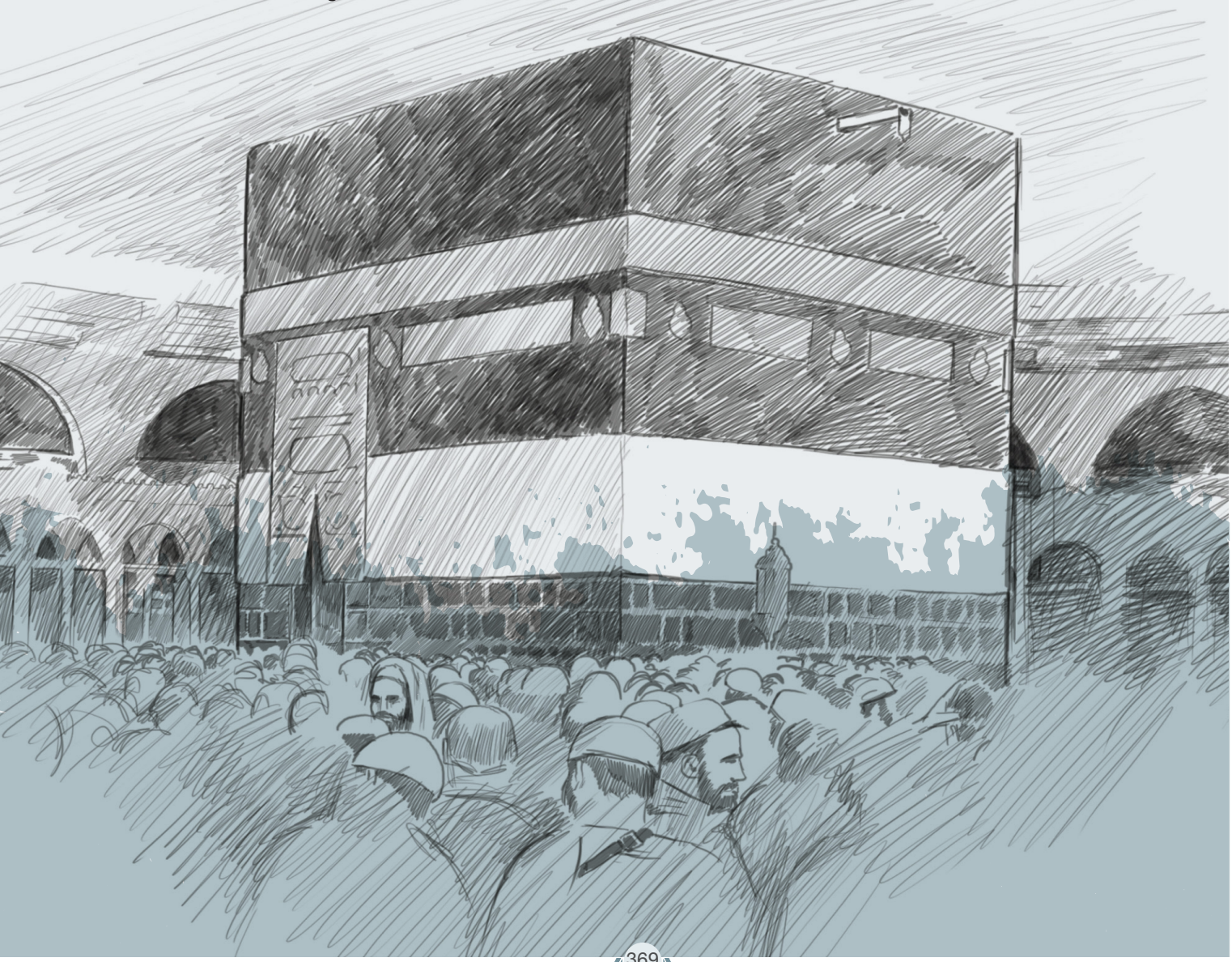
The Night of Power is given this name because God has given it an exceptionally great status. It was on this night that the Qur'an was sent down to the House of Might in the nearest heaven, as God says: 'From on high We have bestowed it [the Qur'an] on the Night of Power'. (97: 1) On this night, the fortunes of people that will take place in the coming year are copied from the Imperishable Tablet, and assigned their timings. God has favoured His servants with a multiplication of their good deeds on that night. He says: 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months'. (97: 3)

The Night of Power is kept uncertain, but it is during the last ten days of Ramadan. Whoever offers night worship on all the ten nights will definitely have done his worship on this night. The Mother of Believers, 'Ā'ishah, said: 'When the last ten nights of Ramadan started, the Prophet was more diligent and tightened his lower garment, spent its nights in worship and awakened his family'.[2] It is more probable that it occurs in the odd nights of the last ten of Ramadan, as the Prophet says: 'Seek it in the odd ones of the last ten nights of Ramadan'.[3]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1894; Muslim, 1151.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2024; Muslim, 1174.
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 2017; Muslim, 1169.

3

In the second hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions that whoever offers night worship on all nights of Ramadan, out of faith and in dedication and devotion, shall have all his past sins forgiven. There is no contradiction between having one's sins forgiven for doing night worship throughout the month of Ramadan and their forgiveness for doing so on the Night of Power. Each of these two practices is good enough for the forgiveness of past sins, but each of them has something special which does not apply to the other. Offering night worship on every night of the month is certainly hard, but whoever does it shall inevitably have witnessed the Night of Power. He is forgiven his past sins for having done each one of the two. To offer worship on the Night of Power is not as hard as doing this throughout the month, but it requires looking hard for it, and one may ultimately witness it or miss it. Therefore, it is better to offer night worship on each night of the month, because it earns very rich reward as also certainty that the Night of Power has been included.



# Implementation

1. One aspect of the grace God bestows on us is that He gives certain times and places special and exclusive merits. Hence, the Day of Arafat is the best day of the year, and Friday is the best day of the week. The Ka'bah is the best place on earth, the month of Ramadan the best month in the year, and the Night of Power is the best of all nights. God has associated these times and places with a great prospect for splendid success, to motivate man to be diligent and keen to make the best use of these occasions.

2. Good deeds must be offered out of faith and in true dedication and devotion. Good deeds are unacceptable from an unbeliever. A person who does not do it as an act of dedication, or one who does it to earn some reputation or to give a false impression of himself will earn no reward for his good deed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Actions are but by intention'. Therefore, a Muslim should have clear intention in everything he does and dedicate all his deeds to seeking God's pleasure.

3. Faith and dedication must be the basis of every good action. Both are combined in the definition of God-fearing stated by Ṭalq ibn Ḥabīb: 'That you act in obedience of God, clear by God's light, seeking God's reward, and that you abandon disobedience of God, clear by God's light, fearing God's punishment'. Every action must have faith as its starting point and God's reward and pleasure as its ultimate objective.

4. God kept the Night of Power undefined so that His servants would increase their efforts in obeying Him at all times, rather than concentrating their efforts on one night only. Likewise, He kept the time of answering prayers on Fridays undefined so that His servants prayed to Him throughout the day.

5. Disobedience of God is one of the most important reasons that prevent a person from making use of the best times for worship. The Prophet came out of his home to tell people the time of the Night of Power, but he saw two men quarrelling in the mosque. This was the direct cause for his forgetting its exact time. Hence, a Muslim should steer away from all sin, so that God gives him light in his heart and enables him to make the best of good times and deeds.

6. Everyone has two ways to earn God's forgiveness: one is hard but the hardship is coupled with the pleasure of obedience of God and being close to Him. This way is doing night worship on every night of Ramadan. The other way is easier, limiting one's worship to the Night of Power only. The first way gives complete certainty, while the second relies on probability. Needless to say, the certain way is much better.

7 Ibn Rajab said: ‘The ones in love find the nights numerous. They count them awaiting the ten nights of every year. When they have these, their wait is over and they can serve the One they love’.[1]

1 Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā’if al-Ma‘ārif*, p. 204.

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Hadith

# ENSURING THE VALIDITY OF FASTING

Abu Hurayrah narrated

that God's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: **If one will not abandon saying and acting on what is false and wrong deeds, God is in no need of him abandoning his food and drink.** [1]

## From the Qur'an

- **﴿Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing.﴾** (2: 183)
- **﴿Turn away, then, from the loathsome evil of idolatrous beliefs and practices; and turn away from every word that is untrue.﴾** (22: 30)
- **﴿The true servants of the Lord of Grace are those who walk gently on earth, and who, whenever the ignorant address them, say: 'Peace'.﴾** (25: 63)
- **﴿[And the true servants of God are] those who never bear witness to what is false, and whenever they pass by [people engaged in] frivolity, pass on with dignity.﴾** (25: 72)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The purpose of fasting is to maintain the path of being God-fearing, specifically restraining one's tongue and organs from doing what is forbidden. If this purpose is not achieved and a person indulges in what is forbidden during fasting, then such a fast is worthless in God's sight.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6057.

# Message and Meaning

1. In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) makes clear that the ultimate objective of fasting is to be God-fearing and to safeguard one's tongue and body organs against what is sinful. This is stated in the verse that establishes the duty of fasting. God says: 'Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may be God-fearing'. (2: 183) When fasting, a person abstains from food and drink, but he is also required to abstain from all verbal falsehood which includes lying, backbiting and the like. He is further required to be in control of what he says, using no foul language and refusing to be drawn into a slanging match or exchange of verbal abuse. All such language is unacceptable, particularly when coupled with any loud noise. All this is disapproved of by the Prophet (peace be upon him) who says: "If any of you is fasting, he must neither say what is obscene nor shout. If someone abuses him verbally or quarrels with him, he should say: 'I am a fasting person'".[1] The one who commits such actions during fasting makes his fasting unacceptable and it will not be credited.

2. The Prophet uses the expression, 'God is in no need', to indicate that his action is totally discarded and unacceptable. The fact is that God is in no need of anyone and He benefits nothing from them. He says: 'People! It is you who stand in need of God, whereas He alone is free of all wants, worthy of all praise'. (35: 15)

3. God, Mighty and Exalted, has forbidden all verbal falsehood. He says: 'Turn away, then, from the loathsome evil of idolatrous beliefs and practices; and turn away from every word that is untrue'. (22: 30) He praises His servants who do not witness falsehood, neither say nor practise it. They do not even join a group that may say it. God says: '[And the true servants of God are] those who never bear witness to what is false, and whenever they pass by [people engaged in] frivolity, pass on with dignity'. (25: 72) The Prophet (peace be upon him) says that one of the worst major sins is giving false testimony. 'We were sitting with God's Messenger (peace be upon him) when he said: "Shall I tell you which the gravest sins are?" (He repeated this three times): "The association of partners with God, undutifulness to parents, and perjury (or stating falsehood)". God's Messenger (peace be upon him) was reclining, but he sat up and continued to repeat it until we thought: we wish he would stop'.[2]

4. The purpose of making fasting obligatory is not to train a toleration of hunger and thirst. Rather, it is what follows of restraining desire, controlling anger and keeping one's soul at peace. If nothing of this occurs as a result of fasting, and the person is not so affected, then all he achieves through fasting is being hungry and thirsty. This is what is expressed by the Prophet: 'Some fasting person gets nothing out of his fasting other than hunger and thirst, and some night worshipper gets nothing out of his night worship other than tired wakefulness'. In such cases, God does not care about such person's fasting and does not accept it, because the action itself is fruitless.

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1904; Muslim, 1151. (This is in Hadith 76 in this work.)

2 Related by al-Bukhari, 2654; Muslim, 87.

# Implementation

1. As mentioned earlier, God has kept the reward He grants for fasting secret, saying: 'All man's actions are his except fasting: it is Mine and I reward it'.[1] He thus makes clear that fasting is treated at a higher level and its reward is indeed rich. Yet a person may say a word that incurs God's wrath and it destroys all this reward. This tells us of the seriousness of falsehood, verbal and practical. It is something ruinous, leading to total loss in both this present life and the life to come. It behoves every Muslim to beware of it and steer away from it so that he does not ruin his good deeds.

2. God, Mighty and Exalted, wants His servants to fear and obey Him, and to refrain from what He has forbidden them. He does not want to restrict their lives by abstaining from food, drink and sex. He simply wants them to do what He bids them and refrain from what He forbids them, so that fasting becomes a training course in which they learn abandoning what is forbidden and doing their duties.

3. The objective of fasting is self-discipline and steering away from what is forbidden. It is not meant only for abstention from food and drink, which are lawful.

4. While food, drink and sex with one's spouse are permissible except during the day of fasting, abstention from them during fasting is the way to draw closer to God. However this cannot be done until one has taken the first step of abandoning what God forbids, such as lying, wrongdoing, injustice and all types of aggression against other people.

5. God has forbidden saying what is false and also acting on it. This includes backbiting, sewing discord between people, urging what is evil and forbidding what is good, as well as all other forms of falsehood.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5927; Muslim, 1151.

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Hadith

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HAJJ

Abu Hurayrah narrated that

the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever comes to this House and commits neither lewdness nor wicked conduct returns as pure as on the day of his birth.**[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿**Perform to their completion both the pilgrimage and the 'umrah purely for God's sake.**﴾ (2: 196)
- ﴿**The pilgrimage takes place in the months appointed for it. Whoever undertakes the pilgrimage in those months shall, while on pilgrimage, abstain from lewdness, all wicked conduct and wrangling. Whatever good you do God is well aware of it. Provide well for yourselves: the best provision of all is to be God-fearing. Fear Me, then, you who are endowed with insight.**﴾ (2: 197)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

A perfect hajj wipes away all past sins. Whoever performs the hajj, committing nothing of the sins that spoil the hajj, returns home with his slate clean, like it was on the day of his birth.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1820; Muslim, 1350.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) points out one of the best ways to erase one's past sins, namely a perfect hajj, or pilgrimage to the Ka'bah. He tells us that whoever performs the hajj well, will have his sins erased. He returns home as pure as he was on the day he was born. A perfect hajj is one during which the pilgrim does not violate any of the restrictions that apply during the hajj, such as sexual intercourse and foreplay with one's spouse, or any transgression that involves committing a sin.

2. The hadith applies to both the hajj and the 'umrah, or mini-pilgrimage, as Muslim's version of the hadith speaks of 'whoever comes to this House'. Moreover, the Prophet says: 'One 'umrah to another wipes away [the sins] committed in between them. And a perfect hajj earns no lesser reward than [admittance into] Heaven'.[1]

3. The forgiveness mentioned in these hadiths applies to what is due to God, Mighty and Exalted, as He wipes such sins away. As for the rights of human beings, these cannot be erased except through satisfying one's opponents or returning whatever one owes to their rightful owners.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 1773; Muslim, 1349.

# Implementation

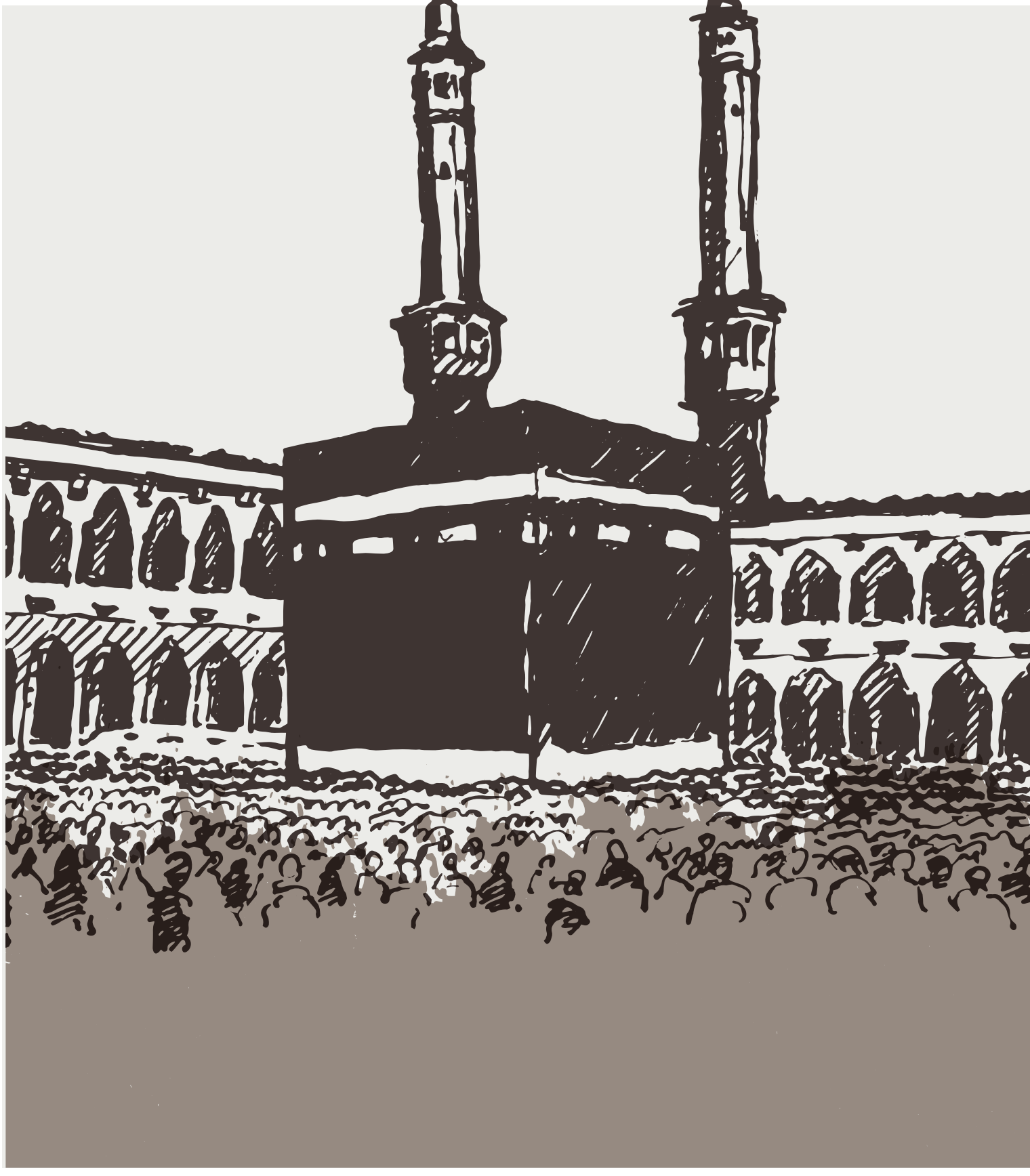
1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the simile of being free from sin ‘as on the day of one’s birth’ to emphasize the meaning of forgiveness and the wiping away of sins. Using such an expressive style to explain one’s meaning. is recommended

2. The Prophet points out a splendid way of ensuring forgiveness of past sins, namely, a perfect pilgrimage. Needless to say, every one of us needs a way to erase our sins and faults.

3. The hadith emphasizes the importance of good manners, which can be a cause of the acceptance or rejection of one’s good deeds.

4. Beware of being unjust to other people or taking their rights unfairly. Sins related to people’s rights cannot be erased except through returning their rights and obtaining their pardon. As for offences related to God’s rights, all these, apart from associating partners with Him, are subject to God’s will. He may forgive them or punish the one who commits them.

5. One of the objectives of the hajj is to remind people of the life to come. A pilgrim abandons his fine attire and puts on instead garments that look like the wrappings of a deceased body. The pilgrim also keeps away from the pleasures of life. He attends at Arafat as one of millions of pilgrims, in a gathering similar to that of the Day of Judgement. All are equal, with no distinction between young and old, king and subject. When a pilgrim appreciates all this, he returns home caring little for the present life, eager to ensure a good prospect in the life to come.



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# Hadith

## THE HAJJ DUTY

Abu Hurayrah narrated, saying:

1 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) addressed us and said: 'God has made the hajj obligatory to you, people, so perform the hajj'.

2 A man said: "Every year, Messenger of God?" The Prophet remained silent while the man repeated his question three times.

3 God's Messenger said: 'Had I said, "Yes", it would be a duty and you would not be able to fulfil it'.

4 He then added: 'When I leave out something, let it be.

5 People before you were ruined by asking too many questions and by their disobedience of their prophets.

6 When I give you an order, fulfil it as best you can, and if I prohibit you something, abandon it'.[1]

1 Related by Muslim, 1337.

### From the Qur'an

- ﴿Perform to their completion both the pilgrimage and the 'umrah purely for God's sake.﴾ (2: 196)
- ﴿Pilgrimage to this House is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it. As for those who disbelieve, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds.﴾ (3: 97)
- ﴿Believers, do not ask about matters which, if made known to you, may cause you hardship. If you should ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they shall be made plain to you. God will forgive you these; for God is much-forgiving, clement. (101) People before your time inquired about them, and on that account they came to deny the truth.﴾ (5: 101-102)
- ﴿It is He who has chosen you, and has laid no hardship on you in [anything that pertains to] religion.﴾ (22: 78)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it. Remain God-fearing; for God is severe in retribution.﴾ (59: 7)
- ﴿Therefore, remain God-fearing as best as you can.﴾ (64: 16)

### The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and he accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) informed his companions that pilgrimage is a duty incumbent on them. One of them asked whether the hajj was a duty to be performed every year? The Prophet did not answer him. So the man repeated his question three times, getting no answer from the Prophet. Then the Prophet told them that they should learn what he tells them and that they should not ask too many questions that may make things harder for them. He further told them that this was the cause that earlier communities were ruined.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered a speech and told his companions that God, Mighty and Exalted, commands them to perform the pilgrimage to His sacred house, the Ka'bah, in Makkah, thus confirming the Qur'anic verse: 'Pilgrimage to this House is a duty owed to God by all people who are able to undertake it. As for those who disbelieve, God does not stand in need of anything in all the worlds.' (3: 97) Thus, they must obey and fulfil their obligation.

   Hajj means taking the journey to the Ka'bah at certain times, to perform certain rituals with the intention of obeying God and doing His bidding.

2. One of his companions, al-Aqra' ibn Ḥābis, asked the Prophet whether the hajj should be done every year. He did not understand whether God's order to perform the pilgrimage meant once only or that it must be repeated time after time.

   The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not answer the man when he put his question twice implying that such a question should not be asked. The Prophet was sent to deliver God's message complete and to explain it fully. He would not withhold any information the Muslim community may need. Had the hajj been a duty to be performed several times, he would have made that clear. To put such a question to the Prophet is rather presumptive, and God orders Muslims not to behave presumptuously when speaking to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He says: 'Believers! Do not behave presumptuously in the presence of God and His Messenger. Have fear of God: God hears all and knows all'. (49: 1)

3. When the man continued to ask his question after the Prophet remained silent twice, the Prophet told him that his silence reflected his compassion for the believers. Had the Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that the hajj was to be performed every year, it would have become a duty for all Muslims, one that would have been much too difficult for them.

4. The Prophet then told his companions that it is not permissible for them to persist with their questions about what is given to them in general or restricted terms. When they receive an order, they should do what that order signifies. Thus, an order to give charity or to perform hajj, etc. should be taken at face value. Whatever meets the meaning of that order is sufficient. Thus, a small amount given in charity fulfils the order to give *ṣadaqah*, and performing the hajj once is sufficient because this is what the wording of the command signifies. Indeed, the wording also admits the meaning of repeated performance, but this is to be ignored.

   This explains that the original status of all matters is permissibility. No ruling may be given except as God's law states. Whatever is not referred to in God's law retains its original status.

5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains this stating that earlier communities were ruined because of asking their prophets too many questions about what was not given to them in detail. Asking many questions indicates lack of conviction. All prophets were commanded to explain to people what benefits them in their present life and in the life to come. They may not remain silent when there is need for explanation. Hence, it is not right for people to precipitate things and ask questions. Good behaviour requires them to listen and to benefit by what is not mentioned.

   Moreover, when earlier communities persisted with their questioning, God made things harder for them. Because their duties became hard, they stopped doing them and, thus, they deserved God's

punishment. Therefore, God ordered Muslims not to ask such questions and warned against their outcome. He says: 'Believers, do not ask about matters which, if made known to you, may cause you hardship. If you should ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they shall be made plain to you. God will forgive you these; for God is much-forgiving, clement. (101) People before your time inquired about them, and on that account they came to deny the truth'. (5: 101-102)

One such example is that some of the Children of Israel requested their prophet to appoint them a leader so that they would fight for God's cause under his command. When such fighting became a duty for them, they turned away, unwilling to comply. It is concerning those people that God says: 'Are you not aware of those elders of the Children of Israel, after the time of Moses, when they said to one of their prophets, 'Appoint for us a king, and we shall fight for the cause of God'. He said, 'Would you, perchance, refuse to fight if fighting is ordained for you?' They said, 'Why should we not fight for the cause of God when we have been driven out of our homes and our families?'[1] Yet, when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, save for a few of them. God is fully aware of the wrongdoers'. (2: 246)

Another case was that when Prophet Moses ordered the Children of Israel to slaughter a cow. They kept asking about its description, and with every question, God added to the restrictions. Had they initially slaughtered any cow, it would have been sufficient.

Therefore, the Prophet told his companions not to ask unnecessary questions. Anas ibn Mālik reports: 'We were warned against asking God's Messenger (peace be upon him) about anything. We, therefore, loved that a sagacious person from the desert people should come and ask him while we listened'.[2] This concession given to the desert people was due to the fact that they were not aware of many things, because Islamic orders were not transmitted to them regularly. Their situation was different from the Prophet's companions who were with him in Madinah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'A Muslim who does Muslims the worst injury is one who asks about something that has not been forbidden for them, and it was then forbidden to them because of his asking'.[3]

6

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then points out what a Muslim should do. When a Muslim receives an order, he should do it as well as he can. Every Muslim is commanded to offer his prayers, in the form, conditions, essentials and recommended aspects which are well known. If a person is physically unable to perform his prayer as it should be, he does it as he can manage. If he cannot pray standing up, he prays seated, or reclining. If he cannot do his ablution fully, he does of it what he can. This is in line with the Qur'anic order: 'Remain God-fearing as best as you can'. (64: 16)

When Muslims receive an order of prohibition, they refrain from what is prohibited altogether. It is not possible to implement a prohibition if one does some aspects of what is prohibited. For example, an order prohibiting intoxicating drinks cannot be partially implemented, with people stopping drinking some intoxicants but not others. They must refrain from every drink that intoxicates. Hence, God says: 'Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it'. (59: 7)

1 Literally: 'when we have been driven out of homes and our sons', but it is not unusual in Arabic to refer to one's family as one's children.

2 Related by Muslim, 12.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 7289; Muslim, 2358.

# Implementation

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) uses the simplest style in explaining Islamic rulings. He said: 'God has made the hajj obligatory to you, people, so perform the hajj'. A mufti or a scholar should be very clear in putting the Islamic ruling in the clearest form so that what he says is fully and clearly understood.

2. The hadith makes clear that hajj is one of the duties God has made obligatory for His servants. Every Muslim should try to perform it early before he is prevented from doing so by unforeseen impediments.

3. It is permissible for a scholar or an advocate of Islam to remain silent when asked a particular question, if his silence is meant as an indication that the question should not be asked.

4. If the questioner does not understand the scholar's silence as meaning that the question is improper, the scholar should explain the Islamic ruling and tell him not to ask such questions.

5. Muslims should reflect on the Prophet's compassion for his community and how he was keen for their welfare. For example, he did not answer certain questions so that they were not encumbered with heavy duties. He did not come out for night worship during Ramadan, fearing that it might become obligatory. For the same reason, he told his companions not to ask about what is not mentioned in a text. When they reflected on his attitude, they were bound to love him more and appreciate his compassion.

6. One must not try to discuss what is not addressed, so as to find a religious ruling for it. Whatever is not addressed by a text and has no case of analogy is considered permissible according to the original ruling of all things.

7. During the Prophet's lifetime, Muslims were ordered not to ask about things so that these may not become forbidden as a result, which would cause them some hardship. As for us now, it is not permissible to do something without enquiring whether it is permissible or not. We must learn matters of religion and get to know what is permissible and what is forbidden so that we do the former and refrain from the latter.

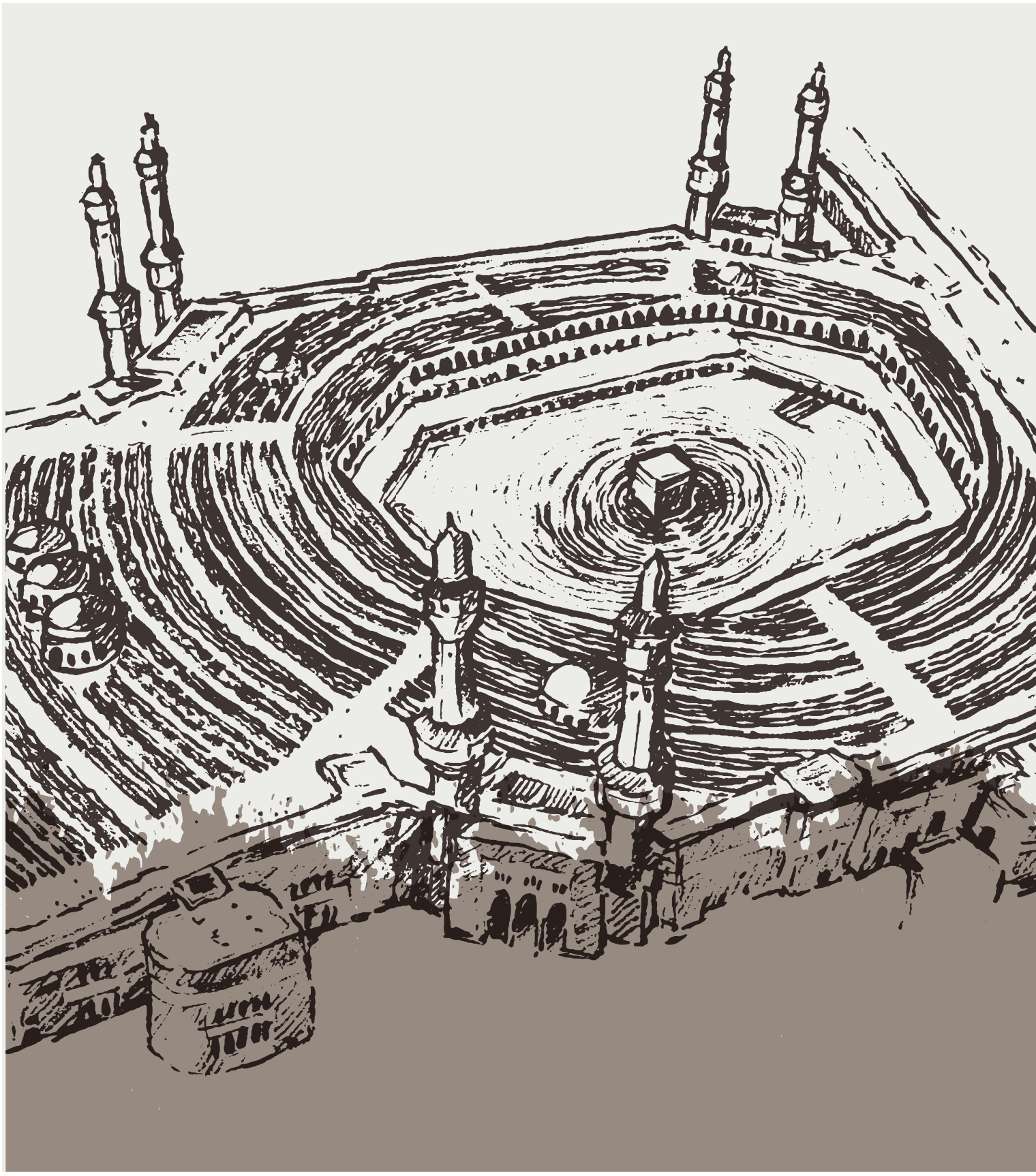
8. Questions that are not acceptable now are those that bring no benefit, or those which lead to negative results or confusion, such as questions about the form and shape of God's attributes and actions, and speaking without knowledge about His names and attributes.

9. It is preferable that an advocate of Islam should explain the reasons for Islamic commandments and prohibitions, if it is easy for him to do so. Such explanation makes it easier for his addressees to implement such orders.

10 The hadith shows that God's servants should fulfil what they are ordered according to their ability. A poor person is not required to give charity, or *ṣadaqah*. A sick person or a traveller need not fast, but may fast later in compensation. A person who does not meet the condition of ability is not required to perform the hajj. What applies to all Muslims is to do what they can in regard to all obligations and duties.

11 Abandoning sinful action takes priority over the fulfilment of duties. We should remember that orders are subject to ability, while prohibitions must be refrained from. Indeed, we must steer away from prohibitions and everything that leads to them.

12 Refraining from sinful actions is not complete unless a Muslim refrains from all aspects of that sin. The prohibition of associating partners with God, i.e. *shirk*, means by implication the prohibition of its means that may not be considered as clear cases of *shirk*, such as swearing by something other than God without considering it superior, or saying 'whatever God and so-and-so will'. All such preliminaries of *shirk* are also prohibited.



67

# Hadith

# RULINGS APPLICABLE DURING THE HAJJ

Jābir narrated:

1 I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) stoning while riding his she-camel on the Day of Sacrifice,

2 and he said: ‘Learn your rituals.

3 I do not know but I may not perform the hajj after this hajj of mine’. [1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Give glory to God during certain appointed days. Those who hasten their departure after two days incur no sin, and those who stay longer incur no sin, provided that they are truly God-fearing. Have fear of God and know well that you shall all be gathered before Him.﴾ (2: 203)
- ﴿He who obeys the Messenger obeys God thereby. As for those who turn away – We have not sent you to be their keeper.﴾ (4: 80)
- ﴿We have now bestowed on you the reminder so that you may elucidate to mankind all that has been bestowed on them, and that they may take thought.﴾ (16: 44)
- ﴿Whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, abstain from it.﴾ (59: 7)

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Abdullāh Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the battles of Badr and Uḥud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffīn alongside ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah during his lifetime. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor of the Prophet’s companions who attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) did the duty of stoning at the grand Jamrah at Aqabah and was riding his she-camel as he did it. He ordered his companions to learn their rituals of pilgrimage from him. He told them that he might not perform the hajj a second time. This was what actually happened.

1 Related by Muslim, 1297.

# Message and Meaning

This hadith states a very important Islamic rule, namely, that what the Prophet did serves as evidence, and that, like his statements, they provide the lead to be followed.

1 Jābir reports that he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) performing the ritual of stoning on the Day of Eid al-Aḍḥā and that he was riding his she-camel at the time. The Prophet wanted his companions to see how he performed the hajj rituals and to show them, at this instance, how he did the stoning, and what he said as he threw each stone. He also wanted them to know that the stoning could be performed on foot or whilst riding.

2 The Prophet (peace be upon him) then ordered us that we should learn the rituals of hajj from him. We should do as he did, ignore what he ignored, and put forward or delay as he did.

The Prophet's actions that are meant as explanatory of religious duties stated in general terms, such as prayer, zakat and hajj, are obligatory to emulate. Hence, he said: 'Pray as you have seen me pray'.[1] Exceptions are only made on the basis of clear evidence.

The Prophet says in this hadith: 'Learn your rituals'. He uses the imperative form, thus he means that whatever he used of words, actions and conditions are parts of the hajj, and that these are the believers' rituals. Learn them from him, practise them and teach them to other people. This hadith is a fundamental principle of the hajj, akin to his order concerning prayer: 'Pray as you have seen me pray'.[2]

3 The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained his order to follow his example saying that he thought that most probably, or perhaps certainly, this would be his only hajj.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was given signs indicating that he was approaching the end of his life. One of these was that on the Day of Arafat, during his hajj, he received Qur'anic revelations saying: 'This day I have perfected your religion for you and have bestowed on you the full measure of My blessings and have chosen Islam as a religion for you'. (5: 3) Another indication was reported by his daughter Fāṭimah when she said that during his last illness: 'He told me that Gabriel used to recite the Qur'an with him once every year, but this year, he did so twice, and I feel that my end is close'.[3] Perhaps he said this on the basis of such information, or he might have been informed by God, Sublime and Exalted, that this would be his only hajj.

Indeed this was the only time the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed the hajj after he migrated from Makkah and after the establishment of the hajj as an Islamic duty. Hence, it is named the Farewell Pilgrimage, because when he said that he might not perform the hajj again, he was bidding farewell to his companions.

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1 Related by al-Bukhari, 6008.

2 Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Vol. 9, p. 45. English edition, Kube Publishing & ICMG, Leicestershire, 2022, Vol. 7, pp. -410 411.

3 Related by al-Bukhari, 3624; Muslim, 2450.

# Implementation

1. Advocates of Islam and educators should perform some acts of worship openly, in front of people, so that they learn from them.

2. Scholars and advocates of Islam must be at the forefront during public occasions, so that people may put their questions to them and learn Islamic rulings.

3. Doing something practically and telling people to do it in the same way may be a better substitute to explaining it verbally.

4. Advocates of Islam should give more attention to immediate practical issues. They may delay what people do not need at present. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mention the details of the hajj rituals until he led the people in performing hajj.

5. Every Muslim should always endeavour to follow what the Prophet said and did. His is the best guidance.

6. Advocates of Islam and educators should encourage their students and audience to learn from them whatever they are teaching them. If they delay doing so, they may have other preoccupations or something different may happen to distract them.

7. It is permissible to predict something that may happen in the future, if such prediction is based on certain preliminaries. However, one must not state this as a certainty, or as someone who knows what will be coming. He should make clear that he is only making an informed suggestion on the basis of interrelated signs, but ultimately, all matters are in God's hand.

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# THE MOST IMPORTANT OF BLESSINGS

‘Ubaydullāh ibn Miḥṣan al-Khaṭmī narrated

that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **Whoever wakes up in the morning feeling secure in his dwelling place, enjoying good personal health, having enough food for the day is like one who has the world at his disposal.**[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿**Those who believe and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing are the ones who will feel secure, as they follow right guidance.**﴾ (6: 82)
- ﴿**God cites the case of a town living in security and ease. Its sustenance comes to it in abundance from all quarters. Yet it was ungrateful for God’s favours. Therefore, God caused it to experience the misery of hunger and fear for what its people used to do.**﴾ (16: 112)
- ﴿**God has promised those of you who believe and do good deeds that, of a certainty, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, in the same way as He caused those who lived before them to accede to it; and that, of a certainty, He will firmly establish for them the religion which He has chosen for them; and that, of a certainty, He will cause their erstwhile state of fear to be replaced by a state of security.**﴾ (24: 55)
- ﴿**Are they, then, not aware that We have set up a secure sanctuary while people are being snatched away from all around them? Will they, then, continue to believe in what is false and to deny God’s blessings?**﴾ (29: 67)

## The Narrator

Abu Salamah ‘Ubaydullāh, or ‘Abdullāh, ibn Miḥṣan al-Khaṭmī belonged to the Anṣār. However, scholars have different views on whether he was a companion of the Prophet or not. Ibn Ḥibbān said that he was. Ibn al-Sakan said that it is reported that he was a companion of the Prophet, while Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said that most scholars confirm that he was.

## Summary

Security, health and available provisions are great blessings, but many people do not appreciate them properly.

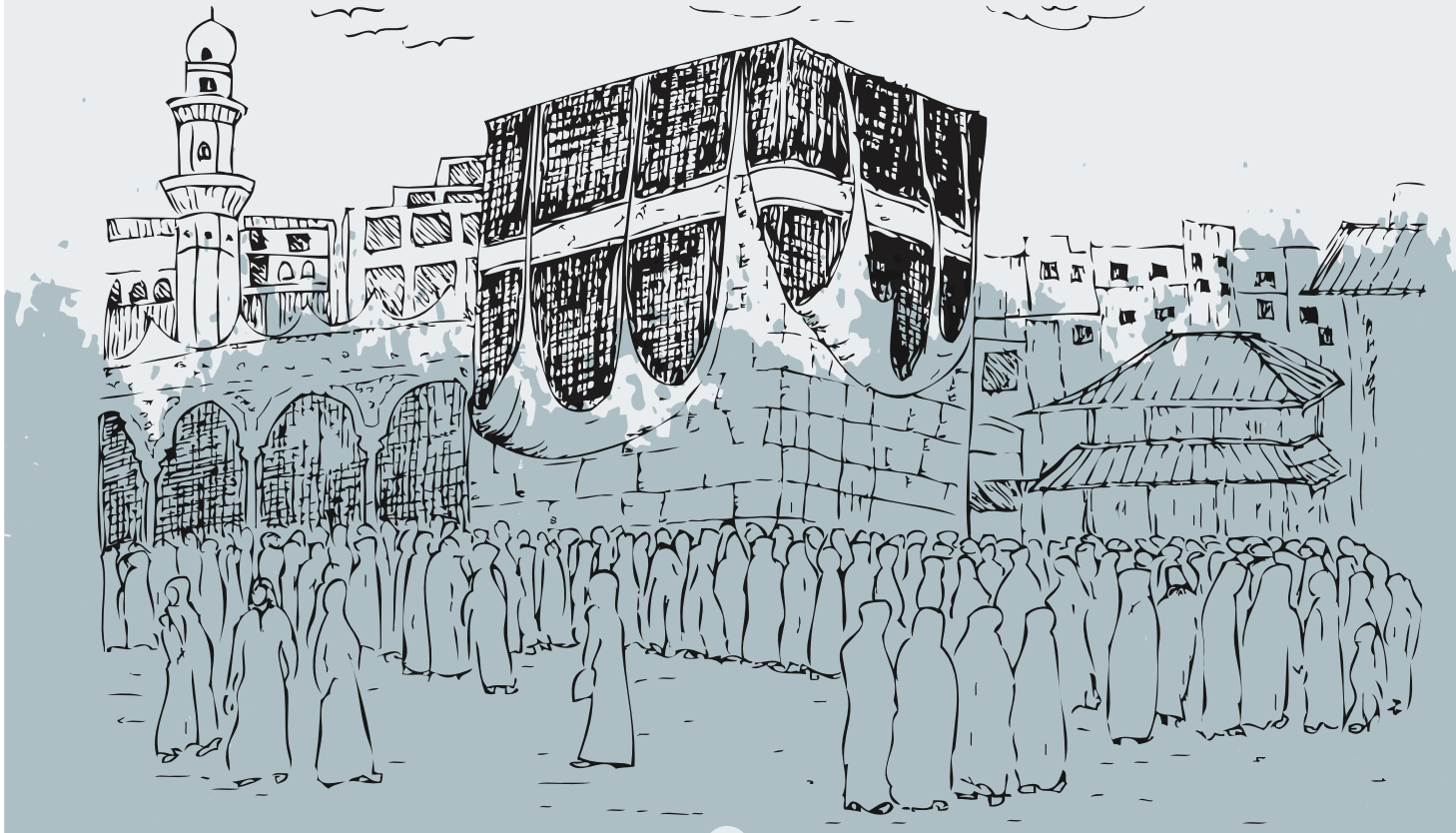
1 Related by al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad, 300; al-Tirmidhī, 2346; Ibn Mājah, 4141.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states that God's bounty is limitless. All of us are enjoying favours bestowed by God, but we do not appreciate their importance and we are not properly thankful for them. In this hadith, the Prophet mentions three such favours: security, health and available provisions.

2. Take the case mentioned in this hadith: a person starts the day feeling in full security personally, at home and in his country. He is reassured, fearing neither enemy, nor illness, nor injustice. He feels robust and in good health, suffering no personal problem that impedes his movement and how he does his work. Furthermore, he has enough food for the day, which means that he has no worry in that area. The Prophet said that he is like a person who has the world at his disposal. What could he desire other than these blessings?

3. God reminds people of these favours which He has bestowed on them. He says: 'Are they, then, not aware that We have set up a secure sanctuary while people are being snatched away from all around them? Will they, then, continue to believe in what is false and to deny God's blessings?' (29: 67) He also says: 'It is He who has provided them with food against hunger, and with security against fear'. (106: 4) God rebukes the unbelievers who deny these favours and He punishes them by withdrawing His favours. He says: 'God cites the case of a town living in security and ease. Its sustenance comes to it in abundance from all quarters. Yet it was ungrateful for God's favours. Therefore, God caused it to experience the misery of hunger and fear for what its people used to do'. (16: 112)



# Implementation

1. Every Muslim should think well of God. He must not forget that his provisions and all his affairs are subject to God's will.

2. When a person enjoys security, he should be very grateful to God for it. When a person is chased, or in fear for his life, or taken captive, his dearest wish is to have a feeling of security.

3. The importance of security as a blessing is reflected in the fact that God promises the believers that He will grant it to them. He says: 'Those who believe and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing are the ones who will feel secure, as they follow right guidance'. (6: 82)

4. Good health is a great favour for which a person should be thankful to God. It is He who has given man the best constitution and granted him health that enables him to do what he needs.

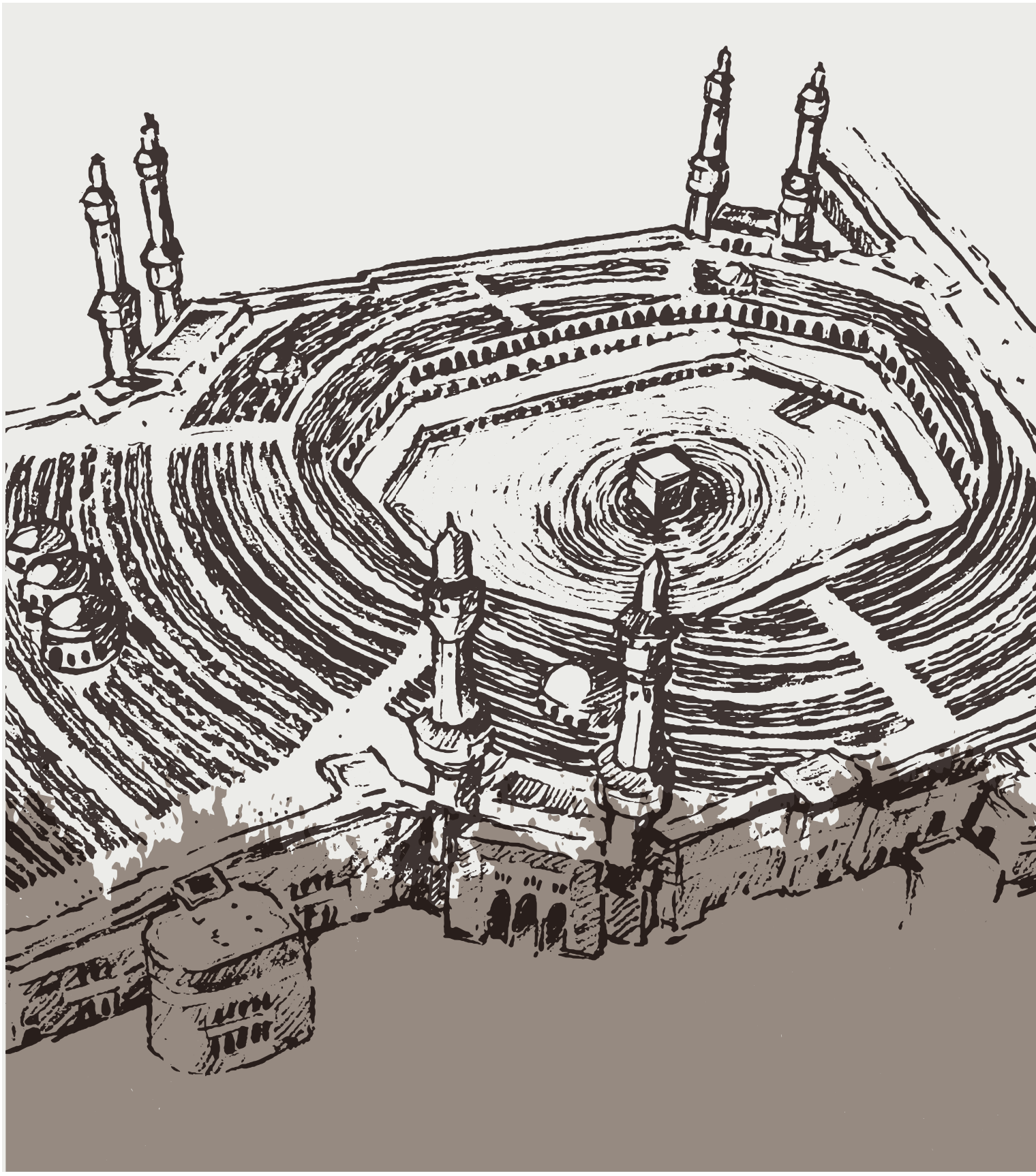
5. The Prophet (peace be upon him) included in his supplication: 'My Lord, keep me healthy in my body; my Lord, keep me healthy in my hearing; my Lord, keep me healthy in my sight. There is no God other than You'. Every Muslim should use this supplication.

6. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Health and spare time are two blessings which many people do not appreciate'. It does not behove a Muslim to think lightly of God's blessings.

7. Every Muslim should thank God for his provisions and be content with what God has given him. Others go hungry and have nothing to eat.

8. Everyone should appreciate God's blessings and favours and should know that he is accountable for how he uses them. Therefore, every Muslim should manifest his gratitude for God's blessings by doing what earns God's pleasure. On the Day of Judgement, God will question everyone about how they used His favours. Those who use them in ways that please God will be safe. Others will be the losers.

9. No one appreciates God's favour of making water available until one is very thirsty. The same applies to all God's favours. We appreciate them when they become unavailable. It behoves every Muslim to always be thankful for God's favours.



69

# Hadith

## TO HAVE FAITH AND TO SEEK A LIVELIHOOD

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

1 **Were you to place your trust in God as truly as it should be, He would have given you your provisions in the same way as birds are provided with theirs;**

2 **They begin the day hungry and finish it well fed.** [1]

### From the Qur’an

- **﴿It is in God that all believers must place their trust. (11) And why should we not place our trust in God, when He has guided us on our paths? Hence we will bear with patience all your persecution. In God alone let all those who trust place their trust.﴾** (14: 11-12)
- **﴿God will be sufficient for everyone who puts his trust in Him. God always attains His purpose. God has set a measure for everything.﴾** (65: 3)
- **﴿When you have resolved about a course of action, put your trust in God. God loves those who put their trust in Him.﴾** (3: 159)

### The Narrator

Abu Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl belonged to the ‘Adiy branch of the Quraysh tribe. His line of descent joins with that of the Prophet at Ka‘b ibn Lu’ay. He was nicknamed al-Fārūq. He was the second of the rightly-guided caliphs, and the first to have the title *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, i.e. Prince of the Faithful. He was constantly very close to the Prophet (peace be upon him). He died in Year 23 AH 645 CE.

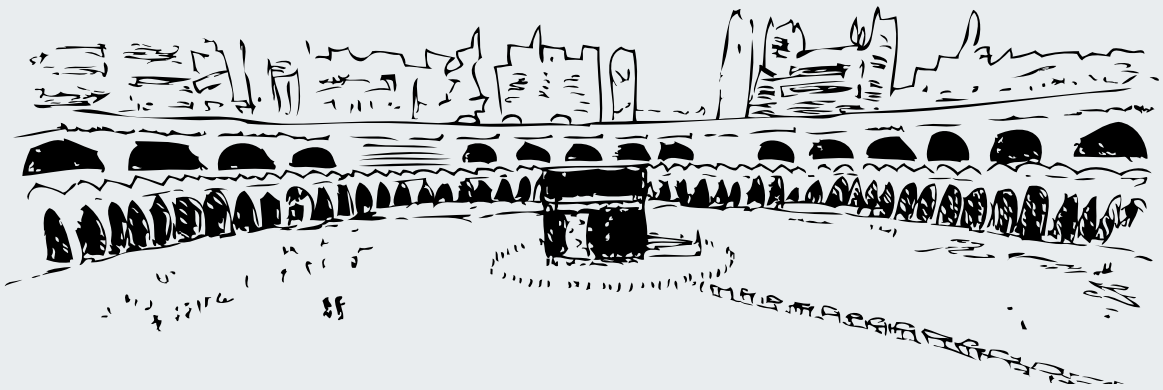
### Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that if we are sincere in our reliance on God, truly observing it as it should be observed, He would have given us our provisions as He gives it to birds: they are hungry in the morning and well fed by the evening.

1 Related by Ahmad, 205; al-Nasā’ī, 11805; al-Tirmidhī, 2344.

# Message and Meaning

1 Reliance on God is an aspect of mental worship that requires placing our trust in God and depending on Him along with taking the necessary measures for whatever we intend to do. The Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that if we do so, God will give us our provisions as he gives theirs to the birds.



2 Birds start hungry in the morning, with their bellies empty, but finish the day with full stomachs. To be in the same position as birds, we need to be true in placing our trust in God and relying on him fully. However, most of us resort to cheating, lying or deception in our transactions, or are complacent, taking no measures, or simply rely on our efforts, thinking that by doing so, we will inevitably get what we need.

True reliance on God requires that man takes the necessary measures and does what should be done, placing his trust in God and knowing that all matters are accomplished by His will and everything is in His hand. It is not right for a person not to take measures to earn his living and instead wait for his sustenance to reach him. This is not the required reliance on God; rather, it is utter laziness and ineptitude. When he went to war, the Prophet (peace be upon him) put on his body armour. When the confederate tribes marched to attack Madinah, he dug a moat to stop their advance. When he migrated, he left his home under the cover of darkness, stayed in hiding in a cave and hired a guide to take him along unfamiliar routes. For every battle, he devised a strategic plan. Yet he was exemplary in his trust in God. It is God's order that reliance on God should be coupled with resolve and taking the necessary measures. God says: 'When you have resolved about a course of action, put your trust in God. God loves those who put their trust in Him'. (3: 159)

# Implementation

1. A Muslim who is worried about his provisions only needs to place his trust in God and be satisfied with what God gives him. He should be absolutely certain that God, his Lord, takes care of him. He must then take the necessary measures.

2. Many are those who frequently say: 'In God I trust', but they are not really relying on God. Such reliance is not a mere word uttered; it rather constitutes true submission to God, acceptance of His will and true belief in Him.

3. A person who truly relies on God is one who is successful in what he intends, protected against Satan's whisperings and temptations. God says: 'Whenever you read the Qur'an, seek refuge with God from Satan, the accursed. (98) He certainly has no power over those who believe and place their trust in their Lord'. (16: 98-99) Whoever hopes that God will protect him from Satan and keep Satan away from him must place his trust fully in God.

4. Whoever likes that God will protect him in all his affairs, and look after him in all matters of this present life and the life to come, should turn to God and hand over his affairs to Him. God says: 'God will be sufficient for everyone who puts his trust in Him'. (65: 3) The Prophet said: 'Whoever says when leaving home, "In the name of God. In God I trust. No power ever operates except by God's will", shall receive the response, "You are spared and protected", and Satan will be removed from his way'.[1]

5. To truly place one's trust in God means that one is happy with whatever God does, and that one fully trusts in God and submits one's affairs to Him. Bishr al-Ḥāfī said that a person may say, 'In God I trust', but he is lying to God. Had he really placed his trust in God, he would have been happy with what God does with him. Yaḥyā ibn Mu'ādh was asked: 'When is a person truly relying on God?' He said: 'When he is satisfied that God is his guardian'.[2]

6. When God wanted to give Mary something to eat as she was giving birth, He commanded her to shake the trunk of a date tree. Can we imagine that a woman going through the pains of childbirth has the strength to shake the trunk of a date tree so that she can obtain some dates to eat? Even if a strong young man were to shake a date tree, he could not hope to receive one date. Mighty and Exalted, God loves that His servant takes the necessary measures and leaves the result to Him.

7. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb met a group of Yemeni people who did not take any measures to achieve their purpose. He asked them who they were. They said: 'We are the ones relying on God'. He said: 'Not really! You are only waiting for things to happen. A person who truly relies on God will plant his seeds and place his trust in God'.[3]

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1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 3426.

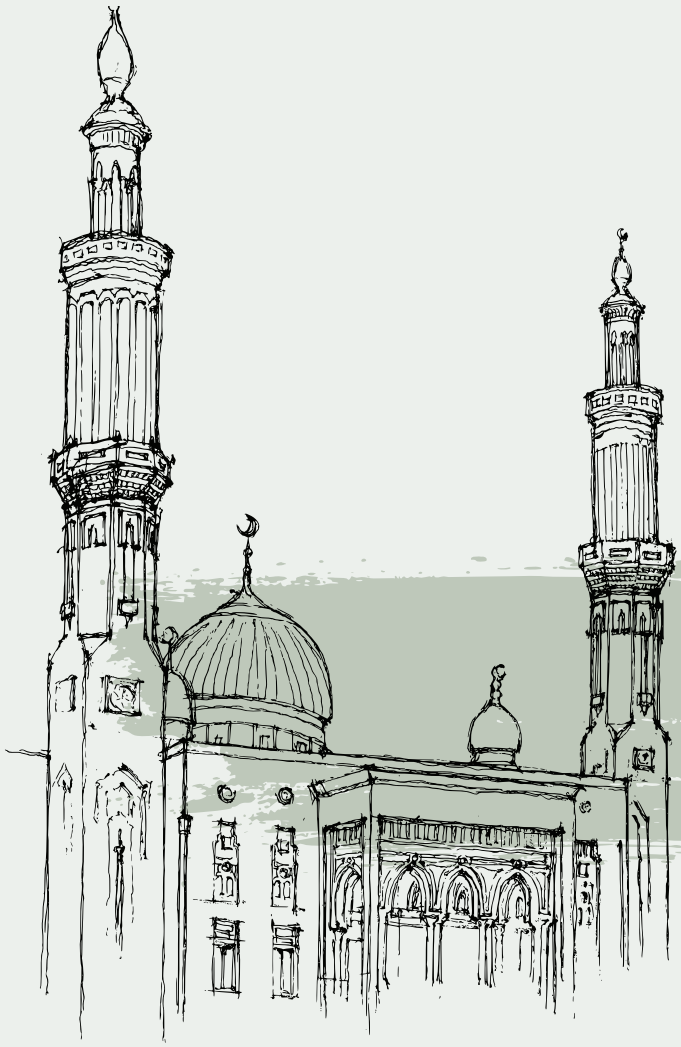
2 Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, Vol. 2, p. 114.

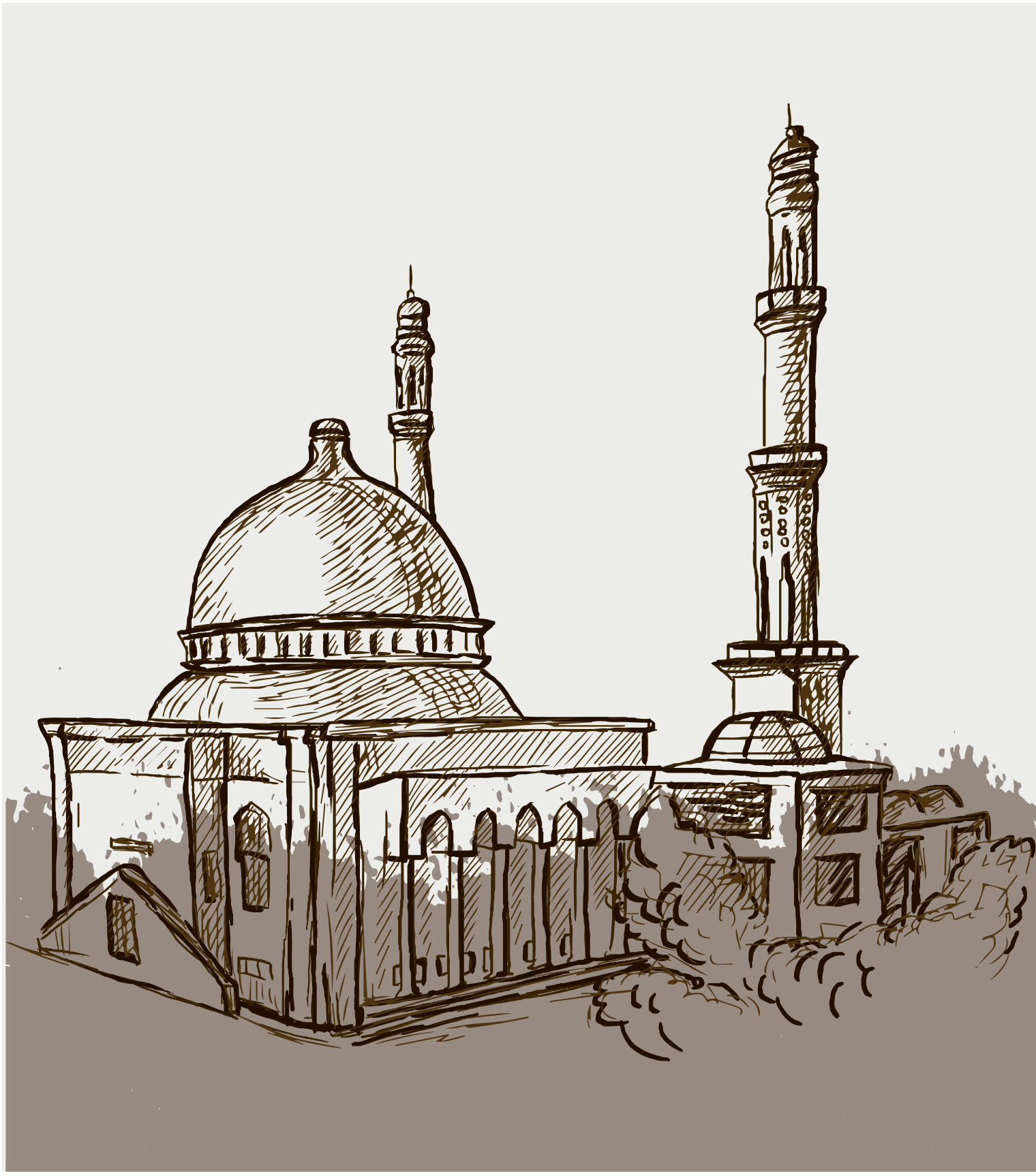
3 Related by al-Bukhari, 1523.

8 Advocates of Islam and educators should always use figures of speech and comparisons that illustrate meanings and drive one's point home.

9 'Abdullāh ibn Sallām and Salmān, who were companions of the Prophet, once met and one of them said to the other: 'If you die before me, come and tell me what God has done to you. If I die before you, I will come and tell you the same'. The other said: 'Do dead people meet with the living?' He said: 'Yes. Their souls are free to roam wherever they wish in Heaven'. When the first of them died, he met the other in his dream and told him: 'Place your trust in God and rejoice. I have seen nothing like placing trust in God. Place your trust in God and rejoice. I have seen nothing like placing trust in God'.

10 Luqmān said to his son: 'Son, the life of this world is a sea in which countless numbers have drowned. If you can make your boat in it your faith in God, its oars your obedience of God, and its sails your trust in God, I hope you will be safe'.





# Hadith 70

# SELLING FORBIDDEN STUFF

Jābir ibn ʻAbdullāh narrated that he heard God's Messenger (peace be upon him) say when in Makkah during the Year of Victory:

1. God and His Messenger have forbidden the sale of wine,
2. carrion,
3. pork
4. and idols.
5. People said: 'Messenger of God, the fat of carrion is used as a coating for boats, varnishing hide and people use it in their lanterns?' The Prophet said: 'No. It is forbidden'.
6. God's Messenger then said: 'May God curse the Jews. When God, Mighty and Exalted, forbade them the fat of carrion, they melted it and sold it, devouring its price'. [1]

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2236; Muslim, 1581.

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Forbidden to you are carrion, blood, the flesh of swine; and that over which any name other than God's has been invoked; and the animal that has been strangled, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, except that which you may have slaughtered when it is still alive; and [forbidden to you are] animals that have been slaughtered on idolatrous altars. And [forbidden also] is the division [of meat] by raffling with arrows; for all this is sinful.﴾ (5: 3)
- ﴿Believers, intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous practices and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Therefore, turn away from them so that you may be successful. (90) Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?﴾ (5: 90-91)
- ﴿Say: In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wishes to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine - for all that is unclean – or a sinful offering over which any name other than God's has been invoked. But if one is driven by necessity, neither intending disobedience nor exceeding his bare need, then know that your Lord is much-forgiving, ever-merciful.﴾ (6: 145)
- ﴿He makes lawful to them the good things of life and forbids them all that is foul.﴾ (7: 157)

## The Narrator

Abu ʻAbdullāh Jābir ibn ʻAbdullāh ibn ʻAmr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. His father took part in the Battles of Badr and Uḥud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffīn alongside ʻAlī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah during his lifetime. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE. Thus, he was the last survivor of the Prophet's companions who attended the second Aqabah pledge of the Anṣār.

## Summary

In this hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentions several things that are forbidden to sell. He makes it clear that when God's forbids the consumption of something, he also forbids its usage and its price, if sold. When he mentioned that carrion is forbidden, his companions asked him about its fat, which may be used in painting and lighting. He told them that this is also forbidden to use. He further mentioned that the Jews incurred God's wrath for their trickery. When God forbade them the use of the fat of dead animals, they melted it down and sold it.

# Message and Meaning

1. God and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have forbidden wine and all intoxicant drinks because they influence one's mind which is the recipient of God's address and the duties given to man. It encourages a person to disobey God and do what is wrong. God says: 'Believers, intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous practices and divining arrows are abominations devised by Satan. Therefore, turn away from them so that you may be successful. (90) Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not, then, desist?' (5: 90-91)

   Since wine is forbidden to drink, its price when sold is also forbidden. Anas said: 'With regard to wine, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed ten types of people: its brewer and the one who requests its brewing; drinker; carrier and the one to whom it is carried; server; seller; the one who takes its price; buyer and the one for whom it is bought'.[1] Abu Ṭalḥah asked the Prophet about orphan children who inherited some wine. The Prophet told him: 'Spill it off'. Abu Ṭalḥah asked: 'May I make it vinegar?' The Prophet said: 'No'.[2]

2. The Prophet also prohibited the selling of animals that die naturally, because carrion is forbidden to eat or use, as God says: 'Forbidden to you is carrion'. (5: 3) The only exception is the use of the hide of animals that are, when alive, pure and permissible to eat, such as sheep, cows, etc. The hide of such animals is usable after it is tanned. Ibn 'Abbās narrated: 'A slave woman belonging to Maymūnah was given a lamb as a *ṣadaqah* [i.e. a charitable gift], but the lamb died. God's Messenger (peace be upon him) passed by and said: "Why do you not take its hide, tan it and make use of it?" They said: "It is carrion". He said: "It is only forbidden to eat"'.

   Another exception is the eating of fish and locusts which die naturally. The Prophet said: 'Two types of dead animals and two types of blood are made lawful to you: the dead ones are fish and locusts; and the two bloods are the liver and spleen'.[3]

3. It is also forbidden to sell pork, because God has forbidden eating it, and ruled that the pig is impure. He says: 'Say: In all that has been revealed to me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wishes to eat thereof, unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine - for all that is unclean – or a sinful offering over which any name other than God's has been invoked. But if one is driven by necessity, neither intending disobedience nor exceeding his bare need, then know that your Lord is much-forgiving, ever-merciful'. (6: 145)

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1295; Ibn Mājah, 3381.
2 Related by Abu Dāwūd, 3675.
3 Related by Ibn Mājah, 3314.

4 Similarly forbidden is the manufacture and sale of idols, whether they are meant for worship or not, because they are considered a means to associating partners with God, i.e. *shirk*. The start of *shirk* and such association in the human world began with the making of idols, although they were not initially made for worship. Moreover, the Prophet said: 'The Last Hour is not due until Daws's women's buttocks sway around Dhul-Khalaṣah'.[1] Dhul-Khalaṣah was an idol worshipped by the Daws tribe in pre-Islamic days.

5 When the Prophet mentioned the prohibition of the sale of carrion or its use, his companions asked him whether its fat may be used for purposes other than food. Could it be used as sealer for boats and hide, or used as lighting oil? The Prophet told them that even such usage is forbidden.

They asked him about such usage of dead animals' fat and selling it because they thought that they were like donkeys. The Prophet forbade eating their meat but they were permissible to sell, ride and be used in other ways. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that the case of carrion was different, because it is impure. Hence, it is forbidden to eat or benefit by. Therefore, its sale is forbidden.

6 The Prophet then curses the Jews for the tricks they employed to circumvent God's law. They were forbidden to eat, use or sell animal fat, as God says: 'To those who followed the Jewish faith did We forbid all animals that have claws; and We forbade them the fat of both oxen and sheep, except that which is in their backs and entrails and what is mixed with their bones'. (6: 146)

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 7116; Muslim, 2906.

# Implementation

1. It is forbidden for a Muslim to sell wine and all types of intoxicating drinks, whether he sells it to a Muslim or to an unbeliever. Its price is forbidden for Muslims to take.

2. Islam attaches great importance to man's mind, as it requires people to think and contemplate on God's creation. Islam also requires people to seek knowledge and forbids them what influences the mind and negatively affects its function, such as alcoholic drinks.

3. The prohibition of selling dead animals includes an embalmed animal carcas, which it is forbidden to buy or sell.

4. Eating pork and all types of pig meat is forbidden. Likewise, it is forbidden to sell it, whether the buyer is a Muslim or an unbeliever, because such a transaction is a collaboration in sin.

5. It is forbidden to own or manufacture idols, as this is a major sin. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Indeed, those who are the most severely punished on the Day of Judgement are the image makers'.[1]

6. The hadith shows that it is necessary to guard against the preliminaries of *shirk*, which means the association of partners with God. During the Prophet's lifetime, a man pledged to sacrifice some camels at Buwānah, which is in the southern part of Makkah. He went to the Prophet and told him that he pledged to give this sacrifice at Buwānah. The Prophet asked: 'Was there a worshipped idol in pre-Islamic days in that area?' People answered in the negative. He asked again: 'Did people celebrate any feast there?' People said that there was not. The Prophet said to the man: 'Then fulfil your pledge. [I asked because] a pledge that involves an element of disobedience of God may not be fulfilled. The same applies to a pledge that the pledger does not have'.

7. The Prophet's companions were not too shy to ask about using dead animal fat in useful ways that do not relate to human consumption. They thought that such animals were merely forbidden to eat. There question was neither unwarranted nor one of objection. They merely asked to learn. Hence, shyness should not prevent one from asking legitimate questions.

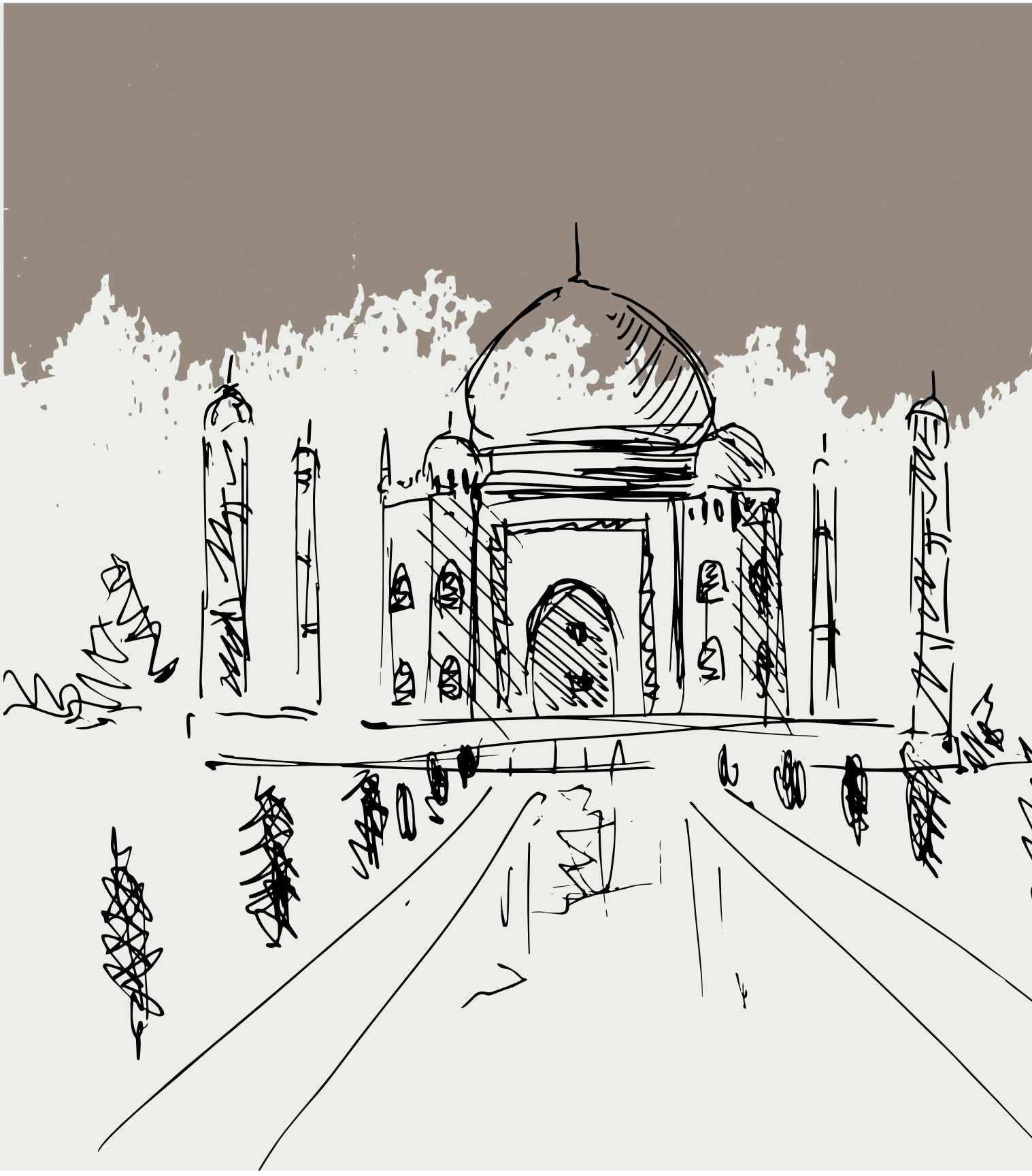
8. Using ways and means to circumvent God's legislation is not a characteristic of believers. God describes the believers in the following terms: 'The response of believers, whenever they are summoned to God and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, is none other than, "We have heard, and we obey". It is they that shall be successful'. (24: 51) Such evasive characteristics belonged to those Jews who incurred God's wrath. We should beware of doing the same.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5950; Muslim, 2109.

9 The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned against emulating what the Jews did of using tricks to circumvent God's law. He said: 'Do not do what the Jews did, so as to legalize what God has forbidden by resorting to stupid tricks'.[1]

10 Those who resorted to tricks in order to do what God has forbidden were severely punished. They profaned the Sabbath when fishing was forbidden. They placed their fishing nets in the sea on Friday and left them on the Sabbath, so as to collect them up on Sunday. God transformed them into apes. Anyone who thinks of using a trick to break God's law should beware of God's punishment.

1 Related by Ibn Baṭṭah al-'Ukburī in *Ibṭāl al-Ḥiyal*, p. 47.



71

# Hadith

# PROHIBITION OF CHEATING

Abu Hurayrah narrated that

1 As he was passing by, God's Messenger (peace be upon him) saw a heap of food [on sale]. He put his hand into it and felt that it was wet underneath.

2 He said: 'O food seller, what is this?' The man said: 'Messenger of God, it has been affected by rain'.

3 The Prophet said: 'Would it not be better for you to put it on top so that people can see it?

4 Whoever cheats does not belong to me.[1]

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, eat of the wholesome things We have provided for you, and give thanks to God, if it is truly Him that you worship.﴾ (2: 172)
- ﴿Do not devour one another's property wrongfully, nor bribe with it the judges in order that you may sinfully, and knowingly, deprive others of any part of what is rightfully theirs.﴾ (2: 188)

## The Narrator

Abu Hurayrah whose name according to the best reports was 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr belonged to the Daws tribe, a branch of the Azd from Yemen. He embraced Islam in Year 7 AH, when the Battle of Khaybar took place. He always remained close to the Prophet and was keen to learn. He memorized numerous hadiths and was the leading narrator of hadiths among the Prophet's companions. He died in Madinah in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) checked the goods of a shopkeeper and found that the product was wet underneath. He told him that this was not permissible, and that cheating was forbidden in all cases.

1 Related by Muslim, 102.

# Message and Meaning

1. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) went about into the market, inspecting people's conditions and looking at how they conducted their business, he noticed one shopkeeper selling some articles of food. He made a heap which looked attractive and beautiful. The Prophet placed his hand into the heap and noted that underneath the surface, the food was wet, which meant that the quality of the food was suspect. The seller had covered it up so that buyers would not notice.

2. The Prophet asked the shopkeeper with clear disapproval why he had placed the wet portions underneath those that were dry, leading people to think that the whole quantity was dry. The man told the Prophet that it was rain that had made it wet.

3. The Prophet told the man that he should place the wet portion clearly visible, so that people could see it. Honesty in business is an essential requirement. The Prophet says: 'On the Day of Judgement, business people are resurrected as clear sinners, except those who are God-fearing, righteous and truthful'.[1]

4. The Prophet then states a general rule, saying that a cheating person abandons the Prophet's Sunnah. Scheming, deception and cheating are characteristics of liars and hypocrites. The Prophet and his followers do not adopt such characteristics.

   The Prophet's statement does not mean that a cheating person is not a Muslim. The hadith means that his behaviour is contrary to Islam and that his sin incurs God's wrath and punishment, because he takes the money of his brother by deception, giving him an ill-feeling of dismay. This leads to the weakening of bonds within the community.

   This general rule is not limited to trade but applies to all transactions. It includes a ruler's cheating of his people, caring little for their interests and using his position to serve his own personal ambitions. The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: 'If God places a servant of His in charge of some people and he cheats his subjects to the day of his death, God shall forbid him entry to Heaven'.[2] It also includes cheating in religion, which is the worst and most serious type of cheating. This refers to scholars suppressing what God commands them to make known and explain, or to their twisting meanings in order to gain posts or wealth. This is referred to in the Qur'an, as it says: 'Believers, some of the rabbis and monks wrongfully devour people's property and turn people away from God's path'. (9: 34)

1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 1210; Ibn Mājah, 2146.
2 Related by al-Bukhari, 7150; Muslim, 227.

# Implementation

1. Advocates of Islam and young scholars should visit the marketplaces and look for unlawful practices, giving advice to people and reminding them of the need to always be God-fearing.

2. In the early generations of Islam, it was the tradition of the Prophet, his companions and the *tābi'īn* that a market controller was appointed. He would go on a round of inspection so as to ensure that everything was done properly. It is useful that governments should revive this tradition in order to organize trade and protect people's rights.

3. The Prophet (peace be upon him) first asked the shopkeeper about the wetness of his goods, without accusing him of any wrongdoing. He considered that the shopkeeper might not have been aware of it. It is important to ascertain what is going on, rather than judge things by appearances.

4. Vendors must inspect their goods periodically so as to make sure that they remain of good quality.

5. A Muslim must be truthful in buying, selling and all other transactions. He must ensure that his earnings are legitimate. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'Whatever flesh grows through wrongful earnings is only suited for the Fire'.[1]

6. Every Muslim must beware of cheating in business, because it leads to loss. Whatever earning are made through it will be devoid of blessing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'The two parties to a sale deal have the option to cancel until they have parted. If they are truthful and explain things, their deal is blessed, but if they lie and suppress information, the blessing of their deal is obliterated'.

7. Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh used to sell goods. He would tell the buyer of any defect in the article he was buying and give him the choice to buy or not. Some people said to him that if he continued to do so, he would sell nothing. He said: We have pledged to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that we will give sincere advice to every Muslim.[2]

8. Every Muslim should make sure that whatever he eats or drinks is lawful. Good deeds are unacceptable if they are coupled with devouring what is unlawful. Wahb ibn al-Ward said: 'Were you to stand in the mosque as long as this pillar, nothing will benefit you unless you check whether what goes into your belly is lawful or unlawful'.[3]

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1 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 612.

2 Related by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, 2510. Quoted by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, Mutammim al-Ṣaḥābah*, p. 803.

3 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 263.

9 Whoever cheats and devours what is forbidden should realize that the fate of every person shall not be determined on the Day of Judgement until he has been asked about four things. One of these is how he earned his money.

10 How will a cheating person who takes people's money unlawfully hope that his supplication be answered? The Prophet (peace be upon him) 'mentioned the case of a man who goes on a long travel, uncouth with dust on his body. He raises his hands to the sky and says, 'My Lord! My Lord!' Yet, his food is unlawfully earned; his drink is unlawfully earned; his clothes are unlawfully earned; and he was fed, when young, with what was unlawfully earned. How can such supplication be answered?'[1]

11 It may be better to state the hadiths that mention 'does not belong to me', or 'does not belong to us' without adding any explanation. They are more effective as a deterrent for people.

12 Ibn 'Abbās said: 'A person will continue to have the right view as long as he is sincere in his advice to others. Once he starts to cheat in his advice, God will deprive him of sound judgement'.[2]

1 Related by Muslim, 1015.

2 Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah*, p. 211.

# 72 Hadith

# PROHIBITION OF USURY

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh narrated:

1. God’s Messenger (peace be upon him) cursed
2. the one who devours usury,
3. the one who pays it,
4. the one who writes [the agreement]
5. and the two witnesses.
6. He said: ‘They are all the same’.[1]

## From the Qur’an

- ﴿Those who gorge themselves on usury cannot rise up except as he may rise up whom Satan has confounded with his touch. That is because they say, ‘Trade is just the same as usury’, whereas God has made trade lawful and usury forbidden. He who receives an admonition from his Lord, and thereupon desists [from usury] may retain his past gains, and it will be for God to judge him. Those who revert to the practice [of usury] are indeed the inmates of the Fire, wherein they shall abide. (275) God blots out usury and causes charitable offerings to grow and increase. God does not love confirmed unbelievers who persist in wrongdoing.﴾ (2: 275-276)
- ﴿Believers, fear God and give up what remains outstanding of usury gains, if you are true believers. (278) If you do not, then war is declared against you by God and His Messenger. If you repent, however, you shall remain entitled to your principal. Thus, you shall commit no wrong, nor suffer any wrong yourselves.﴾ (2: 278-279)
- ﴿Believers, do not gorge yourselves on usury, doubling [your money] again and again. Have fear of God, so that you may prosper. (130) Guard yourselves against the Fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers; (131) and obey God and the Messenger, that you may be graced with mercy.﴾ (3: 130-132)
- ﴿Help one another in furthering righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in furthering evil and aggression.﴾ (5: 2)

## The Narrator

Abu ‘Abdullāh Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥarām al-Anṣārī belonged to the Salimah clan of the Anṣār. He attended the second pledge given by the Anṣār to the Prophet at Aqabah. He was a youth at the time, accompanying his father who was one of the twelve representatives. He was the last to die of those who witnessed the Anṣār’s second pledge to the Prophet at ‘Aqabah. His father took part in the Battles of Badr and Uḥud. It is reported that Jābir took part in the Battle of Ṣiffīn alongside ‘Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib. He was the mufti of Madinah in his life. He died in Year 78 AH, 698 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet cursed usury: whoever takes it or gives it, and the one who writes its contract or acts as a witness. The Prophet further says that they all incur the same sin.

1 Related by Muslim, 1598.

# Message and Meaning

1. The Prophet (peace be upon him) states in this hadith that God, Mighty and Exalted, expels a number of people who take part in the same offence, denying them His mercy.

2. In this hadith, the Prophet begins by stating that the curse, which means expulsion from God's mercy, applies to the one who devours usury. This refers to a person who takes people's money in usurious transactions, regardless of how he spends the usurious gain.

   Usury refers to the excess one party takes according to a contract for an exchange of money, with nothing in return for such increase. For example, one party, whether an individual or an institution, lends the other a sum of money on condition that the borrower will repay the same amount and an agreed sum in excess. Alternatively, they may stipulate that delaying repayment beyond a particular date incurs a fine. A similar case is to have a bond that matures on a certain date, giving the holder, say, 1,200, while he paid only 1,000 for it. Usurious transactions take several other forms, and these may use different names for the excess being paid by one party, such as interest, late payment fine, etc.

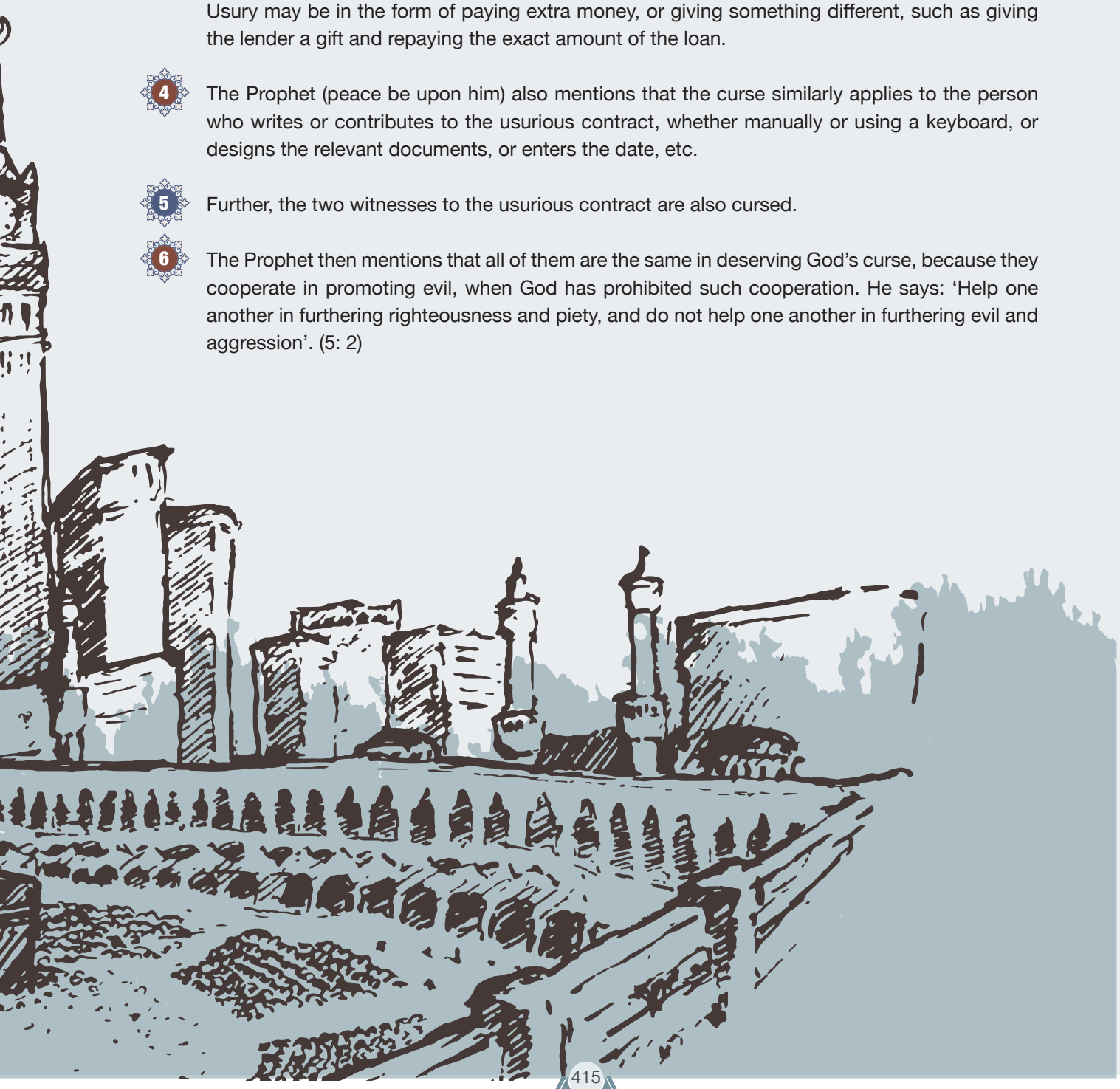
3. The curse also applies to the party who gives the usurious increase. This is the party who undertakes to pay the excess in return for the later repayment. This party is cursed for helping the other party receive such a gain. In most cases, the transaction is not absolutely necessary for people. It is mostly for improvement or comfort.

   Usury may be in the form of paying extra money, or giving something different, such as giving the lender a gift and repaying the exact amount of the loan.

4. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also mentions that the curse similarly applies to the person who writes or contributes to the usurious contract, whether manually or using a keyboard, or designs the relevant documents, or enters the date, etc.

5. Further, the two witnesses to the usurious contract are also cursed.

6. The Prophet then mentions that all of them are the same in deserving God's curse, because they cooperate in promoting evil, when God has prohibited such cooperation. He says: 'Help one another in furthering righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in furthering evil and aggression'. (5: 2)



# Implementation

1. Every one of us is in need of God's mercy, and every one prays to God to bestow mercy on him and his family. Therefore, when we learn that God curses something or the one who does it, we should steer away from it, because such curse means expulsion from God's mercy.

2. Some people may be dissatisfied with what God has given them. A person may feel unhappy when his supplication remains unanswered. He wonders why God's mercy has been slow coming. He should look within himself, because he may have done something, deliberately or unwittingly, which incurs God's curse.

3. A person may take things lightly and become involved in usury when it is a grave sin that has grave financial consequences, in addition to ruining a person's present and future life. It is important for every Muslim to turn a deaf ear to anyone who tempts him to share in a usurious transaction, whether such temptation comes from a friend who is a businessman, or a financial report, or a colourful advertisement. God removes all blessings from the usurer's assets. He says: 'God blots out usury and causes charitable offerings to grow and increase. God does not love confirmed unbelievers who persist in wrongdoing'. (2: 276)

4. Usury is clearly forbidden and whoever takes part in it is cursed. It is not permissible to take part in any usurious contract, even if the borrower says that he is certain of repaying the loan on time, without incurring any usurious increase. The very writing of the usurious contract is forbidden and the curse applies to the parties and the writer.

5. Lawful earnings are the ones a Muslim seeks, knowing that taking unlawful gains will deprive him of having his prayers answered. The Prophet ‘mentioned the case of a man who goes on a long journey, uncouth with dust on his body. He raises his hands to the sky and says, "My Lord! My Lord!" Yet, his food is unlawfully earned; his drink is unlawfully earned; his clothes are unlawfully earned; and he was fed, when young, with what was unlawfully earned. How can such supplication be answered?'[1]

6. Early Muslims were eager to ensure that their food was legitimately earned. They warned people against feeding on unlawful earnings. Wahb ibn al-Ward said: 'Were a person to spend all his time worshipping in the mosque, like one of its pillars, nothing will benefit him unless he looks at what goes into his belly and whether it is lawfully earned'.[2] Imam Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal was asked: 'What softens people's hearts?' He thought for a short while then lifted his head and said: 'Making sure that their earnings are lawful'.[3]

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1 Related by Muslim, 1015.

2 Ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wal-Ḥikam*, Vol. 1, p. 263.

3 Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Ahmad*, p. 269.

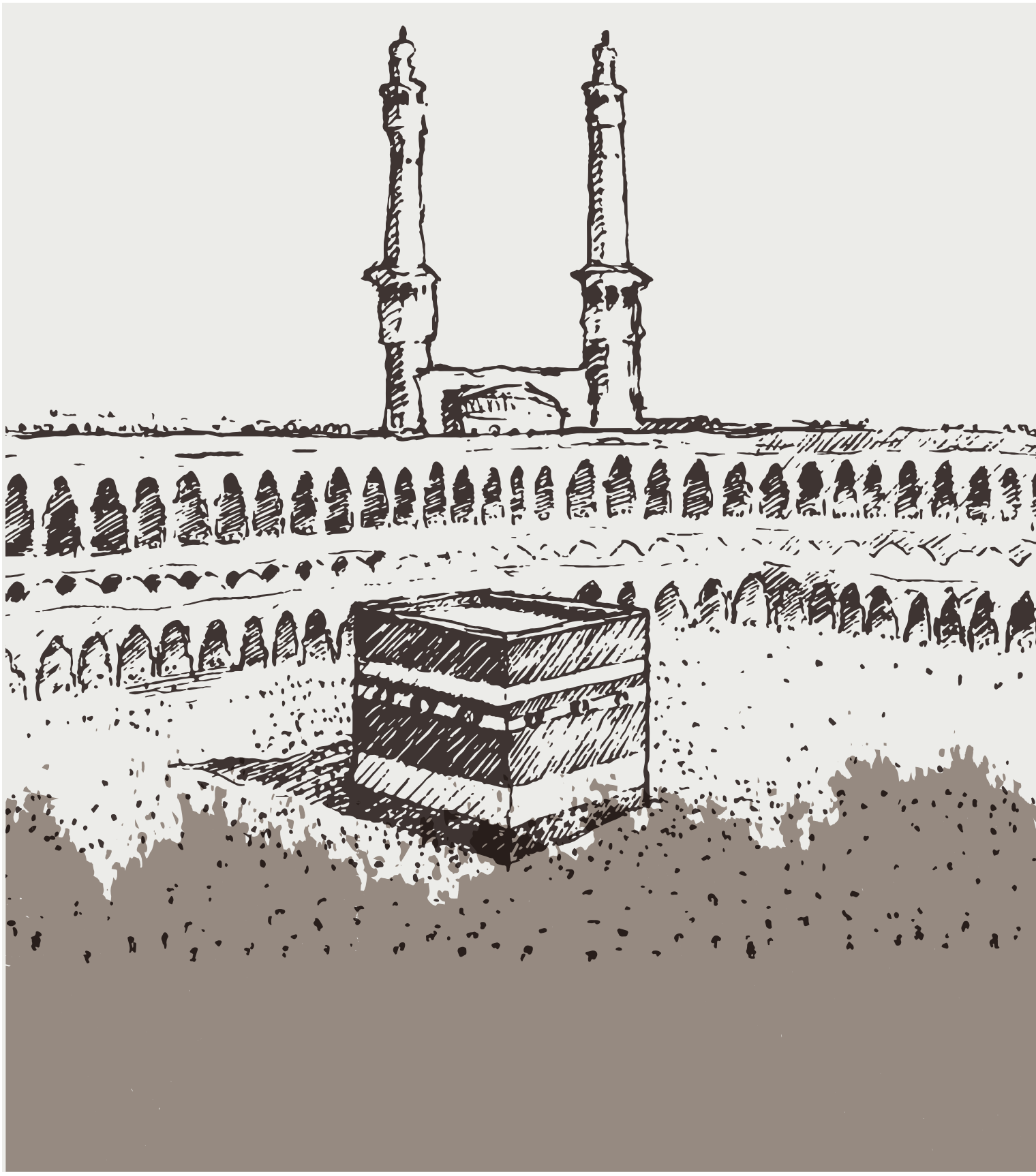
7 The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'I saw in my dream last night two men who came to me and took me to a blessed land. We went through it until we reached a river of blood in which there was a man standing. At the middle of the river there was another man with a heap of stones in front of him. The man in the river came across trying to get out, but the other man threw a stone at his mouth and caused him to go back to where he was. Every time the man in the river tried to get out, the other threw a stone at his mouth and he went back to where he was. I asked what the matter was. I was told that the man in the river was the one who devoured usury'.[1]

8 When God forbids something, He also forbids taking its price, helping in it, as well as witnessing it without objecting to it. Every Muslim should make sure not to help in anything forbidden, particularly taking people's money unlawfully.

9 A person who deals usuriously and wants to repent and stop should return the usurious gains to the people who paid them. He should only take what he legitimately claims. To return unlawful gains is a condition for accepting one's repentance.

10 A Muslim who knows someone who deals usuriously should advise him that he must desist and repent. He then should stop dealing with him, even though his own transactions involve no usury. However, if that person is the only one who sells certain items, it is permissible to buy from him as long as one ensures that the deal itself is in line with Islamic teachings. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had some commercial deals with Jews, although they were confirmed usurers.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 2085.



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Hadith

# PROHIBITION OF UNCLARITY IN SALES

Abu Hurayrah narrated, saying:

1 God's Messenger (peace be upon him) prohibited the sale effected by the casting of a stone

2 and the sale lacking clarity. (1)

## From the Qur'an

- ﴿Believers, do not devour each other's wealth illegally, unless it be through trade which you conduct by mutual consent. Do not kill yourselves, for God is merciful to you.﴾ (4: 29)
- ﴿Give full measure, and be not of those who give others less [than their due], (181) and weigh with even scales, (182) and do not deprive others of what rightfully belongs to them, and do not act wickedly on earth spreading corruption.﴾ (26: 181-183)

## The Narrator

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣakhr al-Dawsī al-Azdī of Yemen was better known by his appellation, Abu Hurayrah. This is what is best known about his name and his father's name. He embraced Islam in the year in which the Battle of Khaybar took place, i.e. Year 7 of the Hijri calendar. He remained close to the Prophet, eager to learn, and accompanied the Prophet wherever he went. He was one of the best memorizers of the Prophet's companions and the one who narrated the largest number of hadiths. Al-Bukhari mentioned that more than eight hundred companions of the Prophet or those who belonged to the *tābi'īn* generation narrated hadiths from him. 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb appointed him as Governor of Bahrain. Later he returned to Madinah and devoted his time to narrating the Prophet's hadiths and educating people about their faith. He died in Year 58 AH, 678 CE.

## Summary

The Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibited certain sales that may involve cheating or ignorance of one of the two elements of sale, i.e. the goods or the price. One of these prohibited sales used to be that the buyer would cast a stone, and if it fell on an article, he must buy it. Other prohibited sales involved some ignorance which made the sale contract flawed. For example, buying something placed in a bag, and where its contents are unknown to the buyer.

1 Related by Muslim, 1513.

# Message and Meaning

Buying and selling are essential to human life. In fact, life cannot prosper without such transactions. Therefore, Islam states certain rules to organize this activity. The starting point is that sales are permissible, but they become unlawful when they are wrongly done, such as sales that lack clarity or those that involve usury.

1 One such prohibited sale is that involving the use of a stone, which used to be practised in pre-Islamic days. It took different forms, one of which was such that the seller said to the buyer: 'I sell you a portion of this land, extending from here to where this stone will fall'. He then cast the stone. Another form was that whereby the seller gave the buyer the choice to go ahead or withdraw, up to the moment when the stone fell from the buyer's hand. Yet another type was to throw a small stone at a flock of sheep, and the buyer must buy the one the stone hit. A different form was that the seller would take a handful of pebbles and say to the buyer: for each pebble I charge you one dirham. There were other forms of such sales, but all of them relied on ignorance. As such, they constituted unlawful earnings, and were forbidden.

2 Islam also forbids sales that are unclear. This includes every type of sale that involves what is unknown, or cannot be delivered to the buyer, such as selling fish before it is caught, or selling an unborn animal, or selling milk which is still in the animal's udder. All such sales lack clarity and, as such, are forbidden. It is not possible to estimate the number or the weight of the fish to be caught, or whether any will be caught. Likewise, the unborn animal may be stillborn or deformed, and the volume of the milk in the udder is unknown, and it may be of low quality. Sales involving the casting of a stone come under lack of clarity, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) specified it because it was commonly used in pre-Islamic days.

However, Islam permits some sales that involve a minor aspect of unclarity, if there is need for it. If neither buyer nor seller has such need, the sale is not permissible. Nor is the sale permissible if it involves a major aspect of unclarity, even though the two parties agree to it. Examples of approved sales with minor unclarity are to sell a pregnant sheep, or a female sheep with the milk in its udder or to buy one drink of water, because people differ in the quantity of their drinks. Since the unclarity in such sales is minor and people are in need of them, Islam allows them.

# Implementation

1. A Muslim who sells goods must learn which sales are permissible and which are not, so that he does not commit a sin or take people's money unlawfully.

2. Under the stone casting sale we may nowadays include some unlawful games, such as those involving casting a coin or a ring on a particular object. If the object is hit, the person wins it, if not he loses whatever he has paid for the coin or the ring.

3. If you are a trader, make sure that your transactions, whether purchase or sale, are consistent with Islamic rules. The merchandise and the price must be known, and if it is a term sale, the term must be specified.

4. Selling is permissible, but it becomes unlawful if any one of three elements is involved: 1) the merchandise is unlawful to sell, such as pork, wine, carrion, etc. 2) unclarity of either the merchandise, or the price, or the inability to give possession of it; or 3) it is a usurious transaction. Make sure that what you buy or sell has none of these three elements attached.

5. One form of sales lacking clarity that have become common nowadays is the purchase of something without seeing or examining it to make sure of its quality.

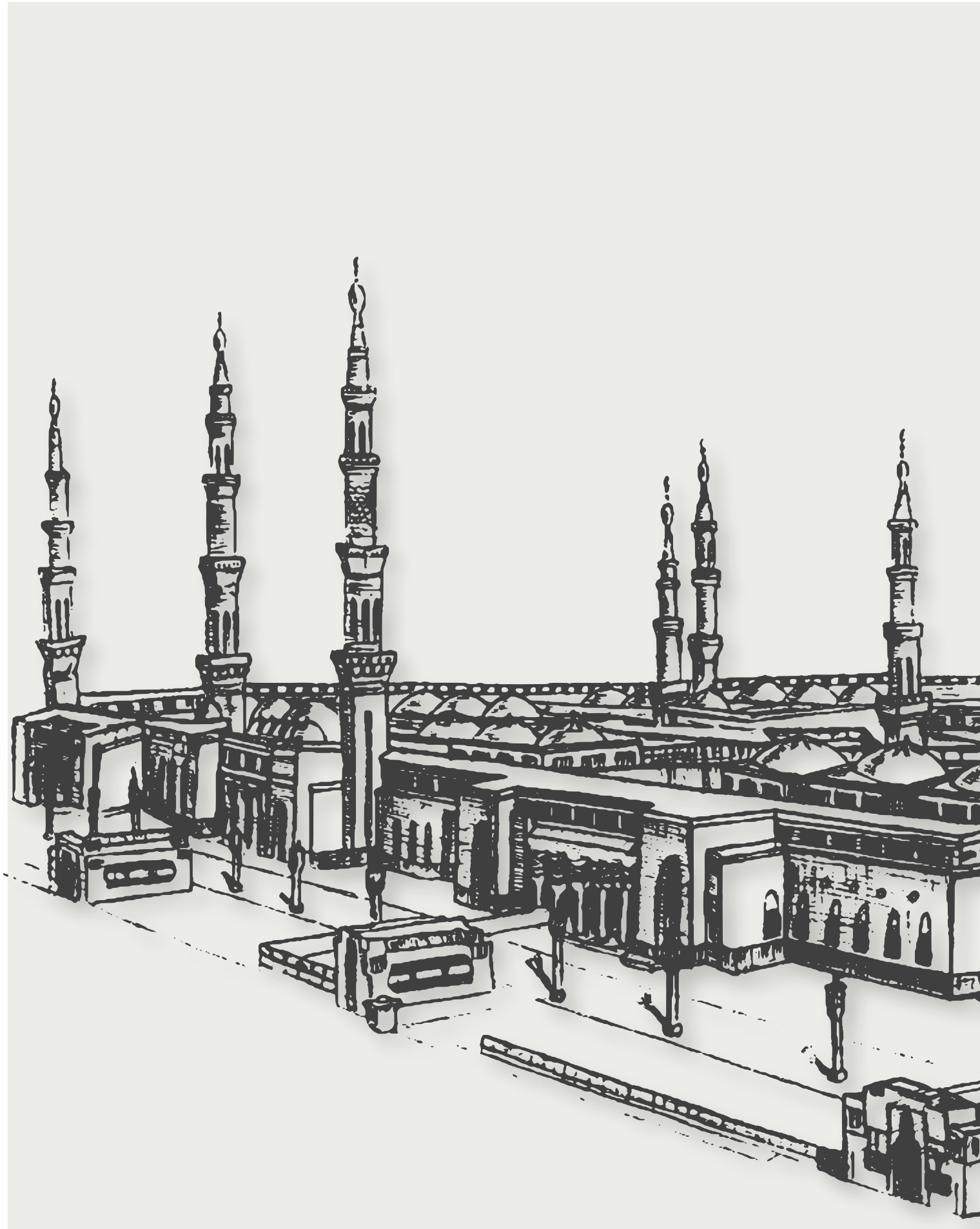
6. Another form of unclear sales is to buy what is unknown, such as buying an unspecified article of clothing. It happens when one sees a number of such articles and buys one without selecting it. He is required to take whatever is assigned to him in a random selection.

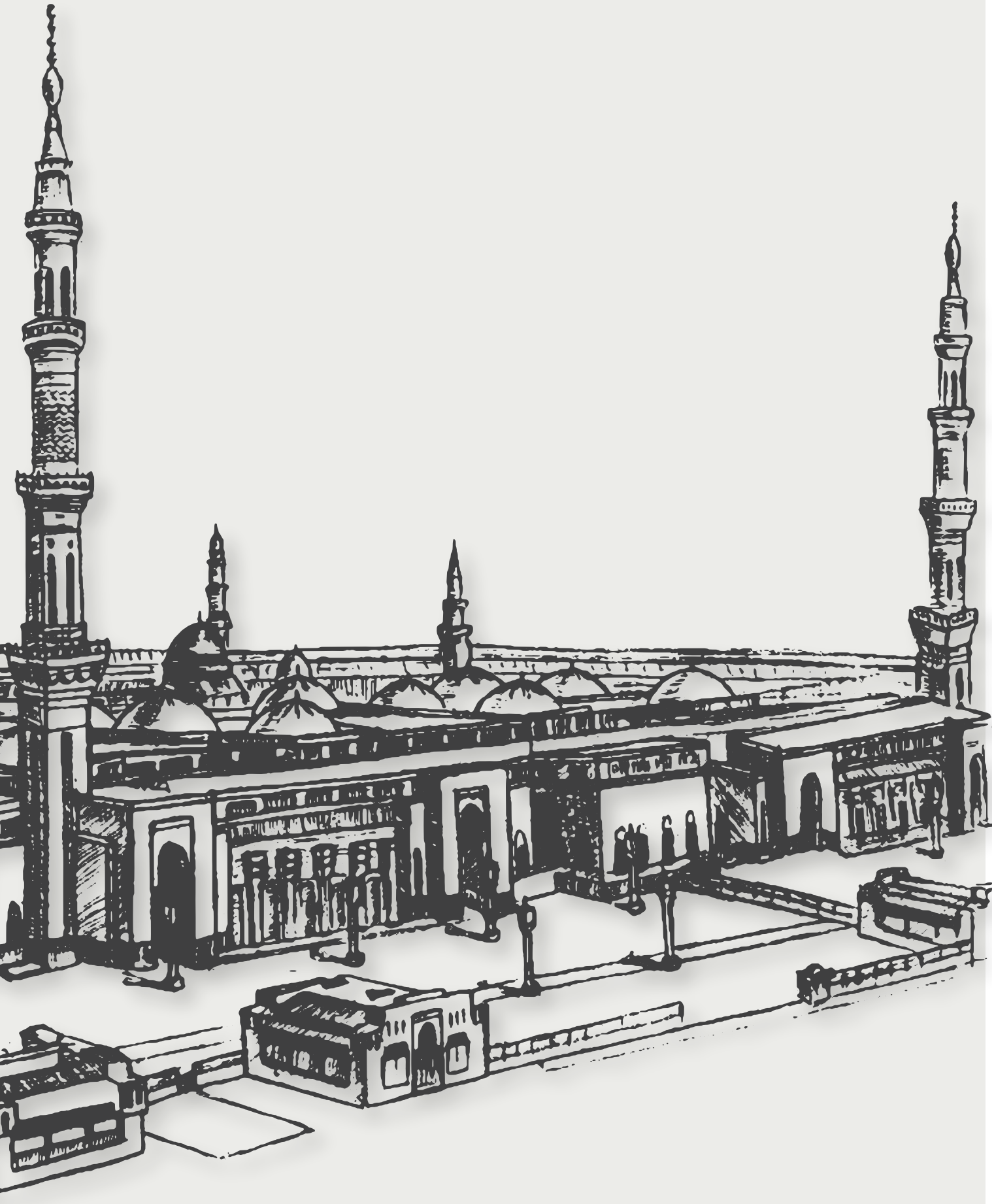
7. A very common type of unclear sales at the present time is the purchase of unknown gift boxes. The buyer gives a specified price for a gift box without knowing what it contains.

8. Children are tempted to buy what is called lucky dip which are said to give them gifts. They get a bag without knowing what it contains. It may not contain anything. This is again a forbidden sale as it lacks clarity.

9. One of the clearest and most common forms of sale that lacks clarity is that a farmer sells the yield of his farm for an agreed number of years to come.

10. Some people habitually deal unfairly with their customers. They do not hesitate to take money unlawfully, offering unsound justification. They overlook the fact that God is fully aware of what they do and that everyone will ultimately be given what they deserve.





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