

PRESENTS *of* PARADISE

A collection of true inspiring incidents

Part 2

Ml. Imraan Kajee

For suggestions, enquiries or copies, etc.

e-mail: imrnkajee@gmail.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Contents

The Power Of Bismillah	5
When The Sweetness Of Imaan Enters The Heart	13
Small Charity - Great Rewards	19
Sabr.....	22
The Husband Who Was Too Shy To Look At His Wife	22
A Mercy In Disguise	25
Love For Others What You Love For Yourself	31
An Unappreciated Treasure, An Amazing Cure	34
Repent To Allah سُبحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى Before It's Too Late	41
The Story Of Khaalid.....	43
High School	44
The Desolate House	46
Difficult Days	50
The Story Of Shaykh Abu Yusuf.....	54
A Terrifying Experience	55
Hunger And Thirst.....	57
Abu Fahd's Success	59
Safe And Sound	60

FOREWORD

All praises are due solely to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), by whose grace and mercy all good deeds are completed. May Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)'s special and choicest salawaat and salaam be upon our beloved master and teacher Nabi Muhammed (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), 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 (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) would say, "Stories are the presents of Jannah." Junaid Baghdadi (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said, "Stories are from among the armies of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), 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 'aalim course' at Darul-Uloom Azaadville in 1431. By the grace of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), many people benefitted from that booklet. This is the second booklet of this series.

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 rights and time so that I could spend it in studying and writing.

I make dua that Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) 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

Imraan Kajee

14 Rajab 1438 / 12 April 2017

THE POWER OF BISMILLAH

Umar (رضي الله عنه) was once sitting in Masjidun-Nabawi with a group of other Sahaabah discussing the virtues of different sections and portions of the Qur'an, during the period of his khilaafah. The virtues of Surah Faatihah, Mu'awwazatain (Surah Falaq and Surah Naas), the last verses of Surah Tawbah, the last verses of Surah Nahl, the last verses of Surah Bani Israa'il, Surah Maryam, Surah Taahaa and Surah Yaaseen had already been discussed, when Ali ibn Abi Taalib (رضي الله عنه) entered and expounded on the virtues of Aayatul-Kursi. As he finished his discourse, Amr ibn Ma'dikarib, who was never at a loss for words, commented, "What about the virtue of 'Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim'. By Allah, 'Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim' contains within it amazing power." Umar (رضي الله عنه) enquired, "Did you see its amazing power after accepting Islam or during the days of Jaahiliyyah (pre-Islamic days of ignorance)?" He replied that he had witnessed its amazing power during the days of Jaahiliyyah (ignorance) before Islam. Umar (رضي الله عنه) sat up straight, so as to give his full attention, as he enjoyed listening to Amr narrating his exploits. He prompted, "Go on, Abu Thawr, tell us of the amazing power of 'Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim'."

Amr related, "During the days of Jaahiliyyah, we were afflicted with a severe drought which led me to unbearable starvation. I got onto my horse and rode through the desert, searching for some food to eat. By Allah, I only found ostrich eggs, which I ate for the next ten days, whilst my horse lived off the dirt strewn around the desert. One day, while wandering about, I noticed a leather tent in the distance, which was surrounded by goats, horses, cattle and camels. I headed in that direction. As I came closer, I saw an old man resting near the entrance of the tent and a young beautiful woman at his side. Her face shone brightly, like a rising sun. She was fair in complexion with a tinge of a slight tan, which together increased her beauty. Her skin was smooth, delicate and tender. Her eyelashes were strikingly dark black, which she had darkened further by applying mascara. Her eyebrows were beautifully arched. Her lips gave way to shining teeth, while her snow-white

forehead gleamed luminously. Her figure was thin and slender, yet fleshy and not skeletal. She was of the perfect stature and height, neither too tall, nor short and tiny. Her upper body was slim and slender, while her waist and rear was attractively curved. (Her figure resembled that of 250ml coca-cola bottle.) One gazing at her from far off would be bowled over and dumbstruck by her gorgeousness, and the one who inspects her from close-up would be attracted by her lovely pretty looks. I never saw a woman in my life who was as beautiful and attractive as her. When I saw her, and the abundance of animals nearby, and thought about my hunger, I said to myself, “O Amr, good luck to you for the enjoyment and wealth you are about to attain.”

As I came nearer to the old man, I said fiercely, “Surrender, as you are now my prisoner. If only your mother had never given birth to you.” He asked, “Who are you?” I replied, “I am Amr ibn Ma’dikarib.” He lifted his head and said, “Listen, if you wish to be our guest, you may. If you need help, we will help you. I again demanded, “Surrender, as you are now my prisoner. If only your mother had never given birth to you.” He repeated his request and I responded as I had done before. He then bade me to be fair and get off my animal, which I did. He stated, “O Amr, I never kill anyone till I present before them three choices. You may choose whichever of them you like; If you wish to be our guest, you may. If you wish, we can wrestle one another. If you wish, we can have a race.” I said to myself in an audible voice, “This old man wants to wrestle me. Fine, I love wrestling.” He enquired, “Are you sure you want that, Amr.” I responded positively.

He asked the young woman to hand him a bandage-like turban, which he tied around his head, covering his entire forehead uptil his eyebrows. He folded his sleeves, and so did I. He stood up like an old man who could barely stand. He then recited ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ and grabbed hold of me. Suddenly, I found myself flat on the floor under him. He had already pounced upon my chest and settled himself there. He asked threateningly, “Should I kill you or let you go?” I begged him to set me free. He got up, and recited the following couplets:

(عَرَضْنَا عَلَيْكَ النَّزْلَ مِنَّا تَفَضُّلاً ... فَلَمْ تَرْعَوِي جَهْلًا كَفَعَلِ الْأَشَائِمِ)
(وَجِئْتَ بِعُدُوَانٍ وَظُلْمٍ وَدُونِ مَا ... تَمَيَّنْتُهُ فِي الْبَيْضِ جَزَ الْغَلَاصِمِ)

We kindly gave you the choice of becoming our guest, but you ignorantly did not desist, which is usually the reaction of wretched unlucky people.

You approached me with enmity and the desire to oppress me, while I did not, in absolute innocence and sincerity, even consider slitting your throat.

Amr said, "I thought to myself: O Amr, you are the famed warrior of the Arabs. It is better to die than to live after running away from this old weak man. I decided to attack him again. So I stood up, reciting the following couplets:

(رُؤْيَدَكَ لَا تَعْجَلْ ثَلَيْتَ بِصَارِمٍ ... سَلِيلِ الْمَعَالِي هَزَبَرِي قَتَائِمِ)
(أَلَا إِنَّ ذُلَّ عَمْرٍو ذَلَّةٌ أَعْجَمِيَّةٌ ... وَلَمْ يَكُ يَوْمًا لِلْفِرَارِ بِحَاجِمِ)
(طَمِعْتَ لَمَّا مَتَيْتَكَ نَفْسُكَ تَسْلَمَنَّ ... سَقَتَكَ الْمُنَابَا كَأَسْهَابِ الصَّرَائِمِ)
(فَمَا لَكَ فَأَنْذِلْ دُونَ نَفْسِكَ تَسْلَمَنَّ ... هُنَالِكَ أَوْ تَصْبِرْ لِحَزِّ الْغَلَاصِمِ)
(فَمَا دُونَ مَا تَهَوَّاهُ لِلنَّفْسِ مَطْمَعٌ ... سِوَى أَنْ أَحْزَ الرَّأْسَ مِنْكَ بِصَارِمِ)

Wait a bit and don't be too quick in your assumptions. You are dealing with a warrior who is the descendant of noble fathers, a long-necked fearsome lion.

If Amr has been subdued and disgraced once, remember that he has never once been one to retreat from battle and flee.

You hoped to have saved yourself when you found yourself lucky (the first time), whereas the draught of death has passed before your lips, which will deliver you sharp blows.

What is the matter with you?! Why don't you save yourself by surrendering now, otherwise you will have to bear patiently the slitting of your throat?

Leaving aside that which you wish for yourself, there is no hope for you other than the fact that I will soon separate your head from your body with my sword.

I then shouted out, “Surrender, as you are now my prisoner. If only your mother had never given birth to you.” He came closer, recited ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ and grabbed hold of me. Suddenly, I found myself flat on the floor under him. He had already pounced upon my chest and settled himself there. He asked threateningly, “Should I kill you or let you go?” I begged him to set me free. He got up, and recited the following couplets:

(يَسْمُ اللهَ وَالرَّحْمَنَ فُزْنَا ... قَدِيرًا وَالرَّحِيمَ بِهِ فَهَرْنَا)
(وَهَلْ تُغْنِي جَلَادَةُ ذِي حِفَاطٍ ... إِذَا يَوْمًا لِمَعْرَكَةِ نَزَلْنَا)
(وَهَلْ شَيْءٌ يَقُومُ لِذِكْرِ رَبِّي ... وَقَدْ مَّا بِالْمَسِيحِ هُنَاكَ عُذْنَا)
(سَأَفْصِمُ كُلَّ ذِي جِنَّ وَإِنْسٍ ... إِذَا يَوْمًا لِمَعْضَلَةِ حَلَلْنَا)

Through the blessings of the name of Allah and Rahmaan, we have been successful from before, and through the blessings of the name of Rahim, we have been victorious.

The endurance of those who were well-able to defend themselves did not benefit them in the least on the day we confronted them in battle.

Can anything remain standing in resistance before the remembrance of my Rabb. In the distant past, we, in the company of Maseeh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), sought refuge in the remembrance of our Rabb.

I will break the back of every Jinn and man, on the day when we come face to face to solve a problem.

I left in disgrace, and had not gone too far when I thought to myself, “O Amr, will you let an old man like this defeat you. It is better for you to die (honourably) than to live (in disgrace after running away from this old weak

man).” I returned and said, “By Laat and Uzza, I am going to kill you. Surrender, as you are now my prisoner. If only your mother had never given birth to you.” He came closer and recited ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’. I was filled with fear on hearing these words. Remember that we, at that time, knew only Laat and Uzza and none besides them. He pounced on me and grabbed hold of me. Suddenly, I found myself flat on the floor under him. He settled himself upon my chest. This time, he was furious. He asked threateningly, “Should I kill you or let you go?” I begged him to set me free. He said, “Not this time. This is your third attempt. Now I won’t just let you go. I will first cut off your forelocks.” I offered him one hundred camels, in the hope that he would leave my hair, but he was adamant and would not budge. He asked the young woman to bring him a pair of scissors, with which he cut off my fore-locks. O Amirul-Mu’mineen, it was the custom of the Arabs for the victor who defeats his opponent to cut off his opponent’s forelocks. Because of the shame of returning back to one’s clan after defeat, the opponent would become like a slave to his victor and continue serving his victor until his hair grew back to normal. So I ended up serving him for an entire year.

After one year had passed, he looked at me one day and said, “O Amr, I want you to accompany me to the forest. I don’t feel frightened or scared of you. I have full trust in ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ and I want to show you its power.” So I joined him through the forest, till we reached a scary, desolate, dreadful valley, the trees and plants of which were pressed together and intertwined and which was full of wild animals. He shouted out ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ at the top of his voice. Not a single bird remained in its nest. They all suddenly took flight. He again shouted out ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ at the top of his voice. This time, even the wild animals and carnivores left their caves and fled. After shouting

out ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’ a third time, I noticed a dark eerie figure as tall as a towering date-palm who seemed to be wearing clothes made from hair. There was a huge expanse between his two shoulders. His upper lip dangled over his lower lip, while his lower lip hanged over his chest. His eyes

were bloodshot like two red rubies. I was petrified. I said to myself, “We’re dead.” The old man said to me, “O Amr, don’t worry. This is a Shaytaan. When you see us lock arms and begin to fight, say loudly, “My companion has defeated this Shaytaan by ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’.” I memorized these words, but still hoped that the Shaytaan would defeat the old man. When I saw them engaged in combat, I said, “My companion has defeated this Shaytaan by the help of Laat and Uzza.” The old man was unable to defeat the Shaytaan. He approached me in a fit of anger and smacked me so hard that I thought my head would fall off. He reproached me, “You know very well that you disobeyed my instruction to you. Traitor! May Allah destroy you! Didn’t I say to you that when you see us lock arms and begin to fight, you should say loudly, “My companion has defeated this Shaytaan by ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’?” I promised not to do so again.

When they locked arms and engaged in combat, I said aloud, “My companion has defeated this Shaytaan by ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’.” These words hardly left my lips when I saw the old man leaping upon the Shaytaan like a person leaps on a horse. He drew his sword, slaughtered the Shaytaan and sliced his stomach open. He then extracted from it something which resembled a black candle. He explained, “O Amr, this is its disloyalty and hatred.” I enquired, “What do you have to do with these Jinnaat.” He replied, “Do you know who that young woman in the tent is? That is Faari’ah, the daughter of Mustawrid. Her father was a pious Jinni who was a friend of mine. He followed the Deen of Isa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام). He married her off to me. This was a member of her family, one of her cousins. Out of jealousy, every year, one of them attacks me. But Allah grants me victory over them by ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’.”

While returning, he said to me, “O Amr, you have seen the ordeal I have just been through. I am suffering terribly from hungry. Can you please find for me some food to eat.” After searching for a while, I only managed to find some ostrich eggs, which I brought back to him. He had already fallen asleep, as he was exhausted. He was resting on one of his hands. Under him was the

wooden sheath of his sword. I managed to quietly unsheathe his sword and pull it out from under him. It was a strong sword, seven feet long and almost two feet wide. I wielded his sword and brought it crashing down upon his leg, which severed his shin bone. He awoke, lingering in his blood, and yelled out, “O traitor, may Allah destroy you. You are the biggest traitor.” However, I continued hacking away at him till I had sliced him into pieces.” Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) interrupted furiously, “May Allah take you to task, o Amr. I repeat the sentiments of that pious man: ‘O traitor’. This Muslim man defeated you and then forgave you and acted favourably to you thrice, but when you found him sleeping, you killed him. By Allah, if I had to punish anyone in Islam for the evil they had committed during Jaahiliyyah (pre-Islamic days), I would have killed you in retaliation for that old man.” He then expressed his thoughts in the following couplets:

(إِذَا قَتَلْتَ أَخَا الْإِسْلَامِ تَظْلِمُهُ ... أَفْ لِمَا جِئْتَهُ فِي سَالِفِ الْحَقَبِ)
 (الْحُرُّ يَأْتِفُ بِمَا أَنْتَ تَفْعَلُهُ ... بَنَّا لِمَا جِئْتَهُ فِي الْعَجَمِ وَالْعَرَبِ)
 (لَوْ كُنْتُ آخِذًا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ مَا فَعَلْتُ ... أَهْلُ الْجَهَالَةِ وَالْإِشْرَاكِ وَالضُّلْبِ)
 (لَنَالَكَ الْيَوْمَ مِنِّي سُوءٌ طَالِيَةٌ ... يُدْعَى لِذَائِقِهَا بِالْوَيْلِ وَالْخَرَبِ)

When you oppressively killed our brother in Islam, you committed such a disgusting crime which was unheard of even in the past eras.

A free honourable man will be ashamed of the action you perpetrated, curses of the Arabs and non-Arabs will rain down upon you on account of such a crime.

If I could punish, in Islam, for crimes committed by the people of Jaahiliyyah (pre-Islamic age of ignorance), the polytheists and the Christians,

you would receive such a severe punishment from me today that people would announce destruction and devastation for the one who tastes it.

Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) then enquired, “What happened thereafter? Continue with

the story.” Amr continued, “Ameerul-Mu’mineen, I then returned quickly to the tent, where the young woman was awaiting our return. When she saw me, she asked, “What happened to the old man?” I replied, “The Shaytaan killed him.” She retorted, “You lie! Never! By Allah, the Shaytaan could never kill him because of those words which originate from under the Arsh of Allah which Allah had taught him. You must have killed him, you traitor.” She began crying incessantly, reciting the following couplets:

(عَيْنُ جُودِي لِفَارِسٍ مَغَوَّارٍ ... وَأَنْدَبِيهِ بِوَإِكْفَاتٍ غَزَارٍ)
(سَبَّعَ وَهُوَ ذُو وَقَاءٍ وَعَهْدٍ ... وَرَيْسُ الْفَخَّارِ يَوْمَ الْفَخَّارِ)
(هُفَفَ نَفْسِي عَلَى بَقَائِكَ يَا عَمْرُو ... وَأَسْلَمْتَنِكَ الْحَيَاةَ لِلْأَقْدَارِ)
(بَعْدَ مَا جَزَّ مَا بِهِ كُنْتَ تَسْمُو ... فِي رَبِيدٍ وَمَعَشَرِ الْكُفَّارِ)
(وَلَعَمْرِي لَوْ رُمْتَهُ أَنْتَ حَقًّا ... رُمْتَ مِنْهُ كَصَارِمٍ بَتَّارِ)
(فَجَزَاكَ الْمَلِيكُ سُوءًا وَهُونًا ... عَشْتِ مِنْهُ بِذِلَّةٍ وَصَغَارِ)

O eyes, shed your tears generously for the daring warrior, and mourn over him by allowing yourself to leak tears incessantly.

He was a predator (during war), yet faithful and true to his word. He was leader of the proud victors on the day of glory.

Oh, how sorry I feel for you over your unfortunate existence, o Amr. Your guardians and defendants will be forced to consign you to your evil fate and destiny.

After cutting him to pieces, what can ever elevate you in rank amongst your tribe Zubaid and fellow Kuffaar (disbelievers)?

By my life, had you attacked him justly, you would have found him to be like a sharp sword.

May the eternal King recompense you with evil and disgrace, as a result of

which you will live in humiliation and disgrace.

I said to her, “Aren’t I younger and more handsome than him?!” She asked, “What do you mean, Amr?” I replied proudly, “I will be better for you than that old man (as a husband and partner).” She asked me to wait for a few moments and entered the tent. I then heard her shouting out at the top of her voice, “Free me from the clutches of this man by the virtue of ‘Bismillahir-Rahmaanir-Rahim’.” By Allah, o Amirul-Mu’mineen, that was the last time I ever saw her. When I entered the tent, I could not find anyone. I had to leave without her. I uprooted the tent and herded the animals, with which I finally returned home.”¹

WHEN THE SWEETNESS OF IMAAN ENTERS THE HEART

Colonel Ameerud-Deen رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ، a great inviter towards Islam, narrated the following:

In the animal kingdom of America, where man marries a man and a woman marries a woman, where a man and woman live under the common law without being married, where nudist colonies are common, in such an animal kingdom, a dancing girl and her husband embraced Islam. They used to dance in the discos, where there are wine glasses, dim lights and little tables at which American girls with skimpy bikinis and little brassieres are seated. Many Muslims from all over the world go to these nightclubs, drinking and gambling.

It was decided by mashwarah that I should take a Jama’ah (group of inviters to Allah) to one such nightclub. When we rang the bell, a woman came out, wearing a small little brassiere and a little bikini, and said, “Yes, gentlemen,

1 Collected and translated from Al-Mujaalasah wa Jawaahirul-Hikam of Abu Bakr Dinwari, Tarikh Baghdaad of Ibn Asaakir, Lamahaatul-Anwaar of Muhammad Ghaafiqi who quotes Kitaab Abi Bakr Muhammad ibn Assaal fee tafsir Qawillahi Ta’ala ‘Wa Rabbuka Yakhlqu maa Yashaa Wa Yakhtaar’

what can I do for you?” When I saw her approaching, I was shaking from head to foot. I didn’t know what to do. Since it was decided by Mashwarah to go, we went. I said, “You see, we want to speak to the owner of this hotel.” His name was Ahmad, a Palestinian Arab. She said, “All right, I’ll bring him just now.” She got hold of him like a little chicken in her right hand and said, “Ahmad darling, your friends want to see you.” I tell you, I pray to Allah that none of our friends ever witness such a scene. Ahmad said to us, seeing us with turbans, big beards and long kurtas (Qamees), “Brothers, why have you come here?” We said, “We have come because you have advertised the nightclub called ‘Khaybar Pass’, so we have come to see this. We are also human beings; we want to see what’s inside this nightclub.” He exclaimed, “What! You want to go inside!” I said, “Yes, my darling brother. We are speaking in plain English. We want to go inside.” He said, “All right, come in.”

Anyhow, we went inside. Inside, we saw small tables and little red lights. The rest of the place was in darkness. You could hear the tinkling of the wine glasses and the Jazz music playing. I tell you, brothers, may we never see such a scene again. All our (Muslim) friends were seated with the beautiful American girls in their lap and wine glasses in their right hands. Anyhow, we got them together. (In Syria, I had marched for 1000 miles on foot in 1962 (24 years ago), from Damascus to Halab and from there further. It was there that I learnt Qur’an and Hadith, how to read the Qur’an and the Arabic language from an Arab tutor.) I gathered those people and spoke to them in the Arabic language for one hour. They are all Arabs. I cried bitterly and they all cried. Fourteen fellows came outside, and went for four months cash from there (for the purpose of Da’wah and Tabligh). That was the changing point in their lives. Those fourteen fellows became the leaders for Tabligh and Da’wah in Central America. After they returned, they brought many Arabs into Deen. ²

² Colonel Ameerud-Deen added, “After they returned, they brought many Arabs into Deen. In that area, I performed 150 nikaahs in one month. People who were roaming about with American girls and committing adultery made Tawbah (repented to Allah). They brought those American girls with them, who then embraced Islam. I then performed their nikaahs. Two or three of those girls who had married those Arabs are now settled in Makkah. Those

With them came one dancer, an Afro-American girl by the name of Jean, and girls are now creating a grave disturbance in Makkah. The born-Muslim girls are afraid of them when they see them, because they wear the full burqa'ah including the veil and are very particular of covering themselves. They catch hold of the Arab girls and say, "What is this? You belong to the city of Makkah and you are a leader of the Muslims. What are you doing, going out like a European?" This is the magic of Tabligh; whenever anybody will follow the rules of Tabligh, they will create a stir in the whole family and that one person will be responsible to bring many, many people into the fold of true and correct Islam."

We were coming back to America. This was the first year in America wherein Jama'ats moved about. It was 1971. In that one year, 200 people embraced Islam on my hands. May Allah excuse me. I am not boasting. This is just to show the effects of Tabligh and Da'wah. In fact, 3600 people accepted Islam at my hands during my ten years stay in America. Many of them are Aalims, many are Haafiz-e-Qur'an or their children are Haafiz-e-Qur'an. One is teaching in the University of Madina and another is at the University of Jeddah. One had been martyred in the path of Allah. That is all due to Tabligh and Da'wah. So, after spending four months in Jama'at, four of the five women who had come out went back with their husbands, donning the burqa'ah and niqaab, etc. which was unknown in America. One woman and her husband remained. They came with us. We landed in New York. We were seventeen people. Everybody was wearing the turban without exception. Everybody had his long kurta (qamees) upto the middle of the shin-bone, the Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ. All had big beards. Most of the Americans wear the lungi (izaar), not even pants. They had miswaaks in their top pockets and had tasbihs in their hands. When the emigration officers saw this, they looked with amazement at these seventeen people. Every one of them stood more than 6 feet tall, except Abdur-Rahman who was a short little chap. (He was martyred in 1979 in Makkah and gone straight into Jannah Insha-Allah.) They entered the passport numbers into the computer, but nothing came up. They were now thinking what they should do. Were these ruffians? They had never seen Muslims in that dress before. They asked, "Who is the leader?" I said, "I." They asked, "Who are you people?" I said, "We are Muslims, followers of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ." One of them said, "We have seen people from Pakistan, India and all countries of the world, but we have never seen this dress and these big beards and these turbans. What nonsense is this?" I said, "Look, we are American and Canadian citizens. Mark your language! Speak in civil and parliamentary language, and do not exceed your bounds! We are not afraid of you!" Yes, you have to be strict with these fellows. So he said, "All right." Then he called Maryam and Abdur-Rahman, who had both embraced Islam on my hands. He told Maryam, "You need to lift your veil. We want to see your face and

her husband. He was a drummer and she used to dance. She used to wear a

compare it with your passport.” She said, “What! What! I am a Muslim. I am a follower of Muhammad ﷺ. I have just been for four months. While sitting in a gathering of ta’leem (where Ahaadith are read out to the participants), I read that Ummu Salamah and Maymoonah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا (two of the honourable wives of Rasulallah ﷺ) would not come in front of a blind man. In fact, Rasulallah ﷺ told them to go into purdah (go behind the curtain). Ummu-Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, “He is blind, o Rasulallah. He cannot see us.” Rasulallah ﷺ said, “But you both are not blind (i.e. you can see him).” I am a follower of that Muhammad ﷺ if you want to know. I cannot lift my veil even if I am shot dead.” Then he looked at me. I said, “Do not look at me! You send for your women police!” He said, “This has never happened in America.” I said, “If you want Muslim women to cross your borders, then you better get your women police! Don’t argue with me!” So they said, “Ok.” Then they brought a women police-officer. I was standing behind that corridor with the rods and bars, while Maryam and her husband were told to go to the other side. I took out my Tasbih and, in a veery feeble voice, I said, “Abdur-Rahman! Tell your wife to do the zikr of Allah.” Abdur-Rahman shouted at the top of his voice, “Maryam, do the zikr of Allah! In front of Allah, America, Russia, China and the whole world put together is not even equal to the wing of a mosquito.” Maryam and Abdur-Rahman were escorted away by the police and taken inside. Since Maryam had become a good Muslim and started to wear the veil, she never spoke directly to me. If she wanted to ask anything, she would tell her husband to ask me. So Abdur-Rahman later told me that when she went inside, the police-woman asked her to lift her veil. She lifted her veil and showed her photo. The police-woman was satisfied. At once, she dropped her veil over her face. The police-woman said, “I can understand that you hide your face from men. But I cannot understand why you are hiding your face from a woman.” Maryam said, “You are not a woman. I apologize, but you are not a woman. You are dressed to kill. You are wearing a small frock. You have got make-up and lip-stick on. Your hair is going up like a mountain in the air. And you are not doing this for your husband, but to distract the gazes of other men. So your heart is not very clean. In fact, it has become black. If I do not hide myself from you, your blackness will rub off onto my heart and I will then return to my old condition, back to how I was before going in the path of Allah.” You understand, my dear friends, this is the effects of Tabligh and Da’wah in America. Rasulallah ﷺ trained his Ummah on these lines. No one can ever equal the dust of the shoes of the Sahaabah. But we will try to copy them instead of copying the Western world. Then we will do Hijrah in the real sense of the word; from our customs, our way of life, our ways of eating, our dress and our ways of living into the pattern of life of Muhammad ibn Abdullah

small bikini and a small brassiere. She said, “I also, with my husband, want to embrace Islam.” I said, “Maa shaa-Allah. You are very lucky.” She asked, “What am I to do?” I said, “Four things; anybody who does these four things, his Imaan will increase and he will see Jannah and Jahannam in front of his eyes.” She said, “What are the four things?” I said,

“a) Ibaadah – pray to Allah (salaah), fast in the month of Ramadhaan, pay the poor-tax (zakaah) if Allah gives you the wealth and perform pilgrimage (Hajj) once in your lifetime. This is a small little book. We are only a few (Muslim) people in America. This is a vast country which stretches 3500 miles from East to West and 2500 miles from North to South.” Those were the beginning days, when you had to perform your prayers on ice at many times. Jama’ats (groups of people travelling with the purpose of reviving Islam) were kicked out of Masjids, taken to courts and beaten up. I told her, “You take this book. You and your husband should study it. This is my telephone number. If you have any difficulty, phone me. I will try my best to reply to you. In the city in which you stay, there are a lot of Muslims. You can even ask them.

b) The second thing to do is to invite your family (give them da’wah). Through the invitation (da’wah), the aspects that you will invite towards will enter into your heart. Your ears are nearest to your tongue. When you talk with your tongue, it will first enter your ears and your heart. It will then enter the hearts of the people you are addressing. This is the system of Allah. Do this! Give this invitation with strength and don’t be afraid of anyone. Allah will help you.

c) The third thing you must do is to make ta’leem of Fadhaail (the virtues of the various Islamic practices). This is a book in English called ‘Teachings of Islam’ (Faza’ilul A’mal). The author is Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya r (who was still alive at that time). You can also find this in your city. It doesn’t cost much money.

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, step by step. And then we will get Hidaayah (guidance). Allah states: ‘And if you obey him, you will be rightly guided.’”

d) Stand up in the late hours of the night for prayer (Tahajjud). Read the Qur'an in the night in this prayer and cry to Allah (in dua at the end of this salaah)." They said, "But we don't know how to read the Qur'an." I said, "It doesn't matter. Stand up facing the Ka'bah and say, 'O Allah, O Allah, O Allah, we are new entrants into Islam. We want You to give us guidance.' If you cry to Allah in the night, one day will come when you will be an example for the whole of America." She asked, "That's all?" I said, "That's all. Assalaamu alaikum."

I also said, "Remember one thing. Allah does not take this work from anybody who does not change according to his invitation. When you give the invitation, you yourself must change. This dress of yours must come off and you must wear the full dress. What is the full dress? You must wear sleeves till your wrists, your neck must be closed and you should tie a scarf. If Allah gives you the courage, you should wear the full burqa'ah (body covering) with the veil (niqaab) in front of your face, because the order of Allah is 'enter into Islam in totality and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytaan' (Surah Baqarah v.208). Do you understand?" She said, "Yes, I understand." They then went away.

After three months, one night at 2:30 am, at the time of Tahajjud, this girl phoned me. In America, the nights are very long in winter; Tahajjud time remains till 6:30 am and the sun rises at 8:30 in some areas. She said, "It is a question of life and death." I said, "In the darkness of the night, you are calling from another country. It must be costing you a lot of money. Why didn't you write a letter, I would have replied?" She said, "Don't talk of money! If all the wealth we had accumulated during the period of our ignorance of Islam was spent to understand one mas'ala (problem) that will save us from the pangs of Hellfire, it is a very cheap business."

Then she said, "When we did those four things for three or four months, the love for Paradise and the hatred for Hellfire entered into our hearts. We thought 'what should we do about our families'. They are going directly towards Hellfire by drinking, womanising, doing whatever they like and following their desires. We therefore decided to have a family meeting. The

men of our families would be in one house, and the women would be in one house, because there are no mixed parties in Islam.” She had embraced Islam just three months ago, but understood that there are no mixed parties in Islam. She continued, “I was going in the bus. After promising you that day, I never wore that European dress again. I began wearing the cloak with full sleeves and pants and tied my hair with a scarf. I wore the full burqa’ah (body covering) with the veil in the front. I was going in the bus. The bus started to move fast, so I held onto the railing. My sleeve slipped four inches, and this much of flesh was exposed.” She started to cry, at 2:30 am. She said, “Tell me, Colonel Sahib! Tell me! Will this flesh burn in Hellfire.” What answer could I give, my dear brothers. I said, “My dear sister, I can assure you that it will not burn in Hellfire. Your thought is enough to save you from Hellfire and take you to Paradise.” She insisted, “But tell me what I should do in the future?” I said, “Put elastic on the end of your sleeve so that it will not open in the future.” I realized that she was flying high in the sky (of Imaan) while I was still stuck to the earth. This is the result of Tabligh and Da’wah.³

SMALL CHARITY - GREAT REWARDS

I would like to share this short story with you which was narrated by Dr. Saleh as-Saleh رَحِمَهُ اللهُ:

Do you want hear this real story which took place here about a hundred years ago. (In Saudi) Tayib. This is real! This is real!

Bismilaahir Rahmaanir Raheem. This story took place here about a hundred years ago and it was also broadcasted on the radio stations. It is about a man called Ibn Jad'aan. He (Ibn Jad'aan) said, “During spring times, I used to go out. I would see good and healthy fat camels, with their udders filled to the extent of almost exploding. Whenever the little offspring (i.e. the calf) would

3 This incident was transcribed from two lectures which Colonel Ameerud-Deen had delivered in South Africa in 1986, with slight editing.

come close to the mother camel, her milk would pour forth because of the great abundance of blessings and abundance of goodness. So I looked at one of my she camels with her calf and I remembered my poor neighbour who had seven young daughters. I said to myself, "By Allah I will give this camel and her calf as Sadaqah (charity) to my neighbour - and I recited the Aayah where Allah said: "By no means shall you attain piety-righteousness unless you spend (in Allah's cause) of that which you love" (Surah Aal-Imraan v.92) And the most beloved from amongst my cattle to me is this she-camel. So I took her along with her calf and knocked on the door of my neighbour. I told him to accept it as a gift from me. I saw his face glooming with happiness and he was unable to utter anything in response.

So he benefited from its milk and used to load wood on its back, waiting for its offspring to grow up in order to sell them. Subsequently, he gained great good from this camel. After the spring had passed, the dry summer came with its drought, and so the Bedouins began looking for water and grass. We gathered our belongings and left our places, looking for water and the duhool (plural of duhul) or 'holes' in the earth, situated underground, leading to water traps underneath the ground. Their openings are on top of the ground, as the Bedouins know very well. I (i.e. Ibn Jad'aan) entered into one of these holes so as to bring some water to drink..."

Dr Saleh continued: "His (Ibn Jad'aan's) three sons were waiting for him outside the hole. However he did not return. His three sons waited for him for day one, two and three and finally became hopeless. They said, "Maybe he was stung by a snake and died or he was lost under the earth and destroyed." They (and we seek refuge in Allah from this) waited for his destruction. Why? Due to greed, in order to distribute his inheritance. So they returned home and divided what he had left behind amongst themselves. They then remembered that their father (Ibn Jad'aan) had given a she-camel to their poor neighbour. They went to their neighbour and told him that it would be better if he gives them back the she-camel and takes another camel in replace of it, otherwise they will take it by force and he will be left with nothing.

The neighbour complained that he would report them to their father. They informed him that he had died. He inquired as to how and where Ibn Jad'aan had died, and why they hadn't told him. They then explained how he had entered into one of those holes underground in the desert and did not come out. The neighbour said, "By Allah, take me to this place and you can take your she-camel and do whatever you wish to do with it and I don't even want your camel in return!" They took him there. When he saw the place, he went and brought a rope, lit a candle, tied it outside the duhul (the hole) and then stepped into it, crawling on his back until he reached the places where he could crawl about and roll. Eventually the smell of moisture became closer and then, all of sudden, he heard by the water the sound of a man groaning and moaning. He went closer and closer towards this sound in the darkness, putting his hand out all over, until his hand fell onto the man (Ibn Jad'aan). He checked his breath and he was still breathing after one week! He pulled him out, covering his eyes so as to protect him from the sunlight. He took with him some dates, moistened them in water and gave it to him to consume. He then carried him on his back and took him to his house. Life gradually returned to this man whilst his sons didn't know.

He then asked him, "Tell me, by Allah, one week while you were underground and you didn't die?!" "I will tell you something strange..." Ibn Jad'aan explained, "...when I went down there, I got lost and waves took me from all directions. I said to myself that I'd better stay close to this water that I have reached. So I started to drink from it, but hunger had no mercy and water does not suffice. Then, after three days, hunger intensified on me and took me from all parts. While I was lying on my back, I surrendered myself to Allah and put all my affairs in His hands. All of a sudden, I felt the warmth of milk pouring onto my mouth. So I sat in the midst of the darkness and I saw a pot coming closer to my mouth. I drank from it until I drank what was sufficient and then it would go! This occurred three times in a day. But, for the last two days, it stopped and I don't know what happened." His neighbour then informed him, "If you know the reason, you will be amazed! Your sons thought you had died and they came to me and took away the she-camel

which Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) was giving you from its milk!"

The Muslim is in the shade of his Sadaqah (charity). Allah stated in Surah At-Talaaq: 2,3:

"And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficult)" and "...and He will provide for him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him". (Surah Talaaq v.2,3) ⁴

SABR

THE HUSBAND WHO WAS TOO SHY TO LOOK AT HIS WIFE

This story was recounted by Prof. Khalid Al-Jubeir, a consulting cardiovascular surgeon, in one of his lectures:

Once, I operated on a two and a half year old child. It was Tuesday. On Wednesday, the child was in good health. On Thursday at 11:15 am – and I'll never forget the time because of the shock I experienced – one of the nurses informed me that the heart and breathing of the child had stopped. I hurried to the child and performed a cardiac massage for 45 minutes. During that entire time, the heart would not work.

Then, Allaah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى decreed for the heart to resume functioning and we thanked Him. I went to inform the child's family about his condition. As you know, it is very difficult to inform the patient's family about his condition when it's bad. This is one of the most difficult situations a doctor is subjected to, but it is necessary. So I looked for the child's father, whom I couldn't find. Then I found his mother. I told her that the child's cardiac arrest was due to bleeding in his throat; we don't know the cause of this bleeding and fear that his brain is dead. How do you think she responded? Did she cry? Did

4 Dr. Saleh as-Saleh narrated this, as quoted in 'Salaf Stories'

she blame me? No, nothing of the sort. Instead, she said “Alhamdulillah” (All praise is due to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and left me.

After 10 days, the child started moving. We thanked Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and were happy that his brain condition was reasonable. After 12 days, the heart stopped again because of the same bleeding. We performed another cardiac massage for 45 minutes, but this time his heart didn’t respond. I told his mother that there was no hope. So she said, “Alhamdulillah. o Allah, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him, O my Lord.”

With the grace of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, his heart started functioning again. He suffered six similar cardiac arrests till a trachea specialist was able to stop the bleeding and the heart started working properly. Now, three and a half months had passed and the child was recovering but did not move. Then, just as he started moving, he was afflicted with a very large and strange pus-filled abscess in his head, the likes of which I had never seen. I informed his mother of the serious development. She said “Alhamdulillah” and left me.

We immediately turned him over to the surgical unit that deals with the brain and nervous system and they took over his treatment. Three weeks later, the boy recovered from this abscess, but was still not moving. Two weeks pass and he suffers from a strange blood poisoning and his temperature reaches 41.2°C (106°F). I again informed his mother of the serious development and she said with patience and certainty: “Alhamdulillah. O Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him.”

After seeing his mother who was with her child at Bed-5, I went to see another child at Bed-6. I found that child’s mother crying and screaming, “Doctor! Doctor! Do something! The boy’s temperature reached 37.6°C! He’s going to die! He’s going to die!” I said with surprise, “Look at the mother of that child in Bed-5. Her child’s fever is over 41°C (106°F), yet she is patient and praises Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى” So she replied: “That woman isn’t conscious and has no senses”. At that point, I remembered the great Hadith of Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, “Blessed are the strangers.” Just two words... but indeed two

words that shake a nation! In 23 years of hospital service, I have never seen the likes of this patient sister.

We continued to care for him. Now, six and a half months had passed and the boy finally came out of the recovery unit – not talking, not seeing, not hearing, not moving, not smiling, and with an open chest in which you can see his beating heart. The mother changed the dressing regularly and remained patient and hopeful. Do you know what happened after that? Before I inform you, what do you think are the prospects of a child who has passed through all these dangers, agonies, and diseases? And what do you expect this patient mother to do whose child is at the brink of the grave and who is unable to do anything except supplicate and beseech Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى**? Do you know what happened two and a half months later? The boy was completely cured by the mercy of Allah and as a reward for this pious mother. He now races his mother with his feet as if nothing happened and he became sound and healthy as he was before.

The story doesn't end here. This is not what moved me and brought tears to my eyes. What filled my eyes with tears is what follows:

One and a half years after the child left the hospital, one of the brothers from the Operations Unit informed me that a man, his wife and two children wanted to see me. I asked who they were and he replied that he didn't know them. So I went to see them, and I found the parents of the same child whom I operated upon. He was now five years old and like a flower in good health – as if nothing happened to him. With them also was a four-month old new-born. I welcomed them kindly and then jokingly asked the father whether the new-born was the 13th or 14th child. He looked at me with an astonishing smile as if he pitied me. He then said, “This is the second child, and the child upon whom you operated is our first born, bestowed upon us after 17 years of infertility. And after being granted that child, he was afflicted with the conditions that you've seen.”

At hearing this, I couldn't control myself and my eyes filled with tears. I then

involuntarily grabbed the man by the arm, and pulling him to my room, asked him about his wife: “Who is this wife of yours who after 17 years of infertility has this much patience with all the fatal conditions that afflict her first born?! Her heart cannot be barren! It must be fertile with Imaan!” Do you know what he said? Listen carefully, my dear brothers and sisters.

He said, “I was married to this woman for 19 years and for all these years she has never missed the [late] night prayers except due to an authorized excuse. I have never witnessed her backbiting, gossiping, or lying. Whenever I leave home or return, she opens the door, supplicates for me, and receives me hospitably. And in everything she does, she demonstrates the utmost love, care, courtesy, and compassion.” The man completed by saying, “Indeed, doctor, because of all the noble manners and affection with which she treats me, I’m shy to lift up my eyes and look at her.” So I said to him, “And the likes of her truly deserve that from you.”⁵

A MERCY IN DISGUISE

This is a true story about a man named Rashed. He tells his story as follows:

I was not more than thirty years old when my wife gave birth to my first child. I still remember that night. I had stayed out all night long with my friends, as was my habit. It was an exciting night filled with useless talk, and worse, with backbiting, gossiping, and making fun of people. I was mostly the one who made people laugh; I would mock others and my friends would laugh and laugh. I remember on that night that I'd made them laugh a lot. I had an amazing ability to imitate others – I could change the sound of my voice until I sounded exactly like the person I was mocking. No one was safe from my biting mockery, even my friends; some people started avoiding me just to be safe from my tongue. I remember on that night, I had made fun of

5 I first heard this incident from my beloved brother Moulana Moosa Kajee. He has also quoted it in his book ‘Women of Paradise’.

a blind man who I'd seen begging in the market. What was worse, I had put my foot out in front of him – he tripped and fell, and started turning his head around, not knowing what to say. I laughed at him so much that the streets reverberated with the sounds of my laughter.⁶

I went back to my house, late as usual, and I found my wife waiting for me. She was in a terrible state, and said in a quivering voice, "Rashed, where were you?" "Where would I be, on Mars?" I said sarcastically, "With my friends of course." She was visibly exhausted, and holding back tears, she said, "Rashed, I'm so tired. It seems the baby is going to come soon." A silent tear fell on her cheek. I felt that I had neglected my wife. I should have taken care of her and not stayed out so much all those nights, especially since she was in her ninth month. I quickly took her to the hospital; she went into the delivery room, and suffered through long hours of pain.

I waited patiently for her to give birth... but her delivery was difficult, and I waited a long time until I got tired. So I went home and left my phone number with the hospital so they could call with the good news. They finally called me to congratulate me on the birth of Salem. I went to the hospital immediately. As soon as they saw me, they asked me to see the doctor who had overlooked my wife's delivery. "What doctor?" I cried out, "I just want to see my son Salem!" "First go see the doctor," they firmly said.

I went to the doctor, and she started talking to me about trials and about being satisfied with Allah's decree. Then she said, "Your son has a serious deformity in his eyes, and it seems that he has no vision." I lowered my head while I fought back tears. I remembered that blind man begging in the market who I'd tripped and made others laugh at. SubhaanAllah, you get what you give! I stayed brooding quietly for a while. I didn't know what to say. Then I remembered by wife and son. I thanked the doctor for her kindness, and went to go see my wife. My wife wasn't sad. She believed in the decree of Allah, she

⁶ Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Do not express malicious joy towards your brother's misfortune, for Allah may have mercy on him and you may be stricken by the thing you made fun of." (Sunan Tirmidhi)

was content. How often had she advised me to stop mocking people! "Don't backbite people," she always used to repeat. We left the hospital, and Salem came with us.

In reality, I didn't pay much attention to him. I pretended that he wasn't in the house with us. When he started crying loudly, I'd escape to the living room to sleep there. My wife took good care of him and loved him a lot. As for myself, I didn't hate him, but I couldn't love him either.

Salem grew. He started to crawl, and had a strange way of crawling. When he took his first steps, my wife celebrated and invited others over. But he was unable to walk properly. When he was two years old, we discovered that he was crippled. I felt like he was an even greater burden on me. After him, my wife gave birth to Umar and Khaled. The years passed, and Salem grew, and his brothers grew. I never liked to sit at home, I was always out with my friends. In reality, I was like a plaything at their disposal (entertaining them whenever they wanted).

My wife never gave up on my reform. She always made du'aa for my guidance. She never got angry with my reckless behaviour and never expressed displeasure if she saw me neglecting Salem and paying attention to his other brothers. Salem grew, and my worries grew with him. I didn't mind when my wife asked to enrol him in a special school for the handicapped.

I didn't really feel the passing of the years. My days were all the same. Work, sleep, food and staying out with friends till late at night. One Friday, I woke up at 11 am. This was early for me. I was invited to a gathering, so I got dressed and perfumed and was about to go out. I passed by our living room, and was startled by the sight of Salem – he was sobbing! This was the first time I had noticed Salem crying since he was a baby. Ten years had passed and I hadn't paid attention to him. I tried to ignore him now but I couldn't take it. I heard him calling out to his mother while I was in the room. I turned towards him and went closer. "Salem! Why are you crying?" I asked.

When he heard my voice, he stopped crying. Then, when he realized how close I was, he started feeling around him with his small hands. What was wrong with him? I discovered that he was trying to move away from me! It was as if he was saying, "Now you've decided to notice me? Where have you been for the last ten years?" I followed him into his room. At first, he refused to tell me why he'd been crying. I tried to be gentle with him. Salem started to tell me why he'd been crying, while I listened and trembled.

Do you know what the reason was?! His brother Umar, the one who used to take him to the masjid, was late. And because it was Jumu'ah prayer, Salem was afraid he wouldn't find a place in the first row. He called out to Umar and he called out to his mother, but nobody answered, so he cried. I sat there looking at the tears flowing from his blind eyes. I couldn't bear the rest of his words. I put my hand over his mouth and said, "Is this why you were crying, Salem!" "Yes," he said. I forgot about my friends, I forgot about the gathering, and I said, "Don't be sad, Salem. Do you know who's going to take you to the masjid today?" "Umar, of course," he said, "but he's always late." "No," I said, "I'm going to take you."

Salem was shocked, he couldn't believe it. He thought I was mocking him. He could not control his tears and he started crying. I wiped his tears with my hand and then took hold of his hand. I wanted to take him to the masjid by car. He refused and said, "The masjid is near. I want to walk there." Yes, by Allah, he said this to me.

I couldn't remember when was the last time I had entered the masjid, but it was the first time I felt fear and regret for what I'd neglected in the long years that had passed. The masjid was filled with worshippers, but I still found a place for Salem in the first row. We listened to the Jumu'ah khutbah together, and he prayed next to me. But really, I was the one praying next to him. After the prayer, Salem asked me for a Qur'an. I was surprised! How was he going to read when he was blind? I almost ignored his request, but I decided to humour him out of fear of hurting his feelings. I passed him a Qur'an. He asked me to open the Qur'an to Surah Kahf. I started flipping through the

pages and looking through the index until I found it. He took the Qur'an from me, put it in front of him, and started reading the Surah... with his eyes closed... Ya Allah! He had the whole Surah memorized.

I was ashamed of myself. I picked up a Qur'an... I felt my limbs tremble... I read and I read. I asked Allah to forgive me and to guide me. I couldn't take it... I started crying like a child. There were still some people in the masjid praying sunnah... I was embarrassed by their presence, so I tried to hold my tears. My crying turned into whimpering and long, sobbing breaths. The only thing I felt was a small hand reaching out to my face and then wiping the tears away. It was Salem! I pulled him to my chest. I looked at him. I said to myself 'You're not the blind one, but I am, for having drifted after immoral people who were pulling me to hellfire. You're not crippled, because you are walking on the straight path of Imaan despite all your disabilities.' We went back home. My wife was extremely worried about Salem, but her worry turned into tears (of joy) when she found out I had prayed Jumu'ah with Salem.

From that day on, I never missed the congregational prayer in the masjid. I left my bad friends and I made righteous friends among the people who I met at the masjid. I tasted the sweetness of imaan with them. I learned things from them that distracted me from this world. I never missed out on the halaqaahs-gatherings of zikr or on the optional prayers. I recited the entire Qur'an several times in one month. I moistened my tongue with the remembrance of Allah that He might forgive my backbiting and mocking of the people. I felt closer to my family. The looks of fear and pity that had occupied my wife's eyes disappeared. A smile now never parted from the face of my son Salem. Anyone who saw him would have felt that he owned the world and everything in it. I praised and thanked Allah a lot for His blessings.

One day, my righteous friends decided to go to a faraway location for da'wah. I hesitated about going. I prayed istikhaarah and consulted with my wife. I thought she would refuse... but the opposite happened! She was extremely happy, and even encouraged me... because in the past, she had seen me travelling without consulting her for wrong purposes. I went to Salem, and

told him I would be travelling. With tears, he wrapped me up in his small arms. I put my trust in Allah and I requested my company for unpaid leave. Alhamdulillah, I received permission faster than I expected.

I was away from home for three and a half months. In that period, whenever I got a chance, I called my wife and talked to my children. I missed them so much, and oh, how I missed Salem! I wanted to hear his voice. He was the only one who hadn't talked to me since I'd travelled. He was either at school or at the masjid whenever I called them. Whenever I would tell my wife how much I missed him, she would laugh happily and joyfully, except for the last time I called her. I didn't hear her expected laugh. Her voice changed. I said to her, "Give my salaam to Salem," and she said, "Inshaa-Allah," and was quiet.

At last, I went back home. I knocked on the door. I hoped that it was Salem who would open up for me, but was surprised to find my son Khaled, who was not more than four years old. I picked him up in my arms while he squealed, "Baba! Baba!" I don't know why my heart tensed when I entered the house. I sought refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaytaan. I approached my wife, but her face was different. As if she was pretending to be happy. I inspected her closely and then said, "What's wrong with you?" "Nothing," she said. Suddenly, I remembered Salem. "Where's Salem?" I asked. She lowered her head. She didn't answer. Hot tears fell on her cheeks. "Salem! Where's Salem?" I cried out.

At that moment, I only heard the sound of my son Khaled talking in his own way, saying, "Baba, Thalem went to pawadise ... with Allaah..." My wife couldn't take it. She broke down crying. She almost fell to the floor, and left the room. Later, I found out that Salem had contracted a fever two weeks before I'd returned, so my wife took him to the hospital. The fever got more and more severe, and didn't leave him, until his soul left his body.

I realized that this was a test and examination from Allah, yet a difficult one at that. I bore this difficulty patiently and I praised Allah. I still can feel the sensation of Salem's little hands wiping away my tears and his little arms

wrapping me up in a loving hug. Oh, how I miss Salem, my blind crippled son who I once assumed I could not love. I now realized that I loved him even more than his other brothers. I cried over his loss. And why should I not be grieved, since Allah guided me at his hands.

Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** wished to guide Salem's father on the hands of Salem, before Salem's death. How merciful is not Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى**!

LOVE FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU LOVE FOR YOURSELF

“Second wife!” The words reverberated through my brain.

“Why?”

Am I not good enough?

Never! I will never accept a second wife!

If you want a second wife, you can go out and get one, as long as you know that I will not be here when you come back!”

Those were my words to my husband a few years ago when he mentioned to me that he is intending to marry again a second time. It was a woman who had been recently divorced with 4 children. “She is having a hard time”, he said. “She doesn't know where the next meal is coming from or how to provide adequately for her children.” “Where is their father?” I asked, “Can't he take care of his own kids? Why do you, a strange man, have to carry another man's burden? Surely there are other ways that you can help her out financially without having to MARRY her!”

I could not imagine myself in a plural marriage. Sharing my husband with another woman. Sharing his love, his smiles, his jokes with a woman other

7 ‘Mausooatul Qisasil Mu’assirah’ of Ahmad ibn Saalim Baadwilaan. The translation has mainly been adapted from ‘Women of Paradise’ of Moulana Moosa Kajee.

than myself. I could not fathom him holding her close and whispering loving words in her ears. It was unacceptable. An outrage.

After all I have been to him. Wife, mother, doctor, housekeeper. I raised 3 of his beautiful children. How can he insult me by marrying another woman, as if I am not good enough. Not pretty enough. Not young enough or just plain not ENOUGH!

NO! I could not accept that and I vehemently made my stance clear to him. If she walks in, I walk out! Plain and simple. If he is willing to risk our marriage, our life, our children for another woman, then he must go ahead. I will not stand for it!

It all seems so many years ago now. When I thought that life would last forever and that nothing will ever change. But it did....

My husband did not get married to a second wife. After all my warnings and threats of leaving he abandoned the idea. I don't know what happened to the women and children. My guess is that they moved on to another town. He never mentioned a second wife again and I was happy with that. I managed to hang on to my husband but I didn't know that our time was running out. His last words to me were that he had a headache and is going to lie down till Isha. He never read Isha salaah that night, because he never woke up.

I was devastated by his sudden death. The man whom I have spent my life with, snatched away from me in a second. I mourned him for a long, long time, neglecting my children and the business. Soon all went to waste and we started losing everything one by one. First the car, then the shop and then the house. We moved in with my brother and his family. My 3 children and I crowded the house and my sister-in-law soon became annoyed by our presence. I needed to get out, to work and find a place of our own, instead of living off the leftovers of others. But I had no skill.

When my husband was alive, we lived comfortably. I had no need to go out and work or equip myself with a skill. Life was very difficult for me and my

children and I wasn't young anymore. I missed him everyday with every beat of my heart. How could one's condition change so drastically?

One day my brother told me that someone he knew is looking for a wife. He was a good person, with good character and very pious. Perfect for me, but he wants me to be his second wife.

It's the second time in my life that the word 'second wife' was mentioned to me. But how different the circumstances. He came to my brother's house to see me. There was an immediate connection between us. I liked him and I liked everything about him. He told me that his first wife knows that he is intending to marry again but that she is obviously not supportive of the idea and that he doesn't know what her reaction will be when he tells her that he had found someone. His answer, he said, will be dependent on her acceptance of polygamy.

I started reading Istikhaarah that night. I so desperately wanted it to work out. I remembered so many years ago when the life of another woman depended on my decision and what my decision was. I felt contrite; I felt that because I did not give another woman a chance, a space in my life, that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى will punish me this time around. I repented. Not once in my life did I think my action worthy of repentance because I had done nothing wrong. I only protected what was mine. Now that I am on the receiving end, I realized how wrong I was in denying another woman this PRIVILEGE of a husband. I prayed that she will accept me.

He phoned me a few days later, telling me that his wife is having a hard time accepting it, but that she is willing to meet me. I was nervous on the day of the meeting. I prayed a lot the day before and asked Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى to help me. When I met her, she was a person, a woman like me. A woman who loves her husband and fears losing him.

She took my hand and with tears in her eyes said: "This is very hard for me, but I hope that we can be sisters." Her words broke my heart.

All I needed in these dark days was a hand reaching out to me and embracing me, giving me hope and the will to carry on. His wife was to me the woman that I could not be and I will be forever grateful for that. I thought that no one could love her husband the way I loved mine, but she taught me the true meaning of unconditional love.

You never know a person's situation until you are in it. Judge by what is right according to Qur'an and you will see how Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى** will send double fold.⁸

Rasulullah **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** said, "I take an oath on that Being in whose control my life lies, no person can be a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (Sahihul-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

Rasulullah **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ** said, "Allah has prescribed jealousy for women and jihad for men. If a woman exercises patience with imaan in the hope for reward on account of a certain action which may cause her to be jealous, (such as her husband marrying a second wife,) then she will receive the reward of a martyr."

(Al Mu'jamul-Kabeer, Musnadul Bazaar)

AN UNAPPRECIATED TREASURE, AN AMAZING CURE

In the Pakistani province of Sindh lived a Hindu man who was diagnosed with tuberculosis (T.B.). (It should be remembered that T.B. in those days was considered to be a life-threatening disease which many doctors then assumed to be incurable.) His elder brother was a qualified and an expert medical doctor. With great effort, the doctor endeavoured to treat his dear brother, but his condition continued to deteriorate. One day, the doctor said to him in frustration, "It is now useless and senseless for you to continue treatment. Your condition is so bad that you may now do as you please. There is no need for you to take any medicine or follow any diet. Eat whatever you

⁸ This incident was sent to me by my friend Moulana Ismail Sayanwala

want.” With these words ringing in his ears, he was sent home.

He was around his early forties at that time. He returned home in a sad, worried and depressed state, all the time imagining his death, which he assumed would occur over the next few days. While sitting and lovingly conversing with his wife, he blurted out, “Brother says that there is no hope for my recovery. There is no need for me to take any medicine or follow any diet. Now the time has come for me to separate from you, since there is now no chance of my recovery.” His wife said, “If you promise to listen to me and do whatever I tell you to, I will give you such a medicine to drink which will cure you.” “But the doctors are unable to find any medicines which can cure me. What kind of special thing could you have?” he retorted. “You love me, don’t you?” enquired his wife. He replied, “Of course, I really love you.” His wife commented, “If you really love me, then promise! You will get better, after which we can pass the rest of our lives together. Just promise that you will do whatever I tell you to do!” The husband finally consented and said, “There is nothing more dear to a man than his own life. If you do manage to cure me, I promise to do whatever you tell me to do.” She reassured him, “Now, you don’t worry. I will treat you.” She placed a chair besides his bed, sat on it, took a jug full of water and began reciting something. She then blew upon him and blew into the water. She poured some of this water into a glass and presented it to her husband. From then on, whenever he would become thirsty, she would only give him water to drink from that jug. Since her father was a staunch Aryan Hindu, he had taught her the Vedas. I assumed she was reciting some Vedic mantra and blowing in the water.

Within a week, the husband was feeling much better and healthier. Previously, he was unable to get off the bed. He was now able to walk easily and move freely within the house. By the next week, he was able to leave the house on errands. By the third week, he returned to his business. As the fourth week began, he was back to normal. He was hale and healthy again. He was eating and drinking normally. He went to a laboratory where he underwent various tests. His results all showed that the tuberculosis had disappeared. His wife

advised him to have himself checked in another laboratory, where too the results turned out clear. He was amazed and astounded.

He said to his wife, “My sickness has really disappeared and I am feeling better. But tell me the truth, what happened here?” His wife responded, “First you will have to fulfil the promise which you made to me, then I will tell you the reality of the matter.” The husband agreed and said, “Fine, go ahead and make your request, I will do whatever you tell me to.” Calmly, she requested, “Recite the kalima - Laa ilaaha illAllah and become a Muslim.” Her husband was shocked. He stared at her face intently and asked, “What did you just say?” She repeated herself, “I am your wife. You have been cured. You made a promise to me, now fulfil your promise, recite the kalima and become a Muslim!” He responded, “I never imagined you would make such a request.” She replied, “Yes, what you are saying is true, but you are bound to fulfil your promise.” He asked inquisitively, “Are you a Muslim?” She answered in the affirmative. He said, “But your father is such a staunch Hindu that he hates the Muslims. If he comes to know of your condition, he will slaughter you. You come from such a background, how did you ever become a Muslim.” She retorted, “That is a long story which I will tell you later, first recite the kalima and become a Muslim!” Her husband was forced to recite the kalima and he (Alhamdulillah) became a Muslim. She then narrated before him her incident:

“When I was a young girl still in school, there was a Muslim girl in my class who became my best friend. Her father was the Imaam of the Masjid and would teach the Muslim children how to recite the Qur’an and other details about Islam. Her mother would teach the Muslim girls how to recite the Qur’an and other details of Islam at home. Since she lived close-by to my house, I would be in and out of her house. I would regularly discuss and debate on religious issues with her mother. One day, she asked me, “Daughter, have you studied the Vedas?” I replied, “Yes, and I studied it thoroughly.” She suggested, “It is my suggestion that you also study the translation of the Qur’an under me. When you complete that, then you will be in a better position to debate me.”

I agreed to her suggestion. Daily, she would first insist that I perform wudhu. After that, she would teach me a portion of the translation of the Qur'an. After completing one Para (Juz') of the Qur'an, I said, "I am not getting the full enjoyment out of this. Rather teach me how to read the Qur'an (in Arabic) and teach me the translation at the same time." She happily agreed. It is easy for anyone who knows how to read the Urdu language to learn the method of reciting the Qur'an. I now restarted the Qur'an, learning the Arabic and its translation simultaneously. I completed a recitation of the entire Qur'an in this manner within one year. After completing, she asked me, "Yes, my dear daughter, now you tell me what objections you still have regarding Islam." Tears welled up in my eyes. I said, "The truth of the matter is that no other book can ever be compared to the Qur'an, not even in the slightest aspect. The Vedas has no reality when compared to the Qur'an. Please make me a Muslim." She asked me to take a bath, gave me some clean clothes to wear and taught me how to perform salaah. She also said to me, "Daughter, do not tell anyone about this! Do not expose your Islam to others! Your father is an evil man who will cause us great harm if he comes to know of this. For now, keep your Islam a secret. Only expose your Islam at the appropriate occasion, when no fear or danger remains. You can come to my house to perform your daily salaah." I promised never to tell anyone.

I once said to her, "Aunty, other children are able to read Qur'an at home, but I can't do so." She said to me, "There is a surah in the Qur'an named 'Alam Nashrah'. If you recite this surah and thereafter blow on any sick person or in water which you then give a sick person to drink, he will Inshaa-Allah be cured. A pious man once mentioned this to me. I am telling you this, you remember it, maybe, one day, it will come to your help." She used to mention many such things to me.

I grew older and was engaged to be married. A few days before marriage, I went to her and, sitting by her side, I cried incessantly. I said, "Aunty, your daughter was my best friend. This was the reason for me coming to your house, which became the means of my reciting the kalima and learning the Qur'an. I am a

Muslim by heart. Now I am soon to be married off, and, that too, into such people amongst who I cannot declare my imaan, nor will I have a Qur'an with me. What am I going to do?!!" My teacher said to me, "My daughter, don't worry. I will make some plan to get a Qur'an sent to you in one of your bridal gifts." I was quite surprised. She sent a message to my mother, explaining that since I was best friends with her daughter, her daughter wishes to send me a gift of clothes which she would sew, if my parents consented. My parents gave permission, in consideration of the fact that we had been classmates from primary school right up till college and had been good friends.

My teacher promised to send a gift containing seven outfits. She sewed seven extremely expensive outfits for me, and gift-wrapped it in a very beautiful manner, in the middle of which she gift-wrapped the Qur'an. She then sent it to my house with a message that since she had gift-wrapped it so beautifully, my parents should not open it at home, but should rather send it to my new home where I would be able to open it out in front of my husband, which would be pleasing to him as well.

My parents were quite pleased with the idea. When I came to your house, the first thing I did was to take out the Qur'an and hide it in the room I was going to be staying in. When you would go to work daily, I would open the Qur'an and recite it, and just before you would return, I would hide it very well so that you don't ever see it. For so many years of my life, I hid my imaan from you.

Now that you were sick, and medicines had failed, I was sure in my heart that only the speech of Allah would be able to cure you, since Allah Himself says in it that it is 'a cure for all sicknesses'. When you lost hope of life and confided in me that you are about to die, I made you promise to agree to do whatever I tell you to and I gave you that water to drink. You agreed, so I recited that same Surah 'Alam Nashrah' and blew on you and into the water, through which Allah cured you. I am also a Muslim from before, and now you too have become one. Allah has now given you a new life, so use it only in the service of his religion." Her husband responded, "If I have been cured through the

blessings of the Qur'an, then I really have no excuse to avoid accepting Islam." The wife asked him to take a bath, made him wear clean clothes and then taught him the kalimah 'Laa ilaaha illAllah'. She even immediately taught him the method of performing salaah. Her husband requested, "Keep this as a secret for now. We will expose our Islam at the appropriate occasion.

The husband narrated: "At that time, I was working in my father's shop. I was receiving a substantial amount of income from my father. After saving up a significant amount, I opened up another branch. My father financially supported me in my initiative. When I gauged that my shop was running satisfactorily, I along with my wife announced our conversion to Islam. My father and father-in-law were enraged. My father dispossessed me. But my mother transferred her property onto my name. The Hindus have tried hard to deprive me of even that property." Finally, the matter was taken to court, where the judge ultimately passed judgement in his favour.

He continued: "My father-in-law decided to send my brother-in-law to my wife with the sole purpose of convincing her to return to Hinduism. He was well educated, having studied both secular sciences and the Vedas. He came to our house and said to his sister, "What good have you seen in Islam?!! These Muslims slaughter cows and eat them." She responded, "My brother. You have yourself read the Vedas. Did you not read the incident of a certain Rajah (king) who was faced with a plague during the period of his rule? The pundits (priests) advised him to slaughter 100 cows and leave the meat in the jungle for the wild beasts and birds to feast upon. They claimed that this was the only way to ward off that plague. The king did as he was told and the plague was repelled. Now, you tell me, if by the wild beasts and birds consuming that cow-meat (beef), a plague was warded off, what harm and problem could there be if humans consume it? (Actually, it should be even more beneficial)"

Her brother was dumbfounded. He posed a second question, "According to the Muslims, if a mouse or rat falls into a well and dies, 20 to 30 buckets of water must be scooped out from the well. If a chicken falls in and dies, 40 to

50 buckets must be scooped out from the well. If a cat falls in and dies, 70 to 80 buckets must be scooped out from the well.⁹ These laws are illogical and make no sense. If the well becomes impure by any of these animals dying in the water, how can it become pure by scooping out 20, 30, 40 or 50 buckets of water? Logic demands that all the water should be removed to purify the well.” She answered, “You are a qualified medical practitioner. Don’t you know that when a person suffers from a blood disorder or infection, many doctors would treat it by drawing out a little blood through venesection (blood-letting) or cupping. This would then result in the rest of the blood being restored back to normal. Nobody would ever draw out all the blood. Likewise, when the water of a well becomes polluted by any of these animals dying in it, a little water will be extracted which will restore the water back to its original purity. There is no need to draw out all the water.” He was again left speechless.

My wife then said to him, “You have read in the Vedas that there are some words written on the door of Paradise. Until and unless a person does not recite those words, he will never be able to enter Paradise. Hindu priests never reveal those words to others. But my teacher had said to me this much that these are the very words which are referred to as ‘an kahni’ (the unutterable statement). When a Hindu suffers the pangs of death for days on end, but is not breathing his last and giving up his soul, he is told by the sympathetic priests to recite the ‘an kahni’. Once he recites ‘Laa ilaaha illAllah. Muhammadur Rasulullah’, his soul departs from his body with great ease and he passes away peacefully.” Her brother returned home without saying a word more. He said to their father, “There is no hope of her ever becoming a Hindu again. She became a Muslim after learning and understanding it thoroughly.””¹⁰

9 This Hindu man had, in ignorance, even distorted the true facts. The law of the Shari’ah with regards to both the chicken and the cat is the same; i.e. 40 buckets should be scooped out, although scooping out 60 is preferable.

10 The above incident has been collected and translated from the narratives of Moulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه who had heard this incident directly from the husband, as in Fadhaail Huffaaz-e-Qur’an pg.1000-1004, and the narrative of Moulana Zul Fiqaar Ahmad

The Quran has described itself as a shifa (a cure). The great power of the Qur'an can be understood from the above incident. It can also be seen from the above incident what hardships people have to undergo and the secrecy they have to adopt just to be able to recite the Qur'an. It is sad that we who have no such difficulties find it so hard to pick up the Qur'an for a short while daily to recite the speech of our Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى**. Have we not been unappreciative for this great bounty of Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى**?

N.B. According to what has been written in Kitaabul Adad of Ibn Abdil Kafi, (as quoted in 'A gift for the Qari') there are 386877 letters in the Qur'an. Since we have been promised at least 10 rewards for every letter we recite of the Qur'an, a person who completes the Qur'an once will at least receive 3 868 770 rewards in his book of deeds, each reward being a key to some treasure or a token to some bounty in Jannah. Therefore, such a person will become a triple millionaire in the true sense of the word.

REPENT TO ALLAH **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE**

“He was the most polite person you had ever seen. You would be overtaken by admiration and awe when he turns his handsome shining face towards you, which bears a unique charming smile. His conversation would always start with Salaam. When he converses with you, you would think that you are his best friend, and feel elated about it. His luminous face sports a thick black beard, which creates in the heart of all a feeling of respect and honor for this young, pious, handsome man. Young and old love him and respect him, and even refer to him for all their major decisions. His speech has a magnetic attraction about it and his concern and enthusiasm for the difficulties facing the Muslims just draws one towards him. While delivering his sermon, the audience's eyes are fixed upon him, and the atmosphere is filled with peace and calmness. His every word touches the hearts of the crowd. His speech is easy to understand and certainly convincing. During his sermon, you would

notice the hearts of people melting and their eyes tearing profusely. Large numbers of people have found guidance at his hands. People flock to greet him. Everyone loves him for the sake of Allah. This is Shaykh Abu Yusuf, who is only thirty years of age.”

This is how I described him to my father, when recounting the details of the short journey we had undertaken with a jama’ah for the purpose of da’wah (calling) towards Allah. During our trip, we had visited some Bedouin tribes who were not living very far off from our locality to impart some Islamic advices to them and to encourage them towards righteousness. Alhamdulillah, we were welcomed very warmly. It was during this trip that we had met Shaykh Abu Yusuf.

Upon hearing this description, my father’s eyes welled up with tears. I asked him why he had become so emotional. He replied, with a heart filled with sorrow and grief, “I am thinking about him.” I enquired, “Who, Khaalid?” My question did not even require an answer, as I knew my father was surely reminiscing about him. My mind too was filled with memories of Khaalid.

That night, my younger brother Saalih who was thirteen years old said to me, “I can’t fall off to sleep, because I saw Daddy crying today. Muhammad, tell me why he was crying! I know for sure that you know why, because I heard you saying ‘Khaalid’. Who is this Khaalid?” I said to him, “Don’t you know that Daddy used to be called Abu Khaalid (the father of Khaalid)?” He replied, “Do you mean to say that he is our brother?” I replied, “Yes, he is our brother.” “So where is he now?” enquired Saalih. I responded, “He passed away eleven years ago, when you were only two years old. That is why you can’t remember him.” Saalih inquisitively begged, “Muhammad, I implore you in the name of Allah to tell me of my brother Khaalid who caused Daddy to cry today.” I replied, “Had you not asked me in the name of Allah, I would have never told you. You are asking me to re-open a very old wound which I thought had closed many years ago. This is what happened to our brother Khaalid:

THE STORY OF KHAALID

More than fifteen years ago, we lived in a small town in the northern suburbs. The inhabitants of that village were so few that you could easily count the number of homes in the town. The town contained only a single Masjid and one little primary school. But this village was extremely beautiful and scenic. It was situated in a valley between two black mountains, in which streams of clear water gushed forth, irrigating the lush farms, plantations and orchards. The scenery was eye-catching and attractive. As you know, Daddy was an expert farmer. While he would work hard in the fields, Khaalid and I would frolic and play about, helping Daddy to irrigate the crops and graze the cattle. Yet, you must remember that Daddy was very keen to see us excel in our studies. As years went by, my brother would always take the first position in his class, always passing with the highest grades. It was taken for granted that Khaalid would always receive 'The Ideal Student' award every year, due to his respect for the teachers, his intelligence, his helpful nature and, over and above that, his punctuality for the five daily salaah.

Added to the above, Khaalid was a respectful and obedient son to our parents, which led them both to love him with all their hearts. Despite his young age, he was blessed with outstanding good-character, due to which he had won over the hearts of all the people of the locality. His speech was very polite and decent. He was unacquainted with the rude and vulgar language which was so common amongst young children of his age. He was far too respectable to utilize such language. Instead, you would find him helping his fellow students and explaining their lessons to them. The fact of the matter is that his character was just too good, considering his young age. There was a three year difference between myself and Khaalid. Therefore, I would love him and respect him greatly.

CITY LIFE

Daddy decided that it would be best for us to move out, following in the footsteps of many who had moved out to the cities. He felt that it was the

ideal time to relocate, as he wished to give us a better life. Our family had grown in size, as we were now five children; Khaalid, myself, Maryam, Salma and Khawlah. Khaalid had just completed primary school. There was no secondary school in our little town which he could attend. Daddy's dream was for Khaalid to complete his studies and matriculate, which was the determining factor prompting him to move away from the village.

We relocated to the city, which was an agricultural hub. Daddy managed to secure a job at a certain huge agricultural enterprise, where he worked hard for years on end, until he earned for himself a prominent position in that company. City-life was strange and unfamiliar to us. In the village, you would daily see all the residents in the Masjid. All the residents were like one family, with a strong support structure and mutual love and co-operation, which would give one a sense of courage and comfort. This was missing in the city, where you would see new faces every day. However, as years went by, we began gradually adapting to our new life in the city.

A few years later, I completed primary school. This brought great joy to Daddy. However, we were eagerly awaiting the results of Khaalid, who was about to complete his secondary grades. He rushed into the house, beaming with joy. "I passed, I passed, Daddy!" he shouted out. My father was bursting with happiness. He joyfully congratulated Khaalid, and praised Allah for this favour. Khaalid came closer, kissed Daddy's hand and remarked, "This is only the fadhl (kindness of Allah), and then because of you, Daddy. You were my support and inspiration, which led me to achieving this." The next year, I began secondary school while Khaalid was admitted into high school. Our sisters were all attending primary school, in different grades. That was the very year in which you took your first steps, my dear Saalih. You would take a step, fall, stand and try to take a step again.

HIGH SCHOOL

One month into the new academic year, Khaalid mentioned to me that there were six students in the school who were known as 'the gang of Abu Sa'd',

all of whom were over the age of eighteen. They had a terrible reputation. Even the teachers were wary and afraid of this gang, to the extent that the principal was forced to separate them and place each one in separate classes, just to avoid problems. Khaalid said, "They converse in a certain strange language, using broken words, letters and even hand signs. Nobody understands it except them." I said, "I think that they are playing fools, just for fun." Khaalid retorted, "No, not at all. I see their reactions to these words. They sometimes laugh and sometimes get angry. I think that this language of theirs is a dark language, which contains dangerous and sinister secrets. These boys use this language so that no one else may come to know of their secrets." I said, "Khaalid, since you know that it is dangerous and sinister, please stay far away from them, so that no harm comes to you." Khaalid rejoined, "No, Muhammad. I am curious to know of their secrets. I will try myself to figure out this mystery."

The next day at school, Khaalid stopped by the gang to make salaam to them. One of them just muttered out a reply. Their attitude did not deter Khaalid. He began a conversation, enquiring from them about their health and the details of their preparations for the exams during the coming month. They sometimes curtly replied in a few words and sometimes sneered and scoffed at Khaalid. But Khaalid had made up his mind to unravel their secret. Through his approach, he hoped to get so close to them that they would finally trust him. As the days went by, Khaalid continued talking to them and joking with them, till they became friends. But they made sure never to reveal any of their secrets to Khaalid. One evening, while returning home after visiting his friend Abdullah, Khaalid met two members of the gang - Zayd and Yaasir- alone on the street. Khaalid thought that this is the ideal opportunity to corner them and get as much information out of them, since they were not with the rest of the gang. He asked where the other members - Husaam, Shaakir, Waleed and Ibrahim- were. They replied that the others were awaiting them in a nearby house. Khaalid said, "I am coming with you." Zayd and Yaasir were dumbfounded and taken by surprise. They were not sure what to do. However, since Khaalid had joined their company at school,

they could not see any reason to stop Khaalid from joining them. Anyway, they mused, since he was a top-achiever at school and an ideal student, he could be of some benefit to them.

THE DESOLATE HOUSE

Khaalid tagged along with them. They walked through some neighborhoods and alleys which seemed deserted. Khaalid had never been here before. He asked, “Zayd, Yaasir! Where are we? Why are these houses desolate?” They replied, “Don’t worry. They are waiting for us in one of these houses.” Khaalid was surprised, “O Allah, can anyone live in these ruins? These houses don’t even have doors and windows. Cats and dogs live in places like these. How did they even come here?” They ignored Khaalid’s list of endless questions and soon reached a certain house, where Yaasir said, “Here we are. They are all here, Khaalid. Go in!” Khaalid entered this desolate house. They found the rest of the gang in one empty room in this house, all sitting in a circle around their leader Ibrahim, who they called Abu Sa’d. He had in front of him an old box. He greeted them, welcomed them and bade them to sit down. Khaalid was overjoyed at this gesture, and sensed that they now trusted him enough to expose some of their secrets to him, as he seemed to now be part of their gang. This was the opportunity he was waiting for. Without waiting a moment, he immediately asked them to reveal to him the secret behind their strange language and hand-signs. They were all quite surprised at his question. Abu Sa’d said, “The secret lies in this”, pointing to the box. Khaalid looked at the box in surprise, as if expecting a reply from the box. Abu Sa’d opened the box and removed from it a yellow piece of paper which had been carefully wrapped. He said, “If you sniff this, you will get the answers to all your questions.” Khaalid took it hesitantly, glancing suspiciously at the face of Abu Sa’d and this yellow paper. Then he opened it and glanced inside. He asked, “What is this, Abu Sa’d?” Abu Sa’d retorted, “Just do what I told you, you will understand.” Khaalid did as he was told, and suddenly drifted off into a deep sleep.

Khaalid awoke with a fright from his sleep and looked around him, “O my

Rabb, where am I?” He tried to stand, but his feet could not carry him. “O Allah, my hands, my legs, my entire body is throbbing with pain.” He noticed the others around him fast asleep. He shouted, “Yaasir, Shaakir, Husaam, Zayd, wake up!” “Shut up, Khaalid, you’re disturbing us” Abu Sa’d snapped. Khaalid announced, “Hey, wake up! It’s already morning. I don’t know what happened. Come on. Let’s perform salaah quickly.” “Go and perform salaah yourself, but don’t disturb us” Waleed rejoined. Khaalid was shocked to hear such words. He stood up hastily, dusted off his clothing, wore his shoes and rushed out of the house past those deserted roads and eerie alleys till he reached a Masjid near home where he performed wudhu and completed his salaah. Khaalid realized that it was almost six o’ clock. He dreadfully questioned himself of the happenings of the previous night, wondering how he had fallen asleep without even realizing what was happening. He rushed home after leaving the Masjid, wondering what answer he would give to Daddy. He thought to himself, “If I tell him that I had spent the night with Abu Sa’d’s gang, he will get angry with me. No, I can’t say that to him. Daddy respects me and trusts me. What can I do? I will have to lie to him.” He knocked on the door. They opened the door instantly. Daddy sighed in relief, “Khaalid, my son. Where were you? Alhamdulillah, you are safe. I was so worried about you. Where were you?” Khaalid replied, “Daddy, I am so sorry. I was doing revision with my friend Abdullah, like usual. I was unable to control myself and I was overtaken by sleep. I hope you will forgive me, Daddy.” Daddy said, “No problem, my son, as long as you were by Abdullah. But please never do this again. We were so worried about you last night.” Khaalid felt relieved. He was so happy that Daddy had believed him. But what if Daddy happened to meet Abdullah and ask him. Khaalid was no fool. He quickly sped off to Abdullah, informed him of what had happened the previous night and what answer to give if he happened to meet Daddy. But Khaalid did not dare to tell his best friend of ‘that mysterious yellow paper’.

That evening, Khaalid decided to go back to that deserted house, as he still wished to find out about that special strange language of theirs, which they had assured him that he would understand by just sniffing that powder. He

knocked on the room's door twice, but they did not open the door. They were terrified, as they had no idea who was knocking on their door at this time of the evening. On the third knock, Khaalid calmly announced, "There is nothing to fear. It's me, Khaalid. Open up!" They opened the door. They couldn't believe their eyes. They were overjoyed. Khaalid said, "Friends, it seems like you weren't expecting me." Zayd responded, "Of course, Khaalid. It never crossed our minds that it might be you." Husaam commented, "I have a feeling you enjoyed yourself last night. Otherwise, you would never have returned." Waleed enquired, "Did you enjoy that powder?" Abu Sa'd instantly offered, "Do you want another sniff, Khaalid?" Khaalid replied, "No. No. I don't want that. I never come over for that." In one voice, they all demanded, "Then what did you come for?" Khaalid replied confidently, "I still don't understand those signs and words which you had assured me that I would soon understand." Abu Sa'd and the rest of the gang all burst out laughing menacingly. Khaalid responded, "Why are you laughing? I am serious about what I'm saying." Abu Sa'd reassured him, "Don't worry, Khaalid. I will give you something else." Abu Sa'd turned to his old box, opened it and pulled out some white pills. He handed one over to Khaalid. He offered, "Take it. It is far better than what you had last night." Khaalid turned this pill in his hands, inspecting it. "What is it for?" he asked. Shaakir remarked, "Fool, it will take you on a high to another world, a world of ecstasy and sweet dreams, far away from reality." Khaalid was curious to try it out, so he popped it into his mouth and swallowed it. The gang burst out into a sinister laugh. "Poor Khaalid, what a fool! He is so gullible and easily convinced." Khaalid was unable to walk straight and was swaying from side to side. He began laughing like a drunkard, and blabbering words which were meaningless. As the gang laughed at him, they too popped the pills. Khaalid awoke in the middle of the night, and rushed home. Daddy was afraid, worried and exhausted. As Khaalid entered, Daddy scolded, "Khaalid, what is this? You never behaved like this before." Khaalid apologized, repeated the same false excuse he had given the day before and went off to sleep.

The next evening, Khaalid returned once again to the dilapidated house. They

welcomed him in. He had become a member of their gang. That evening, they were playing cards and drinking tea. He too sat down and began playing. In the meantime, Waleed took out a cigarette and lit it. After taking a few puffs, he passed it around. When they offered it to Khaalid, he politely declined, saying, “No thanks. I am not used to smoking.” They mockingly laughed at him. Waleed offered, “Have just one cigarette, Khaalid. You will enjoy the game and it will clear your mind. Try it out and see.” Khaalid now did not hesitate. He took a puff, choked and almost suffocated. They snorted and laughed at him. This only served to make him more stubborn and insistent, so that they would not mock at him.

Weeks went by, and Khaalid was getting worse. He would only return home at one o’ clock in the morning. Straight from school, he would head to the deserted house, where he would amuse himself with his friends, the infamous gang of Abu Sa’d. They would spend their nights playing cards, smoking and experimenting on different drugs and intoxicants – the mother of all evils. Khaalid was addicted, and was unable to manage even a day without consuming some drug or another. It was curiosity, inquisitiveness and a love for experimentation which had led Khaalid to the evil of drugs - the root cause of all evils and sins. As the English adage goes, ‘curiosity killed the cat’.

Khaalid’s school results drastically plummeted. The teachers could not figure out the reason for this, as he had always been a top-achiever. However, it was not only his academic results which suffered a setback. His behavior with his family had changed too. He was no more that obedient and truthful son he used to be. At home, he would pass his time in bossing and issuing instructions to all and would hit our young sisters for the most trivial excuses. He had lost all respect for Mummy. When she would ask him about his late nights out, he would sometimes lie to her and sometimes just ignore her. Daddy was very worried about him. He would daily advise him and sometimes even reprimand him, which proved to be of no benefit. Actually, it just made him more stubborn and rude. Finally, Daddy threatened to lock him up in the house if he ever returned late again. This did the trick, and Khaalid would

now return home before dark every night. However, nobody realized or even suspected that Khaalid was hooked onto drugs. In fact, they never imagined it to be possible. In the meanwhile, Khaalid had come to understand that strange language and those strange signs, which were used by drug addicts to converse about all matters related to their evil activities.

DIFFICULT DAYS

One day, Daddy had to travel out to another city for a few days, on behalf of his company for some business-related work. Khaalid had been waiting for an opportunity like this to enjoy some freedom. That night, Khaalid didn't return home. Since his addiction to drugs, Khaalid had undergone a complete transformation. There was no sin or vice which he had not experimented and perpetrated. He would hardly perform salaah or carry out any acts of worship. In the beginning, Abu Sa'd and his gang would supply Khaalid with the drugs of his choice free of charge or for a cheap price. After they were sure that he was addicted, Abu Sa'd began demanding huge amounts for the drugs, which Khaalid was of course unable to pay. Khaalid would pressurize Mummy into giving him however much he needed. Poor Mummy would comply with his demands, since Khaalid held a special place in her heart. During Daddy's trip, Mummy had given away all her money to Khaalid. But Khaalid still demanded more. Mummy said, "Khaalid, I gave you all that I have. I promise you, I don't have a single Riyaal to give you." Khaalid snapped back, "I need more. I want something. I want, I want ... this necklace you are wearing." Mummy was surprised. She said, "What?!! What are you saying, Khaalid?!! Khaalid insisted, "Give it to me quickly. I have no time. Do you want me to die?" Khaalid snatched the necklace from Mummy's neck and ran straight out of the house. Mummy was stunned and shocked. She couldn't believe what had just happened. Khaalid returned home late that night. It was only then that Mummy realized what had happened to her precious child. He walked into the house intoxicated, staggering from left to right, laughing and blabbering to himself. He opened his room door and threw himself onto the bed. It was only then that I too realized that Khaalid was a drug addict. I saw

no choice but to lock him in his room for a while, till we decide what to do with him. Remember that I was only thirteen at that time, whereas he was sixteen. I couldn't really do anything to him.

Suddenly, we heard the door shaking. Khaalid was knocking, or rather banging, at the door with full force, screaming and shouting, "Open the door!" He warned and threatened to harm us if we didn't open the door for him. Mummy was crying bitterly, while I had no idea what to do. I said, "Mummy, I fear Khaalid will harm us if we don't open the door for him. I think we should let him out." Mummy agreed. I opened the lock, but my hands were trembling with fear. I hardly opened the door when Khaalid tackled me, grabbed hold of my collar and threatened to kill me if I ever lock him in the room again. I was like a little chick in his hands. I began trembling, my heart-beat escalated and my body burst out in a sweat. Swallowing my saliva, I stuttered, "I promise, I will never do that again." Mummy held onto his clothes from behind and said, while streams of tears poured down her face, "Leave your brother. I told him to do that." Faster than lightning, he aggressively pushed Mummy's hand off his back with force. Mummy understood that Khaalid had become a danger to the entire family. Maryam emerged from her room, as her sleep had been disturbed by the noise. Mummy sent her back immediately and asked her to lock her door tightly. Mummy feared that this human monster may harm one of his little sisters and she feared he may harm me too. She therefore sent me to her room and asked me to see to you, Saalih. You were crying at that time. She went back to Khaalid, determined to watch his movements. Khaalid pushed her so aggressively that she fell to the ground with a bang. Khaalid then stole whatever he could get his hands on and ran out of the front door.

I rushed out of the room when I heard her scream, only to find my beloved mother sprawled on the floor and unable to move. Maryam and Salma ran out of their rooms too. Maryam said, "What happened, Muhammad? I can't understand what is happening here in this house." I replied, "Don't worry about that, Maryam. You and Salma, help me to carry Mummy to the bed." Poor Mummy. She could do nothing but cry. She passed the next two days in

her bed without moving or getting out. We had no idea what had happened to Khaalid since that night.

Daddy returned from his trip, only to find the family in this pitiable condition. He asked Mummy what had happened, but she would not reply. Only tears trickled down her beautiful cheeks. She feared what my father might do to Khaalid, despite the harm Khaalid had caused to her. But my father was adamant to find out what had occurred during his absence. Maryam burst out crying and narrated whatever had happened during the last ten days, since Daddy had left. Daddy, being the good man he is, could not control his emotions. He clasped his hands together and repeated, “Khaalid is finished. Khaalid is finished.” He wept bitterly and pitifully. We had never seen Daddy crying like this. It was a heart-rending sight.

Daddy searched for Khaalid on the roads and in the nearby localities. He visited Khaalid’s friends, but no one had any idea where he might be. He returned home heart-broken and sobbing. The next morning, Daddy decided to pay a visit to Khaalid’s school. He was surprised to find out that Khaalid had not attended school for more than a month, and that the school had decided to expel him on his return. My father could not handle the stress of all these problems which came crashing down upon him all at once. He fell ill and had to remain in bed for a number of days. Alhamdulillah, Mummy’s condition improved, and she tried to forget about Khaalid and whatever he had done.

One day, while returning from school, I saw Khaalid. But I could not believe that it was Khaalid. Upon closer inspection, I realized that it was definitely him. I hurried home to inform Daddy. He immediately wore his clothes and accompanied me to bring Khaalid back home. Daddy returned home with Khaalid. He did not need to use any sort of force to do so, as Khaalid was in no condition to resist. He had become extremely weak and frail. As soon as he entered the house, Mummy dashed towards him in tears. Whatever might have happened, a mother’s love and affection towards her child never changes. Khaalid slowly recovered. But he was now not allowed to leave home freely. His movements were restricted. After a few weeks, Khaalid approached

Daddy and said, “A group of my friends are going camping in the desert. I want to go with them.” Daddy blankly refused without even batting an eyelid. But Khaalid was persistent and adamant that he wished to go. Daddy finally gave in unwillingly. A few days remained for the mid-year holidays. Alhamdulillah, I passed my exams, and so did our sisters. As for Khaalid, the year was wasted. Khaalid was eagerly awaiting his camping trip with his friends to the desert, as he had never been on such a trip before. I could see him bubbling with excitement as he prepared his gear for the outing.

THE CAMPING TRIP

On the morning of the trip, we bade Khaalid farewell, wishing him a good, safe and enjoyable holiday. But my father passed the entire day uneasy and worried. He was not happy about this trip. The weather was wonderful. The sun shone down brightly, while tufts of clouds provided shade in certain areas. It was a beautiful morning. A green carpet of lush vegetation and grass was spread out all over. Flowers blossomed and trees sprouted out beautiful leaves and fruit. The birds were singing and chirping. Tents were pitched everywhere in this area. Every tent was able to accommodate fifteen youngsters. Four members of the ‘Abu Sa’d gang’ joined Khaalid in the same tent; Zayd, Husaam, Shaakir and Waleed. Abu Sa’d and Yaasir were drug merchants, so they had no time for recreation and outings. They had to see to their customers’ orders.

A week later, we received some alarming news. One of the tents had caught on fire. The cause of the fire was a group of youngsters who had lit a fire to keep warm one night. A spark which shot out from this fire ignited a huge inferno which engulfed the entire tent, burning whoever was sleeping in it. The fire caught on to the next tent which was being used as a kitchen. This tent contained two gas cylinders, both of which burst and exploded, causing a huge blast to be heard by the people who slept in the nearby tents. As they emerged from their tents, they witnessed the tall flames of this inferno. Moments later, the fire-truck arrived to douse out the fire. Not a single person escaped alive. A few burnt corpses were found under the ashes. However,

none of them could possibly be identified. The fire-police were forced to announce that, in all likelihood, all the fifteen youngsters in the tent had all passed on. Daddy was later informed that Khaalid too was staying in that tent and that he was amongst those who had met their fate. Daddy kept calm and composed, remembering the fact that it was the decision of Allah and recited Alhamdulillah over this difficulty which had befallen us. He then made dua to Allah and begged Allah to have mercy on his son Khaalid. It was a sad day in our lives, the sadness of which I will never be able to describe to you, Saalih.”

Saalih remarked, “O Allah. What a sad story, Muhammad! I wish I had seen Khaalid.” I ended the conversation by saying, “May Allah shower His mercy on Khaalid.”

THE STORY OF SHAYKH ABU YUSUF

The next morning, as we returned from Fajr salaah, Saalih asked Daddy, “Daddy, do you still love my brother Khaalid?” Daddy looked at him in surprise, “What a strange question to ask, my boy. Why are you asking this?” Saalih replied, “Muhammad told me about Khaalid last night.” Abu Khaalid ignored the question and turned to me, saying, “Muhammad, when are you going to take me with you to see that pious young Shaykh. Your description of him makes me eager to meet him.” I said, “Of course, Daddy. Why don’t we go today?” I got the car ready and off we went to meet Shaykh Abu Yusuf. When we reached the village, we headed straight for the Masjid. Shaykh Abu Yusuf was imparting a lesson on Aqidah (beliefs) to the listeners, as is his daily habit. When my father saw Shaykh Abu Yusuf and noticed his sweet smile and his beautiful character, he was visibly impressed. Shaykh Abu Yusuf had found a place in his heart. From then onwards, my father would daily attend his lessons and discourses, learning from him as much as he could. A few days later, at the end of the lesson, the listeners noticed a sad look on the face of Shaykh Abu Yusuf. He let out a deep sigh and said, “My brothers. My story is very amazing and strange. Let me tell you about myself:

I was with a group of friends. We had all strayed far from the straight path.

We had committed every possible sin. We neglected our salaah and other compulsory duties. We were probably the most disobedient and sinful people with regards to the commands of Allah. One summer, we went camping with a few friends. We would stay awake till the late hours of the night in singing and dancing. This had become second nature to us. One morning, I joined two of my friends on a hunting trip. We spent our time hunting down birds, searching for lizard holes and roaming about the desert with our car. We found enjoyment in these activities. We were not interested in performing salaah. We had forgotten ourselves. It was late, but we did not realize it until the sun began setting. Abu Fahd, our friend, commented, “We had better get back to our tent before darkness sets in.” We drove towards the north for a few kilometers, but soon realized that we had lost the road. We turned back, but we somehow drove off in a wrong direction. We continued driving too and forth, until darkness set in and we lost hope of finding our road back. I said to my friends, “It is better for us to stop here. We will never find our way back to the tents in this darkness. It makes no sense to deplete our fuel in searching for something we will never be able to find.” So we spent that night in our car. However, something frightening happened that night, which I will never forget for the rest of my life.

A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE

We were discussing hunting and the possible direction of our tent, when Abu Saalim felt that he needs to relieve himself. He got out of the car and took a few steps. He was not to go far, as the night was pitch-black. If he had to do so, it would be difficult for him to find his way back to the car in the darkness. The car lights were off, and the door was closed due to the biting cold. Suddenly, we heard a scream piercing through the still night. Then we heard a shriek, a shout, a cry for help and a plea, mingled with the sounds of howling. “Abu Fahd, what happened” I called out. He replied, “I don’t know.” “I think it’s a wolf” I said.

A hungry wolf had just pounced upon our friend Abu Saalim and attacked him. It tore his body to pieces and took deep bites into his flesh just a few

meters away from us. We heard everything. His shrieks and cries for help still ring in my ears to this day. I held onto Abu Fahd tightly in fear. I began crying like a baby in its mother's lap. Abu Fahd too could not control his tears. We trembled, imagining what had just happened to our friend Abu Saalim. A few minutes later, we heard the howls of wolves all around us. A pack of wolves from all over the desert had assembled and surrounded our car. I quickly jumped to close the window and lock the car doors. The wolves leapt onto the car. They began scratching at the window. They howled ferociously. Their bright eyes shone through the dark night as they peeped at us through the window menacingly. I could not stand it any more. I closed my eyes. My heart was palpitating and beating at top speed. My friend Abu Fahd was in no better condition. Without realizing what I was doing, I suddenly found myself reciting Mu'awwazatain (Qul A'oozu bi Rabbil Falaq and Qul A'oozu bi Rabbin Naas). I would read it and cry, and read it and cry. I began making dua, pleading with Allah and begging Him to save us. My friend Abu Fahd did the same. Together we turned to Allah with such humility and fear as we had never done before. I recited Aayatul-Kursi and asked him to repeat it after me, as he has not memorized it. We spent a significant portion of the night in this condition. Suddenly, we felt a sense of peace and tranquility descending upon us. We praised Allah for this feeling of ease and serenity, and unwittingly fell into a deep sleep.

When I opened my eyes, I couldn't believe what I saw. I was alive! I was alive! It was morning. I said, "Abu Fahd, wake up, wake up!" He opened his eyes and asked, 'Oh, what happened, Abu Yusuf?' I responded, "We are alive, Abu Fahd, we are alive." He said, "You are right, Abu Yusuf. We are alive, Alhamdulillah." I commented, "It was a difficult night, wasn't it, Abu Fahd?" He replied, "It was, Abu Yusuf. It was a very difficult night. What ... what happened to Abu Saalim?" I suggested, "Let's get out of the car and see."

As we opened the door, we saw the wolves' footprints all around the car. When we reached the back of the car, I exclaimed, "O Allah. I can't believe what I am seeing. Abu Fahd, I can't bear to see this." We began crying in pity

over our friend Abu Saalim. His blood was splattered in all directions. Some pieces of his flesh were stuck to the tow-bar. It seemed as if he had grabbed hold of it, hoping it could help him somehow against the wolf. I said, “Abu Fahd, come on. Let us perform Fajr salaah, before the sun rises. I said ‘Allahu Akbar’ and began my salaah. My brothers, that salaah was a salaah full of devotion and humility before Allah. It seemed as if it was the first time we had ever performed salaah. This salaah filled my heart with such a sweetness which I can never describe. After salaah, I turned to Abu Fahd and said, “Allah intended goodness for us out of our experience last night. Allah taught us through last night that He, and only He, can alleviate our distress and save us from harm. I hope Allah will accept our taubah (repentance).” Abu Fahd smiled and said, “Inshaa-Allah.”

We decided to start the car and drive towards the East. We knew that only Allah could help us. We put our trust in Him and began driving. We spent our time reciting short Surahs and various Aayaat of Qur’an, discussing the enjoyment we had experienced during salaah while communicating with our Allah and making dua for Abu Saalim. Abu Fahd soon said to me, “Look! Our fuel is almost finished.” I said, “Don’t worry. We brought along two extra gallons of fuel, which we can fill into the tank.” After refilling the tank with one gallon, we looked for something to eat. We found a single bottle of water, which was enough to last for only one day. We chewed on a few morsels of bread and drank a few sips of water which served to at least moisten our dry lips and throats. It wasn’t enough to satiate us, but we still had a long road ahead, a road which we had no idea when it would end. We knew that we needed to preserve the water.

HUNGER AND THIRST

It was mid-afternoon and the sun shone down brightly upon us. We were tired and had lost hope of finding the road. The fuel too was running out. We got down from the car to perform Zuhr salaah. We then begged Allah to show us a way out from this difficulty. We got back into the car and drove on, but the car came to a halt a few minutes later. I said, “Abu Fahd, we only have one gallon

left. I don't think it will get us out of here." Abu Fahd smiled contentedly and said, "Allah is with us. As long as Allah is with anyone, the end result will always be good. Let us refill the tank with the last gallon and drive on." After refilling the tank, I said to him, "This is our last chance. If we don't get out of here with this last gallon, we will die here." Abu Fahd replied, "In that case, we will happily accept Allah's decision to die. Rather, we will thank Him for not allowing us to die while astray. We will thank Him for guiding us towards Him before death overtook us. And we will beg him to pardon us and forgive our sins and evils which we had committed in the past." We began searching for our road again, but our minds were in a different world."

Peace and serenity encircled us from all sides. We could only hear the sound of the wind blowing and the leaves rustling, along with the buzz of our car's engine. Suddenly, the car jerked and came to a stop. Abu Fahd looked at me, and his eyes welled up with tears. He said to me in a sad voice, "Let us read the Shahaadah." We were silent. It was as if we were awaiting the arrival of the angel of death. We had no food, and our water was almost finished. The sun was about to set, and we had no idea what Allah had decreed for us. We performed Maghrib salaah and began making zikr. As the darkness spread, we jumped back into the car and locked the doors. We heard the howling of the wolves coming closer and closer. It never worried us any longer. We were going to die anyhow, either in the jaws of these wolves or out of starvation and thirst. I said to Abu Fahd, "Do you think it is easier to die out of starvation and thirst, or easier to die in the jaws of these wolves?" He replied, "I think it is more painful and difficult to die out of starvation and thirst, because you suffer gradually. You could suffer the throes of death for days on end before dying. As for the wolves, you will die immediately. After death, it won't matter if they tear you to pieces." I suggested, "Then let us perform Isha outside." He said, "No, that is suicide. In that case, we will earn the anger of Allah. If it wasn't for that, I would gladly get out of the car right now." I said, "Then let us await the decree of Allah."

After performing Isha salaah in the car, we went to sleep, expecting never

to wake up the next morning. Our stomachs were empty and our bodies were fatigued. But we woke up the next morning, as the brightness of day filtered through the window. We performed Fajr salaah, but hardly had the strength to stand straight for a few minutes. After salaah, we got back into the car, awaiting our death. Abu Fahd, overtaken by the pangs of hunger and drained out by the hot sun, lay flat on his back. He was not even able to move. I poured a few drops of water down his throat. He fell asleep. He would wake up every now and then and break the silence by a few weak moans. I sat watching him in this condition. My heart was overcome with grief, seeing my friend suffering like this. He regained consciousness and groaned, "Water, I need water." I gave him the last few sips of water to drink. He then fell into a deep sleep. As I looked at him, I became conscious of the fact that I too am awaiting my end. I too was dehydrated. Sleep seemed to be the best option to avoid suffering from the thirst and hunger. I fell asleep, knowing that I would probably never wake up again.

ABU FAHD'S SUCCESS

The mid-afternoon sun bore down upon me. I awakened, only to realize that I had not performed Zuhr salaah. I was not able to stand, so I was forced to perform it sitting. I woke up Abu Fahd, who could not even sit up. He performed salaah as he was, flat on his back. Upon completing his salaah, I saw a tear rolling down from his eye. I asked him why he was crying. He said, "I request Allah ... to ... forgive me." He was hardly able to utter these words. I cried, and asked Allah to forgive both of us. We again fell asleep. After an hour, I woke up to the moans of Abu Fahd. He was suffering extreme pain, and was perspiring heavily. He repeated, "Water, I need water." I sat next to him, placed his head in my lap and explained to him dejectedly, "My brother, there is no more water. It's finished." He continued moaning in pain. I cried. A few minutes later, I heard some strange sounds emanating from his chest. I thought to myself that this must be Sakaraatul-Maut (the pangs of death). I began encouraging him to recite 'Laa ilaaha illAllah'. He recited the Kalimah, and I witnessed his soul leaving his body to meet its Creator. I held his body

to my chest. I cried and cried. I thanked Allah for blessing my friend with the honour of reciting the Kalimah of Shahaadah moments before his death.

“What am I going to do with his body?” I thought. “How will I bury him?” At that moment, the reality dawned upon me; My friend, Abu Saalim, had died after being attacked by the wolves. He died while he was astray on the wrong path. His end was an evil one. His final abode, if Allah does not have mercy on him, will be very evil indeed (Hell). I asked Allah to forgive him and have mercy on him. As for Abu Fahd, he had also died. But Allah, out of His mercy, had guided him and granted him the chance to repent before death. Allah blessed him with the honour of reciting the Kalimah of Sahaadah before death. I begged Allah to bless me also with a good end and forgive my two friends. After coming to this realization, I promised Allah that I would firstly reform myself, practice upon all His commandments and invite people towards Him, guiding them towards that which would be of benefit to them in this world and the Hereafter. I thought about Abu Fahd. I knew that I did not have the strength to bury him. Hunger and thirst had blurred everything around me. I fell down unconscious.

SAFE AND SOUND

When I opened my eyes, the first thoughts that crossed my mind were, “O Allah, where am I? Where is Abu Fahd? Who are you?” They shouted out in joy, “Alhamdulillah, he is alive.” It was this group of people from the tribe of Shaykh Abu Waddaah who had rescued me from the desert. They later informed me that they had buried Abu Fahd. May Allah grant them the best of rewards. Till today, I live here with them. They have become my family. My duty is to invite them towards Allah.”

The listeners, in unison, exclaimed ‘Allahu Akbar’. Alhamdulillah, Allah protected you.’ Abu Khaalid however was crying. Shaykh Abu Yusuf saw this from the corner of his eye.

After the people left, Shaykh Abu Yusuf approached Abu Khaalid and said,

“It seems like you were affected by my story?” Abu Khaalid replied, “Yes. Your story reminds me of my son Khaalid.” Shaykh Abu Yusuf enquired, “Tell me, what happened to your son?” Abu Khaalid sat down with Shaykh Abu Yusuf in one corner of the Masjid and narrated the entire story of his beloved son Khaalid. Shaykh Abu Yusuf looked towards Abu Khaalid in wonder and amazement as he heard the story, and then lowered his head and listened attentively. After Abu Khaalid completed narrating the account of Khaalid, Shaykh Abu Yusuf raised his head. Tears were streaming down his cheeks. He held the hands of Abu Khaalid and kissed it. He then stammered, “I hope you will forgive me. I hope so. I ... I am Khaalid, my dear father.”¹¹

11 Translated and condensed from ‘Al-Fajrul-Jadeed - Qissah wa Ibrah’ by Muneerah Shayhah. I first heard this incident from my beloved brother, Moulana Ridwan Kajee.

A list of my asaatzah (teachers) who advised me towards righteousness and passed on the knowledge of deen to me:

Family

My Beloved Father Dr. Dawood Kajee My Eldest Brother Moulana Moosa Kajee
My Beloved Mother My Elder Brother Moulana Ridwan Kajee

Maktab And Hifz Teachers

Aapa H. Abba	Moulana Abdullah Mansoor
Aapa M. Jeena	Moulana Ismail Kathrada
Aapa F. Wadee	Moulana Maseehullah Kathrada
Moulana Fareed Beig	Hafiz Basheer Tikli
Moulana Mohammad Amin Sujee	Qari Abdur-Rahman Eshak
Moulana Ismail Bismillah	

Aalim Course

Moulana Muhammad Abba	Moulana Abdullah Dabhelia
Moulana Abdulla Amejee	Mufti Muhammad Patel
Moulana Ziyad Hussein	Mufti Atiqur-Rahman Azmi
Moulana Shafiqur Rahman Azmi	Moulana Moosa Patel
Qari Rafiq Motara	Moulana Hassen Docrat
Qari Abdullah Motara	Moulana Abdullah Ismail
Qari Abdullah Ishaq	Qari Ismail Essack رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
Moulana Muhammad Chotia	Mufti Zakariyya Pandor
Moulana Ahmad Chotia	Mufti Muhammad Amjad
Moulana Umar Bismillah	Mufti Ahmad Ali
Qari Yunus Desai	Mufti Muhammad Saeed Motara
Mufti Masood Qasim	Moulana Fadhlur-Rahman Azmi
Moulana Abdur-Rahim Sheikh	Moulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq

Later Teachers

Moulana Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar	Moulana Saleemullah Khan
Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar	

Besides the above, there are many others from whom i benefitted, studied under for a few days or few hours or from whom i recieved ijazah 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.

Duas for acquiring the love of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى

Rasulullah (ﷺ) had mentioned that Daud (عليه السلام) would make the following dua:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ
اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنْ الْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ

Trans: O Allah, I ask You to grant me Your love, the love of those who love You and the ability to do those actions which will enable me to reach and attain Your love. O Allah, make my love for You more than the love I have for myself (for fulfilling my own passions and desires), for my family and for cold water. (Tirmidhi)

Rasulullah (ﷺ) would also make the following dua:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ الْأَشْيَاءِ إِلَيَّ وَاجْعَلْ خَوْفَكَ أَخَوْفَ
الْأَشْيَاءِ إِلَيَّ واقْطَعْ عَنِّي حَاجَاتِ الدُّنْيَا بِالشَّوْقِ إِلَى لِقَائِكَ وَإِذَا
أَقْرَزْتَ أَعْيُنَ أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ دُنْيَاهُمْ فَأَقِرَّ عَيْنِي مِنْ عِبَادَتِكَ

Trans. O Allah, make Your love the most beloved of all things to me. Make Your fear the most fearful of all things to me. Remove from me the concern of all worldly needs by instilling into me the desire to meet You. When You grant the lovers of this world the coolness of their eyes (immense pleasure) by giving them worldly possessions, then cool my eyes (bless me with immense pleasure) through your ibaadah (worship). (Hilyatul-Awliyaa)

Maalik bin Dinaar (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) would say, “Stories are the presents of Jannah (Paradise).”



Junaid Baghdadi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said, “Stories are from among the armies of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), through which He strengthens the hearts of his friends.”



Ar-Rashid said, “Pay careful attention to these stories, because they are scattered pearls. Perhaps there may be a valueless pearl amongst them.”

