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## **Muhabbah (Love) and its Fruits** **By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)**

Allah ﷻ created mankind from His sheer power and mercy, and for this man is forever indebted. Man is the sum of the parts that Allah ﷻ has given him: the work of the eye is to see; the work the ear is to hear; the work of the mind is to think, and the work of the heart is to love.

There is no one alive who does not love someone or something. If that love is for the sake of Allah ﷻ, then it becomes a means to earn reward. However, if that love is purely for the sake of satisfying one's *nafs*, then it becomes a means for sin and earning Allah's ﷻ Wrath.

A room is either lit or dark: it cannot be both and it can neither be lit *nor* dark. In exactly the same way, the heart will be enlightened if it has the love of Allah ﷻ within it. If devoid of this love, it will surely be dark because of the love of creation. It is said that the heart cannot be at peace unless it is in love, whether that is with a person or thing. Hence to love is an inherent quality of the heart without which it is always restless.

The usage of the word *muhabbah* (love) has become very common, but there are different degrees of *muhabbah* that we might not be acquainted with. For example, a woman has *muhabbah* for her brother, but the dominant traits within this *muhabbah* are kindness and affection; a woman has *muhabbah* for her father, but the dominating trait here is respect; a woman has *muhabbah* for her son, but the dominating traits here are protection and mercy. Likewise, a woman has *muhabbah* for her husband, but her emotional desires are dominant in this *muhabbah*. Hence the word *muhabbah* is commonly used for all kind of love, but there are differences in how that *muhabbah* is displayed and how it impacts others.

Likewise, a believer also has many loves (*muhabbah*) in this world. It is recorded in *hadith* that two believers who love each other simply for the sake of Allah ﷻ will be sheltered under His Throne on the Day of Judgment. Hence, loving a believer simply because he has faith pleases Allah ﷻ and becomes a basis for reward. Moreover, loving one's parents is an inherent trait for which Allah ﷻ dispenses reward. This is so clear to Allah ﷻ that it is written in *hadith* that Allah ﷻ rewards a person for one Hajj or Umra for one sincere glance of love towards his parents. Allah ﷻ is also pleased if we have *muhabbah* for the scholars (*ulama*) because of their knowledge. If someone kisses a scholar out of sheer respect for his knowledge, Allah ﷻ will record as many good deeds for that person as the number of hair on that scholar's head.

Allah ﷻ rewards the love that a husband has for his wife. *Hadith* tells us that the best among the believers is he who is good to his wife. It is also written that if a husband and wife

look at each other and smile, then Allah ﷻ looks at both of them and smiles in His everlasting mercy.

If Allah ﷻ had not created these different kinds of *muhabbah*, then mankind could not have lived together in this world. These are therefore essential but Allah ﷻ has specified some limits and methods. Mankind should cut himself from creation and return to his Creator, and then return to loving creation solely for the sake of the Creator. Any and all connection with the creation should be for the sake of Allah ﷻ alone and not for the sake of one's *nafs*. All our loves will become a means for attaining reward if they exist for the sake of Allah ﷻ rather than anything else.

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

*Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline: or the dwellings in which you delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious (9:24)*

This verse clarifies that all these different loves and affections earn reward only if they remain secondary to the love of Allah ﷻ in the believer's heart. They continue being rewarded only because they are under the umbrella of Allah's ﷻ love. When they leave the shade of this umbrella and even start challenging Allah's ﷻ love is when they start leading the person away from Allah ﷻ. This verse is telling us that all these loves that we have earn reward for us, but we should be willing to sacrifice all of them if they come between us and Allah ﷻ, because our purpose and destination is something else. The love of Allah ﷻ is our only purpose, whereas all other love and affection is secondary. These are the limits that the *shariah* (Islamic sacred law) has specified.

A believer's life and death are all and only for Allah ﷻ. It is written in *hadith* that a believer is he who loves only for the sake of Allah ﷻ; hates only for the sake of Allah ﷻ; gives only for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and if he does not give, the even that is for the sake of Allah ﷻ. *Hadith* continues to say that such is a person who has fulfilled his faith, and so we find out that we need to cultivate these four essential qualities within us if we are to achieve perfect faith. Our relations with people should be solely for the sake of Allah ﷻ, for this is how a person achieves nearness to his Lord.

The Holy Quran also tells us what this kind of *muhabbah* should be. Allah ﷻ says:

*Those of faith are overflowing in their love for Allah (2:165)*

What is an indicator of such strong love? Such a lover aches with desire at hearing the name of his beloved. Such a devoted person cannot hesitate when he hears the call to prayer, and will be restless until he has offered the prayer. There is no need to continually wake such a person at Fajr, but he will be quick in getting up and preparing for prayer.

The *ulama* have also written that supplications (*dua*) are another way to judge the level of one's *muhabbah*. A very simple indicator that reveals a person's *muhabbah* is what he continually asks of Allah ﷻ. If he continually asks for wealth and status in this world and for

success in his business, then it becomes fairly obvious that love for the world and its attractions is more dominant in his heart. On the other hand, if he asks for a closer relationship with Allah ﷻ; if he asks Allah's ﷻ pleasure, and if he asks for success on the Day of Judgment, then this is evidence that love for Allah ﷻ is dominant in his heart.

It is a common rule and practice that a person confides his secrets and troubles to those that are closest to him. He will not wander around complaining to people if love for Allah ﷻ is dominant in his heart. He will instead confide his troubles and open his heart to Allah ﷻ in *dua*. Hence, *dua* is a powerful tool for determining whose *muhabbah* is dominant in a person's heart. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah taught us a very powerful *dua*:

*O Allah, I ask of You Your muhabbah, and the muhabbah of those who love You*

This *dua* tells us that we should seek both the *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ and the *muhabbah* of those who are dear to Him, for they will in turn make *dua* for us. This is only a blessing that Allah ﷻ presents to the fortunate. Today there are many who ask for large houses from Allah ﷻ; many who ask for beautiful wives and successful businesses, but today there are very few who ask for the *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ from Allah ﷻ. The people who cry in the nights for the nearness and the pleasure of Allah ﷻ are very few indeed.

Our great elders who have passed on used to cry in *dua* at *tahajjud* (the night vigil) like a child sobs in front of his parents to appease their anger after a scolding. They used to cry so much to Allah ﷻ that their faces were marked with permanent trails like a stream carves a permanent path in an embankment. Such things are only begotten through asking, crying, and hard work. The *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ is our purpose, without which life has no pleasure, much less fulfillment.

Life is empty without attaining closeness to Allah ﷻ, the Eternal. It is useless to tire oneself chasing after worldly pleasures at the expense of this closeness, for everything in this world is temporary and will cease to exist. It has been said that whoever has loved the world and creation, let him know that one day all this will be taken away from him – whoever loves Allah ﷻ, let him know that one day he will be united with Him.

Two things present obstacles in attaining the *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ: glamour and wealth. It is well known to everyone how glamour is an obstacle: we leave the masjid after prayer and our gaze is not in control and we eye forbidden things with lust. Not being able to control our glances is proof that glamour and lust have become a noose for us. Today this is the biggest trial for men.

The second obstacle is wealth, which is a bigger trial for women than for men. Today these two evils have become nooses for our men and women and have distanced them from Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ has ordered in the Holy Quran that we should remove our attention from two things. Allah ﷻ says:

*Strain not your eyes on what We have bestowed on certain classes of them, nor grieve over them, but lower your wing to the believers (15:88)*

As explained by our *ulama*, we have here a direct command to remove our attention from the wealth of this world.

The second order is to remove our gaze from non-*mabram*:

*Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do (24:30)*

Here we see evidence that Muslims have been commanded to remove their attention from two things: wealth and glamour.

Contrary to this, there is one blessing on which Muslims have been ordered to fix their focus on and not lose sight of. Allah ﷻ says:

*And keep your soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face; and let not your eyes pass beyond them, seeking the pomp and glitter of this Life; no obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the remembrance of Us, one who follows his own desires, whose case has gone beyond all bounds (18:28)*

The Holy Quran is giving us a lesson here. It is telling us that we should not concentrate on temporary attractions like wealth and beauty, but focus and sit in the company of those special people who work for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and stay immersed in His Remembrance (*dhikr*). From this we determine that people will stay on the straight path if they keep themselves connected to these kinds of people and not become distracted. We will ourselves start coming near to Allah ﷻ through the blessing of association with such company.

The eyes can be a blessing for a person and lead to progress if they are used in accordance with the *shariah*, and can carve a path to destruction if used in opposition to Allah's ﷻ commands. *Imam-e-Rabbani* Mujaddid Alaf-Thani ؒ said that troubles descend onto a person's heart through his eyes. If the eyes are not within one's control, then neither is the person's heart, and whoever does not have the heart within his control, then his sexual organs will not be in his control. Hence it is essential for a person to be attentive and safeguard himself by lowering his gaze. If *Hadrat* Hawa ؑ, the wife of *Hadrat* Adam ؑ, had not looked upon the tree that Allah ﷻ had forbidden, the desire to eat the fruit would not have even kindled in her heart. If Cane had not stared at Abel's wife, then the desire to be with her would not have driven him to murder his brother. Zulaikha would not be as famous as she is today if she had not looked at *Hadrat* Yusuf ؑ and hence desired him.

The foundation and common ground in all these events has been man's eyes and his inability to control where they gaze. These eyes are what entangle man in trials and tribulation.

On the other hand, if these same eyes are used in accordance with Allah's ﷻ wishes and commands, then the majority of the time their gaze can change a person's direction in life. Allah ﷻ wants us to live in harmony and love towards one another, but our love for Allah ﷻ must be paramount. We should be fully prepared to sacrifice these other objects of desire if at anytime they start taking the place of the love that we have for Allah ﷻ. This is the vital

point that we should understand because this is our purpose and destination, and not the other loves of this world.

Allah ﷻ is merciful and wants that love should grow in our hearts for Him and wants us to come towards Him. It is written in *hadith* that Allah ﷻ says that the believers who love Allah ﷻ are anxious to meet Him, and Allah ﷻ is even more desirous of meeting them. From this we gather that Allah ﷻ loves a person even more that person loves Him. This is the basis for Allah ﷻ saying that His mercy comes running towards the one who comes to Allah ﷻ walking. Hence it is very true that sometimes a person will be immersed in the love of Allah ﷻ from his head to his toe because of this very fact. It is thus further written in *hadith* that such people come so near and become so dear to Allah ﷻ that Allah ﷻ becomes the eyes through which they see; He becomes the ears through which they hear, and the tongue through which they speak. These people must truly be at an honorable and exalted platform for Allah ﷻ to say something so potent. This love for Allah ﷻ is man's purpose in life, without which our religion becomes a lifeless form.

*Shaytan* was such a devout worshipper that he had prostrated on every corner of the Earth. He had more knowledge than any creation at that time, which is why he initially started presenting logic to Allah ﷻ that he was greater than *Hadrat Adam* ﷺ. He also possessed a deep understanding, proven by the fact that he knew Allah's ﷻ mercy still overcomes His wrath no matter how angry He becomes. This is why *Shaytan* was daring enough to ask for respite until the Day of Judgment when Allah ﷻ cast him out in anger. Thus, even in the height of anger Allah ﷻ gave him respite until the Day of Judgment.

The thus write that *Shaytan* was an *abid* (worshipper); he was an *alim* (scholar); he was an *arif* (one given deep understanding), but he was not an *ashiq* (lover), and that is why he fell. If *Shaytan* had been an *ashiq* then he would not have hesitated upon receiving the command from Allah ﷻ to bow down to *Hadrat Adam* ﷺ. *Hafiz ibn Qayyam* ﷺ says that the only reason for *Shaytan's* downfall was the absence of this vital *muhabbah* for Allah ﷻ.

This anecdote illustrates the extreme importance of *muhabbah* for Allah ﷻ. This is a valuable gift that has to be sought after; that has to be begged for from Allah ﷻ so that our hearts drown in this love. Allah ﷻ is extremely selective when it comes to His love. The Messenger ﷺ of Allah said that he is the most selective out of the children of *Hadrat Adam* ﷺ, and Allah ﷻ is even more selective than himself (the Messenger ﷺ). This is why we must be very careful that the *muhabbah* for Allah ﷻ be paramount in our hearts, and that we purify our hearts from all other loves that threaten to conflict with it. It has been said that *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ becomes forbidden (*haram*) on a heart that is immersed in the love of the world. The love of the world is the foundation of all ills.

Allah ﷻ is so selective that He even tests His dearest subjects in the loves that He has allowed. One kind are the common people like us, but those nearest to Allah ﷻ are sometimes tried and tested through that which Allah ﷻ has allowed, like the love between a father and son.

Allah ﷻ gave *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ a son in his old age, whom he would often look upon with fondness and love. Allah ﷻ decided to test *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ in this very love that he

had for his son, and so ordered *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ to sacrifice *Hadrat Ismail* ﷺ as proof to what *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ held dearer in his heart.

*Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ woke up the morning of the sacrifice and said to his son, “I see in my vision that I offer you in sacrifice: now see what is your view.” The *ulama* have elaborated here that *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ did not ask his son what he *thought* about Allah’s ﷻ order, but what his position was on this matter. By this he meant that he wanted his son to cooperate but he would be sacrificed regardless. However, the son was the son of a prophet and said, “O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me practicing patience.”

*Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ sharpened a dagger and both parent and son set off. Along the way *Shaytan* tried to dissuade and instill fear in the parent and the son but was unsuccessful. This is the designated place where pilgrims today pelt stones at *Shaytan* during the Hajj pilgrimage as these prophets had done.

Having succeeded against *Shaytan* at this point, they reached the location of the sacrifice. The Holy Quran says that both father and son were ready and determined, and *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ laid his son down on the stone slab. *Hadith* elaborates further that *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ blindfolded himself for fear that his hand would become weak at the sight of his son’s blood. The stage was set for the sacrifice to Allah ﷻ.

However, Allah ﷻ had never truly wished that *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ should sacrifice his son, but only wished to test *Hadrat Ibrahim*’s ﷺ love. Therefore, *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ proceeded to cut with the dagger but Allah ﷻ saved *Hadrat Ismail* ﷺ and placed a lamb in his place. Allah ﷻ says:

*And We ransomed him with a momentous sacrifice (37:107)*

Allah ﷻ salutes *Hadrat Ibrahim* ﷺ in the Holy Quran for this great sacrifice and was so pleased that He established this sacrificial ritual on all the Muslims until the Day of Judgment. This is why Muslims throughout the world sacrifice animals after the glorious pilgrimage of Hajj to commemorate *Hadrat Ibrahim*’s ﷺ noble sacrifice to Allah ﷻ.

*Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ held tremendous love in his heart for his son *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ. We are told that Allah ﷻ had given *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ a fraction of the beauty of Paradise, and the women that Zulaikha had invited cut their fingers instead of their fruits they were in such awe of him. This is an important point because it takes a great deal not to be able to tell if one is cutting one’s own finger or a fruit. Such was the awe and fixation that he inspired. Hence *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ had good reason to love his son and be proud.

At one time during his life, *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ looked upon his son with great love in his heart and Allah ﷻ decided to take a test based on this one look. *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ was therefore separated from his father through the vile scheme of his brothers who told the father that a wolf had eaten *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ. *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ had a brother named Bin Yamin, as the two were from the same mother. Bin Yamin was similar in appearance to *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ and so *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ would sometimes be consoled from his lost son’s memory by looking at Bin Yamin.

It so happened that these brothers went to Egypt to ask for food in the years when a great famine gripped the land. *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ had become the Grand Minister after years in prison and now controlled the granaries. He wanted to keep his brother Bin Yamin with him and so slipped one of the king's cups in the brothers' baggage and used this as an excuse to hold him as a thief. The brothers returned and reported all that had happened, saying that even *Hadrat Yusuf's* ﷺ brother turned out to be wicked.

By His wise and supreme plan, Allah ﷻ not only took away *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ from his father, but also took the son who bore a little resemblance to him. Furthermore, *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ wept so bitterly that Allah ﷻ even took away the sight with which he used to look fondly at *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ. He would remain in such grief that one day the brothers said that he should go to Egypt himself to verify whether they were telling the truth. However, *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ said that he would be patient and confide and register his complaints only with Allah ﷻ.

Allah's ﷻ mercy overcame all when *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ said this after having his dearest sons and even his eyesight taken away. At the point when everything he loved was taken away from him, *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ did not turn to anyone but Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ had not wanted to separate the father from the sons he loved but merely wished to test *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ, and so the stage for the reunification of all parties was set since the father had proved successful.

The brothers asked the Grand Minister for mercy and charity when they returned to Egypt again asking for food, for they had not brought sufficient goods to trade. Seeing his brothers beg in this way, *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ pitied them because they too were sons of a prophet of Allah ﷻ and so he asked:

*Know you how you dealt with Yusuf? (12:89)*

The brothers were astonished and asked:

*Are you indeed Yusuf? (12:90)*

*Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ replied:

*I am Yusuf, and this is my brother: behold, he that is righteous and patient, never will Allah suffer the reward to be lost of those who do right (12:91)*

*Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ then dispatched an attendant to take one of his shirts to his father *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ. This man had barely started traveling and was still hundreds of miles distant when *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ said as documented in the Holy Quran:

*I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf (12:94)*

Such is the glory and magnificence of Allah ﷻ. *Hadrat Yaqub* ﷺ was unable to sense his son's presence when *Hadrat Yusuf* ﷺ was only a little distance away in a well but now he

could smell his son from hundreds of miles away because Allah ﷻ willed it. Moreover, Allah ﷻ returned *Hadrat* Yaqub's ﷻ sight as the shirt was cast over his eyes, and reunited father and son in Egypt.

Allah ﷻ had decided to test his dear prophet over one look of love, and *Hadrat* Yaqub ﷻ emerged successful in demonstrating that he held love for Allah ﷻ superior to everything else. Allah ﷻ had no purpose in separating the father from his two sons or in taking away *Hadrat* Yaqub's ﷻ eyesight, but this was all part of the test. Consequently Allah ﷻ returned everything that had been taken once *Hadrat* Yaqub ﷻ passed this test.

Here we find out that Allah ﷻ sometimes tries His nearest and dearest even with love that He has permitted. If such is the case with permitted love, then we can just imagine Allah's ﷻ hurt and anger at the loves that He has expressly forbidden. It is written in *hadith* that Allah ﷻ likes two kinds of people. One is a person among an army returning from battle that stops to rest and he alone gets up to pray *tahajjud* while the rest are sleeping. The other is the man lying in bed with his wife who gets out of bed for *tahajjud* despite being allowed to stay with his wife if he so wishes. It is further written that Allah ﷻ boasts of these peoples' intense love to the angels – a love so powerful that they stand in prayer and overpower their sleep and desire for rest.

These examples from the Holy Quran and *hadith* prove that Allah ﷻ wishes that His love should be paramount within us and superior to all others. Allah ﷻ will draw such people closer to Himself and raise them even higher in rank on the Day of Judgment because they sacrifice their wants and desires in this life for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

*Hadrat* Maryam's ﷻ mother had taken an oath to give her offspring to the service of Allah ﷻ even before the birth of any such child. When this child turned out to be a girl, the mother gave her to the mosque, entrusting the child to the care of *Hadrat* Zakariya ﷻ. Here *Hadrat* Maryam ﷻ spent her days in the worship of Allah ﷻ, and a time came when she reached puberty when her mother and relatives began thinking about her marriage. They approached her with their desire for her marriage but she in turn said that she would prefer to be spared the responsibility of marriage since she had already been promised and given to the service of Allah ﷻ. She would hence like to spend her time only in worship and remembrance.

*Hadrat* Maryam ﷻ sacrificed her permissible right of marriage for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and this appealed to Allah ﷻ so much that He gave her a son without a husband. Moreover Allah ﷻ made both mother and child one of His Signs as documented in the Holy Quran and named an entire *surah* after the noble mother. It is also written in *hadith* that Allah ﷻ will wed her to His Messenger ﷺ in the Hereafter.

When *Hadrat* Khadija ﷺ was fatally ill, the Messenger ﷺ of Allah told her to give his greetings to his wives in Paradise if she happens to go to Paradise soon. *Hadrat* Khadija ﷺ was astonished and said, "Who are your wives in Paradise when I am your first wife?" the Messenger ﷺ of Allah said, "I have two wives in Paradise who have reached there before me. One is Pharaoh's wife Aasiya ﷻ who accepted Islam and Allah ﷻ promised to make my wife; and the other is Maryam."



*Hadrat Maryam* ﷺ had suppressed and sacrificed her permissible right of marriage for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and this pleased Allah ﷻ so much that He gave her a son without a husband and raised her to the highest status of being the wife of the Prophet ﷺ in Paradise. Moreover Allah ﷻ preserved her praises in the Holy Quran until the Day of Judgment. A higher honor cannot be bestowed upon a woman.

*Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ was a prophet of Allah ﷻ who had been given a good wife and children, and wealth in the form of orchards. Once *Shaytan* said in the presence of Allah ﷻ: “This man only worships You because You have given him every blessing he could ever want. If these blessings are taken away then You will see him not so much a devout worshipper.” Hence Allah ﷻ gave *Shaytan* some freedom to do as he pleased to test the love and patience of His prophet.

The next day *Shaytan* set fire to all of *Hadrat Ayyub*’s ﷺ orchards so that all was ruined. He then appeared to *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ in the form of a farmer and said, “You spend all your time in worship to a Lord who has done this to you? What use are all your prayers and remembrance?” *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ replied, “Be gone for you seem like *Shaytan* to me,” and returned to his worship and prayer.

*Hadrat Ayyub*’s ﷺ wife and children were seated eating their dinner when *Shaytan* caused the roof to collapse on top of them, killing them all. *Shaytan* then came in the form of a man and said to *Hadrat Ayyub*’s ﷺ, “You spend all your time in worship to a Lord who has taken away your precious wife and children? I saw that your son’s brain had exited through his nose because of the severe impact.” Here *Shaytan* was trying his hardest to touch a painful nerve in *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ and make him ungrateful to Allah ﷻ. However, *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ again replied, “Be gone, for you seem like *Shaytan* to me.”

The next day when *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ was praying, *Shaytan* came and fanned the flame of a nearby lamp. The clothes quickly caught fire and soon all of *Hadrat Ayyub*’s ﷺ body was engulfed in flames and burned. His body hence became infected and soon infested with all sorts of mites and similar diseased insects. No portion of the body was spared, and *hadith* tells us that this affliction lasted for eighteen years.

*Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ lost his livelihood and his family, and now he lost the one thing that remained: his health. *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ had such stolid patience that he would pick up an insect if it fell from one of his wounds and put it back in, saying “Why have you fallen when Allah ﷻ has made my body your food?” It is written that *Hadrat Jibril* ﷺ came to *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ and greeted him, but *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ did not reply. He repeated himself a second time and *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ returned the greeting. *Hadrat Jibril* ﷺ asked why he had not replied the first time and *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ said, “At that time one of these leeches was feeding on a part of my body. I feared lest it would stop if I replied and so I would be held accountable as to why I did not let this insect feed. I returned your greeting when it had stopped feeding.”

Allah ﷻ was so pleased with *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ that Allah ﷻ healed him completely after eighteen years in this bitter test. The Holy Quran says:

*We found him among those who show patience...a blessed servant (38:44)*

*Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ was indeed exalted for the Lord of the Universe to say something as potent as this. When someone emerges successful from a test, Allah ﷻ does not merely return what was taken away as a result of that test but multiplies that more than we can imagine. Hence the Holy Quran says that Allah ﷻ returned much more than what had been taken away: *Hadrat Ayyub* ﷺ was thus given more wives and children and orchards than he had had previously. The goal of a test is never to rob a person of blessings, but to see whether he can prove successful: Allah ﷻ multiplies those blessings when someone emerges successful from such a test. Allah ﷻ never lets anyone's sacrifice go to waste, but multiplies it many fold.

Allah ﷻ will shower us with blessings when we make Him our sole purpose and His love the only love of our lives. Allah ﷻ wants us to love him foremost of all and live our lives according to what He ordains. We should spend our lives in His *muhabbah* and ask for this blessing from Him.

*Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ said that one day the heat was so severe in his town that even the birds were seeking shelter under the leaves. No human or creature was seen stirring that afternoon because of the heat and it seemed that the town was being cooked in a furnace.

*Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ continued that he had to step outside on an urgent matter and he saw a handicapped young man who did not have the use of his legs, was pushing himself along the street by his hands on a cart. His face was burned red and he was soaked in perspiration.

They greeted each other and *Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ asked where he was going in such weather. The young man replied that he had started traveling from his country with the intention of Hajj. *Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ said, "Why don't you rest at my house and then resume your journey in the evening when the weather is cooler?" The young man replied, "Malik ibn Dinar, you enjoy the blessing of being able to walk, but I have to drag myself by my arms on this cart. Therefore I do not want to stop anywhere lest the season of Hajj starts and I am not able to reach my destination." Saying this he again started on his way and so *Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ called after him, "Young man! Rest at my house for a little while and I can arrange for a ride for you so you may travel at ease and reach in plenty of time." The young man suddenly became angry and said, "Up until now I thought you were an intelligent person, but now I realize that you are not as I had assumed. When a slave angers his master and makes the intention that he needs to win back his master's pleasure, does it suit him to walk or ride on a carriage in luxury? I am that slave who has angered his Master and is going to beg His forgiveness. It does not become me to ride on any vehicle but to drag myself as I have been doing." The young man thus continued on his way and *Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ was left marveling on the intense level of *muhabbah* for Allah ﷻ in this man's heart.

It so happened that *Hadrat Malik Ibn Dinar* ﷺ also went to Hajj that year. After the ritual of the stoning of *Shaytan*, he noticed that a large crowd had gathered nearby and so he asked some people why people were here. He was told that people were listening in awe to a

young man's *dua*, and so *Hadrat* Malik Ibn Dinar رضي الله عنه edged through the crowd and noticed the same young man who he had talked with in his hometown.

The young man was dressed in *ihram* and supplicating thus: "O Allah ﷻ, I am one of Your handicapped servants whom You have blessed with being able to come to Your House. Most people come walking but I have dragged myself with my arms. Only with Your blessing and mercy did I perform *tawaf* and kiss the Black Stone; only with Your blessing was I able to cast stones at *Shaytan* and go to Arafat. Now these people will perform sacrifices to You but You know that I am poor and have nothing except the *ihram* that I am wearing. O Allah ﷻ I want to give my life in Your Name." *Hadrat* Malik Ibn Dinar رضي الله عنه said that this young man said this with such love and devotion that he recited the *kalima* and Allah ﷻ took his life, thus accepting his sacrifice.

When we go to Hajj we become satisfied with sacrificing animals but these special people of Allah ﷻ present their lives in His Name. We should also desire such *muhabbah* from Allah ﷻ so that all forms of worship become easy for us. We should cultivate such *muhabbah* in our hearts that prostrating before Allah ﷻ should become joyous for us; waking in the early hours of the morning should become easy for us, and reading the Holy Quran should become easy and pleasurable for us.

Today the sad state of our prayers is such that we stand before Allah ﷻ but our hearts and minds are everywhere else except in that prayer. What sort of prayers are these in which our minds are on our business and our family and friends, everywhere except on Allah ﷻ? Let it not be that these prayers are discarded on the Day of Judgment like garbage and Allah ﷻ say to us that these prayers are worthless because we could not even concentrate on Him even when standing in prayer to Him. Our hearts should not be so immersed in this world that we forget our Creator even when we are supposed to be in prayer before Him. We should desire such *muhabbah* of Allah ﷻ that we forget all else when we hear the beginning of the call to prayer and focus only on Allah ﷻ. May Allah ﷻ grant us the ability of praying with such concentration and grant us the desire and *muhabbah* to read the Holy Quran.

Blessed are those children who have memorized the Holy Quran, for on them and their parents are the special blessings and mercies of Allah ﷻ. It is written in the books that a *hafiz* went to his wife on their wedding night and both decided to pray two *rakats* in gratitude to Allah ﷻ so that their life together would start on the strong footing of requesting Allah ﷻ for guidance. The wife finished quickly but her husband would not stop reciting the Glorious Quran. He became so absorbed in his recital that he completely forgot his wife and their special night, so much so that when he ended the prayer it was time for Fajr.

He was shocked because he now realized that his wife had been waiting all this time. He begged her forgiveness and promised to return that night, and so went to the masjid. His parents asked him about his first night and at his hesitation realized that he had not even properly met his wife and so became worried, asking the reason. His friends also teased him on this very issue. At that moment this *hafiz* said, "I swear by Allah ﷻ that I made intention for just two *rakats* and became so absorbed that I did not realize the passing of time. When I ended my prayer I noticed it was time for Fajr."

It is written about *Hadrat* Imam Asim Kufi رضي الله عنه that his mouth used to smell of musk and people would be fascinated. One of his students asked, “What fragrance to you use in your mouth that people are fascinated and just want to keep sitting in your presence?” *Hadrat* Imam Asim Kufi رضي الله عنه replied, “I swear by Allah سبحانه that I do not use any fragrance in my mouth.” The student continued, “Then why is it that we sense an incredible fragrance from your mouth that we have not smelled before?” Asim Kufi رضي الله عنه replied, “I have spent seventy years of my life reading the Holy Quran in the Mosque of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Once I was blessed with seeing the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم of Allah and he said that he was very pleased with my recital and devotion to the Holy Quran. He then kissed me on my mouth and then I woke up.”

The light of the Holy Quran emanates from the mouth of the person who reads the Holy Quran. The angels descend and put their mouths close to the mouth of the one reading the Holy Quran so that the glorious light of this fascinating Book may enter inside them. Hence blessed are those people who read and recite this Holy Book day and night and memorize it. May Allah سبحانه bless those who have memorized the Holy Quran and make them a means of salvation for their parents and an example for all of us. Such children should be left in the care of their teachers for some additional time to perfect and strengthen the memorization. It is the responsibility of the parents that they do not neglect the child’s further study of the Holy Quran merely on the assumption that he has now become a *hafiz* and so needs nothing further. Such children have to be protected from bad company and influences otherwise their memorization will suffer and eventually mean nothing. If these children fall into bad company now and become like other lost children the parents will be responsible and therefore held accountable.

Whereas parents of *huffaz* are to be congratulated, they also have to be reminded that they have an enormous responsibility to keep this child in further study so that his memorization remains strong. These children have to be provided with a good environment and influences so that they remain connected with their teachers and other scholars and therefore on the path of the righteous. Where these parents have made sacrifices to have their children memorize the Holy Quran, it would be even more beneficial if they send their child to study the religious books of *hadith* and *fiqh* to become a scholar of Islam.

May Allah سبحانه accept the diligence and dedication of these children, their parents, and their teachers. It is an incredible miracle and blessing of Allah سبحانه that our children are memorizing His Glorious Book: there was a time when children would have to be sent to Pakistan to learn this Glorious Book but the time has come when such training is available in America. May Allah سبحانه bless and safeguard the institutions of learning and accept the hard work of those who strive to establish them. May Allah سبحانه safeguard all of us against evil and keep us on the straight path to His happiness and pleasure, *Amin*.

