Sharh Arba'een an Nawawî

COMMENTARY OF FORTY HADITHS OF AN NAWAWI

By

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Commentaries on Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith

The collection of Forty Hadith by al-Imam al-Nawawi (or Imam Nawawi) has been known, accepted and appreciated by Muslim scholars for the last seven centuries.

Its significance lay in the fact that these selected forty hadiths comprise the main essential and fundamental concepts of Islam which, in turn, construct the minimum level of required revealed knowledge for every single Muslim. Since having good knowledge of the various fundamental aspects of the religion is key to a Muslim's practice and application of Islam, this web site attempts to provide simple and practical commentaries to the collection of Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith.

Various principles are contained in these hadiths, such as belief, Muslim ethics and *fiqh*. As such, it is very important to have a good understanding of these hadiths based on scholarly interpretations. In addition, these commentaries also try to offer discussions on related contemporary issues pertaining to certain concepts mentioned in these hadiths.

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imam nawawi

Imam Nawawi had a very short life but during this short period, he had written a large number of books on different subjects. Every work has been recognized as a valuable treasure of knowledge. Among them are: -

- *Riyad al-Salihin*
- *Sharh Sahih Muslim*
- *Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud*
- *Kitab-ur-Raudah*
- *Tahdhib-ul-Asma was-Sifat*
- *Arba'een*
- *Mukhtasar At-Tirmidhi*
- *Tabaqat Ash Shafi'iyah*
- *Muhimmatul-Ahkam*
- *al-Adhkar*
- *al-Tibyan fi adab hamalat al-Qur'an*
- *al-Irshad wa'l-Taqrib fi 'Ulum al-Hadith*
- *al-Minhaj*

His *Sharh Sahih Muslim* is a standard text book for the study of Hadith while his *al-Minhaj* is used for the study of Fiqh.

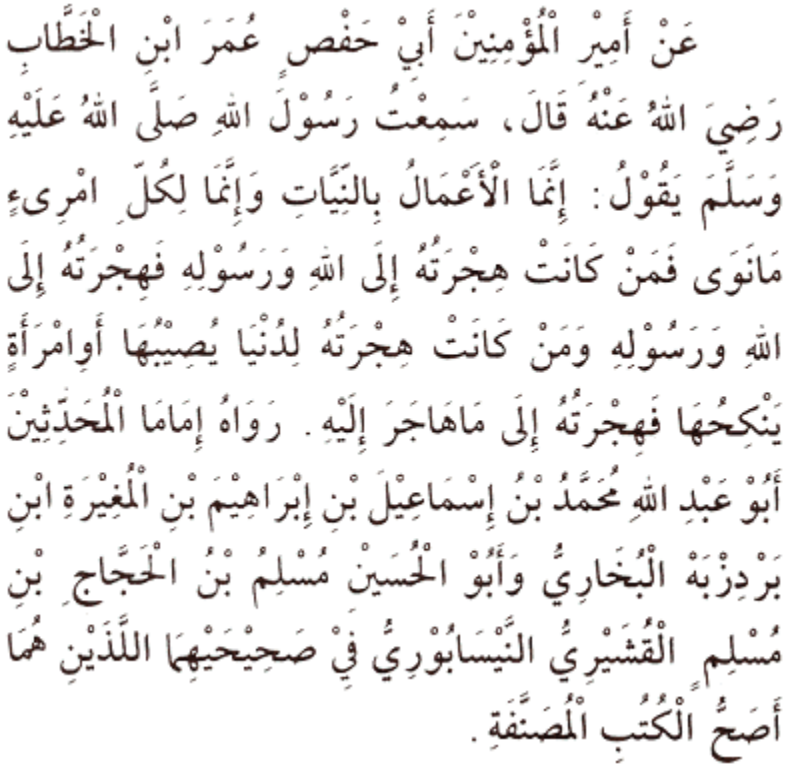
Imam Muhyi al-Din Abu Zakariya Yahya bin Sharaf al-Nawawi, for short Imam Nawawi, was born in the village of Nawa in the vicinity of Damascus in 631 A.H. (1233 A.D.). He grew up in Nawa and at the age of nineteen went to study in Damascus which was considered the center of learning and scholarship.

During his stay at Damascus, Imam Nawawi studied from more than twenty celebrated teachers, regarded as masters and authorities of their fields and disciplines. He studied Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence and principles, syntax and Etymology from great scholars such as Abu Ibrahim Ishaq bin Ahmad AI-Maghribi, Abu Muhammad Abdur-Rahman bin Ibrahim Al-Fazari, Radiyuddin Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Abu Hafs Umar bin Mudar Al-Mudari, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim bin Isa Al-Muradi, Abul-Baqa Khalid bin Yusuf An-Nablusi, and Abul-Abbas Ahmad bin Salim Al-Misri.

Imam Nawawi had endless thirst for knowledge. He used to read twelve lessons daily and wrote commentaries on every lesson. Whatever books he read, he would write marginal notes and explanations on each book. His intelligence, hard work, love, devotion and absorption in his studies amazed his teachers and they became fond of him and began to praise and admire him. Allah had also conferred upon him the gift of fast memorisation and depth of thought. Imam Nawawi made full benefit of his God given qualities and potentialities and earned the highest degree of honor.

Imam Nawawi led a life of singular piety, righteousness and simplicity. After over 20 years, he returned to his hometown. Soon after his arrival at Nawa, he fell ill and died in 676 A.H. (1278 AD).

Hadiths 1


عَنْ أَمِيْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ أَبِيْ حَفْصٍ عُمَرَ ابْنِ الْخَطَّابِ
رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِىءٍ
مَانَوَى فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى
اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ لِدُنْيَا يُصِيْبُهَا أَوِامْرَأَةٍ
يَنْكِحُهَا فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَاهَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ. رَوَاهُ إِمَامَا الْمُحَدِّثِيْنَ
أَبُوْ عَبْدِ اللهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ بْنِ الْمُغِيْرَةِ ابْنِ
بَرْدِزْبَهْ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَأَبُوْ الْحُسَيْنِ مُسْلِمُ بْنُ الْحَجَّاجِ بْنِ
مُسْلِمٍ الْقُشَيْرِيُّ النَّيْسَابُوْرِيُّ فِيْ صَحِيْحَيْهِمَا اللَّذَيْنِ هُمَا
أَصَحُّ الْكُتُبِ الْمُصَنَّفَةِ.

It is narrated on the authority of Amirul Mu'minin, Abu Hafs 'Umar bin al-Khattab, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"Actions are (judged) by motives *(niyyah)*, so each man will have what he intended. Thus, he whose migration *(hijrah)* was to Allah and His Messenger, his migration is to Allah and His Messenger; but he whose migration was for some worldly thing he might gain, or for a wife he might marry, his migration is to that for which he migrated."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* was said by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, at the time when a man emigrated from Makkah to Madinah during the Hijrah for the sake of marrying someone and not for the sake of Islam.

It is considered to be one of the greatest *hadiths* in Islam.

Al-Imam al-Shafie said: This Hadith is one third of the knowledge of Islam; related to about 70 topics of Fiqh.

Al-Imam Ahmad (with reference to al-Imam al-Shafie's statement) said: Islam is based on three fundamentals (all are among the 40 *hadiths*):

i. Hadith 1: which is stated above.
ii. Hadith 5: "Whosoever introduces into this affair of ours (i.e. Islam) something that does not belong to it, it is to be rejected."
iii. Hadith 6: "Truly, what is lawful is evident, and what is unlawful is evident, and in between the two are matters which are doubtful which many people do not know…"

These three *hadiths* are agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

These *hadiths* can be seen as three criteria to help Muslims evaluate and judge what they do and say "as an *ibadah*" in their daily life:

i. Hadith 1 - To evaluate and judge our internal actions (actions of the heart).
ii. Hadith 5 - To evaluate and judge our external actions (actions of the limbs).
iii. Hadith 6 - To evaluate and judge our dealings *"mu'amalat"* (interaction between people).

Niyyah (intention) has two meanings:

i. The intention before an *ibadah* (e.g. prayer)
ii. The willingness

The second meaning (ii.) is what is meant in this *hadith*.

Lessons

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, starts the *hadith* with the principle ("Actions are judged by intentions") and then gives three examples. This is the methodology of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. The examples help illustrate the principle so that it is easier for people to understand and they can apply the principle to other similar situations.

The three examples consist of one of good intention (migration for the sake of Allah and His Messenger) and two of bad intentions (migration for the sake of worldly gains or for marriage).

This *hadith* emphasises ***ikhlas*** (sincerity - to be truthful and honest to Allah alone, performing an act solely for Allah's sake whereby no other witness except Allah is sought). *Ikhlas* is one of the conditions of accepting good deeds. The other condition is that the actions must be done in accordance with the Shariah as it will be explained in the fifth *hadith*.

This can be seen in the *shahadah* :

- "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah" is the *ikhlas* - ensuring that we do things for the sake of Allah and Allah alone.
- "I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah" - the Sunnah is the manifestation of the Quran - the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is our example, our best model to follow. Following his Sunnah in our *ibadah*, *Akhlaq* (ethics), and *Muamalat* (dealings) ensures that we are acting in accordance with the Shariah.

Thus, the *shahadah* shows us the conditions for accepting a deed or performing an action: (a) it should be for the sake of Allah because He is the only One we worship, and (b) it should be in accordance with the Shariah.

To achieve *ikhlas*, we have to avoid *shirk* (associating others with Allah, which causes insincerity). Al-Imam al-Harawi said the root cause for insincerity (or *shirk*) is self-desire *(al-hawa)*. Therefore no action should be done because of self-desire.

Imam al-Harawi states that there are 7 types of self-desires:-

i. To make oneself appear good in the hearts of others
ii. To seek the praises of others
iii. To avoid being blamed by others
iv. To seek the glorification of others
v. To seek the wealth/money of others
vi. To seek the services or love of others
vii. To seek the help of others for oneself

Ways to obtain *ikhlas*:

- Do righteous deeds - the more good deeds we do and hence get closer to Allah, the more sincere we will be.
- Before we do any deed we should firstly seek knowledge *(ilm)* - our actions/deeds should be guided by knowledge so that we do them in accordance to the Shariah.
- Do not give false impressions - do not make others believe that an action we did was good when it was not.
- Al-Imam Ahmad said: Before you do anything, check your intention *(niyyah)* - ask yourself before performing an action: "Is it for the sake of Allah?"

Ibnu al-Qayyim says: Any action we do is subject to three defects:

i. Being conscious that others are observing our actions
ii. Seeking a return (benefit/reward) for the action
iii. Being satisfied with the action

Examples:

- If we go to the *masjid* for the *salah* and we are early, arriving before the Imam and finding a place in the first *saff*, we should not be proud of ourselves and think of ourselves being better than others. We should praise Allah for enabling us to go to the *masjid* and for being able to perform the *salah* without any difficulties.
- After every *salah*, we should tell ourselves that we could have performed it better and try to improve in our next *salah*.

What happens if we were to change our *niyyah* while performing an action? Ibn Rajab says according to the *ulama'* if the *niyyah* at the end of the action matches the beginning (i.e. doing the action for the sake of Allah), then any changes in the middle of the action will be forgiven or does not matter, insha Allah. However, if the *niyyah* at the end does not match the beginning, i.e. we do the action for other than the sake of Allah, then we must repent *(taubah)*.

There are four things that contradict *ikhlas*:

i. *Ma'siat* - committing sins - this will weaken our *ikhlas*
ii. *Shirk* - associating others with Allah
iii. *Riya'* - performing an *ibadah* with the intention of showing off to others
iv. *Nifaq* - hypocrisy

Even though we must always make sure that our actions do not deviate from *ikhlas*, there are actions, which are automatically considered that of good intentions. For example, seeking knowledge in Islam, helping the community, doing *da'wah*, etc.

Some rulings *(ahkam)* which scholars derived from this *hadith*:

- When people 'swear by Allah' by saying "Wallahi" every now and then, their intention is not that they actually swear by Allah. They say it simply out of habit - it readily rolls off

their tongue. Hence, it is harmless. However a Muslim should do his/her best to minimize it.

- When someone is asked to give an oath, what is judged is his intention when he gives the oath.
- There can be a combination of intentions between performing an *ibadah* and teaching others - we perform an *ibadah* for the sake of Allah, but we also do it with the intention of teaching others. e.g. when the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed the Hajj, he did it for the sake of Allah as well as for teaching the Sahabah (his companions, may Allah be pleased with them all).
- A man may go through the process of divorcing his wife, verbally or in court, but it is his intention which counts.
- What could be seen as *ghibah* (backbiting - talking bad, but true, things about a person behind his back) could simply be a joke or a *dua*. If someone talks bad about someone else, it is his intentions, which determines whether it is *ghibah* or not.

Conclusion

Our actions are undermined by our intentions - whether they are good intentions or bad intentions. Therefore we should always check our intentions before we do or say anything. We must make sure that the action is for the sake of Allah so that it is accepted by Allah and that we will be rewarded for it, *insha Allah*.

Hadith 2

عَنْ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضًا قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ جُلُوْسٌ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيْدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيْدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعَرِ لَايُرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرُ السَّفَرِ وَلَايَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخِذَيْهِ وَقَالَ: يَامُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اَلْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَاإِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ، وَتُقِيْمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُوْمَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيْلًا. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ فَعَجِبْنَالَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنِ الْإِيْمَانِ، قَالَ: أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ، قَالَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ، قَالَ: مَاالْمَسْؤُوْلُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنْ أَمَارَاتِهَا، قَالَ: أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأَمَةُ رَبَّتَهَا وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحُفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ يَتَطَاوَلُوْنَ فِيْ الْبُنْيَانِ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَاعُمَرُ أَتَدْرِيْ مَنِ السَّائِلُ؟ قُلْتُ: اَللهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ: فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيْلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Also on the authority of 'Umar, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said:

"While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him.

He sat down close by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, rested his knee against his thighs, and said, O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam." Said the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, "Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform *salah* (ritual prayer), pay the *zakah*, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it)." Said he (the man), "You have spoken truly."

We were astonished at his thus questioning him and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, "Inform me about iman (faith)." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate *(qadar)*, both in its good and in its evil aspects." He said, "You have spoken truly."

Then he (the man) said, "Inform me about Ihsan." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, " It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet He sees you." He said, "Inform me about the Hour." He (the Messenger of Allah) said, "About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner." So he said, "Well, inform me about the signs thereof (i.e. of its coming)." Said he, "They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings." Thereupon the man went off.

I waited a while, and then he (the Messenger of Allah) said, "O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion.""

[Muslim]

Background

Al-Imam Muslim says: Towards the end of his life, Abdullah bin 'Umar (the son of 'Umar bin al-Khattab) was told by two people that a new Islamic sect had emerged from Iraq. They were called Al-Qadariah and they denied *al-qadar* (fate). Thus Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated this *hadith* which mentions *qadar* as one of the pillars of Iman to refute the misconception of this sect.

Lessons

This *hadith* teaches the *adab* (ethics) of seeking knowledge:

- We should be clean and wear clean clothes.
- We should sit properly and closer to the speaker.
- Asking questions for better understanding.
- Seek knowledge from the right source/authority.

The method of seeking knowledge is through asking questions:

- The type of questions we ask should be meaningful - questions that will lead to valuable knowledge and good action.
- Asking good questions will result in better learning as well as teaching. Those who are present when the questions are asked will also learn from the answers - thus, the questioner is teaching the others.
- When Ibn Abbas, one of the greatest Scholars among the Sahabahs, was asked how he obtained all his knowledge, he replied: "with an inquisitive tongue (i.e. he always asked questions) and a contemplating heart".
- In many *hadiths* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, himself will start by asking questions before he imparts with knowledge. Asking questions will prepare the mind/heart so that it will be ready for the answers/knowledge - ready to absorb and learn. In this hadith he calls Jibril "the questioner" which implies full appreciation and encouragement of asking questions specially the ones that will lead to gaining more knowledge.
- In the Quran itself there are more than 1,200 questions - to serve different purposes - to provoke the mind of the reader and force it to indulge in thinking about what he/she reads.

Scholars say that qadar can be seen at two levels:

i. We believe that Allah knew, with His ultimate knowledge, what all His creations will do, even before the creations took place. Allah recorded all this knowledge in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - the preserved tablet.
ii. We believe that it is the will of Allah that these things will take place, whether they are good or bad.

Allah created our willingness and our ability of doing things - we can only do something if we are willing and able to do it. However, we are responsible for the choices we make.

Misconceptions about Qadar

Many Muslims believe that what they are going to do is **caused** by what has already been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - they confuse 'causation' with 'association'. In truth what we have is association, not causation. What we do is not caused by what is written by Allah. Allah with His ultimate knowledge knew what we are going to do. He could easily have put the good-doers into Jannah and the evil-doers into the Hellfire. But Allah is Adil (Just) so He created us in this life as to test us which way to go. What we are going to do will match what has already been written but it's not a matter of causation - what we do is out of our own willingness and ability and we do have full responsibility on whatever choice we make.

Looking at guidance and misguidance, guidance *(hidayah)* is a gift *(rahmah)* from Allah. It is Allah who created us and gave us the mind so we can distinguish between right and wrong to a certain capacity. It is Allah who equipped us with ***fitrah*** to like the truth and good and to dislike the wrong and evil It is Allah who gave us the ability and power to do things and it is Allah who sent the Messenger with the Message to guide us in things, which are beyond the reach of our conception. So when it comes to guidance it is a bounty from Allah.

But when it comes to misguidance, it has to do with us. When we do bad deeds, it is from our own willingness and ability.

Those who turn away from guidance do so because they want to turn away, i.e. they choose not to be guided. They have been misguided because they are arrogant - they refuse to listen.

> And so when they swerved from the right way, Allah let their hearts swerve from the truth.
> [Surah As-Saff (61): ayat 5]

Nevertheless there are people who have not received the Message of Islam/guidance at all or the Message has not reached them in the clearest form, i.e. it is incomplete or distorted. These people are called Ahlul Fatrah and will be excused and not be punished, even though there are misguided.

There are certain situations where we can do something about our *qadar*. For example:

- Illness/sickness is *qadar* - but we have been commanded by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to look for a cure should we become ill. Finding a cure is also *qadar*. Thus, a *qadar* could be dealt with through another *qadar*.

- If something unfortunate happens to us, e.g. if we lost our job, we don't just say that it's *qadar* and do nothing about it. We look for another job, the consequence of which is another *qadar*.

'Umar bin al-Khattab was traveling with a group of Sahabahs during his Khilafah (leadership). They were coming to a town when they heard that it had a contagious/infectious disease, i.e. cholera. 'Umar asked his group whether they should proceed or go back (to Madinah). The majority of the Sahabahs said they should go back but some said they should proceed. Then one Sahabi said he knew a *hadith* where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said, "If you hear that this disease exists in a country, don't travel to that country." So 'Umar decided that they should go back. Another Sahabi (it seems from the second group) asked him whether he was running away from a *qadar*. 'Umar replied that they were moving away from one *qadar* to another *qadar*.

Thus, whenever there is a problem, a challenge or any hardship which we can remove, overcome, solve or minimize, it is a must that we do so. Some scholars like al-Imam al-Jilani use the term: "overcoming *qadar*" in this regard.

In one *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Be keen for whatever is beneficial for you. Seek the help of Allah. And don't be reckless." This *hadith* implies we must make the effort. **The right concept of *qadar* is: we are responsible for whatever we do.**

For example: If we were to drive recklessly and caused an accident where someone died or was injured, we cannot simply say that it is *qadar*, abusing the concept to justify our mistakes. It is *qadar* that the incident took place because it is by the permission of Allah. But we are responsible for the death because it is through our willingness and ability that it happened. That's why in the courts we will be found guilty. If *qadar* can be used as an excuse, then many crimes will go unpunished - a thief can simply claim that his stealing was *qadar*!

Those who abuse the concept of *qadar* are those who fail to be responsible. They abuse it to justify their failure. The correct way of using *qadar* as an excuse is: if someone exerts himself to do his best to fulfil an obligation but due to an unavoidable circumstance, which was out of his control, he could not achieve that obligation - then he might be excused. For example, a student has studied hard for an exam but on the day of the exam he falls sick and does poorly or cannot even attend the exam, then he can say that it is *qadar* and that it is the will of Allah.

When it comes to religious obligations, the matter is the same. We cannot blame *qadar* for committing sins or failing to do a *wajib* as some Muslims might do. We have to know that we are responsible. We might get into a weak status of Iman in doing a sin or delaying a *wajib*. Islam is such a practical religion that it gives us room for repentance and getting back to the right path.

In the above *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, defines Al-Islam, i.e. the five pillars, as the outward actions of the limbs, Al-Iman as being associated with belief - the inner actions of

the heart, and Al-Ihsan as the highest level to attain. But the first two definitions can be interchanged with each other - sometimes Islam can be used to describe internal actions and Iman can mean external actions. There are a few *hadiths* which The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions that there are more than seventy actions which are considered as Iman.

If the term Islam is used on its own, it means the whole thing - Al-Islam, Al-Iman and Al-Ihsan. Similarly, when Iman is used on its own it means Al-Iman, Al-Islam and Al-Ihsan. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions at the end of this *hadith* that the *deen* consists of these three things.

If the Iman is weak it will affect Al-Islam (good deeds/actions). According to al-Imam Abu Hanifa: Even though Al-Iman and Al-Islam are different, Al-Iman necessitates the actions (Al-Islam).

Some Scholars say the Muslims are considered strangers among the Disbelievers; and the Mua'minin are considered strangers among the Muslims; and the Muhsinin are considered strangers among the Mua'minin.

Al-Ihsan (the highest level of Iman where we worship Allah as if we see Him or if we don't see Him we know He sees us) is about fearing Allah and glorifying Him. This will lead us to strive for our best in performing our *ibadah* - we will be more sincere in our *ibadah*. Thus Al-Ihsan is also about the best actions of the heart. The actions that will lead to Al-Ihsan: to love Allah the most, to fear Allah the most, to seek the help of Allah, to have hope in Allah that He will give us mercy and guide us, to trust Allah wholly.

When Jibril, *aliyyhi as-Salam*, asks the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, about the Hour (the Day of Judgement), the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, replies that neither he nor Jibril knows the answer. This is an example set by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, where even someone with vast knowledge like himself does not know everything and admits so.

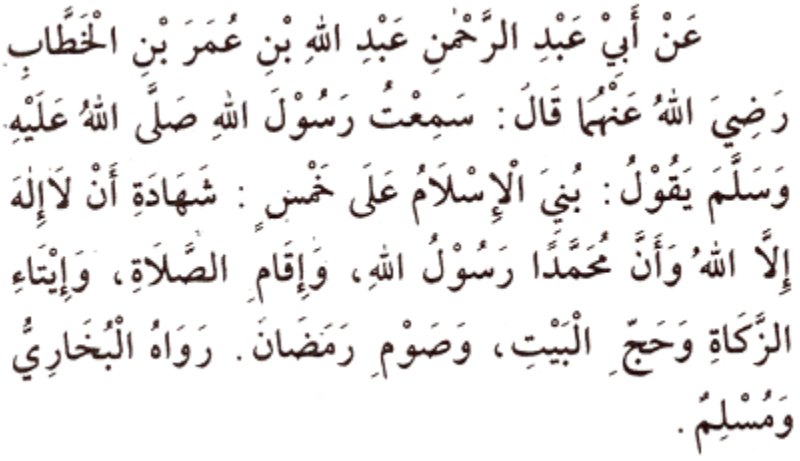
Al-Imam Malik was asked forty questions by someone and to most of them he answered "I don't know - Allah knows better". The man was surprised that the great Imam Malik didn't know the answers. Seeing the man surprised, Imam Malik told him that when he goes back to his town, to tell the people that he met and asked al-Imam Malik questions and Imam Malik said he didn't know the answers. Al-Imam Malik didn't want to be accountable for giving wrong answers. Thus, if we are to become an educator or a scholar, we should have the courage to admit what we do not know. We should not give an answer which may contain incorrect information.

The signs of Akhirah mentioned in this *hadith* are minor signs, as opposed to major ones. We believe in these signs but we should not worry about them too much - we should not worry about when these signs will occur. We should actually be careful as some of these signs are bad deeds and we must steer away from these bad deeds.

Conclusion

This *hadith* contains everything about Islam: the five pillars of Islam, the beliefs that make up Iman (including the belief of fate or *qadar*), the attainment of the highest level of Iman which is Ihsan, the *adab* of seeking knowledge and of teaching.

Hadith 3


عَنْ أَبِيْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ
رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَاإِلٰهَ
إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيْتَاءِ
الزَّكَاةِ وَحَجِّ الْبَيْتِ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ
وَمُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abdullah bin 'Umar bin al-Khattab, *radiyallahu 'anhuma*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"Islam has been built upon five things - on testifying that there is no god save Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger; on performing *salah*; on giving the *zakah*; on Hajj to the House; and on fasting during Ramadhan."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* is part of the previous **Hadith** (2). Most Scholars say that the reason why al-Imam al-Nawawi included this *hadith* in his collection, even though it seems that it repeats some portions of **Hadith** 2, is because of the importance of the 5 pillars of Islam.

This Hadith stresses the fundamental aspects of the outward submission to Allah. This submission is based on some pillars, similar to a structure. If a person fulfills these aspects, he has laid a solid foundation for his *deen* as a 'home'.

The other acts of Islam, which are not mentioned in this *hadith*, can be taken as fine touches to complete this structure.

If a person fails to fulfill these obligations (building the pillars), then the entire structure of his *deen/iman* may be threatened. This depends on how much is being violated - e.g. violation of the *shahadah* is the most dangerous.

Lessons

The use of metaphors and similes

This *hadith* uses a metaphor (i.e. the image of the structure of a building) to affirm certain important meanings. This use of metaphors and similes can be found in many Surahs in the Quran and in many other *hadiths*. For example:

- In Surah At-Taubah (9): ayat 109, a similar metaphor is used - the structure of the Mua'min's deen/iman is based on a sound foundation, whereas the structure of the deen of the Munafiq is based on weak ground which may lead to the collapse of the structure, resulting in the Munafik entering the Hellfire.
- Surah An-Nur (24): ayat 35, uses the metaphor of light as the light of guidance in the heart of the Mua'min.
- A metaphor used to condemn those who fail to fulfill the *amanah* (i.e. religious obligations) can be found in Surah Al-Jumu'ah (62): ayat 5. The Bani Israel, having failed to obey Allah's commandments in the Taurah, are described as a donkey which is burdened with heavy books on its back but doesn't understand anything from them. Scholars have said that this metaphor also applies to other nations, which fail to fulfill their *amanah*.
- In one *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, divided the status of his *ummah* into three categories: those who benefit from the Message, those who benefit partially and those who fail to benefit at all. He, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used the metaphor of rain (as the Message) falling down on different types of land, producing different results.

Using metaphors to convey the Message is a very important 'tool' and it is the methodology used in the Quran and by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. There are many modes of expression used in the Quran and Hadith and they are used for different purposes. E.g. Dealing with the misconceptions and false assumptions of the disbelievers, the Quran and Hadith use rational thinking. When describing Jannah and the Hellfire, the style used by the Quran and Hadith is the visual mode of expression - they are described in such detail that it is like we can actually visualize Jannah or the Hellfire in front of us.

One of the Sahabahs said that he had already seen Jannah and the Hellfire. The other Sahabahs were puzzled and asked him how this could be so as nobody is able to see them until the Hereafter. He replied, "I saw them through the eyes of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. If I were to be given the chance to see Jannah and the Hellfire with my own eyes, I would not trust my sight. I trust the eyes of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, more than I trust my own eyes." Here we can conclude that if we read and understand the Quran and the Hadiths we too can visualize the paradise and the Hellfire.

These modes of expression (thinking styles) used by the Quran and Hadith should be well understood and used by Muslims today to convey the Message of Islam when doing *da'wah* as it is the most effective way. Different styles should be used to reach/convince different people - some people are more emotional, some are more rational, etc.

First Pillar: The Shahadah

The first part of the Shahadah is testifying that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. There are seven conditions of the Shahadah:

- Knowledge - to understand what it means
- Certainty - to have no doubt about anything confirmed in the Quran or Sunnah
- Acceptance - by the tongue and the heart of whatever the Shahadah implies
- Submission/compliance - the actual physical enactment by deeds
- Truthfulness - to say the Shahadah sincerely, with honesty, to actually mean it
- Sincerity - to do it solely for the sake of Allah
- Love - to love the Shahadah and to love its implications and requirements and what it stands for

The Shahadah is not simply saying it with our tongue. We need to adhere to these conditions. If we say the Shahadah sincerely and with honesty, we will not do anything which contradicts with or violates the Shahadah.

The second part of the Shahadah carries the following conditions:

- To believe in the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and in whatever he told us and conveyed to us
- To obey him in whatever he commanded us to do
- To stay away from or avoid whatever he commanded us not to do
- To follow or emulate him in our *ibadah*, *akhlaq* and way of life
- To love him more than we love ourselves, our family and anything else in this world
- To understand, practice and promote his Sunnah in the best way possible, without creating any chaos, enmity or harm

Second Pillar: Establishing the Prayers (Salah)

Some interpretations of this *hadith* translate *"iqamatus salah"* as 'performing' the salah. *"Iqamatus salah"* is a broader concept than what the term 'performing' means. The Scholars say *"iqamatus salah"* implies:

- Doing the *wudu* in the proper way
- To do the salah in its time
- To do it in congregation *(jama'ah)* - where the reward is 27 times than praying alone
- To fulfill the six conditions of *salah*
- To observe the proper manners *(adab)* of doing it such as submission and humility
- To follow preferable actions *(sunnan)* in our *salah*

It is important that we follow these conditions and not violate them if we want to truly fulfill the second pillar of Islam i.e. *"iqamatus salah"*. We should remember that Allah initially commanded us to pray fifty times a day and it was eventually reduced to five times (with the reward of fifty) - the prayer times are very reasonably spread out throughout the day - it can even help us to manage our time - it can help us to manage our affairs, allowing the Muslim community to meet during congregation and care for and help each other which will lead in turn to solidarity. Thus, the prayers should not be seen as a burden as some Muslims might regard them today.

Third Pillar: Zakat

The giving of Zakat has been pointed out by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for certain things and in certain ways or percentages and under certain conditions. The Scholars say that knowing the details of Zakat only becomes an obligation when a person owns the type of property or thing which requires him to give Zakat for. E.g. Farmers or traders or property owners need to know the conditions and percentages of Zakat that they are obligated to give.

Fourth Pillar: Hajj

Pilgrimage (Hajj) to the House (Kaabah) is an obligation that we need to do only once in our lifetime - only if we meet certain conditions, e.g. if we have the financial means, a way of travelling peacefully, etc. If we meet these conditions then we should perform the Hajj as soon as possible and not to delay it.

Some Scholars say that if we have the means to perform the Hajj several times, then it is better to use this money to help others to fulfill their obligations - we will be rewarded for their pilgrimage or to use the money for the betterment of the community.

For each of these Pillars there are conditions, *sunnan*, ethics *(adab)*, etc., which should be observed when we perform these *ibadahs*. Why do we always hear that every year hundreds of Muslims lose their lives or get injured during Hajj? Most of these incidents are due to the negligence of the *adab* or violation of the *sunnan*. For example, the throwing of stones at the Jamrat:

- Even though we are supposed to use small stones, people tend to use big ones and throw recklessly from a far distance, causing injuries to others.
- People do not follow the specified directions when they move, causing many to get crushed by the 'human waves' moving in different directions.
- People insist on going to throw at the peak times, i.e. the busiest part of the day. The elderly, women and handicapped should be reminded to go when it is less crowded.

Thus, it is important that we observe the adab.

Fifth Pillar: Fasting

Ramadhan is a training program for all Muslims to go through, performing good deeds to become better Muslims. However, we should continue with these good deeds outside of Ramadhan - praying in the mosque, Tahajjud, Qiamu alil, reciting the Qur'an, helping and caring for others etc.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, when asked what the best way is to finish reading the whole Qur'an, said to do it in one month, i.e. one Juzuk per day. This is something we should practice all the time and not have to wait for Ramadhan to do it. If we cannot achieve this, at least try to read one or two pages a day (a quarter of a *hizb*).

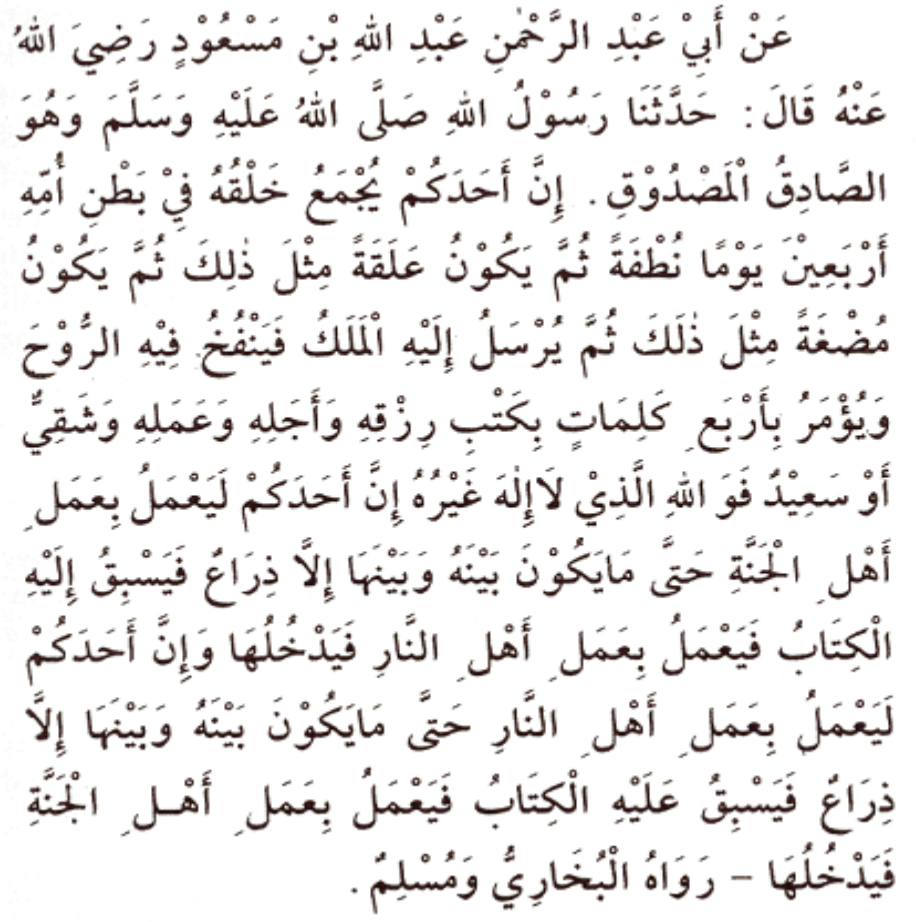
Similarly we should try to do the night prayers (*tahajjud*), be it only two raka'at and not everyday, outside of Ramadhan.

We should not make personal commitments in performing these preferable actions where the Shariah has not made this itself. This might lead us to giving up on our commitment and hence, the good deed. The best way is to do it on ease and convenience aiming at the continuity of these good deeds.

Conclusion

All the Pillars of Islam have rulings, conditions and mannerisms *(ahkam wa adab)* applied to them. It is important that we know these *ahkam* and *adab* and regularly remind ourselves, especially before Ramadan or before performing the Hajj, so that we perform the Pillars properly and according to the Shariah.

Hadith 4



عَنْ أَبِيْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ مَسْعُوْدٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ
عَنْهُ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ
الصَّادِقُ الْمَصْدُوْقِ. إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِيْ بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ
أَرْبَعِيْنَ يَوْمًا نُطْفَةً ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ عَلَقَةً مِثْلَ ذٰلِكَ ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ
مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذٰلِكَ ثُمَّ يُرْسَلُ إِلَيْهِ الْمَلَكُ فَيَنْفُخُ فِيْهِ الرُّوْحَ
وَيُؤْمَرُ بِأَرْبَعِ كَلِمَاتٍ بِكَتْبِ رِزْقِهِ وَأَجَلِهِ وَعَمَلِهِ وَشَقِيٌّ
أَوْ سَعِيْدٌ فَوَ اللهِ الَّذِيْ لَاإِلٰهَ غَيْرُهُ إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ
أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ حَتَّى مَايَكُوْنَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ إِلَيْهِ
الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ فَيَدْخُلُهَا وَإِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ
لَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حَتَّى مَايَكُوْنَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا
ذِرَاعٌ فَيَسْبِقُ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ فَيَعْمَلُ بِعَمَلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ
فَيَدْخُلُهَا - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, *radiyallahu 'anhu,* reported: The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, the most truthful, the most trusted, told us:

> **"Verily the creation of any one of you takes place when he is assembled in his mother's womb; for forty days he is as a drop of fluid, then it becomes a clot for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump looking like it has been chewed for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the *ruh* (spirit) into him. This Angel is commanded to write Four decrees: that he writes down his provision *(rizq)*, his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed.**
>
> **I swear by Allah - there is no God but He - one of you may perform the deeds of the people of Paradise till there is naught but an arm's length between him and it, when that which has been written will outstrip him so that he performs the deeds of the people of the Hell Fire; one of you may perform the deeds of the people of the Hell Fire, till there is naught but an arm's length between him and it, when that which has been written will**

overtake him so that he performs the deeds of the people of Paradise and enters therein."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* was not only recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim but by other Scholars as well. Apart from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, this *hadith* was also narrated by many other companions (Sahabahs).

This narration by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud was recorded with different versions where some words/terms conflicted with each other, resulting in different versions having different meanings regarding Creation. The conflicts are as follows:

1. **The addition of the word *"nutfah"* (the drop of a fluid)**

   This word is not mentioned in Bukhari neither Muslim's narration. However it was added to other narrations including the one chosen by al-Imam al-Nawawi to provide a better interpretation or explanation but instead it gave two conflicting views of the creation of mankind in terms of stages of the fetus:

   First View:
   The three stages of the fetus consist of forty days each, equaling to a total of 120 days for the stages to complete. It is only after this 120 days that the *ruh* (spirit) is breathed into the fetus, as well as the recording of the fetus' provision life span, deeds and destiny. This view, the inclusion of the word *"nuftah"*, is the view held by the majority of the Scholars.

   One problem with this view is that the stages of the fetus as interpreted in this *hadith* contradict the facts proven by science today.

   Another problem concerns the Fatwa on abortion. Scholars say that abortion is allowed (provided there is a very good reason - e.g. the woman's life is in danger) only before the *ruh* is breathed into the fetus, i.e. before 120 days - as opposed to 40 days if the second view is to be taken (see below).

   Second View:
   The word *"nutfah"* does not belong to the text of the *hadith*. This changes the meaning of the *hadith* which interprets the three stages of the fetus as taking place in the first forty days. This view correlates with scientific facts. And this means that the ruh is breathed into the fetus after forty days, and not 120 days. Consequently the Fatwa on abortion states that abortion is allowed only before forty days.

2. **The authenticity of the last section of the Hadith**

   Some Scholars say that the last section of the *hadith* (i.e. "By Allah…) is not part of the text of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* but the words of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud. But since the issue in this *hadith* is related to matters which we cannot perceive with our limited human perception, this last section is accepted and included here because 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud may have derived the meaning from another *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* to explain this *hadith* better.

   There are other *hadiths* collected by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, which touch on the same issue. But there are some differences between the texts of those *hadiths* and this one. Those *hadiths* narrate the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* as saying: One of you will perform the acts of the people of the Paradise (Ahlul Jannah) **as it appears in the eyes of the people**.

   This is like the Munafiqin or hypocrites - they do the acts of the Mua'minin. They appear, in our eyes, to be doing the acts of the Ahlul Jannah but Allah knows best. Their end will be a disaster - by being Munafiqin they are actually denying the message of God in their deep hearts as Allah mentioned in the Qur'an and their end will be in the Hellfire since they do not submit to Allah in their hearts. This explanation of the other *hadiths* is important in the understanding of this *hadith*.

Lessons

The Scholars say when we do a research on a concept or an issue mentioned in *hadiths*, we shouldn't depend on only one *hadith* - we need to search for other similar *hadiths*, which deal with the same issue/matter. We must remember that some narrators will narrate a *hadith* by its meaning, and not exactly as it was said by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. This is because being human, some of them may forget some of the exact words/terms used by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - but they still understand the actual meaning of what was said.

Then we need to compare the different texts of *hadiths* on the same issue with each other in order to have a more complete interpretation and better understanding of the issue/matter at hand.

Some people, on hearing this *hadith* as it is and without further explanation, might feel despair, fearing that they fall into the bad group of people mentioned. This will lead to determination *(jabriah)* - they may think that no matter what they do, if their end has already been written, then why should they bother to do good deeds. This is the wrong attitude to have as it is based on a wrong perception. Allah is Just. We should trust Allah. If we are good to Allah and trust Him,

He will be good to us. We should be optimistic and not pessimistic. We follow Allah's commands and make the effort to be good Muslims and we should not despair.

During one of the battles, a companion (Sahabi) said to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, that he was following him, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to fight in the hope that an arrow will be shot through his (the Sahabi's) neck, coming in from the front and going out the back. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "If you are honest with Allah, Allah will be honest with you." The Sahabi died exactly as he hoped to.

The Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, words here are generic and can be used for all situations. If we are honest with Allah, Allah will not leave us - He will help us - He will guide us, etc. The closer we are to Allah, the more He will help us and guide us. Thus, the last section of this *hadith* is an exception and applies only to few people such as the Munafiqin.

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But this, on the other hand, does not mean that we live in hope alone. The Scholars say that we must combine hope with fear - when we worship Allah, we should have hope as well as fear of Him. Fearing Allah is a positive thing. The more we fear Allah, the closer we get to Him. The more we fear Allah, the more calm and at peace we will be. This is unlike the natural 'fear' where if we fear something, e.g. a fire or a dangerous animal, we will try to get away from it.

Scholars say that we should have an equal amount of hope to the amount of fear. This is so we will have a better status of Iman (faith) - there is no despair and at the same time there is no excessive hope (over-confidence) which could lead to laziness and the non-fulfillment of our obligations. This is why we need to combine hope and fear, as well as love Allah the most and have trust in Him.

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This above *hadith* is about Allah's Creation and Qadar. The statement: "that which has been written will overtake him" should be understood in the positive sense and not negatively. Allah with His ultimate knowledge knows what will happen as it has been explained in the previous *hadith.*

Al-Qadar can be categorized as:

1. Al-Qadar al-Kulli - the general *qadar* which has been recorded by Allah in Al-Lauhulmahfudz or the Preserved Tablet.
2. Al-Qadar al-Sanawi - the annual *qadar* which takes place once a year (Lailatul qadar) - where it matchs what has been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz.

What has been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz is only known to Allah. It is not revealed to us - we don't know about our destiny, what our *rizq* is, where we'll end up, etc. To us it is *ghaib* and unknown. The translation of this *hadith* using the word "overtake" may not give the true meaning if it were to be understood that whatever has been recorded by the angels will be

"imposed" on a person's life. We are simply being told about Ilmu Allah or the ultimate knowledge of Allah. What has been written does not cause us to do what we do. It is not a cause and affect situation, as believed by many Muslims. Many Muslims believe that as it has already been written, therefore this will cause us to do whatever has been written. The truth is even though it has been written and even though we will do it, we will not do it because it has been written. It is actually an association, or a matching. What we are going to do matches the knowledge of Allah, because Allah's knowledge is ultimate. In other words, what we are going to do matches what has been written. This shows the glory of Allah, the ultimate knowledge of Allah. So we should not have the understanding that things are imposed on us. Otherwise this will nullify the whole concept of *iman* (faith) and the whole concept of Creation and all other related concepts.

We are responsible for what we choose and for what we do. Referring to the last section of this *hadith* where a person's final destiny changes at the last minute and he ends up not as expected, there are examples in the Sirahs where some people embrace Islam in the last minute - e.g. they embrace Islam and go into battle and die, some of them not having done a single good deed. There are also many examples today where non-practicing Muslims or those doing bad deeds, having reached the last stages of their lives (at the age of 50 or 60), will repent and turn into a good Muslim. The same applies for thousands of new converts every year.These people, according to the will of Allah, will be forgiven and enter Paradise.

For the other scenario where a person performs good deeds most of his/her life and at the end of his/her life perform bad deeds deserving to enter the Hellfire (as mentioned in the *hadith*), this situation affects only a limited number of people compared to the first one. And it is because of the person himself, such as in the case of hypocrites.

To have the correct understanding of the concept of *qadar*, we need to know more about the creation of the human being. What is mentioned in this Hadith is actually a miracle. It describes the stages of the fetus and the creation of man 1,400 years before science and technology confirm it as fact. (This description of the stages of the fetus can also be found in the Quran but without the mention of the periods of times.) In other words, scientists were only able to observe this phenomenon in the last few decades whereas it was already mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith hundreds of years ago.

A conference regarding the Creation was held in Europe several years ago and some Muslim Scholars were invited to attend. When these Scholars gave the Islamic perspective regarding the stages of the fetus, showing that this was documented in the Quran and the Hadith, some of the people who attended the conference embraced Islam - they were convinced that it is a Divine revelation.

We also need to understand the components of the human being in order to help us understand *qadar* in the positive way. The human being consists of the following components: -

- The intellect (Al-Aql) - this allows us, to a certain extent, to distinguish between good and evil. The intellect is part of us, part of the creation of Allah. Based on this, a person is regarded as *mukallaf*, responsible to understand and accept the massage of Allah if he is sane. If someone is mentally disturbed or insane, then he is not *mukallaf*.
- The natural disposition or innate (Al-Fitrah) - we are created with this innate which enables us to love what is good and what is right and to hate what is evil and what is wrong. It consists of love and hate. Even though we are created with this *fitrah*, it is subject to change due to the environment, to our parents, upbringing, etc. Therefore there are people who might love what is bad due to a spoiled or a corrupted *fitrah*. The Scholars say the original *fitrah* is still there within these people - if we try to 'awaken' the *fitrah*, these people will come back to loving good and hating bad.
- The commitment that we make, at the time of our pre-creation, to worship only Allah. This is related to the *fitrah* - it causes us to have this natural disposition or innate towards loving what is good and hating what is bad.
- The willingness (Al-Iradah) and Power (Qudrah): Allah provided us with willingness and power/ability. An action cannot take place without this willingness and power - we do something only if we are willing and we have the power to do it. But this willingness and power are neutral and can be manipulated and used in either good or bad ways.
- We have also been created with desires *(shahawat)* and the existence of these desires within us can manipulate our willingness or power towards good or bad.

  Desires are part of what is known as the internal challenges - things which influence our willingness and ability. The internal challenges consist of:

  - Shahawat/Hawa (self desires)
  - Nafs, of which there are three different aspects:
    i. The *nafs* which encourages us to do bad deeds
    ii. The *nafs* which blames us for our bad deeds or thoughts of bad deeds (if we have *iman* and knowledge) - e.g. our *nafs* says "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for thinking about drinking alcohol?"
    iii. The peaceful *nafs* (al-Mutma'inah)

    We can be dealing with these three different aspects of the *nafs* in a short period of time, e.g. within less than an hour, where (i) we start in thinking about doing a bad deed, caused by *al-nafsu ammarah bi sua'* which is the first aspect of *nafs*, but due to our faith (ii) the blaming self prevents us from performing that bad deed, leading us to (iii) the aspect of the peaceful self.

  There are also external challenges (which attract the internal challenges):

  - The existing *muharamat* (prohibitions) - e.g. the first aspect of *nafs* will activate the *hawa* and the *hawa* will push us to think about and do the bad deeds.

- The insinuation/whispering *(waswasa)* of Satan. All that Satan can do is to insinuate. He will try to convince us to do bad deeds by promoting evil and making it appear nice and acceptable to us, or convince us to delay doing good deeds. E.g. if we are good Muslims Satan will try to make us delay performing the prayer or giving the *sadaqah* by making it appear as a bad thing to do because giving *sadaqah* will result in a financial burden for us. As we can see, both cases are done through coloring our perception.

We can see that some of the components of the human being help us while some are challenges. For example, the Fitrah and Aql are strong components which direct us to do good. However there is a limit to our intellect and for this Allah sent us the Messengers with the revelations to guide us. Allah's Guidance helps us by telling us what is good and what is bad, in what forms the insinuation of Satan can come in, etc. When we recite the Qur'an with contemplation, we will attain the insight *(basirah)* which will activate the blaming-self and the *nafs ul mutma' inah*.

The Qur'an tells us that we have been created to be tested: (Allah) Who has created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed. [Surah Al-Mulk (67): ayat 2]

Allah tells us what we are being tested on and the scenarios mentioned above describe the nature of the test. This is the mercy of Allah - He equips us with the power, the will, the *fitrah*, the *aql*, the Message/guidance, etc. But He warns us that our will is going to be tested by internal and external challenges. The power and willingness is neutral but it can be influenced/directed to go either way, good or bad. If we have the insight *(basirah)*, if we recite the Quran, if we are close to Allah, if we have the wisdom *(hikmah)*, then what will be activated is the sound mind and the *shahawat* (selfdesires) will be controlled and we will not be misled by them. Satan will not come close to us because he knows that if he does so he will not be able to influence us. If we look at it this way, our life is a challenge - it's a real test that we have to go through.

Even with all these components Allah has equipped us with, we still need Tawfiqul Allah (guidance from Allah). Without *tawfiq* we might be misled by our desires or by the insinuation of Satan. Thus we need to be closer to Allah. We need to do *du'a* to Allah (calling on Him) all the time and to devote our hearts to Him so that we are constantly seeking His help, His refuge, His Hidayah (guidance). That's why at least 17 times a day we say "Guide us to the Straight Way" - we need Allah's guidance again and again. The guidance is not only to the path but it is also within the path. These are the two types of guidance *(hidayah)* - (i) to the path is becoming a Muslim and (ii) within the path is increasing our *S*. The Scholars say we need guidance within the path every second of the day - we need Allah's guidance more than we need to breathe.

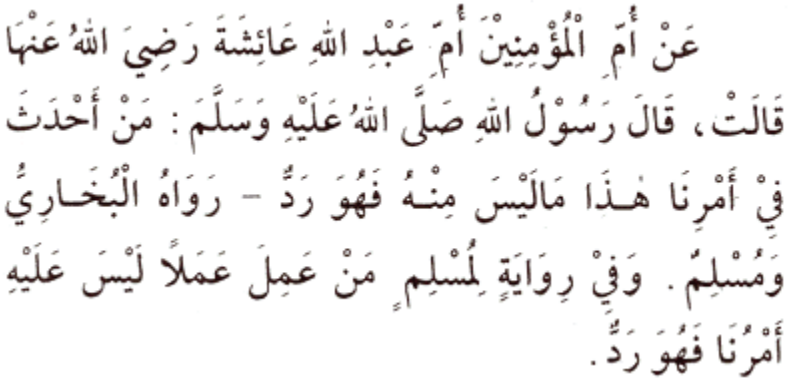
It is narrated by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, in one Hadith that Allah created a man on an island where he was the only person there. Allah gave the man *rizq* by providing fruits on which he survived. For 70 years the man lived and worshipped only Allah, as there were no challenges there. When the time came for the man to die, Allah commanded the angel to bring his soul to Him. Allah asked the man, "O My servant, to Paradise or to Hellfire?" The man replied, "O Allah, Almighty, to Paradise." Allah said, "O My servant, is it because of My Mercy or is it because of your *amal* (good deeds)?" The man replied, "O Allah, it is because of my *amal*. For 70 years I worshipped you. I have done nothing bad, only good deeds worshipping you." Then Allah commanded his angel to take the bounty of sight and put it on one scale. He then commanded the angel to put the man's 70 years' worth of good deeds on the other scale. The bounty of sight weighed heavier than the deeds of 70 years.

In summary, if for 70 years we were to worship Allah and do good deeds and refrain from bad deeds, we will still not be able to repay Allah for one of His bounties. The Scholars say if you want to know Allah's bounty on you, close your eyes. If we close our eyes and imagine that we can no longer see and try to picture how our life would be, only then can we truly appreciate and value the mercy of Allah.

Conclusion

The *hadiths* are the sources of our *iman* (faith), knowledge, and guidance as we are taught by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. Studying and understanding the Hadiths will activate our insight *(basirah)*, enlighten our hearts, and uplift our souls. This will by the help of Allah, lead us and keep us on the right path to the end, *insha Allah*.

Hadith 5


عَنْ أُمِّ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ أُمِّ عَبْدِ اللهِ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا
قَالَتْ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: مَنْ أَحْدَثَ
فِيْ أَمْرِنَا هٰذَا مَالَيْسَ مِنْهُ فَهُوَ رَدٌّ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ
وَمُسْلِمٌ. وَفِيْ رِوَايَةٍ لِمُسْلِمٍ مَنْ عَمِلَ عَمَلاً لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ
أَمْرُنَا فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.

It is narrated on the authority of the Mother of the Believers, Umm 'Abdullah 'Aishah, *radiyallahu 'anha*, that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Whosoever introduces into this affair of ours (i.e. into Islam) something that does not belong to it, it is to be rejected."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

According to the version in Muslim, (it reads): **"Whosoever works a work which has for it no command of ours is to be rejected."**

Background

Like Hadith 1, this *hadith* is one of the most important *hadiths*. Imam Nawawi said it should be memorised by every Muslim.

This *hadith* is used as a criterion for judging external actions or performance of Ibadah. If an action is not done in accordance with the Shariah or the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, it will be rejected and not accepted by Allah based on text of this *hadith*. This *hadith* complements Hadith 1, which was a criterion for judging the intentions or the internal actions of the heart. The Scholars say that the acceptance of actions of Ibadah is based on the above two conditions:

i. The intention - the action should be done with sincerity, for the sake of only Allah.
ii. It should be done in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Apart from Hadith 1 and Hadith 5, the acceptance of actions can also be found in Surah Al-Kahf (18): ayat 110:

> Whoever looks forward to meeting his Sustainer (on Day of Judgement), let him do righteous deeds, and let him not ascribe unto anyone or anything a share in the worship due to his Sustainer.

Emulating and following the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is a Qur'anic obligation. Allah, the Almighty says:

> Verily, in the apostle of God you have the best example to emulate for everyone who looks forward (with hope and awe) to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah unceasingly. [Surah Al-Ahzab (33): ayat 21].

> Say (O Prophet): "If you love Allah, follow me, (and) Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.

Lessons

This *hadith* is related to a very important concept which is following the Sunnah and violating this concept will lead to *bida'ah* [which will be discussed in detail, insha Allah, in Hadith 28].

Scholars classify actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, into actions done for the purpose of Ibadah (worshiping Allah) and actions which are not done for that purpose (i.e. customs, actions done haphazardly, etc.). There are clear indicators for actions done for the purpose of Ibadah such as commands to do or not to do something, warnings for not doing something, etc.

Muslims are only obliged to follow the first kind of Sunnah.

Looking at it in a positive way, the actions (i.e.forms of *ibadah*) that we do should be done in accordance with the Shariah or the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and to ensure this there is a criterion consisting of five aspects that will keep our actions in check:

i. **Time**
   Any *ibadah* that we do has to be done in it's designated or specified time.
   E.g. There are fixed times in the day for the five prayers. For fasting, the month for fasting is Ramadhan. The period that we can fast is from *fajr* to sunset. Similarly, there is a specific time in the year when we can perform the Hajj - from the 8 to the 12 Zulhijjah.
ii. **Place**
   The Shariah has specified that certain *ibadahs* have to be performed in designated places.

E.g. The places for performing the Hajj, I'tikaf, doing Ihram for Hajj have been fixed by the Shariah and this is something which is sometimes violated by Muslims, e.g. doing the Ihram (starting *talbiyyah* and *niyyah* for Hajj) in Jeddah is incorrect.

iii. **Quantity**

For most of the *ibadahs* the Shariah has specified a certain number of times that the *ibadahs* or their components need to be performed. E.g. For prayers, there are specified number of *rakaahs* and *sujud* and for Tawaf there is a fixed number of rounds (7), etc. We should not violate these rules intentionally. To violate intentionally may make the *ibadah* subject to be rejected.

iv. **Way**

Every *ibadah* was described or shown to us by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - being our best model to follow and emulate. The way that the *ibadahs* are performed by him have to be followed - it should not be violated. E.g. There are different ways of performing different prayers - Salat ul-Janazah has no *ruku'* or *sujud*. Even the size of the stones used for throwing at the Jamrat has been specified by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* as not to be too big.

Before we perform any *ibadah*, we should know and learn the way the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed it and we should do it in the right way as he did it. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Pray as you have seen me praying." Many Muslims today violate the way *ibadahs* are performed, because of ignorance or because they do not bother to learn, and they end up doing the *ibadah* in the wrong way.

v. **Type**

If the Shariah has specified a type of *ibadah*, then we should stick to that type. E.g. Al-Udhiah (sacrifice) - the type of animal to be sacrificed has been specified by the Shariah and this should not be violated. Recently a Sheikh in one of the Muslim countries made a *fatwa* that Muslims can use chicken as sacrifice - this is a violation of the type. If a Muslim cannot afford to offer a sacrifice, then they don't have to do it as it is not a *wajib* (i.e. an obligation). In certain years, some of the Sahabahs (companions) purposely did not perform the sacrifice so that the people did not think that it was a *wajib*.

A clear distinction should be made about the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - whether they were done only from time to time or whether they were done continuously on a regular basis. For example, some of the *nawafil* are things which he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do from time to time. We should observe this. E.g. Certain Surahs being recited on certain days - it is narrated that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would sometimes recite Surah As-Sajdah (32) and Surah Al-Insan (76) on Fridays. But some Muslims would recite these two Surahs every Friday. We should be aware of this because if we do something regularly people will think that it is *wajib* even though it is not.

If the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, did something only from time to time, then we too should do it from time to time, especially when we do it in congregation.

As it has been mentioned above, the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, were done for different purposes. There were actions which he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do haphazardly. There are things he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, would do because of the custom of that time. These actions were not done by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for the purpose of *ibadah*. We too should not do these actions for *ibadah* - our intentions should match the intentions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. The following are some examples:

- At the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, the men used to have long hair - it was not done for the purpose of *ibadah*. So if anyone wants to keep long hair today, it should not be done for *ibadah*.
- The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to open the top buttons of his shirt - this was because it was hot and not because for the purpose of *ibadah*.
- The turban, at the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was worn because it was the custom then.
- Some *hadiths* mention the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, using a stick. Again this was not done for the purpose of *ibadah*.

We should not follow these examples of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, for the purpose of *ibadah*.

How do we differentiate between the actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, which were done for the purpose of *ibadah* and those which were not? The Scholars say if the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, commanded us to do an action or commanded us not to do something, then this is considered an *ibadah*. Or if the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned that the doer will receive certain rewards if an action is done, then it is an *ibadah*. Or if the failure for doing a certain action would result in punishment, then the action is an *ibadah*.

This issue of introducing something which doesn't belong to the Shariah is associated with the concept that Islam is a complete religion [Surah Al-Ma'idah (5): ayat 3]:

> Today have I perfected your religion for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that Islam shall be your Religion.

Since it is complete, there is no need for additions or deletions to the religion. Therefore to introduce some new matter into Islam or to delete/omit something from it is an affront to Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Al-Imam al-Shatibi mentions that if certain actions are taken as *ibadah* where in reality they are not, this will lead to *bid'ah*. There is a *hadith* which tells the story of three men who only wanted to do 'good deeds' all the time - one said he will not get married, the second one said he will pray all night and not sleep, and the third said he will fast every day. When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, heard this, he said that he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was the most pious and

righteous amongst the people and yet he did not do the things the way the men wanted to do them. This shows that the actions that the three men thought were *ibadah* would have resulted in *bid'ah* as they weren't practiced by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Al-Shatibi also mentions that avoiding eating certain types of food for the purpose of *ibadah* should not be done. We can avoid these foods for health or other good reasons but not for the purpose of *ibadah*.

He also says that if there are two ways of fulfilling an obligation, we should follow the easier way. E.g. If the weather is cold and if we have the choice of using warm or cold water (for *wudu'*), we should use warm water. We shouldn't use cold water and inflict discomfort on ourselves, trying to show that we are stronger Muslims and hoping for extra rewards. Or if there is choice of going to two *masjids* (mosques) of different distances, we should go to the nearer one.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was passing through a place when he noticed someone standing in the middle of the street in the sun. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asked the Sahabahs what this man was doing. They said that he made a commitment to fast while standing in the sun. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, told them to tell the man to continue his fasting (because this was a good thing to do anyway and fulfilling a commitment is an obligation) but to get out of the sun.

Scholars deduce that we should not attach any hardship to our *ibadah* hoping that it will make it more rewardable. Shariah is based on ease. Therefore we should always choose the easier way when performing an *ibadah* because this will enable us to do it properly - if we were to choose the difficult route then we may, after a while, find difficulty in keeping to our commitment in performing this *ibadah*. An attached hardship to an *ibadah*, which has not been specified by the Shariah, should be avoided - we should not place any hardship in performing any *ibadah*.

The Scholars say if someone violates the Shariah by adding something new to an *ibadah*, the *ibadah* is rejected depending on what kind of violation has been done. For example, in prayer if someone violates its conditions, then his *ibadah* will definitely not be accepted.

If an action is any kind of *bid'ah*, then it is subject to being rejected and the person who performed that action will be asked about it and might be subject to be punished. But if there is a valid excuse for doing that action, the action will not be rewarded but the person may be excused and not punished by Allah.

In worldly dealings and transactions (e.g. Al-Mu'amalat), if someone changes/modifies the principles of the dealings and this violates the Shariah law, then that dealing or transaction is rejected. E.g. changing trading based on *haram* principles, etc.

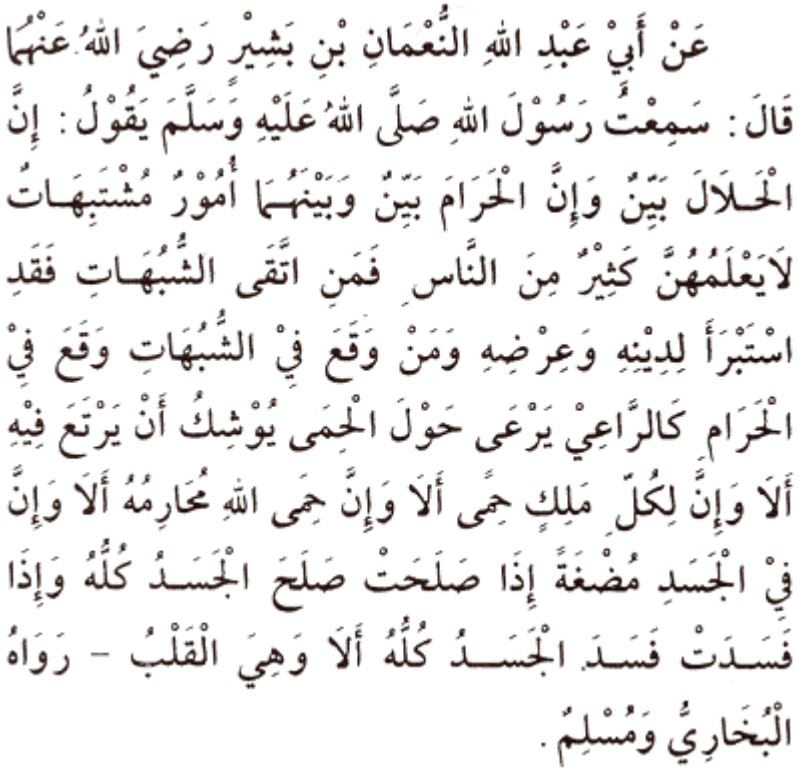
Ibnu Rajab mentions that there are certain actions, which violate the Shariah, but the Scholars have differing views about them. For example, if a man wears natural silk while performing his prayer, is his prayer acceptable? Or if someone prays in a house which is stolen, taken by force from the owner. Most Scholars say the action is acceptable but the person will be asked about his wrongdoing (wearing silk, praying in a stolen place).

Conclusion

These *hadiths* selected by al-Imam al-Nawawi are more of principles and criteria that help the Muslim practice easily and fulfil his/her daily religious obligations.

Hadith 5 sets a criterion for the Muslim by which he can assess and evaluate his actions to ensure their rightness and acceptability.

Hadith 6


عَنْ أَبِيْ عَبْدِ اللهِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا
قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: إِنَّ
الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا أُمُوْرٌ مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ
لَايَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيْرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنِ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ فَقَدِ
اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِيْنِهِ وَعِرْضِهِ وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِيْ الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِيْ
الْحَرَامِ كَالرَّاعِيْ يَرْعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوْشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيْهِ
أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللهِ مَحَارِمُهُ أَلَا وَإِنَّ
فِيْ الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا
فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ - رَوَاهُ
الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu 'Abdullah al-Nu'man bin Bashir, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"Truly, what is lawful is evident, and what is unlawful is evident, and in between the two are matters which are doubtful which many people do not know. He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, and he who indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who pastures his flock round a preserve will soon pasture them in it. Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things Allah has declared unlawful are His preserves. Beware, in the body there is a flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and behold, it is the heart."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

The first thing to note is that Imam al-Bukhari recorded this *hadith* in the beginning of the Book of Trading (Kitab al-Buyu'), i.e. the *kitab* started off with this *hadith*. Some scholars say that

Imam al-Bukhari was not only a *muhadith* who memorized, collected, recorded and compiled the *hadith*, but he was also a *faqih* (jurist) and his *fiqh* (jurisprudence) can be noted in so many ways. One is the *tabwib*, or the way that he gave the title for each chapter of his book. He would choose a certain statement which he would then use for the title of the chapter. This title reflects his *fiqh*. Also the way the *hadith* is recorded, where it is placed, under which chapter, and the fact that sometimes a *hadith* is repeated in many chapters - all these reflect the *fiqh* of Imam al-Bukhari.

But why did Imam al-Bukhari start Kitab al-Buyu' with this *hadith*? What does this imply? There are many implications. One of them is that these doubtful matters are related to the things that we buy and sell, that we trade in. It is also said that his father once mentioned to him that for forty years he never brought anything doubtful into their home.

It can be observed that Imam al-Bukhari was influenced by his father's attitude in two ways:

i. His father brought only *halal* things into the house. Whatever the family ate, drank, wore or used was *halal*. There were no doubts. This is the environment Imam al-Bukhari was brought and raised up in. It is also said that whenever his father made *du'a* to Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*, Allah answered his *du'a* because of the fact that he never dealt with anything which was doubtful. This is reflected in the behaviour and attitude of Imam al-Bukhari. Hence like in this *hadith* where he chose to record it at the beginning of the chapter Kitab al-Buyu'.

ii. Imam al-Bukhari is also known as a great *muhadith*. One of the things that a *muhadith* is involved in is al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil, the status of narrators of *hadith* - whether they can be taken
as *saadiq*, the one who is truthful and trustworthy, or as those who lie and cannot be taken as true narrators of *hadith*. The *muhadithun* uses specific terms to indicate the status of a narrator. When it comes to the status of the liars, or those who cannot be relied on, Imam al-Bukhari used a very astonishing style of al-Jarh wat-Ta`dil. He would not use direct terms - rather, he would use indirect ones. This also reflects his piety and righteousness. He would not simply label a narrator a liar. Instead he would say: "He has been labelled a liar".

Another matter which is related to Imam al-Bukhari is that whenever there was controversial issues or the clashing of views, he would follow the cautious approach. For example, whenever there was conflicting opinions whether something is an obligation or not, such as the recitation of Al-Fatihah in prayers, he would be in favour of the view that treats it as an obligation. Another school of thought has a different approach where some scholars follow whatever the evidence leads them to - provided it is sound and authentic.

Lessons

The Scholars are of the view that the vast majority of acts fall into one of the first two categories: either it is evidently lawful or unlawful. Only a minority number of acts fall into the third category, that which is doubtful.

It can be noted here that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is using a metaphor, or analogy, twice in this *hadith*. As mentioned before, using metaphors or analogies in communicating ideas is very effective and powerful. From the metaphor and the way it is worded ("just as a shepherd who pastures his flock round a preserve will soon pasture them in it"), we can say that the doubtful things are closer to the unlawful things.

This *hadith* emphasizes the importance of glorifying Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*. If we want to glorify Allah, we have to glorify His injunctions, commandments, whether they are obligations (so we perform them), or whether they are prohibitions (so we don't perform them). A Salaf once narrated: "Don't look at how minor the sin is that you committed, but look at the glory of the One you disobeyed, i.e. Allah *subhanallahu ta'ala*." A sin, even if it is a minor one, means disobedience to Allah, hence defying the Glorification of Allah. And the glorification of Allah is actually one of the principles of Tawhid.

We mentioned before that the great actions or the principles of Tawhid are done by the heart. That is why the heart is mentioned at the end of this *hadith*. Looking at the *hadith* at first glance, we might have asked what the heart has to do with the rest of the *hadith*. It is in the heart that we glorify Allah. It is the action of heart when we refrain from the unlawful. If the heart is strong, sound, has no weaknesses, and is full of *iman* (faith), then this would lead us to refrain ourselves from *muharramat* and *makruhah* (undesirable acts). Therfore only those with a strong and sound heart, i.e. the heart that is full of love for Allah, fear of Allah and glorification of Allah, will refrain from the doubtful matters. But those whose hearts are diseased and whose *iman* is weak, may go around the doubtful matters. Little by little they will indulge in the *makruhah*, delaying things and eventually getting into the *muharram* or delaying or even negating the *wajib*. It has to do with the status of the heart. That is why the scholars talk about the life of the heart. For example, when you see Muslims praying in the *masjid* (mosque), you see hundreds of people praying together. But what distinguishes them is the status of their hearts, whether it is devoted to Allah or not. How strong and pure is the heart? How sound is the heart? That's where people differ. This is what we should concern ourselves with, and compete - taking care of our hearts, purifying them, taking away any diseases from our hearts, to activate *iman* in the heart in order to make it alive.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned about Abu Bakr as-Sidiq where he said that If you put the *iman* of all the Muslim *ummah* on one scale and the *iman* of Abu Bakr as-Sidiq on the other scale, the *iman* of Abu Bakr as-Sidiq would outweigh the *iman* of the whole *ummah*. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also said that there is something in the heart of Abu Bakr as-

Sidiq that distinguished it from others, and as it is known he was called as-Sidiq. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, once said about Abu Bakr: "When I call someone to Islam, he will have some hesitation...except Abu Bakr as-Sidiq. The minute I talked to him about Islam, straight away he believed in me, he believed in Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah." So it has to do with the heart that distinguished Abu Bakr as-Sidiq to be al-Khalifatul-Awal, and to be the first Sahabi (Companion). From this, it can be said that every Muslim should care about his/her heart, purify it and activate *iman* in the heart, and practise the great principles of Tawhid, such as to love Allah, to fear Him, to rely on Him, to have hope in Him, to seek help fro Him and to seek refuge in Him so that the heart is alive, activated and full of iman. And at the same time we have to make sure that there should be no diseases or anything bad within our hearts, e.g. greediness, envy, arrogance, etc. Only then will the heart be sound.

In another related *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentioned that: "The heart will be exposed to *fitan* (trials) again and again. The heart which is influenced by *fitnah* will have a black spot placed on it. And if the heart avoids the *fitnah*, there will be a white spot on it." The heart then is either a pure one, or a heart that has been sealed after being affected by *fitan* or prohibited or doubtful matters again and again. Even though the heart pumps out blood and the person is alive, the heart in reality is not alive, because the *iman* is weak, making the heart unsound. Hence avoiding and getting away from the *fitan* is important in order to have a pure heart, especially in these contemporary times where it is full of evil that attracts the heart.

The evil doers promote evil and impose it on others. So if a Muslim is not careful, his/her heart might be stolen. As mentioned by the great contemporary scholar, Sheikh Abdur Rahman ad-Dusari, there are many thieves today who steal the hearts, sometimes without the owner even being aware of it.

If you read any *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, it talks about a matter, whether it is something good that we should do, or something bad that we should not do. And then in the *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, will mention a principle. Usually, the principle, which is the main point of the *hadith*, is the last words or sentence. The *hadith* above mentions about the lawful and unlawful being evident, and then there is the doubtful matter. And then there is the last sentence of the *hadith*. This is the bottom-line of the *hadith*, the main thing, the main issue. If we want to get away from the *muharramat* (unlawful), and also from the doubtful matters, we have to care about our heart. We have to purify our heart and make sure it is sound and alive, and it is not lost from us.

One wisdom we can learn from the *hadith* is from the way the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, tells us about something: he will discuss a concept and then give us the principle. This principle helps us not only with the concept mentioned in the *hadith*, but it actually helps us, if we use it in the right way with the right understanding, in other similar matters and situations. If we care

about our heart, not only will we be able to avoid the doubtful matters, we can apply the same principle to other similar concepts or issues, e.g. in avoiding bad manners for there are also doubtful matters in the concept of *akhlaq* (values).

It was mentioned earlier that Imam al-Bukhari recorded this *hadith* in Kitab ul-Buyu' (Trading). When it comes to trading there are many matters that are doubtful, matters which existed then and even now, e.g. where cheating is done professionally. Therfore we have to be careful if the matter related to trading is clear and evident, permissible or not permissible, or if it is doubtful, in which case we have to avoid it.

Related to the above issue is the issue of *al-ma'kulat* (food) where there are many doubtful matters about what we eat. If we check the ingredients that are used in many manufactured food today, e.g. biscuits, canned food and preserved food, there are ingredients that might raise the question of doubtfulness of what we eat. For example, lecithin is used in the manufacture of foodstuff especially in the west and Muslim countries import a lot of food from the west. If it is not specified otherwise then there is a high probability that the lecithin is derived from khanzir (pig) because it is cheaper to produce. Otherwise, it should be mentioned whether it is derived from soya or plants or from halal production.

Another ingredient is emulsifier. Emulsifiers are labelled as the letter 'E' followed by a series of numbers. Some emulsifers contain things that are not permissible. There are efforts done by some Muslim scientists where they try to identify such ingredients. This can then be used as a checklist to check against when we buy food for our family. We should be very careful when we read the ingredients of foodstuff if we want to ensure that what we eat is halal. It is mentioned in a *hadith* that if what we eat is haram, even our du'a / supplication is not accepted by Allah.

We should take care of our health. A lot of what we eat today or what is in the market is not fresh. There are so many preservatives, colouring and chemicals which, if used excessively, might affect our health. We have to be careful in the sense that although it is in general permissible, if it is used excessively it will affect our health - then we are not doing good for our health as a Muslim.

Some of the interpreters of the collection of the Forty Hadiths try to identify or pinpoint some matters that are doubtful in general. Sometimes they mention matters or controversial issues where the related evidences from the Qur'an and Sunnah are conflicting and there is no apparent way to resolve the conflict. They mention general matters where views of scholars may also be conflicting. Some permissible matters might lead a person to do what is forbidden or lead him to fail to do what is obligatory. For example, the issue of staying up late. According to the view of some scholars, it is *makrooh* to stay up late for no valid reason, just chatting or doing nothing or just wasting time. Even though in general it is permissible, this might lead to other

consequences where it might cause the delaying or failing to do the *wajib* or it might lead us into doing *muharram*. The scholars also say that there are matters which were inferred or concluded based on certain *hadiths* where the authenticity of the *hadith* is questionable. They say this can also be treated as doubtful matters.

The main key to the issue that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gave us, again, is the heart. If we care about our heart, we will be more sensible. If the heart is sound, strong, full of *iman* (faith), we will be more responsible, and we will care more about what we do and what we don't do. This becomes the measure to those matters which are doubtful.

Even though some interpreters gave some principles by which we can distinguish those doubtful matters, it can still be debated or questioned. But if the heart is good, strong and full of *iman*, the person will be able to distinguish between the doubtful matters and other clear evident matters, where he would also be able to refrain from the doubtful matters. Sometimes people may know something is *haram* and not just doubtful, but yet they still get involved in it because of the weak status of their hearts.

So here again we would like to emphasize the main key to dealing with the problem of doubtful matters is the heart. If we all care about the heart, make sure it is in a good status, then insha-Allah we will be able to be saved by the help of Allah. We will be guided by Allah, because the heart will be full of light. When we say the heart is full of light or guided by light, there are things that we can do that help us to identify and avoid doubtful matters:

- Al-Muhasabah - self accountability
- Al-Muraqabah - self reckoning
- Dzikrullah - the remembrance of Allah. Imam Nawawi himself compiled another book, the Book of Azkar, where he recorded the *hadith* about *azkar*. It is mentioned by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, that remembering Allah will purify the heart. However, we have to do it regularly and on a continuous basis. We should do the *azkar* after prayers.

Another thing is as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi (the sending of prayers and blessings to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*). This is also an important matter. We don't train ourselves to practice this Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. We just write SAW or an alphabet after mentioning the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. We even abbreviate the phrase *"subhanahu wata'ala"*. These are mistakes because *du'a* cannot be abbreviated. This is commonsense. Why do we abbreviate? Is it to save our time? Or to save ink? We have to practice saying/writing *"sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam"* in full because we are encouraged to do so. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Do you know the greedy? The one whom my name is mentioned in front of him or her, and he does not say "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*".

In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that if we practice as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, Allah will send His "prayers" and blessings upon us (*yusalli 'alaih)*. What does this mean? The scholars explain this by saying that Allah will guide the person who practices as-Salatu 'ala

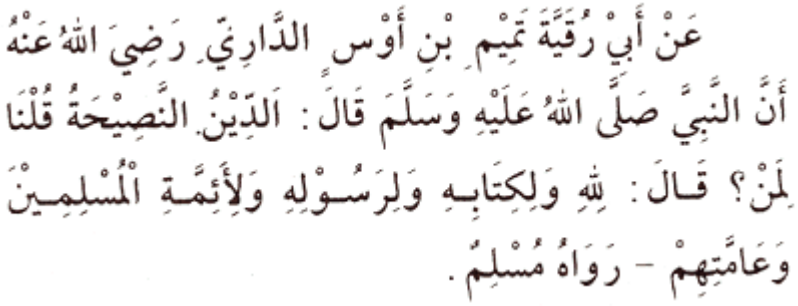
an-Nabi and gives him the light by which to distinguish between the good and the bad. It is a light that will be in the heart. This is termed as *as-solatu minallah 'ala al-'abd*. Moreover each time we say *"sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam"* we will be rewarded ten times. Hence we should strive to not lose out on obtaining all these good things. We should love the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, more than ourselves, our families, our parents or our children.

Conclusion

There are doubtful matters that a Muslim might face in his/her everyday dealings and activities. This *hadith* helps the Muslim in dealing with such matters. There is an early ongoing preparation which is needed in such a case - to purify one's heart. There are some actions that can help us achieve this task, like: *hayya'* (modesty), *murakabah* (self reckoning), *muhasabah* (self accountability), *dzikr* (remembrance of Allah), and as-Salatu 'ala an-Nabi, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. These are things that, insha Allah, can help us and enlighten and purify our heart, and also help us to identify and avoid the doubtful matters - this is the main point, the key, the principle of the *hadith*.

> **"Beware; in the body there is a flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and behold, it is the heart."**

Hadith 7


عَنْ أَبِي رُقَيَّةَ تَمِيمِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ الدَّارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: اَلدِّيْنُ النَّصِيْحَةُ قُلْنَا
لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: لِلّٰهِ وَلِكِتَابِهِ وَلِرَسُوْلِهِ وَلِأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ
وَعَامَّتِهِمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Tamim Al-Dari that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Religion is *nasihah*." We said: "To whom?" The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "To Allah and His Book, and His messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk."**

[Muslim]

Background

The word *"nasihah"* cannot be accurately translated to English because it is a broad concept which cannot be traced in the English language. Some use the term "sincerity" but this is only part of the concept - to negate deception/cheating. According to Imam Ibnu al-Salah, *nasihah* is "truly seeking the best, in terms of intention and action, for the one whom he is making *nasihah* to".

This *hadith* is a profound statement as Sheikh Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo says that in this one brief statement the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, described the essence of Islam. Nasihah hence forms the bulk and the most important pillar of Islam since it encompasses Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

Lessons

Nasihah to Allah

The *nasihah* should be to Allah first. This includes the fulfillment of the obligations in the best way possible (Ihsan).This should be the goal for every Muslim. This also includes striving to get

as close to Allah as possible by doing not only the obligations but also the preferable good deeds, by forbidding the forbidden and avoiding the disliked acts.

Nasihah to Allah also involves:

- believing in Allah and denying any partners with Him.
- believing in His attributes.
- obeying Him.
- fulfilling His commands and abstaining from what He has forbidden.
- doing what is best to remember Him, under all circumstances.
- loving whatever He loves and hating whatever He hates, be it objects, persons, actions, sayings, etc.
- recognising the blessings He has bestowed upon us and properly thanking Him for these blessings.

To do *nasihah* to Allah one should have the correct intention in one's heart to fulfill the rights of Allah, even when one is excused and it is beyond one's ability to perform these obligations. Sometimes a person may not be able to perform an obligation but at least he has good intentions in his heart to fulfill it in the first place.

The actions of the heart (i.e. to have hope in Allah's mercy, to trust Him, to fear Him and to seek refuge in Him), and the actions of the limbs (prayers, Zakah, etc.) also fall under *nasihah* to Allah.

Honesty is also another aspect of this great concept. In whatever we do we should always be honest with Allah, similarly with *ikhlas* (sincerity). In fact *ikhlas* should be the first thing that a Muslim should attain when we talk about *nasihah* to Allah.

Nasihah to His Book

This includes:-

- Believing that the Qur'an is from Allah, that it is the Word of Allah and that it is not like the word of man.
- According to one's ability, to read and recite the Qur'an and to practice it.
- To study it's admonitions, lessons and parables.
- Calling others to believe in the Qur'an.
- To defend and protect it from any kind of distortion or misinterpretation.
- Defending the Qur'an against false claims made against it.
- Having proper respect and treating the Qur'an in a proper manner - e.g. to be careful not to throw away a piece of paper which has an *ayat* printed on it (magazine article, etc.) as it may be stepped on - we should also be aware if we see such a piece of paper on the

ground to pick it up and keep it away safely or destroy it by burning it so that it is not subject to disrespect.

Nasihah to His Messenger

This includes:-

- Believing the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, message.
- Believing in all that he brought as being divinely inspired.
- Loving him more than we love ourselves and our families - it is the second level of love after the love of Allah.
- Our love for him should lead to other obligations like obeying him.
- Helping him and defending him (for those who were alive during his time) - defending his honour and respecting his status.
- For the people who came after the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, life, we should respect and love his Sunnah which is an implication of loving him.
- To say "*sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*" whenever his name is mentioned.
- To accept his Sunnah as a scale by which we judge things, actions and sayings.
- To accept him as the true leader and only human's final word with respect to the religion - he is the only true human authority and everyone else's statements/opinions come after his.
- To love those who love him and hate those who hate him.
- Reviving his Sunnah by learning, understanding, teaching and spreading it. However, when we call people to the Sunnah - as advised by Imam Ahmad - we should do it in a nice and proper way and not to end up fighting about it. One problem today is that many Muslims are unaware of the Sunnah and the status of the Sunnah - so one of the things we should do is to make these people love the Sunnah, and we should not do so in an aggressive or confrontational way as this might lead to the people being confused, offensive and rejecting the Sunnah.

  There are so many *bid'ah* being practiced today and the way to remove *bid'ah* amongst the people is to revive the Sunnah (The Salaf said: "Bid'ah only arises when the Sunnan is not known or practiced."). To revive the Sunnah, we should not start with the condemnation of *bid'ah* but rather with the introduction/presentation of the Sunnah. We have to set good role models of those who love, and follow the Sunnah and we should teach others in a nice, proper way so that others too can understand, love and appreciate the Sunnah. Then they will use the Sunnah as a scale to judge things. Slowly, insha Allah, *bid'ah* will be reduced and minimized.

  When we try to educate people about the Sunnah, we should be careful not to confuse them by focussing on minor issues. Sunnan can be broken into different levels and we should start from the highest level. We should not teach people about the lower levels (details) when they haven't been taught the higher levels (basic concepts). We should let

the people understand and love the higher level Sunnan first before we go step by step into the lower levels, slowly covering more details. This, insha Allah, will lead to the revival of the Sunnah.

- To love both his family and his companions. Most Islamic sects love one or the other and not both. There are some deviated Islamic sects who are propagating their false beliefs by creating doubts about the Sahabahs (Companions) with the intention of making people hate them. This will lead to the rejection of the Sunnah. Some sects only believe the Sunnah that comes through their imams, e.g. the Shi'ah. We should be aware of the sources of narrations about the Sahabah as some of these narrations are false and may create doubts.
- To love those who follow, defend and strive to revive the Sunnah of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Nasihah to the Muslim Leaders

The word 'leader' stands for both *'ulama* and those in authority (at all levels). *Nasihah* should be given to all leaders, no matter how high or what the ranking is. No one is above the law in Islam and no one is above needing advice. *Nasihah* is for the benefit of anyone who is in authority. This means that a ruler, leader or scholar should be the first to accept sincere advice.

Making *nasihah* to Muslim leaders should include:-

- Helping them in whatever is good or beneficial.
- Obeying them in what is right.
- Reminding them if they should err or forget.
- Being patient with them if they do things which we dislike - we try to do the *nasihah* and at the same time we tolerate the leader because otherwise it may lead to instability in the Muslim community.
- Making *jihad* with them and not revolting against their proper authority.
- One should pray for their guidance and piety.
- Choosing the right way, manner and channel in advising them. The Scholars say giving *nasihah* to leaders should be done according to certain rules:
    i. One must have good intentions *(ikhlas)*.
    ii. It should be done mildly, calling on them with respect.
    iii. Avoiding harshness and not to embarrass them - our aim is to advise and correct them and not to show off.
    iv. Not to divulge or inform others about their wrong-doings as this may lead to more problems in the society.
    v. Give the *nasihah* privately and not publicly.
- If one is asked by the leader to do a *maksiah* or something which contradicts with Shariah, one shouldn't obey. However, we should disobey in a nice/assertive manner and

not in an aggressive way because our aim is to remind them that this is wrong so that they will change and not ask us to do the *maksiah*.

- For the Scholars, our *nasihah* is seeking knowledge from them.
- We obey them if their opinion is based on sound proof and evidence.
- Not to seek or point out their mistakes. There are some people who search for the mistakes of Scholars - we shouldn't do this because Scholars are pious people and this act may cause Allah to be displeased with us. It may also create chaos in the community.
- Not to follow them blindly.
- Not to hollow them.

Nasihah to the Common Folk of the Muslims

This includes:-

- To observe the rights of other Muslims - fulfilling our obligations towards other Muslims. These obligations differ depending on the group of Muslims (e.g. our parents, children, relatives, neighbours, etc.) - e.g. greeting them, visiting them when they are sick, making *du'a* for them, giving advice if they ask for it, praying *solat ul janazah* for the one who dies, etc.
- To observe the concept of *wala'* which means:
  i. to love every Muslim.
  ii. to care for all Muslims.
  iii. to help other Muslims.
  iv. to defend/protect other Muslims .

  If you do not love, you will not care. If you do not care, you will not help. If you do not help, you will not protect.
  The reason why so many Muslims today do not care or help others is because there is something wrong with the *wala'* aspect of love. We should have love for other Muslims, especially those who are suffering, so we will care and help them. The Scholars say one way to help and the least we can do is to make *du'a* (pray for them).

  There is a counter concept to *al-wala'* which is *al-bara* or disassociation with (for the purpose of leading others from doing evil). However we should not do it:

  v. for our own interest.
  vi. if it will not lead the other person to change his ways - we should not start with disassociation, we should start with giving advice and educating.

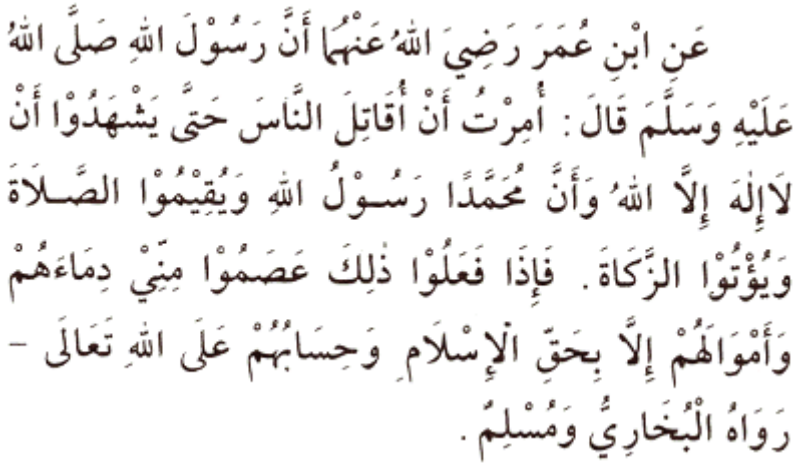
  We should show love and concern and give *nasihah* in the proper way. If all else fails, then we can use the concept of disassociation (if it will lead to the person changing).

- The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that "he is a real Muslim if he is the one who the other Muslims are saved from his tongue and his hand" - the true Muslim is one who will not harm others verbally or physically, in any way or by any means.
- Having mercy for the young and showing respect to the elders - it is part of glorifying Allah that we respect the elder Muslims.
- Sacrificing one's time, effort, money, etc. for the betterment of the Muslim community.
- If we are the ones in authority, then we should act sincerely towards the rest of the Muslims and do whatever is in their best interest. We should give *nasihah* to the people by, e.g. doing what is best for the ummah, defending the community, putting the right and qualified people in the right position and job. Any kind of leadership or authority, whatever the level or rank, is responsible for the people being lead - e.g. supervisors, managers, teachers, principles, etc.

Conclusion

From exploring all the obligations mentioned above, we can see that *nasihah* encompasses everything in Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

Hadith 8


عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ : أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوْا أَنْ
لَاإِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ وَيُقِيْمُوْا الصَّلَاةَ
وَيُؤْتُوْا الزَّكَاةَ. فَإِذَا فَعَلُوْا ذٰلِكَ عَصَمُوْا مِنِّيْ دِمَاءَهُمْ
وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَحِسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللهِ تَعَالَى –
رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abdullah bin Omar narrated that the messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"I have been ordered to fight against people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and until they perform the prayers and pay the zakat, and if they do so they will have gained protection from me for their lives and property, unless [they do acts that are punishable] in accordance with Islam, and their reckoning will be with Allah the Almighty."**

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Background

The majority of Scholars say that the "people" here refers to the Arab polytheists. The same interpretation can also be found in the Qur'an in Surah An-Nasr.

Another opinion say that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was referring to all people, excluding Ahlul Kitab, i.e. the people of the Book. It was said that this *hadith* was abrogated by the later rulings concerning *jizzya* (compensation).

A third opinion interprets the *hadith* as saying that people have to accept the domination or supremacy of Islam - that Islam is the dominant religion. This objective is to be achieved by whatever means, whether it is through fighting or through peaceful agreements.

Lessons

Islam is the only true religion. It is the truth; it is the path of Allah. One of the divine Laws since the earth was created: evil has always been fighting against truth. The truth has to be protected and it needs power to protect it. This is the main philosophy of *jihad* in Islam: *Jihad* is to establish and maintain justice and truth.

Jihad is not confined to only fighting. It has many other unpracticed or weakly practiced forms: *da'wah*, disseminating knowledge and educating others, maximizing the good and minimizing the evil, reconciling clashes and conflicts between Muslims, striving for the betterment of community are all forms of *jihad*.

How do we deal with the concept of *jihad* in our contemporary life? There are oppressed Muslim communities where fighting is a choice. However, generally speaking, we can answer the question based on dealing with two kinds of challenges: internal and external ones.

Internal Challenges encountering Muslims

Today unfortunately, the Muslim *ummah* is not united. It is divided and split into different groups and sects whether religious or political. Conflicts are every where between Muslims. In this situation *jihad* means to re-establish the unity of the Muslim communities and of the *ummah* at large. It means also to remove or minimize clashes and disputes.

Another issue is the lack of understanding of Islam by the Muslims themselves. The majority of Muslims today do not understand the true meaning of Islam, even the basic concepts. Here, *jihad* takes the form of disseminating the true message of Islam to the Muslims and educating them so that they fully understand their *deen*.

Since the majority of the Muslims do not truly understand Islam, they do not practice their religion correctly or completely. This means the *shahadah* of the *ummah* (i.e. being witnesses of the truth) is not activated today. We should be establishing ourselves as a role model to other nations but we are not doing so. We should be practicing the great values, concepts and principles of Islam and following its rulings and guidelines. If we do so, this will portray the real image of Islam and make us the perfect model for other societies, communities and nations. Only then will the non-Muslims feel attracted to Islam and may accept the dominance of Islam in their society because they see that the dominance of Islam means justice, good values, well-being of human kind, etc.

This is a great *jihad* which we should undertake though it needs great effort and may take a very long time, i.e. decades, to establish. We should embark on this *jihad* step by step, with different efforts happening concurrently: efforts to educate the Muslims their great religion; efforts to make them practice it and be good role models to others; efforts to make Muslims a great nation, and to make them united.

Looking at the Muslim *ummah* or community today, the basic concept which will lead to unity is missing - the concept of Al-Wala'. Al-Wala' contains 4 sub-concepts: love, care, help and protection. These basic concepts are missing from the Muslim *ummah* and therefore we need to revive these concepts in order to unite the *ummah*.

This is the situation of the Muslims today. How can we talk about the supremacy and the dominance of Islam if the Muslims are in such a weak situation where there are so many discrepancies, contradictions, obstacles, shortcomings, etc. These are areas where great efforts and a great *jihad* are needed.

But to do *jihad* in a forceful way, i.e. by fighting, does not work and may create even more problems. There are some groups of Muslims today who confine *jihad* to fighting as the main and only way to establish the previous mentioned goals and this is destroying the image of Islam and is not doing any favour to the Muslims. Those people interpret this *hadith* to mean fighting but this may not be applicable to the situation of the Muslims today where fighting may cause more and greater harm.

External challenges encountering Muslims

The Muslim community is encountering two kinds of challenges - the internal challenges (some of which were previously mentioned) and the external challenges which are being imposed on them by the opponents of Islam. Those opponents are coming up with different ways of 'fighting' and trying to rule the Muslim world. These external challenges include all aspects of globalisation, modernity, change of lifestyle, technology misuse, changing values, etc. The battle field of these challenges are the minds and attitudes of Muslims specially the young generation, where the focus is on influencing the attitudes of the Muslims through influencing their way of thinking and altering their perceptions.

The opponents of Islam are promoting evil and negative concepts through new ways and means. One of them is changing our perception about things, where wrong-doings and evil deeds are being perceived as acceptable or even preferable. The latest findings of researches and studies, like cognitive psychology, are used to influence the world, including the Muslims, to change their attitudes, values and even beliefs.

If we accept the situation as it is and not do anything about it, the negative consequences will be greater in the future. Today everything, including the future, is being preplanned and designed but the Muslims are not aware of this. We are not aware that we are the subjects of the schemes of others - that we are being used or victimised as target groups where the Muslim minds are being manipulated and brainwashed. Therefore we need to counter these external challenges. This is also a great *jihad* because these opponents of Islam are using such means and ways to

threaten our values, beliefs and identities as Muslims. We need to be aware of the situation and think about what is being designed to influence us and we should use the same means to counter these negative influences.

The influencing method used by the opponents is similar to the insinuation of the Shaitan. This insinuation, as stated in the Qur'an, is done by the Shaitan to colour our perception. As Allah says, Shaitan will either promote evil by colouring our perception so that bad things are being perceived as good, or by influencing us and preventing us from doing good deeds. For example, if we want to give *sadakah*, Shaitan will insinuate to us that doing such a good deed will burden our finances and influence us into thinking about what better use we could have for the money if we did not give it away.

It is also mentioned in the Qur'an that Shaitan creates conflicts and disputes among the Muslims, also through colouring their perception. A word or term may have different meanings and different interpretations which in turn will lead to different understandings. For example, if a person uses a double-meaning word, Shaitan comes in and insinuates by causing the other party to misinterpret the meaning and this leads to conflicts and disputes. That's why quarrels occur between husbands and wives, brothers, friends, community members, etc.

This same method of colouring or manipulating our perception is being used today by evil doers to promote evil through many different means such as the media and technology. Whether it is through pictures or spoken or written words, these methods are used to change and alter our perception, influencing our attitudes and values and the way we view the world.

This is one of the real areas of *jihad* today for Muslim educators and intellectuals.

Technology can be used in both a negative and/or positive way. We must master it and be in control of it, using it for our benefit and not to merely be passive users. When we use technology, e.g. the Internet, we must use it in a way where we are the ones who control it, and not as a manipulation tool of others. We should use it in our *da'wah*, as a form of counter manipulation. We use it to alter the perception of our Muslim community back to its original, positive form, whether it is our values, beliefs or attitudes.

We can also use the Qur'anic style of *da'wah*, using metaphors and analogies. This methodology is something which we are very weak at. Metaphorical Thinking and Analytical Thinking are powerful skills which we need to learn. These are actually Qur'anic styles. Even though these styles of thinking appear as products of the West, i.e. the products of Cognitive Psychology which was established about 50 years ago, they were actually established 1,500 years ago by Islam. But the Muslims themselves are not using these tools. Thus, we need to learn these

methods and start using them. We need to use imageries and similes in our dialogue when we give *da'wah* as this makes it easier for people to understand the message.

Part of our *jihad* and obligations is to update and equip ourselves with the right tools. Willingness and enthusiasm is not enough. We need to be able to learn and utilise the right tools to counter what is being imposed on us by the evil doers.

Conclusion

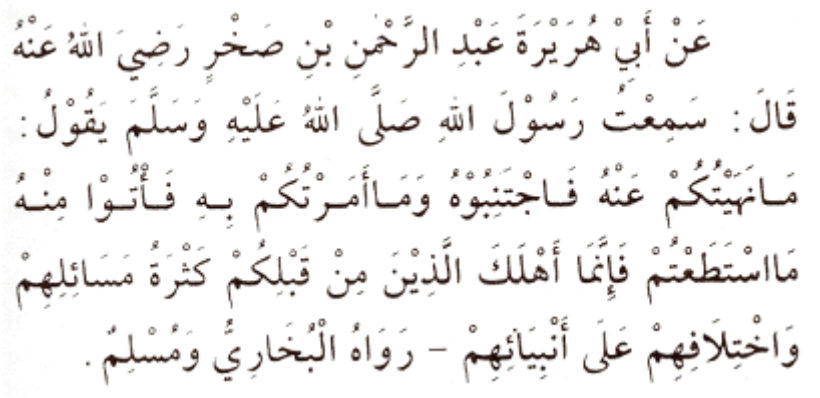
We need to understand ourselves, to understand Islam, to educate others about Islam, to understand the contemporary challenges, to equip ourselves with the right tools so that we can face and counter the contemporary challenges in the right way. When we talk about the concept of *jihad* we shouldn't just talk about the common understanding of *jihad* - we shouldn't get emotional about it, forgetting about ourselves or the world we're living in or the situation of our *ummah* or about the challenges we are facing. Thus it is not easy to truly understand the different aspects of the concept of *jihad* or how to implement these aspects in our world today.

When we discuss about the concept of *jihad* we have to resolve the conflicts that exist within ourselves - the conflicts between reality and the ideal situation. One of the biggest efforts we have to undertake is to determine how we can bridge the distance between these conflicts. We need to bridge the gap between the ideal situation and the real world.

To resolve these conflicts within us, we need psychological and social adjustments. We live in a society which is somehow corrupted but we still maintain our values and try to do something to improve the situation. Otherwise without these adjustments we may end up with either confrontation and aggressiveness or living a modern life and rejecting our values and beliefs.

Both extremes are not acceptable. What we need is assertiveness, a social and psychological adjustment. We need to determine how we can live in this modern world as a good Muslim, maintaining our identity and moral values. These are great challenges which we face today. We have to be practical in dealing with these challenges. When we talk about Islam we usually talk in the theoretical sense, e.g. what is *taqwa* (piety), *ikhlas* (sincerity), etc. We need to be able to implement these concepts in our everyday life activities and practices especially as we face all these different challenges. Thus we need to address Islamic concepts with reality, within the context of the actual situation of the society today.

Hadith 9


عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ بْنِ صَخْرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ:
مَانَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ فَاجْتَنِبُوْهُ وَمَاأَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ فَأْتُوْا مِنْهُ
مَااسْتَطَعْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَثْرَةُ مَسَائِلِهِمْ
وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah 'Abd al-Rahman bin Sakhr, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"Avoid that which I forbid you to do and do that which I command you to do to the best of your capacity. Verily the people before you were destroyed only because of their excessive questioning and their disagreement with their Prophets."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

Sabab al-wurud (reasons and background of a *hadith*) is very important to enable us to understand its meaning. This *hadith* can be understood by knowing its background. It was related during an incident where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said: "Allah has commanded you to perform Hajj. So perform Hajj, O servants of Allah." Then a man stood up and said: "O Prophet of Allah, do we have to do it every year?" Then the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said: "That whatever I forbid you to do, avoid it and whatever I command you to do, do it as much as you can."

Lessons

The incident above was at the time of revelation. Asking too many questions about an obligation may lead to complications and confusions. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* was not happy with the question raised by the man for it could have caused the Hajj to be performed every year by each Muslim if the answer was yes to that question.

However, asking questions in the right way is encouraged as understood from the first *hadith* in this Forty Hadith collection. In fact, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* used questions and answers to educate his Companions. Questions that lead to knowledge and goodness are encouraged. What is prohibited and discouraged are questions that will lead to confusion, doubt and chaos in the community, like asking questions about unnecessary details.

One significant characteristic of Shariah, i.e. Islamic Law, is its flexibility and practicality. One's capacity is regarded and considered in fulfilling obligations.
A Muslim is encouraged to do good actions based on his/her ability and capacity.

Hence Hajj is performed when one has the ability and facility to do it. However if one is tied-up with loans or with other clashing obligations, then there is room for delaying it for another time. This is supported by the Qur'anic verse: "…And Hajj to the House (Kaabah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those can afford the expenses…" [Surah Al-Imran (3): ayat 97].

In other actions like prayers, the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* statement "perform as much as you can" can also mean to perform it at the preferred time and mode (in congregation). However due to unavoidable circumstances, they can be performed later within the specified time. Similarly, a person who is not able to stand in prayer may pray while sitting.

Flexibility is also attributed to other obligations like fasting. For example, one may break the fast while traveling or if he is sick and make it up on other days.

The forbidden must be totally avoided by the Muslim to the extent that whatever leads to *haram* (prohibited act) must be avoided as well, even without intention of indulging in it. By refraining from acts that lead to a prohibited act, we are actually safeguarding ourselves from falling into the forbidden.

Another application of the statement "perform as much as you can" is what Imam al-Shatibi said about a Muslim should not attach hardship to any good deed or act even if it is an obligation. If there is an easier option, one should not use the harder option. For example, during cold weather we should use warm water for *wudu'* (ablution), if we have the option. Hardship is not intended by the *shari'ah* and should be avoided. However when there is no other choice, then the reward for the person will be higher.

The same principle applies to *mandubat* (good actions that are not compulsory but encouraged). We should do as much as we can. According to Imam al-Shatibi one shouldn't make any commitment that he/she must do a certain *mandubat* following strictly to a certain schedule but instead he/she should do it with ease at his/her own capacity. For example, don't make it a *wajib* (compulsory) that you will fast every Monday and Thursday but do it as much as you are able to comfortably and break it from time to time. If you try to commit yourself in these matters, they may burden you and you may finally get fed up and abandon them.

On this issue, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said: "O people, perform such acts as you are capable of doing, for Allah does not grow weary but you will get tired."
In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said: "The acts most pleasing to Allah are those which are done continuously, even if they are small." [Recorded by Imam Muslim]

There are some exceptions to the *hadith* which can be understood from the Qur'an and Sunnah. When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* forbade the *haram*, the general rule is to avoid them. However there are exceptions like during necessity or when there is a clash between a minor and a major harm. For example, in a situation where it is necessary to eat something which is forbidden or face the risk of losing one's life. In this case, a greater harm is avoided by tolerating a minor harm. This principle is called by the scholars as weighing between benefits and harm.

Conclusion

Understanding and practicing these principles may lead us to live a better and practical life, and help us fulfill our obligations in the right way. Applying them will lead us to love, appreciate and continuously practice Ibadah (good deeds).

Hadith 10

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى طَيِّبٌ لَايَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا
وَإِنَّ اللهَ أَمَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ بِمَاأَمَرَ بِهِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ فَقَالَ تَعَالَى: يَأَيُّهَا
الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا، وَقَالَ تَعَالَى:
يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَارَزَقْنَاكُمْ. ثُمَّ ذَكَرَ
الرَّجُلُ يُطِيْلُ السَّفَرَ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ يَمُدُّ يَدَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ:
يَارَبِّ يَارَبِّ. وَمَطْعَمُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَشْرَبُهُ حَرَامٌ وَمَلْبَسُهُ
حَرَامٌ وَغُذِيَ بِالْحَرَامِ فَأَنَّى يُسْتَجَابُ لَهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Verily Allah the Exalted is pure. He does not accept but that which is pure. Allah commands the believers with what He commanded the Messengers. Allah the Almighty has said: "O you Messengers! Eat of the good things and act righteously" [23:51-53]. And Allah the Almighty also said: "O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you with" [2:167-172].**
> **Then he (the Prophet) mentioned (the case of) the man who, having journeyed far, is dishevelled and dusty and who stretches out his hands to the sky (saying): "O Lord! O Lord!" (while) his food was unlawful, his drink was unlawful, his clothing was unlawful, and he is nourished with unlawful things, so how can he be answered?"**

[Muslim]

Background

The word "*at-tayyib"* is used in the Qur'an and Sunnah to describe actions, good deeds, people, things, speech, etc. This term is used as adjectives. Literally it means something good. Ibn Rajab interpreted the word as "*at-tahir"*, or pure.

The term "Verily Allah the Exalted is pure" means Allah has all the attributes of perfection and completeness, free from any kind of shortcomings, weaknesses or needs.

As for "He does not accept but that which is pure", the *hadith* refers to all good deeds. Allah does not accept any deeds that are spoilt by any aspects that may ruin it. For example, the deed must be free from showing-off to others and in the case that involves wealth then the wealth must come from legal sources.

Allah commanded the Believers (Mu'minin) in the same manner as He commanded the Messengers:

"O Messengers! Eat of the Tayyibat" [Surah Al-Mu'minun (23): ayat 51]

"O you who believe! Eat of the Tayyibat that We have provided you with, .." [Surah Al-Baqarah (2): ayat 172]

Lessons

The verses above and this *hadith* imply the following beneficial and useful rulings:

- The money that the Muslims earn must be pure and legal.
- The food that is consumed must be lawful *(halal)*.
- The money with which a person buys food must be lawful, coming from lawful sources.
- These are the keys for acceptance of our deeds by Allah.
- Whether something is permissible or prohibited is by the will of Allah. He explains, guides and tells us what are permissible and what are not. It is mentioned in the Qur'an that some people have wrongfully made something unlawful when actually Allah has made it lawful, and vice versa. It is actually Allah's right to make things lawful and unlawful.
- Earning and consuming lawful things are important conditions for acceptance of our supplications (*du'a*) by Allah.

Adab (manners) of *du'a* mentioned by this *hadith*:

- Earning and consuming lawful things.
- Travelling is one of the occasions when *du'a* is accepted by Allah. Other occasions mentioned by other *hadiths* are as follows: during travelling, sickness, prostration, rainfall and during the last third of the night. These chances need to be observed so as not to be missed by the people going through these occasions.
- Being humble in the *du'a*.
- To raise the hands towards the sky.

- Eagerness in performing the *du'a*, such as asking Allah many times like saying " Ya rabb, ya rabb". *Du'a* is an important form of worship *(ibadah)* that must be eagerly practised by the Muslims. It is a high form of *ibadah* as it shows our need of Allah in helping us. We are in need of Allah's mercy more than we need the air for breathing. We need His help, guidance and mercy in every second and our every single movement.

If these *adab* are not observed, then our *du'a* may not be responded by Allah. If we want Allah to respond to our *du'a*, then we need to respond to his commandments such as eating only that which are lawful to us.

Another ruling from the *hadith* is that charity (*sadaqah*) is only accepted by Allah if it is from lawful sources. This is based on "Allah is pure and only accepts what is pure". Wealth that is obtained from unlawful sources should not be given as *sadaqah* or used in performing any form of worship like performing the Haj. An example is when a person steals money and uses it to perform the Haj. In this context, Ibn Abbas said: "Filth does not expiate filth".

Another ruling given by the scholars is that if somebody stole money, then it must be returned and not be given away as charity. This is particularly applicable in the case of a person wanting to repent *(taubah)* after stealing the money. The person needs to return the money to the owner. If this is not possible, like if the owner is not known or cannot be found, then according to some scholars it can be used for public benefit like roads.

An explanation of the *hadith* given by Jamaluddin Zarabozo is that this *hadith* alludes to the importance of supporting oneself through permissible means. How one supports oneself is how one lives. If it is through legal means, then it will be blessed by Allah.

Another explanation given by the scholars is about the issue of 'public belongings', like the property of a company, organization or an institution. This is an important issue and must be observed because public belongings that are wrongfully taken are considered *ghalul* (a kind of stealing or taking something illegally), a practice which are is expiated even by Jihad in the way of Allah until one pays them back. This is related in a *hadith* about a martyr who took a small portion of the booty of the war.

Today, many Muslims take this issue of *ghalul* for granted. For example, taking paper and pen from the office for personal use. Another example is the personal use of the photocopy machine, company car, telephone, company money or any other instrument without getting the permission from the authority. We will also be held responsible if we damage or vandalise public property/belongings.

A good example of protecting oneself from *ghalul* is one set by Khalifah Umar bin Abdulaziz when he used one candle for his administration duties and put it out upon completion of his duties. He would then use his personal candle.

We need to learn from this example of how we should use things in the way they are allocated for. For example, we need to turn off the lights and the air-conditioner when we leave the office and save the electricity bill of the company/organization. By doing this, we will be rewarded by Allah and Allah will respond to our *du'a*.

We need to create awareness among the Muslims to be more responsible and not to indulge in *ghalul*.

A contemporary issue related to this *hadith* is about caring what we eat, in terms of two things:

- To be aware of the ingredients of the food in the restaurant or packed/canned foods, especially if they are imported. We need to ensure that they are lawful.
- Many of the things that people eat may cause health problems. We need to be more aware about the healthy aspects of the food, that they are 'pure'. Universities may need to introduce health education so that people can know what the good foods are. They need to be aware of preservatives, colouring and chemical used in the food. Harmful contents are not '*tayyiban*' (pure).

Conclusion

Scholars mentioned that whatever we eat affects our attitude and behaviour. We need to eat the right food (at-Tayyib) and in the right manners *(adab)* as prescribed by Islam - e.g. not to eat excessively. By observing these issues, if Allah wills, it will lead us to be better Muslims with a better level of Iman and purer heart devoting to Allah. Then everything that we do can be described as '*at-tayyib*'. This condition is attained by those who observe the manners, earning, drinking, eating the *'tayyib*' and giving charity from the '*tayyib*'. We will then be the '*tayyibun*', pure and blessed by Allah.

Hadith 11

عَنْ أَبِيْ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيّ بْنِ أَبِيْ طَالِبٍ سِبْطِ
رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَرَيْحَانَتِهِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا
قَالَ، حَفِظْتُ مِنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: دَعْ
مَايَرِيْبُكَ إِلَى مَالاَ يَرِيْبُكَ. رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَالنَّسَائِيُّ،
وَقَالَ التِّرْمِذِيُّ: حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ.

On the authority of Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ali bin Abi Taib, the grandson of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ëalayhi wasallam*, and who is dearest to him, *radiyallahu ëanhuma*, who said: ìI committed to memory from the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ëalayhi wasallam*, (the following words):

> **"Leave that about which you are in doubt for that about which you are in no doubt."**

[Al-Tirmidhi and al-Nasaíi related it, and al-Tirmidhi said: It is a good and genuine Hadith]

Background

This *hadith* goes in line with Hadith 6. In this *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, has set a criterion by which Muslims can decide whether something is permissible or not. There is another version of this *hadith* where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, elaborated further by saying: "Verily, truth is tranquillity and falsehood is doubt." This means that the truth will lead to tranquillity and falsehood will lead to doubt.

Thus the criterion set by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, allows us to judge what is false or wrong (i.e. something which causes us to be doubtful) and what is the truth (i.e. something which we are sure of and confident that it is correct because we feel happy and at peace with it). This *hadith* lays down a principle that can be applied in all aspects of one's life. It also shows the way to truth and righteousness. Thus, this *hadith* is of extreme importance.

Lessons

This *hadith* indicates that one should only perform an act or deed (which is permissible and proper) if he is positive or certain of it. Performing this act will lead to some kind of tranquillity or happiness in this life and in the Hereafter – this is one of the benefits of applying the *hadith*.

In the other version of this *hadith* mentioned above, falsehood leads to doubt and never to tranquillity. So if a believer finds his heart being disturbed by something (i.e. he feels uncertain or doubtful), then he should stay away from it. The heart of the true believer is tranquil at the sight of truth and righteousness. And the heart becomes unsure and shaky at the sight of falsehood and wrong.

We can conclude that this criterion applies only to the guided righteous Muslim who is enlightened by *wahi*, i.e. the Qur'an and Sunnah, and is adhering to this guidance. If a Muslim is indulging in forbidden acts, this criterion will not work for him because his heart will not be sensitive to what it faces.

The criterion of the *hadith* is activated by certain conditions or pre-requisites: knowledge, *iman*, adhering to the enlightenment of the *wahi*, etc. In other words, this criterion can only exist if the person is adhering to the commands of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*, the commands of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, following the *wahi*, etc. Only then can a person reach such a status or level. But for those who indulge in *muharramat* (prohibitions), do not observe *wajibat* (obligations) , etc., this criterion will not be activated. Even if it does exist, it will not be reliable.

Sometimes there are people who try to avoid doubtful matters while they are indulging in *muharram*. For example, the people who killed al-Hussain (the brother of the narrator of this *hadith*). After having killed him, they start discussing about the ruling on the killing of mosquitoes, whether it is permissible or not.

There are many matters or issues relating to the *shariah* where the scholars have conflicting views or opinions. For example, some scholars say that it is a *wajib* to recite Surat al-Fatihah in the congregational prayer while other scholars say it is not. Or the paying of *zakat* for Muslim women's jewellery – whether a woman has to pay *zakat* for jewellery that she wears/uses and not just for those that she keeps for investment – an issue which has never been resolved. In these situations, can the Muslim apply the criterion of this *hadith*? According to some scholars, it is permissible to do so – this is known as the 'cautious approach'. This became a very well-known approach for some scholars who used it whenever there were conflicting views.

So for the issue of reciting Surat al-Fatihah, to those who insist that without reciting it the prayer is invalid, these scholars following the cautious approach say that they should recite it. And in the case of the *zakat* for jewellery, the cautious approach is that it is better to pay the *zakat* for all jewellery, whether it is worn/used or not, so that the woman will be 'saved' either way.

There is another approach of the scholars which holds that it is not a matter of conflicting views, it is a matter of the authenticity and soundness of the proofs. If there is a sound *dalil* (evidence), the scholars will follow it. This approach is also practiced by those who strictly follow a *madhab* because the *madhab* follows a dalil.

There are also many situations which consist of both good and bad. The cautious approach will suggest that we avoid an act if it involves both good and bad aspects. The approach which follows the *dalil* applies the concept of weighing between benefits and harms. This involves applying principles derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. These principles state that it is permissible to give up a minor benefit in order to avoid a major harm. Or tolerate a minor harm in order to avoid a major one or to gain a major benefit.

Looking back on Islamic history, we can see that some scholars were for one approach while other scholars were for the other. Thus it is not crucial for us to determine which one is the better approach.

In the situation of conflicting views where something is known for certain and something which is just a mere conjecture, what is known for sure will take precedence, i.e. will be the prevailing view. This is one of the principles of Fiqh. For example, if we know that a piece of clothing has some impurity on it but we are not sure exactly where, it is better that we wash the entire clothing. Another example is if a person is doubtful about how many *rakaats* he has already prayed, whether it is one or two, he should continue his prayer with what he is certain of - he is sure he has prayed one *rakaat* so he should continue with the second one.

Another principle is that it is not allowed to make *ijtihad* if something is clearly and definitively stated in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith. If there is text which clearly states the *hukum* (ruling), then the *ijtihad* is not needed.

There is no righteousness or piety in avoiding something that is clearly and unquestionably permissible, i.e. something that is lawful and clearly permitted by *shariah*. For example, in the area of food, one shouldn't say he will refrain from eating meat as a matter of righteousness. He will not be rewarded for this.

There is the *hadith* that tells the story of the three men, where one vowed not to sleep so he can pray all night, one vowed to fast everyday and one vowed not to marry, all for the sake of righteousness. These actions which these men vowed not to do (sleeping, eating and getting married) are lawful things which are not only permitted but also encouraged. (In fact, some scholars even say that there should be a minimum number of hours everyday which we allocate for sleep so that our bodies get enough rest.) When the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, heard of the three men's vows, he was very disappointed. He, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, called them and

told them he was the most righteous and pious amongst them and yet he sleeps, eats and marries. Moreover the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, made a principal concerning this matter by saying: "This is my way, and whoever refrains from it is not part of me."

Thus, if something is clearly permissible in *shariah*, there is no point in refraining from doing it with the intention that doing so is an *ibadah*. If it is for other good reasons, e.g. to avoid meat because of one's health, then it is okay.

One of the tricks of *shaitan* is that he will take something which is forbidden and present it in a way to make it look like a permissible act. One should be careful not to be deceived by *shaitan*. If something is *muharram*, then no matter what, it is forbidden. We must not allow *shaitan* to influence us and change our perception into thinking that something which is forbidden may not be all that bad after all – that it is permissible to do it.

Shaykh Jamaluddin Zarabozo says in his commentaries on Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith that in these contemporary times there are many matters in business transactions where there might contain some implicit aspects of *riba'*. Thus there are many new situations or issues where people are confused as to whether something is acceptable or not. He says that it is better to avoid acts which we are not sure of or where there are no clear views from scholars.

Sometimes these issues are discussed by scholars but their views are not being promoted enough to the Muslims in general. Many of the renowned scholars today meet once a year to discuss contemporary issues and these issues are then published in a special magazine. Unfortunately, this magazine is not widely distributed and not many people, including educators, other scholars, etc., are aware of it. We should all try to keep ourselves informed with the latest views or opinions of the scholars, especially on matters related to our lifestyle today, e.g. banking, insurance, etc.

Conclusion

This *hadith* equips Muslims with a practical criterion by which to judge doubtful acts and situations, and enables them to make the right decision concerning these matters. However, Muslims need to understand how to apply such a criterion correctly and not to be deceived by wrong perceptions or personal interest.

Hadith 12

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : مِنْ حُسْنِ اِسْلاَمِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَالاَ
يَعْنِيْهِ . حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ . رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُ هٰكَذَا .

On the authority of Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said : The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said :

> **"Part of the perfection of someone's Islam is his leaving alone that which does not concern him."**

[Hadith hasan - Recorded by Tirmidhi]

Background

Ibn Rajab, one of the commentators of Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith, mentioned that this *hadith* is a foundation of manners, behaviour and etiquette in Islam.

Ibn Rajab also quotes Imam Ibn Abi Zayd Al-Qairawani, one of the Maliki Imams, as saying that the following four *hadiths* set the main concept for good manners and behaviour:

- The *hadith* mentioned above.
- "Let him who believes in Allah and the Last Day either speak good or keep silent, .." [Bukhari and Muslim. Refer to Hadeeth 15 of this collection]
- A man said to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*: "Counsel me". He said : " Do not become angry". The man repeated [his request] several times, and he said: "Do not become angry."
  [Al-Bukhari. Refer to Hadith 16 of this collection]
- "None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself." [Al-Bukhari. Refer to Hadith 13 of this collection]

Lessons

This *hadith* states that a believer should avoid things that are of no concern to him. They are of no benefit to this life nor to the hereafter, in terms of belief, speech or actions. In justifying this point, the Maliki jurist Imam Ibn Al-Arabi said that a person is not able to take care of all the necessary matters, why would he then get involved in the unnecessary matters that are of no real concern.

Jamaluddin Zarabozo, one of the contemporary commentators of Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith, emphasises that Islam protects society as a whole from any kind of harm. Much of the harm inflicted on the society are due to people indulging in the unnecessary matters like meddling into the affairs of others when one has no right or responsibility over the particular issue. These types of practices normally lead to great evil in the society. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, recommended a way to avoid societal problems.

He also commented that a believer should train him/herself to concentrate to be involved in the beneficial matters so that this in itself will be the person's attitude. Do not waste time, money and effort in things that are of no benefit in this life and the hereafter.

Putting the *hadith* in a different way, part of the perfection of faith *(iman)* of a believer is to be concerned with matters that are beneficial in this life and the hereafter. This is emphasised by another *hadith*:

"Be keen with what is beneficial to you, and seek help from Allah - do not be reckless." [Tirmidhi]

Muslims have enough matters of concern to the extent one may not have enough time to deal with all of them. This is related to the issue of time management, whereby we need to be involved with matters that are of concern to us.

An important question related to this *hadith* is what are the things to be of concern to a true believer? Answering this question will enable us to practice this *hadith* in the right manner.

- One of the things that are of concern is to fulfill the obligations *(wajib)*, to perform as much as we can of the recommended or preferable acts *(mandub)*, to avoid the forbidden *(haram)* and to avoid as much as we can of the *makruh* (those that are disliked).
- Fard-a'yn, an individual obligation, are matters of concern to every one of us. Examples are matters like worship and supplication.

- Fard-kifayah, community-wide collective obligations, must not be neglected and should also be matters of concern to us. An example is to work for the betterment of the community. Everyone with their own profession and expertise has a role to contribute towards the community.

- Other matters of concern to Muslims are enjoining good and discouraging evil, self-accountability and to practice Ihsan in all that we do. In the Quran:

  (Allah) Who created death and life that He may try you, which of you is best in deeds; and He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.
  [Surah Al-Mulk (67): ayat 2]

  As related in Hadith 17 in this collection:

  "Verily, Allah has prescribed excellence (Ihsan) in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill well; and if you slaughter, slaughter well. Let each one of you sharpen his blade and let him spare suffering to the animal he slaughters."
  [Recorded by Imam Muslim]

- Another matter of concern to all Muslims, but is currently lacking among us, is to think about the affairs of oneself, the community and the whole Muslim community *(ummah)*. We need to think of how to further improve our (the Muslims) situation and not just be content with the current situation. This applies in whatever we do, whether we are worshippers, teachers, professionals or preachers. We should only be slaves of Allah and not others. Hence, we should not be enslaved by current methods or routines of doing things. We need to think creatively to improve the situation, in ways not contradicting the *sharia'h*. In this context, modern tools like 'idea generation' and 'problem solving' can be of great benefit.

We also need to be concerned about the greater challenges facing our community. In this era of technology and communication revolution, many of us are being enslaved intellectually. We need to think about our future generation because we will be responsible before Allah. We need to apply and disseminate our knowledge and not just building 'reservoirs' of knowledge. We need to design our future and not just stand passively and let others design and impose upon us their preconceived scenarios.

Conclusion

Matters of concern to the Muslims cover the affairs of oneself, the community and the whole Muslim community *(ummah)*. We need to create awareness among each other in facing the issues and challenges of the *ummah*. For example, this can be done through dialogues and talks. Those in authority have a greater responsibility in carrying out this task.

We should be aware not to waste our time and effort in matters that are of no concern to us. We should keep ourselves busy only with matters of benefit to us and to the *ummah*.

Hadith 13

عَنْ أَبِيْ حَمْزَةَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ خَادِمِ
رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَايُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيْهِ مَايُحِبُّ
لِنَفْسِهِ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hamzah Anas bin Malik, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who was the servant of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, reported that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"None of you truly believes (in Allah and in His religion) until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself"**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

In the Musnad of Imam Ahmad, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"The servant does not reach the reality of faith until he loves for others what he loves for himself."

In Sahih Muslim from Abdullah ibn Amr Al-Ass, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"…Whoever wishes to be delivered from the fire and enter the garden should die with faith in Allah and the Last Day and should treat the people as he wishes to be treated by them…"
[Sahih Muslim; Book 020, Number 4546]

Lessons

These three *hadiths* carry similar meanings that is to love for other Muslims what one loves for oneself. They lay down a very significant principle of behaviour of Muslims with each other. A true Islamic community is when it is built upon love and compassion for its members. Every member should care for and help one another. They should treat others in ways they want to be treated.

It is a community with no barriers among the races, colour, *mazhab* or group or ranks in implementing this Islamic concept of brotherhood and love. All these barriers must be removed for this concept to be realized. Other barriers to be removed include jealousy, selfishness and envy.

Loving goodness for others is part of loving them. We love good things for them as much as we love those things for ourselves. We treat them the way we want them to treat us.

Part of good treatment of others are excusing them and giving them fair chances. For example, if a person commits a mistake, then we should find excuses for them and not jump to conclusions. There are many possibilities or ways for us to excuse others who have committed mistakes, and hence enabling us to live peacefully and avoid confrontations.

When we deal with other Muslims in the community, we should deal in the best manner. We should choose the best words in our conversation. The Qur'an says:

"O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and speak always the right word"
[Surah Al-Ahzab (33) : ayat 70]

"And tell My servants that they should always say those words that are the best. Satan verily, sows a state of conflict and disagreements among them."
[Surah Al-Isra' (17) : ayat 53]

Good words can minimize quarreling and confrontations among the members of the society.

Mercy and compassion should exist in our treatment of others. This is related to a very important concept in Islam, which is Al-Wala'. The relationship among the Muslim community members is based on this concept of Al-Wala'. It does not only mean protection, but it also encompasses love, care and help. These are the four aspects of Al-Wala' normally mentioned by the scholars. These aspects are interdependent with each other. For example, to care for others comes after the loving of others. Therefore, in relation to the *hadith*, Muslims must also love and care about other Muslims.

Another important issue is not to be arrogant. This comes in many forms (as mentioned by the scholars) such as belittling others, looking down on others, looking at oneself as being more superior or better than others, etc. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise." A person (amongst his hearers) said: "Verily, a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine." He (the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*) remarked: "Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdaining the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people."
[Sahih Muslim: Book 001, Number 0164]

Therefore we need to be humble and show mercy to others. Part of loving goodness for others is to practice mutual consultation, enjoining goodness and forbidding evil. The advice is to be done in a good way, based on loving them and not for seeking personal interest. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also used to show his love of others when giving advice to them. It may also be good to explicitly tell the listeners that the reason we are advising them is because we love them and we care for them. If an advice is specific for a person, then it should be done in private to avoid offending the person.

Fudhayl ibn Iyad went one step higher in putting this *hadith* into practice. He mentioned that we should not only wish others to be like us but also to wish them to be better than us. However, he said that this is not obligatory *(wajib)*.

Ibn Rajab said that we should wish other Muslims to be better than us in worshipping *(ibadah)* and manners *(akhlaq)*, but at the same time we should wish for ourselves to be better than what we are now. It is not good enough to just wish for something good for other Muslims but at the same time we are deficient and not striving to be better Muslims ourselves. It is from the goodness that we have attained that we also love for other Muslims to have. It is not fair to them that we wish for them to attain the same deficiency that we have in ourselves. Therefore, it is a matter of continuous competition among us to attain the goodness.

A related contemporary issue is about the brotherhood in Islam. What criterion should be used in deciding who are the brothers in Islam that they deserve our support? There are many Muslims in the world today, but many of them are weak in *iman* and violating some principles of Islam. In the past, these people were dissociated by the scholars because they were the minority. However, today it is less appropriate to apply this same principle of disassociation and therefore people with the minimum level of Islam should be considered brothers in Islam. Hence we should care for them and love for them what we love for ourselves. For example, if they commit a sin then we love for them that they leave the sinful act. We should advise them out of our love for them.

Conclusion

This *hadith* can be practiced at any level, any time and with any Muslim. It can be practiced in different manners, in the form of advising, giving charity, enjoining goodness and forbidding evil.

In practicing the *hadith*, the various aspects of the *hadith* and the inter-related concepts must be observed. A concept cannot be observed in isolation as it may cause misunderstanding and incorrect application of the concept itself.

Hadith 14

عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُوْدٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَايَحِلُّ دَمُ امْرِىءٍ مُسْلِمٍ إِلَّا
بِإِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ: اَلثَّيِّبُ الزَّانِيْ، وَالنَّفْسُ بِالنَّفْسِ،
وَالتَّارِكُ لِدِيْنِهِ الْمُفَارِقُ لِلْجَمَاعَةِ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ
وَمُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, *radiyallahu anhu*, who said: The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"The blood of a man who is a Muslim is not lawful (i.e. cannot be lawfully shed), save if he belongs to one of three (classes): a married man who is an adulterer; life for a life (i.e. for murder); one who is a deserter of his religion, abandoning the community."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

Before the arrival of Islam, human life had no value. A person can easily be killed for many different reasons, e.g. revenge, to show the superiority of a tribe, killing a newborn baby girl because it was considered a shame, etc.
When Islam arrived, it stressed on the value and importance of human life. A life must not be threatened unless it is lawful, i.e. where a serious violation of the *shariah* had occurred. Islam also made it clear that the taking of a human life is the responsibility of the highest authority, i.e. the judge. This is to prevent this practice from being abused for personal interests.

Islam has established rules and regulations for the community that minimise the need to carry out the execution of a man or woman as allowed by the three cases defined in the hadith. Islam is a peaceful religion and it has established rules where people respect each other and live together peacefully, without lives being threatened. In the case of *zina*, Islam has rules for the Muslim society that regulate relationships. Hence, it is very difficult for the cases mentioned to occur if these rules and regulations are observed. As for 'deserting the religion', the Muslim community is based on knowledge where *ilm* and *da'wah* are continuously being disseminated

and conveyed. Thus people are aware of their religious obligations and the minds of the society are well-protected from being manipulated. All these measures have been set up by Islam to minimise the occurrences of these exceptional cases where the taking of a human life is allowed. These truly are exceptional cases because during the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, (and later during the era of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs) there were only a few cases where such violations or problems occurred.

This *hadith* should be seen and understood from a positive viewpoint – it is not legal to kill a Muslim except in one of three cases. Because these three cases are exceptional, it shows that the Muslim blood is valued and treasured and is blessed by Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

In the last sermon of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, during his farewell Hajj (which was a few months before he died), he, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, re-emphasised the principle of this *hadith* which is the sanctity of a Muslim's blood. Islam encourages Muslims to avoid any kind of act, e.g. violence, injustice, etc. that will lead to violating this principle. All this shows just how important it is not to shed the blood of a Muslim.

Lessons

In Islam what is seen as punishment are actually measures put in place to protect the Muslim society and community. Islam takes precautions to ensure that these evil acts (or the violations of these principles) are minimised. In other words, Islam promotes good values and chastity; it encourages marriage, i.e. the legal relationship between man and woman; Islam also discourages acts that might lead to the violations of this principle, e.g. *zina*.

Islam makes it clear what the duties and obligations of the Muslim are - how we are to treat and respect each other. Islam places importance in a caring society, where the people, whether rich or poor, care for each other. This minimises hatred and hence conflicts and killings.

Adhering to Islam itself (i.e. to stick to the religion) is another means of minimising the occurrences of the exceptional cases mentioned in the *hadith*. The evidence is established and *da'wah* is conveyed and hence the Muslim community is well educated and knowledgeable. They know and understand the religion and their obligations. They are proud to be Muslims and to live in a Muslim community and they can feel the bounty of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. They would never think of forsaking their religion.

But the problem today is that modern technology, e.g. the media, Internet, entertainment, etc., is being misused to promote the three negative cases mentioned: adultery, violence/murder, and apostasy. These are shown as being normal and acceptable for the sake of entertainment. The world today has made bad, unacceptable behaviour and negative elements appear as good and vice versa.

These are serious challenges to the Muslim community today. We have to deal with these challenges very carefully, without forgetting the underlying principles behind this hadith. We have to determine how we can protect the Muslim community from violating these principles. The leaders and *du'at* of the communities have to determine how to counter or minimise the negative influences of the media, especially in areas like entertainment (TV, movies, etc). We have to study why the rates for things like divorce, adultery, violence and apostasy amongst Muslims are high. We have to revive the true roles of parents, *du'ats*, teachers, and leaders of the community to solve these problems. We should especially be concerned about protecting the minds and *akhlaq* (values) of the youths.

There have been many researches and studies that show the negative influences of the media, especially television (e.g. like the book written by Prof Jerry Mander: Four Arguments to Eliminate Television, and the book written by Zig Ziglar: Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World). Studies have shown how television have made children become lazy, physically and mentally, how it affects their academic progress, how it can change their attitude, etc. We Muslims can benefit from these studies by learning from them so as not to allow our children to fall into the same pitfalls.

Another problem is the lack of support within the Muslim communities, in terms of education, health, religious guidance, finance, care, etc. So when certain Muslims are in desperate need for help but no other Muslims are taking the trouble to lend a hand, Christian missionaries would come in and take advantage of the situation. They offer their help, financially, spiritually, etc. There are countries where Muslim families would send their children to Christian schools because it is the Christian schools that have shown greater concern towards the well-being of the Muslim children by providing them with better education and future. This leads to some Muslim families forsaking their religion.

In these sorts of situations, it is the Muslims themselves who are responsible for this apostasy because they do not look out for one another.

Many Muslims today are victims of mind-manipulation where misconceptions created by, for example, Western Orientalists and Christians have influenced their perception and attitude. This results in the Muslim being less careful about his Islam, living a double-standard life – looking at

him from one angle, he looks like a Muslim but looking at him from another angle, he doesn't seem to have the Muslim identity.

This leads to another problem which is the lack of the Muslim identity among the Muslims. There are Muslims today who are promoting non-Muslim identities or speaking highly of other cultures which in the Islamic view may have negative elements. We should maintain and promote our own identity. We can still benefit from progress of the West, e.g. technology advancement, but we should do so in a positive way, without jeopardising the image and values of Islam.

We need to hold more conferences or dialogues and discuss issues like how we can benefit from the positive aspects of technology/change/progress and how to avoid technology misuse. Muslim experts should present their views or propose ideas on how we can achieve this.

We need to discuss these issues which are the real challenges faced by the Muslim community today. We should not just talk about Islamic concepts without putting them in context with reality. We should not just talk about these issues theoretically, simply stating what the rulings on Islam are on this or that matter. We need to have an approach that goes deeper and considers the challenges and strategies we need to put in place in order to help the Muslim community to be positive, confident and proud of their Muslim identity. We need to help them so that they do not become trapped by the challenges they face today.

We need to create awareness among the Muslim community so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities. We need to see how we can revive the original concepts of Islamic values and behaviour in a way that will work today.

Conclusion

This *hadith* needs to be looked at in the positive light where the emphasis is on the value of the human life and not on the punishments permissible for the three cases mentioned. Islam has put in place a system which leads to minimising the occurrences of the three cases. There are strategies, obligations, etc., which help the Muslims to avoid these acts.

Opponents of Islam look at the *hadith* in a negative way where they accuse Islam of being murderous and barbaric. But the truth of the matter is Islam values human life, just as it values chastity (*iffah* or *taharah*) - a virtue which has lost its value in these contemporary times because of the evil being promoted by the opponents via the media and negative side of technology. These negative influences have also caused some Muslims to interpret this *hadith* negatively.

One of the biggest problems today is that with there being more and more challenges, the explanation of the *hadith* should take into account what the problems are that are facing the

Muslims today that violate the principles set up by the *hadith*. We should look into what we can do to promote the principles and virtues mentioned in the *hadith* (e.g. to uphold chastity, valuing human life, that killing is a crime, etc.) and to minimise their violations.

Hadith 15

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Let whosoever believes in Allah and in the Last Day either speak good or be silent. Let whosoever believes in Allah and in the Last Day honour his neighbour. Let whosoever believes in Allah and in the Last Day honour his guest."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* contains the rulings concerning the tongue and the behaviour of Muslims towards others. It also emphasises that we are responsible for what we say.

Imam Haithami points out that this hadith is very similar in meaning to Hadith 13 that says: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." He says that everyone is a neighbour to someone else. Therefore if this *hadith* is properly practiced and applied, then there will be a strong bond and love within the society or community.

Lessons

The responsibility of the Muslim regarding what he says is mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Not a word does he utter but there is a watcher by him ready to record it"
[Surah Qaf (50): ayat 18].

There are also other hadiths which state that the Muslim should be careful about what he says. His words can either, if they are pleasing to Allah, raise him to a higher level; or if his words displease Allah, they may cause him to be thrown into the Hellfire - as stated in a *hadith* recorded by Imam al-Bukhari. This shows that what we say can have a direct effect on whether it will benefit us or not.

One *hadith* (which illustrates the example of a bad consequence resulting from what a person says) states that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that a pious man from Bani Israel use to see his fellow man always committing sins. On day the pious man swore to the sinner: "By Allah, He will never forgive you." Allah was displeased with what the pious man said because only Allah knows what is our destiny, whether someone will end up in Paradise or Hell. Because of this, when the two men died, the pious man was punished and put into Hell and the sinner was forgiven by Allah. [Sunan Abu Daud]

What we can learn here is that either we say something beneficial and good or else we should keep silent.

There are many Islamic guidelines which help us to say good things and to refrain from saying bad things, or things which displeases Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. When we talk to others, whether it is relatives, friends, neighbours, etc., we should select the best terms/words and say them in a nice way. We should ensure that what we say is clear and easily understood. If we are not careful and we do not choose the right words, what we say may be misinterpreted and may lead to conflicts.

As a listener, we have to listen positively and interpret what we hear in a good way. We should not 'over interpret' what we hear; we should not try to 'read between the lines'. Thus, as a speaker we say things in a positive manner and as a listener we interpret things in a positive manner. By doing so Islam encourages us to minimise disputes and conflicts.

If we find ourselves in the middle of a dispute between two people, e.g. between relatives, we should not take sides. We should try to help and reconcile the differences; try to resolve the problems and end the dispute.

If we are being consulted by someone and asked for our advice, we should try our best to give good advice. What we say should help the person and not add to his confusion or doubt. If we do not have enough knowledge and we cannot provide proper advice, then we should keep silent.

Even if we have information which, as a result, may add to the person's confusion, we should keep it to ourselves.

We should keep away as best as we can from unnecessary or non-beneficial talk. People can talk or chat for hours but a lot of what is said is unimportant or trivial and does not benefit anyone. It wastes our time and this continuous talking may even lead us into areas where we might say something which displeases Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

When it comes to saying good things, there are many examples available: *dzikrullah* (remembrance of Allah), reciting the Qur'an, *du'a*, giving advice, etc. These are all things which are pleasing to Allah.

When we meet people who are sick, sad, feeling down, in a low frame of mind, etc., we should say things that will make these people feel better, have patience in facing their calamity, be positive, be strong, etc. This is known as *al-muasah* - to say good things of encouragement to help those facing problems; to not make them panic. The scholars have defined *sabr* (patience) as 'to refrain from panicking' - to refrain from being out of control - and to refrain the tongue from complaining.

Complaining, e.g. simply saying that the weather is hot, will lead us to impatience; it can affect our attitude and hence our work. If we want to lament we should lament only with Allah. If we do it with Allah it is *munajah* - it will turn into *ibadah*. If we do it with others it will be complaining *(tashakki)* - we will be violating the *ibadah* itself, which is *sabr*. So we should learn to minimise and ultimately eliminate the act of complaining.

We should refrain from saying bad things or things which may be untrue. When we hear some news, we shouldn't simply repeat it or spread it without first verifying if the news is true. This could lead to us spreading lies or rumours. We must refrain from:

- spreading rumours, especially those that will cause harm to the community.
- slandering, back-biting, etc.
- sarcasm and making fun of others - this is one of the most common social ills today. It is a sin to make fun of others.

Sometimes we may encounter a situation which involves *fitnah* or *al-fitan*. We have to be careful of what we say. There are people who will take advantage of the situation and they may say things which may worsen the situation. When there is *fitnah*, people are in a panic and might believe anything. That's why we have to be careful of what we say because it may add to the people's fears and problems. What we should do is to help by saying positive things that will

give the people hope; to uplift them and motivate them to face the problems; and not to make it worse.

The second part of this *hadith* stresses on being courteous and generous to our neighbours and guests. This is stated in the Qur'an - Surah An-Nisa'(4): ayat 36: "…do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hand possess."

In one *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Jibril kept advising me concerning the neighbour to the point that I thought that he would inherit from his neighbour." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]. In another *hadith* [also recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim], it is stated: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour."

Another *hadith* records the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, as saying that the person who does not have complete faith *(iman)* is the one from whose affairs the neighbour is not safe. Al-Bukhari and Muslim also records another *hadith* which states that when you cook stew, you should add a little bit more water and give some to your neighbours. This sharing of food between neighbours can strengthen the relationships between them. We should be nice to our neighbours and share our food even if they are not Muslims.

We should be patient with our neighbour even if he causes annoyance to us. In a *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that there are three types of people whom Allah loves. One of them is a person who has a neighbour who causes him harm or annoyance but he remains patient and tolerates the neighbour.

The 'guest' mentioned in the last part of the *hadith* is generally interpreted as a travelling visitor who has come to stay for a short while. One *hadith* states: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be generous to his guest. His special gift (to the guest) is one day and night. He (the guest) is to be entertained for three days. Whatever is beyond that is an act of charity. It is not lawful for a guest to stay with his host to the extent that he makes things difficult for him (the host)." [Al-Bukhari]. Thus, the visitor should not take advantage of a generous host.

Regarding this ruling, the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that hosting, in general, is recommended *(mustahab)* and not obligatory *(wajib)*, even though it is a great and noble act. According to many scholars, the recommended act of hosting does not extend to evildoers or heretics. But some great scholars of today say that we should entertain even evildoers. This is because if we are good Muslims, when we host them and be good to them, we might influence them and cause them to change and become better people. But we should be very cautious if we

were to host these sorts of people - we should only do so if we know there will not be any harm that may be inflicted on us.

Hosting evildoers would be following a general principle of Fiqh which allows us to tolerate a minor harm (e.g. allowing an evildoer to stay with us) in order to attain a major benefit (e.g. influencing him into becoming a good Muslim).

Conclusion

This *hadith* teaches us the proper manners pertaining to speech and entertaining guests. Following the advice given by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, will lead to a more peaceful life and harmonious Islamic society in this life, and attaining the pleasure of Allah in the Hereafter.

Hadith 16

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَجُلاً قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْصِنِيْ، قَالَ: لاَتَغْضَبْ. فَرَدَّدَ مِرَارًا؛ قَالَ: لاَتَغْضَبْ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that a man said to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*:

> **"Advise me! "The Prophet said, "Do not become angry and furious." The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, "Do not become angry and furious."**

[Al-Bukhari; Vol. 8 No. 137]

Background

This *hadith* is also related by other scholars of *hadith*. In another narration, it is related as:

> A man came to the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and said, "Messenger of Allah, teach me some words which I can live by. Do not make them too much for me, lest I forget." The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Do not be angry." [Abu Daud]

Some scholars say that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, knew that the man who asked him used to get angry often and that is why the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gave him that particular advice. This view may lead to narrowing down and limiting the benefit of the *hadith*, whereas it is very comprehensive, far-reaching and applicable to all Muslims because everyone is subject to anger.

There are other Qur'anic verses and *hadith* that emphasize the need to avoid getting angry. Allah mentions the qualities of the *muttaqin*:

> "Those who spend (in Allah's cause) in prosperity and in adversity, who repress their anger, and who pardon men, verily, Allah loves the al-Muhsinun (the good-doers)."
> [Surah Al-Imran (3) : Ayah 133-134]

In another hadith, Abu Hurairah related that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> "A strong person is not the person who throws his adversaries to the ground. A strong person is the person who contains himself when he is angry." [Al-Bukhari; Book 47, No. 47.3.12]

And from the *du'a* (supplications) of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*:

> "I ask you O Allah, for truthful speech during times of pleasure and anger" [Nasaai and Ahmad]

Lessons

There are four views, of which two of them are from the earlier scholars and the other two are from the contemporary scholars, about the interpretation of the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, statement "Do not get angry":

1. A person should learn how to change his character and adapt the characteristics of generosity, kindness, calmness, modesty, patience and forgiving. If a person adapts these qualities, then he may be able to restrain himself when he is about to get angry.
2. One should not act based on anger or while being angry.
3. When a person is about to get angry, he should control himself, be patient and not get angry. This is a contemporary view from Sheikh Al-Bitar.
4. Ustaz Jamaluddin Zarabozo says that the text can be interpreted in the following way: a Muslim must think before acting or speaking. As soon as the feeling of anger appears to oneself, then there is a need to think of why the anger appears and whether it is necessary to be angry. While asking these questions, the person must remember Allah and the Hereafter (Akhirah). This will cause the person to calm down and not get angry.

All these interpretations can be applied as different strategies in handling anger in different situations.

If a person gets angry, then it is necessary that the person performs a *muhasabah*, which is to account oneself of the mistakes committed, what leads to them and how to overcome them in the future. This is an important training for us to improve ourselves.

In various *hadiths*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, teaches us how to control our anger. For example:

> The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "I know a word, the saying of which will cause him to relax, if he does say it. If he says: 'I seek Refuge with Allah from Satan' then all his anger will go away." [Al-Bukhari; Vol. 4, No. 502]
>
> The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "I know a phrase which, if he repeated, he could get rid of this angry feeling." They asked: "What is it, Apostle of Allah?" He replied: "He should say: 'I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil.'" [Abu Daud; Book 41, No. 4762]

Therefore one of the keys to controlling ourselves during anger is to seek refuge in Allah from Satan because Satan influence us through the *'was-was'* that influence our perception. Likewise, Satan promotes evil to people by influencing their perception.

Influencing human perception as a satanic way to promote evil and create disputes among believers has been mentioned in many verses in the Qur'an, for example:

> "And say to My servants (that) they should (only) speak that which is the best; (Because) Shaitan verily sows dissensions among them. Surely, Shaitan is an open enemy to man." [Surah Al-Isra' (17) : Ayah 53]

Indeed, if somebody uses a vague word in his speech, then Shaitan 'whispers' a wrong interpretation or understanding to the listeners of the speech that may affect the relationship amongst them. This is how relationships in the family, brothers, sisters and friends are severed.

In other *hadiths*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, teaches us how to deal with anger:

> "Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution." [Abu Daud; Book 41, No. 4766]
>
> Abu Dharr narrated: The Apostle of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said to us: "When one of you becomes angry while standing, he should sit down. If the anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise he should lie down." [Abu Daud; Book 41, No. 4764]

In another *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> "If one of you becomes angry then he should be silent."

This is an important advice because during anger, most of our actions and speech may not be correct.

> Narrated 'Abdur Rahman bin Abi Bakra: Abu Bakr wrote to his son who was in Sijistan: Do not judge between two persons when you are angry, for I heard the

> Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, saying: "A judge should not judge between two persons while he is in an angry mood." [Al-Bukhari; Vol. 9, No. 272]

This *hadith* is related to the previous *hadith* (Hadith 15) - it sets out to avoid the judge from making unjust judgement.

However, there are praiseworthy anger as known from the examples of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. He never got angry except when the commandments of Allah are violated. However, if we want to get angry for the sake of Allah, then we need to be careful that we:

a. are really not getting angry for ourselves or for our own interests.
b. need to do it in the right way, like not committing wrong actions or saying vulgar words while getting angry.
c. can achieve the benefit as intended by the *shari'ah*. If the action leads to more harm than benefit, then it should be avoided based on the principle of weighing between the benefits and harms.

For example, when giving advice, say it in a good way, using good words, and be careful not to get into a quarrel.

It is well known today that anger causes many health problems especially if they are not controlled. There are wisdoms behind *shari'ah* injunctions and here we find that to control our anger may be beneficial to our health.

Conclusion

Socially, this *hadith* promotes better relationship among people. We need to restrain anger and be patient. We may dislike something in this life but it may have benefits that we do not know.

Our patience towards others who have been harsh on us may later lead them to think and change themselves to be better. Muslims need to set models for others to learn from.

Hadith 17

عَنْ أَبِيْ يَعْلَى شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ
رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ كَتَبَ
الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوْا الْقِتْلَةَ،
وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوْا الذِّبْحَةَ، وَلْيُحِدَّ أَحَدُكُمْ شَفْرَتَهُ
وَلْيُرِحْ ذَبِيْحَتَهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Ya'la Shaddad ibn Aus, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* said:

> **"Verily, Allah has enjoined excellence *(ihsan)* with regard to everything. So, when you kill, kill in a good way; when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way; so everyone of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably."**

[Muslim]

Background

Ihsan is a comprehensive concept. It denotes doing things completely, nicely and in a tasteful manner. It comprises four components:

1. Sincerity *(Ikhlas)*
2. Completeness
3. Tastefulness (doing things in a nice manner), and
4. Correctness (doing things in the right way).

This concept is translated by commentators and interpreters as Excellence. Being a comprehensive concept, the term Ihsan cannot be translated word for word because there is no word in the English language that gives its exact meaning. Therefore, it is better to use it as it is.

Islam commands Muslims to practice and apply Ihsan in all that they do - hence it is an obligation *(wajib)*.
It has been mentioned in the Qur'an as well. Allah the Almighty says:

"Verily, Allah enjoins Justice, and Ihsan and giving help to kith and kin,..."
[Surah Al-Nahl (16): ayat 90]

In Surah Al-Mulk (67), ayat 2 this concept is mentioned as one of two main purposes of human creation, Allah the Almighty says: "The One Who created death and life so that He may test you which of you is best of conduct."

Lessons

The *hadith* contains a principle and provides an example of applying that principle. This is a Prophetic method, as mentioned previously, to enable Muslims to apply the same principle to other similar situations. It can also be said that providing the example is a way of explaining the principle so it is easily understood. Most of the forty *hadiths* collected by Imam Nawawi are of this nature. It was also previously mentioned that Muslims have a tendency of taking the example and forgetting about the principle. This may explain why Muslims are reminded of this hadith only once a year, during Eid ul-Adha.

The concept of Ihsan means that a Muslim is a responsible person and a person of quality where he does things in a very good manner, in a complete sense, in a nice and tasteful way and is never satisfied with anything other than a quality job in all that he/she does, motivated by realizing that Allah prescribed Ihsan to everything and to all deeds.

The term *'amalan* in its selected form as mentioned in Surat Al-Mulk ayat 2 implies any kind of deeds. It is not just the religious deeds *(ibadah)*, but also all that we do which is lawful. It should be done according to the concept of Ihsan and we should exert our efforts to live up according to its implications. The way we look and dress, the way we eat, the way we sleep, our work, our profession, our *da'wah*, teaching and learning, our relationship with our family, relatives, neighbours, and with others in general - Ihsan should be observed and practiced in all these actions. These actions and good deeds can be considered as *ibadah* thereof.

The superlative form of the verb used in the same verse *(ahsan)* implies that all good deeds and actions that we do should be done in a competitive way. However, competition in Islam is not for achieving personal interest but rather for seeking the pleasure of Allah.

The *hadith* mentions one way of dealing nicely or being merciful with animals and that is in the case of slaughtering. In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Whoever shows mercy even when slaughtering a bird, Allah will have mercy on him on the Day of Judgement." [Recorded by Al-Bukhari]

In another hadith, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, related this story: "While a man was traveling, he felt very thirsty. He found a well and went down to have a drink. When he came out he found a thirsty dog. He said to himself, "This dog is as thirsty as I was." He then went back inside the well and used his shoe to bring out some water for the dog. Allah was pleased with him and forgave his sins because of he had done." [Recorded by Al-Bukhari]

In other hadiths the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, warns us not to frighten animals. While he was with his companions he found a bird making a greaving sound. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, immediately said: "Who has frightened this bird by taking its offspring?" Then he commanded: "Return back her offspring." In another hadith the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, warned Muslims not to harm animals. He said: "A lady was put into the hellfire because of a cat. She tied up the cat and did not give her anything to eat nor did she allow it to look for food."

One more ruling concerning dealing nicely with animals is not to abuse the animals we use for achieving certain work (i.e. carrying things) and not to overburden them. In one hadith (which shows a prophetic miracle), the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, was passing by a farm in Maddinah when he came across a camel. The camel approached the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, as if it was telling him something. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asked about the owner of of the camel and called upon him and told him, "Your camel is complaining that you overburden him with work, and gives him too little to eat." [Narrated by Abu Daud, Al-Hakim, Imam Ahmad, and others and it is an authentic hadith]

Shaykh Abdullah bin Jibrin, a contemporary scholar, is in the view that animals should not be used as a testing instrument in the lab (like what is being done in the West) based on a basic ruling derived from this Hadith 17, where it is prohibited to harm an animal. The testing is only allowed if it can be ensured that the animal will not be harmed. All this shows that Islam is the religion of Ihsan and mercy, which is totally contrary to the image of Islam being promoted in the West. Not only that, but this evidently proves that the West are the ones who abuse and harm animals.

Even in Jihad (fighting enemies), Muslims are to apply Ihsan. We are not allowed to kill the elders, children, women, and those who are not fighting. When killing the aggressive enemy who deserves to be killed, Ihsan has to be applied and observed. We have to make sure not to cause any harm or suffering to anyone we kill. The captives have to be treated with Ihsan as well. It is

Islam who introduced a new way of dealing with captives. We are to free them on the basis of them teaching some Muslims something beneficial.

Weapons that cause mass destruction have been initiated, introduced and used by the West. Using them contradicts with the concept of Ihsan. But how about if the enemies of Islam use them against us? Some cotemporary scholars say that Muslims are allowed to use them only in response and as a counter act.

Conclusion

By living according to the concept of Ihsan and by applying it to all that a Muslim does, he/she will be rewarded and showered with mercy and forgiveness from Allah the Almighty. Furthermore, by doing that, a Muslim will ensure that he/she will pass the test and be amongst those of the best conduct.

Hadith 18

عَنْ أَبِيْ ذَرٍّ جُنْدُبِ بْنِ جُنَادَةَ وَأَبِيْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: اِتَّقِ اللهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ وَأَتْبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ. رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ، وَقَالَ: حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ. وَفِيْ بَعْضِ النُّسَخِ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ.

Abu Dhar Jundub bin Junadah and Abu Abdul Rahman Mu'adh bin Jabal, *radiyallahu anhuma*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Fear Allah wherever you may be; follow up an evil deed with a good one which will wipe (the former) out, and behave good-naturedly towards people."**

[Al-Tirmidhi relates it, saying: It is a good *(hasan)* Tradition. In some copies he says: It is a good and genuine (*hasan* and *sahih*) Hadith.]

Background

Taqwa is one of the most important and comprehensive Islamic concepts. The term is derived from its root *"waqayya"* which means "to protect." Taqwa therefore means to protect one own self from the severe punishment of Allah by following His guidance.

Some translate Taqwa as "to fear Allah". However, fearing Allah is only one aspect of this comprehensive concept. Ali ibn Abi Talib, *radiyallahu anhu*, defines it as: "Fearing Allah, adhering to His commandments, being content with what He provides one with, and getting ready for the Day of Judgement."

Mohammad Asad translates it as "to be conscious of Allah." It might be better according to some Muslim linguist to use the transliteration of this Qur'anic term and keep it as it is.

The term has been mentioned many times both in Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah the Almighty says:

"O believers! Have Taqwa of Allah as is His right to have Taqwa. And die not except while you are Muslims"
[Surah Al-Imran (3): ayat 102]

By realization of Taqwa a Muslim is granted many bounties and blessings which he/she may gain. Among them are: the Love of Allah, a criterion by which to judge and distinguish between right and wrong, a way out of difficulties, matters will be made easier for him/her, sins will be remitted, guidance, help to acquire beneficial knowledge, prosperity and success.

Lessons

According to Ibn Rajab's view as well as other scholars, Taqwa is to fulfill obligations and avoid prohibitions and doubtful matters. It is the advice of Allah to all humankind, and it is the advice of all prophets, *alayhim al-salam*, to their people. Prophet Mohammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to advise and continuously remind his Companions about Taqwa in all his talks and on different occasions.

Those who define Taqwa as "fearing Allah" look at the concept as a motive, because according to early scholars the minimum level of fearing Allah is what motivates a Muslim to fulfill obligations and keeps him/her away from prohibitions.

Taqwa does not imply perfection. Those who have Taqwa are subject to commit sins. However, if they do so, they repent right away and follow up the bad deed they have done with a good deed to wipe the bad one out as mentioned in this *hadith*. This clarifies the debatable issue between some scholars: whether or not avoiding minor sins is considered an aspect of Taqwa.

Allah the Almighty and all Merciful has left the door of forgiveness opened to many means by which the punishment for a sin might be removed. To do good deeds right after bad ones to wipe them out is one mean. This is mentioned in Surah Hud, ayat 114: "Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds."

There are other ways and means by which sins are forgiven as stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah such as:

- Istighfar (seeking forgiveness by supplication)

- Tubah (repentance)
- Du'a' of Muslims for one another
- The intercession by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*
- The intercession of pious Muslims
- Performing the daily five prayers regularly and on time
- Afflictions
- The torment in the grave
- The horrible scenes and events of the Last Day
- The mere Mercy and Forgiveness from Allah

If we do a good deed, Allah will reward us by guiding us to do another good deed. Hence, doing a good deed will lead to doing another good deed. Doing a bad deed without regretting it or without *istighfar* or wiping it out by doing a good deed will most likely lead to doing another bad deed, whether of the same type or of a different type. By doing a bad deed with that attitude makes the person subject to repeat it again and again and doing other bad deeds becomes possible until the heart of that person is "sealed" and the person turns into a transgressor.

It is an obligation that every Muslim should treat others, deal with them, and interact with them in a good manner. Ibn Rajab says in his commentary: "Having good character is a characteristic of Taqwa. Taqwa cannot be complete without it. It was mentioned here by itself due to the need for explicitly explaining that point. Many people think that Taqwa implies fulfilling the rights of Allah without fulfilling the rights of humans. Therefore, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* explicitly stated that he/she must deal with people in a kind manner." This ruling is stressed in many other *hadiths*, of which the following are some:

"Piety and Righteousness is being of good character." [Recorded by Imam Muslim]

"The believer with the most complete Iman (faith) is the one with the best behavior." [Recorded by Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawud]

"There is nothing heavier in the scales than good character." [Recorded by Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawud]

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* made Iman (faith) and good character as the main basic criterion whether or not to accept a man for marriage.

Conclusion

To fear Allah the Almighty, to adhere to His commandments, to follow doing a bad deed with a good deed to wipe it out, and to deal with others in a good manner and good character are all aspects of the concept of Taqwa.

Hadith 19

عَنْ أَبِيْ الْعَبَّاسِ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ : كُنْتُ خَلْفَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَوْمًا فَقَالَ : يَاغُلَامُ إِنِّيْ أُعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ : اِحْفَظِ اللهَ يَحْفَظْكَ ، اِحْفَظِ اللهَ تَجِدْهُ تُجَاهَكَ ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللهَ ، وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللهِ . وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوْكَ بِشَيْءٍ ، لَمْ يَنْفَعُوْكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللهُ لَكَ ؛ وَإِنِ اجْتَمَعُوْا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوْكَ بِشَيْءٍ ، لَمْ يَضُرُّوْكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْكَ ، رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ . رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ . وَقَالَ : حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ .

وَفِيْ رِوَايَةٍ غَيْرِ التِّرْمِذِيِّ : اِحْفَظِ اللهَ تَجِدْهُ أَمَامَكَ تَعَرَّفْ إِلَى اللهِ فِيْ الرَّخَاءِ يَعْرِفْكَ فِيْ الشِّدَّةِ ، وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ مَاأَخْطَأَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيْبَكَ وَمَاأَصَابَكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَكَ . وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ النَّصْرَ مَعَ الصَّبْرِ وَأَنَّ الْفَرَجَ مَعَ الْكَرْبِ وَأَنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا .

Abu al-'Abbas 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas, *radiyallahu anhuma*, reported: One day I was behind the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and he said to me:

> **"O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice] : Be mindful of Allah, and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. If you (have need to) ask, ask of Allah; and if you seek**

help, seek help from Allah. Know that even if the Nation (or the whole community) were to gather together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you with anything except that which Allah has already recorded for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with something, they would not be able to harm you with anything except that which Allah has already recorded against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."

[Al-Tirmidhi relates this and says: It is a good, genuine Hadith]

In a version other than that of al-Tirmidhi it reads:

"...Be mindful of Allah, you will find Him before you. Get to know Allah in prosperity and He will know you in adversity. Know that what has passed you by was not going to befall you; and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and ease with hardship."

Background

This *hadith* implies a very important advice and general ruling in Islam: Allah's protection. Ibnu Rajab quoted one scholar as saying: "What a pity for the one who is ignorant of this *hadith* and has little understanding of its meaning."

Lessons

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, starts the *hadith* by getting the attention of Ibn 'Abbas by saying "O young man, I shall teach you some words of advice". By saying "O young man", Ibn 'Abbas knows that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is talking specifically to him. And by following it with "I shall teach you…" Ibn 'Abbas knows how important the next words of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, are going to be. Hence, these words at the beginning have attracted the undivided attention of Ibn 'Abbas.

This teaches us that when we give a talk or speech, it is important that we start with words that will grab the attention of the audience. This is to ensure that our words of advice (contained in our speech) do not fall on 'deaf ears'.

The phrase "Be mindful of Allah" means:

- To observe or fulfil Allah's obligations
- To adhere to His commandments
- To avoid His prohibitions

Some of the things we have to fulfil - to attain Allah's protection - include:

- The daily prayers *(salah)* – by praying in the best way we can and by performing it on time.
- Maintaining cleanliness and purity.
- Observing our oath – we have to be careful if we swear by Allah that we will do something, because we have to abide to this commitment we make.
- Guarding our senses – we should ensure that what we see or hear or say pleases Allah. We should fear Allah and not use these senses in the wrong manner.
- Ensuring that we do not consume, via food or drink, anything that is not *halal*.
- Observing that our dealings and transactions are *halal*.
- Protecting our hearts from being involved in *maksiah*, e.g. *zina'* (adultery) – the moment a person is weak and does a *maksiah*, he should repent because of his fear of Allah.

If we are "mindful of Allah", i.e. we observe and fulfil His obligations/commandments, "Allah will protect us". There two kinds of protection from Allah:

1. Allah will protect or look after His servants in this world / in worldly matters. For example, our health and our senses. We will be enjoying Allah's mercy and bounty for our sight, hearing and speech all of our lives – even as we grow old, Allah will still allow us to see and hear properly, or he will take care of our intellect and mental health.

   Another example is Allah will protect our family and our property, belongings and money. Also, if one is mindful of Allah during his youth, Allah will protect him during his adult years.

2. Allah will protect His servants' *deen* (religion) and *iman* (faith). He will protect us from misunderstandings and being misled or influenced by misconceptions and self-desires. He will help us and give us guidance so that we are protected from negative influences.

   Allah will also protect our *deen* when we leave this world. When we leave this world, we will leave with *iman* for being a *mua'min* (believer). We will be protected from *shaitan*'s influence to lead us astray right at the very last moment in our life.

   We may not be aware of when Allah is protecting our *deen*. It may even cause us to be unhappy. There may be a situation where Allah prevents us from doing something (something which we want to do) – this is actually a protection from Allah, preventing us from a disaster or problem or from committing a sin.

If we are mindful of Allah, we will find Him close to us or beside us or in front of us. Allah is close to His servants (the *mua'minin*) by giving them guidance, support, help, protection, victory, etc.

The other narration of this *hadith* states that if we become beloved to Allah during times of ease, He will know us during times of hardship. During our times of ease or prosperity, if we use it for the pleasure of Allah, He will be with us to look after us in our times of hardship, weakness, sickness, etc. Even in terms of receiving reward from Allah. If we are sick and are no longer able to do something which we used to do during our times of ease, we will be given the reward for that act.

The statement in which the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, tells 'Abdullah bin Abbas to "ask of Allah" and to "seek help from Allah" is the fundamental basics of Tawhid. This is something we say in every *salah ("iyya ka na'budu wa iyya ka nasta'in")*. This shows us the importance of *du'a*, the importance of continuously asking Allah for His support and guidance. We need to show our need for Allah and our total dependency on Him by performing such forms of *ibadah*.

Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* has already written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz what is going to take place. There are events or occurrences that happen which we have no control over (e.g. being sick, losing someone we love, falling into hardship, etc.) and to face these events correctly we need to practice contentment *(redha)* which is the highest level of action required where we are pleased or contented with whatever Allah has chosen for us, whether it is positive or negative. The second highest level is tolerance *(sabr)*, where we need to be patient and not panic or say anything that displeases Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

In the Qur'an there are several verses which emphasises this same meaning that is mentioned at the end of this *hadith*: Surah Yunus (10), ayat 107; Surah Fatir (35), ayat 2; Surah Al-Hadid (57), ayat 22.

Allah recorded the *qadar* (fate) of all creations 50,000 years before He created the heavens and the earth (Sahih Muslim). In another Sahih Muslim hadith, a man asked the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, whether what we do today is something that has already been recorded or whether it is something that just happens. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, replied that whatever happens is according to what has already been recorded. The man then asked why he should do anything at all. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, made a command [not just to the man but to the whole Muslim ummah] to do good deeds – everyone will be guided towards what he has been created for.

Al-qadar can be broadly broken down into two categories:

1. There are actions that take place which we do not have any control over. We have to surrender to the will of Allah and be patient.

2. There are actions that take place which we had control over. These events happen as a result of our recklessness, laziness, of not being alert, etc. Even though the minute these things happen they already become *qadar*, those who are responsible for the actions will be held responsible. Thus, whatever we do, we should do it carefully, completely and to the best of our abilities. For example, construction workers building a site, doctors taking care of patients, driving, etc.

Generally speaking, we are responsible for what we do, whether it is in worldly matters or whether it is in our *ibadah*. We should always strive to improve ourselves and to constantly tell ourselves that we can do better.

Also, we should avoid things that can be avoided, e.g. avoiding disasters, avoiding trouble, etc. Even in health, we should avoid consuming things which are unhealthy for our bodies – e.g. food which can cause heart diseases (i.e. contains high cholesterol), etc. In other words, we should avoid things that are bad for us, and not just let it happen and then blame it on *qadar*.

It doesn't contradict with *qadar* if someone is sick that he seeks treatment. If we are faced with a problem, we should try our best to solve it or minimise it and not do things which will worsen the situation.

Many Muslims tend to interpret this *hadith* (on *qadar*) negatively. We should understand *qadar* in a positive sense. We should differentiate between things which we don't have control over and things which we do. Instead of just accepting things that happen as *qadar*, we should see how we can improve the situation and how we can avoid things which can be avoided. We should accept the fact that we are responsible for whatever we do and the choices we make.

Conclusion

This *hadith* teaches us how we can live a peaceful and happy life by being mindful of Allah and by totally trusting and worshipping Him. By understanding *qadar* positively, we will not live a stressful, unhappy life of always worrying about our future or what the consequences of our actions or decisions will be. We do our best to fulfil Allah's obligations and we trust and accept whatever He wills for us.

Hadith 20

عَنْ أَبِيْ مَسْعُوْدٍ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَمْرٍو الْأَنْصَارِيِّ
الْبَدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ مِمَّا أَدْرَكَ النَّاسُ مِنْ كَلَامِ النُّبُوَّةِ الْأُوْلٰى إِذَا لَمْ
تَسْتَحِ فَاصْنَعْ مَاشِئْتَ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

Abu Mas'ud 'Uqbah bin 'Amr al-Ansari al-Badri, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Among the things that people have found from the words of the previous prophets was: 'If you feel no shame, then do as you wish.'"**

[Al-Bukhari]

Background

Haya' can be translated as: modesty, shame, shyness or bashfulness, as pointed by Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo.
The word *haya'* is derived from the word *"al-hayah"*, which means life, as if the person who has no *haya'* (modesty) is like a dead person.

Islam encourages and treasures *al-haya'* or modesty. It is one of the most important characteristics that each and every Muslim should acquire and posses.

The following are some *hadiths* which emphasize this great quality:

"Haya' (modesty) and Iman (faith) are two that go together. If one is lifted, the other is also lifted."
[Recorded by al-Hakim]

"Al-Haya' is part of Iman."
"Haya' does not produce but goodness."
[Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Possible interpretations of the text

Due to the form of the text, it may be interpreted in many possible meaningful ways. Imam Ibnu Rajab pointed out two interpretations of the text according to early scholars:

First interpretation: If you have no modesty, then do whatever you wish and Allah will punish you for what you do.

This mode of expression is well known in the Arabic language, and it is used for threatening someone. This mode is used by the Qur'an in Surah Fussilat: ayat 40.

Second interpretation: If you are contemplating an act and it is an act such that there is no reason to be ashamed of doing it before Allah or the people, then you may do that act.

Modesty is used as a criterion over whether or not to do a certain act. The command here is in the form of displaying permission.

However, there is a valid **third interpretation** given by Ibnu al-Qayyam who is a scholar from the eighth Hijrah century. He is in the view that the command is not what is meant by this statement. Instead, it is a statement of fact. The meaning is: If a person does not have any modesty, then there is nothing to prevent him/her from doing anything.

Haya' is one of the most important factors that keeps a person from committing a sinful act. If a person has no *haya'*, he/she will do almost anything.

Lessons

There are two aspects of *haya'* : Natural *haya'* and acquired *haya'*. The later is attained as a result of knowing and realizing the Glory of Allah and His attributes.

There are many manifestations of *haya'* as mentioned by Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo in his commentaries on the Forty Hadith:

- Having *haya'* towards Allah - a Muslim should feel ashamed to have Allah see him doing - or hear him saying - something that displeases Allah, especially when that Muslim is alone and out of the view of humankind.
- *Haya'* towards the angels - as they are noble and dignified creatures who witness the acts performed by humans.
- *Haya'* towards other humans - an essential characteristic that keeps people from harming one another and from performing indecent acts.

- *Haya'* towards the person him/herself - a person should be ashamed of him/herself when he/she performs acts that are shameful. If he/she notices that his/her *haya'* level is low he/she should improve it by remembrance of Allah, getting closer to Him, and fearing Him.

This great concept of *haya'* or modesty should be promoted through all possible means and at all levels and by everyone: educators, teachers, lecturers, parents, and *du'at* (preachers). It is unfortunate that today, and because of technology misuse, this great concept is threatened. Hence there is greater responsibility for the Muslim *du'at*, parents, educators, etc. to shoulder. The evildoers are promoting anything that distorts and corrupts *haya'*. Those people are taking advantage of the system where technology advancement is double sided. It is positive and beneficial on one hand, but it can be negative and destructive on the other. Muslims should learn, master and use Information Technology (IT) positively to promote what is good and beneficial. By mastering IT they should make deliberate efforts to be in control of it and minimize its negative destructive side such as by designing and producing filtering softwares.

The same thing can be said about the media, where it is entertainment oriented. Entertainment is taking new destructive directions which negatively affect the concept of *haya'* a great deal. If *haya'* is distorted, *iman* (faith) can be distorted too. The chances of committing sins and evil will be higher, and the chances of delaying or neglecting obligations will be higher as well. Even chances of committing crimes will be higher due to these new directions of entertainment, where crime, drug addiction, distrustful acts, and adultery are all looked at as means of entertainment. Semi naked bodies, songs that promote evil, etc. are aspects of new entertainment. Unfortunately, we Muslims borrow media material from the West without any kind of evaluation, filtering or classification. More instructions and guidelines are needed from media organisers regarding the nature of movies and TV. There should be programs for families' awareness.

Haya' can sometimes be abused as a justification for not doing something or giving up an obligatory act. For example, being silent or passive in the presence of falsehood or oppression for no reason except claiming *haya'*. Or using *haya'* as an excuse for not encouraging good or discouraging evil. Unless, for both of teh above mentioned cases, there is another good reason for not doing these acts such as considering the most likely expected harmful consequences.

Another example of abusing *haya'* is to use it as an excuse for not seeking knowledge. In many Muslim cultures this matter is confused and misunderstood where there is a proverb or cliché that says: "There is no modesty in asking questions in religious matters". But this cliché is only practiced in a few certain sensitive issues. However when it comes to seeking knowledge in a classroom, the situation is different. Most Muslims become shy and use modesty as an excuse. Parents at home, teachers at school, even lecturers at Universities add to the problem where they may treat asking questions as a sign of not being modest. This attitude needs to be changed to the right, positive one.

Another example is using *haya'* as an excuse for not doing what is correct and allowed. You know that something should be done and it is good and allowed or is even a recommended or obligatory act. However, you simply give up and do not do it because of a claimed *haya'*. Not giving *sadaqah* (charity) to a needy in front of others, not taking away a harmful material from the street or the path of the Muslims, or not helping or giving a hand to a disabled or an elderly person to cross the street are some good examples of this phenomenon.

Conclusion

Haya' or modesty is a great Islamic concept that leads to goodness and keeps a Muslim away from doing a bad or indecent act when its level is maximized. Treating bad actions, as shown by revelation, as evil acts and feeling ashamed of Allah to do it and ashamed of the community, are ways of acquiring *haya'*. *Iman* and *haya'* are linked. When there is *iman*, there is *haya'*, and vice versa. All of us are borne with natural *haya'*. However it is subject to be spoiled due to environment and dominating ideologies. Technology misuse has its negative and destructive impact on *haya'*. Muslims need to be aware of such challenges and exert their effort to overcome them. *Haya'* cannot be used as an excuse for not doing good deeds and acts.

Hadith 21

عَنْ أَبِيْ عَمْرٍو وَقِيْلَ أَبِيْ عَمْرَةَ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْـهُ قَالَ، قُلْتُ يَـارَسُـوْلَ اللهِ: قُـلْ لِيْ فِيْ الْإِسْلَامِ قَوْلاً لَاأَسْأَلُ عَنْهُ أَحَدًا غَيْرَكَ، قَالَ: قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَقِمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu 'Amr, though others call him Abu 'Amrah Sufyan bin 'Abdullah, *radiyallahu anhu*, who said:

> **I said: "O Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islam which I could not ask anyone about save you." He answered: "Say: 'I believe in Allah', and then stand firm and steadfast."**

[Muslim]

Background

The literal meaning of "Istiqamah": to go straight into the right direction, acting rightly, allowing no deviation. It is derived from the stem "Qiyyam", which implies the continuity of doing something, following up with it and making sure that it is done in the right way and there is neither deviation nor swerving.

The term has been used by the Qur'an in many verses. Allah the Almighty says:

"Therefore, stand firm (on the straight path) as you are commanded and those who turn in repentance with you. And do not transgress, for He (Allah) sees well all that you do."
[Surah Hud (11): ayat 112]

Ibnu Abbas said that this verse was the hardest and most difficult verse of the Qur'an on the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Indeed it is a difficult task to achieve Istiqamah, hence, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said; "Be straight on the path or be close to it."

In another verse, Allah the Almighty says:

"So unto this (religion) invite (the people). Stand steadfast as you are commanded and do not follow their desires…"
[Surah al-Shura' (42): ayat 15]

Based on these two verses, it can be inferred that Istiqamah is to stand firm and steadfast to what we have been commanded by Allah, i.e. to fulfill obligations and to avoid prohibitions. Also, we should not allow ourselves to follow or be mislead by desires (whether it is our desires or the desires of others) as it will cause deviation and lead us astray.

Lessons

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, there are five conditions to achieve Istiqamah in performing required deeds:

1. The act should be done for the sake of Allah alone *(ikhlas)*.
2. It should be done on the basis of knowledge *('ilm)*.
3. Performing *ibadah* should be in the same manner that they have been commanded.
4. To do it in the best way possible.
5. Restricting oneself to what is lawful while performing those deeds.

According to other scholars of *suluk,* i.e. behavior, there are certain steps to be followed in order to achieve Istiqamah:

1. Always being aware of the final destination, i.e. the Day of Judgment (Akhirah). And to use this awareness in a positive way as a motive to do good deeds. One way to do it is through remembering that a person's journey towards Akhirah starts the minute he / she passes away and leaves this world. One of the Salafs said: "If you live until the morning do not wait for the evening and if you live until the evening do not wait for the morning."

2. Commitment (Musharatah). One has to make a commitment that he/she will be steadfast and will do things in the right way and in the best way possible, and to adhere to conjunctions of Islam. Unfortunately many Muslims are being lenient in making such a commitment.

3. To make continuous efforts (Mujahadah) to bring that commitment to reality. Some Muslims dare to make the commitment, but dare not to make the effort to make the commitment a reality.

4. Continuous checking and reviewing of one's deeds (Muraqabah). Being honest with oneself so as not to give false excuses for failing to fulfill a commitment.

5. Self accountability (Muhasabah). This should be done twice: Firstly, before we start doing something, ensuring that it pleases Allah, that we do it for His sake only, realizing the right way it should be done. Secondly, after the action has been done, to check whether we have achieved what we aimed for, and to check for defects and shortcomings, and that we still could have done it better by not being satisfied with our action.

6. Blaming oneself for not doing it perfectly after it has been done. Self blaming here is a positive one by using it as a motive, and by aiming for improvement and having the intention of doing things better next time. This leads to making another commitment and continual commitments to improve our performance.

7. Striving for improvement (Tahsin). We have to make improvements in all that we do (daily activities, work, actions, good deeds, *ibadah*, etc.) as one of our objectives.

8. To be humble towards Allah, realizing that no one is perfect except Him, seeking His forgiveness, guidance and support.

It should be emphasized that these steps/conditions apply to worldly matters as well as *ibadah* and good religious deeds.

Factors that lead to the weakening of Istiqamah include:

1. Committing sins *(ma'siah)*, insisting on repeating them again and again, without *istighfar* (seeking Allah's forgiveness) and without practicing repentance.

2. Shirk (associating anything with Allah) whether in intentions, by showing off our good deeds to others, seeking others' appraisal, avoiding being blamed by others, being afraid of someone, or to seek rewards from others than Allah. This part of shirk is also called *riyya'* or showing off. All these lead to deviation in Istiqamah, and when these stimuli are not there, the person's work is not perfect any more and it is not done in the best way possible.

3. Nifaq (hypocrisy). There are two forms of *nifaq*: in belief and in action. The Muslim who surrenders totally to the will of Allah and accept Islam based on his/her choice is free from the first form of hypocrisy. However any Muslim is subject to and should avoid the second form of *nifaq* which the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, warned us about: Not keeping promises and breaking them continuously without good reasons or excuses, not fulfilling commitments we make with others, being aggressive and unjust to others in quarrels, and disputes, failing to shoulder responsibilities/burdens we are entrusted with, etc. All these bad qualities should be avoided since they lead to the weakening of our Istiqamah.

4. Bida'ah (innovations in *ibadah*), whether genuine *bida'ah* (performing *ibadah* which has not been ascribed by Shariah, i.e. revelation), or relative *bida'ah* (failing to observe the requirements of doing *ibadah* - the five criteria discussed in Hadith 5), will lead to decreasing the quality of good action or *ibadah*.

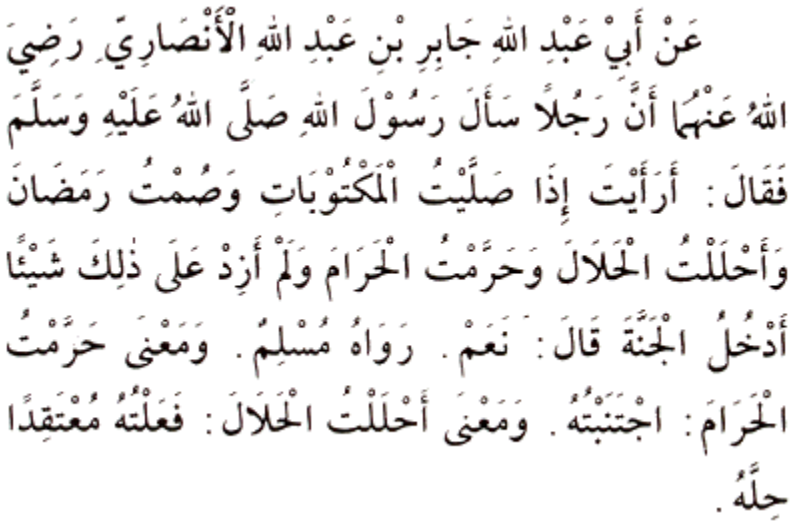
There are other factors that also contribute to the weakening of Istiqamah, such as: recklessness, reluctance, heedlessness, being overwhelmed by a deceiving enjoyment, and being mislead by self interests and desires.

Applying the above mentioned steps and requirements pinpointed by scholars will help in overcoming all these obstacles and barriers.

Conclusion

Istiqamah is an important Islamic concept. Its significance can be seen where every Muslim is required to recite Surah al-Fatihah at least seventeen times each day seeking continual guidance to the straight path from Allah.

Hadith 22


عَنْ أَبِيْ عَبْدِ اللهِ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَجُلاً سَأَلَ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: أَرَأَيْتَ إِذَا صَلَّيْتُ الْمَكْتُوْبَاتِ وَصُمْتُ رَمَضَانَ وَأَحْلَلْتُ الْحَلَالَ وَحَرَّمْتُ الْحَرَامَ وَلَمْ أَزِدْ عَلَى ذٰلِكَ شَيْئًا أَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ. وَمَعْنَى حَرَّمْتُ الْحَرَامَ: اجْتَنَبْتُهُ. وَمَعْنَى أَحْلَلْتُ الْحَلَالَ: فَعَلْتُهُ مُعْتَقِدًا حِلَّهُ.

Abu ‘Abdullah Jabir bin ‘Abdullah al-Ansari, *radiyallahu anhuma*, reported that a man questioned the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam*, saying:

> **"Do you see, if I pray the prescribed (prayers), fast during Ramadhan, treat the lawful as permissible and treat the forbidden as prohibited, but do nothing more than that, shall I enter Paradise?" He (the Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam*) answered: "Yes."**

[Muslim]

Background

Imam Nawawi said that the meaning of "treat the forbidden as prohibited" is to avoid the forbidden, and the meaning of to "treat the lawful as permissible" is to perform them believing that they are permissible.

Ibn Rajab gave two other interpretations:

1. "To treat the lawful as permissible" - to believe that it is permissible; "To treat the forbidden as prohibited" - to believe that it is prohibited and to avoid it.
2. "To treat the lawful as permissible" - to perform it. "Lawful" here means what is not prohibited, which includes *wajib* (obligatory deeds), *mustahab* (preferable deeds) and *mubah* (allowed).

One thing that we notice about the *hadith* is that Hajj and Zakah are not mentioned even though they make up the five Pillars of Islam. According to some scholars, the person who asked the question passed away (in the Battle of Uhud) before *hajj* was made an obligation. As for *zakah*, it is possible that it also was not yet made an obligation; alternatively, the person questioning was not a person of wealth and therefore was not required to pay *zakah*.

Lessons

This *hadith* indicates that the one who fulfils the obligations and avoids the prohibitions will enter Paradise. This meaning has been emphasised in a number of other *hadiths*.

This *hadith* emphasises surrendering to the Will of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* - to accept as permissible what Allah has permitted and to accept as forbidden what Allah has prohibited. This also emphasises Islam itself because Islam means to 'fully surrender to the Will of Allah and to accept everything that has been commanded by Allah'.
In our contemporary times, there arise the issue of Muslims not fully adhering to the *shariah*, i.e. Allah's commandments. If this is because they are new Muslims or that they live in areas where there is a lack of knowledge or poor dissemination of information (e.g. there are no scholars to advise them), then this lack of adherence is excusable. However, if a Muslim chooses to intentionally ignore or reject the obligations and prohibitions set by Allah without good reasons, then he may be in danger of losing his Islamic entity or identity.

These obligatory acts mentioned in the *hadith* that will lead a person to Paradise require strong belief in Allah, commitment and continuous efforts. Only then will it be an easy task to achieve.

This *hadith* implies that the *mustahab* (or *sunnah* or preferable deeds) are not necessary for one to be able to enter Paradise. What counts or what matters is fulfilling the obligatory acts. However, we are encouraged to perform preferable deeds according to our capacity and whenever possible.

The significance of performing preferable acts is that it will lead us in getting closer to Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. In addition, preferable deeds compensate for our shortcomings in performing the obligatory acts.

Some scholars have made the assumption that the person asking the question in the *hadith* was new to Islam. This gives insights to educators *(murabbi)* and preachers *(du'at)* to observe the following lessons when dealing with new converts to Islam:

1. The *murabbi* or scholar should take into account the background or status of the questioner before attending to and answering his or her questions. Different people with different backgrounds may require different answers or different approaches in conveying the answers. This is because a person who comes from a different culture or lives in a different environment from the *murabbis* or scholars may not fully understand the scholar's explanations if it cannot be related to his/her situation.

   If the *murabbi* or scholar doesn't know the background of the questioner (e.g. if questions are being asked through mail, through the telephone, on the radio, etc.), then he needs to find out as much as possible about the questioner before answering. Some scholars try to speculate what could be the status of the person asking the question by, for example, trying to read between the lines of the text of the question. The end-result is that the scholars do not provide one fixed answer - there will be a few answers, each applicable to a different situation.

2. The *murabbi* or scholar should not overburden new Muslims by asking them or encouraging them to perform preferable acts. The *murabbi* should just get them to start with the obligatory acts. If they are given too much to do, it may become too much for them to cope and they may lose interest in Islam altogether. The *murabbi* or scholar should start slowly and when the new Muslims are settled and are performing the obligatory deeds, only then should they be introduced to the preferable acts.

   Similarly, new Muslims should not be subjected to conflicting issues or views in Islam. For example, they should not be told about the four different schools of thought *(madhab)* and be asked to choose which *madhab* to follow. This will only confuse the new Muslims. The *murabbi* or *du'at* should make it easy and simple for converts to start their new lives in Islam. Only later on can such issues be discussed.

   The same thing can be said about the *awam* (general public). Scholars should not overburden them or bombard them with too many obligations or concepts. This is also a lesson we can learn from this *hadith*: the *murabbi* or scholar should observe the background of the questioner as well as the audience in general if there is no questioner.

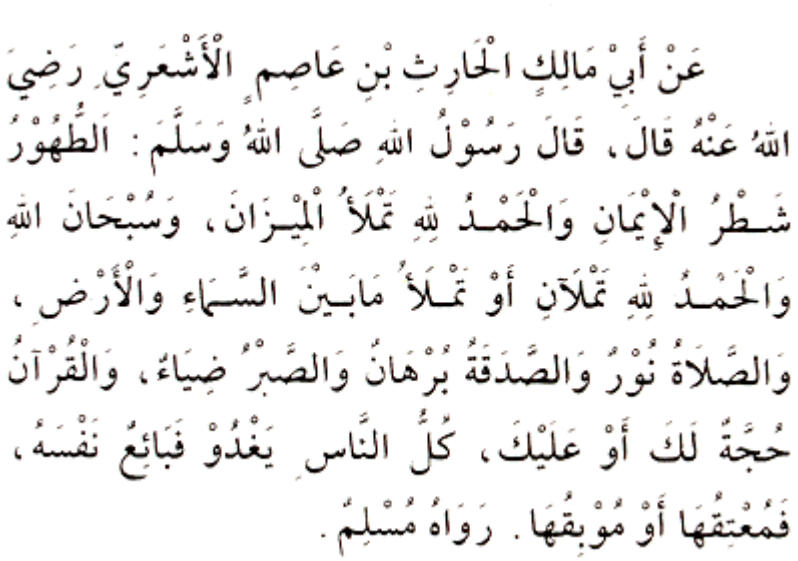
   An area related to this issue is the question of Islamic websites on the Internet. A website can be accessed by people from all over the whole world - people from different backgrounds and cultures. We have to be careful about the information that we put on these websites. Unfortunately there are Islamic websites that contain controversial issues and conflicting views, where different Muslim groups or sects promote only their school of thoughts and criticise other groups. Not only will this confuse those interested in Islam, new Muslims or existing Muslims

from other parts of the world, it will also give a negative impression to the non-Muslims. It will provide information to the opponents of Islam to use as a means of discouraging people from embracing Islam. Islamic websites should be neutral and fair and should not be one-sided or controversial because the purpose of these websites should be to promote Islam and not to condemn it.

Conclusion

This *hadith* shows a significant characteristic of Islam that it is a religion based on ease. There is a minimum requirement to be fulfilled by every one, which is practicing obligations and avoiding prohibitions. By fulfilling this minimum requirement a person deserves to enter Paradise. Preferable acts are encouraged, based on one's capacity and ability.

Hadith 23


عَنْ أَبِيْ مَالِكٍ الْحَارِثِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ الْأَشْعَرِيِّ رَضِيَ
اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ وَسَلَّمَ: اَلطُّهُوْرُ
شَطْرُ الْإِيْمَانِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيْزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللهِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ تَمْلَآنِ أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَابَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ،
وَالصَّلَاةُ نُوْرٌ وَالصَّدَقَةُ بُرْهَانٌ وَالصَّبْرُ ضِيَاءٌ، وَالْقُرْآنُ
حُجَّةٌ لَكَ أَوْ عَلَيْكَ، كُلُّ النَّاسِ يَغْدُوْ فَبَائِعٌ نَفْسَهُ،
فَمُعْتِقُهَا أَوْ مُوْبِقُهَا. رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu Malik al-Harith bin 'Asim al-Ash'ari, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Purification is half of *iman* (faith). Saying *'Al-Hamdulillah'* (Praise be to Allah) fills the scales. Saying *'Subhanallah wa al-Hamdulillahi'* (Exhalted be Allah and Praise be to Allah) fills the space between the heavens and the earth. *Salah* (prayer) is a light. *Sadaqah* (charity) is a proof. *Sabr* (patience) is a shining glory. The Qur'an is an argument either for you or against you. Everybody goes out in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves."**

[Muslim]

Background

The *hadith* shows the importance of these great deeds in Islam through which every Muslim can free him or herself from the punishment of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* in the Hereafter or in the Day of Judgment. One has to free oneself from any kind of enslavement except to Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. One has to be a servant and slave of only Allah and not anyone or anything else.

Lessons

Al-Imam Ibn Rajab mentions that there are different views and interpretations of the term *'al-tuhur'* or purification. He says that some scholars have interpreted *al-tuhur* as to mean 'avoiding sins'. But Ibn Rajab disagrees with this and points out that there is another version of the *hadith* which says that *wudu'* or ablution is a 'half of *iman'*. So he is in favour of this meaning. That is, the term *al-tuhur* refers to the ritual purification by water *(wudu')*. He also says that this is the view of the majority of the scholars and only a few scholars have interpreted *al-tuhur* as to mean 'avoiding sins'.
Ibn Rajab actually mentions two reasons why the term *al-tuhur* is interpreted as *wudu'* :

1. As mentioned earlier that it has been stated in another version of the *hadith* to mean *wudu'* or purification.
2. Imam Muslim and some other scholars have recorded this *hadith* in chapters related to ablution or *wudu'*.

The term *shatr* or "half" (as mentioned in the sentence: "Purification is half of *iman*") also had different interpretations among the scholars. Ibn Rajab says that there are several views that explain the meaning of the term *shatr*.

1. Some scholars said that *shatr* means "part" and not "half". Ibn Rajab says this is a weak interpretation because linguistically *al-shatr* means "half" and not just "part". Secondly, the *hadith* itself has clearly stated *wudu'* (ablution) as being half of *iman* (faith) and not part of *iman*.

2. A second view from other scholars states that *al-tuhur* means the reward of ablution will be multiplied to the half of the reward of *iman*. But Ibn Rajab says this view is also not of a sound interpretation.

3. The third view takes the meaning as being: *iman* nullifies all major sins while *wudu'* nullifies minor sins. So in this regard, *wudu'* is equal to half of *iman*.

4. The forth view is that *al-tuhur* means *iman* along with *wudu'* eliminate and nullify sins. So according to this view *wudu'* is half of iman - but again Ibn Rajab also considers this as a weak interpretation.

5. The fifth view is that the meaning of *iman* in the *hadith* is *salah* (prayer) as mentioned in the Qur'an, in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 143. In this *ayah* Allah called *salah 'iman'* and the *salah* will not be accepted unless there is a *wudu'*. So that is why ablution can be considered as half of *salah*. Ibn Rajab did not comment on this view but he disagrees with all the other views mentioned above.

6. In a sixth view, Imam Ibn Rajab implicitly mentions his own opinion. He favours it from all other views because in the earlier interpretations he merely quoted views of other scholars and commented on them. He says: "Indeed the parts that constitute *iman* such as words and actions are all to purify and clean the heart or the inner parts of the body.

> And there is also a purification of the external body by using water and ablution and this is specific to the body only. Hence, there are two divisions of *iman*; the first division purifies the heart and the internal body and the second division purifies and cleans the external body. So in this regard, both divisions are two equal parts of *iman*."

This is the explanation of the first statement of the *hadith* which is "Purification *(al-Tahur)* is a half of *iman*".

The *hadith* mentions that the phrase *al-Hamdulillah* fills the *mizan* (scales) and *Subhanallah* and *al-Hamdulillah* each fills (or both together fill) the space between the heavens and earth. The *hadith* shows the importance, greatness and significance of *dhikr Allah* or remembrance of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. For example, merely reciting one phrase such as *Subhanallah* gives rewards that fill the heavens! It shows just how important these phrases are for every Muslim.

Al-Haithamy, one of the great Muslim scholars, stated that the full reward of reciting *dhikr* will be given to the person who recites them while thinking of their meaning and submitting to their implication.

The *hadith* actually indicates the greatness of these phrases: *al-Hamdulillah*, *Subhanallah wa al-Hamdulillah*. The phrase *Subhanallah* can be recited alone or together with *al-Hamdulillah* as stated in the text of this *hadith*. This shows the worthiness of what is called *al-Tasbih*, glorifying Allah and *al-Tahmid*, praising and thanking Allah.

Ibn Rajab stated that *al-Tahmid* is greater than *al-Tasbih*. It means that to be grateful and thankful to Allah is better than being in a state of *Tasbih* or glorifying Him and denying imperfection towards Him. The phrase *'al-Hamdulillah'* shows gratitude and thankfulness to Allah. It is a positive concept while *al-Tasbih* is to deny any negative traits towards Almighty Allah and so *al-Tahmid* is better than *al-Tasbih*. Also, *al-Hamdulillah* is not just thankfulness to Allah. It involves more general aspects because it can be expressed both in words and actions. For example, when you do good deeds, it means *al-Hamdulillah*, just as when you say good words.

Ibn Rajab says that in the *hadith al-Tasbih* actually came with the *al-Tahmid* - it is usually mentioned with *al-Tahmid*. But *al-Tahmid* can be stated alone without *al-Tasbih* as found in the *hadith* and other *hadiths*, as well as in many verses of the Qur'an. So although each term has its own significance, *al-Hamdulillah* is better and more important than *Subhanallah*.

The *hadith* shows us the worthiness and importance of *dhikr Allah* in general. It is very important and useful and every Muslim should remember Allah all the time. In the Qur'an, *dhikr Allah* is the only thing that Allah has commanded us to do frequently.

There are different types of *dhikr*. Among them are:-

1. *Adhkar u-al-Salawat*. According to some scholars, the minimum *dhikr* that a Muslim is required to do is to maintain the *adhkar* after each *salah* or prayer. This kind of *dhikr* requires very little of our time. It needs just few minutes and its reward is great. These days, people rush out after the *salah* without reciting the recommended *dhikr*. We should remember that if we are in hurry and we have to leave immediately, we can still recite them while we are walking.

   Today many Imams of mosques rush to the *du'a* after the *salah*. They do not wait for people to recite the recommended *dhikr* after the *salah*. *Adhkar u-al-Salawat* is basically part of our ritual obligations that we have been ordered to do and so we should to fulfill this obligation.

2. *Adhkar u-al-Sabahi wa al-Masa*. According to some scholars, this type of *adhkar* is to be recited after the Fajar prayer in the morning and after the Maghrib prayer in the evening. Some other scholars say it is recommended before sunrise and before sunset. Whatever the case, this *adhakr* consists of very important *du'as* that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, guided us to read during these two specific times. There are many forms of this type of *du'a* but we do not have to read or memorize all of them. We just need to choose some of them. Some scholars say that we can choose only some of *Adhkar u-al-Sabahi wa al-Masa* but we have to maintain them regularly everyday. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to read some of these *adi'yah* regularly in the morning and evening and so we are also allowed do so on an everyday basis.

   Al-Imam al-Nawawi himself has compiled a book called "Kitab Adhkar u Alyoum Wa-Laiylah" and discusses in detail about this type of *adhkar*. It is recommended to read and maintain these *adhkar* everyday. It is easy and takes only five to ten minutes of our time.

3. *Adhkar u-al-Ahwal*. This *adhkar* is to be recited during specific occasions. For example, when you want to eat you are supposed to recite "Bismillah" and when you finish eating there is a *du'a* to be recited. Similarly, when entering the mosque there is a *du'a*, when going out of the mosque there is also a *du'a*, when you enter your house there is a *du'a* and so on. A Muslim has to read these *adi'yah* and memorize some of them. They are very simple to memorize and easy to recite. We have to make them part of our lives. Most of us are, *al-Hamdulillah*, already practicing this. This type of *du'a* is very much recommended during traveling, coming back from travel, during storms and also on many other occasions.

According to Sheikh al-Sa'di, one of the contemporary Mufasir, a person who maintains these three types of *adhkar* regularly is considered among those who remember Allah a lot, as mentioned in many verses of the holy Qur'an. So one has to read and preserve this kind of *dhikr Allah* but *al-dhikr*, in general, can be freely recited and there is no limit to the amount of *dhikr* that one can recite. Sheikh al-Sa'di, while commenting on the Ayah in Surah al-Ahzab further said that *dhikr Allah* is an obligation and we must fulfill this obligation.

Another important thing about *dhikr* is that one has to understand the meaning of the *dhikr* that he or she recites. Ibn al-Haitham stated that *al-dhikr* should be recited with full awareness of its

meaning and not just read by the tongue without understanding it. If a person reads the *adhkar* with full comprehension, he or she will get more rewards. And he/she will feel the pleasure of *iman* and also the *iman* itself will increase.

So from these statements we can understand that there are three conditions for getting more rewards in our *dhikr*. The first one is to read the three types of *dhikr* in their specific occasions. Secondly, to recite the *dhikr* with full awareness and understanding of its meaning. And finally, to continue and maintain the recitation of these *dhikr* regularly everyday.

The third part of the *hadith* is about the prayer *(salah)* and it's position in Islam. The *hadith* says: "*Al-Salah* (the prayer) is a light". According to Ibn Rajab, prayer is indeed a light for the believers in their lives. It is also a light in their hearts and delights the inner parts of their body. They will be guided by the *salah* and will be given enlightenment and satisfaction in their hearts. That is why the *salah* is a delight of the eyes of the righteous people. Al-Imam Ahmed recorded a *hadith* saying that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to say: "The delight and pleasure of my eyes is in the *salah*".

In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "When a servant of Allah preserves and safeguards the *salah* and performs it perfectly in terms of its ablution, its *sujud*, and *ruku'* then the *salah* will say to him: 'May Allah preserve and safeguard you as you preserved and safeguarded me', and then the *salah* will be taken by the angels up to the heavens while it has lights until it reaches Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* and it will do *shafa'ah* or intercession for the servant of Allah." In another similar *hadith* that is recorded by Imam Ahmed in his al-Musnad, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Whoever preserves the *salah*, it will be a light, proof and safe place for him during the Day of Judgment." The *hadith* also states the importance and significance of the *salah* for the believers who always perform it in its right time and right way.

The *hadith* further explains the role of *sadaqah* (charity) in our lives. It says charity is a *burhan* (proof) for the Muslim. *Burhan* literally means 'sunlight' in Arabic. This emphasises that charity is a bright and clear proof like the sunlight. It is a proof that reflects the *iman* of the believer. People who pay charity regularly for the sake of Allah express a strong *iman*. They feel the pleasure of *iman* in their hearts. Imam Ibn Rajab says that the reason why charity is an evidence of *iman* is that people usually love wealth and money and if they challenge this love and overpower their greed for the sake of Allah, they indeed have strong *iman*.

The *hadith* says "Patience is a *dhiya'* or brightness". According to Ibn Rajab, linguistically *al-dhiya'* (brightness) is different from *al-nur* (light). *Al-dhiya'* is more powerful than *al-nur*, because it not only gives out light but also heat, while *al-nur* gives out only a shining light. That is why in the Qur'an the term *dhiya'* is used for sunlight which, beside its light, has heat or high temperature, but the term *al-nur* is used for the moonlight which gives out only light and does not emit heat.

Being patient is a very difficult and painful experience. It requires a lot of effort and struggle within. So when people control themselves and overcome impatience, they develop a good habit of self-control and become masters of their own selves. This is the real meaning of *al-sabr* or patience. *Al-sabr* literally means to 'withhold' or control something. It means to control the *nafs* and prevent it from being in a state of panic or impatience. It also means to prevent the tongue from complaining or saying negative things. People do not practice this value. They become impatient for minor reasons. They seem to be against the *qadar* and plans of Allah in their lives.

Imam Ibn Rajab says that there are three kinds of *al-sabr* or patience in Islam:

1. *Al-Sabru ala da'ati allahi* - to be patient in performing the acts of worship or *ibadah* of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala.*
2. *Al-Sabru an ma'asi allahi* - to be patient in the acts of avoiding sins *(ma'asi)* or disobedience of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala.*
3. *Al-Sabru ala aqdari allahi* - to be patient with the *Qadar* of Allah or His plans which are predestined by Him and happens to us in our lives.

Some scholars add a fourth kind of *al-sabr* to these three classifications: *Al-Sabru ala al-bida'* - to be patient on matters related to religious innovations (but this can be included under the *ma'asi* (sins) or disobedience).

On the question of which of these three kinds of *al-sabr* is more important, Imam Ibn Rajab said that to be patient in *ibadah* and to be patient in avoiding *ma'asi* or sins are more virtues than being patient with the *qadar*. One act of *ibadah* that contains all these three forms of *al-sabr* is fasting. For example, when fasting you obey Allah by performing the act of fasting, you avoid sins of eating during the day, and you believe that this is the plan of Allah and hence a test for you.

The *hadith* also explains the role of the holy Qur'an in our lives. It states that "The Qur'an is either an argument and proof for or against you". In Surah al-Isra Ayah 82 Allah says:

> "We send down the Qur'an that which is a healing and mercy for those who believe and for the unjust people it causes nothing but loss after loss."

So people who recite the Qur'an, learn it and practice its rulings are people who become the people of the Qur'an and it (the Qur'an) will be a proof for them. But those who ignore the Qur'an and never read or practice it in their lives, then the Qur'an will stand against them during the Day of Judgment. One of contemporary scholars observed that people do not read the Qur'an except when someone dies. They recite the Qur'an on a dead body but this is not the aim of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is revealed for the living and not for those who have passed away.

Finally, the *hadith* states one very important issue, that is how to free ourselves from the punishment of Allah. The *hadith* states that everyone goes out in the morning and sells him or herself either for good or for bad. Every morning we sell ourselves either by freeing ourselves from the punishment or leading ourselves into punishment and hence destroying ourselves. Iman Ahmed has recorded another similar *hadith* in his al-Musnad. In Surah al-Shams Ayah 9-10, Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* mentions the same meaning. He says:

> "Truly he succeeds that perfects it (the soul) and fails that corrupts it".

Imam Ibn Rajab, while commenting on this meaning, said the person who struggles to worship Allah and obeys Him is the one who frees himself and the person who indulges in sins is the one who destroys himself. According to the *hadith*, every morning when people go out of their houses they are either gaining rewards and profit or getting losses. If they work for Allah and obey Him they are winners, but if they violate the rules of Allah and disobey Him then they gain nothing but loss after loss. This was also clearly explained in the Qur'an, in Surah al-Zumar Ayah 15.

Conclusion

This *hadith* guides us in how to gain great rewards in our lives and also how to save ourselves from Allah's punishment. For example, practicing the acts of purification, *dhikr Allah*, prayer, charity and also many other deeds are very important ways to free oneself from the punishment of Allah.

Hadith 24

عَنْ أَبِيْ ذَرٍّ الْغِفَارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيْمَا يَرْوِيْهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: يَاعِبَادِيْ إِنِّيْ حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِيْ وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلَا تَظَالَمُوْا. يَاعِبَادِيْ كُلُّكُمْ ضَالٌّ إِلَّا مَنْ هَدَيْتُهُ فَاسْتَهْدُوْنِيْ أَهْدِكُمْ. يَاعِبَادِيْ كُلُّكُمْ جَائِعٌ إِلَّا مَنْ أَطْعَمْتُهُ فَاسْتَطْعِمُوْنِيْ أُطْعِمْكُمْ. يَاعِبَادِيْ كُلُّكُمْ عَارٍ إِلَّا مَنْ كَسَوْتُهُ فَاسْتَكْسُوْنِيْ أَكْسُكُمْ. يَاعِبَادِيْ إِنَّكُمْ تُخْطِئُوْنَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَأَنَا أَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْنِيْ أَغْفِرْلَكُمْ. يَاعِبَادِيْ إِنَّكُمْ لَنْ تَبْلُغُوْا ضُرِّيْ فَتَضُرُّوْنِيْ وَلَنْ تَبْلُغُوْا نَفْعِيْ فَتَنْفَعُوْنِيْ. يَاعِبَادِيْ لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوْا عَلَى اَتْقَى قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَازَادَ ذٰلِكَ فِيْ مُلْكِيْ شَيْئًا. يَاعِبَادِيْ لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ كَانُوْا عَلَى أَفْجَرِ قَلْبِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ مَانَقَصَ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ مُلْكِيْ شَيْئًا. يَاعِبَادِيْ لَوْ أَنَّ أَوَّلَكُمْ وَآخِرَكُمْ وَإِنْسَكُمْ وَجِنَّكُمْ قَامُوْا فِيْ صَعِيْدٍ وَاحِدٍ فَسَأَلُوْنِيْ فَأَعْطَيْتُ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مَسْأَلَتَهُ مَانَقَصَ ذٰلِكَ مِمَّا عِنْدِيْ إِلَّا كَمَا يَنْقُصُ الْمِخْيَطُ إِذَا أُدْخِلَ الْبَحْرَ. يَاعِبَادِيْ إِنَّمَا هِيَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ أُحْصِيْهَا لَكُمْ ثُمَّ أُوَفِّيْكُمْ إِيَّاهَا فَمَنْ وَجَدَ خَيْرًا فَلْيَحْمَدِ اللهَ وَمَنْ وَجَدَ غَيْرَ ذٰلِكَ فَلَا يَلُوْمَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

It was relayed on the authority of Abu Dhar al-Ghifari, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, that the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, said, of what he related from his Lord, magnified and exalted be He, Who said:

"O My servants, I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another. O My servants, all of you are liable to err except for those whom I guide on the right path, therefore seek guidance from Me so that I should direct you to the right path. O My servants, all of you are hungry (needy) except for those whom I feed, therefore seek food from Me so that I may feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked (need clothes) except for those whom I provide garments, therefore seek clothing from Me so that I should clothe you. O My servants, you sin by night and by day and I am there to pardon your sins, therefore seek forgiveness from Me so that I should grant you pardon. O My servants, you can neither do Me any harm nor can you do Me any good. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the whole human race of yours and that of Jinns become as pious as the most pious heart of any one amongst you, it will not add anything to My Power or Kingdom. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the whole human race of yours and that of Jinns become as wicked as the most wicked heart of anyone amongst you, it will not decrease anything from My Power or Kingdom. O My servants, even if the first amongst you and the last amongst you and the whole human race of yours and that of Jinns gather together on a sector of land and all ask of Me and if I were to give everyone of them what they asked, that will not in any way decrease what I have anymore than a needle decreases what is in the ocean when it is put into it. O My servants, these deeds of yours which I am recording for you I shall reward you for them, so he who finds good should praise Allah and he who finds other than that should not blame anyone but himself."

[Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* stresses on the prohibition of all forms of injustice and oppression in Islam. It commands its followers to practice justice which is one of the main objectives of the *Shariah*. It also encourages Muslims to seek guidance from Allah by means of supplication *(du'a)* and relying on Allah alone *(Tawakul)*.

Even though we are commanded to do our best efforts in carrying out our daily activities, one should not be materialistic and rely on his efforts alone. It is only with Allah's permission and support and His *tawfiq* that our efforts becomes successful. Hence, this *hadith* confirms certain aspects of *al-qadar* which have been pointed out before and the choice is Allah's Glory, the all-Gracious and Powerful.

Lessons

As also mentioned in many verses of the Qur'an, Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* affirms His absolute justice and negates that He has never committed any kind of injustice towards anyone. Some verses of the holy Qur'an in this regards are:

In Surah Fussilat (41), Ayah 46 : "Your Lord is not at all unjust to His slaves"

In Surah al-Zukhruf (43), Ayah 76 : "No wise shall We be unjust to them but it is they who have been unjust to themselves"

In Surah Ghafir (40), Ayah 31 : "And Allah wills no injustice for His slaves"

In Surah al-Imran (3), Ayah 108 : "...and Allah wills no injustice to the world"

In Surah al-Nisa (4), Ayah 40 : "Surely Allah wrongs not even of the weight of an atom"

In Surah al-Kahf (18), Ayah 49 : "...and your Lord treats no one with injustice"

The forbidden injustices include all forms. The first, the highest level and the most extreme form of injustice is *al-shirk* or associating partners with Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great form of injustice indeed"
> [Surah Luqman (31) : Ayah 13]

The second form is unjust towards one ownself such as committing sins. The third form is *dhulm* or unjust towards others whether human beings or other creatures.

It is a must that a Muslim should avoid injustice as it displease Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* and leads to His severe punishment.

Ibn Taymiyyah points out that good and bad may be related to one's worldly life or one's religion. The guidance and forgiveness that are mentioned in the *hadith* are related to one's religion. Food and clothing are related to one's worldly needs. These are examples of what every one of us needs.

The *hadith* shows us that humans are always in great need for Allah. We need Allah for everything because we are poor and needy. Allah is the only One Who does not need anybody. He does not need anything from us. He is the Almighty and the Most Powerful. So a Muslim

should show his or her need to Allah all the time and should seek Allah's support and *Tawfiq* in whatever he or she does. That is why we are ordered to do a lot of *dhikr* all the time because it expresses our needs to Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

It is by the help of Allah that we are able to do things. We are able to move and walk. We are able to sleep and wake up and do all our activities. All our internal bodily systems such as breathing, blood circulation and digestion and so on depend and work on Allah's Will. If any of these functions stop working, no one can bring it back to normal except Allah. So we should always be grateful to Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

Most people remember Allah only when there is a problem. For example, when one of our bodily functions does not work properly (e.g. an injured muscle, a broken finger, etc.), it is only then that we remember the bounties of Allah and what He provided us. But we should not wait until a problem occurs to be grateful to Allah. We have to be grateful to Him all the time and thank Him for all His *Ni'mah* on us. This will increase our *iman* because the more we show our needs to Allah, the more we feel the bounty of Allah. People who are not grateful to Allah are considered arrogant because they do not recognize the bounties of Allah given to them.

Guidance is a great mercy and *ni'mah* from Allah the Almighty. It is very important for every Muslim to know that the most valuable thing that we have in our life is this guidance. Allah has guided us to the right path or *iman* and we have to be grateful to Him. This guidance in the form of the Qur'an was revealed to us by Allah through His Messenger, Muhammad, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*. So we should stick to its guidance and follow its teachings as a guide for us in everything we do in our lives. Our efforts alone cannot guide us. Even though we have our own will and choice, they are not independent. They are under Allah's will and choice and belong to Him. We have *aql* (mind) but again it is created by Allah. We also have *fitrah* or the natural deposition but it is also created by Allah and belongs to Him. All these things are created by Allah. Allah showed us the right way to follow and be guided and warn us against *Shaitan* who is our greatest enemy and cause of our wrongdoings and misguidance. Allah also showed us how to deal with our own desires which He created in us. He told us that we should not be misled by these desires. We have to use them in the right ways.

When it comes to the issue of misguidance, we must know that it is not from the choice of Allah because He does not want us to be misguided. It is from our own will and choice. When someone is misguided it is his or her own attitude and behavior and it is he or she who chooses it to be like that. For example, *takabur* (arrogance) is one source of misguidance but it is a person's character and attitude which affect the heart and cause misguidance. So when a person chooses to be misguided he or she will be so by his or her own will and not by Allah's misguidance. Allah's misguidance comes later as punishment for the person who chooses to be misguided. But if the person is misguided because of external factors which is out of his hands, he will be excused. For example, if the person did not receive the message of Islam at all or he received it but not in a clear way, then he will be excused for that misguidance. People who live in periods between two prophets *(Ahlul Fatrah)* are considered as being in excusable situations because they could not receive the messages of Allah at that period of time.

At the end of the *hadith* it is mentioned and stressed that whoever finds good record he should be thankful to Allah and praise Him for that, and anyone who finds other than that, which means bad record, he should not blame anyone except himself. This is a clear statement that shows the personal responsibility of one's actions. It is the person's own will and choice and not Allah's. Allah is al-A'dil or Just. He never does injustice to His servants. In the Qur'an, we can find many verses that explain how people blame themselves during the Day of Judgment for not following the right path. It is the people themselves who chose to be misguided and hence they cannot blame any one else but themselves. This is also an important aspect of *al-qadar* that should be understood.

According to the scholars there are four types of guidance:

1. Guidance needed for the welfare of the worldly life. This type is general guidance for all living beings. They include Muslims and non-Muslims, animals and also other creatures. All are guided by Allah for their worldly well-being.
2. Guidance which benefits mankind in the religious sense. This type is beneficial for life in the Hereafter.
3. Guidance in terms of placing faith and guidance into the heart of a person. This can be done only by Allah, as mentioned in Surah al-Kahf, Ayah 117.
4. Guidance in the Hereafter as stated in Surah Yunus, Ayah 9. This fourth guidance is a result of the second guidance. Those who follow the message of Allah are guided to the right path and will be guided in the Hereafter.

The door of *Taubah* or repentance is open for all. The acceptance of our repentance is always available. Islam is a practical religion. It acknowledges our weaknesses. People are always subject to wrongdoings. They may neglect or delay performing obligations *(wajib)* or they may even indulge in sins *(ma'asi')* but Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* is Oft-Forgiving and His door is open to all wrongdoers.

We are given the chance to repent and come back to Allah. This is a mercy from Allah. If we truly repent to Allah, our sins will be forgiven and even the bad records will be changed into good ones. Allah is telling us that He is Forgiving, Merciful and Compassionate. He requires us to come to Him and seek His forgiveness. We should know that the door of Allah is open to us all the time. If we do something wrong at night, we should come back to Him in the morning and if we do something wrong in the morning, we should come to seek His forgiveness during the night. We are always encouraged to do *istighfar*, which means to remember Allah and praise Him by reciting His *Dhikr*. We should maintain this *istighfar* regularly, for example, during the morning and evening times. It is also recommended to recite these *adhkar* after the *salah* and in some other specific times. We are encouraged to read these *dhikr* in our hearts.

The *hadith* shows the generosity of Almighty Allah. Allah gives His servants a lot of bounties and favours. The more they ask Him, the more He gives them His *Ni'mah* and countless Bounties. He wants us to ask Him more and seek His help and support. This is different from human beings because humans do not like to be asked frequently. The more you ask a human, the more they hate you and eventually will turn away from you. But the more we ask Allah the more He gives us. He wants us to come closer to Him and show Him our needs and humbleness. He will be pleased by our frequent *taubah* and repentance. This is also a kind of *ibadah* which is required to be practiced.

The early scholars *(al-Salaf)* used to ask Allah a lot and always seek His help in everything, even when a part of their shoe is cut they ask Allah to repair it for them. This shows that they were totally relying on Allah *subhana wa ta'ala* in their lives. We should also depend on Allah alone. We should not depend on our material aspects such as money and wealth as they cannot do anything for us. It is Allah alone Who deserves to be relied on. So every Muslim should be closer to Allah and seek His help and support. This will give us strength in our faith and *iman*. It will also give us more *barakah* (blessings) in our deeds and actions as explained in many verses of the Qur'an.

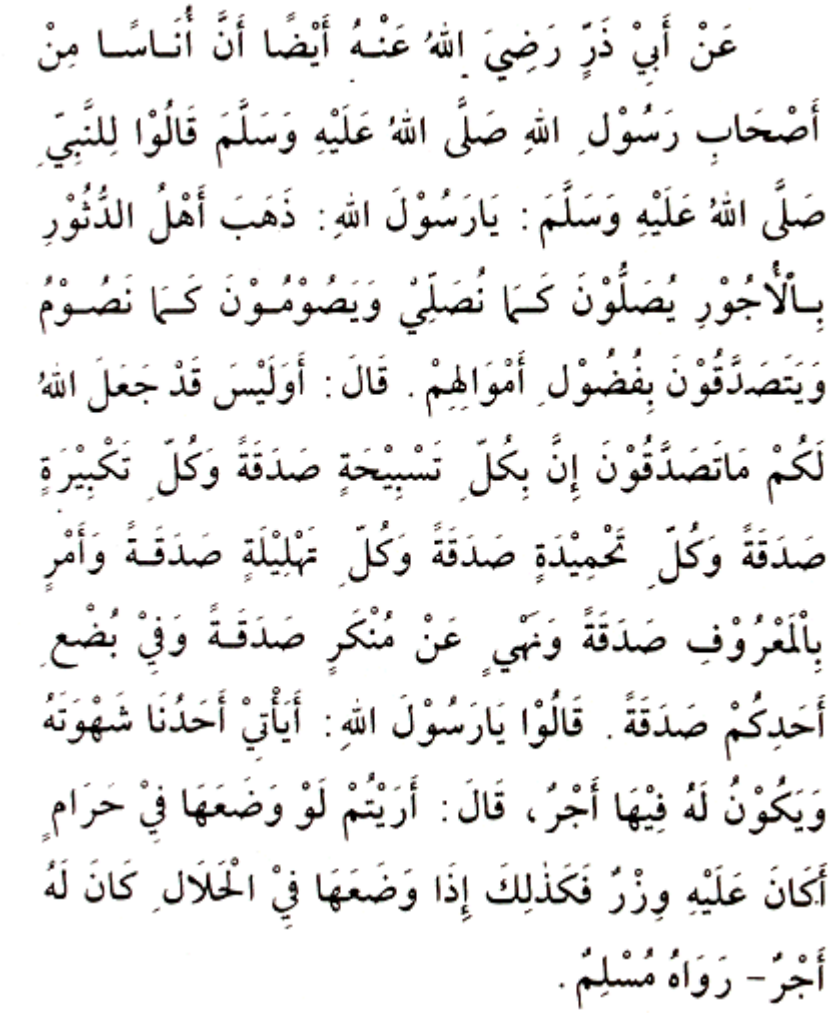
Istighfar is also one way to acquire good *rizq* or wealth because when we do *istighfar* we will get *barakah* in our *rizq*. It is this *barakah* or blessing of Allah which makes our wealth more beneficial regardless of how much money we earn. Some people earn a lot of money but there in no *barakah* in their wealth because they do not do *istighfar* nor are they grateful to Allah. People should show their need and humbleness to Allah who is the Master and Sustainer of the world.

Conclusion

The *hadith* shows us the proper relationship between mankind and Allah. It shows us the many attributes of Allah such as being Merciful, Forgiving, Powerful and Compassionate. In contrast, we as human beings are poor, needy and weak. We are in continuous need for Allah, our creator and sustainer. We need His Guidance, Help and Support. That is why in every *raka'ah* of our *salah* we are required to recite Umu al-Kitab or Surah al-Fatihah. We recite it at least 17 times everyday. It reminds us of our extreme need for our Lord and His Guidance and Support. Also this will strengthen our faith and *iman*.

In many verses of the Qur'an and in the *hadiths* of the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, it is explained the importance of showing our need and humbleness to Allah and the worthiness of frequent *taubah* or repentance to Him. He will listen to us and will accept our supplication and repentance. He will be pleased by our *du'a* and prayers. He will shower on us His Mercy and Blessings and that is what we continuously need. We want to be guided, supported and forgiven. We seek the pleasure of Allah and it is the most important thing that a Muslim may achieve in life. Those who achieve it are described as *Fa'izun* or the most successful people.

Hadith 25



عَنْ أَبِيْ ذَرٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَيْضًا أَنَّ أُنَاسًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالُوْا لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ : ذَهَبَ أَهْلُ الدُّثُوْرِ بِالْأُجُوْرِ يُصَلُّوْنَ كَمَا نُصَلِّيْ وَيَصُوْمُوْنَ كَمَا نَصُوْمُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُوْنَ بِفُضُوْلِ أَمْوَالِهِمْ . قَالَ : أَوَلَيْسَ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللهُ لَكُمْ مَاتَصَدَّقُوْنَ إِنَّ بِكُلِّ تَسْبِيْحَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَكُلِّ تَكْبِيْرَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَكُلِّ تَحْمِيْدَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَكُلِّ تَهْلِيْلَةٍ صَدَقَةً وَأَمْرٍ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ صَدَقَةً وَنَهْيٍ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ صَدَقَةً وَفِيْ بُضْعِ أَحَدِكُمْ صَدَقَةً . قَالُوْا يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ : أَيَأْتِيْ أَحَدُنَا شَهْوَتَهُ وَيَكُوْنُ لَهُ فِيْهَا أَجْرٌ ، قَالَ : أَرَيْتُمْ لَوْ وَضَعَهَا فِيْ حَرَامٍ أَكَانَ عَلَيْهِ وِزْرٌ فَكَذٰلِكَ إِذَا وَضَعَهَا فِيْ الْحَلَالِ كَانَ لَهُ أَجْرٌ- رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ .

Abu Dharr, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that some of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, said to him:

> **"O Messenger of Allah, the rich have taken away all the rewards. They observe the prayer as we do, and they keep the fasts as we do, and they give *sadaqah* (charity) from their surplus riches." Upon this he (the Prophet) said: "Has Allah not prescribed for you (a course) by following which you can also do *sadaqah*? Verily in every *tasbih* (i.e. saying *Subhanallah*) there is a *sadaqah*, every *takbir* (i.e. saying *Allahu Akbar*) is a *sadaqah*, every *tahmid* (i.e. saying *Alhamdulillah*) is a *sadaqah*, every *tahlil* (i.e. saying *Lailaha illallah*) is a *sadaqah*, enjoining of good is a *sadaqah*, forbidding of evil is a *sadaqah*, and having sexual intercourse with your wife is a *sadaqah*. They (the Companions) said: "O Messenger of Allah, is**

there reward for him who satisfies his sexual passion among us?" He said: "Tell me, if he were to devote it to something forbidden, would it not be a sin on his part? Similarly, if he were to devote it to something lawful, he should have a reward."

[Muslim]

Background

In another *hadith* recorded by both Muslim and Al-Bukhari, it is mentioned that the questioners were the poor of the Muhajruun or immigrants from Makkah. Ibn Rajab says that this *hadith* shows that those poor people thought that giving *sadaqah* (charity) can only be done through money, something which they could not afford. The Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, told them that all good deeds are considered as charitable acts.

There are other versions this *hadith* of Abu Dharr as well as some other hadiths which show similar meanings. One of them is in Sahih Muslim which says that: "Every good act is an act of charity". In another version the *hadith*, it says: "Your smile to your brother is a charitable act. Ordering good is a charitable act. Forbidding evil is a charitable act. Helping a man who has bad eyesight to see things is a charitable act. Removing a stone, rubbish or bones is a charitable act. Emptying your cup in the cup of your brother is a charitable act."

Also in the Sahihain (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) it is mentioned that "A man spending money upon his wife is charity". In another *hadith* in the Sahihain it is mentioned that "No Muslim plants a plant or soils a seed and has it eaten by a bird, animal or human except that it will be a charitable act for him".

Lessons

According to Ibn Rajab, the *hadith* proves that the Companions of the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, were so eager to do good acts and charitable deeds. They had very strong desires to do *al-khayr* and charity in order to please Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. They were sad when they could not afford to donate their money to charity especially as it was being done by some other people. They had a strong desire to spend they wealth and to do good deeds when they saw some members among the Companions doing it. They wanted to be like them in terms of rewards and *tawab*. They were able to do *salah*, fasting and other *ibadah* but one thing they could not do was giving money or *sadaqah* because they did not have any. But they were told to do more *dhikr* which is equal to giving money or charity in terms of rewards.

We can see here how the Companions were so keen to do all forms and acts of *ibadah* in order to please Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. This should be the case with every Muslim. We should be eager to do every good deed which pleases Allah. At least we should have the will and desire to do it even if we cannot do it.

Ibn Rajab states that the Islamic concept of charity in its broad sense can be divided into two types: -

1. The acts of goodness and kindness one can have towards other humans. Ibn Rjab gave some examples such as education and teaching people, teaching the Qur'an, removing anything that harms people in their paths, and also doing whatever that contributes to the well-being of the Muslim community. This also includes making *du'a* (prayer) and *istighfar* (forgiveness) for the other Muslims.

2. Keeping any harmful action away from others. This means that we must not perform a harmful act towards other people if it does not benefit them. It is the minimum thing that one can afford to do to benefit others.

Charitable acts are rewarded even without *niyah* or intentions. This can be understood from the first impression or the general observable meaning of the text of the *hadith*. But it seems that Ibn Rajab is not happy with this interpretation. He says that a charitable act, according to many scholars, is conditional to a good intention. That is we must do it for the sake of Allah only and to seek His Pleasure. According to Ibn Rajab, this view is supported by two evidences:

1. In another version of the *hadith* good intention was mentioned and hence it applies to the other places where good intention was not mentioned.

2. In Surah al-Nisa Ayah 114, Allah says: "There is no good in most of their secret talks except one who exhorts to a good deed of charity or goodness or conciliation between people. To him who does this seeking the pleasure of Allah, We shall soon give him a reward of high value." Ibn Rajab says that in this verse it is mentioned that the reward is conditional to a good intention only.

Each of the phrases of *dhikr Allah* such as *al-tahmid*, *al-tahlil*, and *al-tasbih* is a charitable act. This show us the importance if *dhikr Allah*. There are general types of *dhikr* and there are specific types of *dhikr*. Muslims should remember Allah all the time. The recommended time to do *dhikr* is during the morning and the evening and after the *salawat*. Every Muslim should maintain and observe the *dhikr* in order to become among those who are described as *al-dhakirun*.

The acts of pleasing Allah are very wide and affordable to everyone. People differ in their ability, preference, potential, etc. There is room for all where every one has the ability to perform some act of charity. Therefore a Muslim should take this advantage and do good deeds which are more convenient and suitable for him or her. However, we are encouraged to do as much of good deeds and charitable acts as we can.

There is story that Imam al-Dhahabi related about a dialogue between Ibn al-Juwairiyah and Imam Malik. He said that Ibn al-Juwairiyah wrote a letter to Imam Malik about *ibadah* and advised him to do more acts of worship. Imam Malik was well known for his lectures in the Masjid al-Nabawi where he used to disseminate *ilm* (knowledge) and the *sunnah* of the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, that he learned. Ibn Juwairiyah was known of his piety and devotions to worship. Imam Malik replied Ibn al-Juwairiyah's letter saying that Allah has divided the acts of deeds among people as He divided *rizq* or wealth among them. Some are given talents in knowledge and how to spread it while others are given talents in *jihad*, fasting and so on. So what he (Imam Malik) was given is not less than what Ibn al-Juwairiyah have been given and he hoped that both of them are on the right track and do the things that please Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*.

Also In the stories of the Sahabah we can find that every one was good at doing some specific acts. This means talents are divided among people. Ibn Masud said that fasting the *sunnah* prevented him from reciting the Qur'an. It made him weak. So he chose the recitation of the Qur'an over the non-obligatory fasting. This is mentioned by al-Shatibi in his al-I'tisam.

So people have choices and preferences in doing acts of *ibadah* according to their ability and this is acceptable in Islam. Only a few people may have the ability to do many things together. One of them was Abu Bakar al-Siqdiq, *radiyallahu 'anhu*. He was given the talents to perform all forms of *ibadah* and was good at doing them.

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions said that it is recommended to compete towards good deeds as mentioned in the Qur'an. People are allowed to compete for goodness and for the acts of charity in accordance with their talents and ability. There is a story of a man who was in Madinah who usually goes to *salah* with some money in his pocket. After the *salah* and on his way back, he would give the money to any needy person that he met. He was well known for doing this kind of charity. Then there is the story of an old man who was over 80 years old who used to do many good activities for the people of the village. He used to walk around the streets of the village and cleaned the roads and streets. Every morning after the *Fajar* prayers he would go to the school and clean the muddy and dusty road to that school. He was an illiterate man but yet he did a lot of good jobs for the villagers which other people did not bother to do. This is indeed a great deed in the sight of Allah. It is a good opportunity to get the pleasure of Allah. Therefore every Muslim should be doing this kind of action which is actually easy and simple but has great rewards. We cannot do all charitable acts at one time but we have to do whatever we can do. We have to have the intention to do any charitable act. The *hadith* that says: "Your smile to your brother is a charitable act" is a good example of this type of *ibadah*. It is common now to see many people who have the habit of smiling at other people. They are in fact good at this kind of charitable act. They are blessed with this behavior. It has a positive influence on other's behavior. When you smile to your brother and say *"Assalamu Alaikum"* to him, you are in

fact making him happy and this act will create a good environment among the Muslim community.

Scholars have emphasised the distinction between *"Ghibtah"* and *"Hasad"*. *Al-Ghibtah* means to have the desire to achieve the good qualities that others have. *Al-Ghibtah* is a positive behavior which motivates you to do good, as good as other people do. For example, when you see a knowledgeable person, you admire and wish to be knowledgeable like him; when you see someone who do a lot of *ibadah*, you wish to do the same; when you see a rich person who pays charity, you admire him and wish to be like him. So you admire these people for their good actions and hence you wish to be like them. *Al-Ghibtah,* then, is actually good and desirable. It influences our attitude and behavior in a positive way.

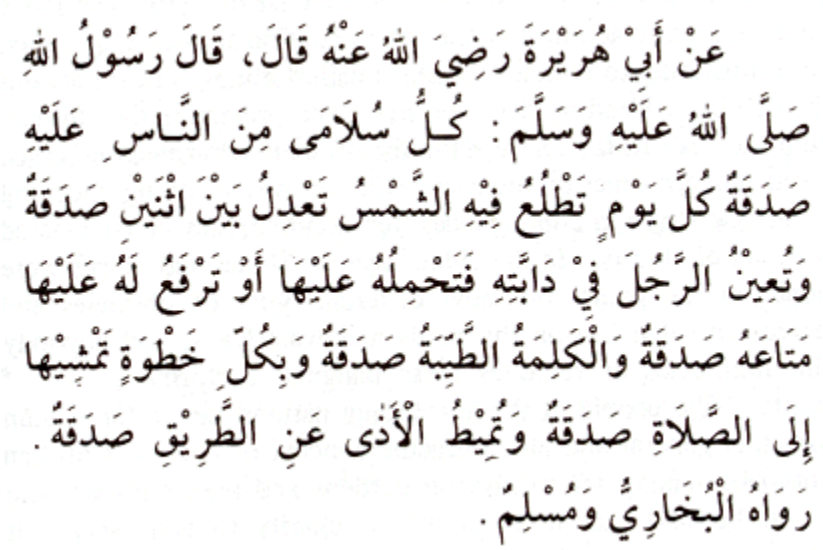
Al-Hasad, on the other hand, means 'envy'. It is a negative behavior which is prohibited and condemned in Islam. The Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, said that *al-Hasad* demolishes the rewards. It is envy and jealousy that occurs when you see someone who is given some privileges that you do not have. It is Allah who gives His Bounty to anyone He choses. So we should not feel any objection to Allah's plan. That is why *al-Hasad* is considered a very bad behavior and a major sin.

We are encouraged to perform the acts of ordering good things and prohibiting evils because when we do it we contribute to the well-being of the society. We do not do it to offend or put down someone. We do it in order to help them. Carrying out this concept will always contribute to the betterment of the whole society. We have to do it with tolerance and patience so that the other party may accept it. When we do this act with good intentions, the other person sees it positively. He sees it as caring and concern from our side. So most likely, he will accept it. We should not do it in a harsh or aggressive way that it may offend others.

Conclusion

Scholars state that permissible acts can be turned into *ibadah*. These acts can be rewarded with the condition of having good intentions. So every normal activity that we do in our everyday life can be turned into *ibadah* and we will be rewarded for doing it with good intentions. For example, when you are driving or putting petrol into your car with the intention of benefiting your family or relatives, you will be rewarded and this act will be considered as *ibadah*. Also, when you make a telephone call to your family or relatives with good intentions, you will be rewarded for that. Hence, these simple acts of our everyday life can be turned into *ibadah* and be rewarded. We need to train ourselves with this habit and *insha Allah* we will get a great reward from Allah.

Hadith 26


عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: كُلُّ سُلَامَى مِنَ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِ
صَدَقَةٌ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ تَطْلُعُ فِيْهِ الشَّمْسُ تَعْدِلُ بَيْنَ اثْنَيْنِ صَدَقَةٌ
وَتُعِيْنُ الرَّجُلَ فِيْ دَابَّتِهِ فَتَحْمِلُهُ عَلَيْهَا أَوْ تَرْفَعُ لَهُ عَلَيْهَا
مَتَاعَهُ صَدَقَةٌ وَالْكَلِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ صَدَقَةٌ وَبِكُلِّ خَطْوَةٍ تَمْشِيْهَا
إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ صَدَقَةٌ وَتُمِيْطُ الْأَذَى عَنِ الطَّرِيْقِ صَدَقَةٌ.
رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said :

> **"On every person's joints or small bones (i.e. fingers and toes), there is *sadaqah* (charity) every day the sun rises. Doing justice between two people is *sadaqah*; assisting a man to mount his animal, or lifting up his belongings onto it is *sadaqah*; a good word is *sadaqah*; every step you take towards prayer is *sadaqah*; and removing harmful things from pathways is *sadaqah*."**

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Background

The content of this *hadith* is the same as the previous one, Hadith 25. One possibility why this is so is that Al-Imam An-Nawawi wanted to emphasise the importance of *sadaqah* (charitable acts) so he decided to repeat the meaning of the previous *hadith*. Another possibility is that this *hadith* may contain more examples of *sadaqah* than what was mentioned in the previous one. A third possibility is the influence of Al-Imam Muslim on Imam Nawawi, who has written commentaries on Sahih Muslim. Imam Muslim recorded many *hadiths* which address the issue of *sadaqah*. It can be concluded that what has happened is due to the influence of Imam Nawawi's involvement in this great scholarly research on explaining and interpreting Sahih Muslim.

Ibn Rajab quotes other *hadiths* with similar meanings. Two were recorded by Imam Muslim. From this a possibility of influence can be derived. A third *hadith* is recorded by Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim where the *hadith* mentions the number of bones as 360. In this *hadith* the number is not mentioned. It only mentions every small joint (bone).

In one of these *hadiths*, the performance of the *Duha* prayer is mentioned as a substitution of some charitable acts. The Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that the praying of *al-Duha* has the same reward of doing these charitable acts. In the *hadith* that is related by Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, it mentions something that is not mentioned in the previous *hadith*. One more charitable act that is mentioned by Ibn Rajab is helping the one who is in need. Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, emphasized this idea: if a Muslim cannot help the one who is in need, he should abstain from evil and not harm others.

Lessons

The *hadith* shows the great creation of man which has been emphasised in many *surahs* in the Qur'an. Ibn Rajab says when the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions these small bones or joints, he is emphasizing their structure and creation which are great bounties of Allah *subhana wa ta'ala*. The Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, calls upon us to be thankful to Allah by doing charitable acts for each one of these bones.

Al-Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo highlights the significance of the word *'salameh'*, the small bone, when he refers to the small bones in the hands and feet and how they are put together. Once again, we notice how scholars may be influenced by each other. It is not strange to notice that Ustaz Jamaludin is influenced by Ibn Rajab since he translated most of his work. He asks the Muslims to see how these bones are magnificently put together. It is their interaction that allows the dexterity and speed that the creatures possess in their hands. It also gives proper balance to the feet.

Al-Shaikh Al-Bitar, one of the commentators on An-Nawawi's Forty **Hadith**, states that these bones are some of the keys to the progress and civilization of man. These bones enable human beings to move, grasp, construct and build things. Most of what people perform and what has been manufactured is due to these small and minute bones that have been created by Allah in this impressive and marvelous way. Therefore, he continues to say, these are great blessings for which a Muslim must be thankful to Allah. We can be thankful by doing the above mentioned charitable acts: to do good deeds, to help others, and to benefit the community.

Ibn Rajab mentions that doing these charitable acts mentioned in the *hadith* is an obligation upon each Muslim. Moreover, he classifies thankfulness to Allah into two categories:

1. Obligatory *(wajib)* thankfulness. Muslims are required to fulfill the obligations *(wajibat)* and refrain from the prohibitions *(muharramat)*. This is the minimum level of being thankful to Allah. To be thankful to Allah requires one to refrain from disobedience *(ma'siah)* to Allah, to strongly disapprove sin, and not to misuse or abuse any of our limbs *(jawareh)* or whatever Allah has bestowed upon us. Man has been given one of the most important bounties from Allah and that is sight. Man must not use it in disobedience. Allah bestowed us with the bounty of hearing and we should use it in a beneficial way.

2. Preferable *(mustahab)* thankfulness. This is for Muslims who seek to be among the righteous and competing believers. This type can be classified into subcategories:

    a. What is beneficial to the community such as what is mentioned in this *hadith*.
    b. Limited to the person who performs it, as mentioned in Hadith 25.

Though the above mentioned classifications may be perceived positively or negatively, it should not take us away from the great meaning of the charitable acts where we can look at them from a different angle. Not from the angle of whether they are preferable (*mandoub*: if we do it, we will be rewarded and if we do not do it, we will not be blamed) or obligatory *(wajib)*. Sometimes preferable things become obligatory. For instance, if a blind man wants to cross the road and you are the only one to help him, helping him becomes obligatory. If every one of us is expecting someone else to help the blind man, he will end up with nobody willing to help him. This sort of attitude will weaken the bonding within the community. There are many negative examples that can be seen today. The recklessness of some Muslims who do not help needy people is often noticed in the Muslim community these days. As a result, the Muslim is blamed when he is the only one who is capable of doing that action but does not do it.

This *hadith* aims to emphasize the charitable acts that benefit the society since they are great deeds and the people who do them are rewarded. Most Muslims forget these charitable acts. Another *hadith* emphasises that Muslims are like one body where they care for each other. We should set ourselves as models in our morality, behaviour, values and qualities in order for others to follow our steps and listen to us. Only by this will the level of confidence be increased in the community. People will listen to each other when they see good examples and this is what meant by the verse that the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is a good model for Muslims

As Muslims, we have to observe the charitable acts. We should do as much as we can without making any commitment to any of them. These charitable acts are not done regularly as the 5 prayers. We do them on our convenience and according to our ability. By performing these acts regularly, we will be closer to Allah. When every Muslim exercises these charitable acts, we will end up with a harmonious and cooperative society. By doing this, we contribute to the increasing of goodness and the minimising of evil - this is the main purpose of *da'wah*.

This *hadith* emphasises the significance of certain deeds: bringing about justice between two people and reconciling them. Getting people who deviated in their thoughts back to the community is part of *islah* (reconciliation). When the Khawarej started thinking of fighting their own community, Abdullah bin Abbas, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, went to them and had a dialogue with them. He tried to remove any misconceptions. He was successful in getting two-thirds of them into the Muslim community. This is one meaning of charitable acts. Another meaning is to give help to those who are in need for help. We should not wait until we are asked. We have to offer help when we see people in need. This is what is meant by *wala'* (loyality) to the community.

Saying a good word is a charitable act, as mentioned in Hadith 25. There are many ways that we can do this. For example, when we notice that someone is unhappy, we can bring pleasure to him by saying a good word to him and relieving his sadness or worry.

Another deed is the step to prayer. We know that prayer is obligatory, but by walking to prayer we perform a charitable act in every step. When Muslims keep this in their minds, they will be encouraged to do such deeds.

The last charitable act that is mentioned in this *hadith* is removing a harmful thing from the road or from someone's pathway. Some people may look at this as insignificant or unimportant. But this does not mean that the act is degrading. In the sight of Allah it is a great act and we will be rewarded for doing it. Doing such an act may prevent a terrible accident from happening. For example, omitting a nail from the street may prevent car accidents and consequently keep the safety of our community. We should not care about the comments of others because we are doing it for the sake of Allah. The more we have the intention that we are doing these charitable acts for the sake of Allah, the more will be the reward from Allah *subhana wa ta'ala.*

Conclusion

Islam calls for and encourages its followers to build a caring society, where members of the society care for one another, support one another and help one another. Social charitable acts discussed above are considered obligatory daily activities which form ways and means of being thankful to Allah. This concept needs to be promoted in the classroom, *masjid* and the media in every possible way.

Unfortunately, contemporary media plays a negative role in this sense. Movies promote negative values which lead to an uncaring society, resulting in, for example, selfishness, greediness and ego-centric personalities.

One way of changing this negative role to a positive one is to change the existing concept of entertainment. Another alternative is to initiate new branches of communication such as educational communication and psychology of the media.

Hadith 27

عَنِ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سِمْعَانَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: اَلْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ مَاحَاكَ فِيْ نَفْسِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلِعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

وَعَنْ وَابِصَةَ بْنِ مَعْبَدٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أَتَيْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: جِئْتَ تَسْأَلُ عَنِ الْبِرِّ؟ قُلْتُ: نَعَمْ! قَالَ: اسْتَفْتِ قَلْبَكَ، اَلْبِرُّ مَااطْمَأَنَّتْ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وَاطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ الْقَلْبُ وَالْإِثْمُ مَاحَاكَ فِيْ النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ فِيْ الصَّدْرِ، وَإِنْ أَفْتَاكَ النَّاسُ وَأَفْتَوْكَ. حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ؛ رَوَيْنَاهُ فِيْ مُسْنَدَيِ الْإِمَامَيْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ حَنْبَلٍ وَالدَّارِمِيِّ بِإِسْنَادٍ حَسَنٍ.

Al-Nawwas bin Sam'an, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Righteousness is good character, and sin is that which wavers in your heart and which you do not want people to know about."**

[Muslim]

According to Wabisah bin Ma'bad, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said:

> **I came to the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and he said: "You have come to ask about righteousness ?" " Yes," I answered. He said: "Consult your heart. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil and the heart feels tranquil, and sin is what creates restlessness in the soul and moves to and fro in the breast, even though people give you their opinion (in your favour) and continue to do so."**

[A good hadith transmitted from the Musnads of the two Imams, Ahmad bin Hanbal and Al-Darimi]

Background

The first thing that should be pointed out is that even though the second *hadith* is weak by itself, due to supporting evidence it is raised to the level of *hasan* (authentic). These two *hadiths* state the meaning of righteousness and sinfulness.

Lessons

Ibn Rajab states that the term *'bir'* which is used in this *hadith* is actually used in two senses: (a) treating others in a good manner, and (b) all acts of good deeds and worshipping Allah. Based on this, the first statement in the first *hadith* can be interpreted as meaning the most essential aspect of righteousness is good character. And Ibn Rajab extends this meaning by saying that good character can be interpreted as all good manners mentioned in the Qur'an. Consequently, according to Ibn Rajab, the two meanings of *bir* are there.

Allah has created us with a pure innate or natural disposition that is called *fitra*, as mentioned in other *hadiths*. This means to love the truth and the good and to hate falsehood and evil. Consequently, good believers with pure *fitra* should never confuse truth with falsehood.

The second *hadith* guides us to consult our heart regarding doubtful matters. If the heart is in tranquility, that implies that it is *bir* or righteousness. If the heart is not tranquil, one should abstain from carrying out such an act or doubtful matter. However, it should be noted that *fitra* is subject to corruption and can be spoiled due to the influence of bad environment - a person may start to like and appreciate what is bad or evil and dislike truth and goodness. Here, the heart is diseased or even dead. Such a person cannot use his heart as a measure to judge what is good and bad because the *fitra* is already corrupted.

Sin is what wavers or trembles your soul. This portion of the *hadith* defines a sinful act as an act for which its performer deserves blame. Imam Qurtabi gives the previous interpretation. Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo states that in this *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gave very important signs of sin. The first one is an internal sign within the human being. It is the feelings of the soul with respect to any particular act. The second sign is also about the internal feelings but it deals with the outward reaction to the act itself. Sin causes a wholesome soul to be uneasy and troubled. The soul is unhappy and worried about sin and its consequences. Ustaz Jamaludin

remarks that these signs occur because the person is naturally disposed to favour what leads to positive results and avoid what leads to negative results. The commentators of this *hadith* stress that the 'people' referred to here are the respected and righteous people.

The two *hadiths* reveal a significant aspect of Islam that is an internal controlling and guiding system that is established as a result of several factors:

1. The pure *fitra* (natural disposition). Allah created everybody with a pure *fitra* and not just Muslims. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions many factors in the environment that play an influential role in subjecting the *fitra* to corruption.
2. The realization of *tawhid*. This means practicing all the essentials of *tawhid* like loving Allah, seeking His Help as the only refuge, depending on Him *(tawakul)*, asking for His Mercy, and many other essentials associated with the idea of *tawhid*.
3. Adhering to *shari'ah* instructions.
4. Seeking knowledge.
5. *Tazkiyah* and *tarbiyah* - that is the purification of the soul and the heart of the Muslim.

The above mentioned factors and many others are interrelated and altogether lead to the establishment of the internal controlling system. However, this system needs to be 'updated' and 'upgraded' regularly by educators and *da'ies*. It is very important that the educators and *da'ies* pay attention to the individual's and the community's built-in system. They have to create awareness about contemporary challenges. They should plan future strategies to deal with such challenges.

This internal system is very important for Muslims today. They should know about it in order to activate it. Only through such proper reconstruction of the consciousness can we be certain about the validity and effectiveness of the internal controlling system. Muslims need to be aware of this fact and have to activate their system in order to be sensitive towards doubtful acts and sinful matters. Unless this system is 'upgraded', the person may not act in the right way. It is like 'installing' an 'anti-virus software' within ourselves. With such a 'software' in place, our internal system will prevent 'viruses', i.e. bad/evil acts, from entering our thoughts or hearts.

There are many issues today where people are in total doubt about whether something is allowed or not. In many areas such as insurance, food, medicine, trade, and technology, there are no definite answers - or the people themselves are not aware of the Islamic approach. This may lead to moral conflicts. Unfortunately, even some people who teach *akhlaq* and moral values are sometimes not even aware of these conflicts.

In this era we have several clashing values. Muslims should be exposed to the Islamic point of view of the issue in order to go for the right value. Works about such issues should be published and translated for all Muslims. Books and magazines should be available to all Muslims. If the existing works are very long, we need to summarize the findings and translate them into major Muslim and international languages. Exposing Muslims to such findings will minimize disputes

among them regarding certain issues. They will at least know what to do and what not to do. This will lead to unity and remove anything that can lead to disputes.

Another thing is that educators and *da'ies* should not simply use the traditional approach. If we want to talk about *sidq*, *tazkiyah*, and *tarbiyah*, we should not limit ourselves to one scholar or website. We should compare knowledge and information between different scholars. For example, if we compare the works of Al-Shaikh Zarrouq and Imam Ghazali on *tazkiyah*, we will notice differences; the work of Al-Shaikh Zarrouq is totally different from Imam Ghazali's. His books of Qawaed Altasaruf and Udat Alboroud Alsadeq use totally different approaches from Imam Ghazali. Al-Shaikh Zarrouq addressed the people of his time. We can read these books and benefit from them but we should use a more suitable approach that is more convenient to the challenges of our time. This means that we should have different ways of presenting these issues about *tazkiyah* and *tarbiyah*. It is only by this way can we 'upgrade' our internal controlling system.

We should interpret the Qur'anic texts and *hadiths* in the light of what we have today. This cannot happen unless the internal system is 'upgraded'. Otherwise we may get lost. The system has two sides: positive and negative. We must use the positive side. We have to know how to be honest in this era. It is the responsibility of the educators and *da'ies* of today to 'upgrade' the internal controlling system of the Muslims in general and the young generation in particular.

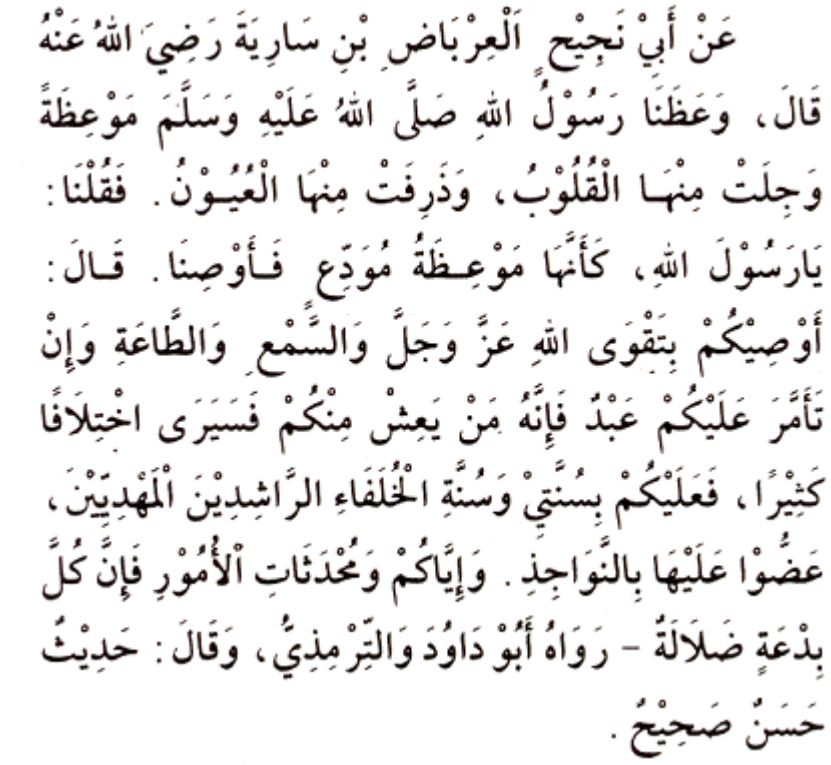
We should also be aware of the recent advancements in technology. For example, nowadays there are filtering software that are developed by non-Muslims. We can download these software and have control over some of the negative elements that can reach us through the Internet. We should develop this type of software to suit our needs as Muslims. We have to maximize the positive side of information technology. We need to do this to enable Muslims to access the Internet and use their time in the right way.

One more area that we need to be aware of is that of intellectual slavery - that is when people try to benefit from technology through globalization. There are some people who want to influence others in order to affect the *akhlaq* and ideology. They use cognitive psychology and other branches of knowledge where they can manipulate the mind. They practice brainwashing and Muslims are not aware of this. This is a very great challenge to Muslims since this may lead us to question our beliefs and moral values. Educators need to address this crucial issue. They should do something to 'upgrade' the above mentioned internal controlling system in order to prevent ourselves from being brainwashed.

Conclusion

Without a 'fully functioning' internal controlling system, people will have different attitudes which may lead to problems such as extremism. Extremists will increase in the Muslim community if issues like those mentioned above are not resolved. Muslims may end up with multiple personalities. They are Muslims but they commit *haram* (forbidden) and many other negative things. They are not aware that they are doing anything wrong and they start acting in strange ways. These people are victims of the new system of globalization. Our strategy to face such challenges is to 'activate' and 'upgrade' our internal system. Then Muslims can live their lives in tranquility and without confusion. Other solutions will merely be short term because there will be no tranquility.

Hadith 28


عَنْ أَبِيْ نَجِيْحٍ اَلْعِرْبَاضِ بْنِ سَارِيَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ
قَالَ، وَعَظَنَا رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْعِظَةً
وَجِلَتْ مِنْهَا الْقُلُوْبُ، وَذَرِفَتْ مِنْهَا الْعُيُوْنُ. فَقُلْنَا:
يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ، كَأَنَّهَا مَوْعِظَةُ مُوَدِّعٍ فَأَوْصِنَا. قَالَ:
أُوْصِيْكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ
تَأَمَّرَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَبْدٌ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا
كَثِيْرًا، فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِيْ وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِيْنَ الْمَهْدِيِّيْنَ،
عَضُّوْا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ. وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَمُحْدَثَاتِ الْأُمُوْرِ فَإِنَّ كُلَّ
بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ - رَوَاهُ أَبُوْ دَاوُدَ وَالتِّرْمِذِيُّ، وَقَالَ: حَدِيْثٌ
حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ.

It was narrated on the authority of Abu Najih al-Irbad bin Sariyah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said:

> **The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, delivered an admonition that made our hearts fearful and our eyes tearful. We said, "O Messenger of Allah, it is as if this were a farewell sermon, so advise us." He said, "I enjoin you to have *Taqwa* of Allah and that you listen and obey, even if a slave is made a ruler over you. He among you who lives long enough will see many differences. So for you is to observe my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the rightly-principled and rightly-guided successors, holding on to them with your molar teeth. Beware of newly-introduced matters, for every innovation *(bid'ah)* is an error."**
>
> [Abu Dawud & Al-Tirmidhi, who says it is an authentic hadith]

Background

In one of the narrations of this *hadith*, it is mentioned that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gave this talk after the Fajr prayer. Based on other *hadiths*, it was the practice of the Prophet,

sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, to give admonition to his companions from time to time, however, without burdening nor boring them. Ibn Rajab points out the characteristics of the Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, speeches and admonitions: brief, concise, and conveyed in beautiful understandable manner.

The admonition consists of three main issues:

1. To have *taqwa* of Allah where it is Allah's Advice to all mankind.
2. To listen and obey the leaders for it will lead to better management of the affairs of the community, of peace and unity. However, the *hadith* lays a fact that rightly-guided leadership will be the first Islamic concept to be violated.
3. The *hadith* anticipates a historical fact: i.e. the Muslim disunity and split into groups and sects due to heresies. It indicates the main principle to be followed in such situations: adhering to the *sunnah*.

The emphasis, then, in the advice given in the *hadith* is to adhere to the *sunnah* and to avoid *bid'ah* (heresy).

Lessons

Introductory statements about adhering to the sunnah

The Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, actions may be classified as follows:

1. Those that are specific to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, such as continuous fasting *(wisal)*.
2. Actions that are related to the culture of his time, such as the turban, unbuttoning the top shirt button, keeping long hair, using a walking stick.
3. Actions resulting from spontaneous or haphazard actions. For example, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to stop at particular places during a journey or take a certain route for a journey.
4. Actions that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed intentionally for the purpose of *ibadah*.

Scholars state that Muslims are only obliged to follow the last type of action.

Note: An act is considered an *ibadah* if there are authentic *hadiths* mentioning that the act is an *ibadah*, or that it will be rewarded, or that the one who does it is praised, or that the one who does not perform it is blamed or cursed or will be punished.

Scholars stated that to consider an action as a *sunnah*, two conditions must be met. Not only are the outward actions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to be imitated, but the intention of the act must be the same. For example, wearing a turban should not be done with the intention of performing an *ibadah*. If one has the intention of merely following the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, then one will rewarded for that intention only.

Imam Shatibi states the principle that if there are two ways to perform an *ibadah*, one being easier than the other, then it is obligatory to take the easier way. For example, if on a cold winter's night there is an option of using cold or hot water, then one takes the easy option, i.e. using the hot water. This principle is derived form the Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 185.

Another principle that Imam Shatibi states is that when one does a preferable action or *mustahab*, one should not commit oneself to doing it in a set manner. For example, one should not say that he shall read two *juzu'* a day, or will fast every Monday and/or Thursday on a continuous basis without stopping from time to time.

The reasons one should not commit oneself to non-obligatory acts are because:

1. It is not made obligatory by *shari'ah*.
2. It goes against the general principles of the *shari'ah* (al-Baqarah: 185).
3. If one commits himself to do non-obligatory *ibadah* on a regular basis, it comes close to being a vow *(nazr)* which is not a preferable act *(makruh)*.
4. If one makes a commitment and sticks to it, one might get fed up with the action later on and stop doing it altogether.

Therefore, it is better to do good deeds based on one's personal capacity, encouraging oneself to continue performing the deed.

Imam Shatibi has established that there are two types of *bid'ah*:

1. Genuine *bid'ah* - Any form of *ibadah* for which there is no evidence in the Qur'an nor from the *sunnah*.
2. 'Relative' *bid'ah*. Any form of *ibadah* for which there is a general evidence from the Qur'an and/or *sunnah* but no explicit/specific evidence. An example is the *du'a* in congregation. There are general evidences for making *du'a*, but there is no explicit/specific evidence to perform it in congregation on a continuous basis.

Imam Ahmad Zarouq (899H) adds a third category which is: un-agreed upon heresy or *bid'ah khilafiyyah*. This is acceptable form of *ibadah* to some scholars and it is *bid'ah* according to other scholars such as the later given example.

General rules and principles to differentiate between bid'ah and sunnah
(extracted by Imam Shatibi)

1. An *ibadah* (ritual of worship) cannot be formulated unless there is evidence from *wahy* (revelation). Another way of saying this is that *ibadah* is restricted by the *shari'ah*. The evidence for this is the *hadith* of Aishah which states that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Whoever performs an action that is not according to our way will be rejected." (al-Bukhari) [See Hadith **5**]

2. If there is a beneficial act that existed during the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, yet the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, did not perform it as a act of *ibadah*, then we cannot perform it as an act of *ibadah*.

   An act of *ibadah* may be performed due to a number of reasons:

   a. If an act is considered a need to motivate people because of their laxity and carelessness, then that act is a *bid'ah* and cannot be performed. For example, Abdul Malik bin Marwan gave the *Eid khutbah* before the prayer because people left after the prayers.

   b. If the act is considered a need due to the natural circumstances of the people and there was no need during the time of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, then it is considered as *maslahah mursalah*. For example, the compilation of the Qur'an, the use of the *mihrab*, the existing schooling system, the use of loudspeakers during the *adhan*, etc.

3. If the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, performed an act and then stopped due to a certain reason, we may perform that act provided the reason no longer exists. For example, the *Tarawih* prayers - the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, stopped performing them after a time because he was afraid that it would be made compulsory. After his death, there is no way that the *Tarawih* prayers will become compulsory as the time of *wahy* has passed.

4. Avoiding any act of worship that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, did not perform is considered a *sunnah (sunnah tarkiyyah)*.

5. Performing an act which has been made into an *ibadah* by:

   a. Generalising evidences that relate to a specific *ibadah*. In other words, removing the limits of an act that has been limited by the *shari'ah*. An example is that there are certain *adhkar* whose number of repetitions have been limited by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam* - for example, the *adhkar* after prayers. To remove these limits, i.e. make more than the specified number of repetitions, is a *bid'ah*.

b. Specifying a general evidence to a particular act. In other words, limiting an act that is unlimited by the *shari'ah*. An example is to specifically fast on Friday and pray on Friday evening. Other examples are to call the *adhan* for the *Eid* prayer (by using the general *hadith* for the *adhan*) and performing a certain set of *dhikr* for a certain time/day. These acts are considered *bid'ah*.

6. Connecting an act of *ibadah* to an unrelated action (either a natural action or a act of *ibadah*) and making them appear as a continuous action, might be a *bid'ah* or lead to *bid'ah*, depending on the situation:

   - Intentionally. This is a *bid'ah*.
   - Unintentionally. If the connection is repeatedly made in public, then it could lead to a *bid'ah* (because people might think the actions were related).
     An example is that at the time of Imam Malik, it was reported that the *muadhin* would purposely clear his throat before giving the *adhan*. When he was made to stop by Imam Malik, he would then purposely hit a stick against the side of the minaret before giving the *adhan*. Imam Malik stopped him from doing this as well, and said, "Do not do something which has not been practised by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, nor by his companions."
     Another example is to stand up immediately after performing the *fardh* prayers to perform the *sunnah* prayers where people without knowledge may get confused.
     A third example is to start fasting the six days of *Shawal* from the second day of *Eid*.

7. Any non-obligatory action which is permitted by the *shari'ah* but by repeatedly performing in public makes it appear to be a *fardh*, then that action should be stopped occasionally. An example is the recitation of Surah as-Sajdah and Surah al-Insan in the Friday *Fajr* prayer. Another is that the Companions (Abu Bakr and Umar) occasionally did not perform *udhiah*.

8. Not everybody who commits a *bid'ah* will be considered a *mubtadi'* (the one who commits a heresy). Some of them will be excused. This principle also applies to one who commits acts of *kufr* (disbelief) i.e. not everyone who commits *kufr* is a *kafir*.

   The excuses are:

   . Someone lives in a place where there is no scholar who can establish the evidence, remove misconceptions and offer guidance.
   a. Someone who is a new Muslim. That person is excused until he knows about the issues involved.
   b. If there are misconceptions related to the situation, that person is excused until these are removed.
   c. The un-agreed upon acts.

9. It is important to differentiate between innovation that is *kufr* or leads to *kufr*, and one that isn't. Any innovation which is not *kufr* or does not lead to *kufr* is worse than a *ma'siat*

(sin) but with regards to the Hereafter, it falls under the same category of *ma'siat*, i.e. the innovator may be punished or he may be forgiven and not punished.

[Note: according to Ibn Taimiyyah, there are 10 reasons why one isn't punished, among which are:

. One's rewards outweigh his sins.
a. Trials and hardship undergone in this world.
b. Intercession of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.
c. Intercession of a good Muslim.
d. Punishment in the grave.]

10. There are two opinions about one who commits a *bid'ah*:
    . Only the action committed with the *bid'ah* will not be accepted.
    a. All deeds will not be accepted from that person, provided the person is not excused or has not repented.

Clarification of the second opinion:

Imam Shatibi argues that you will not find someone committing an innovation in only one action, i.e. if one commits a *bid'ah* in the prayers, it is most likely that he will be committing *bid'ah* in *zakat*, *hajj*, etc.
Imam Shatibi states that this opinion may be interpreted in three ways:

a. The statement is taken at face value, i.e. all deeds, obligatory *(fard)* or recommended *(sunnah)*, will not be accepted.
b. That the *bid'ah* is a basic belief that can negate all of a person's actions. For example, the Rafidah's *bid'ah* of rejecting the Companions' results in not accepting the *hadith* and claiming that the Qur'an is incomplete.
c. The manifestation of an innovation is a sign of a person not having a sound grounding in the *shari'ah*, not 'respecting' the *shari'ah* or placing the intellect ahead of the *shari'ah*.

Based on Hadith 5 of Imam al-Nawawi's collection it seems that the first opinion is sounder in the case of those who follow the *sunnah* in general.

Conclusion

In order to adhere to the *sunnah* and to be able to refrain from heresy *(bid'ah),* a Muslim needs to fully understand and apply these principles pinpointed by our great scholars. Doing so can also minimize disputes and quarrels among Muslim community members over many debatable issues every now and then.

Hadith 29

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قُلْتُ: يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ أَخْبِرْنِيْ بِعَمَلٍ يُدْخِلُنِيْ الْجَنَّةَ وَيُبَاعِدُنِيْ عَنِ النَّارِ. قَالَ: لَقَدْ سَأَلْتَ عَنْ عَظِيْمٍ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَسِيْرٌ عَلَى مَنْ يَسَّرَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ. تَعْبُدُ اللهَ لاَتُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَتُقِيْمُ الصَّلاَةَ، وَتُؤْتِيْ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُوْمُ رَمَضَانَ، وَتَحُجُّ الْبَيْتَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَلاَ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ الْخَيْرِ؟ الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ، وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِىءُ الْخَطِيْئَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِىءُ الْمَاءُ النَّارَ وَصَلاَةُ الرَّجُلِ فِيْ جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ. ثُمَّ تَلاَ: تَتَجَافَى جُنُوْبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ.... حَتَّى بَلَغَ... يَعْمَلُوْنَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَلاَ أُخْبِرُكَ بِرَأْسِ الْأَمْرِ وَعَمُوْدِهِ وَذِرْوَةِ سَنَامِهِ. قُلْتُ: بَلَى يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ. قَالَ: رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ الْإِسْلاَمُ، وَعَمُوْدُهُ الصَّلاَةُ، وَذِرْوَةُ سَنَامِهِ الْجِهَادُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَلاَ أُخْبِرُكَ بِمِلاَكِ ذٰلِكَ كُلِّهِ. قُلْتُ: بَلَى يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ. فَأَخَذَ بِلِسَانِهِ. وَقَالَ: كُفَّ عَلَيْكَ هٰذَا. قُلْتُ: يَانَبِيَّ اللهِ وَإِنَّا لَمُؤَاخَذُوْنَ بِمَانَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ. فَقَالَ: ثَكِلَتْكَ أُمُّكَ، وَهَلْ يَكُبُّ النَّاسَ فِيْ النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوْهِهِمْ. أَوْ قَالَ: عَلَى مَنَاخِرِهِمْ إِلاَّ حَصَائِدُ أَلْسِنَتِهِمْ - رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ. وَقَالَ: حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ.

From Mu'adh bin Jabal, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I said:

> **"O Messenger of Allah, tell me of a deed which will take me into Paradise and will keep me away from the Hell-fire." He said: "You have asked me about a great matter, yet it is, indeed, an easy matter for him to whom Allah Almighty makes it easy. (It is) that you worship Allah without**

associating anything with Him, that you perform the prayers, that you pay the *zakat*, that you fast during Ramadan, and that you make the pilgrimage to the House."

Then he said: "Shall I not guide you to the gates of goodness? Fasting is a shield; charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire; and a man's prayer in the middle of the night." Then he recited: "Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of that We have bestowed on them. No soul knoweth what is kept hid for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do". [Qu'ran, Surah al-Sajdah (32): Ayah 16-17]

Then he said: "Shall I not also tell you of the peak of the matter, its pillar, and its topmost part?" I said: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He said: "The peak of the matter is Islam (submission to Allah), the pillar is prayer; and its topmost part is *jihad*." Then he said: "And shall I not tell you of the controlling of all that ?" I said:" Yes, O Messenger of Allah". So he took hold of his tongue and said: "Restrain this." I said: "O Prophet of Allah, will we be held accountable for what we say?" He said: "May your mother be bereft of you! Is there anything that topples people on their faces (or he said, on their noses) into the Hell-fire other than the jests of their tongues?"

[Related by Al-Tirmidhi, who said it was a fine and sound *hadith*]

Background

Many other companions have asked similar questions like the ones in this *hadith*. In general, the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, gave the same answers. Ibn Rajab highlights another narration of the *hadith* recorded by Imam Ahmad which states that Mu'adh came to the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I want to ask you about a matter that has made me ill and burning from inside." The Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, said: "Ask whatever you wish." He said: "Inform me about a deed which will make me enter Paradise."
This shows, as Ibn Rajab continues to say, Mu'adh's eagerness to know about good deeds.

Lessons

This *hadith* is evidence that doing good deeds facilitates and leads to entering Paradise as it has been mentioned in the Qur'an: "This is the Paradise that you have made to inherit because of your good deeds which you used to do" (Surah al-Zuhkruf: Ayah 72). However, a person's good

deeds are part of Allah's mercy and grace. Allah says: "But Allah who caused faith to be dear to you and have given it beauty in your heart, and has made hateful to you denial of the truth and all inequity and all rebellion against what is good" (Surah al-Hujarat (49): Ayah 7). So the meaning of this verse has been emphasized by this *hadith*. The performing of good deeds is a cause of entering paradise but they are themselves a gift from Allah.

There are debates among some scholars about the actions and whether we deserve to enter Paradise because of these actions. They raise the questions: Is it like a contract? Is it a deal? Or is this actually just a cause but entering Paradise is Allah's Mercy? If we just look at the matter as a deal or a contract, we would not be able to pay for even one of Allah's mercies.

The deeds that have been mentioned in this *hadith* have been emphasized in previous *hadiths* collected by Imam An-Nawawi, mainly Hadith 2, 3, 15 and 23. However, there are two additional good deeds mentioned in this *hadith*:

1. A man's prayer in the middle of the night. This includes, according to Ibn Rajab, three types of people:
    a. Those who wake up during the night for *dhikr*, *du'a*, or praying *tahajud*.
    b. Those who wait for the *Isha'* prayer and do not go to sleep until they perform *Isha'*.
    c. Those who wake up for the *Fajr* prayer.

    All these three groups have been mentioned in the Qur'an. People who stay awake throughout the night (busy in entertaining themselves) miss these blessed deeds. The three types of people are guaranteed and promised with the blessing from Allah in the Hereafter where there are unpredictable and unimaginable rewards.

2. *Jihad* where and when it becomes an obligation (this deed is not stated clearly in other *hadiths*). It is a great blessing that gets Muslims closer to Allah. Scholars say that *jihad* is the greatest act of worship and the most important deed after the obligatory acts. Through *jihad*, Islam is protected and preserved and became dominant, where other nations lived under its rule peacefully with their rights maintained.

In Hadith **15**, the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, quoted the importance of saying good things or keeping silent. In this *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, says it is because of the tongue saying bad things that people are thrown into the Hell-fire. Ibn Rajab states that this indicates that restraining and controlling our speech is the crucial matter of all good things. The one who controls his tongue controls all his affairs.

In this *hadith*, we see the emphasis is on the negative side of the tongue, whereas in the previous *hadiths*, the emphasis is on the positive side of the tongue. This means that the tongue can be

used in two ways: to say good things or to say bad things. Most people have the tendency to be lenient about this issue. Though Muslims know that saying bad things is prohibited, they still do so, saying things that displease Allah such as backbiting, slandering and spreading rumours. We will be held accountable for what we say. We will be rewarded for saying good things and we may be punished for saying bad things. Being cynical to others and saying things just for fun is something that a person is going to be accountable for. Even if a Muslim says things in the form of a cynical *du'a* (e.g. "May Allah guide him") or a joke to make fun of other Muslims and put him down, he will be held against this action. Even using gestures or attributes in a cynical way that can be interpreted that he is belittling a Muslim is considered a sinful act that displeases Allah.

The Muslim should have control over his tongue; otherwise his tongue can create a lot of problems for the community. In the *fitnah* (troubles) during Caliphate Othman, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, the Companions said they were considering saying bad things in that critical situation as a way of helping those who killed him. Consequently, the Muslim is always a good person who says only good things and for the benefit of his community. He should not say anything that may lead to any disputes among the Muslim community.

Another thing that is related to this and is mentioned by the scholars is the story of a man (from an Israel tribe) that the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, narrated: "There were two relatives or brothers. One of them was pious and righteous and the other one used to commit sins. The pious person always tried to remind the sinful one, but he did not do so in the appropriate way of making *da'wa*. One day while he was passing by the sinner he said: 'I swear by Allah that He will not forgive you!' Upon this Allah said: 'Who is putting himself higher than My Authority?!" So Allah forgave the sinner and held the pious one accountable for what he said even though he was righteous."

This teaches us that we have to watch what we say especially when we are angry. That's why the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, made the *du'a* : "I ask Allah to enable me to say the truth whether I am angry or pleased." Controlling ourselves needs training and effort. That's why we need *al-tarbiyyah* and *al-tazkiyyah*. This will be difficult in the beginning. But when we show Allah that we are serious, Allah will give us help and *al-tawfiq* (guidance) to the right path. Muslims need to make sincere efforts to reach a high degree of *tarbiyyah* and *tazkiyyah*. This will be part of their *akhlaq*. Muslims need *ilm* (knowledge) because if they are not aware of this, they may misinterpret things and get into sinful acts. Ibn Rajab says if the Muslim can control his tongue, he can control his other affairs. That is the wisdom that Muslims can get from this *hadith*.

Regarding the methodology of teaching and learning, this *hadith* sets forth a good example for Muslims to learn from. Mu'adh starts by asking a question, saying that he wants to ask about a matter that has him 'burning inside'. As a result of his question, he gets the reply. The Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, said: "Ask whatever you wish." He was open to any kind of questions. If someone has an inquiry regarding any matter, he should ask, and the person who has been consulted has to be open-hearted. The Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, later on in this *hadith*, guides Mu'adh in the form of questions: "Shall I not tell you...?" Asking questions from both

sides (from Mu'adh, as a means to learn, and from the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, as a means to teach) is one of the effective ways in the methodology of teaching and learning. If we want to learn we have to ask questions. If we want to teach, we have to communicate in this style and also ask questions. Asking questions will attract the attention of the listeners and will make them think about what is being said.

Conclusion

The central idea in Islam is *tawhid* and *taqwa* (submission to Allah). All other deeds can be looked at as part of *taqwa* and *tawhid*. Without proper *tawhid* there would be no fear of Allah. If we fear Allah, and love Him the most, this should lead us to be closer to Him. Otherwise, our claim is not valid or incomplete. Our *taqwa* and fear should be up to the level. So *tawhid* is the essence of the message of Allah. He sent the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, with this message and made him an example for us to emulate and follow. Consequently, *tawhid (almutab'a)* by following the Prophet, *sallallahu alayhi wasallam*, is part of submission to Allah.

Hadith 30

عَنْ أَبِيْ ثَعْلَبَةَ الْخُشَنِيِّ جُرْثُوْمِ بْنِ نَاشِرٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى فَرَضَ فَرَائِضَ فَلَاتُضَيِّعُوْهَا، وَحَدَّ حُدُوْدًا فَلَاتَعْتَدُوْهَا، وَحَرَّمَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلَاتَنْتَهِكُوْهَا، وَسَكَتَ عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ رَحْمَةً لَكُمْ غَيْرَ نِسْيَانٍ فَلَاتَبْحَثُوْا عَنْهَا. حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ. رَوَاهُ الدَّارَقُطْنِيْ وَغَيْرُهُ.

It was narrated on the authority of Abi Tha'labah Al-Khushani Jurthum bin Nashir, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Verily Allah the Almighty has prescribed the obligatory deeds, so do not neglect them; He has set certain limits, so do not go beyond them; He has forbidden certain things, so do not indulge in them; and He has said nothing about certain things, as an act of mercy to you, not out of forgetfulness, so do not go enquiring into these."**
>
> [Related by Al-Daraqutni and others - Al-Nawawi said this is a *hasan* (fine) hadith]

Background

This *hadith* has been recorded by a number of scholars. They all recorded this *hadith* through the chain of Dawood Ibn Abi Hind on the authority of Makhool from Abi Tha'labah Al-Khushani. This *hadith* is regarded as a weak *hadith* by many scholars such as Al-Bukhari, Ahmad and Hatem. They point out that there are three defects in this *hadith*:

1. Makhool did not hear the *hadith* from Abi Tha'labah.
2. Even if it is assumed that he did hear from Abi Tha'labah, Makhool was classified among the third category of those who commit *tadlis* (*tadlis* is when a person narrates a *hadith* upon one of his teachers but he did not hear the particular *hadith* he is narrating directly from his teacher but from an intermediate source). For this *hadith*, there should be a

direct term that reflects *sama'*, that is this person heard the *hadith* directly from his teacher or sheikh. Otherwise, if he uses on the authority of, this cannot be accepted.

3. It is debatable whether this is actually a *hadith* or a saying of one of the Companions *(sahabi)*. (Is it *marfou'* or *mawqouf*?)

Despite these three defects, the *hadith* has been accepted. Moreover, what has been mentioned in this *hadith* has been used by all jurists or *fuqaha'* as a way of categorizing rulings of *shari'ah*. It is from this *hadith* that the rules of the five well-known categorizations are derived: The obligatory *(wajib)*, preferable *(mandoub)*, forbidden *(muharam)*, hateful *(makrouh)*, and the permissible *(mubah)*. Not only is the meaning acceptable, this *hadith* is also used for categorizing rulings of *shari'ah (ahkam)*.

Lessons

The meaning of the statement which says: "He (Allah the Almighty) has set certain limits, so do not go beyond them." has been emphasised in the Qur'an. Allah says:

> These are the bounds, the limits set by Allah. Do not then transgress them for who transgress them are evil doers. [Surah Al-Baqarah (2): Ayah 229],

and in Surah Al-Talq, Ayah 1, Allah says:

> And those are the set limits of Allah and whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah then he indeed has wronged himself.

By looking closer into the content of these verses, we find that the two verses are talking about the limits *(hudud)* that Allah set regarding family relationships, especially the relationship between husband and wife. The limits that govern the relationship between husband and wife are stated in two verses in two *surahs*. Moreover, in Surah Al-Nisa', Ayah 13 and 14, Allah talks about the regulations of inheritance *(furud almirath)*. Favouring one person over another and giving a person more than he deserves is considered transgression in Islam. And if we lessen or decrease the right of another person, this is also considered transgression. We have to stick to what Allah has set for us regarding what a person should receive.

Usually in family relationships, if there is no adherence to the Islamic bounds and guidelines, the consequences will inevitably be negative as we see in real life and in the Muslim world today. If we go to the courts we will see many cases where transgression has taken place. If the family life is not carried out in accordance with *shari'ah*, we will end up with many people transgressing the set limits. For example, the way divorce takes place violates the concept of family relationship where the spouses are not aware of what they say. They are not in control of their tempers. They end up saying things they do not mean (e.g. performing *talaq* out of anger) - things which might get them in a situation where they would need to go and consult the court or scholars regarding what to do. They start to look for a way to resolve the problem only when they are stuck and the

situation deteriorates. Had they controlled their tempers and their tongues in the first place, they would not have reached this situation. It is only because they have violated the prescribed limits. (In the example of a husband having used words or terms which later on even he himself is not sure whether he has declared divorce or not, some scholars will refer it to the intention when the action took place.)

Another area in this regard is the area of the procedure of divorce itself that has been set by Allah. There are certain rulings that have to be observed by both parties, especially the husband. There are ways of minimizing the case of divorce. It has to occur in a totally controlled situation and in a way where there is an opportunity of getting back when it is carried out in the right way. There are *adab* (manners) that have to be followed if divorce has to take place. Most of the time divorce takes place when everybody lose control of their tempers, feelings or emotions. In Islam, if Muslims have to divorce, they are required to be fully aware of the situation and consequences, and that they have thought deeply about it and not simply divorce as a result of anger or a hasty decision.

Islam creates the procedure that if a person is actually considering divorce, he must be fully aware of what he is doing and his actions are based on sound reasons. This also means that both sides have given the act of divorce deep thought and they could not find any other solution to their dispute. The act of divorce should not lead to transgression - the wife and children should not be victims. To make sure of this, we should stick to the limits set by Allah. People have to be aware of this. They have to respect the family relationship. There should be strong commitment where both sides stick to what this commitment implies. This is so because Islam encourages the continuity of relationships. So here we have two considerations: (1) the respect of commitment, and (2) the continuity of that commitment.

Islam, as a practical religion, wants things to happen even if we dislike them. This is actually mentioned about the relationship between husband and wife. The *hadith* explains what the verse in the Qur'an says, that the believer should not hate another believer (wife). If he dislikes an aspect of her character or personality, he should appreciate other aspects of her character as well and vice versa. This is because there is no perfect person except Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. Consequently, Islam encourages us to appreciate other people's characters.

Islam also asks us to be moderate in our life when it comes to dealing with people. So spouses should deal with each other in a moderate way. A *hadith* says: "When you like someone, you should like him moderately because he might become someone whom you dislike one day, and when you dislike someone dislike him moderately because he might become someone you like one day."

This *hadith* implies that we should be moderate in our actions and sayings and not to exceed the limits. Unfortunately today, this idea has been violated by the media through movies, songs, etc. where love is taken as the central issue in our daily lives. We rarely or never see any exception where love is moderate and in accordance with the Islamic guidelines. This explains why we have 'hopeless' people. Because they have lost their lovers (and most importantly because they have exceeded the limits set by Allah) their lives become miserable and meaningless. This is because of the effect of the culture and the environment which they are exposed to. So by exceeding the limits set by Allah, more problems and disasters occur.

Another area where people usually go beyond the limits is the area of *fara'ed* (inheritance). The limits and guidelines that have been set by Allah have been violated. Allah, in the Qur'an, and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, via revelation, have prescribed and made clear for us the limits. For example, in the case of death, it is made clear to us who should inherit and what is the allowance of each son or daughter. As a result we will have those who have priority and those who have less but still have their share. And we also have those who are even set aside because there is someone closer to inherit. They are considered *mahjoub*.

Nowadays we see people violate these limits all over the Muslim world. Most of the cases happen because of the transgression and domination of the relatives. Muslims all over the world have to observe the limits. Otherwise they will transgress and violate the guidelines set by Allah. They have to make sure that this is not *halal* and will not please Allah. They may enjoy it for months or years, but at the end they may suffer the severe punishment of Allah in the Hereafter. We hear different stories of people who transgress and victimize their relatives. A verse in the Qur'an says: Those people are considered transgressors and being unjust where Allah has forbidden injustice *(zulm)*. These people will be totally responsible for what they have done. This is one statement that is mentioned in this *hadith* and has been emphasized by the Qur'an.

Conclusion

All the meanings that are mentioned in this *hadith* are sound and acceptable even if the *hadith* itself - due to chain defect in the way it is narrated - is considered weak. A Maliki jurist Ibn Al'arabi said: "This hadith is one of the most important rulings in Islam and should be known to every Muslim."

Hadith 31

عَنْ أَبِيْ الْعَبَّاسِ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ السَّاعِدِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: يَارَسُوْلَ اللهِ دُلَّنِيْ عَلَى عَمَلٍ إِذَا عَمِلْتُهُ أَحَبَّنِيْ اللهُ وَأَحَبَّنِيْ النَّاسُ. فَقَالَ: آزْهَدْ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا يُحِبَّكَ اللهُ وَازْهَدْ فِيْمَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ يُحِبَّكَ النَّاسُ. حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ. رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَهْ وَغَيْرُهُ بِأَسَانِيْدَ حَسَنَةٍ.

On the authority of Abu al-'Abbas Sahl bin Sa'd al-Sa'idi, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said:

> **A man came to the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and said: "O Messenger of Allah, direct me to an act which if I do it, [will cause] Allah to love me and people to love me." He, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, answered: "Be indifferent to the world and Allah will love you; be indifferent to what people possess and they will love you."**
>
> [A fine *hadith* related by Ibn Majah and others with good chains of authorities]

Background

This *hadith* is a weak hadith as pointed out by many scholars. Ibn Rajab gave a detailed argument about the weakness of this *hadith*. However, later scholars still recorded their commentaries on the text of the *hadith* for several reasons. The major two reasons are:

1. Sometimes the chain of the narrators *(sanad)* is not strong and the *hadith* consequently is not an authentic *hadith*. But the meaning of the text of the *hadith* is correct and acceptable. In this case the scholars still give their comments on the hadith.
2. The *hadith* is related to one of the major concepts in Islam which is *al-zuhd*. Unfortunately, many Muslims misunderstand and misinterpret this concept due to the influence of other cultures. We need to remove this misunderstanding or misinterpretation which is linked to this concept.

Ibn Rajab says that this *hadith* contains some great advice:

- Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said the renouncing of this world will lead to the love of Allah. In other words, the one who practices this *zuhd* will be loved by Allah.
- To renounce what people possess and that will cause the love of people to the person who practices *zuhd*. *Al-zuhd* has been emphasized in the Qur'an and *hadiths* especially *zuhd* in this world. In Surah al-Nisa' Ayah 77, Allah says:

  > Brief is the enjoyment of this world whereas the life to come is best for all who are *muttaqun* or conscious of Allah.

  In Surah al-Ra'd Ayah 20, Allah says:

  > The life of this world is nothing but a flitting pleasure.

  In Surat al-A'la Ayah 16-17, Allah says:

  > But may you prefer the life of this world although the life to come is better and more enduring.

  In Sahih Muslim, on the authority of Jaber Ibn 'Abdullah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, one day was passing through the market and he passed by a dead goat, which had its ears cut. He held the goat by the ear and asked who would like to have it for one derham (which was a very low price of currency at that time). The people said they wouldn't take it even if it was free. What could they do with it? He, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asked if they liked it if it was theirs. They said even if it was alive they would still not buy it because of its cut ears. So how could they buy it now especialy since it was dead. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "This worldly life is so little in the sight of Allah as this dead animal or goat is so little in your sight".

- There are many other *hadiths* where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, commanded Muslims to avoid asking others for anything, especially money, and to do the best not to indulge in the act of asking others.

Lessons

One of the early scholars, Abu Muslim Al-Hawlani, says *zuhd* in this world does not mean forbidding what is permissible or wasting wealth. *Zuhd* with respect to this world is only where a person puts more trust in Allah, more than what was is in his own hands. If he was afflicted with calamity by losing something of this world, he is more hopeful for its reward and what is in store for him in the Hereafter than if it were to have remained with him.

Based on this, Ibn Rajab states that *zuhd* can be interpreted as three actions of the heart:

1. The Muslim should realize that all provisions come from Allah and not simply the result of his own acts. He should trust Allah and what Allah has more than what he has in his hands.
2. If he loses anything in this world, this should not bother him because he is looking for its reward.
3. The Muslim should not care whether he is going to be blamed or praised by others. He will not look for praise. In his heart, he is not touched by such praise. And if he is blamed, he will not be offended by being blamed. If the accusation is not true, he has nothing to worry about; if it is true then he has to face it and try to be a better Muslim.

We can also try to see and compare what was narrated by Al-Imam Abu Muslim Al-Hawlani and what has been narrated by other scholars. Al-Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was asked one day if someone owns one thousand dinar, can he still be a *zahid*? He replied yes, he can be still a zahid if he does not feel rejoice if the money increases and he does not become sad if it decreases. We must not become slaves to money or our worldly possessions. We can be wealthy and *zahid* if we are still thankful to Allah and use wealth in the right way (provided also that we obtained this wealth in the right way). This meaning has been emphasised by Sufian Ibn 'Uyainah, one of the great scholars, when he was asked who is to be considered as *zahid*. He said whoever Allah bestowed a bounty on him then he is thankful and then when he is under trial, he is patient.

Sufian Al-Thawri - another scholar - said: *Al-zuhd* in this world is that you are ready in your heart and think of the Hereafter - you think of death. We should be prepared for the next world. This is a definition of *zuhd*. *Zuhd* means a status of the heart where a person fears he will not live a long life. This will motivate every one to be a good Muslim. If we have this feeling that we are going to leave this world at any time, this will lead us to be closer to Allah and fulfill our obligations and also to get away from disobedience.

This is why some scholars point out that there are different types of *zuhd*:

- *Al-zuhd* in disobedience and sin
- Not to be misled by our desires.
- Not to exceed the limits of the permissible or the allowable acts *(mubah)*. For example, we should not exceed the limits of sleeping (i.e. sleeping unnecessarily long hours) or eating (i.e. eating too much) which is permissible.

Ibn Rajab said the one who is hopeless of living a long life, then he is looking forward to meeting Allah and he is eager for the Hereafter - this is the maximum level of *zuhd*. Ibn Rajab then says that looking at this worldly life as blameworthy is not because of the day or night,

which are signs of Allah, and not the place and not what He planted in the land, or the animals He created. All of these are bounties from Allah and beneficial to us. The blameworthy is actually with regards to the actions of the people in this life because most of these actions are not done in accordance to the guidance of revelation in a way that will lead to good consequences. Usually the consequences will be bad ones. People will not be able to do good things.

What should be done then is to be like the righteous and good people who used their lives as a means of getting them to the final destination. They were satisfied and contented by whatever they got. Even permissible acts and desires are treated in the same way. Sleeping and eating are good for us because this will help us to perform our obligations. That is why Ibn Rajab says all the early scholars looked for these permissible actions as means of fulfilling their obligations. He quoted al-Hasan al-Basri who said: Doing whatever is beneficial for you is not considered as the love of this world. So we should not belittle some professions and consider them as part of worldly life.

Some Muslims misunderstand *zuhd*. This will lead the Muslim community to become backward. Since we are entrusted for the establishment of Islamic civilization, this requires that we have professionals, and different fields of specializations. All these take effort and time. But what we do here is for the betterment of the community where there is a great need for professional people. If we do it with good intentions and for the sake of Allah we will be rewarded - this is the real *zuhd*.

Zuhd does not mean that we stay in one place and worship Allah. Worshiping Allah is a broad concept. The betterment of the community is considered as a form of worship. So asceticism or *zuhd* does not clash with any of the worldly affairs that the community needs. The *zuhd* here becomes that we do it in the right way, with a good intention and for the sake of Allah. This should not keep us from fulfilling the obligations towards Allah.

Ibn Rajab mentions that the worldly life is cursed because it keeps people away from Allah. They will be deprived from fulfilling the obligations. This life is a test for us, as stated in Surah al-Kahf Ayah 7. We either use it in the right way and be rewarded or we use it in the wrong way which will cause us to fail the test - we will go astray and indulge in disobedience.

Conclusion

One thing that brings us closer to Allah and to be loved by Him is *al-zuhd*. There are other actions that make Allah love us:

- To love Allah much. If we love Allah, He will love us.
- The love of meeting Allah (as stated in another *hadith)*.

- The love of the Prophet, *sallallah 'alayhi wasallam*, more than we love ourselves and our family and to love his sunnah and to follow his model.
- Remembrance of Allah, and all forms of *dzikr*.
- To practice the preferable good deeds.

If we claim that we love Allah, we should test ourselves by taking the above points as criteria. By loving Allah, we will be successful in this life and the Hereafter.

Hadith 32

عَنْ أَبِيْ سَعِيْدٍ سَعْدِ بْنِ مَالِكِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ اَلْخُدْرِيِّ
رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
لَاضَرَرَ وَلَاضِرَارَ - حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ. رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَهْ
وَالدَّارُقُطْنِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا مُسْنَدًا. وَرَوَاهُ مَالِكٌ فِيْ الْمُوَطَّإِ
مُرْسَلًا عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَبِيْهِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْقَطَ أَبَاسَعِيْدٍ وَلَهُ طُرُقٌ يُقَوِّيْ بَعْضُهَا
بَعْضًا.

It was related on the authority of Abu Sa'id Sa'd bin Malik bin Sinan al-Khudri, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

"There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm."

[A excellent *hadith* which Ibn Majah, Al-Daraqutni and others related as of sound *isnad*, but which Malik related in his Muwatta' as of broken *isnad*, from 'Amr bin Yahya, from his father, from the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, but dropping (the name of) Abu Sa'id. This *hadith* has lines of transmission which strengthen one another (so that it may be regarded as of sound *isnad*).]

Background

There are other interpretations of the text. One of them is: "No harm and no harming". Another interpretation is given by Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo: "There is not to be any causing of harm; nor is there to be any requital of harm".

There is another version on the *hadith* in which the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says: "No harm or harming in Islam". There is the additional phrase "in Islam". In a third version, the *hadith* states: "It is cursed whoever harms a *mu'min* (believer)."

Lessons

Imam Abu Dawud stated that this *hadith* is one of the *hadiths* around which all of *fiqh* revolves. Furthermore, this *hadith* leads to the birth of new branches in *fiqh*, mainly *fiqh* maxims *(qaw'ed fiqhiyyah)* and rules. The text of this *hadith* becomes one of the most important maxims. Later on other maxims were derived from the text of this *hadith*. Some of them are as follows:

1. Harm is to be prevented from appearing as much as possible.
2. Harm is to be eradicated.
3. Harm is not to be removed by a similar harm.
4. A greater harm can be removed by a lesser harm.
   Based on maxim number 4, it was realised that if someone has no other options, he should take the lesser of the two harms. Another situation is that if there is a conflict between two harms, precedence is given to avoiding the greater harm.
5. The presence of a particular harm is accepted towards a general harm.
6. Preventing harm takes precedence over gaining or attaining benefits.
7. If there is a conflict between factors permitting something and others prohibiting something, the prohibition takes precedence; that is, it is going to be given the priority.
8. Something harmful is not given precedence just because it was pre-existing. In other words, the pre-existence of something does not allow it to continue to exist and be the cause of harm.

There is a real story related to maxim number 8. This story took place in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) where the people built a mosque. After several years or decades, many houses had been built around the mosque and at that time when the *mu'zin* wanted to make the call for prayer *(Adhan)*, he used to climb up to the minaret. The *fuqaha* (jurists) ruled that the *mu'zin* should stop going up to the minaret in order not to cause any harm (from the minaret, one was able to see into other people's homes and thus invade their privacy).

Another maxim is if there is a conflict between individual harm and public harm, the prohibition of public harm will take precedence. The above are some of the maxims that are derived from the text of this present *hadith*.

When scholars talk about doing things right from the first time either based on experience or anticipation that certain things will cause harm, they urge people to take precautions to prevent any kind of harm. There are books written by Imam Muslim on this issue. When we look at these maxims, we see that they are very great where we have to anticipate the harm and not to allow it to take place. If it takes place, efforts should be done in order to bring it to an end or to remove it. If it cannot be removed, we should try our best to minimize the harm.

Based on the situation, if there is a conflict between a major harm and a minor harm, then the major harm should be avoided. This means that Muslims have to tolerate the minor harms for the sake of avoiding the major ones. In another situation, if we want to bring an end to a certain

harm and if the result would be by bringing a similar or greater harm, then there is no need to remove it in this way. We should not remove harm by bringing a similar degree of harm. In this way the removal of harm would be useless. A greater consideration should be given to this point as this is related to *ma'ruf* (asking people to do good things) and *munkar* (asking people not to do harmful things). If the *munkar* (harm) is to be removed by creating a greater harm, this contradicts the objectives of the *shari'ah*. The objectives of the *shari'ah* are to prevent harm (if not, to minimize it) and to promote goodness and maximize it.

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Regarding the interpretation of the text, Imam Ibn Rajab points out that what is stated in the *hadith* (i.e. the usage of the word "harm") is not a matter of emphasis. It is more sound because the two statements have different meanings.

Ibn Rajab and other scholars have given two interpretations of "harm/harming":

1. The first part of the *hadith* is the noun "no harm" and then the second part is the verb "harming". Harm is not allowed in shari'ah and causing harm without valid reasons is rejected and not accepted.
2. The second interpretation says that the first part of *hadith* (harm) means that the person causes harm to someone else by doing something which is beneficial to the doer. This kind of act is not allowed in Islam. The second part of *hadith* (harming) means that the person causes harm to someone else which is not even beneficial for him.

   For example, suppose a person builds another floor (story) on top of his house and this results in his house being higher than his neighbours. This is beneficial to him but it causes harm to his neighbours as it invades their privacy. Ibn Rajab also says that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, rejected causing harm if there is no valid reason. However, in the punishment of a criminal, there would be harm but the reason is valid. The aim here is to bring justice. In bringing justice, if there is any harm to an unjust person or criminal, then this harm is legal and allowed.

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Causing harm without a valid or good reason

1. Ibn Rajab says the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that if the main objective is to actually cause the harm, then this is totally prohibited. There are many types of harms that are mentioned in the Qur'an:

   - *Wasiyyah* (will) - if a person has some money and he wants to give it to someone who is no related to him. He is allowed but he must not exceed the limits (one third). If he exceeds the limits, he will cause harm to the immediate inheritors. Another situation is to give someone more than he deserves, as stated in the Qur'an. To favour any one of the inheritors is

harm. Ibn Abbas considers this as a major sin. Some Muslims practice this because of ignorance or self-interest. [See Surah An-Nisa' : Ayah 12]

- Marriage and relationship between husband and wife. In *al-raj'ah* (returning), as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah Ayah 231 - someone divorces his wife and then he reconciles with her, but his intention in reconciliation is so that he can cause her harm. This is not allowed in Islam. Another point is *aleyla'* (disassociating with one's wife).
- Traveling or being away from the family for a long time and without a good reason - this can cause harm to the wife and family.
- Breastfeeding - in the case of divorce, the husband tries to take the baby away from the mother and not allow her to feed him. This is prohibited. [See Surah Al-Baqarah : Ayah 233]
- Selling and trading - when someone is in great need of something, the seller (who knows this) sells him at a very high price - this is not allowed. Some scholars consider this as a form of *riba'* (profit) which is prohibited in Islam.
- Somene who wants to buy is not good at bargaining, and because of this the seller sells at a very high price, more than it is worth. This is prohibited. According to Imam Malik if the price exceeds a third of what it is worth, it is considered harm.

2. Someone may do something for a beneficial reason and with a good intention. But he overdoes it, and consequently causes harm to others. Examples of this scenario are as follows:

    - Burning rubbish on your property on a windy day. This will cause harm to your neighbours. It may cause harm to the environment and the people in the neighbouring countries. This kind of harm should be brought to an end.
    - Building a high building, as mentioned above. Building a high building where it will obstruct air, sunlight, and moonlight, is not allowed because it will cause harm.
    - Digging a well that will cause damage to the well of one's neighbour. If one needs to dig a well, he should position it a little further away from his neighbour's.
    - Behaving on one's property in a way that will harm his neighbours.
    - Causing bad smell to spread from one's property to his neighbours'.
    - A person may have a property which is within the property of another person, on which he might cause the harm.

Ibn Rajab mentions that there are also some other types of actions which imply that Allah did not ask His servants to do anything that will cause us harm. He said that whatever Allah commands us to do is beneficial in this world and the Hereafter. And whatever Allah prohibits

is harmful to us whether it is in this world or in the Hereafter. Examples of these actions include:

- *Tayammum* (ablution without using water) - this is permissible for sick people or when there is no water.
- The traveler or the sick does not have to fast - they can make up for it in the future.
- Another example is taken from the biography of Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, where he saw someone walking and asked about him. The companions told him that this man made a vow or commitment that he will perform pilgrimage walking. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said Allah is not in need for this one to torture himself. He asked his companions to tell the man to look for a ride, that is, to use an easier way or means to go for his pilgrimage.
- The person who has debt. If you lend someone money and he is indeed in a very bad financial situation, then you should give him time for him to get the money and pay you back.

These are just some examples that are mentioned by Ibn Rajab where there is a caused harm and that harm should be prevented.

Conclusion

Any act that causes harm to others, whether individually or as a community and whether it is beneficial or not beneficial to the one who causes it, is prohibited in Islam. It should not exist in the first place and if it did, then a deliberate effort should be made to remove or minimize it. The scholars point out that those in authority should interfere and prevent such harmful acts.

Hadith 33

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَوْ يُعْطَى النَّاسُ بِدَعْوَاهُمْ لَادَّعَى رِجَالٌ أَمْوَالَ قَوْمٍ وَدِمَاءَهُمْ لٰكِنِ الْبَيِّنَةُ عَلَى الْمُدَّعِيْ وَالْيَمِيْنُ عَلَى مَنْ أَنْكَرَ.

حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ، رَوَاهُ الْبَيْهَقِيْ وَغَيْرُهُ هٰكَذَا وَبَعْضُهُ فِيْ الصَّحِيْحَيْنِ.

Ibn 'Abbas, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, said that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Were people to be given according to their claims, some would claim the wealth and blood of others. But the burden of proof is upon the claimant and the taking of an oath is upon the one who denies (the allegation)."**

[An excellent *hadith* which al-Bayhaqi and others have related. Parts of it is in the two *Sahih* books (i.e. in al-Bukhari and Muslim).]

Background

There are in every judicial dispute at least two litigating parties, the plaintiff and the defendant. The first claims what is contrary to the apparent fact; the second holds to the apparent fact and denies the claim. (Mahmassani: Falsaft al-Tashri' al-Islami - p 169, 170).

This *hadith* forms an important maxim. The text of the *hadith* has been expressed in the following way:
"Evidence is for the person who claims; the oath is for the person who denies."
(The Mejelle 1967 article # 76)

Lessons

This *hadith* shows the supreme importance of proof to the administration of justice. The necessity of proof is a restrainer to false, weak, and unsubstantiated claims. (Mahmassani 168).

Therefore it becomes important to know upon who the onus of proof lies. There is no doubt that the burden is upon the plaintiff. This is explained by the fact that what is apparent is presumed to be the original state; any one who makes a claim to the contrary must prove such claim. (ibid)

The proof of a matter requires presentation of evidence until the matter attains the degree of certainty. Certainty is that which can be established by sight or proof. It can only be dispelled by another certainty. (ibid)

Since it is established that a defendant is presumed to be free from liability until the claimant proves the contrary, it is important to know who is the defendant and who is the plaintiff, who of the two must bear the onus of proof, and whose evidence takes precedence in case of conflict. (ibid p172).

The definition of "Plaintiff" and "Defendant"

There are three views regarding the above issue (Zarabozo 3/ 1167):

1. The plaintiff is the one who is not charged with anything or can remain silent of the two disputants.
2. The plaintiff is the one who is claiming something other than what is apparent or what has not yet been established in the past. The defendant is the one who is on the opposite side, arguing to what is apparent.
3. The defendant is the one rejecting a claim while the plaintiff is the one making the claim.

The meaning of al-Bayinah or "proof" (ibid)

Many jurists seem to think that "proof" refers only to witnesses. However, the meaning of proof is much more comprehensive and also applies to means of proof other than witnesses.

According to some early and contemporary scholars, "al-Bayinah" or proof is a noun that encompasses all means of establishing the truth. Circumstantial evidence, conclusive presumption, and clear signs that lead to a definite conclusion can all be taken into consideration .

Modern forms of criminal investigation can be used in making judicial conclusion. Otherwise, rights will be lost and injustice will be allowed to prevail.

The criteria for being an acceptable witness (ibid)

1. The witness must be sane and comptent.
2. In general, the witness must be an adult.
3. The witness must be a Muslim unless it be in a case dealing with non-Muslims.
4. The witness must be of sound memory.
5. The witness must be a person of integrity and honesty.

The importance of giving one's testimony

It is an obligation that people offer their testimony truthfully when called upon to do so. Allah the Almighty says:

> And the witness should not refuse when they are called.
> [Surah al-Baqarah: Ayah 282]

It is considered a sin to conceal what one has witnessed. Allah tha Almighty says:

> And conceal not the testimony, for he who hides it is certainly sinful of heart.
> [Surah al-Baqarah: Ayah 283]

A warning to those who make successful false claims

It is noted that Islam stresses on appealing to fearing Allah whenever there is misuse of authority, or taking chances over others in all human relations such as trading, family disputes, and making false claims against others.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:
"I am a human being. You come to me as litigants. Perhaps, one of you is better in presenting his argument than the other and I decide in his favour according to what I have heard. If I have decided anything for someone from the rights of his brother, he should not take it for I have portioned for him a portion of the Hell fire."

In another *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, warns us that taking as little as a spin of a palm of some one else's property unjustly will be horribly taken responsible for in the Day of Judgment.

In a third *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, cursed the one who changes for no good reason the landmarks of a property.

Conclusion

Islam is a practical religion where it takes into account the possible natural conflicts, quarrels, and disputes among community individuals where people may claim something against one another. Islam establishes rules and principles by which these disputes are brought to an end in a just manner.

A person is free of guilt or claims made against him or her until proven otherwise.

Hadith 34

عَنْ أَبِيْ سَعِيْدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ:
سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ: مَنْ رَأَى
مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ، فَإِنْ لَمْ
يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ، وَذٰلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيْمَانِ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

On the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"When any one of you sees anything that is disapproved (of by Allah), let him change it with his hand. If he is not able to do so, then let him change it with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then let him change it with his heart, though that is the weakest (kind of) faith."**

[Muslim]

Background

The essence of the Islamic *da'wah* is enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, since whenever a person conveys the Message, he is enjoining good and forbidding evil. Therefore, it is a mistake to consider these two as separate matters, since they are actually performed concurrently and are synonymous.

The main objective in fulfilling this obligation is to attain and maximize benefits, and to eliminate or minimize harm.

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Qualities possessed by a Caller who enjoins the good and forbids the evil

1. *Ikhlas* (Sincerity) - since enjoining the good and forbidding the evil becomes an action pleasing to Allah and accepted by Him only if it is done with sincerity for Him.
2. *'Ilm* (Knowledge) - as Allah commands:
   Say: This is my path, I do call to Allah upon clear knowledge.
   [Surah Yusuf (12): Ayah 108]

This is an important condition since the Caller must know what matters are good, so he enjoins it, and what matters are evil, so he forbids it. In Ibn Taymiyyah's al-Amar it is stated that it is necessary to possess the knowledge of good and evil and of the difference between them, and it is necessary to know the situation of the person being commanded or forbidden.

3. *Hikmah* (Wisdom) - which means saying or doing the right thing in the right way at the right time to the right person, as prescribed by Allah in His statement:
   Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful admonition.
   [Surah an-Nahl (16): Ayah 125]

   Ibn Taymiyyah wrote: Enjoin the good in a good way and do not forbid the evil in an evil way.
4. *Hilm* (Forbearance) and *Rifq* (Gentleness) - especially in the face of opposition from the people. As Allah said to His Messenger, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*:
   And by the Mercy of Allah you were able to deal gently with them. If you had been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from you.
   [Surah al-Imran (3): Ayah 159]

   The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also said: Indeed gentleness does not enter into anything except it beautifies it, nor is it removed from anything except that it makes it ugly [Reported by Imam Muslim].
5. *Sabr* (Patience) - since the people whom the Caller opposes in enjoining good and forbidding evil, may be stubborn to his call and may even try to harm him.

   Ibn Taymiyyah says in al-Istiqaamah, concerning the call to the good and away from the evil: Knowledge must precede it, gentleness must accompany it and patience must follow it. Shaikh al-Humaid, the teacher of Shaikh Ibn Baz, said, in an explanation of Surah al-'Asr that Allah makes an oath that mankind will be in a state of deficiency, except with four conditions, which are: (a) iman, (b) good actions, (c) encouraging each other to the truth which means enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and (d) encouraging each other to patience, which is required after enjoining good and forbidding evil. Furthermore each person will have a level of deficiency in accordance with the level of lack of any of these four.

6. *Tawaadu'* (Humility) - since the people will not heed if the Caller is arrogant or he seeks to put himself above others.
7. *Qudwah* (Good example) - for the Caller himself becomes a model to the people to whom he calls, doing those things which he enjoins and leaving those things which he forbids. Allah says:
   O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do. It is a most hateful thing to Allah that you say that which you do not do.
   [Surah as-Saff (61): Ayah 2-3]
8. *Husnul-Istimaa'* (Good listening) - which is that the Caller is attentive to the needs and feelings and also the complaints of the people whom he calls.

9. *Shajaa'ah* (Courage) - which does not refer to strength of the body; rather it is the strength of the heart, together with knowledge - this differentiates between true courage and mere recklessness.
10. *Karam* (Generosity).

Lessons

Scholars say that before using the hand, we should start with advice, warning the people of the consequence of evil and encouraging and motivating them to good actions. When this method has been fully utilised and there is no change in the people, only then is it permissible to use the hand.

Imam ash-Shatibi says that the Caller must predict the consequences of what he says or do, whether by hand or by tongue.

If it is very likely that, as a result of attempting to change the evil, the Caller himself or another person will be harmed, then changing the situation is no longer obligatory upon him. Here harm does not refer to insults or curses, but to physical injury such as being beaten or killed. Harm can also mean that a bad reputation is spread concerning the Caller. Ibn Qudaamah also includes financial loss, whether immediate or later, to such an amount which the Caller cannot afford.

People differ in their ability to change things; in general, when someone is higher in his rank or authority, then there is more responsibility on him to remove the evil.

Principles of Inkaarul-Munkar (Forbidding what is evil)

1. Prioritise the evil, thus beginning with the higher priority before the lower.
2. *Tadarruj* (Being gradual). Note the gradual method by which Allah made the drinking of wine forbidden: Firstly, by saying that there were benefits in it and harm in it but the harm outweighed the benefits; secondly, by forbidding the people to approach the prayer in a drunken state; and finally, by an outright prohibition. This step-by-step method does not imply that wine was not forbidden in the early stages, but it is a methodology from which we can benefit.
3. Do not look for people's faults. Qadi Abu Ya'laa has noted an exception to this principle, which occurs when there are clues or information that an evil is taking place or is about

to take place. Thus one may be able to prevent an evil, such as a murder or rape, from taking place by following up on information.

4. Establish that the evil is indeed taking place.
5. Choose a suitable time to forbid the evil.
    - The Caller should not delay until the evil has finished.
    - The Caller should exploit situations in which the people are more likely to respond to his call, for example when Yusuf, *'alayhi-salam*, spoke to his companions in the prison about *tauhid* when they had been troubled by their dreams. Ibn Masoud said concerning this:
      Verily the heart has moments of yearning and responsiveness
      And moments of indifference and turning away
      So snatch it at the time of yearning and response
      And leave it at the time of indifference and turning away.

6. Speak in private, as Imam ash-Shafie wrote:
   Come to me with your advice when I am alone
   And do not advise me in the crowd
   Because advice amongst the people is a scolding
   And I do not like to hear it aloud
   Then if you disobey me and do not heed my words
   Do not feel sad when you are not followed.
7. Do not instigate or provoke the people, but use a good argument, as Allah says:
   Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful admonition, and argue with them with ways that are best.
   [Surah an-Nahl (16): Ayah 125]

   Imam Ghazali wrote: Don't convey the truth in a challenging manner.
8. Show forgiveness and kindness towards the people, and not to be affected by worry or anger in case the people show a negative response to the advice.
9. If a difference of opinion arose as a result of *ijtihaad*, then the Caller who holds one opinion should not forbid the other opinion.
10. Weighing the principles of benefits and harms, as Ibn Taymiyyah wrote in al-Amar: If enjoining the good and forbidding the evil would result in a greater evil, then it is *haram* to do it. Enjoining the good should not lead to a better deed being left out and forbidding the evil should not lead to a greater evil taking place.

Ibn Rajab states that in enjoining the good and discouraging the evil the conductor is motivated by different reasons:

1. It could be by hope in Allah's great reward for doing it.
2. It could be by fearing Allah's punishment for renouncing this obligation.
3. It could be by getting annoyed by seeing violations to what Allah has prescribed.

4. It could be due to being faithful to the community members who indulge in evil and by being kind and merciful to them by making the effort to save them from being subject to Allah's anger, displeasure and punishment in this life and in the Hereafter.
5. It could be by glorifying Allah and Loving Him much, for He deserves to be obeyed, remembered, and thanked.

Observing the last two motives alone can make burden of conducting this obligation a light, favorable one and will empower the conductor with enough potential belittle any difficulty or hardship he may encounter thereof.

Conclusion

The last portion of the *hadith* clearly states that the least a Muslim can do in the case of witnessing an evil act is to change it by his/her heart. This means that he/she should dislike the evil he/she comes across. This is an action of the heart, such as saying: "O Allah, there is nothing that I can do to change this bad situation that You dislike and disapprove except that I hate it to take place. I do not agree to it. O Allah forgive me, guide me and save my heart to be influenced by it."

Unless this action of the heart is practiced, the heart of the believer who witnesses that evil will be subject to be influenced by that evil. A dark spot will be placed in that heart (as stated in another *hadith* related by al-Bukhari).
With the repetition of such negative attitudes, the heart will be subject to more dark spots placed in it until it is concealed and no longer appreciates what is good and no longer dislikes what is bad or evil. This means that the Muslim who does not practice the lowest level of forbidding the evil, will be subject to turn into being an evil doer him/herself.

Hadith 35

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَاتَحَاسَدُوْا وَلَاتَنَاجَشُوْا وَلَاتَبَاغَضُوْا وَلَاتَدَابَرُوْا وَلَا يَبِعْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ وَكُوْنُوْا عِبَادَ اللهِ إِخْوَانًا، اَلْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَايَظْلِمُهُ وَلَايَخْذُلُهُ وَلَايَكْذِبُهُ وَلَايَحْقِرُهُ. التَّقْوَى هٰهُنَا، وَيُشِيْرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ. بِحَسْبِ امْرِىءٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ، كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعِرْضُهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Do not be envious of one another; do not artificially inflate prices against one another; do not hate one another; do not shun one another; and do not undercut one another in business transactions; and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.**
>
> **A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. Piety is here - and he pointed to his chest three times. It is evil enough for a Muslim to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property and his honour."**

[Muslim]

Background

Unity is one of the greatest objectives of Islam. There are many verses in the Qur'an that urge Muslims to unite. In Surah al-'Imran, Ayah 103, Allah says:

> And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (which is Islam) and be not divided among yourselves.

This is a very well-known verse to Muslims. In Surah al-Taubah, Ayah 71, Allah says:

> The believing men and women are *'awliya'* (loyal) to one another.

There are many other verses in the Qur'an that urge joining unity, as well as verses that forbid disunity. We can see this in the same Surah al-'Imran, Ayah 103, in which Allah says:

> …and be not divided among yourselves.

So in the same verse the Muslims are asked to be united and prevented from disunity. The Qur'an contains many such verses, for example: Surah al-'Imran Ayah 105-107; Surah al-Hujurat Ayah 10; Surah al-An'am Ayah 153 and 159; and in Surah al-Rum Ayah 31-32. All of these verses and many others in the Qur'an forbid the division or split of the Muslim community.

Moreover, we have many *hadiths* that command the Muslims to be united. One *hadith* is recorded by Imam Muslim: "Verily Allah likes three things for you and disapproves three things for you: He is pleased with you but you worship Him and disassociate anything with him; that you hold fast to the Rope of Allah and not to be scattered (disunited); and He disapproves for you irrelevant talk, persistent questioning, and wasting of wealth."

We find that Islam commands the Muslims to practice things that will bring unity - there are conditions and actions where the Muslims need to perform to accomplish this. At the same time, we also find that there are many actions that Islam forbids because these actions may lead to the disunity of the Muslim *ummah*. This Hadith 35 falls in the latter category.

Lessons

The first action that the *hadith* forbids is envy *(al-hasad)*. Muslim scholars like Imam Ghazali and others define envy as disliking to see a person receiving a bounty and wishing that he or she (the receipient) would lose it.

Ibn Rajab gives a different and broader definition. He states in his definition that it is part of human nature that a person dislikes anyone to be better than him in virtues. He says that people differ in their attitudes and he lists five categories of envy that people have:

1. There are some people who will make the effort through action or speech to abolish the bounty received by someone whom they envy.
2. There are others who will then try to get that bounty transferred to them. So they firstly try to take it away from the person they envy and then they try to get it for themselves. For instance, if a certain person is offered a certain position or authority, the envious one

will try to do something by hand or by speech to take away that position or authority from that person. Then he will try to get that status or position transferred to himself.

3. There are some people who do not make any effort by action or speech to harm the one whom they envy. Ibn Rajab says this category of people can be of two types:
    a. The one who does his best to eliminate the feeling of envy within himself but he cannot overcome it. In spite of this, he keeps fighting and struggling against it. Ibn Rajab says this type of person is excused from punishment.
    b. The one who thinks about envy and practices it again and again. He does not make any effort to fight it even though he does not do any harm by action or speech. But he actually enjoys and practices envy - he wishes that the bounty of the envied one will be lost. Consequently, this person is subject to punishment.

4. There are those who, whenever they envy someone, do not harm him or her. They do not even wish the loss of the bounty from the envied one. Instead, they make the effort to attain a similar bounty or virtue for themselves. Ibn Rajab says: "If this bounty is wordly virtues or worldly bounties, there is no benefit in that." For example, if you see someone who has a Mercedes, and you try to attain a similar car for yourself, then there is no benefit in that. But if it is a righteous virtue, then it is good.
5. There are some people who, whenever they feel envy, do their best to stop it and they will do a favour or something good for the person whom they envied. In addition, they will also make *du'a* for that person until they love him - because envy is usually associated with hatred. They will wish that the envied ones are better than them - they do not bother themselves if others have things which are better than what they have. Ibn Rajab says these people are the best category of true believers since everyone is subject to indulge or be trapped by envy or being envious of others.

Why is envy *(hasad)* forbidden?

It can cause - by the permission of Allah - harm to others whom are envied. Consequently, they are considered as evil acts in Islam. They can cause - even by just wishing - the harming of a person. It is the virtue of Shaitan. And it is also the virtue of Jews to envy other people. This is mentioned in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 109 and in Surah al-Nisa', Ayah 54.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, warned Muslims against envy when he said "Creeping upon you is the diseases of those people before you: envy and hatred. And hatred is the thing that shapes. I do not say it shapes the hair but it shapes the religion. By the One in whose Hand is my soul, you will not enter paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Certainly, let me inform you of that which may establish such things: spread the greetings and peace among yourselves." [Recorded by Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhi]

Since this is a harmful act, Muslims are asked to recite certain Qur'anic verses such as Surah al-Falaq, Surah an-Nas, and Surah al-Ikhlas to protect from envious people. According to the Muslim scholars, it would be preferable to recite them after the five prayers along with Ayat-ul-Kursi.

Al-Tanajush is translated literary as "do not artificially inflate the prices against one another". *Najash* that is mentioned in this *hadith* can be interpreted, according to Ibn Rajab, in two ways:

1. It can be interpreted as *bai' al-najash* - the trading where a person offers a high price for a certain item not for the sake of buying it but for the sake of raising the price of the item so that in the end it is sold for more than its actual price/worth. This is usually done, even in the Muslim world today, by a previous agreement by the salesman and another person or relative who pretends that he wants to buy. This is done in the stock market or auctions where there is a person who keeps bidding higher prices for an item. He is doing a favour for the person who wants to sell. This is considered as *bai' al-najash*. The majority of Muslim jurists *(fuqaha)* say it is valid. However, they say that if the buyer finds that he has been manipulated in a way where the price exceeded drastically over the actual price, then he has the choice of returning the item.
2. The second interpretation of *najash* is a broader one, more than merely limiting it to trading. Ibn Rajab says here it means any kind of deceiving actions that will lead to harming others. He adds that all dealings that are conducted in a deceiving way are included here. He quotes Surah Fatir, Ayah 43 : "That the evil plot encompasses only him who makes it."

Ibn Rajab says that this *hadith* is a warning to Muslims not to hate one another, especially if it is because of self-interest. Why? Because Muslims are brothers in Islam. They should love each other and should not hate one another. Consequently, *al-nameemah*, backbiting and slander are forbidden because they will lead to hatred among the Muslim community. Ibn Rajab says that when the Muslims started dividing into different sects because of conflicting views regarding certain religious matters, this led to disputes and hatred among the community, and thus disunity.

We should not turn our backs on one another. Ibn Rajab says this means any form of disassociation. He says that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said the Muslim is not allowed to disassociate himself from the others for more than three days. This is, as Ibn Rajab points out, in worldly matters. Whereas in the religious matters, disassociation is one of the punishments that Islam allows - e.g. to disassociate with those who commit sins in order to teach them a lesson. But scholars say that if the person who commits the sin is not likely to come back to the right path, then it is meaningless to disassociate with him. As one of the scholars pointed out, if the objectives of Islam are not fulfilled then disassociation is meaningless.

We should not undercut one another in business transactions. For example, if someone is trying to buy something from a salesman, in the middle of their negotiations another salesman appears and interferes and tries to get that customer to buy his product/service instead. This kind of transaction is forbidden because the customer has yet to make his final decision - it will lead to the disunity of the Muslim community.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asks us to be brothers to one another. Ibn Rajab says this is like justifying the actions that are mentioned by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, because these evil acts will lead to spoiling the brotherhood of the Muslims. If Muslims avoid these evil acts, then this will lead them to be brothers. Moreover, Ibn Rajab says this statement implies that Muslims have to make the effort to do whatever that will lead to achieving this brotherhood. This means fulfilling all the obligations towards Muslims, for example like returning the greetings, visiting the sick, helping the needy, accepting invitations, sending presents, shaking hands, and smiling.

Then the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says the Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Ibn Rajab explains about this statement: "It is now obligatory for each brother that he tries to benefit his Muslim brother and to refrain from harming them." He adds that the major harm is oppression and injustice. If a Muslim is in need of your support and you fail to support or help him, this is unjust. There are many places in the Muslim world where the Muslims are in great need of help. They are being oppressed and nobody supports them. Accordingly, if we are not doing anything to help them, we are failing our Muslim brothers. We need to be united to solve the problems that we are facing today. Our main concern should be the unity of the *ummah*. A contemporary scholar, Abdurrahman Al-S'adi, says that one of the greatest forms of *jihad* is to make an effort to unite the Muslims. He states that cooperation among Muslims is an obligation.

We should not lie to our Muslim brothers. We should also refrain ourselves from belittling or making fun of other Muslims. We should not make signals or gestures that threaten the face value of our Muslim brothers. We should take care not to be cynical to others and not to undermine other Muslims.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says *taqwa* is in the heart. Ibn Rajab comments on this statement saying it is evidence that the most noble among people are the ones who are righteous even if they are not lucky in the sight of other people. If they are righteous, they are the most noble in the sight of Allah.

It can be said that all that has been mentioned in this *hadith* has to do with the heart: loving Muslims, and not to envy them. When we have *taqwa* in our hearts, we will not do the forbidden acts mentioned - our hearts will be purified and filled with love.

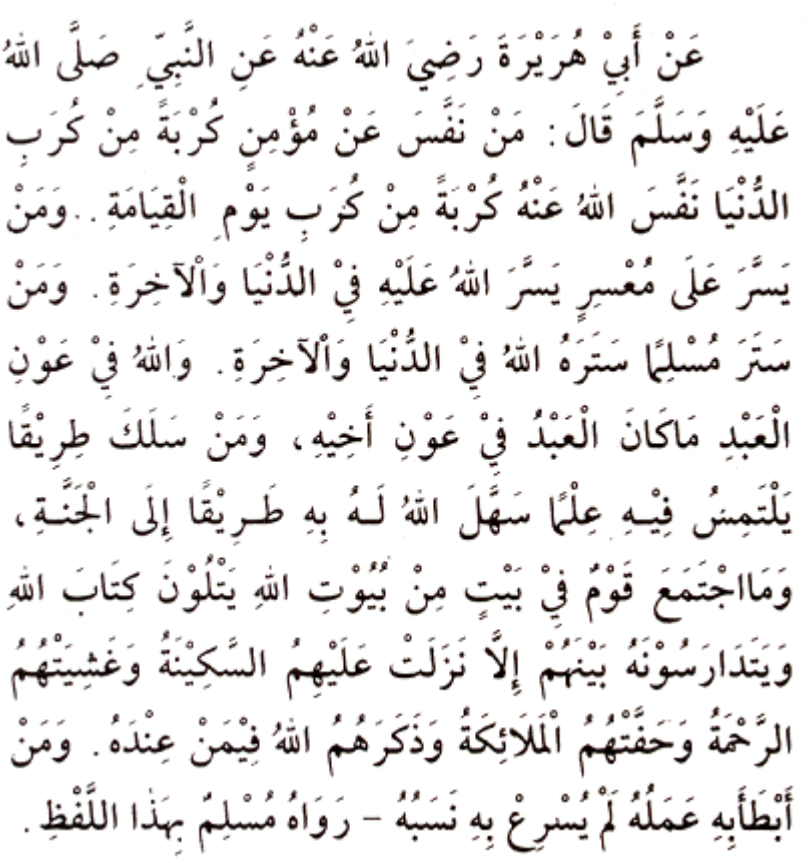
Conclusion

"All things of a Muslim are inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property, and his honour." This important last statement, which was mentioned by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, in his farewell sermon *(hajat alwadaa'),* concludes or summarises what this *hadith* is about. This *hadith* clearly states that harming others either by saying or doing is considered an evil act. Allah says:

> And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly, they bear on themselves the crime of slander and plain sin.
> [Surah al-Ahzab: Ayah 58]

Allah made the believers as brothers so that they have mercy upon one another; so that they love one another; so that they help one another and support one another. This is how Muslims should be.

Hadith 36


عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ
الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ. وَمَنْ
يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ. وَمَنْ
سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللهُ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ. وَاللهُ فِيْ عَوْنِ
الْعَبْدِ مَاكَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِيْ عَوْنِ أَخِيْهِ، وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيْقًا
يَلْتَمِسُ فِيْهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيْقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ،
وَمَااجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِيْ بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوْتِ اللهِ يَتْلُوْنَ كِتَابَ اللهِ
وَيَتَدَارَسُوْنَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِيْنَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ
الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللهُ فِيْمَنْ عِنْدَهُ. وَمَنْ
أَبْطَأَبِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ بِهَذَا اللَّفْظِ.

It was related on the authority of Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Whosoever relieves from a believer some grief pertaining to this world, Allah will relieve from him some grief pertaining to the Hereafter. Whosoever alleviates the difficulties of a needy person who cannot pay his debt, Allah will alleviate his difficulties in both this world and the Hereafter. Whosoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter. Allah will aid a servant (of His) so long as the servant aids his brother. Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. No people gather together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquility descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah makes mention of them amongst those who are in His presence. Whosoever is slowed down by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."**

[Muslim]

Background

This *hadith* was recorded by Imam Muslim by the above text. However, there is another version of the *hadith* where it was recorded by both Imam Muslim and Imam al-Bukhari with the following text:

> "A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim - he does not wrong him nor does he forsake him when he is in need; whosoever is fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah is fulfilling his needs; whosoever removes distress from a believer, Allah removes from him a distress from a distressful aspect of the Day of Resurrection; and whosoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection."

We see that in this *hadith* the obligations towards other Muslims are emphasised and the fulfillment of brotherhood is again stressed.

Lessons

"Whosoever relieves from a believer some grief pertaining to this world, Allah will relieve from him some grief pertaining to the Hereafter."

This means that the reward of an act is of a similar nature to the act itself. Or the reward to the act is relevant to the act itself or from the same type. There are many *hadiths* that emphasise this principle. Grief or distress in this *hadith* means a great difficulty or hardship a Muslim is facing. In one version of the *hadith*, it is stated as "whosoever **relieves**" and in another version "whosoever **removes**". There is obviously a difference between the two versions because 'to relief' means to minimise the difficulty or distress, whereas 'to remove' means to totally eradicate the difficulty or hardship.

Ibn Rajab says the one who successfully removes a grief or distress that a Muslim is encountering will be rewarded more than the one who helps and tries his best to minimise the consequences of a certain difficulty. This is natural because there are two different situations: The first one is related to the capacity of the person who is able only to minimise the distress. The other situation is not just a matter of capacity but also a willingness to do more to remove the distress totally. Ibn Rajab emphasises that we have to motivate Muslims to help others and to remove the distress or difficulties of one another.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says that the reward for the removal or relief of the distress of a Muslim will be rewarded by a removal of a similar distress or difficulty in the

Hereafter. Ibn Rajab questions the difference between the two situations where in the first one the *hadith* mentioned only the relief or removal of the distressful aspect of the Hereafter and not in this world. He says that not everyone is subject to such distress in this world - this is contrasted to *ale'sar* (unable to repay). He explains that since the difficulties of this life are incomparable to the distress aspects of the Hereafter (which nobody can endure as it is beyond human capacity), Allah reserves the reward for removing a distress of a distressful aspect of this life until the Day of Judgment.

"Whosoever alleviates the difficulties of a needy person who cannot pay his debt, Allah will alleviate his difficulties in both this world and the Hereafter."

Here, it is not wise or appropriate for a Muslim to demand his money back from a poor or needy Muslim who honestly cannot afford to pay him. He should either give him a chance until he is able to repay his money or forgive him. The first choice is an obligation because Allah commands us to do so in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 280. The second way of alleviation is that the person who is owed the money might forgive the borrower and try to help him not just by giving him more time but also by reducing the amount of money owed or forgiving him.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says in one of his great *hadiths*: "A man of the previous nations was very rich and people used to borrow money from him. Not only did he lend them money, which is indeed a good deed, but he also asked his sons to alleviate and forgive those who could not repay the money." The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says that in the Hereafter Allah will reward him and forgive his sins because of his generosity. Allah says in Surah al-Furqan, Ayah 26 that "it will be a very hard day for the disbelievers". This means that there is a situation where a person who is kind to those in need and Allah will relief that person by rewarding him a great reward from Allah's Mercy and Help.

"Whosoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter."

Ibn Rajab says that people can fall into two categories:

1. Those who are not known for transgression or committing bad deeds. For these people, if by any chance they commit a mistake, it should not be revealed. On the contrary, it should be concealed and not even talked about.
2. Those who are very well known as transgressors or wrongdoers, and who even speak proudly about their shameful and sinful acts. Ibn Rajab mentions that if there is a need to mention the qualities of these people, we should do so for the benefit of the Muslim community.

The statement in this *hadith* does not apply to the second category of people. The general rule that we derive from the *hadith* is that Muslims should not reveal the mistakes of their Muslim

brothers to others. Some Muslims today take it as a topic for fun and entertainment to reveal the mistakes of others even on very minor issues. As Muslims we should refrain ourselves from such acts. Consequently, the reward will be that Allah will conceal our faults from others. In this life we are subject to faults. If we do not conceal the faults of others, Allah will put us in a situation where our faults will be exposed to other people and everyone will be talking about them. So the punishment is relevant or of the same nature of the act if it is a bad act.

Another thing that is also worth mentioning is the faults of the *ulama*' or scholars. Nowadays we can notice a very strange attitude coming from some seekers of knowledge who try to find out and reveal the mistakes of very well-known scholars. This sort of situation is even worse because they are revealing the mistakes of not just regular persons. If it is a matter of academic discussion or research, we should handle it in an appropriate way that upholds the status of our scholars.

"Allah will aid a servant (of His) so long as the servant aids his brother."

This statement is a principle. Before this statement, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, gives us three examples of Allah helping those who help others.

But should we confine ourselves only to the needy mentioned in the *hadith*? Of course not. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, wants to convey to us that we should help our brothers in any way possible. There are hundreds of forms of need. For example, helping the blind to cross the street or any of the great and charitable acts that are mentioned in Hadiths 25 and 26. The greater the help, the greater the reward. This is something that Muslims should take seriously because if we have a community which care about each other and help one another, then there would be no needy. This should be our attitude - we should seek to be motivated to offer our help at any time to our Muslim brothers.

"Whosoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise."

Here we can find the encouragement of Islam in seeking and gaining knowledge. The knowledge seekers will be rewarded if the knowledge is beneficial to oneself as well as for the betterment of the Muslim community.

This statement of the *hadith* can be interpreted in 3 ways:

1. Allah will make it easy for the knowledge seeker to gain the knowledge that he is seeking.
2. Allah will make it easy for the knowledge seeker so that he will benefit from the knowledge he is seeking. This means that he will benefit from the knowledge and this will lead him to enter Paradise. There are many people who seek knowledge but there are

no blessings in the knowledge they seek. The crucial point here is the person should seek knowledge with good intentions.
3. For the one who seeks knowledge with good intentions, Allah will safely help him go through the horrible incidents and situations on the Day of Judgment.

Ibn Rajab classifies *ilm* (knowledge) into two types:

1. The outcome of knowledge is placed in the heart. That is the knowledge about Allah and His attributes that implies fearing Allah, glorifying Him, and loving Him.
2. The knowledge that we merely memorise or speak about - without our hearts being influenced or affected. This means that if the person does not abide by the knowledge that he has already obtained, then he is in a very critical situation where the he may be subject to the punishment of Allah.

"No people gather together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquility descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah makes mention of them amongst those who are in His presence."

Here the *hadith* implies a preferable act: to go to the mosque, to recite and study the Qur'an, or attending lectures. Ibn Rajab says that this can be applied to all branches of knowledge and not just the Qur'an. The *hadith* mentions four rewards for those who gather in the mosque:

1. Tranquility - this is a great reward which includes relief from stress and being calm.
2. The Mercy of Allah over them.
3. The angels surrounding them.
4. Allah making mention of them amongst those who are in His presence.

"Whosoever is slowed down by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."

This indicates that doing deeds are the means of getting the rewards and that will lead a person to Paradise. Allah says: "For all shall be judged against their actions". If the good deeds are not enough, the person's lineage or ancestry will not benefit him. This is because Allah made rewards related to good deeds and not lineage.

> No ties of kinship will prevail amongst them.
> [Surah al-Mu'minun: Ayah 101]

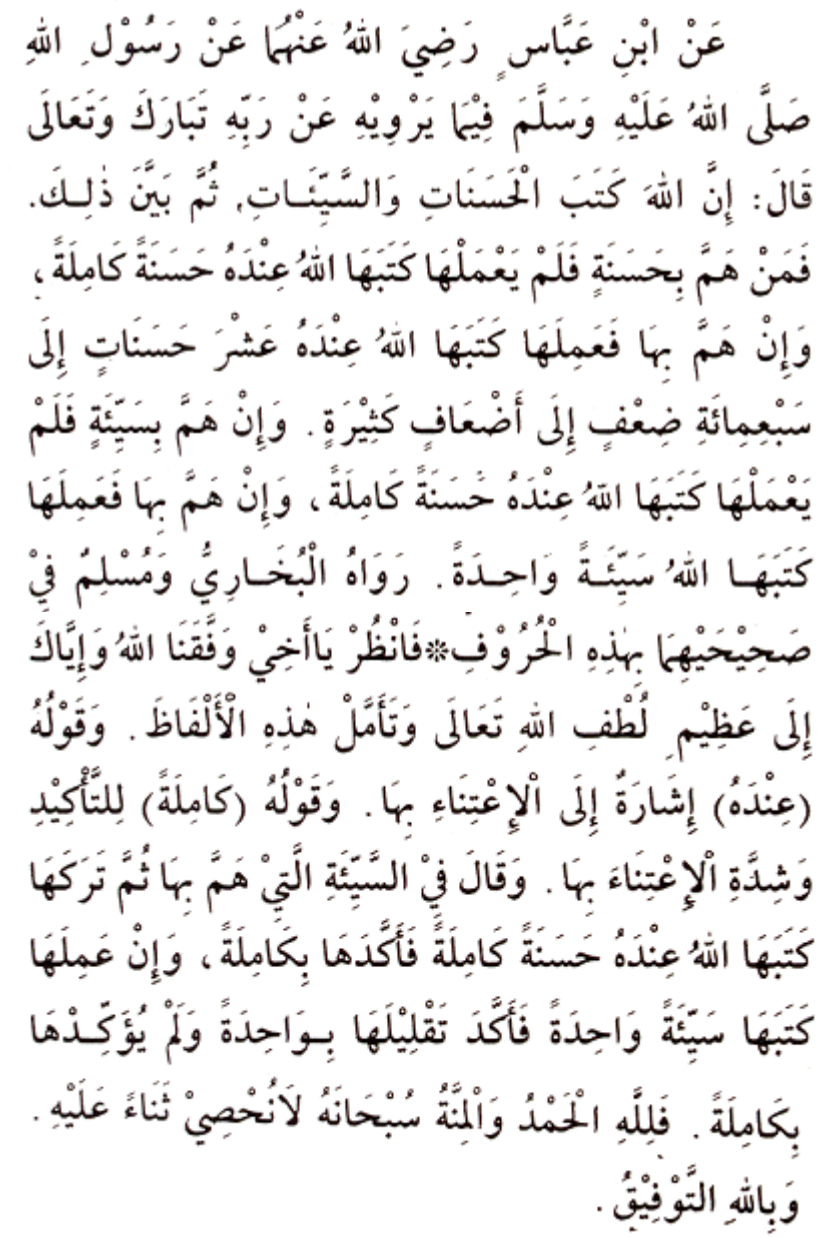
Conclusion

"A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim; he does not wrong him nor does he forsake him when he is in need; whosoever is fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah is fulfilling his needs."

This version of the *hadith* starts by stating a great principle: Muslims are brothers - one will not harm another nor will he do injustice or fail him when he is in need. Then the *hadith* states a motivation factor: Whosoever is fulfilling the needs of his brother, Allah is fulfilling his needs.

This version is more than simply stating a principle - it can be taken as a motivation for helping other Muslims, especially those who are in need. We just need to imagine the situation of the *ummah* when we help each other and fulfill the needs of others. We will end up being a better society, with less needy people, and stronger social ties that will lead to the strength of the Muslim *ummah* at large.

Hadith 37



عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيْمَا يَرْوِيْهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى
قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ كَتَبَ الْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ، ثُمَّ بَيَّنَ ذٰلِكَ.
فَمَنْ هَمَّ بِحَسَنَةٍ فَلَمْ يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً،
وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ عَشْرَ حَسَنَاتٍ إِلَى
سَبْعِمِائَةِ ضِعْفٍ إِلَى أَضْعَافٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ. وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِسَيِّئَةٍ فَلَمْ
يَعْمَلْهَا كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً، وَإِنْ هَمَّ بِهَا فَعَمِلَهَا
كَتَبَهَا اللهُ سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً. رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ فِيْ
صَحِيْحَيْهِمَا بِهٰذِهِ الْحُرُوْفِ*فَانْظُرْ يَاأَخِيْ وَفَّقَنَا اللهُ وَإِيَّاكَ
إِلَى عَظِيْمِ لُطْفِ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَتَأَمَّلْ هٰذِهِ الْأَلْفَاظَ. وَقَوْلُهُ
(عِنْدَهُ) إِشَارَةٌ إِلَى الْإِعْتِنَاءِ بِهَا. وَقَوْلُهُ (كَامِلَةً) لِلتَّأْكِيْدِ
وَشِدَّةِ الْإِعْتِنَاءِ بِهَا. وَقَالَ فِيْ السَّيِّئَةِ الَّتِيْ هَمَّ بِهَا ثُمَّ تَرَكَهَا
كَتَبَهَا اللهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسَنَةً كَامِلَةً فَأَكَّدَهَا بِكَامِلَةً، وَإِنْ عَمِلَهَا
كَتَبَهَا سَيِّئَةً وَاحِدَةً فَأَكَّدَ تَقْلِيْلَهَا بِوَاحِدَةً وَلَمْ يُؤَكِّدْهَا
بِكَامِلَةً. فَلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ وَالْمِنَّةُ سُبْحَانَهُ لَانُحْصِيْ ثَنَاءً عَلَيْهِ.
وَبِاللهِ التَّوْفِيْقُ.

Ibn Abbas, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, related from his Lord (glorified and exalted be He):

> **"Verily Allah has recorded the good deeds and the evil deeds." Then he clarified that: "Whosoever intends to do a good deed but does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it**

and does it, Allah records it with Himself as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times, or more than that. But if he intends to do an evil deed and does not do it, Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed; but if he intends it and does it, Allah records it down as one single evil deed."

[Al-Bukhari & Muslim]
Each in his *Sahih* have thus related it in these words:

"So look! My brother, may Allah help us, and take note of how great is the kindness of Allah - may He be exalted! Reflect on this, how that His saying "with Himself" points to His great care with regard to it, and His saying "complete" is for emphasis, not to point to the intensity of His care with regard to it. With regard to the evil deed which one intended but then abandoned, He says: "Allah records it with Himself as a complete good deed", emphasising this by the word "complete" *(kamilah)*; whereas if he performs it, He records it down as "one evil deed", where by the word "one" He emphasises its being made little of, since He does not emphasise it here by the word "complete". So to Allah be praise and grace. Glory be to Him! Our praises to Him we cannot count. With Allah is success."

Background

This *hadith* is considered as a *Hadith Qudsi* even though the text of the *hadith* does not show that clearly or explicitly. The *hadith* with this text is a clarification from the part of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, about the way of recording deeds. There are other versions of this *hadith* that have been recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the same form of *Hadith Qudsi* and in a very clear manner. One of these is the following version that has been commented upon by Ibn Rajab:

> Allah has said: "If My servant considers doing a sin, do not record it against him. If he acts upon it, record it as one sin. If he considers doing a good deed and does not do it, record it as one good deed, and if he actually does it, record it as 10 good deeds." [Recorded by Imam Muslim]

One may ask how this is considered a *Hadith Qudsi* where its text does not explicitly show so. The multiplication of good deeds and that the one who commits one sin is recorded as only one sin, is a well-known principle in Islam that has been emphasised in both the Qur'an and *sunnah* - Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 245 and 261; Surah an-Nisa', Ayah 40; and in Surah al-'An'am, Ayah 160. Allah says:

> Whoever shall come before Allah with a good deed will gain 10 times the like thereof, but whoever shall come with an evil deed will be requited with no more than the like thereof.

Lessons

What has been mentioned above is a general rule. However, there are some exceptions because the sin is sometimes considered greater due to certain reasons. One of these reasons is the honour of time or place such as the four months *(al-'ashhor al-hurum)*. This is the view of Ibn Abbas (the narrator of the hadith) and Qutadeh. For the month of Ramadhan there are two claimed *hadiths* but which are considered not authentic according to Ibn Rajab who states that sins are considered greater during Ramadhan and during the Hajj (pilgrimage). This is stated in Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 197.

In terms of place, for example Makkah, Allah says in Surah al-Hajj, Ayah 25:

> And whoever is inclined to evil action therein (in Makkah) or to do wrong, him we shall cause to taste from a painful turmoil.

Because of this, a few of the companions of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to avoid doing certain actions in Makkah.

Another criterion for considering sins as great is the nobility of the person who commits the sin. This is because, as Ibn Rajab says, since he is a person of knowledge of Allah and His attributes, his closeness to Allah should prevent him from committing sins. If he commits sins, his sins will be considered greater than normal people.

The *hadith* mentioned four types of deeds:

1. Doing good deeds - the result will be a multiplication of rewards.
2. Doing evil acts - this will be recorded as one sin for one sin.
3. The intention of doing good deeds - this will be recorded even if it is not done as one deed. 'Intention' here means that we have a great eagerness and a very strong determination to do a certain deed - and not merely thoughts of doing it.

   Some examples of this type, as mentioned by Ibn Rajab, are:

   - If someone has intended to wake up in the middle of the night to perform the night prayer but he did not do so because he overslept.
   - If someone intended to pray or fast.
   - If someone intended to do *jihad* or *umra*.

- If someone intended to perform the Hajj (pilgrimage).

So if any Muslim intended to do any of the above and had a strong determination to do them, it will be recorded as if he has done them. But this does not compensate the obligation of doing them when there is an opportunity to do so.

4. The intention of doing a bad deed or committing a sin without actually doing it. This means that one has made the decision to do it, as Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo puts it. Other Muslim scholars relate it to the intention *(niyyah)*. And there is an overlap between intention and decision because when we decide, we have the intention.

   Wherever we have an issue or principle where there are many versions of the *hadith*, scholars compare the text of the *hadith*. In another version that is narrated by Abu Hurairah, Allah says: "He gave up committing the sin for the cause and sake of Allah." Ibn Rajab says this implies that the interpretation of this portion of *hadith* is that the one who has the intention to do the evil act and is able to do it, refrained from doing so for the sake and fear of Allah. Ibn Rajab says this person will be rewarded for that. It will be considered a *hasanah* (a good deed) because refraining from doing that evil act with this good intention is really a good deed by itself.

   Consequently, Ibn Rajab mentions other different situations:

   a. The one who decides or just has the intention to do the evil act but then he refrains from doing it because of his fear of the people or does not like to be blamed by them. Ibn Rajab says that some scholars say this person will be punished.
   b. The person decides to do the evil act but was not able to perform it because of external factors *(qadar)*. For example, a person decides to break into a house to steal, but he does not succeed and runs away because a police car is driving around the area. Some scholars say that he will be punished though he did not steal.
   c. Someone who decides and has the intention to do the evil act, makes the effort but is not able to perform it because of his lack of strength or capabilities. Scholars say this person will be punished. For instance, if two Muslims fight each other with the intention of killing each other, as stated in the well-known *hadith*, both the killer and the one who has been killed will be in the Hellfire. The Companions asked: "O Messenger of Allah, this is the killer - what about the poor person who has been killed?" The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said he had the intention to kill his friend or brother but was not able to because he was killed himself.
   d. Someone has the intention to do an evil act and talks to others about it but does not do it. Some scholars say that he will be punished just because of his bad intention. Other scholars say he will not be punished unless the sin itself is the impermissible kind of speech like slander, backbiting or lying.

e. Someone who has the intention to do an evil act but later on changes his mind because his eagerness to do the evil act has weakened and decreased.

   One may ask whether this person is subject to punishment or not. Ibn Rajab says this situation can be classified into two categories:

   i. The intention to commit the sin was just a thought - it has not been placed or committed in the person's heart - and he dislikes or regrets the thought straightaway. Ibn Rajab says this person will be excused. For instance, if a person sees cool water during the hot month of Ramadhan and he simply has a thought of drinking but then refrains himself. This person will be forgiven because the place of the sin is not in his heart.
   ii. The evil thought has been placed in the heart and the person keeps thinking about it. Scholars say that this can be classified into two categories:
      - The action of the heart involves doubts about Allah's Oneness, the Prophethood or the Day of Resurrection. Scholars say this person will be punished. Ibn Rajab also says that there are other sins which are related to the heart such as loving what Allah hates or hating what Allah loves, arrogance, envy, and suspicions for no valid reason. All these are punishable.
      - The actions of the limbs such as adultery, stealing, drinking wine, killing etc. Ibn Rajab says in this category, if the person persists on doing such an act and has the eagerness and willingness, he will be punished. There is another view that says he will be excused because he has not actually done it. The third view is the same as the second view in that he is excused, but with one exception and that is if it is done in the al-Haram Mosque in Makkah.

f. Someone committed a sin once and then has the intention of repeating it whenever possible. That is this person is persisting on disobedience and is subject to punishment because of his bad intention even if he does it years later.

In one version of the *hadith*, Allah says that for the one who commits a sin, Allah might record it merely as one sin, or He might omit the sin because of repentance by the sinner, or because of the sinner performing good deeds - as mentioned in Hadith 18: "Fear Allah wherever you may

be; follow up an evil deed with a good one which will wipe (the former) out, and behave good-naturedly towards people."

Conclusion

In one of the versions of this *hadith* it says that the one who fails to be saved is of great loss. This means that the one whose bad deeds outweigh the good deeds is a failure. Why? After all this mercy and grace from Allah where Allah multiplies good deeds up to 700 times, after all the chances and opportunities that Allah gives us, if a person still persists on disobedience and commits evil acts and in the end his bad deeds outweighs his good ones, then he is truly a big sinner and transgressor. He has no intention of doing good deeds. He has no one to blame but himself.

There is a saying for Ibn Mas'oud: "Woe to the one whose sins outweigh his good deeds". The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said to his Companions: "Whom do you consider as a bankrupt?" They said: "The one who does not have a dinar or derham (money)." The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "The real bankrupt is the one who comes with mountains of good deeds but he also comes with many bad deeds that are related to attacking and harming the people." In this case, the bad deeds are not easily omitted because they are related to the rights of human beings. This person may wrong others by slander, backbiting, killing, etc. As a result, his good deeds will be taken from him in the Hereafter as a matter of just. In addition to that, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says part of the bad deeds of the people whom he has wronged will be added to his record and the result would be that he will be thrown into the Hellfire.

We need to imagine just how horrible the situation is. We need to reflect on this *hadith* and not to wrong, belittle or fail other Muslims or non-Muslims in the same way. We should also be kind to animals as the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said that a woman will enter Hellfire because of her mistreatment of a cat. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also mentions about a woman who is very pious and did good deeds but she annoyed and bothered her neighbours - she too is in the Hellfire.

Muslims need to be careful when it comes to dealing with other people. Unless we receive forgiveness from others, we will be held responsible for wrongdoings towards others. This has to do with our *akhlaq* and values as Muslims. We need to be concerned about this if we want to achieve any success in this life or the Hereafter.

Hadith 38

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِيْ
وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَاتَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِيْ بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ
إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِيْ يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ
بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِيْ
يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِيْ يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِيْ يَبْطِشُ بِهَا،
وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِيْ يَمْشِيْ بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِيْ لَأُعْطِيَنَّهُ، وَلَئِنِ
اسْتَعَاذَنِيْ لَأُعِيْذَنَّهُ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

Abu Hurairah, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Allah the Almighty has said: 'Whosoever acts with enmity towards a closer servant of Mine *(wali)*, I will indeed declare war against him. Nothing endears My servant to Me than doing of what I have made obligatory upon him to do. And My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with supererogatory *(nawafil)* prayers so that I shall love him. When I love him, I shall be his hearing with which he shall hear, his sight with which he shall see, his hands with which he shall hold, and his feet with which he shall walk. And if he asks (something) of Me, I shall surely give it to him, and if he takes refuge in Me, I shall certainly grant him it.'"**

[Al-Bukhari]

Background

The translation of the term *wali* that is mentioned in the *hadith* is a closer servant *(awliya')* of Allah or a believer rather than a closer friend. There are many verses in the Qur'an that talk about the concept of *wilayah*. These verses talk about the qualities or attributes of *awliya'* and

their status in the sight of Allah. In this *hadith* Allah mentions the status of the *wali* even before He talks about His attributes. This status is mentioned in the beginning (i.e. Allah will declare war against whoever acts with enmity towards one of His closer servants) and in the end (i.e. Allah will answer their *du'a* and will give them refuge). This shows the status of *awliya'* in the sight of Allah. In the middle of the *hadith*, Allah tells us the qualities of His closer servants.

The *hadith* also tells us that Allah loves those who are the closer servants to Allah. This is a natural result of what they do. Allah tells us about their actions upon which they deserved to be loved by Allah. We will see that there are two levels of servants of Allah: The first level is those who fulfill the obligations and avoid the prohibitions *(muharramat)*. The second level is those who not only do this but also perform the preferable acts *(nawafil)*.

The concept of *wilayah* (*awliya'* Allah) is based on the *verses* of the Qur'an and this *hadith*. In the Qur'an there are three verses in Surah Yunus - Ayah 62, 63 and 64.

> No doubt verily the *awliya'* of Allah (the closer servants of Allah) no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve. Those who believed and used to fear Allah much, for them are the glad tidings in this life and the Hereafter.

Based on these three verses and this Hadith Qudsi, we can say that the concept of *wilayah* comprises of the following:

1. The love of Allah
2. Fearing of Allah
3. Belief or faith in Allah and his Messengers
4. Devotion, honesty, and sincerity
5. Obedience to Allah and following His instructions - this include performing good deeds. This motif of this obedience is based on fear of Allah, repenting to Allah and submission to His will.

The origin of *wilayah* is closeness to Allah and the enmity is being far away from the path of Allah. Based on this, the *awliya'* of Allah are those who are obedient and perform the good deeds which make them closer to Allah. The enemies of Allah, on the other hand, are those who are evil doers. Their ill deeds distance themselves away from Allah and this will make them far from Allah's blessing, support, and love.

Lessons

In the first portion of the *hadith* ("Nothing endears My servant to Me than doing of what I have made obligatory upon him to do. And My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with

supererogatory *(nawafil)* prayers so that I shall love him."), Allah classifies His servants into two categories:

1. The first category are those who get closer to Allah by fulfilling the obligations and avoiding the prohibitions. This is a moderate level that has been described in the Qur'an as *ashab alyameen*. This is the minimum level of *wilayah*. In other words, *wilayah* is achieved just by fulfilling the obligations and avoiding the prohibitions. This level of *wilayah* is expected from all believers.
2. The second category of people are those who are closer to Allah by being competent *(al-sabiqeen)* in their worship and effort and strive to be close to Allah. This category of people are not satisfied only of performing the obligations and avoiding the prohibitions but they go further by performing the preferable acts. They also avoid the non-preferable acts. Consequently, they will reach the degree of *wara'* and *wilayah* that will make Allah love them. Allah mentions this explicitly and that His love will be granted for these competent people.

Some of the early people *(salaf)* used to say that it is not a big matter whether you love; the biggest matter is to be loved by Allah. If you are loved by Allah, then you are granted with His mercy and blessings. You are going to be granted with His support and guidance.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to say the following in his *du'a*: "O Allah I ask You that You love me and the love of those who love You and to enable me also to love every act and deed that may bring me closer to You". That is the reason why some of the early scholars say that the actions and the worship that are based on the love of Allah will continue and never be depressed or frustrated. Some others say that the one who loves Allah will not get fed up or bored of getting closer to Allah. He never feels that he is bored of doing good deeds and acts that will get him closer to Allah. Other scholars say that for the one who loves Allah, his heart is purified and he always remembers Allah. He always seeks and strives to do good deeds and acts that will get him closer to Allah. He does all of this with pleasure.

The early scholars also say that the one who loves Allah should obey Him, otherwise he is only claiming to love Allah. Scholars say that among the preferable acts *(nawafil)* that make a person become closer to Allah, is the *nawafil al-salawat* (the preferable prayers that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to pray every day). Another thing is the recitation of the Qur'an and listening to it with full attention and understanding. Also part of the preferable acts is the remembrance of Allah where what the tongue says matches with what the heart believes, and the love of other good Muslims who are closer to Allah.

The second portion of this *hadith* ("When I love him, I shall be his hearing with which he shall hear, his sight with which he shall see, his hands with which he shall hold, and his feet with which he shall walk.") implies that, as Ibn Rajab says, whoever strives, struggles and makes the effort to get closer to Allah by doing the obligations and performing the preferable acts, Allah will get him closer to him, support him, and take him from one level into another until this

servant of Allah reaches the degree of *Ihsan* where this believer will be able to practice *muraqabeh*. That is he worships Allah as if he sees Him, and his heart will be full with love of Allah.

Not only will Allah grant him love of Allah but he will also be helped to glorify Allah and granted with satisfaction. This will be strengthened by performing the preferable acts until the heart is full of these acts where nothing else will enslave or capture the heart. The heart is fully devoted to Allah. When that status is reached by the believer, the limbs of that servant will act only in accordance to what Allah loves. Then he will be seeing, hearing, and doing what Allah sees, hears and does. He will be walking towards what Allah wants and likes. The early *salaf* say that he cannot even commit a sin. Ibn Rajab quotes Ali who said that they used to believe that Omar's Satan was so frustrated to do any sin or disobedience. This is one of the secrets or the real fruits of *tawhid*. This is because *"La ilaha illa Allah"* means that we should only worship, glorify, obey, and love Allah and fear Him the most. When this realisation of *tawhid* is achieved, then he says the heart will have no place for anything that may displease Allah. What will be in the heart is only what Allah loves. In this case, that person will never commit a sin or any kind of disobedience. Committing sins takes place only if the person loves what Allah hates or that person hates what Allah loves. It also takes place when self interest is given a priority and dominance over the love of Allah. The result will be that the obligations of the *tawhid* will not be complete. The person will be led to delay obligations or to commit sins.

The third portion of this *hadith* ("And if he asks (something) of Me, I shall surely give it to him, and if he takes refuge in Me, I shall certainly grant him it.") Implies that the closer servant of Allah has a special status in the sight of Allah. This special status will lead to that whatever he asks of Allah, Allah will give him and his *du'a* will be attended to. If he seeks refuge from anything, he will be given that.

In Sunan Al-Imam Al-Nisa'ei, there is one chapter on *iste'azeh*. There are many *hadiths* in this chapter that tell us the sayings that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to say to seek refuge of Allah to be saved from things such as poverty, ignorance, the turmoil of the grave, sadness and depression of this life, and various diseases. The closer servant of Allah is granted to be saved from the above mentioned things and many others. As Muslims we have to realise the importance of this portion of the *hadith* especially for those who are hearing the *hadith* for the first time. It is better that we learn from the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, what to seek refuge of Allah from. We should try to memorise some *hadiths* which are in the form of *du'a*. In that way we will be granted the love of Allah and we will be given the status of *awliya'*. Consequently, we will be granted with the bounty that whatever we ask for, Allah will give us. Moreover, we will be saved from the harms that are mentioned above.

The last thing that we need to point out is the misconception of *wilayah*. After the early centuries of Islam, this concept has been misunderstood to the extent that there came a time when the attributes of the *wali* is not what is mentioned in the Qur'an and *hadith*. It is actually by claims. We look at the person and his attitude and worship of Allah and we are shocked to see a big

difference. We are surprised to see that the actions do not match with the Islamic teachings. How, then, can this person be a *wali*? He is not a closer servant of Allah. The real closer servant of Allah will not abuse *wilayah* and use it for promotion because it is not what he claims but it is in the heart and love of Allah. This should be corrected because until today some Muslims are still confused about *wilayah*. Imam Shatibi sets a number of criteria for *wilayah* or *karam*ah because they are granted only if the person is close to Allah. Awliya'u Allah are shy to claim that they are closer to Allah because this contradicts with the idea of *ikhlas* (sincerity).

Conclusion

We notice that Imam Nawawi brings this *hadith* which states the main fundamental concepts or principles of Islam in a clear way. By studying this *hadith,* one comes to know what the concept of *wilayah* or closeness to Allah means and what he should do. We also know the status of *awliya'*.

This *hadith* is a warning to those who may harm believers in general or the closer servants of Allah in particular. Allah declares war against the one who acts with enmity towards His *awliya'* (closer servants). This is a message to all Muslims and people not to harm others or to be enemies with Allah by harming the believers. That is how the situation will be, if not in this life, it will be in the Hereafter. Moreover, Allah knows better what is in our favour and what is not in our favour. That's why sometimes the closer servants of Allah may ask for something and Allah does not attend to their *du'a* because the things they may ask for may cause them some harm . But still because of their *du'a*, there will be the blessings and mercy from Allah in similar situations. The blessings of *du'a* will be also granted in the Hereafter.

Hadith 39

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِيْ عَنْ أُمَّتِيْ الْخَطَأَ وَالنِّسْيَانَ وَمَااسْتُكْرِهُوْا عَلَيْهِ. حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ. رَوَاهُ ابْنُ مَاجَهْ وَالْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمَا.

Ibn Abbas, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"Truly Allah has for my sake pardoned the mistakes and forgetfulness of my community, and for what they have done under force or duress."**

[A fine *hadith* related by Ibn Majah, Al-Baihaqi and others]

Background

What has been stated in this *hadith* has also been stressed and emphasised in the Qur'an. In Surah al-Baqarah, Ayah 286, it is stated:

> "Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or fall into error."
>
> (Another translation for the meaning of the *ayah* :)
> "Oh our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or make mistakes."

Allah says in Surah al-Ahzab, Ayah 5:

> And there is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intended. And Allah is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Allah also says in Surah al-Nahl, Ayah 106:

> Whosoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with faith or at certainty.

Lessons

Being excused for what is done mistakenly or out of forgetfulness does not mean that there will be no consequent rulings. This means that a person might be forgiven but he still has to take responsibility for his actions. The consequent rulings for doing something mistakenly or out of forgiveness can be classified into three categories:

1. There are mistakes where there is no consequent ruling such as a person or a Muslim who eats during the day in the month of Ramadhan out of forgetfulness. The majority of scholars say that his fasting is still valid and he does not have to repeat that day. This opinion is based on the *hadith* that is related by Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim which states that "any Muslim who eats during Ramadhan out of forgetfulness will be excused and forgiven."
2. There are consequent rulings to actions that are done out of mistakes or forgetfulness such as if someone kills a Muslim by mistake - as what happens nowadays in car accidents or accidents at work, etc. It is well-known by scholars that for such a person there is no consequent ruling. There is no *kaffarah* (expiation of sins) but he has to pay the *fidyah* as stated in the Qur'an. Another example is if someone caused harm or damage to the property or money of someone else by mistake. In this case the person is responsible and has to compensate for what he has damaged even though he is forgiven by Allah and is not being regarded as sinful.
3. There are actions where there are different opinions among the Muslim scholars of whether there is a consequent ruling or not. Some scholars say that the person has a consequent ruling. Others will say that he is fully excused and has nothing to do. For example, if a person talked out of forgetfulness during his prayer. Does he have to repeat his prayer? Here we have different opinions among the scholars. Some will say he has to repeat while others will say he is going to be forgiven and excused.

   Another example is that a person takes an oath or swears by Allah not to do something and then he does it out of mistake or because of forgetfulness. Is this person responsible? Some scholars will say he is not forgiven and he has to make *kaffarah*. Others will say that he is forgiven and need not make *kaffarah*. A third example is if a person who is *muhrim* - that is he intended to perform *'umrah* or *hajj* and then by mistake he hunts or kills an animal. Is he forgiven (i.e. is this not considered a sinful act)? He is forgiven and will not be punished for that. But the issue is whether he has to pay for it and be responsible or not. This is again a debatable issue among the scholars. Ibn Rajab states that the person who acts out of forgetfulness or by mistake is excused and that the sinfulness will be removed because sinfulness is related to those who does it deliberately. But the ruling, whatever the responsibility is, is not meant by this *hadith*. The *hadith* does not mean that they are going to be excused from everything including any kind of responsibility or rulings. This is something very important to know because some Muslims have the misconception that they are totally excused and they do not have to bear any consequences.

In the situation where a person is forced to do something which is not acceptable in Islam, this *ikrah* or duress can be categorised, according to Ibn Rajab, into two categories:

1. The person is powerless and has no choice to refuse doing an evil act or something which is not acceptable by *shari'ah*. Ibn Rajab says that he is excused.
2. The person is forced to harm someone else. In this situation, we look at the issue from the perspective that he has the power over his actions and can refuse to do the harm but at the same time his intention is to remove the harm from himself rather than to harm the other person. What is the ruling in this case? The scholars say that there are certain cases where the Muslim should not do it (i.e. harm someone else) even if he is harmed himself, such as if a Muslim is forced to kill someone else. He is not allowed to do so because this is a major harm that Muslims should do their best to avoid.

   But the scholars have different views regarding similar situations and actions. The first situation is that if a Muslim took an oath not to do something and then he is forced to do it. Some say that he is excused and he is allowed to do the thing that he promised not to do - he is excused and there is no ruling here. Other scholars say he is responsible and he should not do it. If it is out of his choice, this goes under the first category. The same if someone is forced or threaten or even beaten and he has been ordered to cause damage to the property of someone else. Scholars say since he has the choice, he has to do his best not to cause the damage. The issue here is that if he does it, scholars say that he will be excused in the sense that he is not sinful but he still remains responsible for the damage that he caused.

   The second situation where Muslim scholars differ is prohibited acts such as drinking wine. Some scholars say if a person is forced, then he is excused. Other scholars say though he is forced, he is not allowed to do it.

   Another view or category is the distinction between speech and actions. In terms of speech, a person might be forced and allowed to say something that is not allowable. The scholars say he should not practice *taqiyah*. *Taqiyah* means to say or do something which you do not believe in and are not satisfied with. This only applies to sayings and not actions. Regarding this issue there is an agreement among the Muslim scholars. They say that whoever is forced to say something that is not allowed in *shari'ah*, then he will be allowed to say it - he will not be regarded or considered as 'saying' it. There is another condition that the scholars set. They say that whenever a person is put into *ikrah* or duress, the duress should be definite and most likely to happen and not just something the person imagines or assumes. He has to be sure.

What is mentioned in this *hadith* should not be abused. Some Muslims today abuse what the *hadith* implies by using it as an excuse to not uphold a responsibility or to break a promise. Allah

knows our intentions and we should not take what is mentioned in the *hadith* to get away from the responsibility of fulfilling a commitment or an obligation.

Conclusion

Islam encourages *ihsan*, quality, excellence at work, and a sense of responsibility. At the same time, Islam discourages recklessness, carelessness, and heedlessness. However, Islam takes into account the nature of human beings and their shortcomings. It also takes into consideration the unavoidable situations that they may undergo. It should also be noticed that Islam calls for taking lessons from our mistakes and our experience with others. That's why the Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says a Muslim should not be bitten from the same hole twice.

We should also be aware (based on Hadith 32) not to harm others. That *hadith* says: "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." According to this *hadith* we have to minimise the size of the harm and the consequences of the mistakes as much as possible. Even though the person might be excused and forgiven by one of these factors that are mentioned in the *hadith*, he still has to bear the full responsibility of his actions or deeds.

We should look at this in a positive way. Islam does not encourage people to become reckless, careless, or to feel that they are unaccountable. We should look at the *hadith* as a total picture of the situation and not to look at it in an isolated manner. We should have a complete view of what Islam has already established or stressed such as excellence in our performance, accountability and many other issues that we have to observe. But because we are human beings and subject to committing mistakes out of forgetfulness, Islam still leaves room for these human shortcomings and makes it possible for them to be excused and forgiven - but they have to bear some of the consequences.

Hadith 40

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: أَخَذَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِمَنْكِبِيْ. فَقَالَ: كُنْ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ
غَرِيْبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيْلٍ. وَكَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا
يَقُوْلُ: إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ فَلَاتَنْتَظِرِ الصَّبَاحَ، وَإِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ
فَلَاتَنْتَظِرِ الْمَسَاءَ، وَخُذْ مِنْ صِحَّتِكَ لِمَرَضِكَ وَمِنْ حَيَاتِكَ
لِمَوْتِكَ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

On the authority of Ibn 'Umar, *radiyallahu 'anhuma*, who said: The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, took me by the shoulder and said:

> **"Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveler/wayfarer."**
> **Ibn 'Umar used to say:**
> **"When evening comes, do not expect (to live till) morning, and when morning comes, do not expect (to live till) evening. Take from your health (a preparation) for your illness, and from your life for your death."**

[Al-Bukhari]

Background

There are so many verses in the Qur'an that make comparisons between the worldly life and the Hereafter. The priority and emphasis is made on the Hereafter where it is described as the real life and the worldly life as a life of nothing but entertainment and amusement. Allah says in Surah al-An'am, Ayah 32:

> And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion but the home of Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah. Will you not then reason?

And in Surah al-'Ankabut, Ayah 64, Allah expresses the same meaning mentioned in the previous *ayah*. The same meaning is also expressed in other *ayahs* such as in Surah Muhammad Ayah 36, Surah Yunus Ayah 26, Surah al-Kahf Ayah 45 -46, Surah Fater Ayah 5, Surah al-A'la Ayah 16-17, and Surah al-Isra' Ayah 18-19.

In all of the above mentioned *ayahs*, Allah draws the attention of the believers toward the Hereafter to remind them that it is the final destination and the real life and enjoyment of the believers. Allah also comments on this life as nothing but amusement and diversion. It is a life of a test and trial. It is a life used as a means of getting us forward to the Hereafter.

In Islam there is no nullification of life as some people may misunderstand. There is a balance and adjustment between this life and the Hereafter. There should be no polarization or what Islam is - *rahbanah* or extremism. There should be no conflict between this life and the next life. There is a kind of moderate conception about this life and the Hereafter. Islam also makes it an obligation that the believers cultivate the earth and make it as an *amanah* for them to establish the Islamic civilization which is based on *Tawhid*, good morals and values. This civilization is guided by revelation. This is considered an obligation.

Furthermore, the concept of *'ubudiyyah* (worshipping Allah) is a comprehensive concept where everything we do in this life, if it is guided by revelation and is done with a good intention, becomes a form of worship even though it is a worldly matter. If the thing is done in accordance with the teachings of *shari'ah* and the main guidelines of revelation, then there will be the adjustment and the harmony between this life and the Hereafter. The Muslim's life in this world and the Hereafter should be in total submission and devotion to the will of Allah. The Muslim should establish a good life, improve his way of life and aim for the Hereafter at the same time. By doing so, he is obeying Allah, being guided by His guidance and instructions. He will still enjoy this life but at the same time whatever he does will be recorded by Allah as his good deeds. Consequently, he will get the pleasure of Allah.

Lessons

The *hadith* starts with Abdullah bin 'Umar (Ibn 'Umar), *radiyallahu 'anhuma*, saying: "The Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, took me by the shoulder and said." Here we can learn many lessons as teachers and educators. We have to show care and attention to our audience if we want to be good educators or teachers. This can be achieved in many different ways. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to follow different approaches when dealing with his audience. Sometimes he called upon the name of a certain person and in other times, like in this *hadith,* he gets closer to the person he is speaking to by putting his hand on his shoulder.

Sometimes the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, will start his advice or teaching with a statement that attracts the attention of the audience . For example, we can see this in a previous *hadith* (19) that has been said on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas when the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said "O young man, I will teach you some words (of wisdom)." Sometimes the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used the questioning style as we saw in a number of previous *hadiths*. The questioning style plays a significant role in conveying the message and attracting the

attention of the audience. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, asks the question where the answer to that question is only known to him. The audience and the addressee will be more keen and motivated to know the answer.

In general, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used all of these approaches or means to show care to the addressee, to attract their attention, and also to stress or emphasise the meaning he wanted to convey. This is also sometimes achieved by repeating what he says. Sometimes he would draw diagrams (e.g. a circle or a square) on the ground. Other times he would use analogy to clarify or simplify a certain concept. All of the above mentioned ways can be adopted as techniques for educating.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, tells the believers how to deal with this life, and as usual he offers his audience with more than one choice. In this *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is giving two choices or levels with regards to living in this world:

1. **To be as a stranger**

   This is usually the easier choice. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used the analogy 'to be as a stranger' because, as Ibn Rajab points out, the stranger is usually prepared to eventually go back to his original place or home town. His heart will always long for his home. His main concern will be to be in preparation to do whatever possible and beneficial for returning. A stranger does not look like the other people in his current environment - he is different. Similarly, the believer should be different from those who only care about this life and worldly matters. He should rid himself of the yearning for this materialistic world, a world where some people do not care about the spiritual aspects and the Hereafter. As believers, we should be different from the 'people of this world'.

   Ibn Al-Qayyim, a famous Muslim scholar, says that a Muslim is a stranger amongst the disbelievers and the Mu'min is a stranger amongst the Muslims, and the Muhsin is a stranger amongst the Mu'mins. This means that there are different levels of being a stranger: the lowest level is Islam, the second level is Iman and the third level is Ihsan. [Refer to Hadith **2**]
2. **To be a traveler or wayfarer, traveling along a path**

   This is a higher level than the stranger. The traveler is always traveling day and night without stopping, He is heeding towards his final destination. Even if he stops for a while, this is to provide himself with the needed power to continue his journey and to go farther until he achieves his main objective. A stranger might obtain and keep more things than he actually needs but the traveler takes as little as possible in terms of luggage or other things. Similarly, the believer who is in such a situation has a main objective or concern - and that is not to take more than what he needs (i.e. he should not be weighed down with materialistic things or wealth).

Another thing is the traveler needs to know that he is traveling on the right path, the straight path. For this, he needs to obtain the right knowledge *(ilm)*. He also needs good, helpful companions to help him on his way.

Some scholars ask how would a person be contented with this life where the day distorts the month and the month distorts the year and the year will distort the age? That is how this person will be satisfied with this life if his age will lead him to his final destination and his life will lead him to death. One scholar said when a person looks back at his life since his awareness of this life until this moment, it will seem like a blink of an eye. What remains for the rest of his life is also like that 'blink of an eye'. If that is the case, the person should be careful and wise up.

Ibn 'Umar says: "When evening comes, do not expect (to live till) morning, and when morning comes, do not expect (to live till) evening." This saying is like an explanation to the *hadith*. Al-Bukhari mentions it because the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is talking to Ibn 'Umar.

If one still did not understand the message, Ibn 'Umar continues by saying: "Take from your health (a preparation) for your illness, and from your life for your death." This means that today you may be healthy, but you never know about the future. It is then wise and better to perform good deeds and to be closer to Allah now before being unhealthy or before dying. This meaning has been stressed by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, in other *hadiths* where he asks us to utilise our time and to do beneficial things whether in this life or in the Hereafter. We can relate to Imam Nawawi's other *hadiths* that have been previously mentioned in which certain charitable acts have been emphasised.

The impact of this hadith on the life of Muslims

1. To increase the sense of responsibility in terms of our duties towards Allah, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, relatives, and the community members.
2. To motivate the Muslims to enjoin what is good and to forbid what is evil.
3. To be closer to Allah at all times.
4. To minimise weaknesses, shortcomings and sinful acts.
5. To maximise self-accountability and self-reckoning.
6. To emphasise *taqwa* and fearing Allah the Almighty.
7. To be safeguarded from being misled or enslaved by self-interests, desires and worldly temptations.

Challenges that threaten the above mentioned concept of dealing with this life in a good way

1. The promotion of the materialistic aspects of life, especially by the media.

2. The complexity of contemporary life where there are more problems, and the engagement in life activities without proper balance.
3. Rapid life changes due to technology advancement and progress which in turn creates other problems, such as:

    - Adjustment between the old lifestyle and the new lifestyle.
    - The emergence of new values which lead to conflicts between sets of values.
    - Technology misuse.
    - The increase of social ills.
    - The weak religious awareness and education or spiritual training in the Islamic world (i.e. *tazkiyyah*).

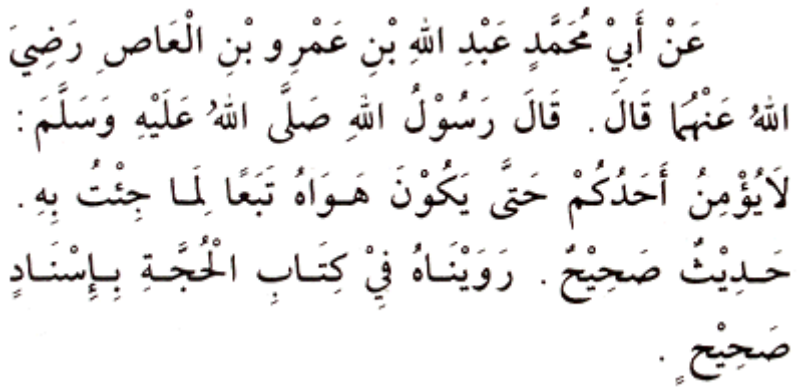
4. The challenges of modernity.
5. The challenges of globalisation and promotion of imposed corrupted western values.

Conclusion

These challenges add to the size of the responsibilities that face the Muslims who want to implement this *hadith* in their lives. Most of these challenges are addressed in previous *hadiths*. This *hadith* contains a helpful piece of advice for every single Muslim which helps us to deal with this life in a proper way by offering us two choices or levels. We need to understand all the above mentioned issues. This will help us to apply the *hadith* in a more positive way.

Some Muslims throughout history misunderstood this *hadith*. Consequently, they misunderstood the Islamic teachings regarding dealing with life. They understood it in a negative way. We also find other Muslims who are affected by the challenges of modernity and the excessive tension that is given to this life. We find minimum levels of good deeds. They are overwhelmed by the advancement of technology and end up with little *iman* or spirituality. The Islamic standpoint that should be understood is that there is no conflict or opposition between this life and the Hereafter. On the contrary, Islam establishes harmony where a Muslim lives in this life but his heart is devoted to Allah and the Hereafter. Whatever he does is with the objective of pleasing Allah and is to be done in accordance with the teachings of Islam and the guidance of revelation.

Hadith 41


عَنْ أَبِيْ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ
اللهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ. قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
لَايُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يَكُوْنَ هَوَاهُ تَبَعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ.
حَدِيْثٌ صَحِيْحٌ. رَوَيْنَاهُ فِيْ كِتَابِ الْحُجَّةِ بِإِسْنَادٍ
صَحِيْحٍ.

Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah bin Amr bin al-'As, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, reported that the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said:

> **"None of you (truly) believes until his desire or inclination is in accordance with what I have brought or subservient to what I came with."**
>
> [A fine and genuine *hadith*, which was related by al-Maqdidsi in his Book of Hujjah]

Background

Imam Nawawi stated that the *sanad* (chain of authorities) of this *hadith* is authentic. However, many other scholars, including Ibn Rajab, stated that there are many defects in the chain of authorities. Sometimes the scholars consider a *hadith* as weak but this does not mean that what is stated in the *hadith* is weak. The meaning of this *hadith* has been emphasised in the Qur'an and strengthened by other *hadiths*. Allah says in Surah al-Nisa' Ayah 65:

> But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.

In Surah al-Ahzab Ayah 36, Allah says:

> It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.

Ustaz Jamaludin Zarabozo points out that there are sufficient authentic and acceptable evidences to prove what this *hadith* states. The main point that this *hadith* makes is that a believer will not be considered as fulfilling the obligatory level of faith or *iman* until he follows what the

Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, has said - i.e. he loves what the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, commanded him to do and hates what the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, prohibited or made illegal.

Lessons

It is an obligation on every single believer to love what Allah loves and to hate what Allah hates to a degree that will motivate them to fulfill his or her obligations. If that love is increased above the level which will lead to fulfilling the preferable acts *(mandoub)*, this is considered an additional preferable level. At the same time, he should hate or dislike what Allah hates or dislikes to the extent that will lead him to avoid all the prohibitions. If that level leads him to avoid what needs to be avoided, then that is an additional level that Allah will reward him for.

In the two *Sahihs* of Al-Bukhari and Muslim it is related that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "None of you will be truly a believer until I become more beloved to him than himself, his children, his family, and all the people." The true love necessitates that one has to follow whatever has been commanded by Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, as stated in Surah al-Imran Ayah 31-32:

> Say (O Muhammad *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*): "If you (really) love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Say (O Muhammad *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*): "Obey Allah and the Messenger." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers.

The true believer is one who loves Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, truly and sincerely from his or her heart, and loves whatever Allah loves and whatever the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, loves, and hates whatever Allah hates and whatever the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, hates or dislikes. This love will lead him to act in accordance with these likes and dislikes. If someone acts in a different way, the obligatory love to Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, is not complete and has a defect. In this case, he has to repent and do his best to fulfill all the obligatory levels to achieve complete love to Allah and towards His Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam.*

All the sins or disobedience that take place as a result of desires happen because self-desire is given a higher degree or outweighs the love of Allah and the love of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*. Allah attributes this in the Qur'an to the disbelievers. In Surah al-Qasas Ayah 50, Allah says:

> But if they answer you not, then know that they only follow their own lusts. And who is more astray than the one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah?

Allah also commanded one of his Prophets not to follow his desires. In Surah Saad Ayah 26, Allah says:

> And follow not your desire, for it will mislead you from the Path of Allah.

Allah has made restraining desires one of the conditions to be fulfilled in order to enter Paradise. Allah says in Surah al-Nazi'at Ayah 40-41:

> But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires and lusts. Verily, Paradise will be his abode.

Anyone who does anything that contradicts with the Message that Allah sent His Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, with and violates any of the instructions or prohibitions, is a person who is following his own desires. It should be noted that desire has to do with likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes are not the main goal. Scholars say that the main point here is not to be influenced by those likes or dislikes. If someone likes something that violates the *shari'ah*, this person is following his own desires. If that person is influenced by those likes or dislikes, this will lead to an act. The act will lead to forms of actions which either pleases or displeases Allah. In both cases, the person has full responsibility and accountability. The responsibility and accountability are not for the likes or dislikes. They are for what the likes or dislikes lead him to.

It is known that following the desires is the reason behind many evil acts and it is also the basis for *bid'ah* (heresy). When someone follows his desires without evidence or truth, this will lead him to fall into *bid'ah* easily. And those who are misled by their desires are the first to follow misconceptions, as stated by many scholars. Whenever there is a misconception they easily fall into problems or troubles.

There are signs of following desires. One of the signs is neglecting or turning away from seeking beneficial *'ilm* (the needed knowledge of Islam). Another sign of following desires is turning one's back from the guidance that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, has come with.

Al-Imam Al-Shatibi, in his book Al-Muwafaqat, volume number 2, p. 168, mentions that the objective of *shari'ah* is to keep Muslims away from desires so that the believer will be a servant to Allah willingly and become an honest servant of Allah. He also states that following one's desires with regard to the rulings of *shari'ah* is a problematic issue where a person might use tricks to fulfill his desires, using deception in order to evade the rulings of *shari'ah*.

With regards to how one can control and deal with one's desires, firstly Al-Imam Al-Shatibi says that the main thing is to make the law of *shari'ah* and its rulings as a judging authority that every Muslim should respect, appreciate, and comply with. Secondly, some other scholars mention feeling Allah's presence, seeking knowledge, and the continuance remembrance of Allah are the ways of controlling self-desires. Thirdly, Imam Ibn Qayyim mentions about 50 ways of dealing with self-desires. Even those who are already influenced by self-desire can use any of these ways to get rid of their self-desires. He mentions this in his book Rawdat al-Muhebin (Garden of Lovers). The following are 15 selected ways:

1. Strong resolution.
2. Patience.
3. Self-courage.
4. Considering consequences.
5. Reflecting that Muslims have been created for a great mission which cannot be fulfilled except by controlling one's desires.
6. Not to be enslaved by self-desires.
7. To know that Satan is the enemy that gets through the servants of Allah. Satan uses desires to influence people.
8. To know that following self-desires will lead to someone's destruction and punishment by Allah.
9. To know that fighting desires by making an effort in order not to be influenced by the desires is one of the greatest forms of *jihad*. Fighting desires is the essential message of Islam. Muslims are required to make every effort to adhere to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah.
10. To know that the one who lets the desires take over and lead him will spoil his intellectual opinion.
11. To know that following desires will weaken the eagerness for performing good deeds. The opposite is also true in this case - that is, not following desires leads to strengthening one's motivation to perform good deeds.
12. To know that not being misled by desires will lead to the honour in this life and the Hereafter.
13. To know that following desires is the main cause of the spiritual heart disease and the remedy of the disease is to not follow desires. We have to make *jihad* to fight desires otherwise we will not be able to fight our enemies.
14. To know that seeking knowledge and feeding it by performing the preferable acts will strengthen one's faith.
15. To know that we need to be enlightened by the Qur'an and Sunnah. This requires us to make the effort to recite the Qur'an in order to know the meaning and the wisdom behind the *ayahs*.

Conclusion

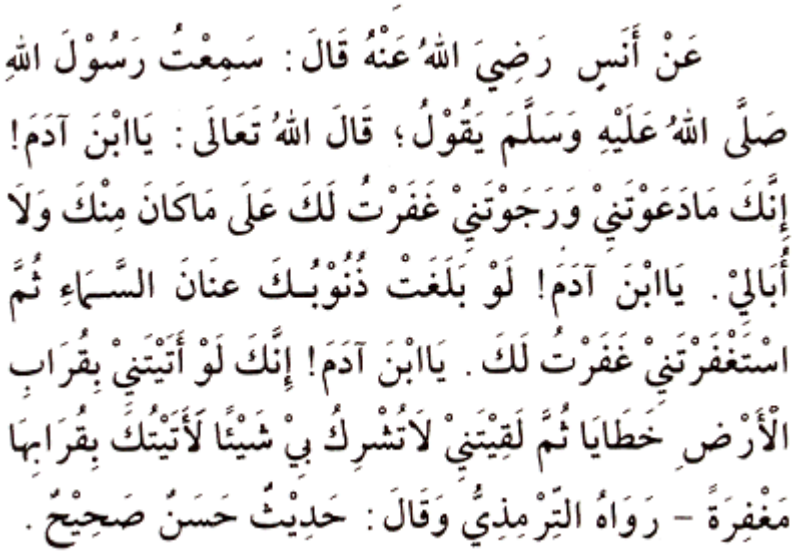
Though this *hadith* is considered a weak *hadith*, it states a very important meaning: in order to fulfill one's faith, one has to make a continuous effort to control his or her self-desires and to like what Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, like, and to dislike what Allah and the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam,* dislikes. This is actually a very important task which we are required to do in order to adhere to the path of Allah. The result will be attaining Allah's pleasure and being honoured in this life and the Hereafter by being a truly honest, sincere servant of Allah.

Muslims must be sincere in their efforts to fight self-desires. The issue is not to like or dislike but what the result of this likes or dislikes is. For instance, if someone is sleeping before dawn in the early morning and then he hears the call for *Fajr* prayer but is too lazy or sleepy to wake up to perform the *salah*, this is considered following his self-desires. Everyone likes to sleep but the problem is the result of this leads us to delay or miss the *Fajr* prayer (a *wajibat*).

Another example is food. There are many things that we can eat but if they are not *halal*, we have to refrain from consuming them. A third example is the love of money. To like money is one thing but to be misled by money is a problem because this will lead the heart to be enslaved to money and the worldly life. This explains why the scholars say that committing sins is actually a result of desires.

We should make the *shari'ah* as the judging authority for everything we do. Before we do something, we should ask ourselves: Is this act based on a sound reason? If the answer is not, then we are following the desires. This is why Allah labels the Qur'an as Al-Furqan or as the criterion that distinguishes what is right and what is wrong.

Hadith 42


عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللهِ
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُوْلُ؛ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى: يَاابْنَ آدَمَ!
إِنَّكَ مَادَعَوْتَنِيْ وَرَجَوْتَنِيْ غَفَرْتُ لَكَ عَلَى مَاكَانَ مِنْكَ وَلَا
أُبَالِيْ. يَاابْنَ آدَمَ! لَوْ بَلَغَتْ ذُنُوْبُكَ عَنَانَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ
اسْتَغْفَرْتَنِيْ غَفَرْتُ لَكَ. يَاابْنَ آدَمَ! إِنَّكَ لَوْ أَتَيْتَنِيْ بِقُرَابِ
الْأَرْضِ خَطَايَا ثُمَّ لَقِيْتَنِيْ لَاتُشْرِكُ بِيْ شَيْئًا لَأَتَيْتُكَ بِقُرَابِهَا
مَغْفِرَةً - رَوَاهُ التِّرْمِذِيُّ وَقَالَ: حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ.

From Anas, *radiyallahu 'anhu*, who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, say:

> **"Allah the Almighty has said: 'O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me, and hope in Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds in the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I shall forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with an earthful of sins and were you then to face Me, without having associated anything with Me, I shall grant you an earthful of pardon.'"**
>
> [Recorded by Al-Tirmidhi, who said that it is a good and sound *hadith*]

Background

The main message of this *hadith* is calling upon Muslims to repent sincerely to Allah and to seek His forgiveness.

Lessons

There are three means or ways, which enable a Muslim to be forgiven by Allah.

1. The first one is *al-du'a* which means to supplicate Allah. Allah says in Surah Ghafir Ayah 60:

> And your Lord said: Call upon me, I will respond to you.

The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said: "Supplication is the essence of worship" [Al-Tirmidhi]. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, also said: "Supplicate to Allah as if you are certain about His response." Supplication is guaranteed that Allah will attend to or respond to it when certain conditions are fulfilled. At the same time there are other things that a Muslim should avoid doing in order for his supplication to be answered. The conditions of supplication have been discussed in previous *hadiths*. The most important thing is the full concentration and attention of the heart and to have full hope that Allah will respond to that *du'a* and not to rush it.

Muslims have to practice supplication frequently because it is a continuous process. Among the things that a Muslim asks Allah in his supplication are to forgive his sins, to be saved from the Hell-Fire and to be among those who enter Paradise. Muslims have to make *du'a* with full hope that there is a response. Allah says in a Hadith Qudsi: "I am as My servant expects of Me." [Muslim]. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says in another *hadith*: "No Muslim who supplicates a supplication, that does not contain any sin or cutting of relations, Allah will grant him one of three things: either Allah will immediately respond to his supplication, or He may keep or store the answer for the Hereafter, or He will turn away from him an equivalent amount of evil or harm." The Companions asked what if they keep requesting Allah. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, replied: "Then Allah shall give you even both." [Imam Ahmad].

2. The second means that leads us to receive Allah's forgiveness is *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness), even if someone has committed many sins. What is meant by seeking forgiveness is the *istighfar* that is linked to repentance which in turn also necessitates that the Muslim gives up committing sins and does not persist on doing them. *Istighfar* is a form of worship. The Muslim has to do and perform a lot of *istighfar* every day. Allah commanded us to make *istighfar* and praised those who perform *istighfar*. Allah says in Surah al-Zumar Ayah 53:

> O My servants, who have transgressed against themselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

There are many forms of *istighfar*. There is what the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, taught his Companions to say. It is also narrated that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to seek forgiveness from Allah more than seventy times a day, and in some narration more than one hundred times a day. Consequently, Muslims are recommended and required to do *istighfar* and seek the forgiveness of Allah at least one hundred times a day. The best statement of forgiveness is the statement that is narrated by the Prophet,

sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam, when he said: "O Allah: You are my Lord. There is no God but You. You created me and I am Your servant. I am following Your covenant and promise to the best of my ability. I seek refuge in You from the evils that I have done. I profess to You Your bounties upon me and I confess my sins. Forgive me for no one forgives sins except You." The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, says: "Whoever says this statement with certainty concerning it in the daytime and dies that day before the evening, he is one of the inhabitants of Paradise; and whoever says this statement with certainty concerning it during the night and dies that night before the morning, he is one of the inhabitants of Paradise." [Al-Bukhari]

Istighfar is recommended to be practiced by true and close servants of Allah and every Muslim. They are recommended to do so in the morning, preferably after the *Fajr* prayers, and in the evening until the sunset. This should be part of the supplications that they perform day and night. Allah says in Surah al-Nisa' Ayah 110:

> And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allah's Forgiveness, he will find Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

3. The third cause or means of seeking Allah's forgiveness is *Tawhid*. *Tawhid* means that a Muslim should worship Allah alone. Allah should be worshiped without associating or ascribing any partners with Him. Allah says in Surah al-Nisa' Ayah 116:

> Verily! Allah forgives not the setting up partners (in worship) with Him, but He forgives whom He wills sins other than that, and whoever sets up partners in worship with Allah has indeed strayed far away.

Tawhid, as the scholars say, melts away sins. Through fulfilling all the obligations of *Tawhid*, Muslims are going to be forgiven and rewarded. In a previous *hadith* in this collection of Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadith, we discussed the importance of the realisation of of the idea of *Tawhid* where Muslims have to love, fear, and glorify Allah the most. By *Tawhid*, Muslims seek refuge only in Allah and ask support and help from only Him. All of these great actions of *Tawhid*, which means that the heart becomes fully devoted to Allah, enable the Muslims to be true believers and *Muwahideen*. Only then Muslims will become enlightened, inspired, and their *iman* or faith will be strengthened and their sins will be forgiven. By realising the idea of *Tawhid*, the Muslim also minimises the chances of committing sins because his heart is fully devoted to Allah.

Tawhid is the greatest essence of the Message of every Prophet. All the Prophets, peace be upon them, were sent with the Message of *Tawhid* - that is Allah is the only One Who deserves to be worshipped and to be totally obeyed. Unfortunately, many Muslims today do not observe the realisation of *Tawhid*. Many Muslims violate *Tawhid*, for example, there are some groups of Muslims that supplicate and slaughter for dead Muslims. By doing these acts of *shirk*

(associating someone with Allah), they are violating the most important messages of Islam and that is the realisation of *Tawhid*.

If we want to be good Muslims to Allah, we should follow the way that *awliya'* Allah (closer servants of Allah) followed. We should follow their ways and practices as mentioned in **Hadith 38.** They had good morals, they loved Allah, feared Him, had total belief or faith in Allah and his Messengers, and they were obedient to Allah and followed His instructions - this included performing good deeds. This obedience was based on fear of Allah, repenting to Allah and submission to His will. Moreover, they were characterised with devotion, honesty, and sincerity.

If we want to do it in the right way we should adhere to what is mentioned above and act as the *awliya'* Allah acted when they were alive. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that this was what led the people of Noah to *shirk* when they started glorifying and giving their righteous dead people a higher status than they deserved. This led them to worshipping these dead people later on to the extent that some of them made idols of these famous figures. This eventually led to their destruction by Allah.

Because of misconceptions or the misunderstanding of the essence of the Message of *Tawhid,* many Muslims today carry out bad or prohibited acts. Some of them may be excused because of one reason or another, but these are terrible acts that displease Allah and lead to *shirk*. This is very risky because many Muslims who fall into such categories must rethink about what they do. They should repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness because He is the One who we must seek forgiveness from. He is the one who we should supplicate to and He is the one who we should obey and count on.

The realisation of *Tawhid* is very important for all Muslims. This is the last portion of the *hadith*. Moreover, it is the last *hadith* in Imam Nawawi's collection. This is very significant for us as Muslims since this last portion summarises the most important thing in Islam and that is *Tawhid*. It is a message from Allah to all Muslims to make sure that their *Tawhid* is sincere and pure. It is important to realise that they should not ascribe any partners with Allah. By doing so, they are assured that they will receive the forgiveness of Allah even if they have committed other sins.

To realise *Tawhid* Muslims should fulfill all obligations towards Allah by fully submitting to His will, worshiping Him, obeying Him and following His guidance and revelation and to avoid the following:

- Avoiding all forms of *shirk*, whether sayings or actions apparent or hidden.
- They should also avoid disobedience or committing sins because sins weaken *Tawhid*.
- Avoiding *riya'* (doing things for self-interest and to please others and not for the sake of Allah).

- Muslims should also avoid *bid'ah* or heresy because this will lead to the weakening of *Tawhid*.
- Avoiding all forms of hypocrisy specially in repeated actions which are considered as traits of the Munafiqun such as: failing to keep a promise, failing to be entrusted, lying, transgression in quarrels and disputes. In general, Muslims should avoid all illegal acts that will lead to dishonesty, insincerity, and transgression.

Conclusion

This *hadith* mentions three ways which lead to Allah's forgiveness. It should be noted that these are not the only ways. Muslim scholars mention other means and ways of receiving forgiveness, as we have seen in previous *hadiths*, such as running into hardships, being put on trial, sickness, patience, the torture in the grave, avoiding the major sins, the horrible situations on the Day of Judgement, following the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to perform the pillars of Islam, fasting specific days such as the day of Ashura' and the day of Arafah, and the intercession *(shafa'ah)* of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, and the intercession of the believers (which I s conditional to Allah's permission and He being pleased with the person).

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glossary

Adab Manners / ethics.

Adhan The call for prayers.

Adil Just.

Ahkam Rulings.

Ahlul Fatrah The people who have not received the Message of Islam (i.e. guidance) at all; or the Message has not reached them in the clearest form, i.e. it is incomplete or distorted. These people will be excused and not be punished.

Ahlul Kitab The people of the revealed Books.

Akhirah The Day of Judgement.

Akhlaq Ethics.

Al-Amr bil-Ma'ruf wan-Nahiu 'anil-Munkar Enjoining what is good and discouraging what is evil.

Al-Khulafa al – Rashidun The Rightly-Guided Caliphs.

Al-Lauhulmahfudz The Preserved Tablet.

Amanah Religious obligations.

Aql Intellect.

At-Tayyib Literally, it means 'something good'. Ibn Rajab interprets the word as *"at-tahir"*, or pure. *"At-Tayyib"* is used in the Qur'an and Sunnah to describe actions, good deeds, people, things, speech, etc. This term is used as adjectives.

Awam General public.

Awliya' Closer servants (of Allah).

Ayah A verse from the Qur'an. (plural: *ayat*)

Barakah Blessings.

Basirah Insight.

Bid'ah Heresy.

Burhan Proof.

Da'wah Preaching or disseminating the Message of Islam.

Deen Religion / way of life.

Dhikr (or zikr) Remembrance of Allah.

Dua' Supplication.

Dunia This worldly life.

Eyla' Disassociating with one's wife.

Fa'izun The most successful people.

Fara'ed Inheritance.

Fard-a'yn An individual obligation.

Fard-kifayah Community-wide collective obligations.

Faqih Jurist.

Fiqh Jurisprudence.

Fitan Trials.

Fitrah Natural disposition / innate

Ghaib What is beyond the reach of human perception.

Ghibah Backbiting.

Ghibtah To have the desire to achieve the good qualities that others have.

Hadith The sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Hajat alwadaa' The farewell sermon of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Hajj Pilgrimage to the House (Kaabah) in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Halal Lawful.

Haram Prohibited.

Hasad Envy.

Hawa Self-desire.

Haya' Modesty, shame, shyness or bashfulness. The word *"haya'"* is derived from the word *"al-hayah"*, which means 'life', as if the person who has no *haya'* (modesty) is like a dead person.

Hidayah Guidance.

Hikmah Wisdom.

Hilm Forbearance.

Ibadah Forms of worship / good deeds.

'Iffah Chastity.

Ihsan A comprehensive concept which denotes doing things completely, nicely and in a tasteful manner.

Ikhlas Sincerity.

Ikrah Duress.

'Ilm Knowledge.

Iman Faith.

Insha Allah "If Allah Wills".

Iqamatus salah Implies:

- Doing the *wudu'* in the proper way
- To perform the *salah* in its time
- To perform the *salah* in congregation *(jama'ah)* - where the reward is 27 times than praying alone
- To fulfill the six conditions of *salah*
- To observe the proper manners *(adab)* of doing it such as submission and humility
- To follow preferable actions *(sunnan)* in our *salah*.

Iradah Willingness.

Istighfar Seeking Allah's forgiveness.

Istiqamah Literally means: to go straight into the right direction, acting rightly, allowing no deviation. It is derived from the stem *"Qiyyam"*, which implies the continuity of doing something, following up with it and making sure that it is done in the right way and there is neither deviation nor swerving.

Jama'ah Congregation.

Jannah Paradise.

Jawareh Limbs.

Jihad Striving for the sake of Allah. This includes *da'wah*, disseminating knowledge and educating others, maximizing the good and minimizing the evil, reconciling clashes and conflicts between Muslims, striving for the betterment of community.

Jizziya Compensation.

Kafir Disbeliever.

Kaffarah Expiation of sins.

Karam Generosity.

Khayr Goodness.

Khilafah Early Islamic leadership (Caliph).

Kufr Disbelief.

Madhab A school of jurisprudence or a school of thought.

Makruhat Non-preferable actions.

Mandub Preferable acts/ good actions that are not compulsory but are encouraged.

Ma'siat Committing sins.

Masjid Mosque.

Muamalat Dealings.

Mua'minun Believers.

Mubah Permissible actions.

Muhadithun Scholars of Hadith.

Muharamat Prohibitions .

Muhasabah Self accountability.

Mujahadah To make continuous efforts to do good deeds.

Mukallaf Responsible.

Muraqabah Self reckoning.

Musharatah Commitment.

Mutab'ah By following the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Najash The act of trading where a person offers a high price for a certain item not for the sake of buying it but for the sake of raising the price of the item so that in the end it is sold for more than its actual price/worth.

Naru Jahanam Hellfire.

Nasihah "Truly seeking the best, in terms of intention and action, for the one whom a person is making *nasihah* to".

Nawafil al-salawat The preferable prayers that the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, used to perform every day.

Nazr Vow .

Nifaq Hypocrisy.

Niyyah Intention.

Nutfah The drop of a fluid.

Qadar Fate.

Qudrah Power.

Qudwah To set a good example.

Ramadhan The month of fasting (the 9th month of the Islamic calendar).

Riba' Interest.

Rifq Gentleness.

Riya' Performing an *ibadah* with the intention of showing off to others; or doing things for self-interest and to please others and not for the sake of Allah.

Rizq Provision.

Ruh Spirit.

Sabab al-wurud Reasons and background of a *hadith*.

Sabr Patience.

Sadaqah Preferable / encouraged charity.

Sahabi A companion of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*.

Sahabah The Prophet's, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Salaf The early scholars.

Salah Prayers.

Salameh Small bone/joint.

Sanad Chain of narrators of a saying of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam.*

Shafa'ah Intercession.

Shahadah The declaration of the Oneness of Allah;
Shahadah of the *ummah* : being witnesses of the Truth.

Shahawat Desires.

Shaitan Satan.

Shari'ah Islamic Law.

Shirk Associating others with Allah.

Sunnah (sunnan) Practice, usages, utterances, actions and tacit approvals of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam.*

Surah A chapter from the Qur'an.

Tadarruj Being gradual.

Tahajjud Praying optional preferable prayers at night.

Taqiyah To say or do something which you do not believe in and are not satisfied with.

Taqwa Piety or righteousness or fearing Allah - one of the most important and comprehensive Islamic concepts. The term is derived from its root *"waqayya"* which means 'to protect'. *Taqwa* therefore means to protect one own self from the severe punishment of Allah by following His guidance.

Taubah Repentance.

Tawaadu' Humility.

Tawakul Relying on Allah alone.

Tawfiqul Allah Guidance and support from Allah.

Tawhid To submit to the will of Allah and to worship only Allah.

Tayammum Ablution without using water.

Tazkiyah & tarbiyah Spiritual training and education.

'Ubudiyyah Worshipping Allah.

Ulama' Scholars.

Ummah The nation or collective body of Muslims.

Wajibat Religious obligations.

Wala' A comprehensive concept that encompasses four sub-concepts: love, care, help and protection.

Wali A closer servant to Allah.

Wasiyyah Will.

Waswasah Insinuation / whispering of Satan.

Wudu' Ablution.

Zakat Compulsory charity.

Zina' Committing adultery.

Zuhd Asceticism.

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