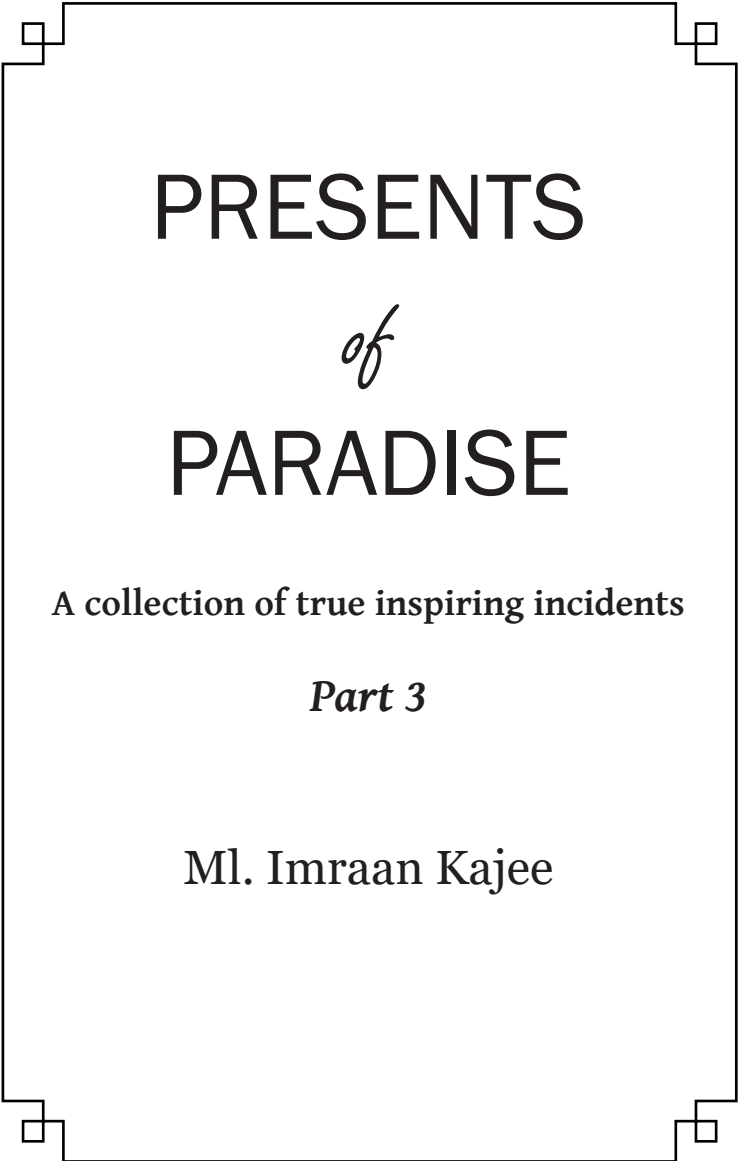




PRESENTS *of* PARADISE

A collection of true inspiring incidents

Part 3

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May Allah ﷻ accept this weak effort on behalf of myself, my parents, my Shaykh (mentor), my spouse, my children, my brothers, my teachers, my mashaayikh, the publishers, the editors, typesetters and cover designer, the sponsors and all those who assisted in this publication with their ideas and duas.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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FOREWORD

All praises are due solely to Allah ﷻ, by whose grace and mercy all good deeds are completed. May Allah ﷻ’s special and choicest salawaat and salaam be upon our beloved master and teacher Nabi Muhammad ﷺ, whose life is the greatest example worthy of being followed.

This booklet is a collection of a few amazing heart-rending incidents which I had heard or read during the last few years. Regarding such incidents, Maalik bin Dinaar ؓ would say, “Stories are the presents of Jannah.” Junaid Baghdadi ؓ said, “Stories are from among the armies of Allah ﷻ, through which He strengthens the hearts of his friends.”

The first booklet of this series was prepared a short while before the completion of my ‘aalam course’ at Darul-Uloom Azaadville in 1431. The second booklet was prepared in 1438. By the grace of Allah, many people benefitted from these booklets. This is the third booklet of this series. The catalyst to this part was my dear friend Ml. Muhibbullah Kathrada, the son of Ml Maseehullah Kathrada, who frequently requested me to prepare another part. It is being published just prior to his completion of the Aalim course in Darul-Uloom Azaadville.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to my beloved parents who were my first teachers, who encouraged and assisted me in every way possible in acquiring knowledge, and whose love and affection upon me I can never repay. I also wish to thank my kind and beloved brothers Moulana Moosa and Moulana Ridwan, my asaatzah (teachers) and my Shaykh whose words and actions have greatly affected my life and whose favours I can never forget. Finally, I wish to thank my spouse who has forgone a lot of her time so that I could spend it in studying and writing.

I make du’a that Allah ﷻ accepts from all of the above people and blesses them with long lives, good health, barakah (blessings) in their sustenance, and the greatest of rewards in this world and the hereafter. Aamin

When the noor (light) of Imaan enters the heart...

Shaykh Yunus from Tunis narrates: I want to relate to you an incident which occurred in Paris. A da'ee (an inviter to Allah) came to me in the markaz (Islamic centre for da'wah activities) of Paris, along with a friend of his. He had encouraged his friend and brought him along to the markaz. I don't wish to take the real names and reveal the identities of these people. So let us assume that his name is Habeeb.

Habeeb came to me and said, "My brother, this is Zayd, my neighbour. I have spoken to him so many times in the past, but he never agreed to join me to the markaz. Today Allah has brought him here. His situation is very unique. Firstly, for the last 17 years, since the time he moved to Paris, he has not performed a single salaah. Secondly, he has 2 restaurants where he sells both wine and pork. He too drinks alcohol and consumes pork. Thirdly, he is married to a Portuguese woman. Her name is Fatimah, but she is a Christian. (How did she get this name? During the era of the Muslim conquests when the Muslims conquered those lands, there was a woman by the name of Fatimah who passed away in Portugal in a certain area. The people were so influenced and affected by her character that even the Christians began to name their children after her for blessings.) Fourthly, he has 3 children. His eldest son was named Jamaal. He later changed his name to Jimmy."

In short, he had not performed a single salaah for so many years, his income and food was haraam and his wife was a non-muslim who he had never encouraged towards Islam. He himself was not a practicing Muslim, so how could he encourage her to embrace Islam.

Habeeb said, "Today I managed to convince him to join me. I have brought him here. Sincerely make du'a for him that Allah save him from this situation." I said to them, "Today, I will be delivering the lecture after Asr. Habeeb and Zayd should both sit next to me." When I quoted verses of the Qur'an and the Ahaadith, I noticed that both Habeeb and Zayd were crying. After the lecture, brothers were asked to express their intentions, "Who is ready to go out for

4 months, 40 days or at least 3 days in the path of Allah?” Zayd stood up and said that he is ready for 3 days. Habeeb was overjoyed.

Zayd went out for 3 days. When he returned, he broke down crying in front of us. We made him sit down, and asked him to tell us how he benefitted from those 3 days. He cried and he made everyone present there cry. He said, “My brothers, this was my previous life; I neglected salaah, I was earning haraam, I consumed pork and wine, my wife is a non-muslim, my children are lost. My brothers, by Allah, I promise Allah and I then promise you that from today, I will never neglect or miss a single salaah, I will put a stop to all haraam earnings, I will invite my wife to Islam and I will teach my children the Qur’an.”

Two days later, he came to me very sad and depressed. I asked him, “What’s the problem, Zayd?” He replied, “My marriage with my wife is on the brink of divorce.” I asked, “But why?” He replied, “I invited her to Islam...” I asked, “How did you invite her?” He said, “I told her, ‘You have a choice; either you become a Muslim or else we divorce.’” I ask you, is this da’wah (inviting to Islam)? Did this man distance his wife from Islam or did he bring her closer?

I said to him, “Zayd, our Nabi ﷺ taught us: “Give glad-tidings and do not behave in such a manner which creates dislike and hatred (in people’s hearts for Islam). Make things easy, and do not make things complicated and difficult.” After you returned home from the path of Allah, you should have helped her with her work in the kitchen and you should have bought for her a gift. After a few days, she will notice a change in you and try to understand why. Then she will soften up and enter into Islam. If you try to feed a piece of meat to a little child who does not yet have teeth and you force the meat down the child’s throat, what will happen to the child? The child will choke and die. There is a procedure which has to be followed. You will have to take things easy and work with wisdom and diplomacy.” He said, “My wife has packed her bags and she is about to leave. The government will take custody of my children. I will be all alone. Please speak to her.” I said, “Phone her and tell her not to leave. I am coming with you.” She consented and waited for me.

I took some dates of Madinah along with me as a gift. When we got into the car, I said, “Zayd, there are 2 actions; if we do them, Allah will send down hidaayah (guidance) before we even expect. The first is to give da’wah with wisdom, and the second is to make du’a with feelings of mercy and compassion. We are going there. I will speak, you don’t say a word. Now, let us make du’a.” We did so. He cried and he made me also cry with him. When we reached, Fatimah the Christian opened the door. She was obviously not covered and veiled in hijaab. But I had my hijaab ready. What is the hijaab of a man? To control his gaze by lowering it from haraam. So I turned my face to her husband, while she stood nearby.

Now remember that when we want to encourage someone towards Deen, we should not immediately start off on a tangent. It is important to start off on a light note. Then, from here, we will see how to turn our discussion to Deen. I said, “Sister, your husband has already told me of your good qualities.” He hadn’t told me anything about her good qualities. I spoke a white lie to her. It is however permissible to speak a lie to reconcile between two people, as mentioned in an authentic Hadith. May Allah forgive me, but I spoke a lot of lies on that day. I enumerated a whole lot of her good qualities. Then I said, “There is something else, which is good, which I have to tell you.” She asked, “What is that?” I said, “This is a gift for you.” I gave it to her while my head was turned the other way, because she was dressed inappropriately. “My sister, do you know where this gift came from? These are dates which have come from Madinah Munawwarah, the city wherein is the grave of the Nabi, our Master Muhammad ﷺ who is the Nabi of Islam. And did you know that his daughter’s name was Fatimah, just like your name.” She was very surprised and fascinated. When I spoke to her in this manner and I presented the gift to her, her heart opened and she now became interested. I asked, “Can we speak to you now?” She replied, “Of course. Definitely.”

I spoke to her for half an hour about Islam and about Nabi ﷺ. I explained to her how all the previous Messengers ﷺ had foretold the coming of Rasulullah ﷺ. I had prepared a chart in which I had collected the glad-tidings of the previous

Messengers regarding Rasulullah ﷺ. (On one occasion, I had presented that chart to an eighty year old priest in a church, and he subsequently embraced Islam.) After one hour, she said, “Enough. I am ready to embrace Islam.” This incident occurred before my very eyes, my brothers.

She asked me what she should do. I advised her to first take a bath. She climbed up her stairs to go to the bathroom and she took a bath. I will never forget that day. When she came back down the stairs, her body was covered from head to toe. I did not tell her anything about covering herself. Besides her face and hands, everything was covered. She came to us and announced the shahaadatain: ‘I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah.’ Her husband began walking around the house, crying in joy, “O my Rabb, all praise belongs to You. You have saved the mother of my children from destruction. O my Rabb, all praise belongs to You. You have saved the mother of my children from destruction.” The family was saved, and there was now no question of separation. The wife was crying. The children who were in the garden came inside. They were surprised. They said, “Mom, what happened? We never ever saw you dressing like this.” She too cried as she told them, “My children, Islam has entered our home today.” The husband, wife and children cried for a long period of time.

The time of Asr entered. I decided to call out the azaan and disperse the Shayaateen (devils) who were residing here for a period of 17 years (in which not a single salaah was performed). The Shayaateen fled when they heard the azaan. We all made wudhu. Then we performed salaah with jama’ah. The husband stood on my right side just behind me, the children behind us and the mother behind them.

After salaah, Fatimah, a new Muslim who had just embraced Islam, said to me, “My brother, please check our house. If there is anything un-islamic in our house, please inform us. We will remove it immediately. We don’t want such things in our house if Islam is unhappy with it. If Islam approves of it, we will keep it and if Islam disapproves of it, we will get rid of it.” She had just

embraced Islam an hour ago. Look at the nur (spiritual light) of her imaan which had spread through her heart already.

The husband, who had closed down his haraam restaurants for the last 3 days and had stopped selling pork and alcohol, said to her, “You should perform tahajjud salaah every night and make du’a, for du’as are accepted at night. Make du’a that Allah grants me halaal sustenance.” Her reply was a reply which could be expected from the senior Auliya of the Ummah, “I am ashamed to ask Allah in my du’a for these despicable worldly items. Must I pollute my du’a by asking for dunya (the world). Don’t ask for the world. It will come by itself.” This was the reply of a new Muslimah.¹

I was sitting in the markaz sometime later when I received a call. I picked up the phone and greeted. The person on the other side asked for Yunus from Tunis. I said that I was the person the caller seemed to be looking for. It was the same woman. She said, “I want to tell you something, and I don’t want to tell this to anyone else. I want to tell you because Allah has made you the means for our guidance. Allah alone has guided us, but he has made you the means. What I want to tell you is that when the night comes in, I become overjoyed and ecstatic. I am so happy, because mankind is sleeping, while I am standing before my Creator. I converse with Him and He converses with me. I experience such ecstasy and pleasure in whispering to my Rabb at night which I had never experienced in any other thing in my life.”²

An 80-year old Christian priest

Shaykh Yunus from Tunis narrates: Listen to this incident. It is very important. There is a certain church. It is 200 km from Paris, on the road to Spain, near

1 However, the best course of action is to follow our beloved Rasulullah ﷺ, who had taught his Sahaabah to ask Allah for every minute need, even for something as insignificant as a shoelace (Tirmizi no.3973). This was a condition which had overcome this revert to Islam, as should not be construed as the ideal which we should emulate.

2 This incident was narrated on 11 Rajab 1436 / 29 April 2015 in Masjidul Ansaar Lakefield Benoni. This useless compiler also attended the above inspiring lecture.

the borders. The Muslims had reached this place during their conquest of Spain. The name of the monk and priest of this church was Pershona. His name means 'our father who shows us the road'. In reality, he had not seen the straight path himself. He was 80 years old. He was engaged in worship in this church for the last 60 years. For the last twenty years, he had studied the French translation of the Qur'an.

Two people came to me. They said that one of them had a daughter who was living in this area. He had visited her recently. He said, "Yunus! I have attended many of your lectures. Today, I have come to you with a special need. This priest has given us a building on the property next to the church. The property is very big and spacious. He gave it to the Muslims for a Masjid. The Muslims formed an Islamic organization and took control over it. The chairman of this organization himself does not perform salaah. They collected money, renovated and repaired this Masjid. They had a dispute over the finances. Finally, they closed the masjid and returned the key to the priest. This is a good cause. Come with us. We want to get the key from this priest. This is the only place where the Muslims can perform salaah and where our children can be taught the Qur'an." I got ready and joined him.

We looked for the priest at his house. He was not there. We enquired about his whereabouts. We were told that he may be in the bar. He would spend a lot of time there. He would help Muslims with accommodation in France, and he would meet them there while they would drink. We eventually did find him in the tavern.

By Allah! It is as if I can picture him right now. His hair was white. When he saw us approaching from a distance, he stretched open his arms and said, "That's it! That's it! God has accepted my prayer." I asked him what he meant by this. He said, "When I gave that building to the Muslims, they returned the keys to me after a dispute and argument. I said, "O God! From now till the spring holidays (which was the period of 2 months), if You send true Muslims, I will give them the keys. If You do not send true Muslims, I will return the building to the church and that will be the end of it." Before that time period,

I am seeing you with this Islamic appearance. God has accepted my prayer. Take the keys.”

I saw his potential. He was so close to Islam. I wanted to draw him and entice him to Islam. I said to him that I needed to speak to him. He agreed. I asked him to lead us to a better place, for this was an evil place, full of wine and smoke. I also asked him to bring his Muslim friends with him. I spoke to him for one hour.³

I explained to him that the only religion which is acceptable and satisfactory to Allah is Islam. Any other religion other than Islam will be rejected. The one who adopts any religion other than Islam will be from the losers in the Hereafter. I explained that every Nabi came with the same beliefs and religion. The religion they brought is one. I presented examples to him of every Nabi. I then explained that every Nabi informed his people of the final Nabi Sayyiduna Muhammad ﷺ. See the revelation to Moses ﷺ in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18-22 and Deuteronomy, chapter 33, verse 2). See what Jesus said in the New Testament regarding the Paraclete (Gospel of John, chapter 14, verse 15 - chapter 16, verse 15). I then explained to him that after the demise of every Nabi, people changed and distorted his message. The Nabi may have passed away, but the Shayaateen (devils) were still alive. They spurred the people on to change the message of their respective Nabi.

He said to me, “I have only one question for you. If you give me a satisfactory

3 Dr Muhammad Hamidullah of Hyderabad, India had come to France (in 1948). He had translated the Qur'an into French. He lived here for 30 years. During this time, he never ate a morsel of meat, out of fear of consuming haraam. He wrote an amazing book on Seerah (the life of Rasulullah ﷺ) in French, which he translated from Arabic sources. Many priests, monks and nuns had embraced Islam at his hands. I studied by him. He had taught me through a graph and tables such a method of speaking to non-muslims after which that person will not be able to say, “I will not enter into Islam.” But you have to be patient. Many other people embraced Islam after I presented Islam to them through this method. (Shaykh Yunus from Tunis)

answer, I will enter into Islam. You say that after the demise of every Nabi, the people changed and distorted his message. Whenever the true religion was altered, another Messenger was sent for the revival of the true religion. Your Nabi Muhammad ﷺ also passed away. So give me some proof that your religion and the Qur'an have not been altered and distorted."

I replied, "I don't only have one proof. I actually have 2 proofs:

a) Allah ﷻ states in the Qur'an:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

"We have revealed The Reminder (The Qur'an) and We will be its protector."
(Surah Hijr v.9)

How did Allah ﷻ protect and preserve the Qur'an in its pristine purity? Allah ﷻ sent Jibreel عليه السلام to Nabi ﷺ, with the message that this Qur'an will be preserved in the chests of men. Therefore, we find that the Qur'an is memorized by even small children, from the ages of 7-15. Because the Qur'an was memorized by people and learnt off-by heart, people were unable to change and interpolate it. The enemies of Islam today, over a period of many years, are spending millions to change just single letters of the Qur'an, but they will never be able to do so. This is Divine protection which has come from Allah ﷻ Alone."

He said to me, "I'm convinced with what you are saying. I saw an article in a Christian magazine which was published by a certain church. In it, the authors admitted and published this fact that 'the only book in the world which is memorized easily is the Qur'an'." This is what these disbelievers had written.

b) Nabi ﷺ informed us that no Nabi will come after him. Allah ﷻ has made his Ummah (followers) responsible to protect, preserve and continue to convey his message, as his representatives and deputies. Allah ﷻ says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

“You are the best of nations, selected for the benefit of mankind, who command to good, forbid from evil and believe in Allah.” (Surah Aal-Imraan v.110)

That is why we have come to you. When the Muslims carried out this responsibility on a wide scale, as occurred in the era of the Sahaabah and their successors, people entered into the mercy of Allah and were saved from the fire of Hell. Today, the Muslims have neglected this duty, so their condition has changed, as you can see.”

He left us to take a bath. It is as if I can see him right now, trembling and shaking. He was 80 years old. He made wudhu and stood with us in the first saff (row) to perform salaah. Allahu Akbar – Allah is the Greatest. He wore a burnus (coat with an attached hat). After completing the salaah, he asked me permission to say a few words in French to the Muslims who were present there. He stood up, cried and made the entire crowd cry. He said, “O Muslims! This white hair and old age of mine was only leading me to the fire of Hell. If this jama’ah had not come to me, I was going to Hell. Now that they have come to me, this white hair and old age will be with you in Islam on the road to Heaven. This jama’ah informed me that there is no Nabi after Nabi Muhammad ﷺ. This responsibility is on the shoulders of the Ummah. How are you going to face Allah, when people die daily and become the fuel of Hell?” All the people cried.

On that day, we prepared a jama’ah for 4 months to go to his area. He opened that door for us (i.e. he facilitated our efforts in that area). He would perform salaah with them. He was their guide. He led them to the homes of all the Muslims in every area and every building of that entire vicinity. He knew the names of all the Muslims living nearby. He assisted the jama’ah in every way possible.

The Ameer (leader) of that jama'ah once narrated to me: Sometimes, he would walk for 2km just to show us the house of a Muslim. He would go by foot. I would ask him to please take a taxi. He said, "By Allah! I will not take a taxi. I tired myself out for sixty years in the path of Shaytaan. Why should I not tire myself out for 2km in the path of Ar-Rahmaan. Leave me to walk in the path of Allah by foot."

He soon left to spend 40 days with a jama'ah to Pakistan. He returned as an inviter and caller towards Allah. His name was Abdul-Majeed.

I visited him before his death. He was 89 years old. He was on his bed, making Tasbih. I asked him how he was feeling. He said, "I am in the best of conditions. I can sense nur (spiritual radiance) in my heart. I can feel that I am on the path to goodness, to Jannah. I never felt and experienced this feeling ever before." I asked him if he had any need. He said, "I have one request. When I die, don't leave me to my non-Muslim family. Take me, bathe me by the masjid, shroud me and bury me in a Muslim graveyard, because I testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

He then said, "Listen! The da'wah of Muhammad ﷺ (the invitation to Islam) does not require a lot of talking. It requires two things; husnul-akhlaaq (good character) and ikraam (treating others with kindness and honour)." He repeated this three times.

I asked him, "Where did you learn this from?" He said, "I learnt this during the 40 days which I had spent in Pakistan. I saw this with my own eyes. I met four youngsters from North Africa. They had no home to live in. They came to study here. They had no money. Their government gave them no support. They were needy. I gave them place to stay with me. I gave them food to eat. I would perform salaah in front of them. But they wouldn't perform salaah. After one or two days, they themselves came to me and asked me to teach them how to perform salaah. See! This is what I am saying. The da'wah of Muhammad ﷺ (the invitation to Islam) requires two things; husnul-akhlaaq (good character) and ikraam (treating others with kindness and honour)."

These were the advices of a French priest from a church.

He decided to travel to Morocco. We went to bid him farewell. He gave us one advice before he left on this journey, “Don’t ever leave the dress of Muhammad Rasulullah ﷺ. When a disbeliever and hypocrite sees this dress, it is as if you are piercing him with a dagger in his heart. Don’t leave the Sunnah of your beloved for the sake these fools.” I say: It is so sad that today, when a Muslim gets into a plane (for a holiday), his Sunnah dress is substituted with western dress. He passes a razor over his beard. My brothers! Whoever imitates a nation will be resurrected amongst them on the day of Qiyaamah.

He then said, “My brothers! I made du’a to Allah to allow me to pass away in Muslim lands. That’s why I am going to Morocco.” He went to Morocco. He passed away in Morocco and was buried in the Muslim cemetery.⁴

Our respected teacher and Shaykh, Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) narrated the following incident regarding his meeting with this priest: When we were in Jamaat, in about the year 1400 AH (1979), we met an elderly priest, who had accepted Islam. He was about 80 years of age and was from France. Prior to his acceptance of Islam, he was drawn to and loved Islam and the Muslims very greatly and very dearly. On that basis, he built a Masjid for the Muslims in his locality, since the Muslims had no place of worship. On completion of the Masjid, he handed the keys of the Masjid to them so that they could establish their Salaah in congregation. ...Sadly, as is common, those Muslims began to fight amongst themselves. The priest then took the keys back and said to them: “I did not have the Masjid built for arguments and fights. I had it build for the Ibaadah (worship) of God!”

Alhamdulillah, Allah ﷻ opened all doors for his Hidayah (Guidance) and he accepted Islam. On meeting him, he shared with us three special advices. They were:

4 This incident was narrated on 11 Rajab 1436 / 29 April 2015 in Masjidul Ansaar Lakefield Benoni in his lecture to Ulama after Maghrib.

1. “NEVER GIVE UP THE AZAAN. ...Wherever you are, always call out the Azaan. You people do not know what effect the Azaan has on non-Muslims!
2. “ALWAYS PERFORM YOUR SALAAH – WHEREVER YOU ARE! ...Whether it is the Masjid, at a filling station, railway station, airport terminal, etc., perform your Salaah. ...The postures of Salaah have a tremendous effect on the hearts of non-Muslims. The Ruku’ – the posture of bowing down, and the Sajdah – the posture of prostrating, impacts the hearts greatly.”
3. “NEVER GIVE UP YOUR ISLAMIC DRESSING. ...You do not realise it, but this dressing leaves a deep impression on our hearts and has a very great influence upon us! The strong effect of such a dress and appearance cannot be found in anything else. ...The Sunnah Libaas and the beard have always been the dressing of the Men of Allah and its beauty and Noor draws hearts.... The same effect is found when seeing the Muslim women covered in their modest and concealing dressing (that is, the Hijaab and Niqaab).”

These were the advices of a learned priest who had accepted Islam. He was not making any assumptions. He was presenting these advices from experience and observation.

People have accepted Islam on hearing the beautiful Azaan, seeing the humility of Muslims in Salaah, and the noble postures of Ruku and Sujood. People have accepted Islam on seeing the dignified dressing of the Muslim – but we who are Muslims sadly do not have that kind of spirit and zeal to implement the same in our lives. We do not have that concern of being flag-bearers of Islam and of the Sunnah. Yet, if we did, then without any speeches, we would be giving Da’wah and inviting the world to Islam, wherever we went! If only we ourselves appreciated!⁵

5 Shaykh Yunus also related the following incident during his talk: A so-called scholar from an Arab country had went to America. He was the head of an Islamic organization and was very eloquent and articulate in his speech. An American Muslim who had recently embraced Islam and had spent some time with the brothers of Tabligh visited him also while visiting the senior scholars. This revert was adorned with Sunnah dressing and a

The consequences of depriving your family of Islamic education and righteous company

A person narrates:

I was a teacher in the Hifz class at the local masjid. I would see this young boy, who was about fifteen years old, after Maghrib salaah holding a pocket-sized Qur'an and reciting from it. He wasn't actually reciting from it, he was just trying to make it seem as if he was. Now and again, he would shyly steal a few glances at us, as if curious to know what we were doing. Once in a while, you would see him eavesdropping on us, to overhear what we were talking about. Every time I caught his eye, he would lower his head and continue with his recitation, as if he had not done a thing.

Day after day, he sat in the same shy manner, eyeing us with the same timid glances. Finally, after Isha salaah one day, I decided to introduce myself to him. "Assalaamu alaykum. My name is Salman. I teach the Hifz class in this masjid."

"And my name is Saleem." It was strange that he replied so fast, as if he had been waiting to share this piece of information for a long time and had expected to be asked.

"Where do you study Saleem?"

"In the eighth grade...and I...I love the Qur'an a lot." Why did he add that last

Sunnah appearance. The scholar said, "It is not necessary for you to wear this kind of clothing and this turban. The Americans will run away from you in fear. You should dress in a shirt and pants." The American asked him how many years he had already been in America. He replied, "30 years." The American then asked him how many Americans had embraced Islam at his hands. He was forced to admit that not a single person had embraced Islam at his hands. This American new-Muslim then said, "Alhamdulillah. About 300 people have already embraced Islam at my hands. They see me dressed like this. They are curious and come over to me to ask me about it. I speak to them and they enter into Islam." This is da'wah through our actions and our appearance.

sentence?

I asked him, “Listen Saleem, have you got any free time after Maghrib? We would be honoured to have you join us in the Hifz class.”

“What? Hifz? The class? Yes...why, yes of course. It will be a pleasure. I’ll be there, insha-Allah.”

That night, I couldn’t think of anything other than this young strange boy and his behaviour. Sleep would just not come to me. I tried to come up with an answer for what I saw and heard, but there was none. A verse of poetry came to mind: ‘The coming days shall unravel the mystery. And the news may appear from people you never equipped.’ I turned on my right side and slipped my right hand under my cheek: ‘O Allah, I have surrendered myself to You and to You I hand over my affairs.’

SubhaanAllah, the months were passing by quickly. Saleem was now a regular in our Hifz class. He was quite hard working when it came to memorization and revision. He was friendly with all and all took him as a friend. You could never catch him without a Qur’an in his hand, or find him in any other line for salaah other than the first.

There was nothing wrong with him, except for his occasional long lapses of attention. There were times when his stoned eyes would reflect the deep thoughts going on in his mind. Sometimes, we perceived that his body was with us, but his soul was somewhere else, drowned in another world. I would then startle him with a question. He would then be forced to bring his mind back to class from his deep thoughts and imaginations. He would mumble some excuse, which was so lame that he knew we will never believe.

One night, I walked with him after class to the sea-shore. Perhaps, he may relax and let out his worries and pain.

We arrived at the beach and walked on the shore. It was night time. The full moon was out. It was amazing scenery. The darkness of the night combined

with the darkness of the sea, with a fully-lit moon in-between them. Everything was silent.

Suddenly, the silence was shattered by a deep and bitter cry. It was Saleem's voice, as he broke down in tears. I chose not to interrupt Saleem's emotional release, perhaps his tears might help him relax and relieve his distress.

After a few moments, he said from behind his tears, "I love you all...I love the Qur'an...and those who love it. I love the pious, the good people. But...my father...it's my father."

"Your father? What's the problem with your father Saleem?"

"My father always warned me not to hang around with you people. He's afraid of you people. He hates you all. And he always tries to convince me that I should hate you too. At any chance he gets, he tries to prove his point with different stories and tales.

But...when I saw you people in the class reciting Qur'an, I saw the light (nur) in your faces, the light (nur) in your words. Even when you were silent I could see the light (nur) even then.

I doubted my father's tales. That's why I would always sit after Maghrib, watching you, imagining that I was part of the class, trying to share and draw from the light (nur).

I...I remember Ustadh Salman...I remember the time you approached me after 'Isha salaah. I'd been waiting for that moment for such a long time. When I began the classes, my soul locked itself into a world of purity with your souls. I began Hifz and I tried hard. I wouldn't sleep; my days and nights became Qur'an. My father noticed the change in my life. He found out, one way or another, that I had joined the Hifz class and that I was now hanging out with 'fundamentalists'.

Then, on that terrible dark night...we were waiting for father to come home

from the coffee shop, as is his daily ritual, so that we could all have supper together. He entered the house with a cold face, frowning in anger. We all sat together over the table-cloth. Everyone was silent, as usual. All of us are afraid to speak in his presence. He broke the silence with a roar and shout, “I heard you’re hanging out with the fundamentalists.”

I was dead. My tongue went limp. All the words jumbled themselves up in my mouth. But, he didn’t wait for the answer. He snatched the tea-cup and smashed it in my face. The room spun and my eyes saw all colours spinning around. I could no longer tell the ceiling from the walls, or from the floor, and I fell. My mother caught me. I woke up from my short-lived slumber in her gentle hands. I heard a loud voice scream, “Leave him alone, or you’ll get the same!” I slipped out of my mother’s lap and rushed out to my room. He followed me down the corridor with the worst swear-words and the vilest curses.

After that, there was not a day that he didn’t beat me, curse me or kick me in some way. He throws at me whatever he finds in front of him. My body has finally become like a worn-out stick, which contains all-coloured wounds. I abhor him. My heart is full of hatred for him.

One day, while we were sitting to eat, he said, “Get up! Don’t eat with us!” Before I could get up though, he pounced on me and kicked me in the back. I fell hard onto the plates. At that moment, lying there on the ground, I pretended to stand taller than him and I shouted back in his face. ‘One day, I’ll pay you back. I’ll beat you just like you beat me, and curse you just like you cursed me. I’ll grow up and become strong and you’ll get old and become weak. Then I’ll treat you just like you treated me; I’ll pay you back.’

After that, I left home and ran away. I just ran, anywhere, it didn’t matter anymore. I found my way to this beach. It helped me wash away some of the sadness and pain. I held my pocket Qur’an and began reciting until I could continue no longer because of my excessive crying.”

And here, a few of those innocent tears descended again, tears that sparkled under the moon like pearls under a lamp. I couldn't say anything. Shock had paralyzed my tongue. Should I be aghast at this beast of a father, whose heart was empty of the slightest vestige of mercy and was a breeding grounds for all types of hatred? Or, should I be amazed at this patient young lad, for whom Allah had wished guidance for and inspired with steadfastness. Or, should I be shocked at them both, as the father-son bond had broken, causing their relationship to transform into a relationship similar to that of a lion and a tiger, or a wolf and a fox.

I held his warm hand and wiped away a tear from his cheek. I encouraged him to be patient, prayed for him, and advised him to remain obedient to his father. I told him to remain patient over his father's abuse, whatever he may do. I promised that I would meet his father, speak to him, and try to win him over.

Days passed. I tried thinking of ways to approach Saleem's father regarding his son. How should I speak to him? How could I convince him? How should I introduce myself? How was I even going to knock on his door?

Finally, I plucked up courage, rehearsed my thoughts, and decided that I would have to meet him. I chose for our meeting five o'clock that day.

When the time arrived, I left for Saleem's house, with all my ideas and questions for his father running through my mind. I rang the doorbell. My fingers trembled and my knees were giving way. The door opened. There he was, with his frowning face and angry facial-expression. I tried beginning with a candid smile, hoping it might catch his gloomy eyes. Before I could say a word, he grabbed my collar and lifted me towards him. "You're that fundamentalist that teaches Saleem at the masjid, aren't you?"

"Well...uh...yes."

"By Allah, if I ever see you walking with him again, I'll break your legs. Saleem won't be coming to your class anymore."

And then, he mustered all the saliva in his mouth and spat it on my face. The door slammed shut.

Slowly, I unfolded a tissue that was in my pocket, wiped off what he had honoured me with, and retreated, consoling myself that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) suffered more than this. They called him a liar, cursed him, stoned him with rocks and caused his feet to bleed. They broke his teeth and placed dung on his back and expelled him from his house.

Days passed by. Months passed by. There was no sign of Saleem. His father forbade him from leaving the house, even for salaah. He even forbade us from visiting him or seeing him. We prayed for Saleem...until we forgot about him. Years passed by.

One night, after the 'Isha salaah, I felt a strong harsh hand on my shoulder. It was the same hand that held me by my throat a few years ago. The face and expression was the same, as well as the mouth that honoured me with what I was not deserving of. But something had changed. The savage face was showing signs of weakness. The angry expression now seemed more humble and calm. His body looked tired of all the pain and worries, weakened by sadness and grief.

"How are you, uncle?" I kissed his forehead and welcomed him. We sat in a corner of the masjid. He broke down into tears. SubhaanAllah, I never thought that this rock would one day soften.

"Speak up. What's wrong? How is Saleem?"

"Saleem!" The name was like a dagger piercing his heart, twisting inside, and breaking off. His head slumped.

"Saleem is no longer the same boy that you used to know. Saleem is no longer that friendly, calm and humble young lad. After he left you, he befriended a gang of bad boys. He loved to socialize. They caught him at that time of life when a youth wants to leave the house and enjoy life.

“He began with cigarettes. I swore at him and beat him, but there was no use. His body was used to the beatings, his ears were used to the curses and swear-words. He grew quickly. He started staying up with them all night, not coming home until dawn. His school expelled him. Some nights, he would come home to us speaking irregularly. His face was different. He would be blabbering and his hands would be shivering.

That body which used to be strong, full, and tender passed away. What remained was a feeble worn frame. That pure fair face of his transformed; it became dark and filthy with sin and vice. Those shy, clear eyes of his changed. They are bloodshot, red like fire. It is as if the punishment for everything he drank or took showed immediately in his eyes, in this life before the aakhirah. His shyness and softness is gone, replaced with harshness and disrespect. Gone was that soft, pleasant young heart. It has converted into a hard heart, like a rock, if not harder.

Seldom does a day pass without incident. He curses, kicks, or hits me. Imagine it, my own son. I’m his father, yet he still hits me.”

He broke out sobbing again. But he added quickly, while wiping away his tears, “I beg you Salman, visit Saleem. Take him with you. I’ll allow you to, the door is open. Pass by him sometimes. He loves you. Register him in the Qur’an class. He could go with you for da’wah. I have no objection. In fact, I am even willing to allow him to live in your homes and sleep over with you. The important thing, Salman...the important thing is that Saleem must become how he was. I beg you lad. I’ll kiss your hands, press your feet. I beg you. I beg you...” He burst out crying and wailing. I allowed him to complete everything he had to say. Then I addressed him: “Despite what has happened, we will try. But uncle, you planted this seed. And as you sow, so shall you reap.”⁶

6 Qisas Abkatnee pg.119-127, quoting from Qisas minal Waaqi’ of Muhammad ibn Saalih Qahtaani. Names have been changed.

Every difficulty we face is only for our benefit

Saeed ibnul Musayyib ؓ narrates: Luqmaan (the wise) ؓ once said to his son, “O my dear son. Whenever you are faced with a situation which you are happy with or a situation which you are unhappy about, understand in your heart that this condition is best for you.” His son replied, “As for this advice of yours, I cannot agree to it without convincing proof that what you are claiming is a reality.” Luqmaan ؓ said, “Son! Allah has sent a Nabi. Why don’t you go to him? He will be able to explain to you what I have said.” His son said, “Come with me to the Nabi.”

So they both set out, each one riding on his own donkey. They carried with them food which was sufficient for their journey. They travelled for a few days and nights till they reached a desert. They prepared themselves as best as they could and then commenced their journey through the scorching arid desert. They travelled for as long as Allah ؓ willed them to travel. Eventually, their water was depleted and their food ran out. It was midday and extremely hot. The donkeys were trudging ahead too slowly for them. They got off the donkeys and began to run on foot. Suddenly, Luqmaan ؓ looked ahead and saw a dark shadow and smoke in the distance. He knew that the dark shadow in the distance meant trees and greenery, and that the smoke was a sign of an inhabited city where people must be living.

As they rushed ahead, Luqmaan’s ؓ son ran over a bone which was sticking out from the sand. It pierced through the bottom of his foot, and could be seen jutting out from the other side. (Due to the pain and shock) he fell down unconscious. Luqmaan ؓ looked back to see what had happened, and he was shocked to see his son flat on the ground. He rushed to his son and embraced him. Quickly, he set about removing the bone by slowly extracting it with his teeth. He tore his turban into a few pieces and bandaged the foot. Looking compassionately at his son’s face, he began to cry. A tear-drop of his fell onto the boy’s cheek. The boy regained consciousness, only to find his father crying. He blurted out, “Father, why are you crying?!! You are the one who

says that this condition must be best for me. How can this situation be best for me, whereas you are crying over it?!! The food has run out. The water is depleted. You and I are alone in this place. If you go, and leave me like this, you will pass the rest of your life in sorrow and grief (that you deserted me to save your life). If you stay here with me, we will both die. Please explain to me how this can ever be better for me, if you are crying like this?!!” Luqmaan ﷺ explained, “I am crying because I wish I could have sacrificed whatever I had in this world for your sake. I am a father. I am crying because I am overtaken by the compassion of a father. As for your question ‘how can this be best for me’, perhaps the calamity which you were saved from was far worse than what you have been afflicted with, and perhaps this difficulty of yours is lighter than the calamity which you may have been saved from.”

During this discussion, Luqmaan ﷺ looked ahead. But he was now unable to see the dark shadow and smoke. He thought to himself, “Maybe I didn’t see anything. (I had just imagined it)” Then he said to himself, “I am sure I have seen something. Perhaps my Rabb (Sustainer) has caused something to happen to whatever I saw.” Consumed with these thoughts, he looked ahead again and happened to see the form of a rider wearing white clothes and a white turban, proceeding towards him on a piebald horse. The horse was galloping forward with tremendous speed, as if it was running in the air. Luqmaan ﷺ kept his eyes fixed to this person until he reached close by.

Suddenly, the man disappeared out of sight. But Luqmaan ﷺ heard a voice calling out to him, “Are you Luqmaan?” He replied, “Yes.” The mysterious man asked, “Are you Luqmaan, the wise?” He replied, “That’s what people call me.” The man asked, “What did this foolish son of yours say to you just now?” Luqmaan ﷺ said, “O servant of Allah, Who are you? I can hear you, but I can’t see your face? The man said, “I am Jibreel. Only the special angels or the Nabis who have been sent usually see me. If it was not for that, you would have seen me. Now tell me what this foolish son of yours said to you just now?” Luqmaan ﷺ said to himself, “If you are Jibreel ﷺ, you should know better than me as to what my son said.” Jibreel ﷺ commented, “I have

really nothing to do with the two of you, but I was allowed to save you. I was commanded to sink this city (which you were heading towards), along with its people, under the ground. The angels came to me and informed me that you two are heading for this city. I made du'a to Allah to delay you for a while. So Allah delayed you by putting your son through this difficulty. Had it not been for this little difficulty that your son had to undergo, I would have made you sink into the ground with the rest of them." Then Jibreel ﷺ passed his hand over the boy's foot, and he was able to stand. He passed his hand over the food-bag and the water-skin, and they were filled with food and water. Then he lifted them and their donkeys into the sky and released them like a carrier pigeon is released. Suddenly, they found themselves back at home.⁷

Allah ﷻ has mentioned in a Hadith-e-Qudsi: "... Some of My believing slaves beg me to be granted a special prestigious stage of ibaadah (worship), but I do not let them reach it, for if I grant it to them, it will lead to vanity which will destroy them; for some of My believing slaves, only riches is suitable, for if I bring poverty upon them, it will destroy them; for some of My believing slaves, only poverty is suitable, for if I grant them wealth, it will destroy them; for some of My believing slaves only good health is befitting, for if I destine sickness for them, it will destroy them; there are others from amongst My believing slaves for whom only sickness is befitting, for if I grant them good health, it will destroy them. I make decisions regarding My slaves which are befitting of their affairs, because I know all that which is in their hearts. I am the All-Knowledgeable and The Possessor of all information."⁸

Such is the wisdom of Allah ﷻ in everything which He does. Due to the deficiency in our understanding, we do not accept, acknowledge and appreciate Allah's benevolence, loving-kindness and favours upon us as we should. May Allah bless us with understanding.

7 Ar-Ridhaa anIllahi bi qadha'iHi by Ibn Abid Dunya no.29, Mukhtasar Minhaajul Qaasideen by Ibn Qudaamah Maqdisi v.4 pg.123, Ad-Durrul Manthoor v.6 pg.514

8 Sharhus-Sunnah, Hilyatul-Awliyaa, Kitaabul-Awliyaa of Ibn Abid-Dunya

A visit to the spiritual beauty parlour

A man from Egypt went to work in the Gulf states for many years. He was very poor when he went there, but he soon became wealthy. His father was a very righteous man and was an Imaam in Egypt.

The young man, after accumulating this wealth, said to his father, “My father, I want to get married. Many years have passed by and now I need to get married. I want you to choose a wife for me. You can go ahead and perform the nikaah. The day that I arrive home, I want to immediately be taken to my wife and consummate the nikaah.

His father was well aware of the following Hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ
لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرِبَتْ يَدَاكَ "

Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah ؓ has reported that Nabi ﷺ has said: ‘A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty, and her din (religion). Be victorious through (marrying) the one possessing din (religion). May your hands be soiled (with dust/dirt). (This phrase was commonly used to show seriousness and to emphasize on the listener to accept. Its literal meaning is not intended.) (Sahih Bukhari)

He therefore chose a pious girl for his son and married her to his son.

After the son arrived at the airport, he was taken to his room along with his veiled wife. When all had left and they were alone in the room, she unveiled herself. He was shocked and flabbergasted. He said to himself, “Is this the wife my father chose for me? But she’s not beautiful. She is just not beautiful.” He was depressed and disappointed. He thought, “I waited through all of these years for a wife, and this is what I get.” He was so upset that he just abruptly left and went to sleep. He probably intended to divorce her the next morning.

The wife understood the reason for her husband's reaction. Only Allah knows what thoughts must have crossed her mind and the pain and heartbreak she must have suffered. A few hours later, in the last third of the night, she tried to awaken her husband. He refused to wake up. He wanted to be left alone. Finally, she sprinkled some water over him to wake him up. He woke up irritated and she spoke to him, "I know how disappointed you are. I understand that I am not beautiful. I always wondered who would ever marry me. I was overjoyed when I received the proposal from your father. I can see that you are unhappy with me. But I have one wish which I have in my heart. One of the reasons for which I wished to get married was to implement this Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ: Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "May Allah have mercy on the man who stands during the night to perform salaah, and also wakes up his wife. If she does not comply, then he sprinkles some water on her face. May Allah have mercy on the woman who stands during the night to perform salaah, and also wakes up her husband. If he does not comply, then she sprinkles some water on his face." (Sunan Abi Dawud, Sunan Nasa'i)

By Allah, I will be so grateful to you if you grant me just this one wish. I wanted to implement this Hadith so much. But I had lost hope that I would ever get married because I am not beautiful. Could you please just allow me to practice upon this Hadith with you? Can you please just wake up and perform Tahajjud with me? Then you can do whatever you want."

So he woke up and led her in salaah. He says, "As soon as I ended my Tahajjud salaah, I looked back. I swear by Allah, I was looking at the most beautiful woman I had ever seen in the world."

Remember that Allah is the giver of beauty. Allah creates true beauty as a result of salaah, zikr and obedience to Him. He is not in need of light complexion, sharp features, slender size and a glamorous appearance to create attraction in the heart of a man towards his wife, such attraction which will convince him that there is no one in the world more beautiful and attractive than his wife. The same is true vice-versa. Don't be deceived by the false world of soap

operas and movies, nor be duped by cosmetics, make-up and artificial beauty.

The grandchildren of this couple are today Huffaaz and Haafizaat (memorizers) of the Qur'an and students of Ilm (divine knowledge), soon to become Ulama (scholars) who will serve the Ummah.

Don't compromise or ignore the commands of Allah if you wish to live happily ever after.⁹

Revive a Sunnah and wake up your partner for Tahajjud

Attain Allah's mercy by the Du'a of Rasulullah ﷺ: "May Allah have mercy on the man who stands during the night to perform salaah, and also wakes up his wife. If she does not comply, then he sprinkles some water on her face. May Allah have mercy on the woman who stands during the night to perform salaah, and also wakes up her husband. If he does not comply, then she sprinkles some water on his face." (Sunan Abi Dawud, Sunan Nasa'i)

Include yourselves amongst those who remember Allah abundantly: Abu Hurairah and Abu Sa'eed Khudri ؓ narrate that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "When a man awakens his wife during the night and they both perform salaah, they will be written amongst the Zaakireen and Zaakiraat-those males and females who remember Allah abundantly." (Sunan Abi Dawud)

Mulla Ali Qari ؒ has written that the virtue mentioned in this narration subtly contains the commentary of an Aayah in Surah Ahzaab, wherein Allah had praised those males and females who remember Allah abundantly, and promised them that He has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward. (Mirqaatul-Mafaateeh) In other words, if one wishes to be included in the register of those males and females who remember Allah abundantly, an easy method is to perform Tahajjud and awaken your spouse to perform Tahajjud with you. As a result, you will earn for yourselves forgiveness and a

⁹ This incident was narrated by an Egyptian Aalim in a lecture, the recording of which I heard some years ago. I then found it also recorded in a book entitled "Islamic Stories and Advices"

great reward.

Earn forgiveness: Abu Maalik Ash'ari ؓ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "When a man wakes up at night and awakens his wife, and if she is overtaken by sleep, he sprinkles some water on her face, then they stand up (in salaah) in their home and remember Allah ﷻ for a portion of the night, they will be forgiven." (Tabaraani in Al-Mu'jamul Kabir)

The practice of the pious:

Amrah, the wife of Habeeb al-Ajmi ؓ once woke up for salaah, while her husband was still asleep. She woke him up at the time of sehri, saying, "Stand up, man. The night has passed and the day is approaching. Ahead of you is a long road and you have meagre provisions for the journey. The caravans of the pious have went ahead of us, and we are lagging behind."¹⁰

The wife of Rabaah Qaysi ؓ, after offering her Isha salaah, used to adorn herself with beautiful clothes and ask her husband if he had any desire for her. If he replied in the negative, she used to take out the clothes and occupy herself in nafl salaah till the following morning. When one eighth of the night used to pass, she used to say to her husband: "Wake up." If he did not wake up, she would awaken him after some time. Eventually, towards the latter part of the night she used to say: "O Rabaah! Wake up. The night is passing by and you are still sleeping." At times she used to pick up a blade of grass and say: "I swear by Allah, in my eyes this world is more valueless than this blade of grass."¹¹

Aamir bin Aslam Al-Baahili ؓ narrates the following from his father: We had a neighbour, in our locality, whose name was Hunaidah ؓ. After a third or half the night had passed, she would stand and awaken her husband, children and servants saying, "Stand, perform wudhu and engage in salaah! You will soon be pleased with (and appreciate) what I am saying!" In this manner,

10 Sifatus-Safwah

11 Behishti Zewar

Hunaidah ﷺ continued to awaken them for Tahajjud Salaah until she passed away.

After she passed away, her husband had a dream one night in which he was told, “If you wish to join her in Jannah then continue to carry out her action among her household (of awaking her household for Tahajjud).” After seeing this dream, her husband began to awaken his household, as his late wife would do, until he passed away as well.

After his demise, his eldest son had a dream in which he was told, “If you wish to join your parents in their rank in Jannah then continue their action among their household (of awaking the household for Tahajjud).” The eldest son thus began to awaken the household, as his parents would do, until he passed away.

On account of this household being one that was punctual on Tahajjud Salaah, they were known by the title ‘Qawwaameen’ (those who were punctual with Tahajjud).¹²

A woman of our era: On the night of her marriage, a girl phoned her teacher quite a while after the isha salaah. The teacher was surprised and asked if everything is all right. She explained that she had only phoned to ask: “Rasulullah ﷺ said, ‘May Allah have mercy on the woman who stands during the night to perform salaah, and also wakes up her husband. If he does not comply, then she sprinkles some water on his face.’ So is it advisable for me to wake my husband up for tahajjud, even though this is the first night of our marriage?” The teacher answered her, and later commented, “SubhaanAllah. She is asking about tahajjud on her first night and if she should wake her husband up for tahajjud. There are many of us who do not even perform fajr salaah on the first night. By Allah, I could not hold back my tears which fell from my eyes. I was overjoyed at this girl’s mindset. If this incident proves anything, it proves that goodness and piety has reached the hearts of many of our women. I used to think that all sisters are only concerned of beautifying

12 Sifatul Safwah

themselves on that night and nothing else. I thank Allah that He proved my thoughts to be incorrect and He showed me in the Ummah such women who have been blessed with lofty levels of courage.¹³

N.B. a. We should bear in mind that different people react differently in certain situations. It will not be appropriate for one to sprinkle water on the face of his wife or her husband if the wife/husband will not react positively to it.

b. Tahajjud should only be performed by those who have completed all the qadhaa salaah which are outstanding. If such qadhaa salaah are outstanding, the time of Tahajjud is an ideal time to perform those salaah. Thus, one should still wake up, but instead of performing nafl salaah, perform your qadhaa salaah.

Beware of the curse of the oppressed

Shaikh Ali Tantaawi writes: While recounting the memories of my life, some people asked me to also mention some incidents of people which I had come across during my life. I decided to fulfill their request. I quoted 2 incidents. Most readers were amazed by them. They are part of my memories, because I had seen it, heard of it or read it. This is not fiction or imagination, but true incidents and happenings of life. When you hear of it, you may think that it is just the imagination of a writer, but I assure you that it is true, even though you may not believe it. Some facts are stranger than fiction.

More than 40 years ago, I was going to Beirut in a small car which belonged to a friend of mine. (This incident was published in November 1986.) As we began climbing a mountain, a brand new Chevrolet passed by us, at a high speed. We drove behind it. It seemed as if it was racing with the other cars on the road. Whenever the driver noticed another car, he sped ahead until he overtook it. The people in the car were shouting, laughing and clapping their hands in glee. When we saw that, we kept our distance. But we could still see

13 Banaatul-Mamlakah

it ahead of us. We watched it as it reached a big juncture. The road was on the edge of the valley, overlooking the lowlands. We saw it trying to pass a large steel truck that was transporting gasoline. The truck was turning, but the small car did not wait for it to do so. While trying to overtake it, it drove into the side of the truck. The truck smashed this little car. The next thing we knew, the car was plunging into the valley. It spun and somersaulted, as if it was a ball that was kicked by a boy.

We were stunned, so we stopped our car and all the passing cars also stopped. We went down into the valley, and we only reached it 15 minutes later. We found three small children, one of whom was a girl of about nine. They were injured by slight scratches and wounds, but were alive. We found a young woman next to the car unconscious, but she seemed to be fine. As for the rest of the passengers, their bodies had mingled like dough. It was one of the most horrific scenes that eyes had ever seen. Their flesh and bones were crushed and mixed together. I have never seen anything like this before.

We saw to the children. We did not touch anything until the ambulance arrived. An investigator, doctor, and the policemen soon came, and the other people continued on their journeys. I stood with the investigator. At that time, I was a judge, so I enjoyed the first bit of the investigation and I took interest in this incident. When I returned to Damascus, I made further enquiries regarding the rest of the story and gathered all related information, to make sense of the situation, until I came to know of the full story. I was constrained to say: *Laa ilaaha illAllah*. How just you are, o my Rabb!

I had discovered a story that contains one of the greatest lessons, so I wrote it and kept it amongst my papers. Today, while flipping through my files, I found these old papers. So I decided to narrate this incident to you:

She was a beautiful girl. Her father was a wealthy and generous man, always ready to spend. So he brought her up in luxury and comfort. Whatever she wished for, she received. Her every request was fulfilled. When she was seventeen, she received her first proposal. Her father tried to stall it, on the

pretext that she was still young. The father of the suitor said, “Won’t you be satisfied if I take her like my daughter. She can live with me in my house, so that she can be under my supervision and observation?” Her father finally gave in and agreed.

The marriage took place. Before leaving to her husband’s home, her father advised her to treat her father-in-law like her father, so that he may treat her as his daughter, and to afford him due reverence and obedience, so that he may treat her with care and love. He advised her to take her mother-in-law as her mother, to trust her, to never lie to her and to never disobey her. She did not really need this advice, because it was her nature to be truthful and hardworking and to abstain from lying and a bad attitude. This is how she was brought up.

So she moved in with them. They were four in the house:

Her husband: He was a young man, with good character and who really loved her. He only wanted goodness and happiness for her. But he had no say with his father regarding the business, as he did not earn his own salary from which he could spend and save. He did not even he have any say with his mother in the house, as she was in control.

Her husband’s aunt: She was an old spinster. Outwardly, she seems very cheerful and happy, but in reality she was miserable and evil. She jealously envied every married girl who is happy in her marriage, and she wished that every married girl should be deprived of the bliss of marriage.

The mother-in-law: She was a stingy and greedy woman. She never spent a thing. She worshiped money. Her religion was to collect money, and her self-resumed responsibility was to save money for rainy days. She seemed to think that the earth had ceased to rotate and that time had stopped. She wished that the year 1920 could return in 1947 (the year when this incident occurred), with its ways and habits. Since it did not come back, she would take out her anger at the young women of this new generation.

The father-in-law: He was a very dominating, determined man, with a sharp tongue, who ruled with the iron-fist. But, in front of his wife, his tongue weakened and his iron-fist would become feeble and limp. He had no opinion and authority before her opinion and authority.

They lived according to the rules set by the mother-in-law, and saved and hoarded until they owned an abundance of gold, silver, paper-money and properties. They kept this safely, for fear of rainy days. The rainy days never came, but they made all their days miserable and gloomy due to the fear they lived with. They could be compared to someone who had a lot of food, but was afraid to eat it, in case it gets exhausted and he would be hungry after that. So he starves himself for his entire life, for fear that he may go hungry one day in the future.

When the girl was in her father's house, she found food readily available in front of her; from bread to the finest desserts, fruit and candy. If ever her father found her or her brothers reluctant to eat, he would promise them a reward for eating, just to motivate them to eat.

When she entered her husband's house, she found less of everything. If they ever bought a candy box, they hid it in the cupboard, and locked it as if it were a precious jewel. If they happened to put it before the guests, they would stare at it and watch it with their eyes and hearts. They would never stretch their hands to take it, in the hope that perhaps the guest will feel uncomfortable to take one.

Meat was served in her father's house far more than beans, for example. In their house, she found that meat was seen as seldom as the stars in the sky which could only be seen through a microscope.

In her father's house, fruit was kept on the table, so that whoever wanted to eat could do so freely. She found fruit in her new home rarer than the appearance of the hot sun in the North Pole. If they ever bought fruit, they would buy cheap fruit which was over-ripe and not fit for consumption. It

was difficult for her, but she never said a word. She would eat little, yet she was content. She was a pampered girl who had never done housework, since her father had hired two maids for this purpose. Here, she was expected to serve the whole family. They would stack up a huge pile of dirty dishes for her, and then enter the living room to chat, while she had to stay in the kitchen alone to wash the dishes. They would not allow her to heat the water, for fear of the cost of heating. Her fingers turned red from the flow of cold water in the harsh winter. When she came to her room, she would find the heater switched off, to save money, out of fear of rainy days.

Her hands were dry and cracked and her nails darkened. She suffered from both shortage of nutrition and fatigue, as well as deprivation from comfort and sympathy. So her health deteriorated and her body melted.

Her husband loved her and wanted good for her. He was an upright man of good conduct, and was firm in his Deen. So he never looked at other women, nor did he fantasize about others besides her. But he could not express his love to her and show his affection for her, because six eyes were always staring at him and observing his movements.

This was especially so in the case of his miserable old aunt, who was full of envy and hate, since she had never known the love of a husband and the joys of marriage. She wanted to take revenge for herself from society by depriving this girl of love and happiness. So she was always with her, not leaving her side for a moment. She watched this young girl and her husband better than a camera. She was older than her brother in age, and she was like a baby-sitter and educator for her nephew when he was young, so she took the role of his advisor now that he had grown. She would whisper and blow evil thoughts into her nephew's heart regarding his wife. If ever she saw him smiling at his wife or speaking kindly and lovingly to her, the aunt would reprimand him and say, "My boy, you are still young and immature. You don't know women. When a woman sees weakness in her husband, she takes advantage of him and she will never again obey him." If she saw him spending time alone with his wife in privacy, she would whisper to him just like Shaytan, and fill his

heart with germs of hatred for her.

This continued until he too began treating her differently. He started returning late in the evening. When he returned, he would enter frowning, not because of any fault from her side, but because his Shaytan - his aunt - whispered to him that being harsh with one's wife is the best way to control her and is the height of intelligence. She would wait until late in the night for him to come to her. Yet, he would not thank her, but he would blame her and belittle her efforts. When he returned late at night, and she was overcome by sleep, the satanic aunt would come to him and say, "Haven't you seen how she neglects you and does not care about you? She doesn't wait for you as wives wait for their husbands." This increased his anger and fury against her.

The girl tried to complain to her father, or to tell her mother, but she could never be alone with them, because her in-laws didn't allow her to go to her family alone. She was only allowed to go with her husband or with this aunt who deceptively expressed in front of her family extreme love and great affection for her. When they would see her losing weight, they would ask her about it, but the aunt would say, "She doesn't eat ...We try to explain to her that she must eat well, but we are unable to persuade her." Her family would believe whatever the aunt said.

The girl would hide her pain in her heart, as she could not find anyone to complain to. She would sit alone in her room, crying until she would wet her pillow with her tears. This is how she would fall asleep.

Her dowry was ten thousand Syrian pounds cash and ten thousand credit. At that time, it was a very huge amount. Her father, being the generous man he was, did not enquire about the money. He wrote the dowry in the marriage certificate, and he did not claim it. He also provided a trousseau for his daughter from his money, which cost a staggering sum. This trousseau was similar to that given to the daughters of kings.

The husband's family was unhappy with this dowry at first, but the father

insisted. They reluctantly agreed. They now began planning some satanic schemes to free themselves from this obligation. They would give their lives to save every penny, so they were not ready to pay this whole amount as dowry to the girl. They tried to annoy her in every way. They ignored her and neglected her. If she spoke, they did not listen to her. If she asked for anything, they did not answer her. If she sat down to rest, they made extra work for her. They assigned to her all the household chores. They deprived her of food. At every meal, they made such comments that upset her, until she excused herself from the table. They used her furniture for their guests and themselves to sit at, and deliberately tried to damage it.

Their main objective was to free themselves from the dowry. They assumed that upsetting her will make her life miserable. When her patience runs out, she will be forced to demand *khula'* (separation where a woman pays to separate herself from her husband), but the poor woman did not know what *khula'* was, nor did she ever hear about it. She just patiently accepted whatever was written for her. Her only refuge were her tears which would drip down her face.

Then, the satanic aunt gave them an idea. They hatched a plan. They suddenly changed their treatment towards her, and began to consider her feelings and speak kindly to her. They would even help her in some of the house-work. They would praise her that she is the only educated person in the family, who was able to read and write. Normally, no person ever knocked on their door, because – out of stinginess – they would never visit anyone, lest that person visit them, the costs of which they would have to bear. Suddenly, there was a knock on their door daily. The postman would come with registered letters and documents. They would come to her to ask her to sign the receipt. They explained that she would have to sign it for them, as she was the only one in the house who was able to read and write, while everyone else in the house is illiterate. She was happy to do so and felt appreciated.

One day, while she was in the kitchen washing dishes, she heard a knock on the door. The aunt came rushing to her, saying, “Take this. May Allah be

pleased with you. Sign here!” She said, “My hands are full of soap. Just wait until I wash it, then I will read what is in the paper.” The aunt said to her, “The man is at the door waiting. Just sign for now, and you can read what is in it later. It is just a mail receipt like any other.” She wiped her hand and took the paper. It was folded. She could not see what was written on the inside. And she signed where the aunt asked her to.

They suddenly began to mistreat her again. Actually, they treated her worse than they used to treat her before. Her husband sided with them and turned against her. She was pregnant, in her last month. They wanted to avoid the costs of childbirth. They kicked her out of the house, so she returned to her father's house...

Her father was surprised to see her. He reprimanded and scolded her, “What is this? From where did you learn to abscond? We don’t do things like that.” And her mother backed him. They did so because they did not know anything about the state of her in-laws. She burst out crying in pain, cries which could cut through a heart. She told them her story through her tears.

Her father consoled her and reassured her. He opened his heart to her and spent his wealth on her, to heal her wounds. Her mother opened her heart for her daughter. Messages were exchanged between the two families through mediators. The in-laws turned against her, openly exposing their enmity and animosity for her, and revealing the truth that they were hiding behind the veil of lies and hypocrisy. The girl’s family lost hope, and asked that the husband divorce her and pay to her what was due to her of the dowry, as well as return the trousseau.

They said: “Never! She received her rights. She has taken all of her dowry. The proof of receipt is by us. As for the trousseau, we bought it already.” The story of the trousseau was that the in-laws had offered the father to buy and select the furniture. Her father agreed to their request. They had bought it, whereas he paid for it. But the receipt, made out in their name, was in their hands.

As for the dowry, the paper that they asked her to sign, claiming that it was a receipt for mail, was actually a proof of payment to establish that she had received her dowry in full. The story of the mail that came every day was just a hoax, to orchestrate their evil designs and plans.

They applied to the court and filed a lawsuit against the in-laws. Her father hired a talented lawyer, and he paid him a large sum of money. The lawyer did his best, and the judge was a just man. But they were unable to prove their claim through witnesses. The judge asked the defendants to swear by oath, so they swore false oaths. The girl lost the case, leaving the marriage without a husband, her dowry, or her trousseau. She was left with only her baby daughter who she had just given birth to.

The lawyer approached the father to file a follow-up charge for false oaths which the defendants had taken. The father replied, "I don't want to take the case further." The lawyer said: "Why don't you?" He said, "Did you not see how we lost the case?" He said, "We lost the case because we have a lack of evidence. It's not because I didn't try, or because the judge was unjust and biased. All human judges can only judge based on clear evidence. Human judges cannot uncover realities which are hidden. Therefore, judges err sometimes, and sometimes reach the correct judgment. Judges base their rulings on written testimonies, witnesses and oaths. Sometimes, papers and written testimonies may be forged, witnesses may lie, and false oaths are taken. Allah alone is the One who always knows the truthful one from the liar." The father said, "Therefore I will lay my charges and fight my case against him before Allah."

Days passed, and the young mother took comfort from her baby daughter. This daughter was the world to her. She found solace in her and was prepared to sacrifice her life for her.

When this young girl reached the age of nine, the father asked for custody of the child. After his first wife, he had married again and was blessed with two children. This course of events opened old wounds for this poor mother, and

her tragic past which she hoped to forget came back to haunt her. She felt that it would be easier for her to die than to be separated from her daughter. This daughter was the world to her. What would be left of her if she had to lose her beloved daughter? She was unable to part with her for a moment. Whenever she saw her, she hugged her, and the girl cried in her arms. Everyone who saw them cried with them. The day of the trial came and the decision was passed to hand the girl over to her father.

The father took the girl. His family, in a display of malice and vengeance, decided to celebrate by going out for a holiday, to rejoice over the defeat of the mother and to laugh on the day of her mourning. He had just bought a new car, despite the opposition of his father. He took his father, mother, aunt, his new wife with her children and his first daughter, who he had just seized from her mother, and traveled to Lebanon.

Their conversation that day was centered on the first wife (the mother of the girl), in making a mockery of her. The poor daughter was listening to them. The fear of Allah, which was clearly lacking in them, was not found so that they may abstain from back-biting and oppressing an innocent woman. They were not even gripped by mere human compassion, by at least considering the emotions of this child that they had just snatched away from her mother. They had overstepped the limits of pride and arrogance. The husband was so excited over winning the case that he ecstatically began overtaking the cars. Whenever he saw a car in front of him, he sped ahead to overtake it. When he saw that truck, they said to him, "Wait until it turns." He said, "No, I will beat him to the turn. I am an expert in escaping from narrow spaces and corners. Didn't I get rid of that woman? I got rid of her, and she had to leave without any dowry, nor any trousseau. Then I even managed to take her daughter away from her." He laughed aloud, and he found himself already at the side of the truck. It turned and the accident occurred.

The truck turned and smashed into his car, just like an elephant falling over a small sheep. The car went plunging into the valley, and it crashed. As for the passengers, the bodies of the husband, father, mother and aunt had mingled

together like dough. Their flesh and bones were crushed together. The new wife and the children who were sinless came out unharmed. They sustained hardly any injuries, because they were innocent. They did not participate in the crime. As for those who participated in it, against whom the oppressed girl's father had laid a claim in the court of Allah, then this was their fate. (It seems that the little girl was then returned back to her mother.)

And if such oppressors do not receive such retribution in this world, they should know that a more severe and painful punishment awaits them in the court of Allah.¹⁴

A First Hand Experience in Running a Business

Maulana Yunus Patel ﷺ¹⁵ narrated the following in an informal talk: It was

14 Summarized from: Qissah Kaamilah Lam Yu'allifha Bashir by Shaikh Ali Tantaawi. I had read this incident in the library of Darul-Uloom Azaadville during my student days there. I remembered this incident a few months ago, and decided to translate it.

15 Maulana was born in 1946 in Stanger, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. In 1962, as a youngster, he volunteered to join the first Jama'at for Tabligh in South Africa with Haji Bhai Padia ﷺ from Grey Street Masjid, Durban. He used to also join his uncle, Chota Mota Desai ﷺ, the author of Taleemul Haq, when he would visit the indigenous areas for the sake of spreading Islam.

In the early 1960's, he went to Darul Uloom Deoband in India to study the Aalim course. He was an outstanding student and also a confidante of many of his illustrious teachers. On returning to South Africa around 1969, he served the community of Mooiriver as the Imaam and teacher. He went there despite being offered more lucrative posts in Transvaal, because there was not a single Aalim between Pietermaritzburg and Newcastle. He passed his time there with great difficulties.

Around the year 1973, he moved to Durban and was instrumental in establishing the first offices of the Jamiatul-Ulama Natal. For many years, he served the community under the Jamiat, later becoming the secretary general and president. During the famous Qadiani Dispute in Cape Town in the early 1980's, he was part of the team of expert Ulama who prepared the required expert evidence in the courtcase to defend the finality of the Messengership of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ. He established the first girls' Madrasah in

around 1971, when my late father-in-law went for hajj. He was away for four months. In that time, I managed his business. Although I had absolutely no experience in business, with the fadhil (grace) of Allah ﷻ, I ran the business during those four months in a manner that not only benefited my father-in-law, but which also became an example for the people of the town. Alhamdulillah.

The daily routine that was adopted, the set-up of the business and the manner of interaction with customers is being outlined and shared, as a lesson. Insha-Allah, that experience will be a means of people, especially businessmen, channelling their efforts towards prioritising deen over dunya and giving preference to earning the Akhirah (Hereafter) over the chase for money and material commodities. The love for dunya and attaching one's heart to it inevitably brings destruction to a person's deen. Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: "Two hungry wolves let loose on a flock of sheep cannot cause as much destruction to the flock as the damage that one's greed for wealth and fame can inflict upon one's deen." (Tirmizi no.2482)

The timetable, whilst running the business, was as follows:

Asherville, Durban in 1982. It is now a flourishing institute.

He served as the Imaam of Masjidun Noor in Asherville, Durban for many years until his demise. His advises have been transcribed in several books and his lectures and writings are available on his website.

Maulana was granted khilaafah (permission to initiate disciples in the path of spiritual reformation) from Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi رحمہ اللہ and Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar رحمہ اللہ. The last decade of Maulana's life saw an emphasis on the spiritual reformation of the community and thousands of people changed their lives at his hands and became his adherents.

He loved the Harams of Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Muawwarah and visited them frequently for Umrah and Hajj. He passed away after the Maghrib salaah in al-Masjid al-Haram of Makkah Mukarramah on Tuesday, 12 Sha'baan 1432 (12 July 2011), while facing the Ka'bah, after making Du'a. His lips were engaged in zikr. His Janaazah salaah was performed in the Haram the following day after the Fajr salaah, and his body was laid to rest in the blessed graveyard of Jannah al-Mu'allaah.

After the fajr salaah it was my practice to recite Yaseen Shareef and other azkaar. Thereafter I would proceed to the shop. I used to open the shop at around 8:30 a.m.

Business and Salaah

There is no doubt that during business hours, there is a demand for hard work. You have to buy, sell and keep up with everything else related to the business. You cannot just let things be and expect a business to prosper. For those few hours, you have to make effort and work hard. However, if the zuhr azaan was at 1 p.m., then from 12:30 p.m. we started arranging for the customers to leave the shop, so that by 12:45 or 12:50 the last customers could leave and we could be in the masjid before the azaan. Alhamdulillah, the same procedure was adopted for 'asr salaah.

After the zuhr salaah, I would go home for lunch, and then return to the shop to continue with business. On a Friday, I used to travel from Richmond to Pietermaritzburg or Ixopo for jumu'ah. The shop remained closed until my return. Alhamdulillah, this is how we managed and operated the business in those months.

On Saturdays, it was extremely busy in that small town. All the buses and cars, transporting hundreds of people, would stop just outside the shops. The people would just go on buying and buying. Because of my routine with regard to closing for zuhr salaah, some of the town's people commented: "Now we will see what happens. All the shops remain open during zuhr time on Saturdays – not one closes in this busy time."

However, I kept up to my routine. I finished off between 12:30 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. and went to the masjid. Alhamdulillah, when I came back from salaah, the customers were there, waiting. Alhamdulillah, this set an example for others to also close for zuhr on a busy day as well.

I have mentioned previously that the non-Muslims also run businesses – and big businesses. They have clear notices at their entrances detailing their

business hours and times for the entire week, such as Monday to Friday, Saturday, Sunday, public holidays, etc. Anyone who wants to purchase anything from these stores knows and understands that they will have to get there in those hours only. The customers work around their own activities and responsibilities, and they get there in time, to buy whatever they want to. So... why do we not have our salaah times also detailed on our notices? Why do we not close for salaah? Why do we distrust the promise of Allah ﷻ? If someone wants to purchase something, he will know the hours of business and will come in those hours. This personal experience that I am relating to you proves this.

Business and Customers

As for the items that were being sold; if there was something in the shop, which in my opinion was not proper to sell, I gave it away or sold it under the cost price. If it was more doubtful than halaal, then I just gave it away.

There were customers who would buy bread, milk, sugar, and other necessities. Some of them were extremely poor. They would tell me what they wanted. However, when they opened their purses, I could see that they did not have enough money. They used to count the coins they had and sometimes they would have to leave out some items due to insufficient money. It was obvious that the person was a very poor person. One could clearly see their poverty. Some would also mention their plight: they were struggling to make ends meet, they had no job and had three or four children to take care of, etc. Their destitution and need was evident. ...In this way, I got to know about their lives and the hardships some of them faced.

So I would ask: “How much do you have?”

If the person had R10 – and in that time R10 was a lot of money – I would then look at the total cost for the groceries that had been taken. If it was, for example, R12, I would say: “Take the whole thing and keep your R10 too.”

Upon hearing this, often that old lady or old man would actually start jumping

around to express their happiness and appreciation. They would then go and bring more customers and come again. Obviously the situation nowadays is different. I am not saying that you should just give away everything to everyone. What will be left of the business? However, there are still many genuinely poor people. As Muslims, we should show mercy, compassion and leniency towards them. Rasulullah (ﷺ) made du'a for such a person: "May Allah have mercy on a man who is lenient when selling, buying, and seeking repayment." (Bukhari)

When my father-in-law returned, the neighbour said to him: "Your son-in-law must have run you bankrupt, because the shop was more closed than opened!"

I told my father-in-law: "Don't worry. Have a rest first, for two or three days."

When I gave him the books and the money, there was a 25% to 30% increase in business. He even asked in surprise: "How did that happen?"

Alhamdulillah, at least I can say from the mimbar (pulpit) that it is not just something theoretical. It is something that was practical and it was experienced while being 'hands-on' in running a business. People say: "What do the 'aalims know about business! They always talk theory. Do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that..." Here was a 30% increase in business, in lesser time, and with the salaah performed on time in the masjid. Alhamdulillah, there was no lying, no stealing, no cheating and no deceiving anybody. ...The staff used to repeatedly say: "We wish you stay in this business full time."

Alhamdulillah, I make shukr to Allah ﷻ for these are incidents – since it offered some inspiration and incentive to the businessmen there.

May Allah ﷻ grant us all the taufeeq of doing business in a manner which is most pleasing to Allah ﷻ, and which will be a means of great rewards and goodness, in both worlds.¹⁶

16 fragrance-of-a-rose.blogspot.com/2016/06/islamic-business-part-1-first-hand

Sadaqah of cold water

On Thursday, the second of August 1990, the Iraqi army unexpectedly invaded Kuwait and its surroundings. Due to the intensity of the attack, many of the people of Kuwait tried to vacate their homes and their cities. Among those who left was a family who got into their car in the early morning in fear and dread for what may happen to them. The car proceeded with its passengers, keeping out of sight from the Iraqi army. Yet all were dreading that something may happen to them. The pious grandmother kept on repeating verses from the Noble Qur'an and making du'a to Allah ﷻ to make their journey easy, in order to safely reach a safe haven.

This car was travelling through the desert on a hot, sweltering day. After traversing a long distance in this desert, a journey which seemed to span over years, an Iraqi soldier appeared from behind some sand dunes, armed with weapons. He stopped the car and stared at all of the passengers carefully. Everyone was terribly afraid. He began interrogating them and asking them certain questions. He then threatened them, intimidating them with threats and warnings. All were quiet, overcome with fear. The grandmother continued making du'a and begging Allah ﷻ to save them from any harm. The Iraqi soldier enquired about their destination. They replied that they were going to Saudi Arabia. He indicated with his hand, showing them which road to take. He said to them, "Go this way, this road is safe." The car rushed forward, leaving behind the Iraqi soldier who was now out of sight. Everyone engaged themselves in praising Allah ﷻ who saved them from this tight corner without any harm coming to them. They made du'a to Allah ﷻ to allow them to reach Saudi Arabia easily.

The grandmother asked her son, "Did you give the soldier some food and water?" He replied, "No, I didn't give him anything? And why should we give him? Alhamdulillah, Allah ﷻ saved us from his evil!!" The grandmother said, "This poor man must be in need of some water in this hot weather and in this scorching desert. Let's go back to him, to give him what he needs."

All the other passengers in the car protested against the opinion of the grandmother and objected to her idea. But she insisted on her idea and ordered her son to return to the Iraqi soldier.

He promptly obeyed his mother and returned to the place where they had met the soldier. When the soldier noticed them, he was surprised at their return. He pointed his gun towards their faces and asked them the reason for their return. The son said, “We came back to give you water and food.” The soldier said, “Water and food! It’s been days since I last tasted food and drank water.” The son gave him a cold bottle of water and a container full of food. The soldier quickly opened the bottle of water and began gulping it down to quench his thirst. The car drove off, without the Iraqi soldier realizing that they had left. He was too engrossed in drinking water.

Suddenly, everyone heard a loud shout from the Iraqi soldier, who was calling them at the top of his voice, “Go back!! Go back!!” They returned to him, quite alarmed. When they reached him, he said to them, “Don’t go on this road.” The son said, “Why not? Isn’t this the road that you sent us on?” The soldier said, “Yes, it is. But this road is dangerous. It is full of land-mines (explosives) and checkpoints. I had evil intentions when I showed you that road. But now that you have given me food and water, I realized that you have treated me better than those (army generals) who dumped us in this desert and left us here without food or water. Had you not come here, I would have probably died from thirst. Now take this alternate road. It is a safe route and no one will interfere with you on this road.” He pointed out to them the road and said, “From here, you drive ahead quickly and do not delay.”

Everyone thanked him, and the car sped ahead. They were all taken aback, amazed at what had just happened. The grandmother said, “Haven’t you seen how Allah ﷻ saved us from such great danger? We almost destroyed ourselves at the cost of these simple morsels of food and a little drink. So praise Allah ﷻ and thank him. Try always to do good actions, and especially to give sadaqah. Charity protects man from evil outcomes.”

With the grace and protection of Allah ﷻ, the family arrived in Saudi Arabia unharmed.¹⁷

Allah ﷻ says, “Surely Allah recompenses those who give charity.” (Surah Yusuf v.88)

Rasulullah ﷺ said, “Doing good to others protects (man) from evil outcomes, from calamities and ruin. Those who do good in the world will be granted good in the Akhirah.” (Mustadrak Haakim)

Neglecting Salaah

A person narrates: We were on a da’wah trip to Jordan. One day, after we performed Zuhur in one of the masajid in Az-Zarqa, we were sitting with some students of knowledge and an Aalim from Kuwait. Suddenly, some people entered the door of the masjid in an unusual manner. They were shouting, “Where is the Sheikh? Where is the Sheikh?”

They came to the Kuwaiti Aalim and they said to him, “Sheikh, we have a young man who passed away this morning from a terrible accident. When we dug his grave, we were met by the sight of a huge snake in the grave. So we did not bury the boy yet. We don’t know what to do.”

The Sheikh got up and we stood up with him. We all went to the cemetery and looked into the grave. We saw in it a massive serpent which was coiled. Its head was in the middle, and its tail was sticking out at the end. Its eyes could clearly be seen, observing the people around it.

The Sheikh said, “Leave this grave and dig his grave in another place instead.” So we dug a grave at about two hundred meters from the first one. We had just finished it when we noticed that the snake suddenly appeared in the new grave.

The Sheikh said, “Look at the first grave!” The snake split through the earth

¹⁷ Qisas Abkatnee pg.81-84

and emerged from the first grave again.

The Sheikh said, “If we dig a third and a fourth grave, the snake will still find its way there. We can do nothing but try to get it out.” We brought spades and sticks (to hit it with). It attacked us, emerged from the grave and sat at the edge. The people were all looking at its frightening form. They were struck with fear and horror. Some of them even fainted. The ambulance was called to take them away. Police officers rushed to the scene and prevented people from coming near the grave, except the Ulama and the close relatives of the deceased.

The body was brought and placed into the grave. Instantly, the snake slithered into the grave, moving at such a fast pace that it left behind it a trail of dust. It darted to the bottom of the grave. Those who were inside the grave jumped out from intense fear. The snake twisted itself around that dead youngster and coiled itself around his legs until it reached his head. It then squeezed him and crushed him.

The narrator says We could hear the sound of his bones cracking like sticks which were being broken. When the dust settled, we edged towards the grave to peep inside. We saw that things were just as they were. The snake had coiled itself around his body, and we could do nothing about it.

The Sheikh said, “Throw sand over him.” So we buried him. We then went to his father and asked him about the condition of his young son. He said, “By Allah, he was a pleasant and obedient son, but he would not perform salaah.”

We seek Allah’s ﷻ protection from an evil end.¹⁸

Honouring a guest

Around 1992, Stefan Leca visited Turkey as a tourist. One night, after losing his way, he and his wife landed up in a small remote village in Turkey. He stopped a person and asked him: “Can you tell me where is this address?” and

18 Qisas Abkatnee pg.230-232

he showed him the brochure of the hotel he had booked at. The man replied in broken English and a bit of Turkish: "There is no hotel in this village. But, please, I want you to be my guest."

Seeing that he had no other choice, Stefan agreed, although they were frightened of this stranger who was a large man and sported a long beard. Little did he know that the man he feared was the same one who would change his life.

As soon as he arrived at the man's house, Stefan and his wife were comforted by the fact that there was a family there; an elderly grandmother of about 80 years old, a mother and five children all close in age. He explained: "That man invited us for a very simple dinner. The way he treated us made us feel very comfortable. And then he said: "You sleep here, we have other place."

The next day, when I woke up, I could see that there was only that one room. This brother with his five children, his mother and his wife were sleeping outside the room under the tree... it was a cold and freezing night. (This was in the month of November and the cold was bitter.)

I was shocked. I told him: "Are you crazy? Why did you do that?" He looked at me with a smile and said: "I'm not crazy, but you are travellers, and I have to give you whatever I have because I am a Muslim." When he said that, his face was shining, and I was very much shocked. My wife started to cry. I said: "Look, what do you know about being a Muslim?" He said: "I don't have very much knowledge about Islam, but you can read the book of the Qur'an and Sunnah and then you'll know about Islam."

That day, I went to a book-shop, I bought a Qur'an and a book of Hadith and started to read. I read continuously for about two months. After two months, my heart was opened and I said the Shahaadah and became Muslim on 17 January 1993."

He adopted the name 'Muhammad' for himself, while his wife chose the name 'Noor'.

When the host of an interview once asked him when he embraced Islam, he replied that, in his heart, he was a Muslim from the time the man said, “I am Muslim.” But he and his wife officially took their Shahaadah (declaration of faith) in Egypt, two months after the encounter with the Turkish man.

When he returned to his home country, Romania, he faced anger and rejection from his family. Taking heed from the conduct of the Turkish man, he showed them the beauty of Islam through his actions. Later, the ones who carried the most enmity towards him were the first to accept Islam.

He explained: “From the beginning of my Muslim life, I started Da’wah. I travelled to more than 112 countries carrying the logo of “Islam is Peace”. More than a thousand people became Muslims. When I saw that these activities had good results, I decided to do something for Islam in Romania.

In our area, we are more than 80000 Muslims, I decided to build an Islamic centre to be a house of teaching people about the Sunnah of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ and the Qur’an.

My dream is to spread this kind of activity all over the world. My target is to let the people know about Islam, because if someone reads the Qur’an with an open heart, he will definitely change his views about Islam and he will follow the words of Nabi Muhammad ﷺ.

We have a big responsibility. Allah ﷻ gave us a gift to be Muslims. We have to spread this gift to all humanity.”

Rasulullah ﷺ said, “The dearest and nearest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the best amongst you in conduct.” (Bukhari)

He ﷺ also said, “The most perfect man in his faith among the believers is the one with the best character.” (Ahmad and Abu Dawud)¹⁹

19 Condensed and edited from aboutislam.net, idealmuslimah.com. I had first heard the above incident narrated in a voice clip which Hajee Ahmad Hoosen of Heidelberg had played for me a few weeks before his demise. May Allah ﷻ forgive him and have mercy

Take advantage of every opportunity

I completed my course in the Medical College with some difficulty. I was not very dedicated to my studies, but Allah ﷻ made it easy for me to graduate. I was employed at one of the hospitals close to my home city. Alhamdulillah, everything was going easy for me. I was living with my parents. I resolved to save up and collect a good sum of dowry for my future bride. That is what my mother encouraged me every day to do. Work was easy. All was going smooth and everything was in perfect order. This was more so because I was working in the military hospital. Because of that, I loved my work. I was very successful in my practical internship, which ran side by side with theory which was tiring and boring.

The hospital hosted employees from various nationalities. My relationship with them was a relationship of work. At the same time, because of being a local, they benefited from my presence, so I became their guide to all places of historical significance and to the shopping centres. I used to even take some of them to our farm. I had a good relationship with them. It was my habit that when any one of them completed his term, we would host a farewell party for him.

One of our British doctors who had just completed his term of service with us was set to travel back home. We discussed having a farewell party for him. The venue was our farm. All arrangements were complete. But my mind was occupied over deciding which precious gift would be most appropriate for this occasion.

This doctor loved collecting rare ancient relics. It was not tiring or difficult to procure it. My father had a whole lot of such artefacts. I just had to ask him. I took from him a heritage item which had been made in our town a long time ago. A cousin of mine happened to be there when I spoke to my father about it. He suggested, “Why don’t you give him a gift about Islam?” I picked up the artefact.

on him.

I didn't take my cousin's words seriously, but Allah ﷻ facilitated it for me without any effort. The next morning, I went to a book store to buy the newspaper and some magazines. I found a book about Islam in English. My cousin's words began ringing in my ears. I just felt inclined to buying it, especially since it was so cheap. I bought the book.

On the day of our friend's farewell party, I placed the book between some of the ancient artefacts, as if I was hiding it. I presented the gift to him. His farewell was quite sentimental. He was liked by all his co-workers. He left on his journey.

Days and months passed quickly. I got married and was blessed with a child. One day, a letter reached me from England. I read it slowly. It was in English. At first glance, I only understood some of its contents. I couldn't understand the rest. All I could grasp was that it was from an old friend who worked with us for a long time. I tried to scan through my memory. This was the first time I was hearing this name. It sounded strange to me. His name was Dhayfullah. That is my name.

I closed the letter and tried my best to remember a friend by the name Dhayfullah. I just couldn't remember anyone who had this name besides myself. I opened the letter and read it a second time. Slowly, the simple words seeped in. This is one section of the letter:

My respected brother Dhayfullah

Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

Allah blessed me with Islam and guided me at your hands. I will never forget your friendship with me. I want to remind you of the book you gifted me when I left on my journey. I read it one day, and it increased my desire to find out more about Islam. It was the taufiq (divine will) of Allah that I found the address of the publishers on the cover. I wrote a letter to them, asking them for more literature. They sent me what I requested. All praise is due to Allah. The light of Islam spread through my heart. I went to the Islamic centre

and announced my Islam. I changed my name from 'John' to 'Dhayfullah', which is your name, because you are my greatest benefactor, after Allah. I am attaching for you the copy of my declaration of Islam. I will try to soon come to Makkah Mukarramah to perform Hajj.

Your brother in Islam, Dhayfullah

Wassalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

I closed the letter. Then, I immediately opened it again. I read it again. This letter shook me greatly. I could sense sincerity in every word and letter. I cried profusely. Allah ﷻ had guided a man to Islam through me, while I was completely oblivious to his rights. Allah ﷻ guided a man to Islam through a book which cost less than 5 riyaaals. I felt sad and happy. I was happy that Allah ﷻ had guided him to Islam without any effort on my part. But I was more sad than happy. I asked myself, 'What did I do in the past for my other co-workers? I didn't invite them to Islam. I didn't introduce them to this Deen. I didn't even tell them one word about Islam, which could bear witness on my behalf on the day of Qiyaamah. I spoke to them a lot. I joked with them a lot. But I didn't speak to them about Islam, not a little and not a lot.'

Allah ﷻ guided Dhayfullah to Islam. Allah ﷻ guided me to analyse myself and examine my deficiencies with regards to His obedience. I will never again ever despise any good action, even if it has to be a book worth one riyaaal.' I asked myself, 'What are we doing? How many of our drivers are non-muslim? How many of our domestic servants are non-muslim? How many...? How many...? Did you shed a tear?' But the main question is: What have we done about it?²⁰

The reward of controlling one's evil desires

Yahya ibn Ayyub Khuzaa'ee narrates that he heard from someone that there lived a youngster during the time of Umar ؓ who was extremely devoted

20 Mausoo'atil Qisasil Mu'athhirah pg.30-33

to worship and was always in the Masjid. Umar ؓ was very impressed with him. The youngster had a very old father and would visit his father every day after performing the Isha salaah. However, his road passed by the door of a woman who used to flaunt her charms by the roadside because she had become infatuated with him. As he passed by one night, she made a persistent effort to seduce him until he eventually followed her. As she entered through her door and he was about to do the same, he remembered Allah. The evil intention vanished instantly and the following verse of the Qur'aan came to his tongue:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ

Indeed when the temptation (to do evil) from Shaytaan reaches those who fear Allah, they remember (Allah and engage in Dhikr, thinking about His punishment and recalling the rewards for abstaining from sin) and their eyes instantly open (they realise Shaytaan's plot and ignore the temptation). (Surah A'raaf, verse 201)

The youngster immediately fell unconscious. The woman then called for her maidservant and with her help, the two of them carried him to his door. He was made to sit and his father's door was knocked. When his father came out to look for him, he found him unconscious in the doorway. He summoned for some of his family members and they together carried him inside the house.

When the youngster regained consciousness after a considerable part of the night had passed, his father asked, "Dear son! How are you?" "I am well," came the reply. When his father then asked him in the name of Allah what had happened, he informed his father about the incident. "Dear son," the father asked, "What was the verse you recited?" When the youngster recited the verse he had recited at the time, he again fell unconscious. Although the people tried to revive him, this time he had passed away. It was still night when they bathed him, shrouded him and buried him.

It was only the following morning that the people informed Umar ؓ about

it. Umar ؓ immediately went to console the father. “Why did you not inform me (of the funeral)?” Umar ؓ enquired. “O Ameerul Mu'mineen!” the father replied, “It happened during the night (and we did not wish to disturb you).” Umar ؓ then told them to accompany him to the grave and when they arrived there, Umar ؓ addressed the youngster by his name and recited the verse,

وَلَمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ

The one who fears standing in the presence of his Rabb (on the Day of Qiyaamah) shall have two gardens (of Jannah). (Surah Rahmaan, verse 46)

The youngster responded twice from within the grave saying, “O Umar! My Rabb has already given me both these gardens in Jannah.”²¹

Another narration states that the youngster said, “Dear uncle! Go to Umar, convey my Salaams to him and ask him what the reward will be for the person who fears standing before his Rabb.” The end of this narration states that Umar ؓ went to the youngster's grave and said, "You shall have two gardens if Jannah. You shall have two gardens of Jannah.”²²

The Young Worshipper & the Cookie

"...I knew him myself. I knew him. I don't say he was from the Children of Isra'il. No! He was from the sons of this land. I knew him personally.

He would weep intensely. He would weep intensely, and he would never have the Qur'an recited in his presence except that he would cry, and become humble and soft. He was an amazing, strange person.

He memorized the Qur'an when he was only twelve! I will tell you about him. I promise that I won't tell you other than what I saw with my own eyes. My second promise is that I won't exaggerate in anything I say about him.

21 Tareekh Dimishq of Ibn Asaakir vol.45 page 450, no 5319

22 Shuabul-Imaan no. 722

He memorized 'Sahih Muslim' with me in two weeks. He memorized 'Sahih al-Bukhari' with another friend in two weeks. Do you understand what he did? I didn't know that he had memorized al-Bukhari, and my friend didn't know that he had memorized Muslim. He loved sincerity. He always loved as-Sirri as-Saqti ﷺ. Do you know why he loved as-Sirri as-Saqti in particular? Because as-Sirri as-Saqti used to pay a lot of attention to sincerity.

He was very good in school, and in fact excelled in it. He would only sleep from the time he got home from school until Zuhr time. After Asr, he would attend halaqahs (Qur'anic circles). After Maghrib, he would attend the lessons of the scholars. After Isha until eleven, he would study for school. From eleven - every single night - he would pray until Fajr.

Whenever he would recite the Qur'an, he would cry. I read that when some of the Salaf would recite the Qur'an, they would pass out. I know of the dispute among the scholars on this. But I have never seen this with my own eyes, except from this youngster. We were performing the Friday salaah, and the imaam recited: "And the inhabitants of Hell will call out to the inhabitants of Paradise 'Give us a drop of water!'" [al-A'raaf v.50] He fell down on his head, and we thought he had died.

We prayed one night at my house. I pretended that I was asleep in order to see what he would do. He came over and motioned with his hand over my eyes (to see if I was awake). He woke up at eleven. I would sleep and wake up, sleep and wake up. He would be standing in a rak'ah and I wouldn't see him go down. He would then bow and I wouldn't see him come up.

On a different night, he was reciting the Qur'an. When he got to this verse: "Indeed, it is The Blazing Hell, tearing away the skin of the head!" [al-Ma'aarij v.15-16] he cried and passed out in front of me. I woke him up. He got up, made ablution and prayed. When he got to the verse: "Indeed, it is The Blazing Hell, tearing away the skin of the head!" he again cried and passed out. I woke him up, and when he got to it a third time, he recited it and passed out again. He didn't wake up until the call for Fajr prayer.

He would recite the entire Qur'an every three nights in secret while praying at night, and would do so every seven days openly during the day. I am not exaggerating, as he would do this in front of me. And by Allah, he would remember Allah in a single day more than 12,000 times! I counted it myself while sitting with him - 12,000 times! I would ask him: "Why?" He replied: "I don't want Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه to have done more than me."

He had jealousy, jealousy when it came to worship! He was only seventeen at the time, when he was at this level!

I don't know what to say about him! Whenever he would come across a text to memorize, I would say: "I challenge you to memorize this." He would say: "Don't challenge me!" I would try to fire him up, and say: "I challenge you!" The next day, he would come and recite the text to me as if it were just his name. If he made just three mistakes, he would not consider himself to have memorized it. Three mistakes!

We would sometimes give da'wah to someone and lose hope in him. I am speaking about myself and Allah سبحانه knows best about others. If we lost hope in a youth, we would tell him to go and give him da'wah. By Allah, after just two days, this person would be guided. He would walk with him for just two days. The first day, the second day, and this person would then be praying in the first row! Whether he was a smoker, a drug addict, etc., he would become upright right away by the Permission of Allah سبحانه. This is real barakah (blessings)!

One day, he was performing salaah behind a scholar in the southern region who would elongate the prayer, following the Sunnah. A man came and hit him on the back with a stick while he was bowing, in front of me. After the prayer, he looked at him and asked: "Why did you hit me?" He replied: "You have whisperings! You make us pray too long!" The imam replied: "You are healthy! You are healthy!" The man replied: "How do you know I'm healthy?"

This youth then raised his hands to Allah سبحانه - as soon as he raised his hands,

my heart stopped - and said: "O Allah, take away his health until he knows its value and prays properly in front of You!" It was the Asr prayer. I swear by Allah that this man didn't pray Maghrib with us. He was at home, laying in bed. After a few weeks, I saw him and said: "Fear Allah! The man is at home in bed! I ask you by Allah..." He said: "My brother, I didn't mean to do this!" I said: "Ask Allah to cure him." By Allah, the man prayed with us the next prayer!

His supplication was answered in front of seventeen people, who all bear witness to this, in more than one incident. In the Haram, he would wear thick glasses. He was in the Haram, and he was wearing glasses. The glasses bothered him. He said: "I can't go to Palestine one day with glasses." So, he went to the well of Zam Zam, in front of seventeen people. He took off his glasses, took the Zam Zam water, said: "O Allah, make it a cure for my vision," and drank it. He then said: "Allah is the Greatest!" and threw the glasses away in front of everyone! They wanted to test him. They pointed to a clock that nobody could see and asked him: "Can you tell us what time it is?" He said: "The time is such and such." Exact! He would now recite the Qur'an without glasses. His vision was returned 100%!

The incidents are many, but the time doesn't permit me to tell them all.

One day, he recited the verse: "On the day when some faces will be brightened and some faces will be darkened..." [Aal Imraan v.106] By Allah, he cried to the point that it was as if my heart was being torn. I said to him: "Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The worst of people is he who is asked something in the name of Allah and does not respond." I ask you by Allah: what makes you cry like this?" I wanted to cry like him! I wanted to feel the happiness he felt!

He said: "I committed a sin in my life." I asked him: "What is this sin?"

Do you know what his sin was? You will laugh at yourself. I will explain it to you. He said: "When I was in second grade [before reaching puberty], I went into a store, took a cookie and ate it. The Fire is most deserving of a body that

is nurtured by that which is forbidden (i.e. because the cookie didn't belong to him, he feared that he would burn in the Fire for eating it)."

He passed away. He passed away, may Allah have mercy on him, when he was only twenty. A person was playing with a weapon. He accidentally fired a bullet. The stray bullet pierced through the body of this youth, killing him. He passed away as a righteous person, and I assume him to be such. He passed away, and that was it. It was all over. However, his life didn't end. And by Allah, were it not for the fact that he asked me by Allah to not reveal his name, I would have revealed it..."²³

An Australian Model Repents

This is a true story that happened with a caller to Islam from Egypt called Amr Khalid. He said, "Three days ago, I received an e-mail from a young lady in Australia, and the email reads as follows:

"I am a young Lebanese lady that has a Muslim father and a Christian mother. For the first ten years of my life, I lived in Lebanon. We then migrated to Australia. That brought an end to my relationship and my connection with the Middle East. I am currently 22 years of age. After migrating to Australia, my association with my religion also ended completely. The only thing I know is that I am a muslimah, that's it. I don't know what the Qur'aan looks like. I don't know how to pray. Religion plays no significance in my life. My mother and father separated, each one re-marrying another person. I entered university. My mother and father left Australia, leaving me behind alone with no family, brothers or sisters. I know nothing about my ancestry in Lebanon. I lived alone and I had to work to spend on myself. I attended university in the morning and worked at a bar in the evening, I have a boyfriend. I have not left out any haraam except that I have done it without any shame. I am fully westernised. I know a little bit of Arabic. Because I am extremely beautiful, I joined the beauty competition in New Zealand and won this competition. I am planning to join a beer competition in New Zealand. I am currently modelling

23 Salaf Stories, with minor adjustments for purposes of clarity

for magazines. During this time, I used to visit a Lebanese family residing in Australia. At their house, I heard a Ramadhan lecture talking about modesty. At the end, the web-address was given. I went through a nervous breakdown. It was as though this lecture was addressing me directly. I am sending you this e-mail to ask, is it possible for Allah ﷻ to accept me and forgive me?"

And this is where Sarah's e-mail ends. SubhaanAllah!

No matter how weak a person's imaan is, his/her soul longs for its Creator just as the stomach craves for food. Amr Khalid wrote back, advising her about the conditions of repentance and that Allah ﷻ will of course forgive her if she repents.

Two days later, she contacts Amr Khalid and she says: "I have repented to Allah ﷻ. I have left my boyfriend and promised never to see him again."

After another two days, she contacts him and she says: "I want to learn how to pray."

Two days later, she says: "I would like some Qur'anic audio tapes." So he sent her some tapes via DHL Courier.

A week goes by and he doesn't hear from her. She contacts him again and informs him that she has retracted her beauty title of that particular city. Then came the surprise. She contacted him, saying, "I have put on the hijab."

However, the story doesn't end here. Two days after putting on the hijab, she experiences a sharp pain. She goes to the doctor, who diagnoses her with brain cancer and informs her that her days are limited. She enters the hospital for an operation. The success rate for this operation, according to the doctors in Australia is 20 percent. This is what her doctor said.

As for Sarah, listen to what she had to say. She said: "I am pleased to meet Allah. I am happy that I repented prior to finding out about my illness. I don't know whether my mother and father will find out about my situation. If I live,

I will support your website, for this website is my window to Islam.

To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return. May Allah have mercy on Sarah who passed away at the age of 22.

They buried her with the Muslims in New Zealand. Prior to her death, she sent a short e-mail to Amr Khalid, saying: "I lived far away from my Lord for 22 years, but I repented and turned back to Allah 3 weeks ago. I don't know many Muslims besides you and this internet forum. I urge you to make du'a for me that Allah has mercy on me and forgives me. Make du'a to Allah to guide my mother, for she does not know anything about me. Signed Sara.²⁴

A beautiful death

A Saudi national had a dream in which someone told him: "Make arrangements for the person with this phone number to perform Umrah (minor pilgrimage)." The phone number shown in his dream was very clear. When he woke up, he had a vivid recollection of the dream, but thought it was his imagination. So he ignored it.

The next day he had the same dream, so he decided to seek the advice of the imaam of a masjid in the neighbourhood. After relating this dream, the imaam said: "If you have the same dream again, note down the phone number, contact the person and provide him with the means to perform Umrah."

As expected, he had the same dream a third time. So, when he woke up, he wrote down the telephone number. When he dialled the phone number later that day, it was a man who answered. After a brief introduction, he said: "I have been asked in a dream to provide you with the means to perform Umrah. I want to accomplish the noble task of getting you to undertake the minor pilgrimage."

The person on the other end of the telephone line laughed boisterously and said: "What are you talking about? It's been ages since I last performed any

24 Salaf Stories, with minor adjustments for purposes of clarity

fardh prayer and you want me to perform Umrah!”

The one who had the dream implored him: “Look, my brother! I want you to go for Umrah. I will bear all the expenses.” After arguing for a while, the person agreed to the offer, on condition that the man who had the dream accompanies him and brings him back to Riyadh at his expense. He agreed to the demand.

When the two met each other later, the dreamer noticed that the other person appeared to be quite wicked. His face betrayed that he was a drinker who rarely prayed. The dreamer was extremely astonished that he had been asked three times to take such a person to perform Umrah.

They then left for Makkah Mukarramah to perform Umrah. When they arrived at the Meeqat, they took a bath and assumed Ihram before moving on towards the Holy Sanctuary. When they arrived in Makkah, they circumambulated Allah’s House, offered a two raka’ts prayer at Maqaam Ibrahim, performed Sa’ee between Safaa and Marwah, had their heads shaven and thus completed their Umrah. Then they prepared to return home.

When they were about to leave the Holy Sanctuary, the person who had been persuaded to perform Umrah, said: “Friend, let me offer a two raka’ts prayer before leaving this sacred place. I’m not sure whether I’ll ever be able to perform Umrah again.” The other person had no reason to object to this noble wish, so he told him to pray to his heart’s content. The man started to pray. He then prostrated for a long time. When it was quite late, his friend called him, but received no response. Seeing that his body was totally motionless, he jumped up to see if he was fine. When he touched him, he was shocked to discover that he had passed away. This was the person of whom he had such a low opinion, but who had died in a state of prostration in Allah’s house. He envied his friend for dying in this manner, and with tears in his eyes, said to himself, “I wish we could all die like this!”

This fortunate person was given his last bath with Zamzam water and

shrouded in the two sheets of unstitched cloth that he had worn while performing Umrah. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims performed his funeral prayer in Al-Masjidul Haraam, asking Allah ﷻ to forgive his sins...

After a few days, the man who had the dream went to visit the widow of his companion. After offering his condolences for her loss, he asked the woman what qualities her husband had which had resulted in him dying in such a good way in Al-Masjidul Haraam. He said that all God-fearing and righteous Muslims aspired to die in this manner. The widow said: “Brother, you know my husband was not a good man. He had given up praying and fasting a long time ago. He was fond of drinking and kept a bottle of wine next to his bed. He went to sleep at night after drinking wine. He also drank wine before going out. I can’t remember anything worthwhile about him.”

“Oh yes, one thing good about him was that he helped a destitute widow and her little kids who live in our neighbourhood. When he went to the bazaar at night, he would buy food for our family and for the widow and her children. When he came back from the bazaar, he would put food at her door and then call her to pick it up. The woman who got the food prayed that Allah ﷻ should grant him a good end! She said:

اللَّهُ يُحْسِنُ خَاتِمَتَكَ

- May Allah grant you a beautiful death.”²⁵

**A LIST OF MY ASAATIZAH (TEACHERS) WHO HAD ADVISED ME TOWARDS
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PASSED ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF DEEN TO ME:**

FAMILY

MY BELOVED FATHER DR. DAWOOD KAJEE

MY BELOVED MOTHER

MY ELDEST BROTHER MOULANA MOOSA KAJEE

MY ELDER BROTHER MOULANA RIDWAN KAJEE

MAKTAB AND HIFZ TEACHERS

AAPA H. ABBA

AAPA M. JEENA

AAPA F. WADEE

MOULANA FAREED BEIG

MOULANA MOHAMMAD AMIN SUJEE

MOULANA ISMAIL BISMILLAH ﷺ

MOULANA ABDULLAH MANSOOR ﷺ

MOULANA ISMAIL KATHRADA ﷺ

MOULANA MASEEHULLAH KATHRADA

HAFIZ BASHEER TIKLI

QARI ABDUR-RAHMAN ESHAK

AALIM COURSE

MOULANA MUHAMMAD ABBA

MOULANA ABDULLA AMEJEE

MOULANA ZIYAD HUSSEIN

MOULANA SHAFIQR RAHMAN AZMI

QARI RAFIQ MOTARA

QARI ABDULLAH MOTARA

QARI ABDULLAH ISHAQ

MOULANA MUHAMMAD CHOTIA

MOULANA AHMAD CHOTIA

MOULANA UMAR BISMILLAH ﷺ

QARI YUNUS DESAI

MUFTI MASOOD QASIM
MOULANA ABDUR-RAHIM SHEIKH
MOULANA ABDULLAH DABHELIA
MUFTI MUHAMMAD PATEL ﷺ
MUFTI ATIQUR-RAHMAN AZMI
MOULANA MOOSA PATEL
MOULANA HASSEN DOCRAT
MOULANA ABDULLAH ISMAIL
QARI ISMAIL ESSACK ﷺ
MUFTI ZAKARIYYA PANDOR
MUFTI MUHAMMAD AMJAD
MUFTI AHMAD ALI
MUFTI MUHAMMAD SAEED MOTARA
MOULANA FADHLUR-RAHMAN AZMI
MOULANA ABDUL-HAMID ISHAQ

LATER TEACHERS

MOULANA HAKEEM MUHAMMAD MAZHAR
MOULANA SHAH HAKEEM MUHAMMAD AKHTAR ﷺ
MOULANA SALEEMULLAH KHAN ﷺ

**BESIDES THE ABOVE, THERE ARE MANY OTHERS FROM WHOM I BENEFITTED,
STUDIED UNDER FOR A FEW DAYS OR FEW HOURS OR FROM WHOM I RECEIVED
IJAAZAH IN HADITH, WHOM I ALSO COUNT FROM AMONGST MY TEACHERS.**

**MAY ALLAH ﷻ ACCEPT FROM ALL MY TEACHERS AND REWARD THEM WITH THE
GREATEST OF REWARDS AND GRANT THEM ALL HIS HAPPINESS.**