

Forty Gems of Beauty



Hadhrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad Sahib M.A.^{ra}

Cover Second Edition

FORTY GEMS OF BEAUTY

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Translated into English by
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“Forty Gems of Beauty” is a collection of forty sayings of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) with a commentary on each saying by the author.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ
فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Verily,
you have in the Prophet of Allah
an excellent model.

33 [Al-Aḥzāb]:22

The Holy Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings of Allāh be on him, said:

مَنْ حَفِظَ عَلَيَّ أُمَّتِي
أَرْبَعِينَ حَدِيثًا فِي أَمْرِ دِينِهَا
بَعَثَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَاقِيهَا
وَأَكُنْتُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
شَافِعًا وَشَهِيدًا

Whoso, with a view to the welfare and reformation of my people, committed to memory at least forty of my Aḥādīth, Allāh, the Excellent, will raise him up on the Day of Resurrection as a jurist and religious Divine, and I will be his intercessor with Allāh and a witness to his faith. (Baihaqī)

Note to the First American Edition

It has been apparent for some time that this well-read book needed to be reprinted. Majlis Ansārullāh, USA has been blessed with this opportunity to print the first American Edition. The intent was not to change or edit in any way the content of the original, except in a very few instances where it proved beneficial from purely a linguistic point of view. The most obvious changes are in adoption of transliteration standards of the Royal Asiatic Society and also of American English spelling. References to the quotations from the Holy Qurān have been added in the format: [Chapter Number [Chapter Name]: Verse Number], e.g. [2[Al-Baqarah]:280]

Vowel marks (A‘rab) have been added to the Arabic text that is present in the explanations for easy reading. A glossary, an index, and a brief note about the author are also added at the end of this version.

I request prayers for all those whose names appear in the acknowledgement section. In particular, I wish to thank and request special prayers for Syed Sājid Aḥmad who worked diligently on this version of the book in spite of health problems.

We hope that this version of the book proves useful for all readers. We pray to Almighty Allāh to accept our humble effort, Āmīn.

Wajeeh Bājwa
Ṣadr
Majlis Anṣārullāh, USA

October 2007

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Contents

Author's Preface to the First Edition	3
Note to the Second Edition	6
Introduction	7
1. Six Articles of Faith	19
2. Five Pillars of Islām	22
3. Five Distinctions Granted to the Holy Prophet	28
4. The Holy Prophet is the Last Law-Giver	33
5. Actions are Rewarded According to the Motives Behind Them	38
6. Allāh Sees Hearts.....	41
7. Difference Between an Active and an Inactive Muslim.....	45
8. Try to Remove Evil	50
9. Like for Your Brother What You Like for Yourself	55
10. Help Your Brother, Be He the Oppressor or the Oppressed.....	58
11. The High Concept of Obedience in Islām	62
12. A Word of Truth to the Wrongdoing Ruler is the Best Form of Jihād	65
13. Show Compassion to Young Ones and Recognize the Rights of Your Elders	69
14. Associating Partners with God, Disobedience to Parents and Lying are the Greatest of Sins.....	72
15. Respect Your Children and Give Them the Best Education.....	78
16. Choose Your Wife for Her Religious Piety	81
17. The Best of Men is One Who is Best in Treating His Wife.....	86
18. A Pious Lady is One Who does Her Duty to Her Husband	90

19. One Who Brings Up an Orphan will Share His Abode in Paradise with the Holy Prophet.....	93
20. Good Treatment of Neighbors.....	96
21. Do not Desire War but if it Comes Fight Determinedly.....	99
22. Violate not Your Contract with the Enemy and Kill neither Child nor Woman.....	102
23. Seven Destructive Sins— Homicide Without Good Cause, Usury, Slander, etc.....	105
24. Intoxicants are Unlawful Even in Small Quantities	114
25. A Cheat cannot be Considered a True Muslim.....	118
26. Do not Imitate other Nations	121
27. If the Heart is Good All the other Limbs Get Well...	124
28. Avoid that What Rankles in Your Mind	127
29. Inferiority Complex is a Highly Fatal Feeling	130
30. True Repentance Washes Off Sin.....	133
31. A Believer is Never Bitten Twice in the Same Hole	137
32. No Deed is Better than Good Conduct.....	140
33. Respect the Respectable Chiefs of Other People.....	145
34. Pay Wages to the Worker Before His Sweat is Dry..	148
35. The Worst Feast is the One to Which only the Wealthy have been Invited.....	151
36. The Upper Hand is Better than the Lower Hand.....	154
37. Leave Behind Your Heirs in a Comfortable Condition.....	158
38. Every Person is a Ruler and will be Answerable in Respect of his Wards.....	162
39. Seeking Knowledge is a Duty of Every Muslim Man and Muslim Woman	165
40. Every Truth is the Lost Property of a Muslim.....	169
 The Concluding Prayer	 173
Glossary	175
Index	181

In the name of Allāh,
the Gracious, the Compassionate.
We praise Him and invoke His Blessings
on His Noble Prophet.

Author's Preface to the First Edition

I do not know the reason why but it is true that since my childhood I have had a sort of natural attachment to the science of Ḥadīth (Sayings of the Holy Prophet) and whenever I read a Ḥadīth, I feel, as if I were transported to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace of God be on him and His blessings), and directly being favored with his holy speech. My imagination takes me 1400 years back, giving me the pleasing taste of spiritual association and companionship with the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh), in the Holy Masjid of Exalted Mecca and in the Prophet's Mosque in Sacred Medina and in the lanes of the two exalted cities and in the desert paths of Arabia. And then, for a while, I am lost to the world, breathing in atmosphere where our most loved Master spent 23 long years of his God-gifted prophethood. But, probably, the Ḥadīth which impressed my heart and mind most, both in point of depth as well as extent, relates to an observation of

the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh). It has no bearing on jurisprudence nor does it partake of scholastic theology. But to my mind it is the very life of Islām and of spiritual experience. A report says that once a poor Muslim paid his respects to the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh). His forehead bore no imprint of worship or penance, but his heart glowed with the spark of the Prophet's love which had lit up a holy lamp in his bosom. In his extreme desire for a close personal and permanent association with the Prophet, he asked of him, a little haltingly,

“O Prophet of Allāh! When will be the Day of Resurrection?”

The Holy Prophet replied,

“You ask of the Day of Resurrection; have you made any preparations for it?”

With trembling lips and palpitating heart, he submitted,

“My Lord, I have not made any special preparations in respect of Prayer and fasting but I have in my heart true love of Allāh and of his Prophet.”

With an affectionate glance at him, the Prophet told him not to worry over much and rest assured that the Loving God would not keep anyone apart from the object of his love.

I read this Ḥadīth during the days of my childhood. But these blessed words of my master have ever since been before my eyes, constant like the pole star and I always felt as if, I had, in person, submitted this query to the Prophet of Allāh and that he had been pleased to favor me with the

above answer. I have never forgotten since, that Prayers and fasting and pilgrimage and Zakāt (almsgiving), all have their proper place as obligatory duties but the inner light of heart and the animation of spiritual life cannot be attained without true love of God and of His Prophet. If one is granted this boon, then the formal practice, full of the breath of life, follows in his wake. But if one is not blessed with this favor, then his soulless practice is no better than a dead carcass that the formalists carry about their bosoms.

God knows well that, in writing this booklet, I have been prompted solely by the love I bear to the Holy Prophet: so that if God so wills a spark of his love may ignite the hearts of its readers—the spark that is the soul of every virtuous act and life of every moral excellence; and that they may listen to the observations of their most loved Master with sincere devoutness and heart-felt devotion and make them their life-amulets and that, it may also be, for me, a means of Allāh's forgiveness and protection and of the Prophet's intercession Amen! O Lord of Mercy, Most Compassionate of all the Merciful.

Mirza Bashir Aḥmad of Qadian,

Rattan Bagh, Lahore,

13-11-1950.

In the name of Allāh, the Gracious, the Merciful.

We praise Him and invoke His blessings
on His noble Prophet.

Note to the Second Edition

Offering to friends the Second Edition of the ‘Forty Gems of Beauty’ I have only to remark that besides slight amendments and some few additions to the earlier edition, captions have been given to the Traditions, which if it pleaseth God should make the book more useful.

With these few words and with the (Qur’ānic) prayer, ‘In the name of Allāh be its course and its mooring,’ [11[Hūd]:42] I launch this boat, which is but a paper-boat, in the vast ocean of learning. Piloting of the boat to the shore and making it profitable to mankind is entirely the work of God. He is the only Helper Whose help is sought in every circumstance and in Him do I repose my trust and towards Him do I incline.

Mirza Bashir Aḥmad of Qadian

Rabwah,

October 1, 1959.

Forty Gems of Beauty

Introduction

Definition of Ḥadīth

Ḥadīth (plural Aḥādīth) is an Arabic word, its root-meaning is ‘a statement which may either be an entirely novel one or may have been put in a novel way.’ Since the speech of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) is pregnant with novel and priceless truths, it has been terminologically described as Ḥadīth. Ḥadīth thus stands for the holy word that our Master the Noble Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) actually uttered or which relates some incident of his holy life, in terms of ocular evidence, and was committed to writing after the lapse of some time through his companions and the Muslim narrators of a later date.

Arabs were gifted with an extraordinarily excellent memory, as is acknowledged even by the Christian historians. Whatever they would hear or see, they could remember distinctly and with the utmost sense of responsibility and since Ḥadīth is a holy and religious

discipline and an important branch of learning, greatest care was especially exercised in dealing with it with a scrupulous regard for truth and veracity. The Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) were thus transmitted to the succeeding generations with more than usual caution. There is no doubt that some narrators were not so reliable in respect of memory or intelligence, or, for that matter, even in point of integrity, that their reports may not be relied on fully. But the early scholars of Aḥādīth, who collected the whole body of the sayings and Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet, have laid down such inviolable canons and criteria as to make a discrimination of the stable from the unstable Ḥadīth an easy task, through proper scrutiny.

The Method of Narration

The method of narrating Aḥādīth consisted, on the part of a companion, who had personally heard the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) make a statement or seen him do a particular thing, in communicating it, for the purpose of disseminating knowledge, to such others as had not so heard or seen the Holy Prophet or had not seen the blessed period of the Holy Prophet (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace). The statement, narrating the Ḥadīth, would ordinarily run like this: “I heard it from so and so that he heard from such and such companion of the Holy Prophet (peace on him and the blessings of Allāh) that he heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say on such and such occasion or saw him do such and such a thing.” They would thus convey the report to the other with a view to refreshing faith or spreading knowledge. Thus it was

that the Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) were preserved for the succeeding generations, through a regularly linked and unbroken chain of narrators.

Categories of Narrators

Narrators of Ḥadīth are divided into several categories. The highest of them is the Muslim narrator who heard or saw personally the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say or do a particular thing. He is called ‘companion.’ To the second category belongs the narrator who heard from a companion and transmitted it further. He is called Tābi‘ī and the one in the lower category is called Tab‘a Tābi‘ī. Thence forward runs the whole chain of ordinary narrators. Similarly the narrators have been classified according to their respective memory, intelligence and integrity.

Standard Works of Ḥadīth

The Aḥādīth were collected and compiled in book form, roughly speaking, from the middle of the second century of the Hijra, to the end of the third century. There is a large number of books on Ḥadīth, but six of them are considered to be of great reliability and treated as standard works. They are, therefore, known as Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah, i.e., six authentic books of Ḥadīth. Their names are as under:

1. ṢAḤĪḤ BUKHĀRĪ: Compiled by Imām Muḥammad bin Ismā‘īl Al-Bukhārī (A.H. 194 to A.H. 256). This work of Imām Bukhārī is authentic book on Ḥadīth and Imām

Bukhārī is regarded as the most outstanding figure among the compiler-scholars of Aḥādīth. The Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī has therefore been termed as the most genuinely correct book after the Qur’ān, the Book of Allāh.

2. ṢAḤĪḤ MUSLIM: Compiled by Imām Muslim bin Al-Ḥajjāj An-Nīshāpūrī (A.H. 204 to A.H. 261) His work is considered to be the second best among the six standard books of Aḥādīth and is regarded an excellent and reliable collection. Most of the scholars of Ḥadīth have named the Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and the Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim as the two correct works (Ṣaḥīḥain).

3. JĀMI‘ TIRMIDHĪ: Compiled by Imām Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad bin ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī (A.H. 209 to A.H. 279) He was a disciple of Imām Bukhārī. His collection of Aḥādīth has been held in high estimation.

4. SUNAN ABŪ DĀWŪD: Compiled by Imām Abū Dāwūd Sulaimān bin al-Ash‘ath as-Sijistānī (A.H. 202 to A.H. 275) In the collection and collation of legalistic material he holds a high place. But scholars are divided on the question of assigning priority of merit of Jāmi‘ Tirmidhī and Sunan Abū Dāwūd.

5. SUNAN AN-NASĀ’Ī: Compiled by Imām Aḥmad bin Shu‘aib an-Nasā’ī (A.H. 215 to A.H. 306) Imām Nasā’ī is one of the leading scholars of Aḥādīth and his work is generally accorded fifth place among the six standard books (Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah).

6. SUNAN IBN MĀJAH: Compiled by Imām Muḥammad bin Yazīd bin Mājah al-Qizvainī (A.H. 209 to A.H. 273). This book is placed sixth among the standard Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah (the six correct works). It is a really good book.

All these Muḥaddithin (compiler-scholars or editors of Ḥadīth) spent the whole of their lives in search of Aḥādīth and compiled their collections out of a vast store of hundreds of thousands of Aḥādīth. The entire Muslim world owes these savants a heavy debt of gratitude. May Allāh give them the choicest reward. In addition to the above listed six books the under-mentioned two works on Ḥadīth are also very well-known.

1. MU'ATṬĀ: Compiled by Imām Mālik Ibni Anas Al-Madanī (A.H. 95 to A.H. 179) Imām Mālik, in addition to holding a leading position among the scholar-compilers of Ḥadīth, is regarded as a leading jurist and is one of the four celebrities of jurisprudence whom the vast majority of Muslims seek to follow in all questions pertaining to Fiqh, (jurisprudence). The followers of Imām Mālik are called Mālikīs. Having been born at a time nearest to the period of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) and for receiving early training in Medina, Imām Mālik holds a position of great eminence. Ḥaḍrat Shah Waliyyullāh Muḥaddith Dehlavī, Mujaddid of the 12th century Hijra regarded his work, on account of his personal predilection, superior to Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī. But there is little doubt that the Mu'atṭā is a great book indeed.

2. Musnad Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal Al-Baghdādī. (A.H. 164 to A.H. 242). Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal is also regarded as a leading scholar of Ḥadīth as well as a celebrated doctor of jurisprudence like Imām Mālik. The Muslims who follow his school of jurisprudence are called Ḥanbalīs. His collection is definitely of a high standard. Due to lack of vigilance on the part of his son, some weak Aḥādīth found their way into his great work.

The other two Imāms of Fiqh (jurisprudence) are the Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (A.H. 80 to A.H. 150) and Imām Shāfi‘ī (A.H. 105 to A.H. 204). Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, popularly known as the Imām A‘ẓam, has the largest following. He has been recognized as the leading figure among the Imāms of jurisprudence. He devoted most of his time to questions of Fiqh. (Imām Shāfi‘ī’s collection of Aḥādīth entitled Kitābul-Imām is also a work of repute.)

Categories of Ḥadīth

Scholars have divided Aḥādīth into several categories. Of these the following are well-known.

1. **ḤADĪTH QAULĪ**: This type of Ḥadīth quotes the words of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) as actually uttered by him, as for example, a companion narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) made such and such speech on a particular occasion or conversed in such and such word with a particular person or gave such and such command to so and so companion and so on and so forth.

2. **ḤADĪTH FI‘LĪ**: This Ḥadīth does not quote any word or statement of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but narrates some act of his, as, for instance, it says the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and the blessings of Allāh) did such and such thing on such and such occasion or performed such and such religious duty in such and such manner.

3. **ḤADĪTH TAQRĪRĪ**: This type of Ḥadīth relates neither a statement nor an act of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be

on him and His blessings). Instead it records what a particular person did or said in the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and that he did not forbid him to do or say it. In fact, the word taqrīr in the Arabic language does not mean speech. Instead it means to keep up or uphold something. Ḥadīth Taqrīrī would therefore stand for a Ḥadīth which confirms, as correct a statement, or, an act of a companion made or done in the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and to which he did not object.

4. ḤADĪTH QUDSĪ: In this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) ascribes a word or act to God the Excellent, saying that God had commanded him thus. Such a statement is other than the Qur’ānic revelation.

5. ḤADĪTH MARFŪ’: This Ḥadīth traces a statement direct to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) without any break in the chain of reporters.

6. ḤADĪTH MAUQŪF: The Ḥadīth cannot be traced to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but stops short and does not proceed beyond a particular reporter. But the nature of the Ḥadīth and the tenor and tone of the testimony should warrant the conclusion that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) must have been heard making the statement.

7. ḤADĪTH MUTTAṢIL: The reporters of this Ḥadīth are known and mentioned and are known and placed in a serial order and none of them is found missing or left unidentified.

8. ḤADĪTH MUNQATĪ': All narrators of this Ḥadīth are reliable in point of

(a) memory,

(b) intelligence and

(c) integrity.

A little reflection will show that these three criteria suffice to test the reliability of a narrator.

10. ḤADĪTH ḌA'ĪF: The Ḥadīth with an unreliable narrator, either in respect of memory or intelligence or integrity, so much so that even if one of the narrators is unreliable, in spite of the rest of them being reliable, the Ḥadīth will be treated as weak (Ḍa'īf).

11. ḤADĪTH MAUḌU': A Ḥadīth which is proved to have been invented by a lying narrator.

12. ATHAR. (plural āthār): It is nothing more than a report consisting of a statement made by a companion. It does not ascribe any statement to the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and the blessings of Allāh). It is clear that athar has no place in the classification of Ḥadīth but is something apart from it. As the books of Ḥadīth happen generally to embody athar as well, the common people sometime fail to make any distinction between the two.

Difference between Ḥadīth and Sunnah

An important point which should be borne in mind is that, though the general mass of people make no distinction between Ḥadīth and Sunnah, the two are, in fact, quite distinct. Ḥadīth consists of the actual words or details of the

deeds of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) as reported down the line of successive narrators. But these Aḥādīth or reports were committed to memory, jealously safeguarded and treasured in the hearts of the reporters and were communicated verbally at first. They were later collected and edited with great care in the form of books at different times, varying from hundred to two hundred and fifty years after Hijra. As against this, the Sunnah is not the name of a recorded report but stands for the actual practice of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in respect of a religious matter and which his companions, adopted in his own lifetime and under his own supervision. Each generation held fast to this actual form in which the Holy Prophet practiced religion, and in its turn was passed on to the succeeding generations. As, for example, when the Qur'ānic command about Prayers was revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), it did not contain, in an explicit manner, full details such as the number of times a Muslim must pray during the course of the day and night, respective timings of different Prayers, the number of raka'āt in each, and the manner in which each rak'ah was to be performed, etc. In this regard he set to his companions a practical example of compliance with these commands, guided as he was by the implicit inspiration from God and which again was a divine gift; and established the companions firm in keeping with this example. And the companions in their turn, carried this practical form to the Tābi'īn and the Tābi'īn passed it on, through their own example, to the Tab'a Tābi'īn.

Thus was established a mode of practiced religion that was immutable in form and that was passed on from generation to generation.

The Sunnah is evidently, therefore, distinct and something apart from Ḥadīth and carries much greater weight and stability than Ḥadīth. We, therefore, hold that the Islāmic Sharī‘at is based originally on the Holy Qur’ān and the Sunnah. For, the Qur’ān is the word of God and the Sunnah is the practical explanation of this word, which the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) established through his personal example and then, through the personal example of the companions, it reached the succeeding generation, and from it to the next generation and thus was one torch lighted from the other torch. But, as against this, the Ḥadīth is, in fact, a collection of verbal reports (so much so that even the Fi‘lī and Taqrīrī Aḥādīth have come down to us through verbal reports), and has the status of a supporting witness. No doubt, it is a forceful supporting witness which cannot be ignored. In any case, it is not as basic as the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. Nevertheless, there is no gainsaying the fact that the Ḥadīth is a most precious treasure-house of historical, intellectual and spiritual wealth. So long as a Ḥadīth is not found contrary to a Qur’ānic verse or a more reliable Ḥadīth, it is the duty of every Muslim to accept it, in obedience to the Qur’ānic command, “Obey Allāh and the Prophet” and make it for life a source of divine guidance. It is a matter of regret, however, that some of the so-called Muslims of our day seem bent on minimizing the importance of this priceless treasure of wisdom.

The Collection of Forty Aḥādīth

With the above introductory note, this humble servant seeks beatitude in presenting the following forty select Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). These Aḥādīth have been culled from popular and standard works of Ḥadīth. A simple translation of each Ḥadīth, with a brief explanatory note, has also been given. I hope that if Muslim men and Muslim women and children commit these Aḥādīth to memory and grasp in their minds, their sense and profit by acting in accord with their spirit, they will find it a source of bliss, mercy and forgiveness, if it so pleaseth Allāh, the Excellent. The Aḥādīth have been purposely selected to the number of forty, firstly because number forty according to the Holy Qur’ān signifies perfection and secondly because, in a Ḥadīth the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) says,

“Whoso, with a view to the welfare and reformation of my people, committed to memory at least forty of my Aḥādīth, Allāh, the Excellent, will raise him up on the Day of Resurrection as a jurist and religious Divine, and I will be his intercessor with Allāh and a witness to his faith.” (Baihaqī).

After this introductory note, I set down hereunder the forty Aḥādīth that I have selected and arranged according to my choice and pray that God the Great may be pleased to make it for me and for its readers, a means of His Grace and Mercy and Blessing and Protection. Be it so, O most Merciful of all Who show mercy!

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ
 بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
 الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 1

Six Articles of Faith

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, (Allāh be pleased with him): said the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings),

“The requirements of Faith are that thou should believe in Allāh and in His Angels and in His Books and in His Prophets and in the Last Day, i.e., the Day of Requital, and that thou should also believe in Allāh’s determination of good and in His determination of evil.”

(Muslim)

Explanatory Notes

The above tradition carries a definition of faith which, as expounded in the teaching of Islām, consists of six fundamental articles of faith:

1. Belief in Allāh Who, as the Creator and Master of the world, is the central theme of all faith and religion. It should be remembered that, in Arabic, the word Allāh is not applied to any being other than the One God, and it denotes a being free from all defects and drawbacks, possessing all the best attributes, having all knowledge and all powers.

2. Belief in angels, who are an invisible but extremely important creation of God. Angels operate the working of the universe under Divine Command and supervise the God-created chain of causes. They also act as media of communication between God and His Prophets.

3. Belief in Books revealed by God through which the world comes to know of the Divine Purpose. The last and everlasting of these books is the Holy Qur'ān which has superseded all the earlier laws that were of a periodic and racial character and henceforth, there is no law, till the Last Day, except the Qur'ān.

4. Belief in the Prophets of God to whom were revealed, from time to time, inspired books and who acquainted the world with the purpose of God, by personal example. Prophets appeared among every people, but of Divine messengers, the last law-giving prophet, the Master Prophet, is the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), who was raised in Arabia 1400 years back, and is

the pride of the progeny of Adam, and topmost of the prophets.

5. Belief in the Last Day, which must inevitably follow death, when every individual will be requited for the good or bad deeds he performed in this life.

6. Belief in the orderly existence of good and evil which is operating in the world, in the form of a Divine law. It means, in other words, believing that the law of nature and the law of religion (Shari‘at) are both divinely-devised laws and God alone is the Founder and Guardian of this material and spiritual universe. He it is Who has laid down the principle for everything, whether of a physical or a spiritual nature, that certain actions lead to good results while certain other actions yield evil consequences as a matter of course. And above all, God holds supreme power over the laws He has created. Under certain circumstances, therefore, He brings about phenomenal changes in these laws, for the sake of His prophets and saints. Such changes, however, always form exceptions to these laws and never run counter to His known ways or promises or attributes. The phenomenon of miracles belongs to the category of these exceptional Laws.

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَيْنِي الْأِسْلَامُ عَلَى خَمْسٍ شَهَادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَإِقَامُ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءُ الزَّكَاةِ وَحُجُّ الْبَيْتِ وَصَوْمُ رَمَضَانَ
(بخارى)

Hadīth No. 2

Five Pillars of Islām

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar, (Allāh be pleased with him): Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings):

“Islām is based on five (pillars):

- (1) Testimony, by heart and tongue, that there is none worthy of worship but Allāh and that Muhammad is His Messenger;
- (2) Observing Prayer;
- (3) Paying the Zakāt;

(4) Performing the pilgrimage to the House
of Allāh and

(5) Fasting in the month of Ramaḍān.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Notes

It must be remembered that while the preceding Ḥadīth defined faith (Īmān), this Ḥadīth gives a definition of Islām, and the difference between the two is that whereas Īmān stands for faith, Islām connotes practice and it will be realized that together the two make religion a complete whole. Belief in God and the Prophet is common to the above two Aḥādīth. In the preceding Ḥadīth belief in Allāh and in the Prophet has been incorporated to emphasize faith by heart and its attestation by tongue. In the present Ḥadīth this has been included as a basis of action. In any case according to this Ḥadīth, in the definition of Islām, belief in the unity of Allāh, the Excellent, and in the Prophethood of the Holy Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), has been accorded the first place so that the belief of every Muslim is based on the holy article that God is One and Muḥammad, the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), is His last law-bearing Messenger. This is followed by four practical acts of worship which are:

1. The first act of worship is Prayer; i.e., Ṣalāt which in Arabic means “glorification and praise.” It has been obligated in the form of five Prayers during the course of the day and is offered after the prescribed Wuḍū (ablution) in a prescribed manner. Of these five Prayers, one is the morning

Prayer which is offered after the first twilight of dawn and before daybreak. The second Prayer is the Zuhr or midday prayer which is offered after the decline of the sun at noon. The third Prayer is the ‘Asr Prayer which is offered when the sun has far advanced in its decline. The fourth is the Maghrib or evening Prayer which is offered immediately after sundown. And the fifth Prayer is the ‘Ishā Prayer which is offered after the twilight has faded away. Thus, not only different periods of the day, but also the two ends of the night are dedicated to the glorification and worship of God and to prayers addressed to Him.

The object of prayer is to establish personal communion with God, keep His remembrance ever-fresh in the heart and cleanse one’s inner self of all evil and evil inclinations and seek His aid in all difficulties. According to another saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), perfect Prayer is one during which the worshipper has the immediate and sure feeling that he is seeing God or, at least, that God is seeing him.

Timing of Prayers too is a subtle hint about the various periods of human life. It is not without purpose, therefore, that the intervals between Prayers are shortened during the latter part of the day when the darkness of night is drawing near. The idea is to remind us that, with increase in age, the pace of preparation for the next world should be accelerated.

Ṣalāt is the kind of worship which in reality is the very soul of spiritual life, and therefore, it has been termed the mi’rāj (the acme of spiritual exaltation) of the faithful. The extent of the Holy Prophet’s attachment to and enjoyment of

Prayer is shown by the following words of his. He would often say:

“The coolness (delight) of my eyes lies in Prayer.”

2. The second item of practical worship, enjoined by Islām, is Zakāt which means “purification of property and increase of goods.” The principal object of Zakāt tax is that, on the one hand, the share of the poor should be deducted from the wealth of the rich and on the other, the poor and supportless people should be provided with means of assistance to help raise the position of the group and improve the lot of the individuals belonging to it. The Zakāt is levied on property which is surplus to a minimum basic slab of property and it is called Niṣāb in legal terminology. This is assessed on the value of gold and silver, gold and silver ornaments, gold and silver coins including paper currency at the rate of 2½ %. It must however, be remembered that there is no separate Niṣāb for gold and its Niṣāb is determined on the basis of the current value of the Niṣāb for silver, which will vary with the variation in the relative value of the two metals. Commercial goods are also assessed at the rate of 2½ %. As far as agricultural land and fruit gardens are concerned, it is 10 % of the crop in case of bārānī¹ and 20 % in case of lands irrigated by artificial means. Leaving aside details, it is assessed at the rate of one goat per 40 to 120 goat or sheep, one calf per every 30 cows and buffaloes, one goat for every five camels, and one young she-camel for every 25 camels. On mines, hidden treasures and sealed deposits, it is charged at the flat rate of 20 %. The

¹ Land dependent upon rain water.

whole proceeds of the Zakāt tax are to be expended in helping the poor and the destitute, the insolvent, the wayfarers, and those who are not free and in softening hearts and in supporting those who are actively engaged in promoting the cause of the Faith and in remunerating the administrative staff of the Zakāt organization. Zakāt thus plays a great part in regulating national wealth.

3. The third practical form of worship is Ḥajj. Ḥajj means journeying to a Holy Place, and in Islāmic terminology, it means visiting the House of God at the Holy City of Mecca, and making a circuit of the Ṣafā and Marwah Mounts, and halting to pray at the historic site of Arafat plain, 9 miles from Mecca, and on return stopping and worshipping at Muzdalifah, and in the end offering sacrifice at Minā, three miles from Mecca. Ḥajj falls on the 8th, 9th and 10th of the lunar month of Dhul-Ḥajj. It is not merely a pilgrimage to the holiest of places associated with the sacrifice performed by Abraham and Ishmael (may God shower His blessings on them) but the holy traditions of the early sufferings and sacrifices of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) are also bound up with it. Besides, Ḥajj offers a great opportunity to Muslims of different countries and diverse races to meet one another, to know one another and to consult one another in matters of general interest. The performance of the Ḥajj (pilgrimage) is obligatory once in one's lifetime but, as is explicitly stated in another Ḥadīth concerning the subject, good health, necessary funds to cover expenses of the return journey and peaceful conditions on the way are the necessary conditions precedent to the performance of Ḥajj.

4. The fourth practical form of worship consists in fasting during the month of Ramaḍān. It is obligated on every Muslim who is of age, is neither sick nor is in course of journey. The sick and the traveler must fast at another time for the same number of days. Fasting is called (Şaum) in Arabic, which means “holding one’s self in restraint.” This disciplinary form of worship is performed during the month of Ramaḍān, which according to [the] lunar calendar, coincides with different seasons of the year by rotation. After taking a meal before the dawn of the morning twilight till sunset one must abstain from food and drink and mating. In other words, during the fast, Muslims set a silent example of the sacrifice of their persons and progeny (through self-denial and restraint). In addition to purifying the mind and inuring one to hardships, fasting creates a sense of fellow-feeling with the poor and has been prescribed to promote the spirit of sacrifice among the Muslims.

In truth, fasting is a source of infinite blessing.

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ أُعْطِيتُ خَمْسًا لَمْ يُعْطِهَنَّ أَحَدٌ قَبْلِي
 نَصْرْتُ بِالرُّعْبِ مَسِيرَةَ شَهْرٍ وَجُعِلَتْ لِي
 الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِدًا وَطَهْرًا..... وَأُجِلَّتْ لِي الْعَنَائِمُ
 وَلَمْ تَحُلْ لِأَحَدٍ قَبْلِي وَأُعْطِيتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ وَكَانَ
 النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى تَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى
 النَّاسِ عَامَّةً (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 3

Five Distinctions Granted to the Holy Prophet

Narrated by Jābir, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said:

“I have been granted five distinctions which none of the Prophets was granted before me. Firstly, I have been reinforced with awe extending as far as a month’s journey, secondly the entire earth has been made for me a mosque and a means of purity, thirdly, the booty of war has been made lawful for me; it was never made lawful before me; fourthly, I have been granted the honor of intercession with the Lord and fifthly, while Prophets before me were commissioned to their particular people, I have been sent to the entire mankind.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

In this Ḥadīth our Chief (may my life be dedicated to his service) has detailed five distinctions granted to him exclusively which go to show his exalted station and the abounding mercy of Allāh the Excellent on him.

His first distinction is the divine gift of awe extending to as far as a month’s journey. [The] history of Islām furnishes strong supporting evidence showing how notwithstanding his apparently slight physical frame and unostentatious living, an enemy would tremble in awe before him, surely a God-given gift. Even it so happened on many occasions that the enemy planned to attack Medina and as the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) sallied forth with a small group of companions, to meet him, he (the enemy) fled on the first alarm. Again when the Holy Prophet

(peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) addressed a letter to the Roman Caesar inviting him to accept Islām and the Caesar learnt further details about him he exclaimed,

“If I could go and pay obeisance to this Messenger of Allāh, I would indeed consider it a great honor if he permitted me to wash his feet.”

The second distinction of the Holy Prophet is that the entire earth has been made a mosque for him. As a result of this, a Muslim can offer Prayers anywhere as and when the time for his Prayer comes and he does not require a special place for worship like followers of other faiths. This was necessary in order to facilitate the extensive campaign of the Muslims to carry the message of Islām all over the world. Similarly, the earth was made for him the means of purification. A minor aspect of this is the fact that in the event of non-availability of water, a Muslim can perform Tayammum in place of Wuḍū. This combination of water and earth is in keeping with the creation of Adam who was created, according to Qur’ānic idiom, out of moist earth.

His third distinction is that, as against the laws of earlier religions, which required the war booty to be burnt, the Islāmic law allowed the Holy Prophet to use the booty that fell in his hands, as lawful. The wisdom underlying this was firstly to stop this needless wastage of national wealth, and secondly to teach aggressors the lesson that if they did not desist from oppressing others, their own wealth would be taken away from them and given to the oppressed; and thirdly to provide the weak among Muslims with a source of strength in the Islāmic defensive wars.

The fourth distinction of the Prophet is the grant to him of the highest office of intercession. Shafā‘at literally means ‘mate’ or ‘like,’ and according to the idiom too it does not mean common prayer. Instead it signifies the special office held by a favorite of God by virtue of his dual role, on the one hand, of close contact with God and on the other of his near association with men. He is entitled to intercede with the Lord. The gist of this intercession would run as follows: “O God, in the name of your past favors to me and my heartfelt solicitude for the good of your creatures (or some particular individual from amongst them), I beg and pray that have mercy on your poor frail creatures and grant them your forgiveness,” urging, on the one hand, the plea of his special contact with Him and on the other the heartfelt solicitude for the welfare of His creatures (or for that matter a particular person), begging thereby of Him mercy for His frail creatures and His forgiveness. In this connection, the Holy Prophet (may peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) says, in another Ḥadīth that when, on the day of Judgment, the people will be seized with extreme panic and consternation, despairing of all others, they will ultimately turn to him, and then, he will intercede for them with God, and that, his intercession will be accepted.

The fifth distinction of the Holy Prophet is that whereas the former prophets were sent to particular peoples for particular periods of time, he was raised for the entire world, for all peoples and for all times. This is a special characteristic and a great distinction indeed. The result was that his God-granted mission extended to every people, to every country and to every age and he was declared the perfect and Perfected manifestation of God. In other words,

it meant that as God of the entire world is One, through His appointment, there was likewise one prophet for the entire mankind.

Allāh! Bless Muḥammad and grant him and his offspring peace.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَئِنِّي أَخِرُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ
 وَرَأَتْ مَسْجِدِي هَذَا أَخِرُ الْمَسَاجِدِ -
 (مسلم)

Ḥadīth No. 4

The Holy Prophet is the Last Law-Giver

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (may peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) said:

“I am the last Prophet and this mosque of mine (at Medina) is the last mosque.”

(Muslim)

Explanatory Notes

In this pleasing Ḥadīth, our Lord, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) says: He is the last

prophet and no such reformer dare come after him as would terminate his prophetic dispensation and, instead, initiate another dispensation. If one came along, he would necessarily be of his own following, his disciple, and as a servant of his Sharī'ah, within the fold of his prophethood and not beyond its pale.

In order to clarify its purport, our Master (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) added the words “And this mosque of mine is the last mosque.” It is clear that, by these words, it was not meant, nor subsequent events support the sense that there would never be built another mosque in the world. On the contrary, it meant that there would not be a mosque in opposition to his mosque and that, all mosques hence-forth, shall be constructed in line with and in imitation of his mosque, as its copies and as its reflections.

Similarly,

اِنِّىْ اٰخِرُ النَّبِيَّآءِ

(i.e., I am verily the last of prophets) means that there can be no prophet, in future, independent of allegiance to him and with a rival prophethood and with a religion other than his. On the contrary, whosoever comes along, would be his servant, his disciple, his subject, his reflection and so to say, a part of his person. And this is the deep philosophy underlying the designation of Khātaman-Nabiyyīn (Seal of the Prophets) given to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in a verse of the Qur'ān. Ponder well the point that, if the sense underlying the saying, “My this mosque is the last mosque,” remains intact in spite of tens of thousands of mosques having been built in Muslim countries, besides his mosque at Medina, how can then the

grant of prophethood to a servant, a disciple, and a subject of his from among his followers, militate against the idea of Khatm-i-Nabuwwat (finality of prophethood) or against the spirit of the Ḥadīth, “I am verily the last of Prophets”?

This Ḥadīth, therefore, definitely means that he was the last law-bearing Prophet and that no Prophet would come after him, independent of his bondage and with a Sharī‘at other than that of Islām and that his mosque (of Medina) was the last and there shall be no mosque in rivalry to it. A little reflection will show that it is not consistent with exalted status of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that he should be regarded as the terminator of the free-flowing former favors. On the contrary, his glory demands that all the diverse streams should be stopped and issue forth afresh from his vast river. And this is the wholesome explanation that the leading Divines of Islām and great reformers have been putting forward in every age. Here are some of them.

(1) The chief of mystics Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Akbar Muhiyyuddīn Ibnī ‘Arabī (A.H. 560 to A.H. 638) says:

“The prophethood that ceased with the coming of the Prophet of Allāh—peace of Allāh and His mercy be on him—is the law-bearing prophethood.” (al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah, Vol. II, p. 3)

(2) Ḥaḍrat Imām Abdul-Wahhab Shīrānī, a reputed Imām (died A.H. 976) observes:

“Prophethood as such did not cease with the advent of the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) but only the law-

bearing prophethood came to a close.” (Al-Yawāqīt wal-Jawāhir, Vol. I, p. 22)

(3) Ḥaḍrat Shaikh Aḥmad Sirhindī, Mujaddid Alf-Thānī, (died A.H. 1034), a leading and reputed reformer of Islām says:

“It is in no way repugnant to the sense of Khātaman-Nabiyyīn that the followers of the Prophet of Allāh should attain to the excellences of prophethood, by virtue of their allegiance to him, as their heritage. So be not of the doubters.” (Maktūbāt-i-Ahmadiyyah, Vol. I, letter No. 271)

(4) Ḥaḍrat Shah Waliyyullāh Muḥaddath Dehlawi, Mujaddid of the 12th century Hijrah (born A.H. 1114, died A.H. 1176), widely known for his profound learning and whose exalted rank is acknowledged on all hands, says:

“That the prophethood ended with the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) means that no prophet shall be raised after him bearing a new law.” (Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiyyah, Tafhīm 53)

(5) Ḥaḍrat Maulawī Muḥammad Qāsim Nānotvī (A.H. 1248—A.H. 1297), a learned scholar of the recent past and the founder of the Deoband University, known far and wide, in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, as a center of oriental science, says:

“The idea of the common people is that the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) is the Khātam, in the sense, that

his period is at the end of that of rest of the prophets. But, to men of understanding it is clear that there is no superiority merely in precedence or in subsequence, in terms of period of time, as a mark of praise. How can then the verse “But He is the Messenger of Allāh and the Seal of the Prophets” [33[Al-Aḥzāb]:41] be appropriate in this sense? If, by way of supposition, a prophet were to appear after the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) it will not be a breach of the Muḥammadi Khātamiyyat.” (Taḥzīrun-Nās, page 3 and p. 28)

Little doubt, therefore, that the view that prophethood has found its perfection in the august person of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) and everlasting Sharī’ah has been revealed and there is no prophet after him, but, one who partakes of his garden-fruit in his service, bearing his seal of authentication inherits the favor of his reflected prophethood and is raised to serve the religion brought by him. Would that people cared to grasp this minute point and recognize the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings).

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ
 اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّمَا
 الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَّا
 نَوَى - (بخاری)

Ḥadīth No. 5

Actions are Rewarded According to the Motives Behind Them

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) say:

“Verily deeds are (judged) by the intentions and for every one is a reward, according to his intention.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

This subtle Ḥadīth throws a basic light on the philosophy underlying human deeds. It is evident that seemingly good deeds are also of many types. Some acts are done by sheer force of habit, some in imitation of other people, and yet some for show and advertisement. But our Master, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings), says that all these deeds are barren of result, and carry no weight in the balance of the God of Islām, and that correct deeds are the ones done with a true intention and a sincere mind. Such a deed is the one that is deserving of a true reward from God. The truth of the matter is that, so long as the heart of a man and his tongue and his limbs, i.e., hands, feet and other members, are not working in harmony in the performance of a deed, such a deed has no value. A true motive in the mind, testimony by word of mouth of this purity of motive, and hands and feet bearing practical witness to this honesty of purpose, make an act deserving of acceptance. If a person lacks in truthfulness of motive, he is a hypocrite. If his tongue bears no testimony to his inner feeling, he is a coward. And if his hands and feet do not act in harmony with his declared purpose, he is a poor performer. A truthful act therefore is one that is impelled by a true motive. With honesty of purpose, a man can make his seemingly worldly acts superior virtues of a religious character. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh he on him and His blessings) says, in this connection, that if a husband puts a morsel in the mouth of his wife, because it is the will of His Maker that he provide his wife with subsistence and see to her comfort, his this act would therefore be certainly treated, in the presence of God,

as an act of piety. But it is a matter of regret that lākhs of men in this world offer prayers, because they got into the habit, from early childhood. And again, there are lākhs who observe fast because the people around them do so. And there are lākhs of men who perform the pilgrimage, so that they may be known as Ḥajjis among the people and that they may be considered pious and so that their trades may prosper. This Ḥadīth of our Lord (may my life be dedicated to his service) voids all such actions. A false act, however virtuous it may appear to be, cannot be deserving of any reward from Allāh. Undoubtedly a truthful deed is the one that has, behind it, a true and pure motive, for, the reward of deeds is measured out in terms of motives.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 6

Allāh Sees Hearts

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh):

“Allāh does not see towards your shapes and your wealth but He sees towards your hearts and your actions.”

(Muslim).

Explanatory Note

In this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) has mentioned two things which, in spite

of being gifts of God, can and [do] become, at times, causes of big trial for both men and women. Of these, one is physical beauty and comeliness which becomes, generally for women, a source of great trouble. The second is wealth and affluence which generally put men to a lot of test and temptation. Citing both these as examples, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said that while, without a doubt, they were great gifts of God, but Muslims should take note that Allāh does not judge the worth of people by His appraisal of the beauty of women or of wealth of men but that He sees towards their heads and hearts which are the source and repositories for human thoughts and feelings and then He sees towards their deeds which are the products of their thoughts and feelings.

The word qalb used in this Ḥadīth stands both for heart and mind: for, qalb literally means the central point of an organism and the heart and the mind are both, in their respective spheres, centers of the bodily organism; the mind being the center of overt feelings and the heart that of spiritual experience. By using the words qulūb (hearts) and a‘māl (deeds), the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) in this context, has pointed out that, though physical beauty and material wealth are gifts of God and one should value them, but what God takes note of is the heart (qalb) of men and their (a‘māl) actions. It is therefore the duty of every Muslim to seek to improve his mind, heart and actions, instead of taking pride in the gifts of physical beauty and property and worldly goods.

It must be borne well in mind that the Holy Prophet’s (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) admonition that God, the Excellent, watches the heart and deeds of man,

means not only that these things will weigh him, on the Day of Requitul but in this world too, real weight is given to feelings of the heart and the motives of the mind and the actions of limbs. The truth is that, once a people are granted the favor that the heads and hearts and limbs of its members start operating in the right direction, no power can hinder the courses of its progress nor deprive it of realization of the highest of values.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَأَقَامَ
 الصَّلَاةَ وَصَامَ رَمَضَانَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ
 يُدْخِلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ جَاهِدًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ جَلَسَ
 فِي الرَّوْضَةِ الَّتِي وِلْدَانُهَا قَالُوا أَقْلَانِ بُشِّرُ
 النَّاسَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ إِنْ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مِائَةٌ
 دَرَجَةٍ أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِلْمُجَاهِدِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ مَا بَيْنَ الدَّرَجَتَيْنِ كَمَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَ
 الْأَرْضِ فَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ فَاسْأَلُوهُ الْفِرْدَوْسَ
 فَإِنَّهُ أَوْسَطُ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَعْلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَفَوْقَهَا
 عَرْشُ الرَّحْمَنِ وَمِنْهَا تَنْفَجِرُ أَنْهَارُ الْجَنَّةِ -

(بخاری)

Difference Between an Active and an Inactive Muslim

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) said:

“Whoso believed in Allāh and in His Prophet and established Prayer and observed fast in Ramaḍān, Allāh promises to admit him into Paradise whether he fights for His cause or sits in the garden house where he was born.”

They (the companions) said: ‘Should we then communicate these pleasant tidings to the people, O Prophet of Allāh?’ The Prophet answered thus:

“There are a hundred grades in Paradise, prepared by Allāh for those who fight in the path of Allāh, and, in between each, is as great a distance as is between earth and heaven. So when you beg of Allāh, beg of Him the Firdaus: for, it is the most central Paradise and the highest one and aloft of it is the celestial seat of the Gracious God and therefrom spring the streams of Paradise.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

Against my ordinary rule of selection, I quoted this comparatively longer Ḥadīth, as through it we come to know of certain facts that are as useful as they are important and basic and which are:

1. That there is not merely one grade in Paradise but that they are numerous, of which Firdaus is the highest and, so to say, is the source of all the streams of the Paradise.

2. That the difference between the top-grade of the sit-at-home Muslims and the lowest grade of the Muslims who fight in His cause will be as great as distance between heaven and earth.

3. That Muslims should not only strive to deserve the grades reserved for soldiers of God but also for the highest of those grades, i.e., the Firdaus should be their target.

4. That the various grades of Paradise correspond to the various degrees of nearness to God, the Excellent, and therefore it is that the top-most grade of Paradise has been assigned a place close to the Divine throne.

5. That the gifts of the Paradise are not of a material character; they are spiritual in nature. For, their gradation is demarcated in terms of nearness to God. And though their spirit will partake of the body, as deeds do partake of it, none-the-less, in the Paradise, even the human body will be of a spiritual character; therefore, the physical gifts of that place will be, according to their basic spiritual standard, clear and pure.

This is the fine spiritual wisdom that accrues from this Ḥadīth. This observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is aimed at elevating the objective and ideal of the Muslims. No doubt a Muslim who observes the injunctions about fasting and prayer and other obligatory duties, with sincerity of heart, (Ḥajj and Zakāt have not been mentioned in this Ḥadīth since they are obligatory only on the well-to-do and people of substance and they are not obligations binding on every Muslim) but sits pretty at home, can attain to his salvation and save himself from Divine reckoning. But he cannot be worthy of the excellent gifts that entitle a man to the special favor of God's nearness. Those faithful ones, who are desirous of higher progress, owe it to themselves to give up their sit-at-home life and take to the role of soldiers of God and engage themselves in the service of the Prophet, day and night. The truth is that a sit-at-home Muslim, the benefit of whose faith and its effect remains confined to his own person, is not only depriving himself of the very best gifts but is courting for himself an hourly danger, for, he stands by the brink and a slight swerving on his part can hurl him from the place of salvation and make him the target of punishment. But a Muslim, who is a soldier in the way of God, is secure against this possible danger.

The question is, what is the way to become a soldier of God. The answer is that there are scores of ways of participating in the great struggle as a soldier of God, but the Holy Qur'ān particularly emphasizes two. It says:

“Allāh has granted eminence to those who fight in His way with their property and their

persons over those who sit at home.” [4[Al-Nisā]:96]

It appears that property and life are the two great sinews of the battle in the way of Allāh. The property’s part lies in its generous investment in the propagation and progress of Islām and the consolidation of faith. The life’s part, in the battle for God, lies in devotion of time, as much and as often as one can spare, in the service of faith (in its propagation and in inculcating *discipline* among others), and when the call comes, in offering life itself without hesitation—one who takes part, in these two types of battles of God, with his whole heart becomes worthy of the higher Divine favors meant for the soldiers of Allāh. But one who stays at home and offers prayers, observes fast should not expect to receive a prize greater than that reserved for a Muslim of stay-at-home type.

How intensely solicitous for our welfare is our Lord, the Holy Prophet, (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him ever and ever more). Like an overindulgent father, he tells us that while, without a doubt, we may save ourselves from punishment and attain to salvation, through prayer and fasting, but counsels us to have a higher aim and strive to attain to the glories, reserved solely for soldiers of Allāh. For, without it, the pace of national collective life cannot ascend to the lofty pinnacles. On the contrary, the life of such a sit-at-home people will always be exposed to grave risks. In this connection, it is primarily the duty of parents and then of the school teachers and college professors, to instill in the minds of children at early age, the active fervor of faith and a zeal for sacrifice and not to let them rest content with a static

stay-at-home life and to make them active servants in the cause of the faith and the nation to which they belong.

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا
 فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ
 فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ وَذَلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ
 (مسلم)

Ḥadīth No. 8

Try to Remove Evil

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa‘īd, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (peace be on him and the blessings of Allāh) say:

“Whoever of you sees something repugnant to morals or faith, he should change it by his hand. If he has not the strength to do so, then by the word of mouth. And if he cannot do so, then dislike it at heart (and endeavor to reform through prayer), but he would say that this was the weakest of faith.”

(Muslim).

Explanatory Note

While the preceding Ḥadīth comprises an exhortation to battling in the way of Allāh, stating how a true Muslim should devote himself through his property and his person to fighting in the cause of Allāh, this Ḥadīth outlines a special field, out of the many fields of jihād. It pertains to national, family and individual reformation. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) says that many religious and moral evils grow because people connive at their sight and fail to take any oral or practical measures of reformation, the result being that the evil becomes widespread, the bad example of one man infects scores of others. It does not stop at that; the natural fear of evil begins to disappear and to lose its hold on the hearts of men.

It is easily comprehensible by every person that in addition to the deterrent of law, there are the other two great methods of dealing with evil in society. One of these is the supervision and advice of the elders and the virtuous, which is a great means of keeping weak-minded elements firm. The other means is the fear of evil that the weight of public opinion inspires. This serves to keep a large number of people in wholesome check, saving [them] from going wrong. For instance, a child begins to go wrong through falling in with bad company. But timely control or counsel of his parents or some other virtuous elders checks his fall. Or an individual begins having ideas inclining him to a particular evil but the weight of social pressure and fear of losing face in public opinion keeps him from slipping. Even

in the absence of practical supervision or verbal counseling, the silent prayers of virtuous people go a long way in reforming peoples and families. Through this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) aims at mobilizing all the three reformatory factors, so that the door to social evils is closed to the Muslims and instead, the road to virtuous activity is opened wide. There are many in the world who fail to stir even their little finger in protest against a near relation, a friend or a neighbor openly indulging in anti-religious or immoral activity, because they do not want to hurt feelings or would not want to involve themselves in a controversy or they do not feel concerned about the personal morals of anybody else. Evil takes root before their very eyes, grows from a sapling into a plant and from a plant into a tree but they stay unmoved, little realizing, through stupidity, that a fire that has gutted the house of their neighbor today, might spread far enough to destroy their own house tomorrow.

Little doubt therefore, that our Chief, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has laid down this profound and wise injunction that one should not be a disinterested spectator of the fire of evil and sit in one's environment, but should hasten to put down the fire raging in the neighbor's premises and then save one's own house from the range of its destructiveness. He divided this instructional effort into three parts. Firstly, if someone has the necessary power, he should put down evil by his hand. Secondly, if he has not the power to do so, he should try to eliminate it by word of mouth and if he cannot do even this, he should at least condemn it at heart.

It should be remembered that the injunction to put down evil by hand does not mean that unconcerned people should be subjected to the use of force or of arms. In fact it means that those who are in a position to prevent evil by the strength of their arms, it is their duty to do so. As, for instance, a father, seeing a son going the wrong way or an officer, seeing a subordinate going the wrong or evil way, are duty bound to counteract this evil tendency by the use of their legitimate authority.

Preventing by word of mouth means counseling or, if necessary, admonishing. Prevention through condemnation at heart does not merely mean keeping silent and entertaining a passive feeling of disgust at heart.

The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has used the words “transforming or preventing through the feeling of the heart” which cannot be fully implemented by a mere passive feeling of disgust. It means, in fact, a heartfelt prayer which is a proven means of reformation. The Holy Prophet (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) means to say that in the event of a man being unable to prevent evil by the strength of his arm or even by means of word of mouth, he should at least make an effort at reformation, through his heartfelt prayer. The observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that the effort to reform through a feeling of the heart is the weakest variety of faith, means that it is a weak line to leave the matter solely to prayer. The true soldier of God is one who, in addition to his prayer makes use of the other available means created by God. One who is contented with prayer and does pretty little else to checkmate evil through practical measures has, in fact, not understood the

philosophy of the reformation of the human self. Prayer has, undoubtedly, a great power. But effective prayer is one accompanied by visible practical effort, so that one may be the recipient of God's grace, not only through oral activity but also through practical action.

All true Muslims should, therefore follow this august saying of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings). If they see some of their relations or friends or subordinates commit a wrong, they should prevent them by their hand, and if one whom they cannot so prevent by the means of their hands, is going wrong, or there is the fear of use of hands in his case leading to trouble, they should prevent him through verbal advice and counseling. But, if, because of their own lack of courage or because of fear of trouble, it is not possible for them to act in either way, they should at least fight the evils through heartfelt prayer. If Muslims adopt these measures, the face and future of the country will be changed in a very short time; they are so effective and of such great practical value and benefit. But those who quietly contemplate the spectacle of evil, and sit back passively, cannot be termed true Muslims.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ
 حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ (بخاری)

Hadith No. 9

Like for Your Brother What You Like for Yourself

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Anas, Allāh be pleased with him:
 Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on
 him):

“By God Who holds my life in His Hand,
 none of you can be a truly faithful Muslim,
 unless he liked for his brother what he liked for
 himself.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Notes

This Ḥadīth sets forth the true standard of Islāmic brotherhood. First of all, the Holy Qur’ān knits all Muslims into one brotherhood by declaring that “all the faithful are brothers.” The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) explained the high standard at which this brotherhood was to be evolved through the words of this Ḥadīth. How forcefully he says, by swearing by the power of his Lord, that the true standard of brotherhood of the Faithful consisted in choosing for his brother what a Muslim would choose for himself. Through this short observation, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has uprooted all estrangement and feeling of conflict from among the Muslims, combining them into one organic whole. It is unfortunate that most of the people of our day are engrossed in self-interest and in accumulating every benefit for themselves to the exclusion of others. It is about these people that the Holy Qur’ān observes:

“Woe unto those who, when they receive the measure from others, they get it in full but when they weigh it out to others, they give out less. Do they think they will never be raised and brought before their Lord?” [83[Al-Muṭaffifin]:2-5]

Islām cuts at the root of egoism and makes it obligatory on true Muslims to like for their brothers what they would like for themselves. It does not, however, mean that the special rights of relations that the Sharī’ah has laid down should be ignored. As, for instance, a father is bound to maintain his young children, the husband to maintain his

wife, and children to support their aged and dependent parents. Likewise, the Sharī'ah has apportioned shares for heirs on the death of a person: Widow, children, parents and others inherit definite portions of the legacy as their respective shares. Similarly it has been enjoined with great emphasis to look after the well-being of other relations, neighbors and friends. These rights as laid down are of course there. Leaving them aside, in our day-to-day relationships and dealings, Islām expects every Muslim, and enjoins upon him, to like for his brother what he would like for himself and should not have a double measure, one set for himself and another set for others. In another Ḥadīth our Lord the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has described Muslims as limbs of one body and as the whole body is ill at ease where a limb pains, so should all the Muslims feel ill at ease when one Muslim suffers. This is the high place of brotherhood to which the Prophet of Allāh (may my soul be devoted to his cause) proposes to elevate us. Would that we valued this injunction.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ أَنْصُرْ أَخَاكَ ظَالِمًا أَوْ مَظْلُومًا قَالُوا
 يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هَذَا نَنْصُرُهُ مَظْلُومًا فَكَيْفَ
 نَنْصُرُهُ ظَالِمًا قَالَ تَأْخُذُ فَوْقَ يَدَيْهِ.
 (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 10

Help Your Brother, Be He the Oppressor or the Oppressed

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Anas, Allāh be pleased with him:
 Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on
 him):

“Help your brother be he the oppressor or
 the oppressed.”

The companions said, ‘O Prophet of Allāh, we understand that we should help him when he is the aggrieved party but how should we help him when he is the wrongdoer?’ He said,

“Hold his hand.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

This wonderful Ḥadīth is a compendium of the philosophy of brotherhood and the philosophy of ethics. The philosophy of brotherhood postulates that a brother should be helped be he the oppressor or the oppressed; brotherliness is not a value that can be ignored or omitted in any circumstances. One who is our brother is always deserving of help. His being the guilty or the injured party does not affect his right to receive help. As against this, the philosophy of morality postulates that whether we have to deal with a brother or a stranger, it is our duty, in any case, to cleanse this world of all injustice and vice and to establish virtue and justice. If a person happens to be a stranger, it does not mean that we are free to do him wrong and if someone is our brother, it would not mean that we should therefore abet his injustice and be his accessories.

Superficially, the two postulates appear to be out of harmony and in conflict with one another. If a wrongdoing brother is not aided, bonds of brotherhood break down. And if the wrongdoing brother is helped, justice goes by the board. But our Lord (may my life be dedicated to his service) linked together these two parallel channels that do not apparently seem to meet. He linked the two by means of an

intermediary channel in such a manner that they now flow like a single stream. He observed, in effect, that brotherhood was such a holy relationship that there was no cutting it asunder, under any circumstances, whether a brother is good or bad, oppressor or oppressed, he remains a brother always and there is no cutting off the brotherly ties. But the God of Islām would not permit injustice and enjoins equity even to enemies. Therefore, the two postulates should be so harmonized that help should be rendered to the brother in any case but, if the brother is an oppressor the form of help should be changed. If he is the oppressed party, stand by him to fight injustice, but if he is the wrongdoer, then embrace him and hug him hard and hold tight his oppressive hand and say, “Brother I stand by you, in all circumstances but Islām does not permit injustice and therefore, I will not let your hand do wrong.” This is the sacred principle that the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has laid down in this Ḥadīth.

To put on it the construction as some do that a particular language has been used by the Holy Prophet, in this Ḥadīth only for purposes of emphasis and that its gist postulates that if your brother is the aggrieved party you should help him but, if he be the wrongdoer, then line up against him, is not only wrong but also a travesty of the wise wording of the Ḥadīth. If that were the aim of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), he could very well have enjoined a line-up against injustice, whether its perpetrator was an enemy or a brother. But he did not say so. On the contrary, in this command, he has formulated in the following terms a fine and novel postulate out of two apparent contradictories:

(1) A brother is deserving of help in any case

(2) Injustice must be resisted in any case

(3) If the brother be the aggrieved party, help him and, if he be the wrongdoer, then change the shape of help, by holding his aggressive hand, so that brotherliness is sustained and injustice is also prevented.

This is the compound theory which, fourteen centuries ago, the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) put across to the world, from the desert of Arabia. But, until today, not one of the progressive nations of Europe or America has attained to its ethical height. If they made a pact of brotherhood with any nation, to honor the obligation of brotherliness, they opened wide the gates of unbounded tyranny and if, according to their notions, they turned to prevent some injustice, they tore to bits the covenant of brotherhood.

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ عَلَى الْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ السَّمْعُ وَالطَّاعَةُ فِيمَا أَحَبَّ وَكَرِهًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْمَرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَإِنْ أُمِرَ بِمَعْصِيَةٍ فَلَا سَمْعَ وَلَا طَاعَةَ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 11

The High Concept of Obedience in Islām

Narrated by Ibni ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say:

“It is binding on a Muslim to listen to and carry out an order issued by his officers whether he likes it or not, except when it

involves the violation of a commandment of God or His Prophet or of a superior officer.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Notes

This Ḥadīth lays down the fundamental principle and Islāmīc criterion of obedience. Islām is a religion of great discipline and orderliness. It does not believe in forcing anybody against his will into its circle and says openly,

“There is no compulsion in the matter of faith.” [2[Al-Baqarah]:257]

But when a man has, by his free will and open heart, accepted Islām, it expects of him strict observance of its discipline and orderliness, as becomes an organized people. It wants every member of the faith to be an exemplar in obedience. It does not permit criticism of the order of the superiors, nor does it allow selective obedience to such orders, that is, to obey them if one likes them and to disregard them if one did not like them. “Hear and obey” is the eternal command of Islām. There is only one exception permitted in this code of obedience for the Muslims, that when one is commanded to do what is manifestly in contravention of the commandment of God and His Prophet or of superior authority, it should not be obeyed; every other order of whatever nature it is and under whatever circumstances it is given, must be obeyed.

The addition of the word “Hear,” with the word “Obey,” points to the finer meaning that a negative type of obedience is no part of a Muslim’s obligation, and that he is not

enjoined to content himself with a barren obedience to an order. In fact, he is required to be an exemplar in according a lively and positive type of obedience. In other words, he should be all ears to the commands of his officer, so that, as soon as he hears a command, he should implement it forthwith. If simple obedience were the object, the word “Obey” would have been enough and served the purpose without the addition of the word “Hear.” The addition of this word is definitely for the purpose of replacing barren and formal obedience with enthusiastic and positive compliance. The gist of the Islāmic code of obedience therefore is:

1. Obedience of every command of one’s officer whether one likes it or not.
2. To hear the officer with a devoted attentiveness, lest one should miss some of his instructions.
3. Should, however, the officer command one to do something contrary to the commandment of God and his Prophet or a superior officer, then one should not obey him within the meaning of this excepting clause.

عَنْ طَارِقِ بْنِ شِهَابٍ أَنَّ رَجُلًا سَأَلَ النَّبِيَّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَقَدْ وَضَعَ رِجْلَهُ
فِي الْغُرْزِ أَيْ الْجِهَادِ أَفْضَلَ قَالَ كَلِمَةٌ
حَقٌّ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَابِرٍ (نَسَائِ)

Hadīth No. 12

A Word of Truth to the Wrongdoing Ruler is the Best Form of Jihād

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Ṭāriq bin Shihāb, Allāh be pleased with him: While the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was setting forth on a journey and putting his foot in the stirrup, a person enquired of him which form of jihād was the best, he said,

“The word of truth to the wrongdoing ruler.”

(Nasā’ī)

Explanatory Note

If, on the one hand, the Muslims have been enjoined to be exemplars in obedience to the commands of their rulers and to hear their rulers and their commands with attentiveness and to implement them with wholeheartedness, they are, on the other hand, required to have the moral courage to advise the ruler and to reform his ways, if he takes to the wrong path and to oppressive ways and should thus help him to establish justice and equity in the land. Since counseling a wrongdoing and oppressive ruler calls for an extraordinary courage, and may be, at times, even risky, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has described it therefore as the highest form of jihād.

The truth of the matter is that Islām has established such a wonderful equilibrium between the relations *inter se* of the ruler and the king and the subject, that it is impossible to improve upon its teachings. The first and foremost injunction of Islām is that irrespective of caste or creed, all the public offices should be assigned, from the Head of State down to the lowest grade, on the basis of merit. The Holy Qur’ān says in this connection,

“All public offices are public trust and Allāh commands that these should be entrusted to the worthy and fit and the officers should administer with equity and justice.” [4[Al-Nisā]:59]

Secondly, Islām enjoins that people should obey their rulers wholeheartedly, hear their commands with attention and comply with them with enthusiasm.

Thirdly, Islām lays down that, in the case of a ruler who goes off the track of justice, his subordinates should try to reform him, by tendering good advice in time, for such counseling being in the interests of public peace is, in no way, less estimable than the highest form of jihād. But, since, some subordinates are prone to take a wrong step in this direction on account of consideration of personal prestige, or in haste on account of an improper sense of rivalry or sense of personal grievance, therefore, as in the case of Pharaoh, God the Excellent, commanded Moses (peace of Allāh be on him) to address the Pharaoh in polite language. Islām forbids disrespectful attitude or insubordinate language or rebellious attitude. On the contrary, as has been explained in another Ḥadīth, it considers it better to be patient even in [the] face of some tyrannies so that the peace of the country and its unity are not endangered and this is the only middle course along which foundations of real peace can securely be laid in this world.

It is, however, a matter of deep regret that these days instead of giving good counsel to officers and keeping them to the path of justice and equity, quite a few people would corrupt them by means of false flattery or by the still dirtier means of bribe and unmerited recommendations and thus persist in destroying their sense of justice. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has cursed both, the one who gives bribe and the one who accepts it and has observed in another Ḥadīth,

“The one who gives bribe and the one who takes it, both are the fuel of fire.”

Would that Islāmic countries got rid of this curse.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْ صَغِيرَنَا وَلَمْ
يَعْرِفْ حَقَّ كَبِيرِنَا فَلَيْسَ مِنَّا (البوداؤد)

Hadīth No. 13

Show Compassion to Young Ones and Recognize the Rights of Your Elders

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh Ibni ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said:

“One who had no compassion for our young ones and did not recognize the rights of our elders was not of us.”

(Abū Dāwūd)

Explanatory Note

In this Ḥadīth, a fine Law regarding dynamics of mutual relations has been laid down. Many disputes and causes of ill-will arise in the world, because the elders do not treat the

younger ones with compassion and consideration, and the younger ones forget to extend respect to the elders which is their due, and thus a distasteful chain reaction of class struggle is set off. Islām has, on the one hand, recognized equality of rights for all in the assignment of public offices and distribution of the means of earning wealth. On the other hand, by building a bridge of compassion and consideration of dutiful respect, it has linked all in one chain. Those who get an opportunity to excel others in the struggle of life, they are required to treat their less fortunate brethren with compassion and affection, so long as the latter are in that situation. As for those who lag behind, they are enjoined to pay dutiful respect to those who are ahead of them as long as they continue in the position. By means of this golden injunction, our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has cut at the root of unnecessary and unbecoming tension between the different layers of society. But, it is a matter of regret that few care to respect this injunction, and if someone comes into power, because of one thing or the other, he loses his head and loves to crush those who are beneath him. And, if one lags behind in the race of existence, he is jealous of those who have outdistanced him so that he is ever intent on destroying them and bringing them low to earth. Both these types are far gone off the course of Islām.

Islām itself certainly does not create classes. But it does not shut its eyes to facts either, and takes due note of the temporary distinctions which arise as a natural phenomenon due to differences in intellectual level or standards of personal industry. It resolves (these differences) in a similarly natural manner and takes proper measures to countermand their unpleasant consequences. This blessed

observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is a part of these measures. At the same time, Islām stresses the transitory character of these differences pointing out that a class of people which happens to be at the lower rung today, may very well forge ahead tomorrow. The Holy Qur’ān says in this behalf,

“It is not proper for any section of society to look down upon any other section. For, haply that one may become better in material amenities than this one.” [49[Al-Ḥujurāt]:12]

It must be borne in mind, that the expression “younger ones and elder ones” in this Ḥadīth apply to all whether they are junior or senior in point of age, or relationship, or wealth, or office, or prestige, or influence. In whatever respect that the difference exists, every senior is required to treat his junior with compassion and consideration, and every junior is required to show due respect and regard to his senior. And whoso does not behave in that manner, our Master (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) says about him that he is not of us.

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَلَا أَنْبِئُكُمْ بِأَكْبَرِ الْكِبَايُرِ ثَلَاثًا
 قَالُوا بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ أَلَا شِرَاكُ بِاللَّهِ
 وَعُقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ وَجَلْسَ وَكَانَ مُتَكِنًا فَقَالَ
 أَلَا وَقَوْلَ الزُّورِ فَمَا زَالَ يُكْرِرُهَا حَتَّى قُلْنَا
 لَيْتَهُ سَكَتَ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 14

Associating Partners with God, Disobedience to Parents and Lying are the Greatest of Sins

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddīq, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him):

“Shall I apprise you of the three great sins?”

We said, ‘Aye, O Prophet of Allāh.’ He said:

“Hearken! The biggest sin is setting up equals to Allāh and then disobedience of parents and neglect of duty to them,”

and, leaving the cushion he was leaning against, and sitting up in a roused manner, he said with great force,

“Hearken! And lying,”

and he repeated it so many times that we wished he had left it off at that and not strained himself so much.

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

In this forceful Ḥadīth, in enumerating cardinal sins, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has selected the three aspects which are fundamental in spiritual and moral ethics. These three aspects are

- (1) Rights of Allāh
- (2) Rights of His servants and
- (3) Inner discipline of the soul.

The biggest sin is Shirk, i.e., setting up to God, our Creator as well as our Master, a partner or equal who is neither our creator nor our master.

Shirk is thus a combination of both treason and rebellion. In truth, it is an extreme act of traitorousness to cultivate such beings as have nothing to do with our existence, or survival, against the one Being who created us and provided us all the means necessary for our mundane, as well as our spiritual progress. It is also the most felonious type of

treason to turn away, in revolt from allegiance, to the dominion of the True Master and the True Ruler and bow to such beings as have no personal power over us. It is, however, painful to note that, in our contemporary age, highly progressive nations, in spite of their great cultural advancement, are not free from the filth of Shirk. As for instance, the Christian nations who treat Jesus (who possessed no attribute which was not shared by other prophets) as God are thus still caught up in the quagmire of Shirk. The gods of the Hindu Pantheon are legion and well known.

The second big sin, according to this Ḥadīth, is ‘aqūqul-wālidain. ‘Aqūq in Arabic language means cutting off and idiomatically it will thus signify disobedience to parents, not paying their due respect, or not treating them with tenderness of heart and neglecting to look after them. Obedience to parents and dutiful service to them are obligations that relate to the *Rights of the servants* of God and in the order of priorities under this head, it holds probably the first place of sanctity, so that the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) says in another Ḥadīth,

“The pleasure of Allāh is in the pleasure of parents and His displeasure in their displeasure.”

He (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) says in another Ḥadīth,

“Whoso found his parents in old age and did not open for himself the way to Paradise,

through service to them, is the most unlucky person.”

His personal example in this respect is clear from an incident. He was giving away some goods when his foster mother called to see him. His own mother had died in his childhood. He at once ran to her saying, “my mother, my mother.” He spread out his sheet with great affection and respectfulness, requesting her to be seated with comfort and ease.

In short, Islām has laid great stress on obedience and service to parents. The Holy Qur’ān emphatically says:

“Incline thy arms with tenderness of affection and respectfulness before your parents and pray for them to God ‘O my Lord have compassion on my parents in their old age, as they brought me up lovingly when I was small.’ ” [17[Al-Isrā]:25]

The third great sin mentioned in this Ḥadīth is lying. The Islāmic stand on this is clear from the statement in this Ḥadīth that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) referred to it, he sat up in excitement and repeated the words “and beware of lying” several times. The truth of the matter is that after Shirk (association of partners or equals to God) and disobedience to parents, lying is the next biggest sin. And if the other two are the seed out of which stems forth the tree of sin, lying is for it the irrigating water whereby this tree blossoms and grows. It is lying which promotes sinfulness and lends one the cover to continue in vice; for lying is proffered as a screen to cover sin and vice; thus secure behind it, it grows and spreads fast. Therefore

lying is not a sin by itself but the worst kind of support to other evils. It is therefore that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) placed it immediately next to Shirk and disobedience to parents. In another Ḥadīth, it is related that once a Muslim sought of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) to instruct him about the sin which he should give up first, for, he pleaded that he was very weak and too far gone into diverse sins to muster strength enough to banish them all. He (blessings of Allāh and His peace be on him) advised him to give up lying first. He promised to do so and returned to his home. Later when, through force of habit, he felt the urge to commit some other vice, it occurred to him that the matter may reach the ears of the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and he interrogated him, and since he was committed against lying, he knew not what to say; or if some other Muslim came to know of it, he could not imagine how he would manage to explain it away. Ultimately, on further reflection, he thought it better to give up all vices, since he had committed himself against false speech. Accordingly by giving up lying, he was blessed with the strength to give up all other sins too. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has thus by classifying lying as a cardinal sin, next to Shirk and disregard of parents, disclosed a psychological truth that can be so helpful to Muslims in suppressing vice.

The truth is that lying is one of the meanest and lowest kind of vices and it is the duty of every decent person to first get the better of this evil tendency from among all the vices.

Incidentally, it must be remembered that the injunction to shun lying does not necessarily carry the sense, that truth

must be told, even when one is not called upon to do so. All that it means is that whatever is deposed should be done truthfully and without admixture of lie, in any case. There are otherwise many occasions when, in national interest, some matters call for secrecy and observance of secrecy is in no way contrary to truthfulness.

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ يُحَدِّثُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَكْرَمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ
 وَأَحْسِنُوا أَدَبَهُمْ (ابن ماجة)

Ḥadīth No. 15

Respect Your Children and Give Them the Best Education

Narrated by Ḥadīrat Anas bin Mālik, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings):

“Respect your children and cultivate in them the best of manners.”

(Ibn Mājah)

Explanatory Note

Islām has defined the rights of parents over children and vice versa. On the one hand, it emphasizes service and respectful behavior to parents, and on the other, commands parents to treat their children with due understanding and

regard, and to handle them in such a way as engenders in them feelings of dignity and self-respect and to attend to their education and training in particular, so that, when they grow they may observe, with due propriety, their duties to God and to His servants and become pioneers of national progress.

The truth is that no nation can make any progress, nay, no nation can escape degeneration, if its members do not leave behind their children in circumstances better than their own. If every father was to see to it that he will leave his children better off than himself, both in knowledge and in practice, the nation must gain from strength to strength and will, by the grace of God, remain immune to the danger of decline. But it is a pity that most of the parents disregard this golden principle with the result that many children, far from being better off than their parents, are brought up, in such a condition as to give the impression of a dead baby having been born to a live person. Such parents feed and dress their children well and to some extent also mind their secular education, as it provides them with means of economic well-being, but they generally disregard their moral discipline as if it were something unimportant. On the contrary, moral training or discipline is infinitely more important than secular education and certainly has a greater moral value and status. An educationally less qualified but morally better disciplined person endowed with qualities of industry, truthfulness, honesty, self-sacrifice and pleasing manners, is far superior to the man carrying the donkey-load of knowledge but totally bereft of qualities of moral excellence. In the Holy Qur'ān, the injunction,

“Slay not your children,” [6[Al-An‘ām]:152
and 17[Al-Isrā]:32]

hints at the truth, that if you ignore inculcation of good moral qualities among your children and neglect their educational equipment, you will be virtually committing their murder.

The other portion of this Ḥadīth, the one relating to respect to children, is of all the religious codes the distinctive feature of Islām; for, no other religion of the world has appreciated the point that without showing a proper measure of respect to children, high moral qualities could not be cultivated among them. Some foolish parents, in spite of loving their children, treat them evidently in such a low and vulgar manner, frequently indulging in abusive language, that their feelings of dignity, self-respect and self-estimation slowly freeze into death. This injunction of our Master (may my soul be dedicated to his service) is worthy of being written in gold letters. It enjoins that “children should be treated with considerateness” so as to equip them with dignity, self-respect and high moral qualities. Would that they valued this wise teaching!

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا فَاظْفَرُ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 16

Choose Your Wife for Her Religious Piety

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“In marrying a woman, a man’s choice of a spouse is determined by the consideration of her wealth, her family and her physical beauty and her religious piety, but thou shouldst make thy life happy, prosperous and successful, by

choosing a spouse, on account of her religious piety, otherwise thy hands will ever remain in dust.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Notes

The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) has, in this Ḥadīth, after stating the considerations that determine the selection of a wife, enjoined on Muslims that their choice of a spouse should be governed primarily by consideration of religious piety and moral endowments. As a consequence of this, he says, their family lives will be happy and full of bliss. Otherwise, they may enjoy a temporary and superficially pleasant break, but they cannot have true and abiding felicity. This saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is pregnant with deep wisdom, for, through this not only a way to basing the home life of Muslims on happiest foundations has been opened, but also provision has been made for the well-being and security of the coming generations. But, it is a great pity, that leaving aside other nations, even the majority of Muslims either totally ignore the aspect of piety and morality while choosing a wife or give greater consideration to other aspects than to the religious angle. One would fall for her beauty and shut his eyes to other aspects, another would be wholly won over on account of her wealth; while what constitutes the lasting foundation of a happy home life are piety and moral qualities of the wife. There are innumerable instances of men marrying wives for their beauty and comeliness of looks but when their beauty wanes with time as all beauty must wane, or on the sight of a

prettier woman, the unprincipled husband turns away from her, it so happens that after daily contact with the wife the husband discovers some unpleasant aspects of her habits, leave alone a life of felicity, for the husband the home becomes real hell. The same is true in the case of family lineage, on account of which, the wife betrays often an air of superiority and an exaggerated sense of pride vis-à-vis her husband and this is fatal to family bliss. Wealth, of course is a passing thing. One possesses it today and loses it on the morrow. And often a wife's wealth becomes a curse for the husband rather than a source of happiness. Truly, therefore, as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has observed, the real foundations of family happiness and married bliss, are laid on a wife's religious piety and her good moral qualities. Very unlucky is the person who is after short-lived toys and gilded things in preference to solid qualities. The lasting good effect that a virtuous and good-natured wife exercises on children is [a] permanent gift which no sensible person who, in addition to his personal comfort, also has the welfare of his generations at heart, can afford to ignore. Clearly, the early bringing up of children is in the hands of the mother, for in [a] family, the child is naturally more attached to the mother, and is more free with her, and spends more of his time with her, while the father, on account of his various other duties, cannot devote much attention to the children. The early training of the children is thus mainly the responsibility of the mother. If, therefore, the mother is pious and of high character, the children, would naturally be well-grounded in good morals. But if on the contrary a woman has neither piety nor morals, she can never succeed in imbuing the children with good morals and

virtuous habits. The truth is that such a wife usually does not appreciate the value and necessity of religion and good morals.

The Ḥadīth under discussion, however, does not mean that, in selecting a spouse, all other considerations should be totally ignored. All that it means is that piety and moral excellence should be preferred. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) has, on other occasions, drawn attention to other considerations as well, for, they too are to a certain extent, instinctive urges of human nature. As, for instance, in spite of strict instructions about observation of seclusion in purdah by the women-folk, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) used to advise that one may have a glimpse of his wife-to-be so that after marriage he is not unhappy on account of her features and looks. On another occasion when a woman called on him to have his advice in regard to her marriage, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) said that he would not advise her to marry a certain individual because he was poor and hard up and would not be able to bear her expenses, nor could he advise her to marry a certain other individual, for, he was very high-handed, but she could marry one who in his opinion was suited to her circumstances. On another occasion, he said to the companions that women of the Quraish were excellent in respect of their loyalty to their husbands and love for their children. And on another occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) advised marriage with women who are prolific in bearing children, so that he could feel happy on the Day of Resurrection over the numerousness of his followers. In short he has drawn

attention to other aspects as well in their proper perspective and within their due limits. But what he stressed most was that preference should, in any case, be given to religious and moral aspects, otherwise one is bound to have one's hands ever soiled with dust and owe it entirely to himself. This is the golden teaching, observance of which can turn the homes of Muslims into cradles of bliss and felicity. Would that they understood.

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
 عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِيهِ وَأَنَا
 خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي (ترمذی)

Hadīth No. 17

The Best of Men is One Who is Best in Treating His Wife

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Jābir, Allāh be pleased with him:
 Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on
 him):

“Best of you is one who is best in his
 treatment of his wife and I am the best of you
 in the treatment of my family.”

(Tirmidhī)

Explanatory Note

The emphasis on the kindly treatment of one’s wife as
 enjoined in this Ḥadīth is clear and distinct. The Holy

Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings), attached great importance to a husband's kind treatment of his wife, and observed in this connection that after belief in God and in His Prophet and in His Faith, the deeds of a man in respect of his treatment of God's servants shall be subject to Divine scrutiny in the light of the rights of His creatures, and that the kind treatment of one's wife holds a place of high priority, so much so that in the eyes of God the best of Muslims is the one who is best in treatment of his wife. But as everyone is likely to feel according to his own sense of values, that his treatment of his wife is ideal, in order to dispel this likely error, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) said that the standard of good treatment will not conform to the rules arbitrarily set by individuals but it will be judged by his own (the Holy Prophet's) example, since by the grace of God, his treatment of his wives was really the ideal.

Through the above observation, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has raised so high the standard of marital rights of Muslim women that, with the possible exception of temporary unpleasantness which often occurs even in the best regulated families, a life of torment cannot be the lot of a good wife in the house of a good Muslim. The truth is that if a wife enjoys comfort at the hands of her husband, she is prepared to bear up with every kind of hardship with pleasure, for, no other joy of the world has, in comparison, the least value in her eyes. But if a husband does not treat his wife with kindness, then for the wife the wealth of her husband is a curse, likewise his honor a curse and also his health a curse. For these gifts are valued only in the context of marital happiness and husband's love.

There is not the least doubt about it, therefore, that this blessed observation of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) serves to make the four walls of the home a paradise, provided that on her part, the wife abides by the husband's will and appreciates his love. The unity between the husband and wife necessarily makes its impression on the children and thus the felicity of the present becomes the harbinger of a permanent bliss.

This is the lesson that our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) imparted fourteen centuries back, in the midst of a people and in a country where woman in general was tied up with two qualifications which set a standard to which even the nations of our day could not attain nor ever seem likely to reach. For, with these two adjuncts, the command about good treatment of one's wife reaches heights which are the loftiest in this field:

These two qualifications are in conformity with the observation

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِهِ وَأَنَا خَيْرُكُمْ لِأَهْلِي

made by our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and are as follows:

1. Kind treatment of one's wife is not only obligatory on the part of a man but is in fact, in the eyes of God, a measure of the excellence of his station and place as a man, in the sphere of his obligations to the servants of God. One who is good in his treatment of his wife is good in the sight of God.

2. The standard for judging one's good conduct towards one's wife does not depend on the arbitrary opinion of an individual; for self-praise is very easy. The standard in this

respect lies in the personal example of the Holy Prophet himself (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him ever and evermore). Only that treatment will be termed kindly and good which conforms and sizes up to the standard set by his example.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي أَوْفَى قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ
 بِيَدِهِ لَا تُؤَدِّي الْمَرْأَةُ حَقَّ رَبِّهَا حَتَّى
 تُؤَدِّيَ حَقَّ زَوْجِهَا - (ابن ماجه)

Hadīth No. 18

A Pious Lady is One Who does Her Duty to Her Husband

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh bin Abī Aufā, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“I swear by the Being who holds the life of Muḥammad in His hands that no woman shall be deemed to have done her duty by her God unless she has done her duty to her husband.”

(Ibn Mājah)

Explanatory Note

While on the one hand, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has commanded husbands to treat their wives with kindness, he has, on the other hand, enjoined on wives to do their duty to their husbands. For, the true felicity and bliss of the home lies in the husband meting out the most generous treatment to the wife and, in the latter, respecting the rights of the husband with faithfulness. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was so particular in regard to this sacred obligation of the wife, that, in another Ḥadīth, he observed that if the husband of a Muslim wife died pleased with her, she would, by the grace of God, enter Paradise. In the same Ḥadīth he has further remarked that if sajdah (a form of worship which consists in the worshipper lying with his forehead and kneecaps resting on ground) before anyone other than Allāh were permissible in Islām, he would have commanded wives to perform sajdah before their husbands.

The reason underlying the observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) that the wife who did not do her duty to her husband, did not do her duty to God is twofold: Firstly in spite of the difference in degree, the two obligations partake of the same nature. For instance, as God loves His creatures with extreme love so does the husband cherish a special kind of love for his wife and again as, with all His love, Allāh is the Ruler and Guardian over His servants, likewise is the husband the superintendent and maintainer of the house, with all his love for his wife and as, God is the Lord of Providence for His creatures and provides them with means of livelihood,

similarly is the husband obligated to provide sustenance to his wife. There are so many other aspects of similarity making the resemblance so striking that, in our language, has the husband been termed the temporal god of the wife.

Another wisdom underlying it is that the rights of man in Islām have been assigned by God and the law lays extreme stress on these rights, so much so, that, according to a Ḥadīth, God forgives the sins relating to man's obligations to Him but does not forgive the sins pertaining to man's obligations to a man, until the concerned man himself does not forgive. It is in the spirit of these two underlying realities that the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allāh) has said in emphatic language, reinforced with an oath, that no woman can be considered as having done her duty to her God until and unless she has done her duty to her husband.

As to the obligations of a wife, according to the Holy Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, she owes her husband that she be obedient to him, should show him proper respect, should love him, should be faithful to him, should bring up his children well, should look after his property and serve him to the best of her capacity. As against this, the husband is obligated to love her and treat her with compassion and with winsome ways, see to her comfort, respect her feelings and provide her necessary maintenance as best as he can afford. There is hardly any gainsaying the fact that if the husband and the wife respect the rights of one another, a Muslim home can become a veritable paradise.

عَنْ سَهْلِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ
 فِي الْجَنَّةِ كَهَاتَيْنِ (ترمذی)

Hadīth No. 19

One Who Brings Up an Orphan will Share His Abode in Paradise with the Holy Prophet

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Holy Prophet of Allāh (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace):

“I and the guardian of the orphan will be in
 the Paradise close together like two fingers,”

and the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) demonstrated it by closing his two fingers together.

(Tirmidhī)

Explanatory Note

The orphans are a highly valuable possession of a community and Islām lays very great stress on their care and upbringing. The words of this Ḥadīth convey, accordingly, that emphasis. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) says about the Muslim who looks after the orphan that he will be so close to him in the Paradise as two fingers of the hand are close to one another. After this peremptory command, which carries with it such extraordinary reward, no true Muslim can neglect the duty of bringing up well and taking good care of orphans. In the care of orphans, only the object of looking after and upbringing of helpless and supportless children is not served. A little reflection will show that this institution stimulates the spirit of sacrifice among the members of the community when the individual members of a community are assured that, in the event of their death in national service, their orphaned children will not be left helpless and unprotected after them but will, on the contrary, be well looked after by their relatives or other members of the community, they will certainly be foremost in courageously offering every kind of sacrifice. And this will stimulate the spirit of service and sacrifice among all the members of the community. The proper care of the orphans is not only the means of saving minor children from spiritual, moral and financial ruin, but is also a great means of stimulating the general prosperity of the community and its spirit of sacrifice.

But it is a matter of deep regret that Muslims of our times are very neglectful in respect of this sacred duty. Often even the near relatives, instead of acting as guardians of orphans,

misappropriate their property, and by their neglect of those [duties], become the means of their educational and moral morass. In the orphanages run by different offices, the orphans' feelings of self-respect and self-estimation are so grievously hurt that orphans turn practically into beggars in the end. It calls for an urgent remedy. The distant and near relations who assume the role of guardians to their orphan-kinsmen owe it to them to provide adequately for the education and high moral and cultural discipline of their wards and to take good care of their properties. The organizations that take up this service in their hands, likewise, should act as the parents of the orphans, and instead of making them beg from door-to-door, take appropriate measure to train them as self-respecting and useful members of society. Above all, they should never have cause to feel in their hearts that they are helpless and forlorn dependents on the charity of others. The orphans, on the other hand, have little ground to despair. They should always remember that the greatest of mankind, the chief of the two worlds and the Pride of Prophets (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was himself an orphan who had lost his father before his birth and his mother departed from this world when he was hardly seven years old. If they took to the path of virtue, God will not let them down. Who can give greater protection than God ?

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ قَالَ
 رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا زَالَ
 جِبْرِيلُ يُوصِينِي بِالْجَارِ حَتَّى ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ
 سَيُورَثُهُ - (بخاری)

Ḥadīth No. 20

Good Treatment of Neighbors

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Ā’ishah, Allāh be pleased with her: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings):

“Gabriel recommended to me good treatment of the neighbor so often that I started thinking that he would perhaps declare him the heir and successor.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

Neighbors are an important limb of society. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has laid great emphasis on generous treatment of neighbors. The truth is that one who does not treat his neighbor well cannot deserve to be called a human being. For, man is a civilized being and good neighborliness is a necessary part of culture. In the interest of good and strong mutual relations, Islām lays down generous treatment of one's neighbors and puts so much emphasis on this command that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) says that Gabriel reminded him of his obligation in this respect so often and so forcefully that he (the Prophet) concluded that he (Gabriel) might declare the neighbor the heir and successor. In the light of this peremptory command, it is the duty of every good Muslim to treat his neighbors with uncommon compassion and kindness, sharing with them their sorrows and their pleasures and looking after their families in their absence. In the matter of good treatment of neighbors, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was so particular that he reminded of this obligation even in regard to very minor things, as for instance, in another Ḥadīth, he said that if one cooked meat, he had better make more gravy so that some of it may serve one's neighbor, should he be in need. In fact the true standard of a person's social behavior is reflected in his treatment of neighbors. With people living far away and with those who meet one now and then, one can simulate good manners as a passing phase. But affectation cannot last long with those whom one contacts constantly. Before long the cultural level of the man

comes to surface in its naked form. The blessed observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) contained in this Ḥadīth is not only a useful means of indirectly disciplining one's own social behavior, but also is an exhortation to treat one's neighbors kindly. For, only he who is morally good can treat his neighbors well. In order to be able to treat your neighbors kindly, you must yourself become a good fellow indeed, for the false manner of affected morality cannot deceive for long those with whom one has to deal day and night. By the same token in its extensive application this Ḥadīth obligates upon nations and neighbor countries as far as possible to be generous to them and cooperate with them. For, an individual is subject to the law of morals, so are nations. The truth is that peace can be established in the world only when nations and governments accept the rule of the moral law.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي أَوْفَى قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ لَا
 تَتَمَنَّوْا لِقَاءَ الْعَدُوِّ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ الْعَافِيَةَ
 وَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُوهُمْ فَاصْبِرُوا وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
 الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ ظِلَالِ السُّيُوفِ (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 21

Do not Desire War but if it Comes Fight Determinedly

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh bin Abī Aufā, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings):

“O ye people, desire not to meet the enemy in battle and seek of Allāh peace and tranquility. But if you meet the enemy in battle,

then be steady and persevering in fighting and remember that Paradise lies under the shadow of swords.”

(Muslim)

Explanatory Notes

This Ḥadīth carries the pith of Islāmic teachings about the treatment of the enemy and the philosophy of jihād, in four basic principles:

1. Do not desire to have war with the enemy and indulge not in any provocative war-like act.
2. Seek constantly of Allāh peace and tranquility.
3. In the event of the enemy committing a hostile act leading to war with him, fight him with patience, perseverance and determination.
4. In the event of an engagement with the enemy, be sure of one of the two trophies, either you will be victorious, or win martyrdom and gain admittance to Paradise.

No religion of the world, nor any country, nor any period of human history has a better code of morality to offer, in respect of wars, whether they are of a secular or of a religious nature. Incidentally, this Ḥadīth also proves that there is no compulsion in Islām in the matter of religious faith. For, if forcible conversions were permissible, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) would have never warned against seeking war with the enemy. A believer in force tries to find excuses to attack others so that he may subjugate them and thus mould them to his own fashion.

Therefore, this command that ‘seek ye not to engage the enemy’ is the decisive argument of Islām against leave to use force in the matter of faith. This is the teaching that the Holy Qur’ān has clearly enunciated in the words,

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ

“There is no compulsion in religion.” [2[Al-Baqarah]:257]

Forbidding Muslims to provoke hostilities, on the one hand, and exhorting them to fight determinedly, on the other, points to the subtle truth that while Islām warns Muslims against being aggressors in any case, it, at the same time, aims at steeling the hearts of Muslims against the fear of death. And this is the middle course which serves as the foundation of national progress: that, on the one hand, they should keep hold on themselves and be not oppressors, in any case or circumstance, and, on the other, be so brave and fearless in [the] face of death, that they should visualize Paradise under the shadow of swords.

عَنْ بُرَيْدَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا أَمَرَ أَمِيرًا عَلَى جَيْشٍ أَوْ سَرِيَّةٍ قَالَ أَعِزُّوا بِسْمِ اللهِ..... وَلَا تَغْلُوا وَلَا تَغْدِرُوا وَلَا تُمَثِّلُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا وَلَيْدًا..... وَلَا امْرَأَةً - (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 22

Violate not Your Contract with the Enemy and Kill neither Child nor Woman

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Buraidah, Allāh be pleased with him: The Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), whenever he sent out a party to meet the enemy, would advise its commander, saying:

“Go in the way of Allāh, in His Name and be not dishonest and break not the covenant with

the enemy and mutilate not their dead and kill
neither their children nor their women.”

(Muslim)

Explanatory Note

The attitude of the companions and of the succeeding generations of Muslims in their wars has been manifestly governed by this blessed observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). Islām took up the sword in answer to the cruelties perpetrated by the disbelievers and to their acts of aggression. But in the subsequent stages, Muslims deported themselves towards their unjust enemies so nobly that history fails to furnish an example comparable to the ethical excellence of their conduct. Among Arabs, slaughter of women and children was a very common practice; in fact, since the establishment of Mosaic law, it had become widespread in large parts of the world. Besides this, it was customary among Arabs to exult, in a barbarous fashion, in the mutilation of the dead enemy by cutting off their noses and other limbs. This evil custom was known as Muslah. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) forcefully forbade all these barbarities, enjoining instead decent treatment of the enemy and declaring dishonesty, treachery, and breach of agreement totally unlawful acts, he laid in the world the foundations of a lofty code of social behavior.

Besides, as is clear from Aḥādīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) commanded that the aged of the belligerent enemy, and such of them as have dedicated themselves to religious service, irrespective of

their religion or race, should be left unmolested, and as the Holy Qur’ān says in Sūrah Muḥammad, forbade the slaying of prisoners of war; on the contrary, ordered that they be either set free as a gesture of generosity or on payment of ransom and that in any case, after the cessation of hostilities, their period of captivity, should not be prolonged. During the period of their captivity, Islām has been so emphatic about decent treatment of the prisoners of war that the non-Muslim prisoners-of-war testified that their Muslim captors gave them [a] good diet while they contented themselves with a poor fare and provided them with camel mounts but themselves walked on foot. Did any people in any period of world history treat the belligerent enemy any better? In so far as equitable and just treatment of the enemy is concerned, the Holy Qur’ān lays down in this behalf

لَا يَجْرُ مِنْكُمْ شَنْئَانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا تَعْدِلُوا
 اِعْدِلُوا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

[5[Al-Mā'idah]:9] “Under no circumstances should the enmity of a people prevent you from rendering justice and equitable treatment. Do ye justice to the enemy in any case, for, this is the demand of righteousness.”

It is a pity that the world has failed to value this glorious teaching.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُؤْبَقَاتِ قَالُوا
 يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَاهُنَّ قَالَ الشِّرْكَ بِاللهِ
 وَالسِّحْرُ وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللهُ إِلَّا
 بِالْحَقِّ وَآكُلُ الرِّبَا وَآكُلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ وَ
 التَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الزُّحْفِ وَقَذْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 23

Seven Destructive Sins— Homicide Without Good Cause, Usury, Slander, etc.

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Commanded the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allah be on him):

“Abstain ye from seven destructive evils.”

They (the companions) asked ‘And what are they, O Prophet of Allāh?’ He said:

“Shirk (i.e., association of someone with God as a partner or an equal or ascription to Him of a spouse or a son or adviser), pre-occupation with illusory objects and deceptive things, slaying any man without just and good cause, usury, consuming the property of orphans, turning tail to the enemy in battle and accusing falsely innocent believing women.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

The Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has in this Ḥadīth pointed out seven social evils which ultimately bring utter ruin both upon individuals and nations. The foremost and the first in importance is Shirk which means association of aught as partner in person and attributes to God.

Shirk is offence No. 1 in the field of faith. And indirectly human morals are seriously affected as a consequence of Shirk. Shirk is of two kinds. One is manifest Shirk and the other is hidden Shirk. The manifest Shirk consists in ascription of a man, an idol, or any other object, as partner to God in His dominion or in His attributes or setting up an equal to Him; as, for instance, the Hindus, believe in many deities, besides God, as His partners. Or, as the Christians believe Jesus Christ to be the one of God and a partner in His

attributes and in His dominion. The hidden Shirk consists in practically honoring someone (other than God) as God alone should be honored, while simultaneously setting up no partner with God and claiming to be believing in His unity; or relying on somebody (other than God) as is worthy only of the honor of God, or loving someone (other than God) as God alone deserves to be loved, or fearing someone as God alone deserves to be feared.

The hidden Shirk of this variety is, unfortunately, found in many Muslims in our times. But Islām teaches perfect unity and emphatically warns us of both the manifest as well as the hidden Shirk. Another tradition indicates that in the connotation of shunning Shirk, in other words, in the conception of unity, belief in God includes belief in the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), for it is through prophethood that real unity is established in the world. In short, there is extreme stress in the teachings of Islām, against Shirk and it is the duty of every true Muslim to shun both its hidden as well as its manifest variety. In respect of hidden Shirk, the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) says in a captivating style:

“All that has abode in your heart besides
God is an idol of thine, O ye of weak faith.

Be wary of these hidden idols and keep the
apron of thy heart clear of them.”

The second evil mentioned in this Ḥadīth is *siḥr*. It stands in Arabic for something illusory, an object which is projected in a different shape, its reality being covered up, and showing a lie as a truth. This type of *siḥr* is the worst kind of falsehood, for, in addition to lie, it partakes of element of

cheating and cunning. Therefore gilding is also called siḥr in Arabic. As, for instance, if a silver article is gold-plated and offered as a gold article, it will be termed siḥr in Arabic idiom. Anything underhand or surreptitious, having an element of secrecy with the object of deception, will be called siḥr in Arabic language. Islām declares all these things unlawful as they adversely affect morals, and tend to breed an involved and crooked habit of mind, and give rise to mutual suspicion, dissension and discord. The deceptiveness and fraudulence which characterize what is called siḥr in common parlance, are too well-known to need further exposition. Also siḥr means mischief and disruption and the evil of siḥr in this shape is a manifest and clear feature and in the following paragraph the reference to murder bears a supporting testimony to it.

The third evil to which attention has been invited is murder without a just cause. Islām lists murder among serious offences and prescribes death for murder with intent, which can be changed into blood-money compensation only when the parties, as well as the concerned authority, agree. The wisdom underlying this concession is that if the affected families of the parties hope for a true reconciliation, they may be saved thereby from the continuing cycle of vendetta.

The proviso of “without just cause” with “murder” has been appended as an exception to such killings as take place in war or as a result of due process of law. Murder without “good and just cause” also applies to murders committed by people who lose their heads and fanatics who killed someone in the belief that they are meting out a deserving punishment, without the sanction of a legal court, in defiance of the prescribed course of law. Islām strictly forbids such

high-handedness and forbids taking the law in one's own hands. For, without such an injunction, peace of the land could not be maintained. In fact, Islām considers “murder without just cause” a most heinous crime, so much so that the Holy Qur’ān observes:

“One who killed a person without just cause, killed the entire mankind.” [5[Al-Mā'idah]:33]

For, murder without just cause not only leads to a long and offensive cycle of mutual vendetta, but, at the same time, undermines feelings of respect for law in the country. As a result of incidents of this kind, human conscience is frightened into slow death. It was essential that murder should be listed among the most heinous crimes.

The fourth evil to which the Ḥadīth under reference points is usury. No doubt because of a centuries-long period of non-Islāmic environment, usury has become an inalienable part of the economic system in vogue, in almost the whole of the modern world, and a substantial part of Muslims is also, indirectly involved in this filth. But there is little gainsaying the fact that usury is a great curse, destructive not only of human impulses of sympathy and fellow-service, but also a great cause of fanning the fires of disputes and wars in the world. Usury leads to

(1) destruction of the fine impulses of human nature,

(2) encouragement to contract debts far heavier than one can afford, and

(3) undue prolongation of conflicts and wars, for, people, in the heat of animosity rush into debts headlong and thereby add fuel to the fire of war.

Islām has therefore declared usury unlawful, and confines lending and borrowing to the following three forms:

1. Simple credit, in common parlance known as Qarḍah Ḥasanah (debt of honor), which a relation or friend or neighbor lends to another relation, friend or neighbor.

2. Mortgage loan, or, loan raised against property, movable or immovable, which is pledged, and

3. Business loan, or, lending money to someone, in loss and profit partnership with him, in trade, industry or craft.

Islām does not permit of any loan transaction outside the above three forms and declares usury, irrespective of the fact whether the rate of interest is low or high, as unlawful. To think that it is hard to get along without raising loan on interest is a mistaken idea which is the creation of the contemporary environment of misleading notions. During the heyday of Islām, the vast international commerce flourished without the help of interest. And so shall it flourish again when the wheels of fortune turn in favor of Islāmic supremacy and people wake up to its realities after blunders and falls.

The fifth evil to which attention has been invited is the eating up of the property of the orphans. This vice is also destructive of families and nations. For, it leads on the one hand, to the ruination of the youth of the community and, on the other, to an elimination of the feelings of human sympathy and to a spread of dishonesty. Thirdly, it opens the

way to the oppression of the weak, and fourthly, the spirit of sacrifice wanes among the people. Members of a community used to the spectacle of orphans being robbed and ransacked can never boldly take to the path of self-sacrifice. For, in that case, there would naturally arise in their hearts the fear that in the event of their death, their orphans would meet a similar fate. Islām has, therefore, declared the care of the orphans as a most grave responsibility and the Holy Qur’ān has laid extreme stress on it.

The sixth vice which has been mentioned in the Ḥadīth is turning tail to the enemy, in battle. This is a weakness that has largely contributed to the decline of nations. The truth is that a cowardly people have no right to live as they fall easy preys to oppressive and aggressive nations. Islām therefore considers it a heinous offence to turn tail and show the white feather on the battle-front. The Holy Qur’ān says, accordingly:

“O ye believers, when you meet the enemy in the battle, as an army, turn not your backs under any circumstances, and whoso does so, except that he does so as a tactic for battling, or, to join another party of believers for purposes of offering battle later, he will incur the wrath of Allāh and his abode is the hell-fire.” [8:[Al-Anfāl]16-17]

This is the golden teaching which contributed to the victories of early Muslims, leading them to the conquest of the then-known world, with lightning speed.

The point is worth pondering. Even in our apparently highly advanced times no experienced general could give a better order to his army.

The seventh and the last point mentioned in this Ḥadīth is leveling false accusation against innocent, believing women. This is a vice which in truth greatly undermines national character. But, it is a matter of deep regret that many people indulge in this weakness; they hear libelous stories with great relish and give them wide currency, so much so, that they spread like a jungle blaze, destroying in their wake an innocent heart. A slight consideration will show that indulgence in obscene, libelous, sinful talk is far more destructive of society than actual sinfulness. For, it poisons the hearts of the weak-minded and undermines the awe of sinful indulgence. If an act of sinfulness is committed, and its knowledge is limited to two persons, its effect is likewise restricted. But when a sin is talked of by many tongues, many a weak-minded youth becomes infected with its bad effect and slowly the natural fear of sin which is inherent in human nature and is greatly instrumental in restraining evil, loses its grip. It is, therefore, that Islām has not only taken preventive measures against sinful tendencies, but has, at the same time, shut the door to libel and indulgence in stories of sinfulness, and this is the one way of wisdom that leads to national reformation.

A closer examination in the light of the different aspects of moral conduct and social ethics reveals another great excellence of [this] Ḥadīth: and that it has kept in view, in a very charming manner, basic points relating to faith, morals, public peace, economics, security of the rights of the weak, national survival and manifest evil. For instance, the

reference to abstention from Shirk has been listed for the preservation of faith; the unlawfulness of sihr, for elevation of character and cleanliness of habits; “murder without just cause” has been forbidden in the interest of public peace; unlawfulness of usury has been mentioned for economic reform; care of the orphan has been commended for the firm establishment of justice and equity in respect of treatment of the weak; the warning against turning one’s back in the battlefield is in the interest of national survival, and slander has been made unlawful to bang the door on shamelessness. Thus has our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) by this golden command sealed up for us an ocean in a nutshell. Bless Muḥammad, O Lord! and grant him peace and safety.

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَا أَسْكَرَ كَثِيرُهُ
 فَقَلِيلُهُ حَرَامٌ - (ابوداؤد)

Hadīth No. 24

Intoxicants are Unlawful Even in Small Quantities

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“If the larger dose of a thing causes intoxication, its small quantity is also unlawful.”

(Abū Dāwūd)

Explanatory Note

While, on the one hand, this charming Ḥadīth declares liquor, and other intoxicants, as unlawful, it also, on the other hand, lays down the wise postulate that until a vice is

cut at its root, and unless all the possible avenues leading to it are sealed, there is no shutting it out. Therefore it is a dangerous mistake to think that since liquor and other intoxicants do not induce intoxication when taken in small quantities, therefore there is no harm in their restricted consumption. Human nature is so constituted that once permission to use a thing is granted, one fails to observe subtle distinction of this nature and cannot keep off a particular limit. In particular in the case of intoxicants this danger is very great. Because when one betakes himself to this field, in most cases, there is nothing to prevent further progress in that direction and from a drachma to an ounce and from an ounce to a double dose and then to a pound, the momentum continues to grow. It is, therefore, that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has declared unlawful the consumption of intoxicants even in small doses, so that dangerous vices of this nature are uprooted at the outset. Tens of thousands of persons meet their doom in this world simply because they tried to have a temporary excitement in their mind by taking a few drops of wine in the beginning, then slipped so fast that they fell into a state of stupor throughout the day and far into the night. The same is true of opium, morphia, bhang, charas, hashish, cocaine and other intoxicants; their limited consumption leads in the end to heavy dosages and the man who plays in ankle-deep water by the seashore eventually gives up his ghost in its overflowing depths. The glorious Qur'ān has, therefore, notwithstanding its recognition of some merits of wine and gambling, given the finding that their danger far exceeds their benefits,

إِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا

[2[Al-Baqarah]:220] i.e., even if they have, beyond doubt, some benefits, their injurious properties far exceed their advantages. The true Muslim should, therefore, in any case, abstain from them.

If the question is posed here that since there are exceptional cases of men who can keep themselves within limits, in respect of the use of wine, and that there is little danger of their exceeding the small dosage, will consumption of wine in limited quantities be considered permissible in their case? The answer is an emphatic “no”. Even so, the consumption of wine will not be permissible for any Muslim. For, primarily in the matter of such regulations, the majority aspect and mass angle will be kept in view; that is to say, that when something is definitely dangerous for the general mass of the people, in consideration for the mass aspect of the law, that particular thing is declared unlawful even for the minority, for, the laws cannot otherwise hold their ground. Secondly, if a man can keep himself in check today, where is the guarantee that he will not slip off and lose grip on himself tomorrow? Thirdly, this Ḥadīth does not list all the evils of drinking but, has only by way of example, pointed out its intoxicating ill-effect. Wine, in fact, has many other injurious properties besides this one. Therefore, if in the case of a person, the ill effect of intoxication is absent, wine will still be considered unlawful for him on the ground of its other harmful properties. And it is therefore that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has declared it unlawful, in any case.

In short through this Ḥadīth, our Master (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) has invited our attention to three important things. Firstly, that every intoxicant is unlawful to Muslims, whether it is wine, bhang, charas, opium, hashish, cocaine, or any other thing. Secondly what produced intoxication when used in big quantity, even its small dosage is unlawful. Therefore, nobody can consume wine or bhang, opium or hashish on the pretext that he uses it in such quantities as fail to induce intoxication. Thirdly, the true remedy, for eradicating evils of this kind, is that they should be cut at the very root and all the possible avenues to them should be sealed. For, if the door to them is kept open, the danger of their invasion will be there and Islām aims at providing complete shelter against any such possibility.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ عَشَّ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي -
 (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 25

A Cheat cannot be Considered a True Muslim

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“Whoso cheats in business and in transactions, and is not at heart what he appears to be, is not of me.”

(Muslim).

Explanatory Note

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) made this observation when, on inserting his hand in a heap of grain belonging to a grain merchant, he discovered

that it was wet inside while, with a thick covering of dry grains on top, an attempt had been made to cover this defect. At that time his face was suffused with anger and in extreme displeasure, he told the grain merchant that cheating was not permissible in Islām, and the Muslim who practiced deceit and wanted to sell rotten goods by making them up as good commodity, had no lot or part with him. He then commanded that if goods were defective in any way, their defect should be made public and then offered for sale so that the buyer may be able to evaluate them, keeping their defect in mind.

The effect of this extremely forceful exhortation was evidenced sometime in the very charming difference of opinion that occurred among his companions, when, for instance, the vendor would ask two hundred coins for his commodity but the buyer would insist that it was worth three hundred coins. But it is painful to note that many so-called Muslims of today cheat in trade without the least scruples and back their lies with oaths and indulge in excessive adulteration, so much so that even Satan, perhaps, feels outdone. Some Muslims perform Ḥajj (pilgrimage) also for the sole consideration of promoting their trade with their newly-won epithet of Ḥājī. I do not say that all of them are of this type. But when a substantial number of community is involved in moral degradation of this kind, the entire mass of its people cannot get away from the stigma of ill-repute. And, in any case, the true follower of our Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is one who obeys his command, and shuns every form of deceit and fraud, as he cannot otherwise escape the operation of the warning, “that whoso

cheats and commits fraud in trade and other transactions
has nothing to do with me.”

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ - (ابوداؤد)

Hadīth No. 26

Do not Imitate other Nations

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Ibnī ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him):

“Whoso imitated another people (leaving the way and tradition of his own community and people) will be considered one of them.”

(Abū Dāwūd)

Explanatory Note

This brief Ḥadīth carries a subtle psychological point and it means that one who abandons the way and the custom of his own people and its characteristics and seeks to look like another people, it will be understood, in his case, that his

heart has been influenced by the way and custom and tradition of the other people, and has yielded to them in mental slavery. For, the desire to seek resemblance with others in this manner springs from a sense of inferiority complex. A person feels that the culture and civilization and circumstances and outlook of a certain people are far superior and higher than the culture, civilization and circumstances and outlook of his own community, and starts looking down upon himself, in comparison with them, then falling into mental slavery begins to imitate them blindly. No doubt therefore that such a person would be listed as a member of the community he seeks to imitate. The Holy Prophet (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) has, therefore, by means of this Ḥadīth, warned the Muslims against imitating the ways and culture of other communities and commanded them to adopt Islāmic culture instead, believing it to be the best and highest of all other cultures and civilizations; otherwise they will land themselves in the worst sort of mental slavery and thus lose their distinct identity and their excellent individuality. And there is little doubt about it that mental slavery is far worse than secular slavery. A man, who is a slave temporarily, is no doubt a subject of the other fellow, but in spite of it, his heart and his mind are free. But one who is mentally a captive, in spite of being a free man temporarily, loses the freedom of his soul and mind and his deeds are in no way better than those of the monkey who knows only aping and dancing to the tune of others. But it is a pity that notwithstanding these wise instructions of their Lord (may peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) Muslims of today have taken to the worst form of slavery of the western countries. When the British came to

India, a substantial section of Muslims surrendered abjectly before their culture and betook themselves to decking themselves up with its plumage. Their beards disappeared. Their dress beat a hasty retreat before the onslaught of ties and collars and goblets of wine overflowed in their feasts and their womenfolk discarded their veils to display their alluring garments publicly. Does not all this add up to the worst form of “whoso imitated the ways of others became one of them.” Reflect, O ye who have eyes!

It is no doubt true that there is no harm in adopting a good thing in a befitting manner. Even our Master (Blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) says in this connection:

“A wise saying is the lost property of the faithful and wherever he finds it he is most entitled to take it, for it is his property.”

But it does not mean that every nonsense should be adopted blindly. On the contrary, in taking to a thing there should be two determining factors taken into consideration:

(1) Firstly, that it should be in fact good and should not be contrary to the spirit of Islāmic teaching and tradition.

(2) Secondly, it should not be adopted, blindly, in imitation but should be thoroughly scrutinized and its pros and cons carefully weighed and it should be adopted in a normal way.

عَنِ النَّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ
 اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِنَّ
 فِي الْجَسَدِ مِضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ
 الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ
 كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 27

If the Heart is Good All the other Limbs Get Well

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Nu‘mān bin Bashīr, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say,

“In the body is a piece of flesh, when it gets well, the whole body gets well and when it becomes unhealthy, the whole body gets unhealthy and hark! That piece is the heart.”.

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

In this Ḥadīth, a charming philosophy, aimed at reforming one's self has been enunciated. It says that the heart is the fountainhead of all the actions of man. If the heart of a man entertains good and pure thoughts, all his deeds will necessarily be directed towards the path of virtue. But if the heart has dirty and offensive ideas, the deeds must necessarily follow the path of vice, for the feelings entertained by the heart are like seeds and action is the tree that grows out of the seed. Therefore, for the purpose of reformation, one must first worry about the heart. If leaders of a community and the press infuse in the minds of the masses the feelings of virtue, and the college and school teachers similarly touch the hearts of the students, as also the parents those of their children, and instill in them the love of God, of the Prophet and of the faith, and feelings of welfare for the community, and the spirit of service and sacrifice and truthfulness, and sow in them the seeds of honesty, then there is little occasion to worry for good deeds on their part. The purity of mind will itself stimulate the growth of the tree of virtue. But if the heart is sick, the plant of good deeds will not grow and if it grew at all, it would wither away soon. The Holy Founder of the Aḥmadiyya Movement, the Promised Messiah (peace of Allāh be on him) has well said in this connection:

“Righteousness is the root of all virtue.

If this root is firm all is safe.”

The truth is that [the] human heart is the central repository of righteousness, the fountainhead and source of

all virtuous deeds. If the heart is in good shape, the activity of the hands and the feet and the tongue and the eyes also becomes healthy. But if the heart is filthy then all the deeds of man smell of stench and filth. Even the seemingly good deeds of such a person are but lifeless imitations or hypocritical advertisements devoid of any reality. It is thus the duty of every reformer to concentrate on the cure of the heart first for the heart is like the root and no dirty root would grow into a holy tree.

عَنْ وَابِصَةَ بْنِ مَعْبُدٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اسْتَفْتِ نَفْسَكَ
 اسْتَفْتِ نَفْسَكَ اسْتَفْتِ نَفْسَكَ. أَلِدُّ
 مَا أَطْمَأَنَّتْ إِلَيْهِ النَّفْسُ وَأَطْمَأَنَّ إِلَيْهِ
 الْقَلْبُ وَالْإِثْمُ مَا حَاكَ فِي النَّفْسِ وَتَرَدَّدَ
 فِي الصَّدْرِ وَإِنْ افْتَاكَ النَّاسُ (مسند احمد)

Hadīth No. 28

Avoid that What Rankles in Your Mind

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Wābiṣa bin Ma‘bad, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“Seek the guidance of thy soul! Seek the guidance of thy soul! Seek the guidance of thy soul! The virtuous deed is one whereby thy soul feels restful and thy heart contented, and sinful act is one which rankles in thy soul and which

contracts thy heart even though the other people endorse it as lawful.”

(Musnad Aḥmad)

Explanatory Note

This observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is based on the eternal truth that God the Excellent, who is the Creator of nature, has endowed every man with a pure nature. It is the later developments that mislead it in the wrong direction and cover up this pure nature with impure superimpositions. Still the basic goodness of nature and the light of conscience do not die out totally and serve man throughout his life as a torch of guidance. Even when persons deeply involved in worldly filth reflect calmly, in moments of solitary retirement, on their own condition, their nature, tearing through the meshes of worldliness, starts reproaching them. This blessed observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) is based on the foundational guidance of this natural light. He says that in general matters of principle a sensible man need consult no outside judge, for, his own heart is for him a jurist; he should consult his own heart in respect of evil and good and seek the light of his own conscience. For, virtue produces a feeling of expansiveness and restfulness and contentment in the heart, while vice contracts the bosom and weighs down on the soul. In such a predicament, it is useless to seek the false support of guidance from others; instead, one should listen to the voice of one's conscience and, if in respect of a certain matter, the conscience hesitates and the heart feels

contracted, then one should desist from it, notwithstanding the favorable views of doctors of law, and should accept the verdict of the light of conscience which is in fact, the guidance given by the Creator of nature Himself.

But, as in the words

اسْتَفْتِ نَفْسَكَ

(consult thy mind), the Holy Prophet (blessings and peace of Allāh be on him) has hinted, it is necessary that, in order to consult the mind, one should reflect in retirement, away from others, and should consult it in a spirit of righteousness, as, otherwise, the opinions of others would overpower the conscience and shut out the light of nature. But if a person consults his mind, in retirement, free from all external influences, the natural light of his heart will serve him as the torch of guidance which has been eternally gifted with the power to discriminate between virtue and vice. On reflection one would discover that this natural sense of discriminating between virtue and vice is a weighty argument in support of the existence of God. For, if there is no God (God forbid that we entertain such a view), then whence comes this innate sense of discrimination between virtue and vice, which resides in the depths of the souls and provides means of guidance to man? Reflect and ponder well!

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ هَلَكَ
النَّاسُ فَهُوَ أَهْلَكَهُمْ (مسلم)

Hadīth No. 29

Inferiority Complex is a Highly Fatal Feeling

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (blessings and peace of Allāh be on him):

“When a man declares about certain people that they are doomed, it is he who consigns them to the doom.”

(Muslim).

Explanatory Note

This Ḥadīth is based on a great psychological fact which is described in modern terminology as ‘inferiority complex’ or the defeatist mentality. The Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allāh be on him) says that attempt should be made to raise the morale of the people by creating in them hope and faith and self-reliance and self-respect, instead of dragging them down the pit of degradation through despair, frustration, inferiority complex and a defeatist mentality. Whoso wails loud over the minor errors and unimportant drawbacks of the people, and moans that they are finished and doomed, he himself, through such observations, creates in them despair and an inferiority complex and thus opens the way to their doom. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has, therefore, in profound wisdom, enjoined that while people may be suitably reprimanded for their errors as a reformatory measure, crying over each little mistake and wailing that they have neared the brink of ruin is tantamount to consigning them, with one's own hands, to doom and that every reformer should beware of this course.

In this respect, the attitude of our Chief (blessings and peace of Allāh be on him) came into evidence when, once upon a time, a party dispatched by him (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) ran back from the battlefield to Medina. The thought that turning one's back to the enemy in the battle is unlawful in Islām, made them so deeply distraught with an overwhelming sense of shame, that they would not come up before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). When he saw them cowering in a corner of the mosque, hiding their faces, he went over to them in person and called out to enquire who they were. Shamefacedly, with eyes downcast, they said, "O Prophet of Allāh, we are the runaway party" (نَحْنُ الْفَرَّارُونَ).

Sensing in them the feeling of self-defeatism, he told them that they were not runaways, but that they had retreated only to attack the enemy harder, and had but come over to him, and that he was about to lead them back to the battle. When this soul-stirring call of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) reached the ears of this party, then suffering silently in the vortex of despondency, and buffeted by the rising waves of inferiority complex, they sprang forward in one bound and fell to kissing his hands. This was the lesson that our Master gave his companions practically and which he imparted theoretically through the Ḥadīth under reference. O Lord, shower peace and bliss and safety on Muḥammad.

The word

أَهْلَكَهُمْ

occurring in this Ḥadīth (meaning ‘he destroyed them’) is susceptible of another meaning (he is personally the most ruined) after a slight variation in vowel point it becomes

أَهْلَكُ

It is evident that in terms of this other meaning also, this Ḥadīth carries a very charming sense, for, in the latter case, it will mean that the person, who declares others as the doomed, is in reality personally caught up deep down in the extreme consciousness of self-defeatism. Whether therefore the other people are doomed or not, by uttering these words, he, at any rate, seals his own doom, without the trace of a doubt.

عَنْ أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ
 قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ -

(ابن ماجه)

Hadīth No. 30

True Repentance Washes Off Sin

Narrated by Abū ‘Ubaidah bin ‘Abdullāh, Allāh be pleased with him on the authority of his father: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“The one who repented of sin was like one who had never sinned.”

(Ibn Mājah)

Explanatory Note

The philosophy of taubah (repentance) is deeply concerned with spirituality and also exercises tremendous impact on morals of men. Through taubah one is helped to remain full of hope from God and thus is enabled to elevate his moral standard. It is a pity, however, that most of the religions, except Islām, have, by banging the door of repentance (taubah) on man, promoted on the one hand, distrust of God and on the other, pessimism and moral degeneration. As, for instance, the Christian Church, following its rejection of the taubah, sought refuge in the totally artificial and unnatural theory of vicarious atonement. And the Hindu religion has bogged down its followers in the quagmire of reincarnation. While the truth of the matter is that the postulate of taubah (repentance) is a clearly natural remedy, in disregard of which neither man can attain to spiritual perfection nor to moral excellence.

It is a strange irony that the religious systems that bolt the door on taubah are not prepared to concede to God, Creator-Lord of this Universe, even the moral attributes which are considered praiseworthy endowments of a good man. A gentleman overlooks the faults of his children, of his friends, of his subordinates, and of his servants, day in and day out. It is considered praiseworthy on his part. But it is a pity that such generous treatment on the part of God has been considered improper. In fact, it has been considered imperative on His part to crush the sinner even though he was contrite and repented his sin sincerely. Islām outright spurns at this impure doctrine with contempt and opens wide the gate of God's forgiveness and mercy to every

truthfully contrite sinner. And it is in this manner that it causes a two-way stream to flow between man and His Creator, of compassion and mercy on the part of God, and of dependence and gratitude on the part of man, as much worthy of the glory of God as it is becoming of worshipfulness of man.

Clearly, man is weak and prone to stumble often, under the pressure of momentary influences. It will be highly unjust to condemn him to the gallows even when he was truly repentant and sincerely contrite.

It is totally fallacious and unreasonable to argue that acceptance of repentance encourages sin.

Far from emboldening in sinfulness, true repentance serves as a means of purifying a man. Islām has laid down such hard conditions as make true taubah a grave spiritual revolution and a basic mental change. As is clear from the Holy Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, these conditions are three :

1. The repenting person should be contrite of his sin with a true heart and seek forgiveness and protection with heartfelt sincerity.

2. That he should take a vow that he shall abstain from such transgression and sinful acts in future and should seek the help of God in this behalf.

3. That if it is possible to make practical amends for the wrong and sin he has committed, he should do so. If, for example, he has misappropriated somebody's property he should recompensate him and if he has usurped the rights of someone, he should restore the same to the rightful party.

No sensible person can find fault with the taubah governed by such conditions. The truth is that sincere repentance (taubah) is a death which grants man a new life, opening the way to the mercy, compassion and protecting love of God.

Islām alone opens the door to true repentance.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
 وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ لَا يُلْدَغُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مِنْ جُحْرٍ
 وَاحِدٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 31

A Believer is Never Bitten Twice in the Same Hole

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him ever and evermore):

“A believer is never bitten twice in the same hole.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

This charming Ḥadīth holds a vast meaning. It's plain and simple purport is that the true believer remains alert and on guard. If he puts his hand in a hole (i.e., if he comes in

contact with a person, party or people), he sees to it that he is not bitten the second time. In other words, he gets alert after his very first experience and is saved from further injury, refusing to give the other party another chance to hurt him. By means of this observation, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has enjoined on the Muslims to remain exceedingly alert and on guard, and described it as a characteristic of the true Muslim, that because of his inherently trustful disposition, he may be deceived once but is never deceived twice by the same person or in the same affair, and that profiting by each bitter experience, he tends further to strengthen his position, and thus goes on opening for himself further avenues of progress, one after the other.

This observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) applies with equal force to all the phases and opportunities of one's life. If, for instance, a Muslim has been cheated once by a dishonest businessman, this Ḥadīth is there to warn him to beware of giving the crook another chance to swindle him. If a professional thug cheated a Muslim once, this Ḥadīth warns him against being swindled a second time by the same crook. And if a person cheated a Muslim by posing as a friend, this Ḥadīth alerts him to beware of playing in the hands of that cheat again. In short, this Ḥadīth is of a very wide scope. Even in cases when a man does something believing it to be innocent, or knowing it to be sinful but failing to realize its gravity and realizing its harm only after practical experience, this Ḥadīth serves him as a torch of guidance, warning him against repeating his mistake. In fact, it will not be in keeping with the insight of a Muslim if he is bitten twice in the same hole.

In short, this beautiful Ḥadīth cautions every Muslim to live with his eyes open in this world and to make every fall a means of further strengthening of his feet and to leap forward after every slip and continue to march on and onward.

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
 قَالَ مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْمِيزَانِ أَثْقَلَ مِنْ
 حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ - (ابوداؤد)

Hadīth No. 32

No Deed is Better than Good Conduct

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Dardā, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (Blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace):

“Nothing weighs heavier in the scale of God than the excellence of conduct.”

(Abū Dāwūd.)

Explanatory Note

Excellent social behavior is half the faith. Islām has laid tremendous emphasis on it, so much so, that according to this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) declared that there was nothing weightier in the Divine scale than excellent conduct. In another Ḥadīth, he

says that whoso was not grateful to man was not grateful to God. In fact, excellence of social conduct constitutes the basis of every virtue; even spirituality is but an advanced state of good conduct. It is therefore that our Chief has laid so much stress on the improvement of social conduct and in this behalf the Aḥādīth reported are far too many to be enumerated.

Besides, in so far as the expression of social ethics through individual conduct is concerned, Islām does not omit to satisfy the rights of any claimant. From God down to men and from among men, from the monarch down to the humble servant, good conduct has been enjoined on all. Rights of officers, of subordinates, of the father and of the son, of friend and of foe, of man and of beast, in short of each and every one, have been assigned. And, again, it has been enjoined to discharge these obligations in the best possible manner. Even minor and secondary virtues have not been left out. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) went so far as to say that if a person meet his acquaintances with a smiling countenance to please them, it will be considered an act of moral excellence on his part, making him worthy of merit in the eyes of God. On another occasion he advised that thorny or slippery or stinking objects, or stumbling blocks, should be removed from the way lest another brother should suffer thereby.

In regard to merciful treatment of others he said,

“One who showed not compassion to others
would not deserve it of God.”

He was personally endowed with such excellence of social conduct that he never turned down the request of anyone for

help, never first let go the hand of anybody once he grasped it; he took compassionate care of orphans and supported widows, won over his neighbors through kindly treatment, attended to his poorest of companions in their sickness and gave them new heart by the charm of his comforting speech, so full of compassion and love.

A poor old woman, who lived in Medina, used to sweep the Masjid-i-Nabawī, (the Prophet's mosque). When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) did not see her for a few days, he enquired of companions whether she was in good health. The companions submitted that she had expired after a short illness and considering that it would distress him, they did not inform him when her funeral was taken out. This grieved him to no small extent, and he complained, why they did not inform him of her death. And then he left to visit her grave and prayed for her departed soul.

On one occasion, probably before the command for the women to observe seclusion was revealed, he was with his honored wife Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, when a person called on him. On receiving the intimation, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) remarked to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that the visitor was not a good man. But when he came to him, he talked to him in an affectionate and conciliatory tone. As he went away, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah submitted, "O Prophet of Allāh, you do not hold a good opinion of him and yet you have been so engaging to him in your conversation." The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said,

“ ‘Ā’ishah! is it not my duty to deport myself in excellent ways in my social contact with the people?”

Before embracing Islām, Abū Sufyān was a bitter enemy of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh and His blessings on him). But when the Caesar of Rome enquired of him about the teachings of the Holy Prophet to his people (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and asked if he had ever broken a promise or betrayed a trust, Abū Sufyān had nothing to say about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but that he prohibited worship of idols and taught excellent manners and that he had never broken the pledge he made with them.

This excellence of his conduct was not confined to men only. He has included even dumb animals within the fold of his compassion. He would constantly impress on his companions,

فِي كُلِّ كَبِدٍ رَطْبَةٌ أَجْرٌ

“It is a good deed to show compassion to all living beings.”

Once when a camel was moaning piteously under the weight of excessive load, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) was deeply moved and walking over to the beast, compassionately patted his head and told his owner that the dumb animal was complaining of his cruel treatment and that he should treat him with considerateness so that he may be shown compassion in the heavens.

Such are the manners as have been taught us by our Master. It grieves one's heart to see many Muslims of today being so very unmindful of their social duties.

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا آتَاكُمْ كَرِيمٌ قَوْمٍ فَأَكْرِمُوهُ
(ابن ماجه)

Hadīth No. 33

Respect the Respectable Chiefs of Other People

Narrated by Ḥadīrat Ibn ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings):

“When the leaders of a people pay you a visit, show them due respect.”

(Ibni Mājah)

Explanatory Note

The most effective means of promoting wholesome relations between countries and nations and parties lies in respecting and honoring leaders and dignitaries of one

another. Our Master (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has been very emphatic to the Muslims in this behalf. This Ḥadīth is one of the many having a bearing on this golden principle. Differences are bound to arise among nations and countries, as they do among individuals. In order to mitigate their bitterness, decent treatment of one another is the most effective remedy. Respectful attitude towards the leaders of one another exercises considerable influence in this behalf. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has accordingly commanded that whenever the leader or dignitary of another people or party visits Muslims, they should show him due respect, irrespective of his religion and race, and should not neglect the duties of hospitality towards him. This priceless injunction is the finest epitome of hospitality, good conduct, and true statesmanship.

His personal example in this respect was reflected in his laying by a special robe which he would don when receiving foreign embassies, as a mark of special welcome to them; though, as a rule, he had simple tastes and his dress and food had no trace of fastidiousness. He was so particular in the matter of duties of hospitality to foreign delegations, that while on his deathbed, he made a will directing respectful treatment of visiting embassies and missions. Once when an ambassador was impertinent in his conduct towards him, he told him that he could not rebuff him as he was the envoy of a foreign people. On the conquest of Mecca, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) announced amnesty to those who would remain indoors within their own homes and would not visit the houses of others to hatch conspiracies against Muslims. Thereupon Abū Sufyān, the

Chief of Mecca, said that since he was the head of the Quraish tribe, he deserved special consideration. Granting his request, he said that his house would be marked off for special treatment and that whoso sought asylum in it would be treated as if he took refuge in the Holy Prophet's own house.

In short, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) showed utmost respect to the leaders of other peoples and enjoined the same on his companions. This teaching alone can lead to world peace and cleansing of hearts.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَعْطُوا الْأَجِيرَ أَجْرَهُ
 قَبْلَ أَنْ يَجِفَّ عَرْقُهُ . (ابن ماجه)

Hadīth No. 34

Pay Wages to the Worker Before His Sweat is Dry

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh Ibni ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“Pay wages to the worker before his sweat is dry.”

(Ibni Mājah)

Explanatory Note

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has, on the one hand, enjoined respectful attitude towards the leaders and dignitaries of people, and has, on the

other, paid due attention to the rights of the poor and the weak. Since the laboring class is generally the poorest, he has invited special attention to their rights and commanded payment of the worker's wages before his sweat becomes dry. In making this wise observation, his aim was not simply a prompt payment of the laborer's earnings; in fact, what he aimed at was to draw attention to the rights of the poor and the working classes in general. Since payments of the wages to the worker, as and when it became due, is the minimum of the worker's rights, by stressing its importance as an example, he indirectly proposed safeguard of the greater and more important rights of the worker. The reformer, who would not brook so much delay in payment of wages to the laborer as allows his sweat to become dry, is, by means of this command, without a doubt, also recommending the payment of full wages to the worker, a due regard for his comfort and abstention from putting him to exertion beyond his capacity. His teaching about the kindly treatment of domestic servants and his injunctions about Islāmic brotherhood and equality (which have been dealt with in some detail by the author in volumes II and III of his work—the *Khātaman-Nabiiyyīn*) are illustrative of his solicitude for the welfare of the poor, and show how great a protector of their rights they had in him.

This is true that, in order to keep the individual's initiative alive, and to ensure to him the fruit of his personal effort, he permitted possession of private property. Simultaneously, he outlined the organization of a suitable machinery in the shape of *Zakāt* (a prescribed rate), proscription of usury and division of property among heirs for the proper regulation and distribution of wealth. And, in

order to remove the traces of bitterness due to disproportion, if any were still left, he comforted the poorer classes by saying that if they adhered to faith, they would be admitted to heavens 500 years ahead of the wealthy. It is evident that the short life of this world bears no comparison to the eternal life of the hereafter. Again he comforted the poor further by addressing to them the words

الْفَقْرُ فَخْرِي

[Indigence is my pride] i.e., they should realize that he had collected no worldly goods for himself and being poor, he was of them and with them, and that his pride lay in his poverty.

At the same time, in this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has by saying the words, “Before the sweat is dry,” made a subtle hint that the laborer who is honest in the eyes of God, is the one who sweats in his work and does not work for show, nor neglect it in the absence of the employer, nor is dishonest. If, therefore, on the one hand, it is the duty of the employer to make payment of his wages to the worker in full measure and without delay, and to respect his rights, it is, at the same time, the duty of the worker to prove his honesty and sense of duty by sweating hard in his work. This is the middle course which alone can serve to establish true peace between the employer and the employee, the master and the servant, on a firm foundation.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ شَرُّ الطَّعَامِ الْوَلِيمَةُ يُدْعَى لَهَا الْأَغْنِيَاءُ وَيُتْرَكُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَمَنْ تَرَكَ الدَّعْوَةَ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 35

The Worst Feast is the One to Which only the Wealthy have been Invited

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“The worst feast was the one to which the wealthy had been invited and from which the poor had been left out. And whoso declined an invitation (to a meal), he verily sinned against God and disobeyed His Prophet.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

The measures adopted by Islām to regulate distribution of wealth, and to minimize the disproportion between high and low income groups, is an open book. In this respect, the social distinctions that perpetuate mutual rivalry and class struggle by dividing the rich and the poor into two distinct camps, are the most objectionable and principal features of the episode. Islām has exerted in the extreme to remove this class struggle and to reconcile the emotional conflict. In this connection the first step it takes is to put all Muslims on an equal level as brothers. Again, in respect of rights, it has not permitted the public posts of profit to become the monopoly of one class, and has commanded that they should be open to all, and that appointments should be made on the basis of merit, irrespective of caste or tribe or poverty or wealth.

In order to promote social contact among the rich and the poor and to weld them into one family, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has, besides this, commanded that when they arrange a feast, the wealthy must invite the poor also, and when asked to a meal by the poor, they should not decline to accept their invitation. The Ḥadīth under reference emphasizes the august words of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). He says in very emphatic language: the worst feast is the one to which the wealthy have been invited and from which the poor have been left out. At the same time, he warns the wealthy that it is not permissible to them to decline the invitation of a poor man on the ground of his poverty and the Muslim who did so “sinned against God and disobeyed His Prophet.” In another Ḥadīth he says,

لَوْ دُعِيتُ إِلَى كُرَاعٍ لَأَجِبْتُ

“If a poor man invited me to a meal of goat’s cooked feet, I would accept his invitation.”

In the course of yet another Ḥadīth, it is said that once Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) inadvertently hurt the feelings of Ḥaḍrat Bilāl (Allāh be pleased with him) and of some other poorer Muslims. When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) learnt this, he told Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) to soothe the hearts of those who were aggrieved as “in the pacification of their hearts lay the pleasure of God.” Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) went straight to them and begged of his brethren to forgive him as he did not mean to hurt them. Can an unpleasant grouping emerge in a truly Muslim society, in the face of this teaching? Never. It is our own fault that, through disregard of Islāmic teachings, we have encouraged the growth of rival camps in our social structure.

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ وَهُوَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ وَهُوَ يَذْكُرُ الصَّدَقَةَ وَالتَّعَفُّفَ عَنِ الْمَسْئَلَةِ أَيْدِي الْعُلِيَّا خَيْرٌ مِنَ أَيْدِي السُّفُلِي. (موطأ امام مالك)

Hadīth No. 36

The Upper Hand is Better than the Lower Hand

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him:

“In a sermon from the pulpit, the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) once enjoined charity and at the same time advised against begging and observed that the upper hand (of the donor) was better than the lower hand (of the receiver).”

(Mu’atṭā Imām Mālik).

Explanatory Note

Of all the possible ills arising out of poverty and destitution, mendicancy and low-spiritedness, and the habit of depending for livelihood on others, are the worst which generally take hold of the poor. When a destitute person sees the rich living in affluence, he falls prey, on the one hand, to low-spiritedness and to inferiority complex and, on the other, he falls into the habit of begging doles of the rich, to improve his own circumstances. Our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), through his far-sightedness, apprehended this possible danger and his soul would not feel at rest until he had provided against this threat. His commands, accordingly, are replete with observations that show his abhorrence of begging, and bid the poor to work for their living and forbid them to beg. The Ḥadīth under review is one of the many on the subject.

In this Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) says that while it is the duty of the rich to help their poor brethren, the poor should, however, refrain from begging and behave with dignity. In order to create among them a feeling of self-respect, he observes ‘the upper hand (i.e., the hand of the donor) is better than the lower hand (the hand of the receiver).’ In this brief sentence, he has in fact infused such a strong spirit of self-respect and dignity which should take quite a few volumes to explain in detail.

The holy body of his companions accorded this observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) the utmost respect. In this connection Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām (Allāh be pleased with him) says

that since after this command of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), he never accepted help from anybody. He was assigned a fixed stipend by the Khalīfah but he always turned it down on the ground that he would not let down his hand that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings be on him) had commanded to be kept up. Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (Allāh be pleased with him), a cousin of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and also his son-in-law and fourth Khalīfah of Islām after the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) came of a highly respectable family of the Quraish tribe. After migration to Medina, he would take an axe, go to the jungle, cut firewood and sell it in the market to make a living but would not ask help of anybody. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah (Allāh be pleased with him) a well-known companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) had to go without food, many times, for days, but would never beg of anybody. Once when he was prostrate with hunger, he asked Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (Allāh be pleased with him) and later also Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (Allāh be pleased with him) the meaning of a Qur’ānic verse which related to the command about feeding the hungry. But both Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar (Allāh be pleased with them) did not catch his hint and after explaining its usual meaning went away. By chance, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) happened to hear this conversation. He called Abū Hurairah (Allāh be pleased with him) very affectionately, said that it seemed he was hungry and asked him to come over to him. Then he gave him some milk to drink. There is yet another incident of a still superior type; it relates to another prominent companion whose whip fell down while he was

going on horseback. There went along with him some persons on foot. He did not request anyone for help but dismounting picked up the whip. When a companion asked him why he did not tell them to hand it back to him, adding that they could have readily obliged him, he replied back that the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) forbade them to seek charity and that if he had asked them to pick up his whip for him, it would have been very near to begging.

In short, the companions of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) set, by their conduct, such examples in self-reliance, contentedness and dignity, that history has no parallel to offer. And it is the distinct greatness of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) that, on the one hand, he directed the wealthy not to turn down a request for help and, on the other, commanded the poor to seek an honorable living and abstain from begging.

The two commands are, apparently, contradictions in terms but the truth is that in their reconciliation with one another lies the basis of a true brotherhood of the rich and the poor.

عَنْ سَعْدِ بْنِ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ قَالَ جَاءَ النَّبِيُّ
 صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعُودُنِي وَأَنَا بِمَكَّةَ فَقَالَ
 إِنَّكَ إِنْ تَذَرْتَنِي أَغْنِيَاءَ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَنْ
 تَذَرَهُمْ عَالَةً يَتَكَفَّفُونَ النَّاسَ - (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 37

Leave Behind Your Heirs in a Comfortable Condition

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Sa‘d bin Abī Waqqāṣ, Allāh be pleased with him: When I fell sick in Mecca and the Prophet of Allāh (peace of Allāh and His blessings be on him) came to enquire about my health, he said,

“It is better that thou leave thy heirs in affluence than that thou leave them in straits, seeking help of others.”

(Bukhārī)

Explanatory Note

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) made the foregoing observation when his close companion, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ (Allāh be pleased with him) fell ill during the course of his journey to Mecca. Fearing that his end was near, he expressed to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) a desire to bequeath the whole of his property in the way of Allāh. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) said that it was far too much and that he could not permit that. Thereupon Ḥaḍrat Sa'd proposed to bequeath away two-thirds of his property. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) did not permit that much either. Then at the end Ḥaḍrat Sa'd (Allāh be pleased with him) begged leave to give away one-third of his property. Permitting him to do so, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) observed that it were better if he left behind his heirs in good circumstances than that he left them in straitened circumstances so that they are forced to beg help of others.

This wise observation shows that Islām advises foresight and recognizes the importance of material means in emergent conditions. It does not permit a well-to-do Muslim to donate the whole of his property to the divine cause, and ignore the rights of His creatures by depriving his heirs of a share, forcing them to take to begging after his death.

It is a pity, however, that Muslims of today take an erroneous view of tawakkul (i.e., trust in God); in their view it amounts to leaving the matter in the hands of God, refraining from making any effort themselves in this behalf.

The Islāmic tawakkul is in no way susceptible of this interpretation. True Islāmic tawakkul, on the contrary, consists in taking all the necessary steps within one's means and simultaneously reposing one's trust in God, in the firm belief that with all the apparent devices adopted by one, the real key to success and achievement is with God alone. This is a difficult position; in fact, at the face of it, it seems to be self-contradictory and hard to understand and harder still to maintain. But the truth is that Islāmic tawakkul consists, on the one hand, in the adoption of all the necessary measures and, on the other, in believing that all the ropes are in the grip of God and that what He wills must inevitably come to pass. A little reflection will show that there is no contradiction in it. When God alone is the sole Maker, Disposer and Master of good and evil ordination and of the properties of things and causes, then there is no point in doubting that in spite of all the overt measures we take, the final determination of the result of our efforts rests in His hand. A tradition relevant to this point relates to a Bedouin chief who, happening to visit the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), left his camel untethered outside the Prophet's Mosque in his eagerness to have a meeting with the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). When he returned after his meeting, he found his she-camel had made off. In great consternation, he came back and related to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) how he had left his she-camel to the care of Allāh and on his return after his meeting with him, discovered that she had run away. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) observed

اعْقِلْهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ

i.e.,

“Tether her first and then leave her to the care of God.”

In short, in the Ḥadīth under review, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has, on the one hand, taught parents to have the foresight and wisdom to provide, so far as it lies in their power, for the subsistence of their children, and not to leave their dependents unsupported, and to make provision for their honorable living; and on the other, incidentally, has hinted by means of this Ḥadīth, that employment of overt means, in this behalf, does not, in any way, militate against the sense and spirit of tawakkul. One should, therefore, first take all the necessary measures so far as it lies in one’s power and is permitted by one’s resources, and then leave the result to God. No doubt, as I have stated above, it is a very difficult stand, for man is prone to over-incline to one side on account of his weakness; he either becomes so much devoted to overt means as to make them his god, or in utter defiance of these, he pins all his hope on God, so much so that he believes that, notwithstanding his complete rejection of the material means that God has made, He will nevertheless descend from the High Heavens to personally handle all his affairs. But the truth is that both these stands are untenable and contrary to the spirit of Islāmic teaching. The true philosophy which the virtuous in every age have followed lies in the observance of the maxim “Tether thy camel first and then leave her to the care of God.”

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ
 مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ (بخاری)

Hadīth No. 38

Every Person is a Ruler and will be Answerable in Respect of his Wards

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Ibnī ‘Umar, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (blessings of Allāh be on him and His peace) say:

“Each one of you is a ruler and will be answerable in respect of his subjects.”

(Bukhārī).

Explanatory Note

Every man has some rights and also owes some corresponding obligations. The Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allāh be on him) has, through this Ḥadīth, drawn attention to both these points. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has observed that each person, is, in spite of being a subject in some respects, a ruler in other respects. A man who is employed in an office, is, perhaps, subordinate to an officer. But the same person, may be the ruler of his wife and children in his home. A wife, in spite of enjoying marital love, is subject to the rule of her husband, in management of the household. But she simultaneously holds authority over the children, the domestics and over the property of the husband which she holds in her charge. Similarly from a king to a slave, from general to a trooper and from a governor to a peon, all are, within their respective spheres, both rulers as well as subjects. The king is the ruler of all of his subjects; but he is, at the same time, servant of God, or in other words, subject to the law of ordination and determination (Qaḍa wa Qadar). The same is true of the rest of officers and subordinates that they are rulers in one respect and subjects in the other. And, according to the observation of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) all of them will be required to answer with regard to the subjects in their respective spheres whether they rendered unto them their rights. When, through this process, we come to the last person (who is the least among them) and apparently we find none under him, on reflection we discover that he is, in reality, the ruler over one subject, his own self, over which he has full authority. He will therefore be required to answer in respect of his self how far he did his duty to it. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) in short, alerted everyone that to whichever section of the society one may belong, one is, in

one respect or the other, a ruler, and shall therefore, be required to answer about one's obligations in this behalf. This Ḥadīth, simultaneously a carrier of glad tidings to men, fortifying them with courage in that, whatever their station in life, each is, in a way, a ruler and has good cause, to be grateful to God for His having granted him a position in his eternal Kingdom and if one gave Him thanks, one could progress from one's existing sphere of rule to a higher and better dominion. In short, this pleasant composite of obligations and rights is both glad tidings for men and a warning. It is glad tidings in the sense that sovereignty is a gift of God, and a warning because every sovereignty entails a good many obligations. The true Muslim, therefore, is one who is grateful for the good tidings of future grace, and remains vigilant in respect of his present obligations; for, in this attitude lies eternal secret of human progress.

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ طَلَبُ الْعِلْمِ فَرِيضَةٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ وَمُسْلِمَةٍ (ابن ماجة)

Hadīth No. 39

Seeking Knowledge is a Duty of Every Muslim Man and Muslim Woman

Narrated by Ḥadrat Anas bin Mālik, Allāh be pleased with him: Said the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him):

“It is the duty of every Muslim man and woman to seek knowledge.”

(Ibni Mājah)

Explanatory Note

Since Islām is based on the certain knowledge revealed by God, in the shape of the final law, and advances its views with the sporting force of argument, it therefore very rightly

lays extreme stress on the acquisition of knowledge. This is one of the many Aḥādīth by means of which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has enjoined on Muslims, both men and women, to acquire knowledge. He was so particular about it according to another Ḥadīth, he is reported to have commanded,

“Seek knowledge even if you have to go to China for this purpose.”

It should be borne in mind that, owing to the conditions obtaining then, China was not only the most distant country from Arabia, but also the way to it was full of great hazards and traveling to it was beset with extreme dangers and great hardships besides entailment of extraordinary expenses. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has, by singling China out, by way of example, in fact, underlined the value of knowledge, to impress on the faithful, the necessity of acquiring learning even in face of extreme hardships and prohibitive distances. The early Muslims, as historical evidence shows, used to travel hundreds of miles and undergo heavy expenses to hear a Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) from his companions. When a man after having traversed hundreds of miles, came to Damascus from Medina to hear from Ḥaḍrat Abū Dardā (Allāh be pleased with him) a tradition of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him), Abū Dardā related to him that particular Ḥadīth and also told him that he had heard the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say that whoso undertook a journey for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, Allāh would open up for him the way to it and at the same time open his way to Paradise. In another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allāh be on him) has observed that a learned man, in comparison with a worshipping man who lacks knowledge, is like unto the full moon in comparison with a star. Again in another Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) says that a learned man far outweighs a thousand worshippers against the Satan. Another Ḥadīth of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) carries the statement:

“The learned who are also pious constitute the greatest good of my people.”

In yet another Ḥadīth the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has observed that the learned Ulema are the heirs of the Prophets. As, the Holy Qur’ān says, true learning must be accompanied by righteousness, piety and proper deeds, otherwise it is nothing better than a load on the back of a donkey.

In short, Islām has laid extreme emphasis on pursuit of knowledge and true learning has been accorded the next place to faith. Besides, knowledge has been aptly declared limitless. Hence the instruction that the more one acquires it, the more one should seek to increase it. Even the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) the Pride of Creation and the Chief of the Universe and Head of the Messengers has been taught by Allāh the Excellent the following prayer in the Holy Qur’ān:

“Say: Lord grant me increase in knowledge.” [20[Ṭāhā]:115]

As already made clear in the Ḥadīth under review, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has not restricted the pursuit of knowledge to men only. He has

similarly commanded womenfolk to seek knowledge. It is a matter of deep regret that, notwithstanding these peremptory injunctions, the standard of educational advancement of Muslim men and women, far from being superior to that of other people, is in fact comparatively very poor and low. Before the partition of India, the percentage of literacy among the Muslims was the lowest of all the nationalities—the Hindus, the Sikhs, the foreign Christians and the Parsees. This exhibition of illiteracy does little credit to a people who owe allegiance to the most learned of world Reformers (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him). It is high time Muslims realized their obligation and set about not only leading but outdistancing the rest of mankind in the field of both secular and religious learning.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ كَلِمَةُ الْحِكْمَةِ ضَالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَحَيْثُ مَا وَجَدَهَا فَهُوَ أَحَقُّ بِهَا. (ترمذی)

Hadīth No. 40

Every Truth is the Lost Property of a Muslim

Narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Allāh be pleased with him: I heard the Prophet of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) say:

“The word of wisdom is the lost property of a Muslim, so that wherever he finds it, he should take it, as he is the most entitled to it.”

(Tirmidhī)

Explanatory Note

This charming Ḥadīth which is the last of this collection, discloses an excellent avenue of knowledge. Knowledge is not a limited thing that it can be acquired only in the four walls

of a school, or through sermons in a mosque, or in the gatherings of the learned or can be gleaned from newspapers and through a study of books. On the contrary, it is something very vast, and a man going about in life with his ears and eyes open can acquire it from every page of the record of the universe. For the true seeker after knowledge, the earth and the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets, the forests and the mountains, the rivers and the seas, the dwellings and desolations, the wise and the stupid, mankind and beasts, men and women, the children and the aged, the learned and the ignorant, the friend and the foe, all are an open book of learning whereby he can enrich the treasure-house of his own knowledge to the best of his capacity and effort. It is therefore that our Lord (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has observed that the word of wisdom is the lost property of a Muslim and that he should claim it whenever he finds it and that he should keep open the windows of his mind and heart so that no point of learning that comes to his notice misses its way to the repository of his mind and heart. It is to this expanse of knowledge that the Ḥadīth directs. It is the simple truth that, with an open mind and keen eye, a man of knowledge can learn at times even from a child. It is narrated that once Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (mercy of Allāh be on him) on seeing a child playing in rain and mud warned him to watch his step lest he should tumble. The child, turning round, retorted, that the Imām had better mind his own step, for, if he tumbled, being a leading divine, a whole world must follow suit while in the case of the child, his fall would affect only his person.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah had a highly intelligent mind that appreciated subtle points. He readily recognized the wisdom of the child’s remarks.

In connection with this Ḥadīth it must be remembered that the use of the word

ضَالَّةٌ

(Ḍāllah) in its text carries the subtle hint that whatever word of wisdom a Muslim happens to know of, whether he had learnt it before or not, has, in fact, its seed in Islām; it is therefore that it has been so termed, the underlying point being that it was originally the property of the faithful but because of being hidden from his view, it had been out of his grip. It is therefore the right of the Faithful to annex it as and when he finds it. Not because he has got the chance to pinch the property of others but because his own lost property has been restored to him. For the same reason, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has suffixed the word Ḍāllah (i.e., lost property) with the observation

فَهُوَ أَحَقُّ بِهَا

“and he is most entitled to it.” In other words, the Faithful have far greater title to it even though it be with others. A little reflection will make it clear that, in truth, Islām is the original source of all verities and wisdom as the Holy Qur’ān claims,

“Therein are all the eternal truths.” [98[Al-Bayyinah]:4]

It is a pity however that few ponder and benefit thereby.

The truth is that whatever the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings) has said is but detailed version of the Qur’ānic teaching. But it is evident that what he discovered in it, none else could and none would. With divine support and heaven’s help, he has displayed on the open pages of Ḥadīth what lay embedded in the hidden depths of the Holy Qur’ān. And as the material universe has been satisfying the physical needs of man of every age from the days of Adam, similarly the treasure-house of the Holy Qur’ān is unlimited in its bounties of spiritual wealth, which are in no danger of being exhausted. It is precisely for this reason that Allāh the Excellent says in respect of it:

إِنَّ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

[15[Al-Ḥijr]:22] That, there are with Him (in the Qur’ān) treasures of spiritual wisdom and knowledge of every kind and that He reveals them, in a determined measure, in answer to requirements. There is little gainsaying the fact that every truth and point of wisdom is but the lost property of the faithful, for its seed is already there in the Holy Qur’ān, which is the exclusive preserve of the Muslim, irrespective of the fact whether he is alive to the worth of its treasure or not.

Would that the world appreciated the value of the Qur’ān and would that it knew the value of the jewels embedded in the Aḥādīth which our Master (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) has extracted from the Holy Book for our guidance and benefit.

And our last word is that:

All praise is due to Allāh, the Creator-Lord of the Worlds.

The Concluding Prayer

My this address to the world has come to a close. But man can, at best, prepare a frame. It is the domain of God to infuse soul into it. After concluding my address to the world, therefore, I turn now to my Heavenly Lord, the Possessor of all beauties and of all powers, with this humble prayer:

O my Lord! I have compiled these forty Aḥādīth of the Holy Prophet (may my soul be dedicated to his service) culling them together from different books, with a sincere motive and a truthful heart. But, without Thy help and Mercy, my this humble effort cannot be worthy of that bliss which descends by Thy command from the heights of Heaven, infusing life in dead bodies, and making of the particles of sand brilliant stars. Therefore, O my Lord! by Thy grace and glory, make this brief work recipient of Thy eternal and everlasting blessings and may this sacred word of Thy Holy Prophet enlighten the hearts and minds of its readers and be the means of blessing their limbs; may individuals and families alike find through it the way to emancipation and may nations and peoples be helped thereby to prosperity and ascendancy. For, though in their appearance, they be plain words but reflection reveals the numberless measures of reform and progress they embody. And O my Creator and Master, O my God, pray grant me, as well, shelter in the shadow of Thy grace and mercy and by the love of Thy Holy Prophet, that Thou hast planted in my

poor heart, keep me steadfast in this world, in the teachings that he brought, and, favor me with the coolness of His feet in the Hereafter. Amen! O Most Compassionate of all the Merciful.

Glossary

Aḥādīth أَحَادِيثُ : plural of Ḥadīth.

‘alaihiṣṣalām عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ : peace be on him

Allāh اللهُ : the one and only God.

‘amal عَمَلٌ : deed, act, action

a‘māl أَعْمَالٌ : deeds, acts, actions

‘Aqūq عَقُوقٌ : cutting off

‘aqūqul-wālidain عَقُوقُ الْوَالِدَيْنِ : disobedience to parents, not paying their due respect, or not treating them with tenderness of heart and neglecting to look after them.

‘Aṣr عَصْرٌ : late afternoon formal Islāmic worship

athar أَثَرٌ : remains. relics. signs. traces. footprints

āthār أَثَارٌ : plural of athar.

A‘ẓam أَعْظَمٌ : greatest, the great

Bhang بهنگ : hemp, cannabis

charas چرس : hemp extract, cannabis resin, marijuana, pot

drachma: a dram

Fiqh فِقْهُ : jurisprudence

Firdaus فِرْدَوْسٌ : Paradise

Ḥadīth حَدِيثٌ : saying of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam.

Ḥadīth Ḍa‘īf ضَعِيفٌ : the Ḥadīth with an unreliable narrator, either in respect of memory or intelligence or integrity, so much so that even if one of the narrators is unreliable, in spite of the rest of them being reliable, the Ḥadīth will be treated as weak (ḍa‘īf).

Ḥadīth Fi'lī **حَدِيثِ فِعْلِي** : does not quote any word or statement of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but narrates some act of his.

Ḥadīth Marfū' **حَدِيثِ مَرْفُوعٍ** : traces a statement direct to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) without any break in the chain of reporters.

Ḥadīth Mauḍū' **حَدِيثِ مَوْضُوعٍ** : a Ḥadīth which is proved to have been invented by a lying narrator.

Ḥadīth Mauqūf **حَدِيثِ مَوْقُوفٍ** : cannot be traced to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) but stops short and does not proceed beyond a particular reporter, but the nature of the Ḥadīth and the tenor and tone of the testimony should warrant the conclusion that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) must have been heard making the statement.

Ḥadīth Munqaṭi' **حَدِيثِ مُنْقَطِعٍ** : all narrators of this Ḥadīth are reliable in point of (a) memory, (b) intelligence and (c) integrity.

Ḥadīth Muttaṣil **حَدِيثِ مُتَّصِلٍ** : the reporters of this Ḥadīth are known and mentioned and are known and placed in a serial order and none of them is found missing or left unidentified.

Ḥadīth Qaulī **حَدِيثِ قَوْلِي** : quotes the words of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) as actually uttered by him.

Ḥadīth Qudsi **حَدِيثِ قُدْسِي** : the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) ascribes a word or act to God the Excellent, saying that God had commanded him thus. Such a statement is other than the Qur'ānic revelation.

Ḥadīth Taqrīrī حَدِيث تَقْرِيرِي : relates neither a statement nor an act of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allāh be on him and His blessings), instead it records what a particular person did or said in the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) and that he did not forbid him to do or say it.

Ḥaḍrat حَضْرَت [Ḥaḍhrat, Hazrat]: His Holiness

Ḥajj حَج : formal pilgrimage to Mecca during appointed time of the year.

Ḥājjī (Arabic, Persian), Ḥājī (Urdu) حَاجِي : a person who has performed Ḥajj, the prescribed pilgrimage to Mecca during its appointed days.

i.e.: (abbreviation of Latin id est.): that is

imām إِمَام : leader, chief, guide

Īmān إِيْمَان : faith, belief

Islām إِسْلَام : submission

inter se: among themselves

‘Ishā عِشَاء : late night formal Islāmic worship.

jāmi‘ جَامِع : comprehensive, inclusive, universal, generic, general, mosque, compiler, author, writer, typesetter

Khātaman-Nabiyyīn خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ : seal of the prophets. best of the prophets. Muḥammad, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

Khatm-i-Nabuwwat خَتْم نَبُوَّت : completion or finality of prophethood.

lākh لاکھ : 100,000

masjid مَسْجِد : mosque

- mi'rāj مِعْرَاج : place or route of ascent. ascent, ladder, stairs.
 Muḥammad's (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him)
 ascent, spiritual journey. the acme of spiritual exaltation.
- Niṣāb نِصَاب : minimum for Zakāt levy, course, syllabus,
 curriculum
- Muḥaddath مُحَدَّث : recipient of divine communion.
- Muḥaddith مُحَدِّث : compiler-scholars or editors of Ḥadīth
- Muḥaddiththin مُحَدِّثِينَ : plural of Muḥaddith
- Muḥammadi Khātamiyyat مُحَمَّدِي خَاتَمِيَّت : excellence of the
 prophethood of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of
 Allāh be on him).
- Muslah مُسْلَحَة : mutilation of the dead enemy by cutting off
 their noses and other limbs.
- Parda پَرْدَة : Ḥijāb, Niqāb, modesty, Purdah, veil, curtain,
 screen or concealing garment used by some Hindus and
 Muslims to hide women from the gaze of men or
 strangers.
- Pardah: see Parada
- Purdah: see Parada
- Qaḍa قَضَا : judgment, injunction.
- Qadar قَدَر : fate, destiny, lot, predestination.
- Qadian قَادِيَان : a town in northwest India where *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā
 Ghulām Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi,
 'alaih-salām, lived.
- qalb قَلْب : turning, reversal, transformation, essence, the
 central point of an organism, heart, mind.
- qarḍah قَرْضَه : debt.
- qarḍah ḥasanah قَرْضَه حَسَنَه : debt of honor, debt without
 interest.

qulūb: plural of qalb.

Rabwah رَبْوَه : a town established by the Aḥmadiyya community as their headquarters in Pakistan, located in District Jhang in Punjab next to River Chenāb.

raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu: رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ : may Allāh be pleased with him.

raka‘āt رَكَعَات : plural of rak‘at

rak‘at, rak ‘ah رَكَعَه : a section of the prescribed Prayer. plural: raka‘āt

Ramaḍān (Ramaḍhān, Ramazān, Ramzān) رَمَضَانَ : Islāmic lunar month ascribed for prescribed fasting.

ṣaḥīḥ صَحِيح : correct

Ṣaḥīḥain صَحِيحَيْن : the two most authentic works of Ḥadīth, Bukhārī and Muslim.

Sajdah سَجْدَه : prostration

Ṣalāt صَلَاة : formal prayer offered according to a prescribed procedure, thus, Ṣalātut-Tahajjud, Ṣalātul-Fajr, Ṣalātuz-Zuḥr, Ṣalātul-‘Asr, Ṣalātul-Maghrib, Ṣalātul-‘Ishā.

ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ : peace and blessings of Allāh be on him.

Ṣaum صَوْم : fasting, fast

Shafā‘at شَفَاعَات : intercession.

Sharī‘ah شَرِيعَه : (Islāmic) jurisprudence, divine law, code, law.

Sharī‘at شَرِيعَات : see Sharī‘ah.

Shirk شِرْك : association of aught as partner in person and attributes to God.

siḥr سِحْر : illusion, magic, witchcraft, sorcery, spell, charm

Sunnah سُنَّه : practice of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam.

Sūrah سُورَة : a chapter of the Holy Qur'ān. There are 114 Sūrahs (chapters)—of various lengths—in the Holy Qur'ān.

Tab'a Tābi'ī تَبَع تَابِعِي : the generation following the Tābi'ī generation

Tābi'ī تَابِعِي : follower. first generation following the Companions (Ṣaḥabah).

Tābi'in تَابِعِينَ : plural of Tābi'ī.

taubah, tauba تَوْبَة : repentance

tawakkul تَوَكَّل : reliance, dependence, trust, confidence.

Tayammum تَيَمَّم : to wash with clean sand or earth where water is unavailable, dry ablutions.

'ulamā عُلَمَاء : (religious) scholars. plural of 'ālim, a (religious) scholar. {ulema}

'ulema: see 'ulamā

vis-à-vis (pronounced as veezavee): in regard to, in relation to.

Wuḍū وُضُوء : ablution. prescribed washing before Islāmic worship.

Zuḥr ظَهْر : afternoon Prayer.

Zakāt زَكَاة : prescribed alms.

Index

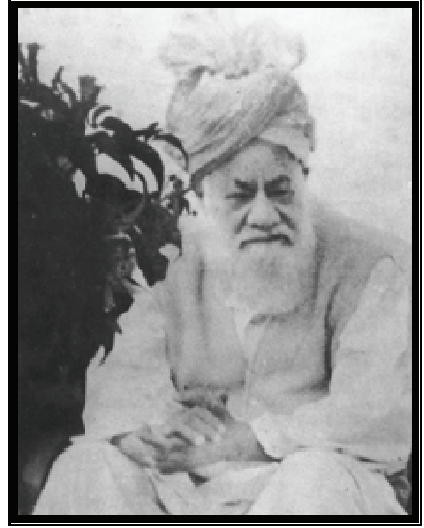
- Ā'ishah, 96, 142, 143
Abdullāh bin Abī Aufā,
90, 99
Abraham, 26
Abū 'Ubaidah bin
'Abdullāh, 133
Abū Bakr, 72, 153, 156
Abū Dardā, 140, 166
Abū Dāwūd, 10, 69, 114,
121, 140
Abū Hurairah, 33, 41, 45,
81, 105, 118, 130, 137,
151, 156, 169
Abū Sa'īd, 50
Abū Sufyān, 143, 146
Adam, 21, 30, 172
Alī, 156
America, 61
Anas bin Mālik, 55, 58,
78, 165
Arabia, 3, 20, 61, 166
Baihaqī, 17
Bilāl, 153
Bukhārī, 9, 10, 11, 23, 29,
38, 45, 55, 59, 63, 73,
82, 96, 106, 124, 137,
151, 158, 162, 179
Buraidah, 102
China, 166
Christian, 7, 74, 134
Day of Resurrection, 4,
17, 84
Dhul-Hajj, 26
Europe, 61
Faith
six articles of, 19
Fast (Ṣaum), 4, 5, 23, 27,
40, 45, 47, 48, 179
Fiqh, 11, 12, 175
Gabriel, 96, 97
Ḥadīth
categories of narrators,
9
definition of, 7
difference between
Ḥadīth and Sunnah,
14
method of narration, 8
standard works of, 9
Ḥajj, 177
Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām, 155
Hindu, 74, 134
husband, 39, 56, 83, 87,
88, 90, 91, 92, 163
Ibn 'Umar, 22, 62, 69,
121, 145, 148, 154, 162
Ibn Mājah, 10, 78, 90,
133, 145, 148, 165
Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, 12,
170, 171
Imām Aḥmad bin
Ḥanbal, 11
Imām Mālik, 11, 154
Imām Shāfi'ī, 12
Ishmael, 26
Islām
five pillars of, 22

Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh, 28,
 86, 114
 jihād, 51, 65, 66, 67, 100
 Marvah, 26
 Mecca, 3, 26, 146, 158,
 159
 Medina, 3, 11, 29, 33, 34,
 35, 131, 142, 156, 166
 Minā, 26
 Mu’aṭṭā, 11, 154
 Muslah, 103, 178
 Muslim, 10, 19, 33, 41,
 51, 100, 103, 118, 130
 Musnad Aḥmad, 11, 128
 Muzdalifah, 26
 Nasā’ī, 10, 65
 Niṣāb, 25, 178
 Nu’mān bin Bashīr, 124
 Pilgrimage (Ḥajj), 5, 23,
 26, 40, 47, 119, 177
 Prayer (Ṣalāt), 4, 5, 15,
 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 40,
 45, 47, 48, 179, 180
 Qarḍah Ḥasanah, 110,
 178
 Quraish, 84, 156
 Ramaḍān, 45
 Sa’d bin Abī Waqqāṣ,
 158, 159
 Ṣafā, 26
 Sahl bin Sa’d, 93
 sajdah, 91
 Shafā’at, 31, 179
 Shirk, 73, 74, 75, 76, 106,
 107, 113, 179
 sihr, 107, 108, 113, 179
 Sunnah, 179
 difference between
 Ḥadīth and Sunnah,
 14
 Tab’a Tābi’ī, 9, 15, 180
 Tābi’ī, 9, 15, 180
 Ṭarīq bin Shihāb, 65
 taubah, 134, 135, 136,
 180
 tawakkul, 159, 160, 180
 Tirmidhī, 10, 86, 93, 169
 Umar, 19, 38, 156
 Wābiṣa bin Ma’bad, 127
 wife, 39, 57, 82, 83, 84,
 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 142,
 163
 Wuḍū, 23, 180
 Zakāt (obligatory
 almsgiving), 5, 22, 25,
 26, 47, 149, 178, 180

Ḥaḍrat

Mirzā Bashīr Aḥmad (Raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu)

April 20, 1893-
September 2, 1963



Son of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah (‘alaihiṣṣalām), and younger brother of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II (raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu). He was given the venerable title of Qamarul-Anbiyā (moon of the prophets) in one of the revelations of the Promised Messiah (peace be on him).

He was a skilled writer, orator and an outstanding author. He penned several scholarly works: *Sīrat Khātām al-Nabiyyīn* (Life of Prophet Muḥammad, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam), *Sīrat al-Mahdī* (Life of the Promised Messiah, peace be on him), *Silsilah Aḥmadiyyah* (The Aḥmadiyya Movement), *Tabligh-i-Ḥidāyat* (Guide to Preaching), and *Hamārā Khudā* (Our God). (All these works are written by him in Urdu.)

He had a special talent for handling organizational matters and solving complex problems. For this reason he was a lifetime advisor of *Ḥaḍrat* Mirzā Bashīr-ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Aḥmad, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II. He devoted his life to the service of the Jamā‘at. His affection and deep concern for every member of the Community was admirable.

The late Mirzā Muzaḥfar Aḥmad (M. M. Aḥmad), world renowned economist, and the Amīr of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, for a number of years, was his son.

“Forty Gems of Beauty” is a collection of forty sayings of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be on him) with a commentary by the author. The original Urdu work was titled

چالیس جواہر پارے — Chālīs Jawāhar Pāre.

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