

The **Inevitable Journey**
الرحلة المحتومة ١

المرض، الأكارم وعظات
Sickness
Regulations & Exhortations
2ND EDITION



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Muhammad al-Jibaly

مَشُورَاتُ الْكُتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*Bismi Allahi Alrrahmani Alrraheemi
In the name of Allah, the most
Beneficent, the most Merciful*



The Inevitable Journey – Part I
Sickness: Regulations & Exhortations

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿وَالَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ﴾

﴿وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ﴾

﴿وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ هُوَ يَشْفِينِ﴾

﴿وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ﴾

(الشعراء ٧٧-٨١)

«Indeed, they (the idols) are enemies to me—except the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and it is He Who guides me; and it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink; and when I am ill, it is He Who cures me; and it is He Who causes me to die and then will bring me back to life.»

[Ash-Shu'arā 26:77-81]

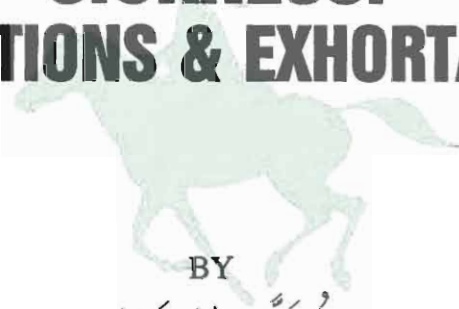
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THE INEVITABLE JOURNEY - PART I

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أَحْكَامُهُ وَعِظَاتُهُ

**SICKNESS:
REGULATIONS & EXHORTATIONS**



BY

محمد الجبالي

MUHAMMAD AL-JIBĀLĪ

مَنْشُورَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ
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PRELUDE

Introduction

Al-ḥamdu lillāh. Indeed, all glory and praise is due to Allāh. We glorify and praise Him, and we ask Him for help and forgiveness. In Allāh we seek refuge from the evils of ourselves and from our wrong doings. He whom Allāh guides shall not be misguided, and he whom He misguides shall never be guided.

I bear witness that there is no true god except Allāh, alone without any partners, and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His 'Abd and Messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ

مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ آل عمران ١٠٢

«Believers! Fear and worship Allāh as He deserves, and do not die except as Muslims.»¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ النساء ١

«People! Revere your Lord who has created you from one soul, and created from it its mate, and from these two spread forth multitudes of men and women; and fear Allāh through whom you demand [your mutual rights], and [revere the ties of] the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-watchful over you.»²

1 *Āl 'Imrān* 3:102.

2 *An-Nisā'* 4:1.

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۗ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ۝» الأحزاب ٧٠-٧١

«Believers! Revere Allāh, and [always] speak the truth. He will then direct you to do righteous deeds and will forgive your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger has indeed achieved a great victory.»¹

Verily, the best words are those of Allāh (ﷻ); the best guidance is that of Muḥammad (ﷺ); the worst matters [in creed or worship] are those innovated [by people], for every such innovated matter is a *bid'ah*, and every *bid'ah* is an act of misguidance that deserves the Fire.²

Our *Da'wah* and Objectives

Our goal in this and our other works is to propagate the True *Da'wah* that derives from the Book of Allāh (ﷻ) and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (ﷺ). Propagating this *Da'wah* is a duty that every Muslim should cherish. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝» آل عمران ١٠٤

«Let there arise from you a group of people inviting to all that is good (*Islām*), enjoining what is right (according to *Islām*), and forbidding what is wrong

1 *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:70-71.

2 These opening paragraphs are a translation of *Khuṭbat ul-Ḥājah* (the Sermon of Need) with which the Messenger (ﷺ) used to start his speeches and which he was keen to teach to his companions.

(according to *Islām*). These are the ones who will achieve success.»¹

This *Da'wah* may be summarized in two words: *taṣfiyah* (cleansing and purification) and *tarbiyah* (cultivation and education). Allāh (ﷻ) refers to this in the following:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾ الجمعة ٢

«He it is who has sent unto the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves to convey unto them His messages, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom - whereas before that they had been, most obviously, in clear misguidance.»²

Propagating the True *Da'wah* must then be pursued through purifying *Islām* from unfounded beliefs and practices, and working patiently to assist the Muslims abide by the true and purified religion. This must be done at various levels as follows:

1. We must uphold the sublime *Qur'ān* and the Prophet's authentic *Sunnah*, and comprehend them in accordance with the understanding and practice of the righteous *Salaf*. This is Allāh's (ﷻ) command, as in the following:

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ

1 *Āl 'Imrān* 3:104.

2 *Al-Jumu'ah* 62:2.

مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾ النساء

«If anyone contends with the Messenger after the Guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell: What an evil abode!»¹

And He (ﷺ) says:

﴿فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا﴾ البقرة ١٣٧

«So if they believe as you believe², they are indeed on the right path.»³

2. We must enlighten and educate the Muslims, urging them to comply with the true *Dīn*, act according to its teachings, and adorn themselves with its virtues and ethics. This will ensure Allāh's acceptance, through which they will realize happiness and glory, as indicated in the following:

﴿وَالْعَصْرُ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ﴾ العصر ٣-١

«By the passing time, man is indeed in loss, except those who believe, do good deeds, enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience (in adversity).»⁴

3. We must caution the Muslims and exhort them to absolve their lives of any thoughts alien to the pure and essential tenets of *Islām*, such as *shirk*, *bid'ahs*, or philosophy. This is a duty that Ailān (ﷺ)

1 *An-Nisā* 4:115.

2 The address here is to the companions of the Messenger (ﷺ).

3 *Al-Baqarah* 2:137.

4 *Al-'Asr* 103:1-3.

enjoins on us by saying:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾

المائدة ٢

«Help one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sinning and transgression.»¹

4. We must help cleanse the *Sunnah* of weak and fabricated narrations. The weak reports and unfounded beliefs have marred the clarity of *Islām*, preventing the Muslims' advancement. This duty is of such absolute vitality that the Messenger (ﷺ) praised those who perform it by saying:

«This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy ones of every generation - they will expel from it the alterations made by those going beyond bounds, the false claims of the liars, and the false interpretations of the ignorant.»²

5. Guided by the *Islām*ic principles³, we must strive to revive the unobstructed *Islām*ic thought, and oppose stubborn adherence to *mathhabs* and prejudiced loyalty to parties. Neglecting this in the past has caused rust to dwell on the hearts and minds of Muslims, diverting them from the pure original sources of *Islām*, and causing them to deviate from the honest *Islām*ic brotherhood called to by Allāh (ﷻ):

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾ آل عمران ١٠٣

«And hold fast all together, by the rope of Allāh, and

1 *Al-Mā'idah* 5:2.

2 Authentic - Reported by Ibn 'Adiyy and others.

3 These principles are described in point "1" above.

be not divided among yourselves.»¹

And by His Messenger (ﷺ):

«Be, worshippers of Allāh, one brethren.»²

6. We must help provide realistic *Islāmic* solutions to contemporary problems, and strive to resume a true *Islāmic* way of life and establish a true *Islāmic* society governed by Allāh's law. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَنْ أَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ المائدة ٤٩

«Hence, judge between them in accordance with what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their errant views.»³

We call upon all the Muslims to support us in carrying out this noble trust. This will surely elevate and honor them and spread the eternal message of *Islām* all over the earth, as is Allāh's true promise:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظَاهِرَهُ عَلَىٰ الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾ الصف ٩

«He it is who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, in order to make it prevail over all [false] religion, however hateful this may be to the *mushriks*.»⁴

1 *Āl 'Imrān* 3:103.

2 *Al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*.

3 *Al-Mā'idah* 5:49.

4 *Aṣ-Ṣaff* 61:9.

General Approach in This Work

A large number of *Islāmic* writings in recent times lack the correctness and preciseness that are expected in a true *Islāmic* approach. They suffer from two major problems:

1. Unconcern about the importance of relying only on authentic evidence, particularly in quoting *ḥadīths*. Thus some conclusions that they reach, and some principles that they establish are, in the least, of doubtful validity.
2. Replacing the glorious thought and sound understanding of the *Salaf* (ﷺ) with inferior opinions and speculations of later scholars.

These problems have led to the following serious consequences:

- ▶ A deformation in some of the fundamental beliefs for the majority of Muslims, including many who are regarded as scholars.
- ▶ Practicing *Islām* in a way that conflicts with the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

Through the ages, a number of true '*ulamā*' have directed their efforts to correcting these problems through reviving the authentic *Sunnah* and fighting *bid'āhs*. Their efforts have always been fiercely countered by advocates of *bid'āhs*. But it is not possible to stop the truth from spreading, and Allāh's light will surely prevail. These '*ulamā*' (may Allāh bless them and reward their efforts) have produced marvelous writings rectifying the *Islāmic* beliefs and practices.

Very little of these great writings have been translated to English, or have been resorted to in English writings on *Islām*. Thus a good deal of the existing *Islāmic* literature in English suffers from the two problems cited earlier. It also suffers from additional problems, mainly:

3. Many writers have had a shallow *Islāmic* education. They had to self-educate themselves to meet the requirements of *da'wah* in the West. But their education has not been, in general, adequate enough to qualify them to write on *Islām*.
4. Some non-Muslim scholars and orientalists have volunteered to write on *Islām*. Despite their wide academic knowledge, their writings on *Islām* are usually charged with obvious fallacies and prejudiced misinformation.

These problems have caused a further deviation from the truth in many of today's English writings and talks on *Islām*.

This publication is, therefore, a humble response to our realization of a great responsibility: the responsibility to help bring forth, before the general English speaking public, writings that refine the *Islāmic* concepts from the above problems and present *Islām* pure and simple, as close as possible to the way that it was understood and practiced by its early good pioneers - the *Salaf*.

Translating and Transliterating Arabic

A serious attempt has been made to minimize the use of Arabic terms. This is a frequently neglected service to the English speaking reader. Transliterated Arabic terms are used in the following two situations only:

- a) When no English expression is found that can reflect the same meaning as the original term.
- b) When it is judged that an Arabic term is of such importance that it is essential to familiarize the readers with it.

At the end of this book, we have included a glossary defining common Arabic terms that fulfill the above criteria, as well as an index of the terms that are more pertinent to this current book, indicating the page on which they have been defined.

Except for proper nouns, transliterated Arabic terms are *italicized*. In general, the rules of English pronunciation can be applied. The following table includes additional symbols employed in this book to help pronounce the Arabic terms.

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
ā, Ā	(ا) <i>Alif</i> (long vowel a)	Mostly: <u>M</u> an, <u>s</u> ad. At times: F <u>a</u> ther, h <u>a</u> rd, g <u>o</u> d.
ū, Ū	(و) <i>Wāw</i> (long vowel u)	<u>R</u> oot, <u>s</u> oup, <u>f</u> lute.
ī, Ī	(ي) <i>Yā'</i> (long vowel i)	<u>S</u> eed, <u>l</u> ean, <u>p</u> iece, <u>r</u> ec <u>i</u> ve.
'	(ء) <i>Hamzah</i>	The first consonant vocal sound uttered when saying: <u>a</u> t, <u>i</u> t or <u>o</u> h.
Th, th	(ث) <i>Thā'</i>	<u>T</u> hree, mo <u>th</u> .
H, ḥ	(ح) <i>Ḥā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the lower throat, below "h". Resembles the sound produced after swallowing.
Kh, kh	(خ) <i>Khā'</i>	No equivalent. Produced in the back of the mouth and top of the throat.
<u>Th</u> , <u>th</u>	(ذ) <i>Thāl</i>	<u>T</u> here, mo <u>th</u> er.
Ṣ, ṣ	(ص) <i>Ṣād</i>	A deeper "s" sound. Somewhat close to the "sc" in "m <u>u</u> sc <u>l</u> e".
Ḍ, ḍ	(ض) <i>Ḍād</i>	Sounds deeper than a "d". Produced by touching the tongue to the mouth's roof.
Ṭ, ṭ	(ط) <i>Ṭah</i>	Similar but deeper than a "t".

Symbol	Stands for	English Equivalent Sounds
Z, z	(ظ) <i>Zah</i>	A deeper <i>thāl</i> , produced by touching the tip of the tongue to the back of the front teeth.
	(ع) <i>'Ayn</i>	Produced in the bottom of the throat, underneath "h".
Gh, gh	(غ) <i>Ghayn</i>	A gurgling sound produced in the back of the mouth, just above the <i>khā</i> . Similar to the "R" in some french accents.
Q, q	(ق) <i>Qāf</i>	Somewhat similar to the "c" in "coffee".

Translating and Referencing *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*

The *Qur'ān* contains Allāh's exact words. These words cannot be exactly translated into other languages because of possible misinterpretations and limited human understanding. It is best to translate the meanings as understood by the Muslim scholars. This is what is attempted here. When an *āyah* is cited, the Arabic text is quoted first, followed, between double angle quotation marks («»), by the English meaning in **boldface**. The meaning is extracted from books of *tafsīr* and from accessible translations.

The location of a *Qur'ānic* citation is specified in a footnote. It provides the name of the *sūrah* followed by its number and the number(s) of the *āyah*(s) cited.

In general, the Arabic text of a cited *ḥadīth* is not provided. This is based on a general agreement among the '*ulamā*' permitting relating *ḥadīths* by meaning. The meaning of a *ḥadīth* is included, in **boldface**, between single angle quotation marks (◊).

A footnote normally specifies the location of a cited *ḥadīth* in the

Hadīth compilations. The footnote indicates as well its degree of authenticity and the names of scholars who made such judgement. If a *ḥadīth* is narrated by al-Bukhārī or Muslim, its authenticity is taken for granted.

Notable Utterances

Out of love, appreciation, gratitude or other noble feelings, a Muslim is encouraged to utter certain phrases at the mention of Allāh, His messengers, the angels, the *ṣaḥābah*, or other righteous Muslims. We present these phrases in condensed Arabic calligraphy as follows:

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
سُبْحَانَكَ يَا أَعْلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ	Allāh's Name	<i>Subḥānahū wa ta'ālā.</i>	He is exalted above weakness and indignity.
عَظِيمٌ	Allāh's Name	'Azza wa-jall.	May He be hollowed and glorified.
عَظِيمٌ	Allāh's Name	<i>Jalla jalāluh.</i>	May His glory be hollowed.
سَلَامٌ	Muḥammad and other prophets	<i>Ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i> ¹ .	May Allāh's peace and praise be on him.
سَلَامٌ	Prophets and angels	'Alayh is-Salām.	Peace be on him.
سَرِيحٌ	A male companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhu.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with him.

1 Uttering this is sometimes described as, "saying *ṣalāh* upon the Messenger".

Phrase	Mentioned with	Transliteration	Meaning
ﷻ	A female companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhā.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with her.
ﷻ	Two companion	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhumā.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷻ	More than two companions	<i>Raḍiya 'Llāhu 'anhum.</i>	May Allāh be pleased with them.
ﷻ	A past scholar or righteous Muslim.	<i>Raḥimahu 'Llāh.</i>	May Allāh have mercy on him.

When coming across any of these symbols, the reader is advised to utter the complete phrase in order to obtain the reward of saying the appropriate *thikr* or *du'ā'*.

PREFACE

The Inevitable Journey

We inevitably pass through the route starting in this life, and extending into the grave, before our final abode in the hereafter. In the process, we encounter stages of sickness, death, and the intermediate life in the grave (*al-Barzakh*). These are the subjects with which “the Inevitable Journey” deals over a sequence of four titles:

I. Sickness: Regulations & Exhortations

II. The *Islāmic* Will & Testament

III. Funeral Regulations

IV. Life in *al-Barzakh*

We present the subject matter of this series from the authentic texts of the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah*, guided in their explanation by the understanding of eminent ‘*ulamā*’. We strive to eliminate all elements of superstition and falsehood that have traditionally crept into this side of the human life in various cultures.

All books in this series are meant to be useful handbooks in their subject matter. Thus, whenever possible, the material is presented in table format for easy reference, discussion, and study. Supplication are generally presented with the Arabic text, transliteration, and English meanings.

This Book

This book is the first in the series.¹ It deals with the subject that afflicts the human being, in various forms, from birth until death. It

1 Chronologically, though, this book was completed after Part IV (*Life in al-Barzakh*).

strikes as light as a simple cold or allergy, and as hard as a plague or cancer. It keeps the human being under check, reminding him of his weakness, and giving him a chance to turn to the One Who possesses to afflict and cure. It deals with sickness, its regulations, and lessons associated with it.

Despite its great importance to the Muslims, it is hard to find this subject all compiled in one book, not only in English, but in Arabic as well. We thank Allāh (ﷻ) for facilitating this for us.

The idea of this book started from *al-Ifādah limā Jā'a fil Maraḍi wal-'Iyādah* (The Benefits in What Has Been Reported Concerning Sickness and Visiting) by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī. Sensing the need for a book like it in English, and realizing its limited coverage and that it contains a good number of unauthentic reports, it was decided to use it only as a starting point for a comprehensive manual on the subject of sickness.

In compiling this book, we have used other references dealing with various aspects of the subject of sickness, as is indicated in the list of references in the back of this book.

It is to be noted that, in the chapter on treatment, we tried to cover the most important forms of treatment reported in the *Sunnah*, without attempting to encompass all. The reason for this is that there are translations available of “the Prophet's Medicine”, which is a part of Ibn ul-Qayyim's, “*Zād ul-Ma'ād*”. That book is quite encompassing in this regard, but care should be taken to avoid its numerous unauthentic reports.

We have included a chapter on the subject of *ruqyah*, which is a great source of misconception and confusion in the minds of many people. Its misunderstanding has led many people to fall victims to magicians, sorcerers, and ignorant soothsayers. Therefore, we have dealt with that subject from both practical and creed-related aspects.

The last chapter comprises a detailed discussion of the subject of disabilities. In addition to being strongly related to sickness, the discussions in that chapter are much needed by multitudes of disabled Muslims.

An Important Warning

Many situations and concepts discussed in this series (the Inevitable Journey) relate to *ghayb*. In dealing with such issues, we should apply the following important rules:

- a) Any matter of *ghayb* that is mentioned in the *Qur'ān* or authentic *ḥadīths* should be accepted and believed in without any doubt.
- b) The texts concerning *ghayb* have real meanings that are within the human reason, and at least the versed Muslim '*ulamā'* understand them—otherwise, Allāh would not have addressed the people with them.
- c) Unless there is an authentic evidence to the contrary, *ghayb* incidents should be understood and interpreted in accordance with the literal apparent meanings of the texts.
- d) The physical laws of this life cannot always be applied to matters of *ghayb*. So, instead of hastily concluding that a particular incident does not make sense, we should realize that it is governed by different laws and should be accepted without *kayf*—without imposing our limited knowledge attempting to interpret or misinterpret it.

We ask Allāh, the All Mighty, to guide all the Muslims to His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, in all the affairs of their life—He is All-Hearing, and He answers the supplications.

Acknowledgements

All praise and thanks are offered to our Lord (ﷻ) who facilitated completing this work. May He further reward all the Muslims who helped and supported this effort in various ways. In particular, may Allāh (ﷻ) reward Usāmah 'Itānī for translating parts of the subject of

disabilities, Jād Sylvester for reviewing an early manuscript of the book, and ‘Abdullāh al-Jibālī who typed some of the Arabic text and designed the cover.

We ask Allāh (ﷻ) to make this humble effort helpful and fruitful to the Muslims, forgive our shortcomings, purify our work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from us.

Our Lord, forgive us and all of the believers, and bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

Muhammad al-Jibālī
20 Ṣafar 1419 H
15 June 1998



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Defining “Sickness”

Sickness is of varying intensities. It can be as mild as a light headache or a slight wound, or as severe as to cause death. Thus, a guideline needs to be set to determine to which levels of sickness does the following discussion apply.

Health or well-being of a particular organ or part of the body means that it functions perfectly well and does not have any problems. Sickness being opposite to health, it means that that part of the human being functions imperfectly. This imperfection can be anywhere from a very minor deficiency to a total malfunctioning. According to this definition, baldness is a sickness in the skin of the scalp, and heart disease is a sickness in the heart. Obviously, the first is a minor sickness, and is not even viewed as a sickness by most people. The latter is considered a major sickness that requires immediate attention and care.

By the same token, sickness conditions apply to the human spirit, and vary in intensity and gravity. Displeasure caused by criticism is sometimes a minor form of “spiritual” or “psychological” sickness, whereas chronic depression and despair is a major one that can lead to suicide.

In both bodily and spiritual cases, “sickness” is not normally applied except to situations exceeding a threshold level of malfunctioning before which the human being is considered reasonably well.

Defining a Sick Person

Based on one’s health situation, we may classify him into one of the following broad types:

1. HEALTHY

This applies to one who functions and behaves normally, without complaining or seeking any kind of help for his condition. Thus, the majority of the human beings are considered “healthy”, even though none of them but suffers from some minor pains, bruises, wounds, insect bites, allergies, heartburns, insomnia, etc.

2. DISABLED

This applies to one who has a lasting deficiency in one or more parts of his being. A disabled person usually becomes accustomed to his condition, and his disability becomes to him and other people more of a hindrance than a form of sickness. In some cases though, the disability is so severe as to classify a person as “genuinely” sick (type 4 below).

3. MILDLY SICK

This applies to one who suffers from a mild level of sickness, like headache or light influenza, that takes him beyond the “healthy” status. Most of the regulations of the sick do not apply to such cases, except for possible facilities contingent on the condition.

4. GENUINELY SICK

This applies to one whose sickness restricts him, usually temporarily, from pursuing his normal activities or causes him abnormal pain and suffering. All of the regulations of the sick usually apply in this case.

Some Muslim scholars have defined a sick person who should be visited as one who is allowed to make *jam'* (joining) of the prayers, break his fasting in *Ramaḍān*, sit down during the obligatory prayers, stop going to the *Jumu'ah* and *jamā'ah* prayers, or perform *tayammum*¹ instead of *wuḍū'*. According to al-Haythamī, a sick person is one who finds it hard to leave his house or walk.

1 A symbolic ablution performed by wiping clean dust, instead of water, over the hands (to the wrists) and face.

From all of this, we see that the guideline for sickness is that it disables a person from carrying on with his normal activities, forces him to miss many acts of obedience, or forces him to rely on other people's assistance for fulfilling his normal needs. This includes some forms of disabilities, such as severe cases of mental retardation or paralysis.

SUMMARY

The following table summarizes the above discussion:

Condition	Description	Sickness Regulations
Healthy	Minor pains, bruises, wounds, insect bites, allergies, heartburns, insomnia, etc.	Rarely apply.
Disabled	Lasting deficiency that becomes more of a hindrance than a form of sickness.	Apply in some cases.
Mildly Sick	Mild sickness, like headache or light influenza.	Mostly do not apply.
Genuinely Sick	Sickness that restricts from pursuing normal activities or causes unusual pain and suffering.	Mostly apply.

As for the specific regulations applicable in various cases, they will become more clear after reading the forthcoming discussions in this book.

Important *Fiqh* Rules for the Sick

1. ACCOUNTABILITY DEPENDS ON ABILITY

Out of His great mercy and generosity, Allāh (ﷻ) does not impose a burden heavier than what one can bear, as He says:

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾ البقرة ٢٨٦

«Allāh does not burden a person beyond his capacity.»¹

﴿هُوَ أَجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾ الحج ٧٨

«He has chosen you (to convey His message to the humanity) and has not laid upon you in the religion any difficulty.»²

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ﴾ البقرة ١٨٥

«Allāh intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship.»³

﴿فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ﴾ التغابن ١٦

«So have *taqwā* of Allāh as much as you are able.»⁴

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«When I command you to do something, do as much of it as you are able.»⁵

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

1 *Al-Baqarah* 2:286.

2 *Al-Hajj* 22:78.

3 *Al-Baqarah* 2:185.

4 *At-Taghābun* 64:16.

5 Muslim and others.

«Indeed, this religion is easy. And whoever overburdens himself in the religion will not be able to continue in that way.»¹

Therefore, the obligations of the healthy do not apply to the ill, and those of the seeing do not apply to the blind. Similarly, a person who has lost one of his organs or capabilities is proportionally exempted from some of the *Islāmic* obligations.

2. SANITY IS A PREREQUISITE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Sanity, which is the ability for cognition and comprehension, is a prerequisite for accountability in regard to matters of *īmān*, *Islām*, and the various acts of worship. A mentally retarded person is only accountable in accordance with his sanity, and a totally insane person is totally unaccountable.

3. DEFICIENCY DOES NOT TOTALLY ABROGATE ACCOUNTABILITY

This means that an accountable person should perform the obligations as much as he can. So, if one has half of his arm severed, he should still wash the remaining half, up to the elbow, during *wuḍūʾ*. Similarly, one who cannot stand up because of illness, but can sit, should pray sitting, and may not pray lying down. ‘Imrān Bin Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Pray standing; if you cannot, pray sitting; if you cannot, pray on your side.»²

4. ONE IS A WITNESS AGAINST ONESELF

We have set above general guidelines for determining one’s true level of sickness. However, there are things that are not possible to determine except by the afflicted person.

¹ Al-Bukhārī and others.

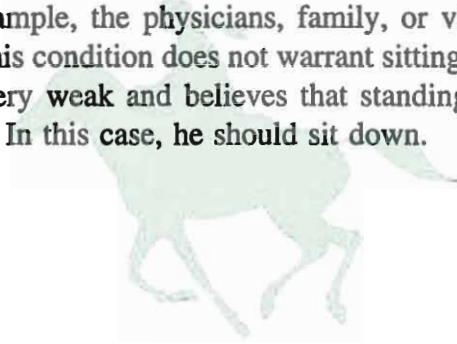
² Al-Bukhārī and others.

Whenever one's condition permits, after gathering the necessary information from those who have the knowledge and experience, one is responsible for evaluating his level of sickness, and consequently the sickness regulations applicable to that condition. One should comply with this evaluation, remembering that Allāh knows his true condition, and realizing that he will testify against himself on the Day of Judgement. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ۝﴾ القيامة ١٤

«Rather, the human being is a witness against himself.»¹

Thus, for example, the physicians, family, or visitors may tell a sick person that his condition does not warrant sitting down for prayer, while he feels very weak and believes that standing in the prayer is harmful for him. In this case, he should sit down.



1 Al-Qiyāmah 75:14.

CHAPTER 2

TRIALS FOR THE BELIEVERS

Fluctuations of Life

Our life in this world is precarious. We pass through alternating periods of happiness and sadness, vigor and weakness, wealth and poverty, health and sickness, and so on.

A true believer is one who maintains a clear level of *īmān* throughout the worldly fluctuations. He continues to remember Allāh (ﷻ) and ascribe the favors to Him, and he turns to Him in submission, asking for relief from his affliction. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۝ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ۝ ﴾
البقرة ١٥٥-١٥٧

«But give glad tidings to the patient—those who, when afflicted with a calamity, say, “Truly, to Allāh we belong; and truly, to Him will we return.” It is those who will be awarded blessings and mercy from their Lord; and it is those who are the guided ones.»¹

Ṣuhayb (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed, amazing is the affair of a believer! It is always for his good; and this merit is for no one except a believer. If he is granted ease of living, he

1 Al-Baqarah 2:155-157.

is grateful, and this is best for him; and if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres, and this is best for him.> ¹

In another report, Şuhayb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was once sitting with his companions; he laughed and asked them, <Wouldn't you ask me why I laugh?> They said, "What makes you laugh, O Allāh's Messenger?" He replied:

<I am amazed at a believer's situation! His situation is always good: If something occurs to him that pleases him, he praises Allāh, and this is good for him. And if something occurs to him that displeases him, and he perseveres, it is good for him. No one else's situation is always good except a believer.> ²

Thus, a believer shows gratitude and thankfulness for all of the wonderful blessings that Allāh grants him, and maintains patience and submission during sickness, hardships, hunger, or other forms of affliction.

Afflictions Benefit the Believers

Allāh has decreed that, in this life, hardships and disasters strike both believers and non-believers. For a non-believer, they are inconveniences that hinder him from proceeding with his normal involvement in the worldly life. For a believer, on the other hand, they are instances of rest and remembrance, tests that promise great rewards, and indications of atonement and expiation of sins. Regardless of how little is the harm that strikes a believer, it carries with it the good news of forgiveness and elevated ranks in *Jannah* ³.

The prophets and their followers used to be pleased when a

1 Recorded by Muslim and others.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 147).

3 *Jannah*: The Gardens of Paradise.

hardship afflicted them, seeing it as token of Allāh's forgiveness and benevolence. Abū Sa'īd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The prophets are afflicted the most, then the righteous. Indeed, one of them would be tested with poverty, so that he would not be able to wear anything except a coarse cloak. And indeed, they used to be as pleased with affliction as you would with comfort.»¹

EXPIATION OF SINS

Afflictions expiate a believer's sins and clean his record prior to the Day of Judgement. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Affliction continues to befall believing men and women in their body, family, and property, until they meet Allāh (ﷻ) burdened with no sins.»²

SIGN OF ALLĀH'S LOVE

Afflictions are an indication of Allāh's love for a believer. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever Allāh wills good for a person, He subjects him to adversity.»³

1 Recorded by Ibn Mājah and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 144.

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2280).

3 Al-Bukhārī and others.

SIGN OF ĪMĀN

Afflictions are a sign of belief and faith for a believer. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and Ka'b Bin Mālik (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The parable of a believer is like that of a fresh and moist plant; the wind tilts it this way and that way; so is a believer: he continues to be subjected to affliction. And the parable of a hypocrite is like that of a firm cedar tree; it does not shake—until it is uprooted all at once.»¹

SIGN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The prophets and righteous people are afflicted the most, and their rewards are the highest. This is indicated in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd cited above. In another report, Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Those who are most afflicted among the people are the prophets, then the best, then the (next) best. One is afflicted in accordance with (the strength of) his *Dīn*. If his *Dīn* is firm, his affliction is hard, and if his *Dīn* is weak, his affliction is light. Indeed, one would be so much subjected to adversity until he walks among the people without any sins.»²

EARLY PUNISHMENT

Afflictions are a means of punishing a believer with lesser suffering in this life instead of the greater suffering and pain stored for the disbelievers in the hereafter. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 993).

«When Allāh wills good for a servant of His, He expedites his punishment in this life; and when He wills retribution for a servant of His, He holds his sins for him to judge him by them on the Day of Resurrection.»¹

MULTIPLICATION OF REWARDS

When an afflicted believer shows contentment, his rewards are multiplied and he attains Allāh's acceptance. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

«The magnitude of the reward is in accordance with the magnitude of the affliction. When Allāh (ﷻ) loves some people, He afflicts them. He who is then content (with Allāh's decree) will achieve the acceptance (of Allāh); and he who is dissatisfied (with Allāh's decree) will attain the anger (of Allāh).»²

Ibn ul-Qayyim's Views on Afflictions

Ibn Qayyim il-Jawziyyah (رحمته الله) covers some very important and comprehensive principles regarding afflictions, as well as various aspects of wisdom associated with them³. His discussion is presented in this section.

1 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 308).

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 146).

3 Extracted from *Ighāthat ul-Lahfān fī Maṣā'id ish-Shayṭān* (Rescuing the Distressed in the Snares of Satan). This text is also included in 'Alī al-Ḥalabī's summary of that book, titled *Mawārid ul-Amān*, p. 421.

1. LESS AFFLICTIONS FOR THE BELIEVERS

The evils, hardships, and harm afflicting the believers are less than those afflicting the disbelievers. Also, the affliction of the righteous in this life is far less than that of the sinful, corrupt, and wrongdoers. ¹

2. THE BELIEVERS' HIGH EXPECTATIONS

The believers' affliction is accompanied with acceptance (of Allāh's decree) and expectation (of His rewards and forgiveness). Even if they are unable to achieve that acceptance, the believers would still exhibit patience and expectation (of Allāh's rewards). Their perception of the beneficent outcome of the affliction reduces its burden and makes it easier for them to withstand its hardships. As for the disbelievers, they know no acceptance or expectation, and any patience that they display is similar to that of the animals. Allāh points to this by saying:

﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلُمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلُمُونَ
كَمَا تَأْلُمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ﴾ النساء ١٠٤

«Do not falter in pursuing the (opposing) folk. If you should be suffering, so are they suffering like you do, but you expect from Allāh that which they do not.» ²

Thus they both share in the suffering; but the believers excel in that they hope that Allāh (ﷻ) will reward them and elevate their ranks (in *Jannah*).

3. REDUCING THE BELIEVERS' SUFFERING

When a believer receives the suffering resulting from afflictions with submission to Allāh, it is reduced for him according to his level of obedience, sincerity, and truth of faith. Thus, the amount of suffering

1 In light of no. (3) below, Ibn ul-Qayyim refers here to the harm and pain resulting from the afflictions, and indicates that it is reduced for the righteous believers, even though the magnitude of their affliction may be or may appear to be greater.

2 *An-Nisā* 4:104.

lifted off him is such that others (of lesser faith) will not be able to bear even a small fraction of it.

This is how Allāh wards off His believing servant: He protects him from a great deal of affliction; and if some of it is inevitable, He reduces for him its burden, effect, harm, and outcome.

4. A SIGN OF LOVE

As the love of Allāh becomes more firmly established in the heart, the lovers' affliction for the sake of their beloved One becomes more pleasurable and less objectionable.

Many lovers have declared to their beloved ones their pleasure with the affliction coming from them, as one poet said:

“Even though your abuse troubles me,
My occurring to your thoughts pleases me!”

How, then, about the love of the Supreme beloved One? His affliction toward His beloved ones is surely a mercy and favor from Him to them.

5. BETWEEN FAKE AND TRUE HONOR

The level of victory and honor occurring to the disbelievers, wrongdoers, and hypocrites is far less than that occurring to the believers. Furthermore, their apparent dignity is in reality nothing but humility and disgrace, even if it appears differently. ¹

6. PURIFICATION THROUGH AFFLICTION

For a believer, afflictions are like medicine: they remove from him diseases that, were they to remain, would destroy him or lower his status of *īmān*. The afflictions and tests extract such diseases and

1 Any form of victory or dignity that the wrongdoers seem to enjoy is but a test for them and a passing glitter that does not benefit them in the next life, nor does it give them any lasting pleasure or feeling of satisfaction in the heart.

prepare him for receiving full rewards and a high position (in *Jannah*).

The occurrence of these afflictions is better than their absence, as Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«By Him in whose hand is my soul, Allāh does not ordain a decree for a believer but it is for his good; and this merit is for no one except a believer. If he is granted ease of living, he is thankful; and this is best for him. And if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres; and this is best for him.»¹

Therefore, affliction and testing are required for the believer to achieve victory, honor, and well-being. Because of this, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Those most afflicted among the people are the prophets, then the most righteous, then the next most righteous. One is afflicted in accordance with (the strength of) his *Dīn*. If his *Dīn* is firm, his affliction is made harder, and if his *Dīn* is weak, his affliction is made lighter. A believer continues to be subjected to adversity until he walks on the surface of the earth without a sin.»²

7. REQUISITES OF THIS LIFE

There are things that afflict the believers in this world, such as being oppressed, defeated, and harmed by the enemies. These occurrences are essential and inevitable aspects of this world, and are similar to extreme hot and cold weather, sickness, worries, and grief. These things are essential for the human life and nature, and are applicable even to the children and animals, as decreed by the wisdom of the Most-Wise.

There is a great wisdom behind mixing the good with evil, the pleasure with pain, and the benefit with harm. Had this world been

1 This *ḥadīth* was cited earlier; it is recorded by Muslim from Ṣuḥayb (رضي الله عنه).

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others from Sa'd, Abū Sa'īd, and others (رضي الله عنه); verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 143, 144).

devoid of such mixing, it would be a totally different world, and that wisdom would be lost.

Refining the good from the bad will occur in a world other than this world, and a life other than this life, as Allāh (ﷻ) said:

﴿لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ فَيَرْكُمُهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾
الأنفال ٣٧

«So that Allāh may distinguish the wicked from the good, and place the wicked one on another, heap them together, and cast them into Hell. It is those who are the losers!»¹

8. WISDOM IN AFFLICTIONS

There is a great wisdom, not possible to encompass to the fullest by other than Allāh (ﷻ), in afflicting the believers and letting their enemies² sometimes defeat, oppress, or subdue them. Some of this wisdom is explained in the following:

- a) **Weakness Brings Submission, Strength Brings Obedience:** Affliction instigates in the believers full humility and submission to Allāh, makes them realize their need and dependence on Him, and causes them to ask Him for victory against their enemies. Had they always been victorious and triumphant, they would become arrogant and insolent. Contrarily, had they always been subdued and oppressed by their enemies, it would not be possible for them to establish the *Dīn* and secure the truth. Therefore, the wisdom of the Most-Wise has mandated alternating them between being victorious sometimes and losers others. When they lose, they

1 *Al-Anfāl* 8:37.

2 Even though most of the following discussion deals with enemies, it applies equally well to sickness, disasters, and other forms of affliction, all of which are as hated to the soul as its enemies.

implore, turn with sincerity, submit, and repent to their Lord. And when they win, they establish His *Dīn* and its rites, command good, forbid evil, strive against His enemies, and support His allies.

- b) **Distinguishing the Truthful from the Liars:** Had the believers always been victorious and triumphant, they would be followed by those whose purpose is not to establish the *Dīn* and obey Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), but only to be with those who are in positions of power and victory. On the other hand, had they always been losers and defeated, no one would follow them. Therefore, the Divine wisdom has mandated that they be winners sometimes and losers others, thereby distinguishing those who strive to obey Allāh and His Messenger from those whose only goal is the worldly possessions and positions.
- c) **Servitude in All Situations:** Allāh (ﷻ) loves for His servants to perfect their servitude to Him in the opposing situations of ease and hardship, well-being and affliction, victory and defeat. In each of the two situations, Allāh requires from His servants a form of servitude consistent with that situation, and not possible to fulfill without it. The heart cannot be well without these opposite situations, like the body which cannot be well without being subjected to heat and cold, hunger and thirst, toil and strife, and their opposites. Those trials and afflictions are required for attaining the human perfection and well-being, as it is not possible to reach a goal without the necessary means.
- d) **Rectification Through Affliction:** Allowing the believers' enemies to overcome them is a test that cleanses, purifies, and rectifies them. Allāh (ﷻ) indicates the wisdom behind allowing this to happen in the battle of Uḥud by saying:

﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزِنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝ إِنْ يَمْسَسْكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ، وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَّأُولُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا

يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ۖ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۗ
 أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ
 وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ آل عمران ١٤٢-١٣٩

«Do not falter nor grieve, since you are superior (to your enemy) if you are (true) believers. If a sore should afflict you, similar sores have afflicted the (opposing) folk. We alternate such days (of victory) among the people, so that Allāh may know those who believe, and may accept martyrs from among you—Allāh does not love the wrongdoers—and so that Allāh may purge the believers and wipe out the disbelievers. Or did you think that you would enter *Jannah* before Allāh knows those among you who strive (in His way) and those who are steadfast?»¹

Here Allāh mentions the wisdom for which he allowed the disbelievers to win that battle.

First, Allāh encourages and reassures the believers, and gives them the tidings that they are superior to their enemy by virtue of their belief. He also consoles them in that, even though they have been afflicted with sores because of their obedience to Allāh and His Messenger, their enemy had previously been afflicted with sores because of its disobedience to Allāh and His Messenger.

Allāh then indicates that, out of His wisdom, He makes the days (of victory) alternate among the people so that, similar to sustenance and life-spans, each group will earn its appointed share.

Allāh then informs them that He does that in order to know the believers among them. Of course, He (ﷻ) is All-Knowing of everything, before and after its occurrence. But He wanted to realize their belief in actual existence.

Allāh then mentions that He loves to take martyrs from among them. Martyrdom is an elevated and exalted position that can only be

1 *Āl 'Imrān* 3:139-142.

attained through dying for His cause ¹. Without the enemy's victory, it is not possible for the believers to attain this rank of martyrdom so beloved to Allāh and beneficent to them.

Allāh then indicates that He wants to purge the believers: He wants to purify them from their sins through their repenting to Him and seeking His forgiveness for the sins that made their enemy's victory possible. Furthermore, He indicates that He wants to wipe out the disbelievers because of their oppression, persecution, and tyranny.

Allāh then disapproves of the believers' presumption to enter *Jannah* without striving and patience, as His wisdom requires. Were they to be always victorious, no one would fight them, and it would not be possible to test their patience in the face of their enemy's harm.

9. THE CREATION'S PURPOSE IS TO TEST THE PEOPLE

Allāh (ﷻ) has created the heavens and the earth, and death and life, and has adorned the earth with all the things that are on it, for one purpose: to test His servants and distinguish between those who seek Him and His rewards and those who seek the worldly life and its pleasures. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ
عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿٧ هود﴾

«He is the One Who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His throne was over water—so He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds.» ²

﴿إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ
عَمَلًا ﴿٧ الكهف﴾﴾

1 There are other cases recorded in the authentic *Sunnah*, in which Allāh (ﷻ) grants martyrdom to Muslims who die in specific manners, such as drowning or burning. See "the Inevitable Journey Part IV: Life in *al-Barzakh*".

2 *Hūd* 11:7.

«Surely We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it, so We may test them as to which one is better in deeds.»¹

When a messenger is sent to the people, they have two options: believe, or deny and persist on committing disbelief and sins. Thus it is essential to test both types.

As for the one who says, "I believe," Allāh tests and afflicts him to make it clear whether he is truthful or lying in what he claims. If he were lying, he would turn around and run away from the test as he would also run away from Allāh's punishment. And if he were truthful, the test would merely increase his *īmān*, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا﴾ الأَحْزَاب ٢٢

«And when the believers saw the Confederates (advancing against them), they said, "This is what Allāh and His Messenger had promised us! Allāh and His Messenger have told the truth!" And all this merely increased them in faith and submission (to Allāh).»²

And as for a disbeliever, he will be tried and afflicted with Allāh's punishment in the hereafter. In addition, he will suffer from the pain, disasters, and punishment that Allāh (ﷻ) ordained in this life for those who disobey His messengers.

No one can escape from trials in this life, in *al-Barzakh*³, or on the Day of Resurrection. A believer's trials and affliction are light and temporal; because of his faith, Allāh protects him, lightens his load, and grants him patience, firmness, and submission that ease his

1 *Al-Kahf* 18:7.

2 *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:22.

3 The intermediate life for the human beings between the moment of death and the time of resurrection. See "the Inevitable Journey Part IV: Life in *al-Barzakh*".

affliction. On the other hand, the trials and affliction are hard and prolonged for a disbeliever, hypocrite, or corrupt.

Suffering and trials are, therefore, necessary for everyone—believer or disbeliever. A believer initially suffers in the first life, and is then granted the success of the first and last lives. A disbeliever, hypocrite, or corrupt initially enjoys the pleasure, but ends up in pain and suffering. This is further explained in the next point.

10. AFFLICTIONS ARE A BYPRODUCT OF SOCIALIZATION

By nature, a human beings is social: he must mix with other people. And since the other people have their own tendencies, attitudes, and beliefs, they expect him to conform with that. If he does not, they would harm and punish him, and if he does, he would be harmed and punished in a different way. Thus, it is necessary to mix with people, which leads to agreeing with them in some matters and disagreeing in others. Agreeing with the evil of their desires, beliefs, and tendencies, results in pain and suffering, and disagreeing with that results in pain and suffering as well. There is no doubt, though, that the pain resulting from disagreeing with their wrong is lighter and easier than that resulting from obeying them.

As an example, you would find those who expect from a person to agree with their injustice, sinning, or false witness, or to help them in committing a prohibited act. If he does not agree, they would harm, oppress, and persecute him; but the final success will be his if he maintains patience and *taqwā*. On the other hand, conforming with them to evade their persecution would result in a greater pain; and most often they would eventually turn against him and inflict on him an amount of pain much larger than what he tried to evade.

Understanding this and acting upon it is one of the most useful matters for a person: a little pain followed by a great and permanent pleasure is more endurable than a slight pleasure followed by a great and permanent pain. Indeed, facilitation is in Allāh's hand.

11. THE FOUR TYPES OF AFFLICTIONS

Affliction that occurs to a human being can only be with respect to one of four things:

- a) his person,
- b) his wealth,
- c) his honor, or
- d) his family and beloved ones.

The affliction in regard to one's person can be through harming or totally destroying it, and this is the most severe form of affliction.

Wishing for Affliction?

With the wisdom and rewards associated with afflictions, it may seem reasonable for a Muslim to wish for affliction and ask Allāh to try him. This, however, would conflict with the easy and forgiving nature of *Islām*. Instead of wishing and asking for affliction, we are instructed to ask for well-being. 'Abdullāh Bin Abī Awfā and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Do not wish to encounter the enemy, and ask Allāh for well-being. But when you do encounter it, be steadfast, and know that *Jannah* is under the shadow of the swords.»¹

The Greatest Affliction

For a believer, the magnitude of an affliction is proportional to the amount of loss that it represents in thing that he values. If one remembers this, and remembers the worthlessness of the possessions and pleasures of this life, most of his afflictions will become unimportant. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ):

«Of those who deserve to enter *Jannah*, the one who had been most afflicted in the first life will be brought (before Allāh) and the command is issued, "Give him a taste of *Jannah*." After this is done,

¹ Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Allāh (ﷻ) asks him, “O son of Ādam, had you ever suffered from any misery or anything that you resented?” He replies, “No, by Your glory my Lord! I had never suffered from anything that I resented!”

Then of those who deserve to enter Hell, the one who had lived most comfortably in the first life will be brought (before Allāh) and the command is issued, “Give him a taste of the Fire.” After this is done, Allāh (ﷻ) asks him, “O son of Ādam, had you ever enjoyed any pleasure or satisfaction?” He replies, “No, by Your glory my Lord! I had never enjoyed any pleasure or satisfaction!”¹

This is further emphasized by reflecting on the greatest affliction that ever struck the believers, which is the death of the Prophet of *Islām*, Muḥammad (ﷺ). ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«When one of you is struck with an affliction, let him remember his affliction because of my death, because it is the greatest of all afflictions.»²

Rewards for Sickness

One should not look to sickness as a gloomy episode, but should remember the great good in it. It is one form of affliction with which Allāh (ﷻ) tests His *‘ibād*, giving them a chance to acquire rewards, as was explained above, and as is further emphasized below.

REMOVAL OF SINS AND ELEVATION IN RANKS

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

2 Recorded by Ibn Sa’d, Abū Ya’lā, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1106).

⟨Whenever a Muslim is afflicted with harm from sickness or other matters, Allāh drops his sins because of this, like a tree drops its leaves.⟩¹

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

⟨Whenever a Muslim is afflicted with a hardship, sickness, sadness, worry, harm, or depression—even a thorn’s prick, Allāh expiates his sins because of it.⟩²

Once Salmān (رضي الله عنه) visited a sick man in Kindah (in Persia), and said to him:

“Expect good, because Allāh (ﷻ) makes a believer’s sickness an expiation (for his sins) and a period of repose. As for a disbeliever falling sick, he is like a camel whose owner ties it and then lets it loose—it does not understand why it was tied, nor why it was freed.”³

ʿĀʾishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that once some pain afflicted the Prophet (ﷺ), causing him to suffer and turn about in his bed. She said, “Had one of us done this, you would have rebuked him.” He replied:

⟨The ailment is intensified for the righteous. Whenever a believer is afflicted with a hardship, be it a thorn or more, a sin is taken off him because of it, and he is elevated one level (in Jannah).⟩⁴

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 493); verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

4 Recorded by Aḥmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Ḥākim, ath-Thahabī, and al-Albānī.

RETAINING REWARDS FOR DEEDS PRIOR TO SICKNESS

Usually, when a believer falls sick, he cannot do the same amount of good (prayer, fasting, helping the Muslims, etc.) that he used to do while he was well. But Allāh, out of His great mercy, continues to record for him the good deeds that he was forced to stop because of his sickness. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A traveller's or sick person's deeds are recorded in accordance with what he used to do when he was resident or well.»¹

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever a person gets sick, his deeds are recorded for him in accordance with what he used to do when he was well.»²

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever Allāh afflicts a Muslim in his body, He records (his deeds) for him in accordance with what he used to do when he was well—as long as he is sick. Thus, if He takes his life, He forgives him; and if He cures him, He washes him (from sins).»³

'Uqbah Bin 'Āmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Each day's deeds are sealed with it⁴. Thus, when a believer gets sick, the angels say, "Our Lord! Your servant such and such—You have restrained him

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 500). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

3 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 501). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

4 This means that the records for a person's deeds are sealed up at the end of each day.

(from doing good this day).” And the Lord replies, “Seal his day in accordance with his (usual) deeds, until he is cured or dies.”¹

REASON FOR THE REWARDS

‘Aṭā’ Bin Rabāḥ reported that Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) told him, “Do you want to see a woman from the people of *Jannah*?” He said, “Yes.” He said:

“It is this black woman. She came to the Prophet (ﷺ) saying, ‘I have (epileptic) seizures, and I get exposed, so supplicate to Allāh for me.’ He (ﷺ) said:

«If you wish, be patient, and you will be granted *Jannah*; or if you wish, I will ask Allāh to cure you.»

She replied, ‘I will be patient! But my body gets exposed (because of falling), so supplicate to Allāh that I do not get exposed.’ And he (ﷺ) did.”²

The ‘*ulamā*’ differ as to whether a sick person will be rewarded for the sickness itself or for being patient during it. The correct opinion is that if he is patient and is content with Allāh’s decree, as in the above *ḥadīth*, he will be rewarded for both the contentment and sickness; otherwise, he would not be rewarded at all, because he resented Allāh’s decree. This is what should be understood from Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī words:

“The authentic *ḥadīths* are clear in that the rewards are recorded once affliction strikes a Muslim. As for patience and acceptance, they are virtues for which a

1 Recorded by Aḥmad and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2193).

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

person may get rewards additional to those for the affliction.”¹

Also, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If a Muslim is pricked by (as little as) a thorn in the worldly life, and he anticipates Allāh’s reward for it, he will be absolved of some of his sins because of this on the Day of Judgement.»²



1 *Fatḥ ul-Bārī* 10:105.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 507). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

CHAPTER 3

DUTIES OF A SICK PERSON

To many people, sickness is an episode of cessation and interruption: With its occurrence, one is expected to terminate all of his activities and turn into a dormant being who cannot do anything but wait for health or death. No so for a believer! A true believer uses every chance to augment his reserve of good deeds—and sickness is no exception for him. His realm of physical activity may be limited by sickness, but not his ability to obey Allāh, using the boundless favors that He granted him to acquire more rewards and rise in ranks among the righteous. And as the favors are boundless, so are the means of utilizing them to please their Benefactor. One can thus use his heart, tongue, and whatever is capable of his body to worship Allāh and perform numerous acts of obedience. In what follows we highlight just a few.

Actions of the Heart

SUBMISSION TO ALLĀH'S DECREE

A sick person must be content with Allāh's decree, and bear it with patience. He must believe that whatever occurred to him could never have missed him, and was all ordained before he was created. Allāh says:

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَّبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾

«No disaster strikes upon the earth or within yourselves but was recorded in a Book ¹ before We bring it into being. This is truly easy for Allāh. So that you may not despair over whatever (good) has escaped you, nor be overjoyed over whatever (good) has come to you. For Allāh does not love any arrogant boaster.» ²

Allāh (ﷻ) also says:

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنِ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ التَّغَابُنِ

«No disaster strikes except by Allāh's permission, and whosoever believes in Allāh, He guides his heart. Allāh is the Knower of all things.» ³

Therefore, when a Muslim is struck by illness or any affliction that troubles him, he must show and express submission to Allāh's will and decree, as Allāh (ﷻ) teaches us:

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ
مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

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«We will surely try you with danger, hunger, and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient—those who, when afflicted with a calamity, say, “Indeed we belong to Allāh, and

1 This refers to *al-Lawḥ ul-Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet).

2 *Al-Ḥadīd* 57:22-23.

3 *At-Taghābun* 64:11.

indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are bestowed blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the ones who are (truly) guided.»¹

Suhayb (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed, amazing are the affairs of a believer! They are all for his good; and this merit is for no one except a believer: If he is granted ease of living, he is grateful, and this is best for him; and if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres, and this is best for him.»²

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she heard Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) say, «Whenever an affliction strikes a believer and he says:

«إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون.

اللهم أجرني في مصيبتني وأخلف لي خيراً منها.»

“*Innā lillāhi wa ’innā ilayhi rāji’ūn. Allāhum ma’jurnī fī muṣībatī wakhluḥ lī khayran minhā* — Indeed we belong to Allāh, and indeed to Him we will return. O Allāh, reward me for my calamity, and replace it for me with that which is better,”

Allāh will surely reward him for it and replace it for him with a better thing.» Umm Salamah added, “So when Abū Salamah died, Allāh enabled me to say this, and He replaced him for me with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ).”³

1 *Al-Baqarah* 2:155-157.

2 Recorded by Muslim and others.

3 Muslim.

GOOD THOUGHTS ABOUT THE LORD

A sick person should maintain good thoughts about his Lord (ﷺ), turning only to Him in worship and supplication, remembering His great generosity, and looking forward to His blessings and forgiveness. Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«None of you should die without having good expectations in Allāh (ﷻ).»¹

BETWEEN FEAR AND HOPE

A sick believer must simultaneously be between fear and hope: fearing Allāh's punishment for his sins, and hoping for the His mercy. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) visited a young man who was dying. He asked him, «How do you feel?» He replied, “By Allāh, O Messenger of Allāh, I have hope in Allāh, and I fear my sins.” The Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«These two qualities do not dwell together in a person's heart in this situation (of death) but Allāh (ﷻ) will grant him what he hopes, and save him from what he fears.»²

Actions of the Tongue

Sickness is an important chance for a person to spend a quiet time with himself. He should benefit from it by contemplating the reason for his existence, his mission in life, and his performance in obeying Allāh (ﷻ). He should spend it in extensive supplication, *thikr*, and reading *Qur'ān* and other books on *Islām*.

1 Recorded by Muslim and others.

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Mājah; judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Aḥkām ul-Janā'iz* 3).

READING *QUR'ĀN*

Spending a quiet time with Allāh's Book, soberly reading it and feeling the effect of every letter and word, as if it is a private discourse between the reader and his Lord: This is indeed a great pleasure beyond description that no one understands except those who experience it. Feeling the closeness to the Creator, listening attentively to His words, and being overwhelmed by His grace and glory, are all means of enriching the heart and strengthening the soul. If not a cure by itself, this is at least a great means of extracting immense pleasures out of situations of sickness and suffering! Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَتُنزَّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا﴾ ﴿الإسراء ٨٢﴾

«We send down of the *Qur'ān* that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.»¹

MAKING *THIKR*

Remembering Allāh and mentioning Him is a means of preserving a strong tie with Him that is most needed during sickness. This is fulfilled by reading His Book, as well as saying various forms of *thikr* that are recorded in the *Sunnah*. With *thikr*, the state of solitude of a sick person turns into a rich state in which one enjoys the company of the Lord of lords, and strolls through gardens after gardens of spiritual tranquility that bring serenity and contentment into his heart. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾ ﴿الرعد ٢٨﴾

1 *Al-Isrā* 17:82.

«Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allāh. Indeed, in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find rest.»¹

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allāh (ﷻ) says (in a *Qudusī ḥadīth*):

«I am at the expectations of My servant, and am with him when he remembers Me: If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me among a distinguished group (of people), I mention him among a more distinguished and better group (of angels).»²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«I am with My servant when he remembers Me and his lips move to mention Me.»³

SUPPLICATING

Allāh (ﷻ) loves for His servants to invoke Him and ask for His help. This is a demonstration of their true devotion and sincere belief that all good is in His Hands. During sickness, one's need for Allāh's help is even more obvious—He is the only One who can truly provide cure or reduce the pain. Thus, one should turn to Him with sincere supplication, as Allāh (ﷻ) tells about the prophet Ayyūb (Job) (رضي الله عنه):

﴿وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾
فَأَسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرِّهِ ﴿٨٣﴾﴾ الأنبياء ٨٣-٨٤

1 *Ar-Ra'd* 13:28.

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 Recorded by Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Mājah* no. 3059).

«And (remember) Ayyūb, when he called to his Lord, “Verily, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.” So, We answered his call, and removed his affliction.»¹

‘Uthmān Bin Abī al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that he was suffering from an illness that almost killed him. He came to the Messenger (ﷺ) seeking his help. The Messenger (ﷺ) told him:

«Put your right hand over the painful part of your body and say:

«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ» (ثلاث مرات)،

“*Bismillāh* — In the name of Allāh (three times),” then say:

«أعوذ بعزة الله وقدرته من شر ما أجد وأحاذر» (سبع مرات).

“*A‘ūthu bi ‘izzati ‘LLāhi wa qudratihī min sharri mā ajidu wa ‘uhāthir* — I seek refuge in Allāh’s eminence and power from all that I feel or fear (seven time).”»

‘Uthmān said, “I did that, and Allāh (ﷻ) removed my illness. Thus, I continued to advise my family and others to do it.”²

Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī testified that they heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

«When one says:

«لا إله إلا الله، والله أكبر»

“*Lā ilāha illa ‘LLāh, wa ‘LLāhu akbar* — There is no god except Allāh; Allāh is the Greatest,” Allāh

1 *Al-Anbiyā* 21:83-84.

2 Muslim.

confirms this by responding, “There is no god except Me; I am the Greatest.” And when one says:

« لا إله إلا الله، وحده لا شريك له »

“*Lā ilāha illa ’Llāh, waḥdahū lā sharīka lah* — There is no god except Allāh—alone without any partners,” Allāh says, “There is no god except Me—alone without any partners.” And when one says:

« لا إله إلا الله، له الملك وله الحمد »

“*Lā ilāha illa ’Llāh, lah ul-mulku wa lah ul-ḥamd* — There is no god except Allāh, to Him belongs all sovereignty and praise,” Allāh says, “There is no god except Me, to Me belongs all sovereignty and praise.” And when one says:

« لا إله إلا الله، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله »

“*Lā ilāha illa ’Llāh, walā ḥawla walā quwwata illā billāh* — There is no god except Allāh, and there is no power or strength except from Allāh,” Allāh says, “There is no god except Me, and there is no power or strength except from Me.”

He (ﷺ) then commented:

«Whoever says this while sick, and then dies, the Fire will never touch him»¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that once when ‘Alī was sick, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught him to say:

«اللهم إني أسألك تعجيل عافيتك، وصبراً على بليّتك،»

1 Recorded by at-Tirmithī; verified to be authentic by him and al-Albānī.

«وخرجاً من الدنيا إلى رحمتك.»

«*Allāhumma innī as'aluka ta'jīla 'āfiyatik, wa-ṣabran 'alā baliyyatik, wa-khurūjan min ad-dunyā ilā raḥmatik* — O Allāh, I ask You to quicken Your cure, give me patience with Your affliction, and let my departure from this life be to Your mercy.»¹

ASKING TO DIE IN A BLESSED PLACE

It is permissible to ask Allāh (ﷻ) for death in a blessed place. The Mother of the Believers Ḥafṣah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she heard her father 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) say:

“O Allāh, grant me *Shahādah* in Your way, and let my death be in the town² of Your Messenger.”

So she asked him, “How can this be?”³ He replied, “Allāh will grant me this when He wills!”⁴

ASKING FOR SHAHĀDAH

It is permissible and recommended to ask Allāh (ﷻ) for *Shahādah*, as in the above statement of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه). Sahl Bin Ḥanīf (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«He who truthfully asks Allāh for *Shahādah*, He will grant him the rank of a *shahīd*, even if he died on his bed.»⁵

1 Recorded by al-Ḥākim, ad-Daylamī, and Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā. Verified to be authentic by al-Ḥākim and ath-Thahabī.

2 I.e., al-Madīnah.

3 Ḥafṣah's inquiry was because al-Madīnah was under the rule of *Islām*, and she expected no fighting to take place in it. Yet, Allāh granted 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) his wish by having him assassinated in al-Madīnah.

4 Al-Bukhārī.

5 Muslim and others.

ASKING FOR DEATH DURING TRIBULATIONS

It is permissible to wish for death during times of evil and turmoil—if one fears for his *Dīn*. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh (ﷻ) taught His Messenger (ﷺ) to say:

«اللهم إني أسألك فعل الخيرات، وترك المنكرات،

وحب المساكين، وأن تغفر لي وترحمني،

وإذا أردت فتنة في قوم فتوفني غير مفتون.»

«Allāhumma innī asʻaluka fīʻl al-khayrāt, wa-tark al-munkarāt, wa-ḥubb al-masākīn, waʻan taghfira lī wa-tarḥamanī. Wa ithā aratta fitnatan fī qawmin fatawaffanī ghayra maftūn.»

Meaning:

«O Allāh! Enable me to do good deeds, avoid evil deeds, and love the poor; and forgive me and have mercy on me. And if You will to send turmoil over the people, take my life without being confused (in my *Dīn*).»¹

Things to Avoid**COMPLAINING**

A sick person should remember that his sickness is a test from Allāh (ﷻ), which carries tidings of forgiveness and mercy for him. Thus, he should accept it with patience and satisfaction, asking Allāh (ﷻ) to reduce his suffering, as preceded. He should avoid complaining about his affliction, as that is usually an indication of

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by Ibn Rajab, al-Albānī, and others.

objecting to Allāh's decree, ill mannerism, or soliciting pity for himself.

However, a sick person may describe his suffering to specific people, such as a physician or a close friend. Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that he visited the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was sick; he touched him with his hand, and felt the fever. He said, "You have a severe fever." He (ﷺ) replied:

«Yes! I suffer from fever as much as would two men among you!»¹

A similar incident occurred with Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه). He visited Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) while he was sick and covered with a blanket. He touched it and could feel the heat of fever through it! He said, "How severe is your fever O Allāh's Messenger!". The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:

«This is how it is for us (prophets)! Our suffering is more severe, and our rewards are multiplied.»

Abū Sa'īd (رضي الله عنه) then said, "O Allāh's Messenger, Who among the people suffers the most?" He (ﷺ) replied:

«The prophets, then the most righteous. One of them would be tested with poverty, so that he would not have except a cloak to cut and wear; or one would be tested with lice that would kill him. And indeed, they used to be more happy with the affliction² than you would with gifts.»³

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Because they knew the vastness of rewards associated with it.

3 Recorded by Ibn Mājah and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 144.

Also, ‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) fell sick prior to passing away she said to him, “My head hurts very much!” And he (ﷺ) responded:

«If this (pain) happens while I am alive, I would ask Allāh to forgive you, and would supplicate for you.»

She answered, “Woe be to me! By Allāh, I think that you wish for my death! And if this happened, you would not mind spending that evening in joy with one of your wives!” The Messenger (ﷺ) then said:

«Rather, it is my head that hurts! I wanted to summon Abū Bakr and his son to entrust (successorship) to him—so that no talkers would talk, or wishers would wish (for it). Then I thought, “Allāh rejects (anyone else), and so do the believers—only Abū Bakr (can be the successor).”»¹

ASKING FOR DEATH

Regardless of how severe is the sickness, one may not wish for death. Umm al-Faḍl (ﷺ) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) visited her house when his uncle (her husband) al-‘Abbās (ﷺ) was suffering from illness. Al-‘Abbās voiced a wish for death, upon which the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«My uncle, do not wish for death. If you had been doing good, extending your term is better for you, as it enables you to do more good; and if you had been sinful, delaying your term is better for you, as it enables you to repent from your sins. So do not wish for death.»²

And Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Recorded by al-Ḥākim; verified to be authentic by ath-Thahabī and al-Albānī (*Aḥkām ul-Janā’iz* 4).

«None of you will be let into *Jannah* by virtue of his deeds.»

He was asked, “Not even you, O Allāh’s Messenger?” He replied:

«Not even I—unless Allāh encompasses me with His mercy and favors. ¹ So do good to your best ability, and let none of you wish for death: if he is righteous, he may do more good; and if he is a sinner, he may have a chance to repent.» ²

And he (ﷺ) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Let no one wish for death, nor ask for it before it comes to him. Indeed, when one of you dies, his deeds cease; and indeed, a believer’s life does not increase him but in goodness.» ³

However, Anas reported the Messenger (ﷺ) saying that if the suffering becomes so severe as to make it inevitable for a person to wish for death, he is allowed to say:

«اللهم أحيني ما دامت الحياة خيراً لي،
وتوفني إذا كانت الوفاة خيراً لي،
واجعل الحياة زيادة لي في كل خير،
واجعل الموت راحة لي من كل شر.»

«*Allāhumma ahyinī mā dāmat il-ḥayātu khayran lī, wa tawaffanī ithā kānat il-wafātu khayran lī. Wajʿal il-*

1 This means that our deeds, no matter how good, cannot be an appropriate price for the great reward of *Jannah*. It is only out of Allāh’s great mercy and favor that He has made our deeds a reason for entering *Jannah*.

2 Al-Bukhārī and others.

3 Muslim and others.

*ḥayāta ziyādatan lī fī kullī khayr, wajʿal il-mawta
rāḥatan lī min kullī sharr.>*

Meaning:

<O Allāh, let me live as long as life is better for me; let me die when death is better for me; let life be a means for me to increase in all that is good; and let death be a rest for me from all evil.>¹

CURSING THE FEVER

One should avoid blaming the sickness or cursing it for his suffering. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) visited a woman called Umm us-Sā'ib while she was sick. He asked her, **<Why are you shivering, O Umm us-Sā'ib?>** She replied, "Because of the fever, may Allāh not bless it." He said:

<Do not curse the fever! It takes away the sins of the human beings as the bellows remove the filth from the iron.>²

ASKING FOR PUNISHMENT

It has been discussed earlier (p. 21) that, despite the purifying and rewarding nature of the affliction, one may not wish for it. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) once visited a Muslim man who was so weak that he was (thin) "like a chicken". Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him, **<Did you make a specific supplication or ask Allāh for something (so that you became like this)?>** He replied, "Yes, I used to say, 'O Allāh, whatever punishment you have prepared for me in the hereafter, expedite it for me in this life.'" Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) then instructed him:

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Muslim.

«Exalted be Allāh! You cannot withstand that. You have said instead:

﴿رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ﴾

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«*Rabbanā āytinā fid-dunyā ḥasanatan, wa fil-ākhirati ḥasanatan, waqinā 'athāb an-nār* — Our Lord, grant us in this life good, and in the last life good, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.»¹ >

He (ﷺ) then implored Allāh to cure him, and He (ﷻ) cured him.²

Ritual Acts of Worship

PURITY AND CLEANLINESS

As much as possible, a sick person should keep his body and clothes clean, cut the nails, remove armpit and pubic hair, and do other acts of cleanliness as instructed in the *Sunnah*.

In addition, *ṭahārah*³ of the body, clothes, and place of prayer is a condition for the prayer to be acceptable. Thus, after going to the toilet, one should cleanse oneself carefully from urine and feces. This is done by using water to remove all traces of these substances and then rinsing their locations. In the absence of water, or if it needs to be avoided in certain sick situations, one may use tissues, leaves, medical solvents, or other materials instead.

1 *Al-Baqarah* 2:201.

2 Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

3 *Ṭahārah* means purity. In *fiqh* discussions, it usually refers to the ritual cleanliness and purity required for prayer and other acts of worship.

While cleansing, one should avoid using the right hand to touch the *najāsah*⁴—unless one is forced to do so due to sickness or pain in the left hand. Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Let not any of you hold his penis with his right hand while urinating, nor clean off after toilet with his right hand.»²

One must take a bath in the case of a major *ḥadath*³, and perform *wuḍūʾ* in the case of a minor *ḥadath*.

If water is not accessible, or if one is afflicted with a sickness that precludes using water for bathing or performing *wuḍūʾ*⁴, one should perform *tayammum*.

The following table is summarized from Shaykh ‘Abd ul-‘Āzīz Bin Bāz, may Allāh bless him:⁵

#	Condition of a Sick person	Action
1	Slight sickness; using the water (warmed if necessary) is not expected to cause damage, complications, delay in curing, increase in pain, or any other harm; examples: headache, toothache, etc.	Must use water and may not replace it with <i>tayammum</i> .

1 *Najāsah* is the opposite of *ṭahārah*. It means filth or impurity. It most commonly refers to the filth resulting from urine, feces, menstrual blood, pus, etc.

2 Muslim.

3 *Ḥadath*: This literally means event. In relation to *ṭahārah*, it describes a state of uncleanliness. A major *ḥadath* normally refers to both *janābah* (state resulting from sexual intercourse or wet dreams) and menstruation. A minor *ḥadath* refers to the state of uncleanliness caused by going to the toilet, sleeping, passing gas, etc.

4 This applies to situations where using the water is expected to cause harm to the sick person or delay his cure.

5 *Aḥkāmū Ṣalāt il-Marīḍ wa-Ṭahāratuh*.

#	Condition of a Sick person	Action
2	Delicate sickness; using the water is expected to cause death, damage, complications, delay in curing, increase in pain, or any other harm.	Must refrain from using water and replace it with <i>tayammum</i> .
3	Disabling sickness that prevents one from moving—assuming that there is no one around him to give him water.	Permissible to perform <i>tayammum</i> .
4	Wounds, blisters, broken bones, or other localized types of sickness.	As much as possible, wash the healthy parts, then perform <i>tayammum</i> for the rest.
5	A sick person who cannot use water, or does not have access neither to it nor to dust.	Pray without washing or <i>tayammum</i> , and may not delay the prayer.
6	One who is afflicted with urinal incontinence, or a similar kind of sickness.	Cleanse the body and clothes, perform <i>wuḍūʿ</i> for each prayer, attempt to control the flow as much as possible, and pray immediately to minimize the <i>najāsah</i> -contaminations.

THINGS THAT INVALIDATE *Wuḍūʿ*

Wuḍūʿ is invalidated by things coming out of either of the body's two exits (frontal and rear), such as urine, feces, and gas. It is also invalidated by sleep or unconsciousness that make a person completely unaware of what is happening around him.

Bleeding resulting from a wound or bruise does not invalidate *wuḍūʾ*. The *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم) used to pray despite the bleeding of their wounds after battles. Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Muslims have continued to pray despite their wounds”¹

ʿUmar (رضي الله عنه) continued praying while blood was flowing out of his wound². And ʿAbbād Bin Bushr continued praying after being hit with three arrows during his prayer³.

Similarly, withdrawing blood from a sick person does not invalidate his *wuḍūʾ*, as there is no evidence entailing that.

MAINTAINING THE PRAYERS

The prayer is obligatory for every sane Muslim who has attained puberty—except for women during their menses and post-natal bleeding. This obligation is not reduced or waived because of travel, fear, or sickness. Only the manner of performing it would be modified in some of these cases, as is indicated in the *Sunnah*.

Some people commit a great mistake by voluntarily missing prayers when they are sick. This is indeed a great injustice that they do to themselves, because they badly need the prayer—this strong link with Allāh (ﷻ)—during their sickness.

During the prayer (as well as outside of it as much as possible) a sick person should cover all of his *ʿawrah*, which extends from the navel to the knees for a man, and covers the whole body except the face and hands for a woman.

With the help of those serving him, as needed, a sick person should try his best to have his body and clothing clean of dirt and *najāsah* during the prayer.

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Shaybah.

2 Recorded by Mālik, Ibn Saʿd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwāʾ ul-Ghalīl* 1:225).

3 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Khuzaymah, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 182).

One must pray standing ¹. Only if this is not possible would one be allowed to pray sitting. 'Imrān Bin Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Pray standing; if you cannot, pray sitting; if you cannot, pray on your side.» ²

One may not delay a prayer beyond its prescribed time. The only excuses in that regard are involuntary forgetting, sleeping, or unconsciousness throughout the prayer's time. In such cases, one should make up the missed prayers as soon as he realizes missing them.

If it is hard for a sick person to perform each prayer individually during its time, he may perform *jam'* between *zuhr* and *'aṣr*, or between *maghrib* and *'ishā'* prayers.

FASTING

Fasting is a great act of worship that raises the level of *taqwā* and provides a means of attaining countless rewards. Fasting the days of the month of *Ramaḍān* is an obligation on every Muslim—except those who have been clearly exempted by the *Shar'*.

A sick person is exempt from the obligatory fasting during his sickness. He should make up the missed days of fasting when he becomes healthy. If his sickness is chronic, he should only feed one poor person for every missed day, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ
وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ﴾ البقرة ١٨٣

«So whoever among you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days.

1 Some scholars require this even in situations where one can only stand by leaning on a cane or against a wall.

2 Al-Bukhārī and others.

As for those who can afford it, they have to offer a ransom by feeding a poor person (for every day).»¹

There is no clear-cut definition in the *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah* as to the level of sickness that permits breaking the fast. This is a demonstration of Allāh's mercy in that He (ﷻ) left it for the sick person himself to determine his ability to fast. However, the sick person may consult with people of medical knowledge or experience to help him assess his ability to fast.

Fasting is invalidated by eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, or intentional vomiting. Involuntary vomiting does not break the fast, provided that one does not deliberately swallow back his vomitus.

Fasting is not invalidated by various forms of injections, suppositories, inhalers², and enemas that are used for treatment, even if they contain some nourishing ingredients or vitamins.

Other Actions

GIVING CHARITY AND DOING GOOD

If, prior to falling sick, a sick person was sinful and disobedient as to deserve Allāh's anger and punishment, sickness is a reminder for him to repent, as mentioned above. It is also his chance to increase in good deeds as much as he can. The good deeds will act together to reduce Allāh's anger and prevent His punishment. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The secret *ṣadaqah* (charity) extinguishes the Lord's anger; preserving the ties of kinship increases the life span; and rendering good to people protects from evil fatalities.»³

1 *Al-Baqarah* 2:184.

2 Asthma inhalers, even though applied to the mouth and nose, are meant to treat the lungs, and very minute amounts of the inhaled medication reach the stomach.

3 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī, Ibn 'Asākir, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1908.

Also, Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Treat your sick with charity.»¹

GOOD MANNERS

A sick person should maintain good manners in dealing with his relatives, visitors, nurses, servants, etc. He should refrain from falling into arguments over worldly matters. An-Nawawī (رضي الله عنه) said:

“A sick person should take care of preserving good manners, avoiding arguing over worldly affairs, and keeping in his mind that this could be the end of his abode in the dwelling of deeds, so let him conclude it with something good.”²

ALLOWING VISITORS

A sick person should not normally prevent the Muslims from visiting him during his sickness. Such visits carry rewards for both himself and the visitors. Preventing such visits should only be done if they are expected to cause harm.

GETTING TREATMENT

Getting dependable treatment, within the capacity of the sick person and his family, is an obligation, as is explained in Chapter 5.

Chance of Departure

One should always be prepared for death, do as much good as he can, and strive to avoid sins.

1 Recorded by Abū ash-Shaykh; judged by al-Albānī to be *ḥasan* (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3358).

2 *Al-Majmū'* 5:103.

People are usually so much involved in the worldly life that they put the thoughts of death far away from their minds. They fear that such thoughts would spoil their peace and distract them from the routine of their lives.

However, when one gets sick, he should realize the weakness and fragility of the human body, and the obvious chance of death. Thus, he should make immediate preparations for this possibility, returning the people's rights, admonishing his family, and making sincere repentance.

REPENTANCE

One should turn to Allāh (ﷻ) with repentance at all times. This is more emphasized during sickness, as one becomes more likely to depart from this life. One should realize the severity of his sins, regret them, resolve never to fall again into them, and ask Allāh for help and forgiveness.

RETURNING THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

A sick person must fulfill his obligations and duties toward other people. If this is not possible for him, he should include instructions in his will for doing so. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever had oppressed his brother in his reputation or wealth, let him remedy that before the Day of Judgement comes. Because no *dirham* or *dīnār*¹ will be accepted then: if he has good deeds, they will be taken from him and given to his brother; and if he does not have good deeds, he will be burdened with his brother's sins.»²

Also, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) asked, «Do you know who is truly ruined?» To which the *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم) replied,

1 *Dirham* and *dīnār*: silver and gold currencies.

2 Al-Bukhārī and others.

“A ruined man among us is one who does not possess money or property.” He (ﷺ) then informed:

⟨Indeed, a ruined person of my *Ummah* is one who comes on the Day of Resurrection with prayers, fasting, and *zakāh*. However, he had abused so and so, defamed so and so, unlawfully consumed the wealth of so and so, shed the blood of so and so, and beaten so and so. Thus, this and that will be given from his good deeds. If his good deeds are exhausted before he returns what he owes, he will be burdened with their sins, then hurled into the Fire.⟩¹

A believer's debts restrict his soul from entering *Jannah*. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

⟨The soul of a believer is held back by his debts—until they are paid off for him.⟩²

An-Nawawī (رحمته الله) said:

“A sick person should assume that this is the end of his life. This would make him strive to end it in a good way—returning the rights that he owes to people, rectifying acts of oppression, returning trusts and loans, etc.”³

WRITING A WILL

It is important for a sick person to hasten to write his will or testament, and have two just Muslims witness it. His will should explain how to dispense of his property after his death. This is most

1 Muslim.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad and at-Tirmithī; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6779).

3 *Al-Athkār*.

important when there are chances that, without such a will, rights and dues would be lost for some people. Information, instructions, and a sample will be included in Part II of this series (the Inevitable Journey).

ADVISING AND ADMONISHING THE FAMILY

A sick person should remind his family to obey Allāh (ﷻ). He should make them promise not to commit one of the common violations that many people do at the time of death, such as showing discontent with Allāh's decree, wailing, beating the face and chest, or wearing black as a sign of mourning.



CHAPTER 4

OBLIGATIONS TOWARD THE SICK

Visiting the Sick

RULING

Visiting the sick is one of the important mutual rights among the Muslims. It brings hope and remembrance to the heart of the sick person. It also provides a chance for the Muslims to increase their balance of good deeds through making *du'ā* for him and helping him in various ways. Al-Barā' Bin 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) commanded us to visit the sick, walk with the funeral, make *tashmūt*¹ for the one who sneezes, help one fulfill his oath, support the oppressed, answer the invitations, and spread the *salām*.”²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

⟨There are five rights for a Muslim upon other Muslims: to answer the *salām*, visit the sick, walk with the funerals, answer the invitations, and make *tashmūt* for the one who sneezes⟩³

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) commanded:

1 **Tashmūt** is to say, “*Yarḥamuk Allāh* — May Allāh have mercy on you,” to the one who sneezes and says, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*”.

2 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

3 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

‹Visit the sick and follow funerals; that reminds you of the hereafter.›¹

And Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) commanded:

‹Visit the sick, feed the hungry, and free the captives.›²

Al-Bukhārī headed this *ḥadīth* with the title, “Chapter on the Obligation to Visit the Sick.” From the above *ḥadīths*, many other scholars have also concluded that visiting the sick is a *wājib*. Others hold the opinion that it is a confirmed optional *Sunnah*. The correct opinion in this regard is that it is a *farḍ kifāyah*, and must be performed by at least a few Muslims who are close to the sick. Yet, we witness an unfortunate negligence of the above commands among most Muslims.

However, some scholars are of the opinion that one should not visit a sick person who holds hatred toward the visitor, because visiting him would disturb him and add to his suffering.

SPECIAL CASES

The obligation to visit the sick becomes more emphasized in certain special situations, such as the following:

- The sick person is a close neighbor. Allāh (ﷻ) commands the Muslims to take special care of the close neighbors (*an-Nisā’* 4:36). The Muslims are required to look after their Muslims neighbors. If they get sick, they should realize it soon enough to be able to help them.

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 518). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

2 Al-Bukhārī.

- The sick person needs help and cannot move easily to fulfil his needs. The Muslims are then obliged to visit and help him, and they are sinful if they do not.
- The sick person is a parent, a child, a spouse, or some other relative. Such people hold the highest right upon a person, and their right becomes more confirmed when they fall sick.

MERITS

At-Tirmithī said that the noblest report in regard to visiting the sick is the *Qudusī ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«On the Day of Resurrection, Allāh (ﷻ) will say, “O son of Ādam, I was sick but you did not visit Me!” He will reply, “How would I visit You when You are the Lord of all the people?” Allāh will answer, “Don’t you recall that my servant so and so was sick but you did not visit him? Indeed, had you visited him, you would have found Me there!”

Allāh (ﷻ) will then say, “O son of Ādam, I asked you for food, but you refused to feed Me!” He will reply, “How would I feed You when You are the Lord of the people?” Allāh will answer, “Don’t you recall that my servant so and so asked you for food but you refused to feed him? Indeed, had you fed him, you would have found [the reward of] that with Me!”

He (ﷻ) will then say, “O son of Ādam, I asked you for a drink, but you refused to give it to Me!” He will reply, “How would I give You a drink when You are the Lord of all the people?” Allāh will answer, “Don’t you recall that my servant so and so asked you for a drink but you refused to give it to

him? Indeed, had you given it to him, you would have found [the reward of] that with Me!’> ¹

In addition to the rewards attained through fulfilling an *Islāmic* obligation, visiting the sick has many other merits depicted in the following *ḥadīths*.

Thawbān (ﷺ) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

‘When one visits a sick Muslim, he enjoys the fruits of *Jannah* until he leaves.’ ²

‘Alī (ﷺ) reported that he heard Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) say:

‘When one visits his sick Muslim brother, he walks through the fruit gardens of *Jannah* until he sits; when he sits, the mercy encompasses him. If it is in the morning, seventy thousand angels supplicate for him until the evening; and if it is in the evening, seventy thousand angels supplicate for him until the morning’ ³

Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

‘When one visits a sick person, or visits a brother for Allāh’s sake, a caller from the heavens says, “Good are you, and good is your walking. A position is secured for you in *Jannah*.”’ ⁴

And Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked, **‘Which one among you is fasting today?’** Abū Bakr answered, “I am.” He (ﷺ) asked, **‘Which one among you visited a sick person today?’** Abū Bakr answered, “I did.” He (ﷺ) asked, **‘Which one**

1 Muslim.

2 Muslim.

3 Recorded by Ibn Mājah, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

4 Recorded by Ibn Mājah and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

among you walked with a funeral today?› Abū Bakr answered, “I did.” He (ﷺ) asked, ‹Which one among you fed a poor person today?› Abū Bakr answered, “I did.” He (ﷺ) then said:

‹Never would these qualities be fulfilled by one man
in one day, but he will enter *Jannah*.› ¹

Visiting Sinners, Non-Muslims, and Others

SINNERS

Some scholars declare that it is not recommended to visit a sick person if he is a *fāsiq* ². They base their verdict on a *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr Bin Al-‘Āṣ that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Do not visit those who drink *khamr* when they get sick.” However, this *ḥadīth* is not authentic ³.

The position in this regard remains in accordance with the general rule that it is recommended to visit the sick. However, some considerations need to be taken in this case with respect to commanding good and forbidding evil. In some situations, when a righteous person visits a sick sinner, this would cause the latter to remember and take heed. In other situations, this would not help, and it may be taken by some ignorant people as being an approval of the sinner’s conduct. Thus, this should be dealt with according to the particular situation.

INNOVATORS

An important consideration should be taken if the sick person is known to be an innovator in *Islām* who misguides others with his *bid‘ahs*. As in the previous case, it is recommended to visit him if it is expected that he will benefit from the visit and repent because of it. But if this

1 Muslim and others.

2 One who openly commits sins.

3 This is pointed out by al-Albānī in *Da‘if ul-Adab il-Mufrad*.

not the case, and if the visitor is a person of knowledge and respect, he should avoid visiting lest the common people take that as a stamp of approval for the sick person's innovations.

IGNORANT AND COMMON PEOPLE

Some people of knowledge or distinction are reluctant to visit a sick person whom they consider ignorant or lowly! This contradicts the obligation of mutual mercy and love that should prevail among all Muslims. It also conflicts with the practical *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) went to visit a sick bedouin, and said to him:

«لا بأس، طهور إن شاء الله»

«*Lā ba's, ṭahūrun in shā'Allāh* — No harm (may befall you); may this (sickness) be a purification (of your sins)—with Allāh's will.»

The bedouin responded, "This is a purification!? No! Rather, it is a surging fever, attacking an old man, in order to take him to the grave." And the Prophet (ﷺ) said, «**So be it then!**» And the man died soon after.¹

UNCONSCIOUS PERSONS

Whether the sick person has temporarily passed out, or is in a long-term coma, it would still be recommended to visit him. Even if he does not see the visitors, his family members would, and this would raise their spirits and give them support. Besides, the visitors would then have chance to make supplications that would be of benefit for the sick as well as themselves. Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“I fell sick; and the Prophet (ﷺ) came walking with Abū Bakr to visit me. They found me unconscious. The

1 Al-Bukhārī and others.

Prophet (ﷺ) performed *wuḍūʿ*, poured the remaining water over me, and I came back to my senses.”¹

CHILDREN

Usāmah Bin Zayd (رضي الله عنه) reported that a son of one of the Messenger’s (ﷺ) daughters became very sick. His mother sent someone to summon the Messenger (ﷺ), because his grandson was close to death. He (ﷺ) told the envoy:

«Go tell her:

«إن لله ما أخذ، ولله ما أعطى، وكل شيء عنده لأجل مسمى.»

“*Inna lillāhi mā akhathā, wa lillāhi mā aʿṭā, wa kullu shayʿin ʿindahū li ʿajalin musammā* — To Allāh belongs what He took, and to Him belongs what He gave. Everything is (recorded) with Him for an appointed term.” And let her be patient and seek Allāh’s reward (for her affliction).»

The envoy conveyed this to her, and she sent him back to her father (رضي الله عنه), swearing that he must come. So the Prophet (ﷺ) went to her with some of his companions, including Saʿd Bin ʿUbādah. He held the child and hugged it to him, hearing from its chest an echoing sound. His eyes shed some tears, and Saʿd exclaimed, “Are you weeping, and you are Allāh’s Messenger!?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«I cry out of mercy for her. Indeed, Allāh does not grant mercy except to the merciful ones among his servants.»²

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX

One may visit the sick from the opposite sex if they are *maḥrams*, or if the visit would not lead to something prohibited such as *khulwah* ¹, flirting, intent looking, etc.

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) visited the sick women, as in the earlier example of Umm us-Sā'ib (p. 40).

The women also visited the Prophet (ﷺ), as is reported that his wives and daughter Fāṭimah visited him during his final sickness. ²

Umm ad-Dardā' visited a man from the *Anṣār*. ³

ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that during *Jāhiliyyah*, al-Madīnah used to have a disease that would strike anyone who entered it. So when Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) migrated to it, Abū Bakr and Bilāl (رضي الله عنهما) fell sick. She visited them and said, "O father, how do you feel?" And, "O Bilāl, how do you feel?" When the fever became high for Abū Bakr, he would chant:

"Every person rises in the morning among his family,
And death is closer to him than his shoe-ties."

And when the fever subdues from Bilāl, he would raise his voice chanting:

"I only wish that I would spend one night
In a valley (in Makkah) surrounded by nice-smelling
grass,
And that I would go one day to drink from the water of
Mijannah ⁴,
And to me would appear Shāmah and Ṭafīl ⁵."

And he would continue:

1 To be alone with a person from the opposite sex.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others from ʿĀ'ishah (رضي الله عنها).

3 This is reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* under the chapter of "Women Visiting Sick Men".

4 A water source a few miles from Makkah.

5 Two mountains near Makkah.

“O Allāh, curse ‘Utbah Bin Rabī’ah, Shaybah Bin Rabī’ah, and Umayyah Bin Khalaf, because they drove us out to the land of disease.”

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) came to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and told him about that. He said:

«O Allāh, make al-Madīnah beloved to us like Makkah or more. O Allāh, make it healthy, bless its crops for us, and move its fever to al-Juḥfah^{1, 2}

NON-MUSLIMS

As long as no violations to *Islām* are expected to occur during the visit, visiting non-Muslim sick people is permissible. It becomes recommended if they were neighbors or relatives, or if one hopes that visiting them may lead to their embracing *Islām*³.

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that a Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) visited him in his fatal illness, sat by his head, and said to him, «Embrace *Islām*; embrace *Islām*!» He looked (with indecision) at his father who told him, “Obey Abū al-Qāsim!” So he did, and then died. The Prophet (ﷺ) departed saying:

«All praise be to Allāh who saved him from the Fire.»

And he said to his companion, «Pray *janāzah*⁴ for your companion.»⁵

1 A place on the outskirts of al-Madīnah.

2 Al-Bukhārī.

3 *Al-Majmū’* by an-Nawawī, 5:99.

4 *Janāzah*: Funeral.

5 Al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad, and others.

THOSE WITH CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

One is not required to visit those with contagious diseases; rather, one is instructed to avoid them. It would be sufficient to inquire about them from their relatives or via the telephone. In some cases it may be possible to visit them and sit behind a glass barrier, or wear special protective attires. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Run away from a leper as you would run from a lion.»¹

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) also narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Do not bring a sick person in contact with a healthy one.»²

And 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If you hear that the plague is in a certain land, do not go there. And if it strikes the land where you are, do not run away from it.»³

Etiquettes of the Visit**CONVENIENT TIMES**

One should visit a sick person on days and at times that are suitable for him and do not cause him inconvenience. Some scholars have disliked making the visits on certain days of the week, such as Saturdays or Wednesdays, but there is no evidence for any of that.

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

3 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

SHORT VISITS

Visits to the sick should be made short, thereby avoid tiring or inconveniencing the sick person or his family. Exceptions may be made if one is sure that the sick person enjoys his visit and would like him to stay longer, or if one needs to stay longer to help the sick.

It is important to note in this regard that a *ḥadīth* is reported instructing one to shorten his visit to the sick to the duration of milking a camel. That *ḥadīth* is unauthentic ¹.

FREQUENCY OF VISITS

A *ḥadīth* narrated from Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) ² instructs one to make intermittent visits to the sick. However, that *ḥadīth* is very weak as well ³.

The frequency of the visits should be regulated by the situation of the sick person. In general, the visits should be intermittent, unless the sick person needs frequent help or is known to be delighted by the visits, in which case they may be made more frequently.

Supplicating for the Sick

Supplication is an important favor that a visitor can offer to the sick. The Prophet (ﷺ) never neglected it; and many of the authentic supplications that he said or taught are recorded in the *Sunnah*. More discussion of this subject will appear in the chapter on *ruqyah* (Chapter 6).

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when the Messenger (ﷺ) visited a member of his family who was sick, he would say:

«اللهم ربَّ الناس، أذهب البأس، واشف، أنت الشافي،

1 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab ul-Īmān*; verified to be unauthentic by al-Albānī in *Da‘īf ul-Jāmi‘*.

2 *Kanz ul-‘Ummāl* 9:97.

3 Verified to be unauthentic by al-Albānī in *aḍ-Ḍa‘īfah* no. 1644, 1645.

لا شفاء إلا شفاؤك، شفاء لا يغادر سقماً»

«*Allāhumma rabb an-nās, athhib il-ba's, washfi ant ash-shāfi, lā shifā'a illā shifā'uk, shifā'an lā yughādiru saqamā.*»

Meaning:

«O Allāh, Lord of the people, remove the hardship, and give cure—You are the one who cures, and there is no cure except from You—a cure that will not leave any sickness behind.» ¹

Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) visited him while he was sick, and he (رضي الله عنه) said:

«O Allāh, cure Sa'd; O Allāh, cure Sa'd; O Allāh, cure Sa'd.» ²

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever one visits a sick person who is not at the brink of death, and says in his presence:

«أسأل الله العظيم، رب العرش العظيم، أن يشفيك» (سبع مرات).

“*As'al ul-Lāh al-'azīm, rabb al-'arsh il-'azīm, an yashfiyak* — I ask Allāh the Great, the Lord of the great Throne, to cure you (seven times),” Allāh will cure him of his sickness.» ³

Also, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) used to say to the sick people whom he visited:

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Muslim.

3 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmithī; verified to be authentic by at-Tirmithī, al-Ḥākim, and al-Albānī.

«لا بأس، طهور إن شاء الله»

«Lā ba's, ṭahūrun in shā'Allāh — No harm (may befall you); may this (sickness) be a purifier (of your sins)—with Allāh's will.»¹

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Jibrīl visited the Prophet (ﷺ) while sick² and said to him, “O Muḥammad, are you suffering [from the pain]?” He replied, <Yes!> He then said:

«بسم الله أرقيك، من كل شيء يؤذيك، من شر كل نفسٍ
أو عين حاسد، الله يشفيك، بسم الله أرقيك.»

“Bismillāhi arqīk, min kulli shay'in yu'thīk, min sharri kulli nafsin aw 'ayni ḥāsīd”

Meaning:

“With Allāh's Name I shelter you, from all that ails you, from the evil of any soul, and that of the envious eyes. May Allāh cure you; with Allāh's Name I shelter you.”³

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr Bin Al-'Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<When a man visits a sick person, let him say:

«اللهم اشف عبدك، ينكأ لك عدواً، أو يمشي لك إلى صلاة.»

“Allāhum ashfi 'abdak, yanka' laka 'aduwwan, aw yamshī laka ilā ṣalāh — O Allāh, cure your servant,

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Obviously, the ṣaḥābah could not see Jibrīl (جبرئيل). Thus, in this ḥadīth, Abū Sa'īd (رضي الله عنه) is reporting something that the Prophet (ﷺ) had told him.

3 Muslim and others.

he would then grieve an enemy of Yours, or walk to a prayer in obedience to You.”¹

Raising the Hope

RAISING THE HOPE OF THE SICK

One should try to raise a sick person’s hope in Allāh’s rewards, and lighten his fear of Allāh’s punishment. He should remind him of Allāh’s great favors and the great rewards in store for him because of his illness.

After ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was stabbed, and was approaching death, he became worried about his fate and afraid of Allāh’s punishment. So Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said to him:

“O Commander of the Believers! Do not be worried about anything. You accompanied Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in a good way; and when he departed, he was pleased with you. You then accompanied Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) in a good way; and when he departed, he was pleased with you. You then accompanied their companions in a good way; and if you depart from them now, they are pleased with you.”²

Abū Shumāsah reported that when death approached ‘Amr Bin al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه), he wept very long (from fear of Allāh), and turned his face toward the wall. His son then said to him:

“O my father! Didn’t Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) give you such and such glad tidings, and such and such glad tidings?”³

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī and others.

2 Al-Bukhārī.

3 Muslim.

And Ibn Abī Mulaykah reported that Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) visited ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) when she was on her death bed. He said, “How do you feel?” She answered, “Well—if I have *taqwā*.” He said:

“You are then well—in *shā’a* ‘*LLāh* (with Allāh’s will). You are the wife of Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). He did not marry a virgin except you. And Allāh (ﷻ), from the heavens, declared your innocence.”¹

RAISING THE HOPE OF THE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

If one is not sure about the actual situation of a sick person, it is recommended that he assumes the best and impart this to other people. Saying good and reassuring words to the friends and relatives of the sick would help reduce their concerns and raise their hopes. This would reflect favorably on the sick person and enhance his curing process. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) visited Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in the final sickness in which he passed away. When he came out, the people asked him, “O Abū al-Ḥasan, how is Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) doing this morning?” He replied:

«أصبح بحمد الله بارئاً.»

“*Aṣḥaba bi ḥamdillāhi bārī’an* — Praise be to Allāh’s, he is recovering.”²

Miscellaneous Acts of Kindness and Consideration

When visiting a sick person, one should display kindness and care in various ways.

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Al-Bukhārī.

SITTING CLOSE

One should sit close to the sick person and talk to him in a low and quiet voice. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) visited a sick person, he would sit by his head. ¹

SERVICE

One is required to help and serve his Muslim brothers in all possible ways. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Let any of you who can benefit his brother do so.» ²

This becomes more emphasized during sickness, when the Muslim is in a weak condition and needs more help and service.

KIND ADVICE

One should be patient and have understanding with the sick. If a sick person acts or speaks ill because of his sickness, one should try to advise him and remind him in a good way.

GIVING PRESENTS

People are usually delighted with presents, especially when they are things that they like. Because of this, some scholars have recommended giving the sick person a gift that he is likely to relish, such as perfume or fruits.

However, presents should not be thought of as a required obligation that must accompany the visit to the sick. Nor should one imitate the extravagant ways of some people who buy expensive, and often useless gifts—for the sake of showoff.

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 536). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

² Muslim.

PROVIDING TREATMENT

As is indicated in the above *ḥadīth* of Jābir (رضي الله عنه), one is required to help his Muslim brother, especially when he is sick. In this case, one should help him with visits, supplications, buying what he needs, etc.

Also, if one is of medical expertise, he should help his brother by treating him.

Miscellaneous Things to Avoid

When visiting a sick person, one should avoid things that would cause him harm or ill feelings.

STRESSFUL DISCUSSIONS

One should avoid discussing matters that require effort or cause distress to the sick person.

ARGUMENTS

One should avoid arguing, blaming, or quarrelling with others in the presence of the sick person.

PROHIBITED LOOKS

One should cast down his eyes in the house of the sick person or in the proximity of his family. Once ‘Abdullāh Bin Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) visited a sick man with a group of men. A woman was present in the house; and one of the men started looking at her. So, ‘Abdullāh said:

“It would be better for you if your eye is gouged out (than to make these impermissible looks).”¹

1 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad* (no. 531). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

FORCING THE SICK TO EAT

‘Uqbah Bin ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Do not force your sick ones to eat. Indeed, Allāh feeds them and gives them drink.»¹



¹ Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others; judged *hasan* by al-Albānī and others (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 7439).

CHAPTER 5

TREATING SICKNESS

Concept of Seeking Treatment

THE TRUE HEALER

A sick person should seek treatment for his sickness. At the same time, he should remember that Allāh (ﷻ) alone is the one who cures, and that the treatment or medicine that he takes is only a means that Allāh (ﷻ) has provided for people out of His great mercy. Allāh (ﷻ) tells us that among what Ibrāhīm (ﷺ) said to his people was the following:

﴿فَانَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِي إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي
فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ۝ وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ ۝
وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ۝ وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ۝﴾
الشعراء ٧٧-٨١

«Indeed, they (the idols) are enemies to me—except the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and it is He Who guides me; and it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink; and when I am ill, it is He Who cures me; and it is He Who causes me to die and then will bring me back to life.»¹

Nothing is wrong in receiving treatment from specialized physicians and doctors—as long as one realizes that Allāh (ﷻ) is the true curer and healer. Abū Ramthah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

1 *Ash-Shu'arā'* 26:77-81.

“I visited Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) with my father. My father saw the mark on the Messenger’s back, and said to him, ‘Let me treat that thing on your back, because I am a *ṭabīb* (physician or healer).’ He (ﷺ) replied:

‘You are only a kind man. But Allāh (ﷻ) is the (true) *ṭabīb*.’¹

TREATMENT VS. QADAR

Just as Allāh (ﷻ) has ordained the sickness, He ordained the cure for it. All of this is part of Allāh’s *Qadar*. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

‘Treatment is part of *Qadar*; it may benefit with Allāh’s permission.’²

And he (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

‘Treatment is part of *Qadar*; and He (ﷻ) benefits whomever He wills with whater He wills.’³

TREATMENT VS. RELIANCE

Some people ignorantly discourage the sick from seeking treatment, thinking that avoiding it is a sign of *īmān*, and claiming that it conflicts with the true reliance on Allāh (ﷻ). The true scholars of *Sunnah* reject this position; some of them even hold the opinion that seeking treatment is an obligation, because Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) commanded:

1 Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and an-Nasāī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1537.

2 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*, and Abū Nu‘aym. Judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 3415).

3 Recorded by Ibn us-Sunnī. Judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 3416).

◀Seek treatment, because Allāh (ﷻ) did not create a sickness but has created a treatment for it—except for old age.▶¹

Using Medications

As indicated above, every sickness has a treatment, and one should therefore seek the correct treatment. Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

◀Every Disease has a medication: If the medication for a particular disease is found, it will be cured with Allāh’s (ﷻ) permission.▶²

One of the *Anṣār* reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) visited a wounded man and said, **◀Bring such and such physician.▶** The physician came, and said, “O Allāh’s Messenger, does a medicine help?” He (ﷺ) replied:

◀Exalted is Allāh! Did Allāh send down to earth any disease and not create a cure for it!?!▶³

However, people often do not know the exact treatment for a particular disease, as Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

◀Seek treatment, because Allāh (ﷻ) did not send down a sickness but has sent down a medication for it—known to those who know it, and not known to others—except for death.▶⁴

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others from Usāmah Bin Sharīk. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 2930).

2 Muslim.

3 Recorded by Aḥmad. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *Ghāyat ul-Murām* no. 292.

4 Recorded by al-Ḥākim; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no.

There are various forms of medication that have been pointed out or approved in the authentic *Sunnah*. One is referred to the extensive treatises on this subject. In what follows, we highlight some of the most important among them.

Medications from the *Sunnah*

BLACK SEED

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«In the black seed ¹ is a cure from all diseases, except death.» ²

HONEY

Allāh (ﷻ) said:

«يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ»
النحل ٦٩

«There issues from their (the bees’) bellies a fluid of varying hues, in which there is cure for the people.» ³

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “My brother is suffering from severe diarrhea.” He replied, «Give him honey to drink.» He did that, then came back saying, “I gave it to him, but his diarrhea got worse.” He (ﷺ) replied similarly, and the man did the same three times. On the fourth time he

1809).

1 Black caraway; botanic name: *nigella sativa* (from “the Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic”).

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

3 *An-Naḥl* 16:69.

said again, “I gave it to him, but his diarrhea got worse.” And Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) responded:

«Allāh spoke the truth; and your brother’s stomach is lying! Go give him honey!»

He gave it to him; and he was cured. ¹

And Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Healing is by three means, a drink of honey, a cut with a blade ², or a burn with fire; and I prohibit my *Ummah* from using the burn.» ³

CUPPING

Cupping ⁴ is an old art of medication which, in general, involves the following steps:

1. A little amount of combustible material, such as paper or wood, is placed inside a little cup.
2. The material is lighted, and the cup is inverted carefully and firmly over specific parts of the body, such as the back or the back of the neck, without letting the fire touch the skin; this causes the flame to go off, and the flesh to swell and suck into the cup.
3. After a few minutes’ wait, to insure that the blood has rushed into the sucked area, the cup is moved a little, and a clean sharp razor blade is used to apply several short cuts in the

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 This is done during cupping, which is explained below.

3 Al-Bukhārī and others.

4 This is referred to in Arabic as *ḥijāmah*.

swollen area; this will cause blood to pour out from the cuts into the cup.

The Prophet (ﷺ) considered this practice permissible, and recommended it in some situations, as in the above *ḥadīth*. Also, 'Uqbah Bin 'Āmir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) repeated three times:

«If anything could be a means for healing, it would be a blade-cut, a drink of honey, or a burn applied to the location of pain; and I hate burning and do not like it.»¹

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Jibrīl has informed me that cupping is the most useful medication for people.»²

MILK

Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Treat yourselves with the milk of cows; I hope that Allāh (ﷻ) will put cure in it, because they eat from all sorts of plants.»³

In another narration by Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allāh (ﷻ) did not create a sickness but has created a treatment for it—except for old age; so use the milk of cows, because they eat from all sorts of plants.»⁴

1 Recorded by Aḥmad; judged authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3026).

2 Recorded by al-Ḥākim; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 218).

3 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*; judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī in (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2929).

4 Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, al-Ḥākim, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

And Ibn Mas'ūd and Ṣuhayb (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Drink the milk of cows, because it is a cure, use their fat because it is a remedy, and beware of their meat because it is (a cause of) illness.»^{1, 2}

COLD WATER FOR FEVER

‘Ā’ishah, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās, Rāfi‘ Bin Khudayj, and other Ṣaḥābah (رضي الله عنهم) all reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Fever is of the puffs of the hell-fire; so cool it with [cold] water.»³

And Anas reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«If one of you suffers from fever, let him pour cold water on himself for three consecutive nights in the early morning.»⁴

SALT FOR STINGS

‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that while Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was praying one night, he put his hand on the ground, and a scorpion stung him. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) hit it with a shoe and killed it. Then he said:

(Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘ no. 1808).

- 1 Some scholars believe that this illness is caused by excessiveness in eating beef, which leads to digestion problems; others say that it results from worms or germs that are easier to get into the cow-meat. Allāh knows best.
- 2 Recorded by Ibn us-Sunnī, Abū Nu‘aym, and al-Ḥākim; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1943.
- 3 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. The word between brackets comes from Ibn Mājah.
- 4 Recorded by an-Nasāī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Ḥākim and al-Albānī (Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘ no. 497).

«May Allāh curse scorpions. They would not leave alone a praying person, a prophet, or anyone else.»

He requested water and salt, put it in a container, poured it over his stung finger, rubbed over it, and read the two *Mu'awwithāt* ^{1, 2}

ANTIMONY FOR THE EYES

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Line your eyes with antimony ³; it clears the sight and grows the hair.» ⁴

'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Use antimony; it grows the hair, removes the dirt, and clears the eyesight.» ⁵

Jābir and Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Use antimony when you go to sleep; it clears the eyesight and grows the hair.» ⁶

1 The Protecting Ones. This refers to the last two or three *sūrah*s of the *Qur'ān* (112, 113 and 114). In this particular *ḥadīth*, it refers to the last two only.

2 Recorded by al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab ul-Īmān*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt ul-Maṣābīḥ* no. 4567).

3 A black material used for lining the eyes. In Arabic, it is called *ithmid*, and the generic name for it is *kuhl*.

4 Recorded by at-Tirmithī; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1197).

5 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 665).

6 Recorded by Ibn Mājah and al-Ḥākim; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 724).

ḤINNĀ

Ḥinnā' is a reddish-orange cosmetic gained from leaves and stalks of the *ḥinnā'* plant (botanic: *lawsonia inermis*)¹. Salamah (ﷺ) reported:

“Never a wound or thorn pricked the Prophet (ﷺ), but he would put *ḥinnā'* on it.”²

And Salmā, a female servant of the Prophet (ﷺ), reported:

“Whenever someone complained to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) of a headache, he would tell him, **«Get cupped.»** And whenever one complained of pain in his feet, he would tell him, **«Dye them with *ḥinnā'*.»**”

Forbidden Medications**PROHIBITED AND FILTHY MATERIALS**

It is not permissible to use prohibited materials, such as intoxicants or pork products, for medication. Umm ad-Dardā' (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed, Allāh (ﷻ) has created the illnesses and their cure. So treat yourselves, O Allāh’s worshippers, but do not treat yourselves with something *ḥarām*.»³

And Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited any filthy medications.⁴

1 From “the Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic”.

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and Ibn Mājah; judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2059).

3 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 1762).

4 Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt ul-Maṣābiḥ* no. 4539).

KHAMR

*Khamr*¹ can lead to all major sins. ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr (ﷺ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Khamr is the mother of all filthy actions. Whosoever drinks it, his prayer will not be accepted for forty days. And if he dies while it still is in his belly, he dies like one from Jāhiliyyah.»²

And Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Khamr is the mother of all offensive deeds, and the greatest of all major sins. Whosoever drinks it would fall upon (i.e., rape) his mother, paternal aunt, and maternal aunt.»³

Therefore, it is only reasonable that *Islām* prohibits using it, even as a medication. If one presumes that it could help in one side, he can rest assured that it will do much more damage in other sides. Ṭāriq Bin Suwayd (رضي الله عنه) and Wā’il Bin Hījr (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said about *khamr*:

«It is not a cure; rather, it is a disease.»⁴

Medications that contain ethyl alcohol should be totally avoided and replaced with their substitutes. This applies to some types of cough medicines, mouth wash, and so on.

1 Any alcoholic liquor. Its essence is ethyl alcohol or ethanol, which is the substance that causes intoxication and is, therefore, the reason for its prohibition.

2 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awṣaṭ*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1854).

3 Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr*. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1853).

4 Muslim and an-Nasā’ī.

FROGS

‘Abdurrahmān Bin ‘Uthmān reported that a physicaian asked the Prophet (ﷺ) if he may kill a frog to use it in a medication. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited him from doing that. ¹

Also, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited killing *surrads* ², frogs, ants, and *hudhuds* ^{3, 4}

BURNING

This is an old form of medicine, whereby a piece of metal is heated and applied to the ailing part of the body. The Prophet (ﷺ) permitted it at first, but he subsequently prohibited it, as was cited earlier, and as in the following report by Ibn ‘Abbās and other companions (رضي الله عنهم):

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited burning.” ⁵

Treating the Opposite Sex

Islām maintains a high level of purity within the society, establishing guidelines to curtail all actions that could lead to the spread of indecency and promiscuity. Thus, it ordains modest clothing and behavior, and prohibits intermingling, touching, intent looking, and *kulwah* between members of the two sexes. ⁶

However, if the need arises, one may treat a sick person from the opposite sex, even if the treatment involves looking and touching, and even if it extended to seeing or touching the private areas.

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasāī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 6971).

2 A bird with large head that eats smaller birds.

3 The hoopoe bird.

4 Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 2490).

5 Al-Bukhārī and others.

6 This will be covered in depth in my book, “*Islām vs. Anarchism: Woes of Tabarroj and Ikhilāḥ*”, may Allāh (ﷻ) facilitate completing it.

For treating women, the following sequence must be followed, based on availability:

- a) Muslim female doctors and nurses.
- b) *Kāfir* (non-Muslim) female doctors and nurses.
- c) Muslim male doctors and nurses.
- d) *Kāfir* male doctors and nurses.

One may not go to the next option before exhausting the possibilities in the previous one. Also, within the same option, one should seek the doctors who are known to be more considerate and respectful toward the *Islāmic* principles.

Furthermore, treating a woman by a man should be in the presence of her husband, a *maḥram*, or trustworthy women to prevent the occurrence of *khulwah*.

Also, a doctor or nurse (even of the same sex) may not view, touch, or expose any part of a woman's body beyond the minimum amount needed for the treatment.

As for female doctors or nurses treating male patients, the same above considerations must be equally applied.

It should also be noted that the above guidelines must be implemented from the age of puberty for the patients, despite the fact that some systems deal with patients up to the age of eighteen (or even twenty) as being children!

Ruqyah

Because of its special importance, we have covered the subject of *ruqyah* in a separate chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 6

RUQYAH

Definition

Ruqyah (plural: *ruqā*) derives from the past-tense verb *raqā*. It consists of words said or written in the form of *du'ā'* or *thikr* for the purpose of protection or cure. It is sometimes accompanied with other actions, such as blowing or wiping over the thing to which it is applied.

A synonym for *ruqyah* in Arabic is “*ta'wīth*” and “*ta'wīthah*”, from which derives the description “*al-Mu'awwithāt*” (the protecting ones) for the last three *sūrahs* of the *Qur'ān*, and “*al-Mu'awwihatān*” (the two protecting ones) for the last two *sūrahs* only (cited below).

Ruling

People from most cultures and religions use various forms of *ruqā*. They are usually referred to in English as spells, charms, incantations, and so on. Most of those *ruqā* contain magic, *shirk*, senseless words, lies, etc. Because of this, the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited using *ruqā* at first. Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed, *ruqā*, amulets, and *tiwalah*¹, are all acts of *shirk*.»²

Later on, he (ﷺ) allowed people to use only the *ruqā* that he approved, or that did not contain *shirk*. Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) prohibited *ruqā*. Then, some

1 *Tiwalah*: Beads or other objects, usually worn around the neck, believed by some people to have the power of making a husband love his wife.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 331.

people from the tribe of ‘Umr Bin Ḥazam came to him and said, “We have a *ruqyah* that we used to use for scorpion and snake stings; but you have now prohibited using *ruqā*.” And they showed it to him. He (ﷺ) said:

«I do not see anything wrong in it. Anyone among you who can benefit his brother should do so.»¹

Conditions for a Permissible *Ruqyah*

There are some important conditions that must be satisfied in a *ruqyah* to make it permissible. They were summarized by Ibn Ḥajar (رحمته الله):

“There is a consensus among the ‘*ulamā*’ that *ruqā* are permissible when they satisfy three conditions: to be with Allāh’s words or His names and attributes, to be in Arabic or of an intelligible meaning, and to believe that they do not have effect by themselves but by Allāh (ﷻ).”²

In what follows, we discuss each of these conditions:

1. MUST BE WITH ALLĀH’S WORDS, NAMES, OR ATTRIBUTES

As we will see below, all forms of *ruqā* reported in the *Sunnah* satisfy this condition. They either consist of specific portions of the *Qur’ān*, such as *al-Fātiḥah* or *āyaṭ ul-Kursī*, or contain a praise of Allāh (ﷻ) and an invocation of His help and protection.

2. MUST BE WITH CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD WORDS

This is an important condition that must be satisfied in order to eliminate any magic factors from the *ruqyah*. It is discussed more later (under the prohibited things).

1 Muslim.

2 *Fatḥ ul-Bārī* 10:240.

3. BELIEVING THAT THE TRUE BENEFIT IS FROM ALLĀH

Similar to our earlier discussion of medicines, one must always believe that the true and ultimate protector is Allāh (ﷻ) alone, and that *ruqā* and medications are means that He created and He controls as He wills. Thus trust must be put in Him and not in the means that He created. Allāh (ﷻ) commands His Messenger (ﷺ):

﴿فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ ٥٦ غافر

«So seek refuge with Allāh (only); verily, it is He who is all-Hearer, all-Seer.»¹

Additional Guidelines

In what follows, there are additional guidelines that should be taken into consideration what performing a *ruqyah*.

1. ADHERING TO WHAT IS REPORTED IN THE *SUNNAH*

Ruqyah is a form of supplication. As is the case with other supplications, it is permissible to use any words that fulfill the above conditions. This is approved by Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) who said:

«There is nothing wrong with *ruqā* as long as they do not involve *shirk*.»²

However, rather than experimenting with *ruqā* that may or may not be useful, and rather than being doubtful as to whether a specific *ruqyah* fulfills the correct conditions and guidelines, it is best to adhere to the *ruqā* that have been reported in the *Sunnah*.

1 *Ghāfir* 40:56.

2 Muslim. The full report of this *ḥadīth* is presented below.

2. SEEKING *RUQYAH* FROM OTHERS?

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

‘The prophets have been presented to me with their nations¹; so a prophet would pass with a whole nation, a prophet would pass with a large following, a prophet would pass with ten followers, a prophet would pass with five followers, and a prophet would pass by himself!

Then I saw a great number of people covering the horizon. I asked Jibrīl, “Are those my *Ummah*?” He replied, “No, (they are Mūsā’s followers,) but look again toward the horizon.” I looked and saw an even greater number, and he said, “Those are your followers; and preceding them are seventy thousand who will be exempt from reckoning and punishment.” I asked, “Why is that?” He replied, “They do not burn themselves (for treatment), nor do they seek *ruqyah*, nor do they believe in evil omens; and on their Lord do they rely.>

A *ṣahābī* named ‘Ukāshah Bin Miḥṣan said, “O Allāh’s Messenger, ask Allāh to make me one of them.” He said, ‘O Allāh, make him one of them.> Another man asked him, “O Allāh’s Messenger, ask Allāh to make me one of them.” He said, ‘Ukāshah has anteceded you to that.>²

Based on this *ḥadīth*, some ‘*ulamā*’ consider it disliked to perform or seek *ruqyah*. Others permit it because the Prophet (ﷺ) allowed it and told some people to seek it. The most appropriate position in this regard, as is pointed by Ibn Ḥajar and others, is that it is not disliked to perform *ruqyah*, but only to seek it, because the latter action generally reflects a deficiency in one’s full reliance on Allāh and being able to directly seek His help.

1 This could be during his night trip (*isrā’*) to the heavens, or in a true dream.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī and others.

Things to Avoid in a *Ruqyah*

1. *SHIRK*

‘Awf Bin Mālik al-Ashjaī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Allāh’s Messenger! We used to apply *ruqā* during *Jāhiliyyah*. What do you think of that?” He replied:

«Present your *ruqā* to me. There is nothing wrong with them as long as they do not involve *shirk*.»¹

Ibn Mas‘ūd’s (رضي الله عنه) wife Zaynab narrated that he saw on her neck a string and asked her, “What is this?” She replied, “It is a string on which a *ruqyah* was made for me.” He cut it off her neck and said:

«You, family of Ibn Mas‘ūd, are in no need for *shirk*. Truly, I heard Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) say, «Indeed, *ruqā*, amulets, and *tiwalah*, are all acts of *shirk*.»»

She said, “Why do you say this? I was having spasms of pain in my eye; so I went to such and such a Jewish man, and whenever he treated it with *ruqyah*, it soothed it.” He replied:

“That is the doing of Satan. He (Satan) pinches it with his hand; and when the *ruqyah* is applied to it, he removes his hand. It would have been sufficient for you to say what Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to say:

«أذهب البأس، ربّ الناس، واشف، أنت الشافي،
لا شفاء إلا شفاؤك، شفاء لا يغادر سقماً»

«*Athhib il-ba’s, rabb an-nās, washfi ant ash-shāfi, lā shifā’a illā shifā’uk, shifā’an lā yughādiru saqamā.*»

1 Muslim.

Meaning:

«Remove the affliction, Lord of the people, and cure—You are the one who cures, and there is no cure except from You—a cure that will not leave any sickness.»¹

2. MAGIC

The Prophet (ﷺ) explicitly prohibited all magical *ruqā*. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«*Nashrah*² is of the doing of Satan.»³

3. SEEKING IT FROM MAGICIANS OR SOOTHSAYERS

One may never go to a magician for help, regardless of whether the magician were true or false. False magicians are liars who pretend things to attract people's awe, money, or both. True magicians rely on *jinn*s and the devil, and apply procedures containing *kufr* to produce their spells. Thus all of their spells, including *ruqā*, are prohibited, and any Muslim who seeks their help belies his belief in the Prophet (ﷺ). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever goes to a soothsayer or fortuneteller and believes in what he says has indeed rejected that which has been revealed to Muḥammad.»⁴

As indicated in the *Qur'ān*, the magicians can never be successful (*Tāhā* 20:69), nor can they benefit anyone (*al-Baqarah* 2:102). Because of all of this, and from the rule established earlier that Allāh did not

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd; judged *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt ul-Maṣābīh* no. 4552).

2 A magical spell done to counter another magical spell.

3 Recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2760).

4 Recorded by Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 5939).

make our cure in anything that He prohibited, we clearly conclude that it is not permissible at all to seek a *ruqyah* from a magician.

4. USING UNINTELLIGIBLE WORDS OR PHRASES

As has been indicated earlier, a *ruqyah* must be in intelligible and well-understandable words. Otherwise, it could contain *shirk*, magic, or other evils covered by cryptic characters and mysterious words.

5. APPLYING IT IN PROHIBITED OR STRANGE SITUATIONS

Some people require that a *ruqyah* be accompanied with bizarre actions or conditions, such as **applying it** in a graveyard or bathroom, or applying it to a person **who is unclean** or covered with *najāsah*. These and other similar requirements, **beside** conflicting with what has been reported in the *Sunnah*, **demonstrate** a devilish tendency that must be totally avoided.

As for writing a *ruqyah* **on a piece of paper** and attaching it to the body of the patient, or **soaking the paper** in water and making him drink that water, or blowing and spitting over a water container while reading it and then making him drink that water, all of this has no basis in the *Sunnah*¹, and should therefore be totally avoided.

6. USING PROHIBITED WORDS OR PHRASES

A *ruqyah* may not include evil words, such as cursing, offensive descriptions, or profanity. All of this is prohibited, and, as has been indicated earlier, Allāh did not make our cure in anything prohibited.

7. RELYING ON THE POWER OF THE *RUQYAH*

Neither the person applying a *ruqyah*, nor the person to whom it is applied may assume that it has an independent power of cure or

1 There are some authentic reports indicating that Imām Aḥmad (رحمته الله) and some other 'ulamā' of the *salaf* have allowed some of these actions, but this by no means gives them a stamp of approval without a supportive evidence from the *Sunnah*.

protection. They must both put their full trust in Allāh, rely fully on Him, and believe that the *ruqyah* is a means that He created for them. As Ibn ul-Qayyim indicates ¹, one should view a *ruqyah* like one does a sword: it can be of no use without three conditions:

- a) It should be strong and sharp.
- b) The person using it should be well versed and experienced.
- c) There should be no obstacles hindering it from being most effective.

8. THE PROFESSION OF *RUQYAH*-GIVING

Some people have turned *ruqyah*-giving into a profession for which they devote their full time, and from which they earn a lot of money. This conflicts with the *Sunnah* and the practice of the *salaf*. It should be avoided by both the giver (called a reciter or a *rāqī*) and the seeker of *ruqyah*. Some of the reasons for its prohibition are the following:

1. The common people think that the reciter has a special healing power, thereby turning their minds from the True Healer and His words to the one who recites them. This is a clear source of *shirk*.
2. We have no reports of any of the *ṣahābah* and *salaf* devoting their time to offer this service. This makes it a *bid'ah* in the *Dīn*.
3. When the devils realize the common people's fascination by a particular person, they do things to cause deviation to him and them. This is clearly expressed in the above discussion that took place between Ibn Mas'ūd and his wife.
4. When a reciter finds the people gathering at his door seeking his help, he would imagine that he has a high status before Allāh, and would be drawn into vanity and conceit.
5. Most of the reciters have a poor knowledge of the *Sunnah*, which makes them claim or do things that have no basis in *Islām*.

1 In *al-Jawāb ul-Kāfī*.

6. Since this profession is a good source of income, it attracts many impostors and liars who claim that they can treat people, thereby adding to the spread of ignorance, falsehood, and *shirk*.

Ruqā* from the *Sunnah

Various forms of supplications for prevention or healing, some of which may be classified as *ruqā*, have been presented earlier in this book. In what follows, we include some more, or refer to earlier ones, as the discussion warrants.

RUQYAH WITH ALLĀH'S NAME

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Jibrīl came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “O Muḥammad, are you sick?” He replied, <Yes.> He said:

«بسم الله أرقيك، من كل شيء يؤذيك، من شر كل نفسٍ
أو عين حاسد، الله يشفيك، بسم الله أرقيك.»

“*Bismillāhi arqik, min kulli shay'in yu'thīk, min sharri kulli nafsin aw 'ayni ḥāsīd* — With Allāh's Name I shelter you (give you *ruqyah*), from all that ails you, from the evil of every soul, or that of the envious eyes. May Allāh cure you; with Allāh's Name I shelter you.”¹

Another *ruqyah* using Allāh's name is in the *ḥadīth* of 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) cited below (p. 100).

1 Muslim and others.

RUQYAH WITH ALLĀH'S BOOK

‘Ā’ishah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) came into her house and saw with her a woman who was treating her with *ruqyah*. He told her:

⟨**Treat her (only) with Allāh’s Book.**⟩¹

In what follows, we present *ruqā* with specific *sūrahs* or *āyāt* as is recorded in the *Sunnah*.

RUQYAH WITH AL-FĀTIḤAH

Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (ﷺ) and Ibn ‘Abbās (ﷺ) reported that a number of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions were on a journey. They stopped one night by the dwellings of a bedouin tribe who refused to host them and give them food.

The chief of that tribe was then stung (by a snake or scorpion). His people tried everything possible to treat him, but to no avail. One of them suggested to seek help from the travellers. When they came to them, one of them said, “By Allāh, I can perform *ruqyah*; but you have refused to host us. So I would not perform the *ruqyah* until you pledge to give us an offering.”

They agreed to give them a flock of thirty sheep, and the companion started blowing (with light spit) on the stung man’s sting and reading *al-Fātiḥah*. He was immediately cured, like one who was tied and then set free. He stood and walked as if nothing happened to him, and they gave them their pledged offering.

Some of the companions said, “Let us divide this flock among us.” Others said, “No, you may not take any pay for reading Allāh’s Book! Let us not divide the goats until we reach the Prophet (ﷺ), tell him what happened, and see what he commands us.”

When they reached al-Madīnah, they came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him what happened. He said (approvingly):

¹ Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1931.

«How did you know that it (*al-Fātiḥah*) is a *ruqyah*? You have done well! And indeed, the best thing to be paid for is Allāh's Book. ¹ So, divide it among you; and allot a share for me.» ²

A similar incident took place with another *ṣaḥābī* who cured a madman with *al-Fātiḥah*, as is cited below (p. 98).

RUQYAH WITH AL-MU'AWWIḤĀT

As explained earlier, *al-Mu'awwiḥāt* are the last three *sūrahs* of the *Qur'ān*. The last two of them carry a clear meaning of *ruqyah*, and are presented below. *Sūrat ul-Ikhlāṣ* (112) does not carry such meaning in an explicit manner, but contains concise and strong words of praise for Allāh (ﷻ), making it an important introduction to the succeeding two *sūrahs*:

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفُلُقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾﴾ الفلق ١-٥

«Say, “I seek refuge with the Lord of daybreak, from the evil of what he created, and from the evil of darkness when it settles, and from the evil of the

1 One may not be paid for praying or reading *Qur'ān*, because these are acts of worship that should be done purely for Allāh (ﷻ). However, it is permissible to be paid a compensation for the time or effort that one sometimes puts into matters associated with these acts of worship in order to serve the Muslim community. For example, a regular *imām* in a *masjid* should be compensated for devoting his time to that position, otherwise he would have to work in a profession that would prevent him from fulfilling all of the services needed from him.

Furthermore, based on this *ḥadīth*, some scholars conclude that it is also permissible to be paid for a benefit that reaches others because of one's reading *Qur'ān*.

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

blowers in knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies.”»¹

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ﴿٣﴾
مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ
النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾ مِنَ الْغَيْبِ وَالنَّاسِ﴾ الناس ١-٦

«Say, “I seek refuge with the Lord of the people, the King of the people, the God of the people, from the evil of a retreating whisperer, who whispers (evil) in the breasts of the people, (whether he is) from among *jinn*s or the people.”»²

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

“When Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) went to bed, he would bring the palms of both hands together, and blow into them while reading “*Qul huwa ‘Llāhu aḥad*”³, “*Qul a’ūthu bi rabb il-falaq*”⁴, “*Qul a’ūthu bi rabb in-Nās*”⁵. He would then rub with them whatever he could reach of his body, starting with his head, face, and the front part of his body. He would do this three times. When he got very ill, he asked me to do that for him.”⁶

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) also reported:

“In the final sickness in which he passed away, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to blow over himself with *al-Mu’awwizhāt*. When he became very ill, I blew with

1 *Al-Falaq* 113:1-5.

2 *An-Nās* 114:1-6.

3 *Sūrah* 112.

4 *Sūrah* 113 (cited above).

5 *Sūrah* 114 (cited above).

6 *Al-Bukhārī* and *Muslim*.

them for him, rubbing over him with his own hand because of the blessing in it.”¹

Another *ḥadīth* has been cited earlier in regard to using these *sūrahs* for scorpion stings (page 76).

RUQYAH WITH ĀYAT UL-KURSI

Ubayy Bin Ka'b narrated that he had a harvest of dates. He noticed that it shrunk every day, and decided to watch it at night. He did and noticed a beast that looked like a boy who attained puberty. He gave him *salām*, and it responded to him with *salām*.

He asked it, “Are you human or *jinn*?”

It replied, “*Jinn*.”

He told it, “Show me your hand.”

It showed him its hand, and he saw that it looked like a dog's, with fur like that of a dog covering it.

He exclaimed, “Is this how *jinn* are like!?”

It then told him, “All *jinn*s know that there is no one among them stronger than me.”

He asked it, “What brought you here?”

It replied, “We have been informed that you like to give charity, so we came to get some of your food.”

He asked it, “What would protect us from you?”

It replied, “This *āyah* from *Sūrat ul-Baqarah*, ‘*Allāhu lā ilāha illā huw al-ḥayy ul-qayyūm*,’² — whoever says it in the evening will be protected from us until the morning, and whoever says it in the morning will be protected from us until the evening.”

In the morning, Ubayy came to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and told him of that incident. He told him, <The evil one has said the truth!>³

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 *Al-Baqarah* 2:255.

3 Recorded by an-Nasā'ī and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī ().

RUQYAH WITH ALLĀH'S COMPLETE WORDS

Allāh's complete words are His commands and decree that never err, and that are most truthful, just, wise, and overwhelming. There is a number of *ḥadīths* relating that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed *ruqā* with Allāh's complete words. 'Abdullāh Bin 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to shelter his grandchildren al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn with the same supplication that Ibrāhīm (رضي الله عنه) used to say for his children Ismā'īl and Ishāq:

«أعيدكما بكلمات الله التامة من كل شيطان وهامة،

ومن كل عين لامة»

«*Uṭhukumā bikalimāt illāh it-tāmmah, min kulli shayṭānin wa-hāmmah, wa min kulli 'aynin lāmmah* — I shelter both of you with Allāh's complete words from every devil and harmful creature, and from every envious eye.»¹

RUQYAH OF THE EARTH

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when one suffered from a sickness, ulcer, or wound, the Prophet (ﷺ) would thrust his index finger into the ground (after wetting it with his saliva), raise it, (rub the ailing part,) and say:

«بسم الله تربة أرضنا، بريقة بعضنا، يُشفى سقيمنا، بإذن ربنا.»

«*Bismillāh, turbatu arḍinā, birīqati ba'ḍinā, yushfā saqīmunā, biṭhni rabbīnā* — With Allāh's name, and with this soil of our earth and our saliva, our sick will be cured with our Lord's permission.»²

1 Al-Bukhārī.

2 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

Things Requiring *Ruqyah*

PROTECTION FROM SATAN

There are several forms of *ta'wīth* or *ruqā* mentioned in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* for protection from Satan's harm and plotting. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وإِذَا يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ الأعراف ٢٠٠

«And if an evil whisper comes to you from Satan, seek refuge with Allāh. Verily, He is all-Hearer, all-Knower.»¹

﴿وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ﴾ المؤمنون ٩٧-٩٨

«And say, “My Lord! I seek refuge with you from the suggestions of the devils, and I seek refuge with you, my Lord, lest they be present with me.”»²

﴿فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ﴾ النحل ٩٨

«So when you want to recite the *Qur'ān*, (first) seek refuge with Allāh from Satan, the expelled one (from His mercy).»³

﴿وإِذَا يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ

1 Al-A'rāf 7:200.

2 Al-Mu'minūn 23:97-98.

3 An-Nahl 16:98.

هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾ فصلت ٣٦

«And if an evil whisper from Satan comes to you, seek refuge with Allāh. Verily, He is the all-Hearer, the all-Knower.»¹

THE EVIL EYE

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) heard a little child crying, and said:

«Why is this child crying? Wouldn’t you seek to treat him with *ruqyah* from the evil eye?»²

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) saw in her house a young girl whose face appeared yellowish. He said:

«Seek *ruqyah* for her, because she is struck with an evil eye.»³

Buraydah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Do not treat with *ruqyah* except for the evil eye, stings, or bleeding.»⁴

And Asmā’ Bint ‘Umays (رضي الله عنها) narrated that she said to the Prophet (ﷺ), “O Allāh’s Messenger, the children of Ja’far are easily afflicted with the evil eye. Should I seek *ruqyah* for them?” He replied:

«Yes! If anything were to race the *Qadar*, it would be the evil eye.»⁵

1 *Fuṣṣilat* 41:36.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1048).

3 Al-Bukhārī.

4 Muslim and others (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 7496).

5 Recorded by Aḥmad and others; judged authentic by al-Albānī (*Mishkāt ul-Maṣābīḥ* no. 4560).

This means that the evil eye's envy is so harmful, and its harm so immediate, that it could almost take effect before what had already been decreed.

ULCERS

A man from the Anṣār was afflicted with ulcers on his sides. He was told that a woman called ash-Shifā' does *ruqyah* for that. He went to her and asked her to treat him. She refused saying, "By Allāh, I have not done any *ruqyah* since I embraced *Islām*." The man went to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and mentioned this to him. So he (ﷺ) summoned her and said, **«Present your *ruqyah* to me.»** She did, and he (ﷺ) said:

«Treat him with this *ruqyah*; and teach it to Ḥafṣah just as you taught her to write.»¹

PAIN AND GENERAL SICKNESS

Many supplications for curing from sickness or pain are recorded in the *Sunnah*. Some of those are classified by the scholars as *ruqā*, and a number of them have been cited earlier, such as the *ruqyah* of Jibrīl for the Prophet (ﷺ) when he was suffering from a sickness (p. 63), and the *ruqyah* that the Prophet (ﷺ) taught to 'Uthmān Bin Abī al-'Āṣ (p. 33).

STINGS

The *ḥadīth* of Buraydah (رضي الله عنه) cited above indicates that stings are among the things that may be treated with *ruqyah*. In a previously cited *ḥadīth* by 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) (p. 76), the Prophet (ﷺ) applied *ruqyah* to himself with *al-Mu'awwizhāt* after a scorpion's sting. Also, the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (p. 90) expresses the Prophet's (ﷺ) approval to using *al-Fātiḥah* as a *ruqyah* for stings. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 178.

Prophet (ﷺ) also approved of some people using another *ruqyah* for a scorpion's sting (p. 81).

MADNESS

Khārijah Bin aṣ-Ṣalt at-Tamīmī (رضي الله عنه) reported that his uncle went to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and embraced *Islām*. On his way back, he passed by some people who had among them a madman shackled in iron. The madman's family told him, "We have been told that this companion of yours (i.e., the Prophet) has come with good things. So, do you have anything (from him) with which to treat this?" He gave him *ruqyah* with the opening chapter of the Book, doing that morning and evening for three days. After reading it every time, he would collect his saliva and blow over him. He was thus cured, as if freed from captivity. They gave him (the *ṣaḥābī*) a hundred goats. He went back to Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and told him about that. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him, «Did you say anything else beside this?» He replied, "No!" He said:

«Take them then; by Allāh, many a person earns food because of a false *ruqyah*, but you have indeed earned them because of a true *ruqyah*.»¹

PROTECTION FROM FEAR

'Abdullāh Bin 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to teach them (the *ṣaḥābah*) to say the following words in situations of fear:

«أعوذ بكلمات الله التامة من غضبه وشر عباده،

ومن همزات الشياطين وأن يحضرون»

«*A'ūthu bikalimāt illāh it-tāmmah min ghaḍabihī wa sharri 'ibādih, wa min hamazāt ish-shayāṭīni wa an yaḥdurūn* — I seek refuge in Allāh's complete words

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2027).

from His anger, from the evil of His creation, and from the spurring of the devils and that they be present with me.»¹

PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL CREATURES

Khawlah Bint Ḥakīm (رضي الله عنها) reported that she heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«Whoever stops at a place² and says:

«أعوذ بكلمات الله التامات من شر ما خلق»

“*A‘ūthu bikalimāt illāh it-tāmmāt min sharri mā khalaq* — I seek refuge in Allāh's complete words from all that He created,” nothing would harm him until he departs from that place.»³

PROTECTION FROM THE EVIL OF A NEW TOWN

Ṣuhayb (رضي الله عنه) reported that as soon as Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saw a town that he intended to enter he would say:

«اللهم ربّ السموات السبع وما أظللن، وربّ الأرضين السبع وما أقللن، وربّ الشياطين وما أضللن، وربّ الرياح وما دزّين، أسألك خيرَ هذه القريةِ وخيرِ أهلها، وأعوذ بك من شرّها وشرِّ ما فيها»

«*Allāhumma rabb as-samāwāt is-sab‘i wa mā aẓlalna, wa rabb al-arḍīn as-sab‘i wa mā aqlalna, wa rabb*

1 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

2 I.e., to rest or camp during travel.

3 Muslim.

ash-shayāṭīni wa mā aḍlalna, wa rabb ar-riyāḥi wa mā tharayna, as'aluka khayra hāthih il-qaryati wa khayra ahlihā, wa a'ūthu bika min sharrihā wa sharri mā fihā.>

Meaning:

«O Allāh, Lord of the seven heavens and all that they cover, Lord of the seven earths and all that they carry, Lord of the devils and all that they misguide, Lord of the winds and all that they scatter, I ask you for the good of this town and the good of its people, and seek refuge in you from its evil and the evil that it contains.»¹

PROTECTION FOR THE WHOLE DAY

‘Uthmān Bin ‘Affān (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Nothing would harm a ‘abd who says three times every morning and evening:

«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ، وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ» (ثلاث مرات)

“*Bism illāh il-lathī lā yaḍurru ma’ asmihī shay’un fil arḍi walā fis-samā’i wahuw as-samī’ ul-‘alīm* — (I shelter myself) with the name of Allāh, the One with whose name nothing can cause harm on the earth or in the heaven; He is the all-Hearer the all-Knower.”²

1 Recorded by an-Nasā’ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb* no. 649).

CHAPTER 7

REGULATIONS FOR THE DISABLED ¹

Introduction

DEFINITION

A disabled person is one who is afflicted with a certain amount of deficiency in his (or her) physical body or mental faculties. This definition includes several categories of disabilities that make one less able to function than an average person, such as partial or total loss of vision or hearing, loss of the ability to use one or more limbs of the body, or partial loss of mental abilities. Therefore, disabilities range from mild to severe. This should be taken into consideration while reading the forthcoming discussion.

It is reported that approximately 10% of all people have some kind of disability. This means that there are more than 500 million disabled people in the world today. Statistical data estimates that 80% of these people live in the poorer countries referred to as “the developing world”.

IMPORTANCE

With the above definition, disability is a form of sickness to which apply all of the earlier discussions in this book. However, we have included this special chapter because:

- a) Disability usually refers to a long-term deficiency that requires special care or regulations.

¹ The main reference for this chapter is ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān ‘Abd ul-Khālīq’s article titled *al-Mushawwiq fī Ahkām al-Mu’awwaq*.

- b) People tend to neglect a sick person after getting used to his condition or becoming tired of it, which usually happens after the first few days of sickness.
- c) There is a large number of Muslims who can be classified as “disabled”, and who do not usually receive the proper care required in *Islām*.
- d) The Western civilization has given a great importance to serving and rehabilitating the disabled in various manners, right and wrong, making this an important trend in the minds of many people.

All of this made it imperative in this chapter to reemphasize some of the earlier principles, refer back to others, and bring out some additional points more relevant to the disability situations.

The Worst Disability

Disbelief in Allāh being the worst sin on Earth, the truly disabled person is the disbeliever: Allāh created him, fashioned him, and gave him hearing, sight, and heart. Instead of using these faculties to believe in Allāh, worship Him, and follow His Straight Path, he paralyzed them and chose to disbelieve. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْإِنسِ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾»

الأعراف ١٧٩

«We have certainly created for Hell many of the *jinn*s and human beings. They have hearts with which they fail to understand, and eyes with which they fail to see, and ears with which they fail to hear.

**Those are like cattle; rather, they are further astray;
those are the heedless ones.»¹**

This is the status of a disbeliever who cripples his ability to hear, see, and recognize the truth. Like an animal, he only uses his faculties in pursuit of food, drink, and mating. An animal is even better than him, because it is not entrusted with accountability like the human beings. True blindness is not the loss of vision, but is the loss of insight and faith. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي

الْصُّدُورِ﴾ الحج ٤٦

**«For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but
blinded are the hearts that are within the breasts.»²**

Therefore, a truly disabled person is not one who lost part of his mental ability, one of his senses, or one of his organs. A believer who strives to obey Allāh with whatever senses and organs He (ﷻ) gave him, and utilizes them appropriately for what they were created is never disabled. A truly disabled person is one who Allāh gave hearing, sight, and all of his bodily organs, but he refrains from using them to increase his faith, and misuses them in disobeying his Benefactor.

All of Allāh's Creation Is Good

There is wisdom and a purpose in everything that Allāh (ﷻ) created, and all of His creation is good. Allāh (ﷻ) describes Himself as:

﴿الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ﴾ السجدة ٧

1 Al-A'raf 7:179.

2 Al-Hajj 22:46.

«The One Who makes most excellent everything that He creates.»¹

Allāh (ﷻ) did not make a mistake, nor did He forget anything when He created the creation. Everything was planned in the best way, completely recorded in *al-Lawḥ ul-Maḥfūz*, and precisely created as planned. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾ ﴿الأنعام ٣٨﴾

«There is no creature (that walks) on the earth, nor bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. Not a thing have We neglected from the Book.»²

Allāh has dignified the human beings over other creatures by giving them the best and most complete physical appearance. He (ﷻ) made them better than the animals by giving them a superior intellectual ability, and by subjugating the animals to them. He even preferred the righteous human beings over the angels. He says:

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾ ﴿الإسراء ٧٠﴾

«We have certainly honored the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided them with good and pure things for sustenance, and favored them far above a great part of Our creation.»³

If some human beings are different from the average creation of people, that does not make them less distinguished, nor does it mean

1 *As-Sajdah* 32:7.

2 *Al-An'ām* 6:38.

3 *Al-Isrā* 17:70.

that there was a flaw in their creation. Ash-Sharīd (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) once reproached a man who was wearing his *izār* (lower garment) too long (below the ankles), and told him:

«Raise your *izār*: Have *taqwā* of Allāh!»

He explained that he wanted to hide his legs to avoid the mockery of the people, “My legs are so bent that my knees touch each other.” But the Prophet (ﷺ) did not accept that excuse and said:

«Raise your *izār*, for all of Allāh’s creation is good.»

That man was never seen after that with his *izār* reaching below the middle of his shins.¹

Allāh’s Wisdom in Creating Disabilities

A disability, being an affliction from Allāh (ﷻ), demonstrates the same aspects of wisdom, as was discussed in Chapter 1. In what follows, we summarize that and add a few aspects specifically relevant to the subject of disabilities.

Wisdom Behind Disabilities

1	They expiate a believers’ sins and purify him (or her) prior to the Day of Judgement.
2	They are signs of Allāh’s love for a believer.
3	They are signs of belief and faith.
4	They are signs of righteousness.

¹ Recorded by Aḥmad and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1441).

Wisdom Behind Disabilities

5	They are means of punishing a believer with lesser suffering in this life instead of the greater suffering and pain stored for the disbelievers in the hereafter.
6	They are means of multiplying the rewards for a disabled believer who displays contentment.
7	They are means of appreciating Allāh's full ability and choice to create complete and deficient creatures.
8	They are means of appreciating Allāh's favors by not subjecting a person to what others are subjected to.
9	They are means of appreciating Allāh's power, and that He alone is the one who determines one's welfare or disability.

Required Elements of Belief for the Disabled

Many elements of belief that are required from every believer are most vital in situations of affliction and suffering. Some of them have been covered in detail in Chapter 3 (under "Actions of the Heart"), and we make quick reference to them here. Others are introduced here for being more relevant to disability situations.

BELIEF IN ALLĀH'S DECREE

One must have full belief in Allāh's wisdom and justice, that everything is decreed by Him, and that nothing can happen different from what He has ordained. One must further have full submission to Allāh's decree, acceptance of its outcome, and patience in its regard.

A POSSIBLE FAVOR FROM ALLĀH

One must recognize that if Allāh inflicts suffering upon a believer, it is because He loves him, favors him, and wants to grant him some means for expiating his sins and improving his status in *Jannah*.

Because of this, as was discussed earlier, the messengers were afflicted the hardest; and needless to say, they showed the most endurance and contentment.

Therefore, when a believer is subjected to suffering, illness, or a physical disability, he is entitled to great rewards and a favored status from Allāh.

THE REWARDS INCREASE WITH AFFLICTION

Allāh rewards the believer for every mishap, no matter how small it is, even if it is the prick of a thorn. Furthermore, the greater the hardship and affliction, the greater will be the reward and compensation, as stated by the Prophet (ﷺ):

«Allāh (ﷻ) says, “When I take my servant’s sight, and he remains patient and seeks My reward for it, I approve of no reward for him less than Paradise.”»¹

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The magnitude of the reward is in accordance with the magnitude of the affliction. When Allāh (ﷻ) loves some people, He afflicts them.»²

NEVER DESPAIR

A disabled believer should strive to overcome his deficiency by optimizing the functioning of his remaining faculties and limbs. Loss of vision, for instance, does not mean one’s end of life, and should not make one hopeless or desperate. On the contrary, development of the

1 Recorded by at-Tirmithī from Anas and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan at-Tirmithī* no. 1958,1959).

2 Recorded by at-Tirmithī and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 146).

remaining senses may compensate for the loss of vision. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A strong believer is better and more beloved to Allāh than a weak one, and good is in both of them. Hold tight to what benefits you; and ask Allāh for help, and do not falter. If you are afflicted with a mishap, do not say, “Had I done such and such, such and such would have happened instead.” Rather say, “Allāh willed, and He does as He wills.” For “Had I ...” opens the way for the work of Satan.»¹

Obligations of Individuals Toward the Disabled

There are various obligations for the Muslims regarding disabilities and disabled people. In what follows we present some of them.

THANKFULNESS FOR WELL-BEING

One should thank Allāh (ﷻ) and praise Him for the gift of well-being, recognizing that Allāh can afflict him with the same thing that He afflicted others.

SUPPLICATION

One should pray for the disabled Muslims, asking Allāh (ﷻ) to reward them, heal them, and compensate them with something better than that of which they were deprived.

SYMPATHY

One should sympathize with the disabled, and realize that they may be better before Allāh than others who have been spared from their affliction.

¹ Muslim.

ASSISTANCE

Helping the needy is one of the greatest ways for obtaining lofty rewards. In particular, one should help the disabled and rush to their aid. Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) reported that he asked, “O Allāh’s Messenger, which are the best deeds?” He (ﷺ) replied, **«Believing in Allāh and striving for His cause.»** He asked, “Which are the best slaves to free?” He (ﷺ) replied, **«Those that are most precious to the owners and most expensive.»** He asked, “What if I could not do this?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«Help a (poor) worker, or work to aid one who does not have a profession.»

He asked, “What if I could not do this?” He (ﷺ) replied, **«Spare the people from your harm; this would surely count as a *ṣadaqah* for you.»**¹

In this *ḥadīth*, “one without a profession” refers to an individual whose mental abilities are so limited as to hinder him from learning a livelihood-earning profession. This is a form of mental retardation, which is a disability that calls for help from the Muslims.

So helping a blind person along the road, helping him with the basic needs of his life, reading for him, educating the deaf, caring for the physically or mentally incapacitated, etc., are among the greatest means of doing good.

By contrast, inconveniencing or harming a disabled person to make fun of him or fulfill an evil whim is one of the major sins. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ):

«Allāh curses one who misleads a blind man off his way.»²

1 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad.

2 Recorded by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab ul-Mufrad*, and verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Adab il-Mufrad* p. 332).

This means that misleading a blind man is a major sin that deserves Allāh's curse, such as to take him into a way that he does not want or that causes him harm by falling into a hole or tripping on a rock.

AVOIDING OFFENSE

It is mandatory to treat the disabled with kindness and consideration, and avoid ridiculing or humiliating them. It is totally prohibited, and is considered a major sin to call a Muslim with names that hurt him, backbite him, or say anything in his presence or absence that harms or displeases him in any manner. This applies equally or more appropriately to the disabled, because they are often more sensitive and easier to hurt due to their disability.

However, if the disabled person is known by a title specifying his disability—and he is not offended by it—then it is permissible, though not recommended, to refer to him by that title. For instance, the companion ‘Abdullāh Bin Umm Maktūm, the Blind,

A fine point often overlooked is that many disabled persons are sometimes offended by people showing excessive care toward them, and treating them in a way that magnifies their disability in their minds or the eyes of those present around them. One should thus be moderate and considerate in the way he treats the disabled.

Obligations of the Muslim *Ummah* Toward the Disabled

A COMMUNAL OBLIGATION

There is no doubt that the individual responsibility of caring for the disabled falls first upon the close relatives, for the womb relationship necessitates that the people thus attached care for each other. Therefore the priority to care for one another rests upon the relatives the same way that they are prioritized to inherit from each other. This makes caring for the disabled a *farḍ ‘ayn* upon the close relatives and the directly-involved individuals.

Additionally, caring for the disabled is a *farḍ kifāyah* upon the Muslim community. Caring for the blind, deaf, paralyzed, and other

disabled people is an obligation upon the whole Muslim *ummah*, just as is their obligation towards the poor, needy, and destitute.

Furthermore, every Muslim is required to perform what Allāh has ordered him in this regard, and it is obligatory for the entire Muslim community to aid the care provider of the disabled, especially if he is having difficulty performing these tasks.

SPIRITUAL REHABILITATION

A person's disability deprives him of some of enjoyments that are taken for granted by other people, such as health, walking, exercising, self dependency, enjoyment of food and drink, etc. Disability and affliction strike the soul and body; but their effect on the soul is more devastating. A break-down in the soul weakens the faith, and results in skepticism, anger, rebellion, and rejection of Allāh's decree and will. This is a form of *kufir* that destroys the soul, and it represents the greatest loss of this life and the Hereafter—we seek refuge with Allāh (ﷻ).

Needless to say, it is vital to restore as much as possible of a disabled's physical body, overcome its deficiency, and rehabilitate it. However, it is totally wrong to rehabilitate his body while neglecting his soul, heart, and faith. Neglecting the soul is a defective approach and misguided effort.

Therefore the first obligation is to sympathize with the disabled and encourage them to persevere and maintain strength of heart, soul, and faith. The community, as well as the individuals, must work hard on establishing methods and programs for healing the wounds of the disabled's souls as well as their bodies. They should work on rehabilitating their hearts and faith so as to be capable of accepting their deficiencies, and be satisfied with Allāh's decree and will, and hopeful of what Allāh reserves for His patient servants. It is important to remind them continuously that the pleasures and joys of this life are little, its days are few, and what Allāh has prepared is better and everlasting. This would strengthen the disabled's souls and bind their hearts to Allāh and the life hereafter.

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

The second obligation is to physically rehabilitate the disabled, benefit from the rest of the abilities that Allāh preserved for them, and escalate their potential. As is observed in many practical examples, one skilled hand can do the work of two inept hands; a limp may develop in his healthy extremities the power to do things beyond the ability of an average person with two feet; a blind person may develop insight, sharp understanding, and hearing, which make him more enlightened than many people with normal vision; and so on.

PROVIDING ACCESSIBILITY, AND SOCIALIZING

The third responsibility of the *ummah* is to mandate involving the disabled in public life, and to prevent isolating them from the society. This provides some means of achieving great rewards, among which are the following:

- ❁ Involving them in public positions and services where they can use their talents in helping the community as well as becoming financially independent.
- ❁ Involving them in public activities, such as the *jamā'ah* prayers, especially on Fridays and the Days of 'Īd.
- ❁ Inviting them to weddings, dinners, and other social functions.
- ❁ Encouraging and helping them attend public meetings and gatherings.
- ❁ Visiting them at their homes.

Unfortunately, many of the relatives and take-carers of disabled individuals have detached themselves from them, denied them the care they need, largely neglected them, and made them a source of scorn and ridicule. By this, they have deprived themselves of a great source of good deeds, lost many of Allāh's rewards and blessings, and accumulated a great deal of sins.

Blessings in the Presence of the Disabled

The presence of the disabled among the Muslims is a source of blessing, victory, and goodness, and is one of the gates to Allāh's Mercy. Treating them with mercy and affection is a means of attaining Allāh's forgiveness, mercy, and great rewards.

A parallel example is the presence of the poor in the *ummah*: it is a mercy for the rich, because the charity they give is a discipline for their souls, a purification of their money, and an elevation of their position among the righteous. Without the poor, the rich would not have the opportunity to purify their souls and wealth, and there would not be a great gate to paradise through which whoever gave a *ṣadaqah* (charity) is invited on the Day of Judgement. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whosoever spends two pairs ¹ for Allāh's cause, he will be called from the gates of *Jannah*, "O Allāh's servant, this is good!" Thus, he who is of the people of *ṣalāh* will be called from the gate of *ṣalāh*; he who is of the people of *jihād* will be called from the gate of *jihād*; he who is of the people of fasting will be called from the gate of ar-Rayyān (the thirst quencher); and he who is of the people of *ṣadaqah* will be called from the gate of *ṣadaqah*.» ²

Wouldn't a sane person love the existence of those who were made the cause of his salvation, success, and righteousness? Only an ignorant nonbeliever would hate that, echoing what his predecessors said:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْطَعِمُ مَنْ لَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ. إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

1 According to Ibn Ḥajar, this means two items that are usually given as charity (*fath ul-Bārī*).

2 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

مُبِين ﴿ يس ٤٧

«And when they are told, “Spend of that which Allāh has provided for you ,” those who disbelieve say to those who believe, “Should we feed one whom, had Allāh so willed, He could have fed (Himself)? You are but clear in clear error.”» ¹

No doubt, Allāh (ﷻ) is capable of making all of His servants rich. However, His wisdom ordained the existence of the rich and poor, as a test for the rich with wealth, and for the poor with poverty. A rich person should exhibit thankfulness and extend benevolence toward the needy, thereby purifying his soul and wealth, and acquiring the traits of mercy, generosity, and affection. On the other hand, the poor should exhibit patience and humbleness, long for Allāh’s rewards and beneficence, and avoid jealousy and hatred.

Therefore, the existence of the poor, weak, and disabled in the Muslim community is a great blessing, and they are essential means to Allāh’s rewards. Because of it, competition to help and offer good to them arises among the Muslims; their presence is a reminder of Allāh and His ultimate power, wisdom, mercy, and knowledge; furthermore, their prayer and supplication are acceptable, and are a source of mercy, victory and glory for the Muslims. Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«Approach me through the weak ones, for you acquire sustenance and victory through the weak ones among you.» ²

Also, Muṣ’ab Bin Sa’d (رضي الله عنه) reported that his father (Sa’d Bin ‘Ubādah (رضي الله عنه)) thought that he was superior to some of the poorer ones among the *ṣaḥābah*, so the Prophet (ﷺ) corrected him:

«Allāh only gives victory to this *ummah* by its

1 *Yā-sīn* 36:47.

2 Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasāī, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 779).

weaklings: through their supplication, prayer, and sincerity.> ¹

Western Methods in Rehabilitating the Disabled

PRASEWORTHY METHODS OF THE WEST

The Western inventors have devised many beneficial tools for the education and communication with the disabled, such as the Braille method for the blind, the sign language for the deaf, and various instruments and devices that help the disabled, like the motorized mobile chairs, lifts, and computers. There is no doubt as to the usefulness of these tools, and that they should be utilized as much as possible to facilitate the life of the disabled and reduce their distress.

However, we should differentiate between the application of these modern instruments and inventions to facilitate the physical rehabilitation, and the perverted methods adopted in the West for the spiritual rehabilitation of the disabled.

WESTERN ERRONEOUS THEORIES AND METHODS

Most of the contemporary methods for rehabilitating the disabled are based on the Western philosophy and view of life: That this is the only life to live, and there is no life after death; and that one should enjoy his life to the utmost, without being restrained by religion, morals, or tradition; etc.

Therefore, the Western societies have let free (in varying degrees) the base desires and lusts, thereby condoning dancing, music, alcohol, smoking, drugs, nudity, adultery, and perversion. They eliminated anything that might interfere with this "freedom", such as religious teachings, *ḥayā*², and tradition. This attitude was equally applied to

1 Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 779). The first half is recorded by al-Bukhārī as well.

2 *Ḥayā*² carries some of the meanings of shyness, modesty, and inhibition, but is not equivalent to them, because these characters, depending on the situation, could be

the healthy and the sick; and the psychologists postulated that the best form of rehabilitation for the disabled, which would restore to them the love and attachment to life, is through allowing them to cherish the joys of life with whatever senses are left for them.

The rehabilitation centers have thus embraced the Western theories, introducing therapy by singing, music, dancing, movies, and other methods, many of which are wrong and prohibited in *Islām*. They further apply methods that develop in the disabled aimless interests and absurd concerns, directing them to becoming strongly involved in wasteful practices and hobbies, such as trivial drawing, card games, backgammon, etc.

good or out of place, whereas *ḥayā* is always good, as ‘Imrān Bin Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Ḥayā brings nothing but good.» [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

And *ḥayā* is one of the traits of *īmān*, as Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«īmān consists of sixty-some or seventy-some branches, the highest of which is saying, “Lā ilāha illa ’Llāh (there is not true god but Allāh),” and the lowest is removing the dirt from the people’s way; And ḥayā is a branch of īmān.» [Al-Bukhārī and Muslim]

Ḥayā is the character that consistently compels one to avoid loathsome or blameworthy actions, or infringing on the rights of others—and Allāh’s right precedes any other’s. It makes one value one’s faith, honor, and morals, and be very disturbed if any of these is threatened in the least amount. Thus *ḥayā* is an action within the heart that may sometimes reflect on the body in the form of modesty of behavior or redness in the face. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) possessed the character of *ḥayā* in its best and highest form, as was described by Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه):

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) had more *ḥayā* than does a virgin in the innermost room of her house. When he saw something that he disliked, we immediately detected that in the expressions of his face.”

REFUTATION AND CORRECTION

The Western approach to spiritual rehabilitation is a sure method, not only for killing the time, but also for destroying the soul, preventing the disabled from the great beneficial and rewarding things that they are capable of doing. As stated earlier, the only true rehabilitation is in planting and nurturing the *Islāmic* principles, values, and morals in the disabled's hearts and souls, so that they would enjoy the permissible things, according to the potentials that Allāh allowed for them. A true believer will always find great pleasure and enjoyment in remembering Allāh, reading the *Qur'ān*, and learning the beneficent knowledge of *Islām*. This will be detailed below.

Important Preoccupations

BELIEF IN ALLĀH

Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked, "Which deeds are the best?" He replied, <Belief in Allāh and His Messenger> He was asked, "Then what?" He replied, <Jihād for Allāh's cause.> He was asked, "Then what?" He replied, <A righteous hajj.> ¹

This *hadīth*, as well as the one cited earlier (p. 109), clearly indicate that belief in Allāh is the best of deeds. And this deed is accessible to everyone, including the disabled, regardless of their disability—unless it is total insanity. Loss of hearing, eyesight, a limb, or a part of the intellect, do not prevent believing in Allāh. Rather, those afflicted with any of these disabilities might reach a higher level of belief than that of many healthy non-disabled people.

The true belief in Allāh (ﷻ) is associated with various great deeds of the heart, such as relying on Allāh, trusting Him, fearing Him, loving Him, praising Him, glorifying Him, revering Him, longing for what He has, and being conscious and watchful of Him. These deeds are all accessible to a person with a disability.

This means that the physically disabled have the opportunity to

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

perform the greatest obligation, the most honorable among the deeds of the Religion, the most rewardable, and the most highly regarded by Allāh: believing in Him, and all the other deeds of the heart that are associated with it.

Therefore, it is most important for the physically disabled to strengthen their belief, love and closeness to Allāh (ﷻ). This will be much more rewarding for them than whatever they lost because of their disabilities.

REMEMBERING ALLĀH AND MAKING *THIKR*

Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۖ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا﴾ ﴿الأحزاب ٤١-٤٢﴾

«O you who believe! remember Allāh with much remembrance; and exalt Him morning and afternoon.»¹

And He (ﷻ) says:

﴿فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرْ لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ﴾ ﴿البقرة ١٥٢﴾

«So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me, and do not deny Me.»²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allāh (ﷻ) says (in a *Qudusī ḥadīth*):

«I am at the expectations of My servant, and am with him when he remembers Me: If he mentions Me to himself, I mention him to Myself; and if he mentions Me among a distinguished group (of people), I mention him among a more distinguished

1 *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:41-42.

2 *Al-Baqarah* 2:152.

and better group (of angels).> ¹

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said that Allāh (ﷻ) says:

<I am with My servant when he remembers Me and his lips move to mention Me.> ²

Remembering Allāh with the heart and tongue is one of the easiest deeds. The weak and disabled people have been given by this a great opportunity to approach Allāh, devote themselves to worshipping Him, and feel continued closeness and attachment to Him. It is easy because it is performed with a simple movement of the tongue. And even if the disabled cannot move his tongue, he can still remember Allāh in his heart. Therefore, a disabled Muslim—rather, every Muslim—should strive to keep his tongue wet with the remembrance of Allāh.

THE PRAYER IS THE BEST SUBJECT

The *ṣalāh* is the greatest obligation after the belief in Allāh, and is a major pillar of *Islām*, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<(The thing that connects) between a man and *kufr* is abandoning the prayer.> ³

In addition to the five daily obligatory prayers, Allāh (ﷻ) has opened the door wide for additional voluntary prayers, many of which has been established by His Prophet (ﷺ). They include the twelve regular daily *rak'āt* (prayer units) performed before and after the mandatory prayers: two before *fajr*, four before and two after *zuhr*, two after *maghrib*, and two after *'ishā'*. Umm Ḥabībah (رضي الله عنها) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

1 Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

2 Recorded by Aḥmad and Ibn Mājah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Mājah* no. 3059).

3 Recorded by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and others.

◀Whoever prays in a day and night twelve voluntary rak'āt, Allāh builds for him a house in Jannah.▶¹

Allāh (ﷻ) has also prescribed the night voluntary prayer whose time extends from after 'ishā' until fajr, the *duḥā* (forenoon) prayer whose time extends from after sunrise until noon, as well as many reason-related voluntary prayers, such as the *masjid*'s greeting, the prayer following *wuḍū'*, etc. In addition to all of this, there are the unrestricted voluntary prayers, which can be offered at all times—except for the short intervals during which it is prohibited to pray: when the sun is rising, setting, or is in the zenith of its course at noon.

These prayers are the greatest thing with which a Muslim can preoccupy himself, and are among the greatest opportunities available for the physically disabled. A man asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "I want to accompany you in *Jannah*." He (ﷺ) asked, **◀Anything else?▶** He said, "This is it." The Prophet (ﷺ) advised him:

◀Help me against yourself by making prostrations (during the prayer) in plenty.▶²

Therefore, we urge those who are afflicted with disabilities to make the best of their time by praying, for this is the best of what a Muslim can achieve in this life.

GREAT SCHOLARS AFFLICTED WITH DISABILITIES

As was discussed earlier, a disabled person should take his disability as a blessing from Allāh, and should further look at it as a possible avenue for him to increase in *Islāmic* knowledge and practice. Many of the prominent scholars of *Islām* were afflicted with serious disabilities. Among those who lost there eyesight were: 'Abdullāh Bin 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه), at-Tirmithī (رضي الله عنه), and, in our time, the esteemed scholars 'Abd ul-'Azīz Bin 'Abdillāh Bin Baz, 'Abd ul-'Azīz Āl ush-Shaykh, and others. Among those who were

1 Recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad, and others.

2 Muslim.

amputated was 'Urwah Bin Az-Zubayr (ﷺ). Among those who were afflicted with a limp was 'Amr Bin Al-Jamūh (ﷺ) and 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Bin Hurmuz. And among those who were afflicted with bleary-eye was Sulaymān Bin Mihrān.

Some *Fiqh* Regulations for the Disabled

ASSISTANCE OF OTHER PEOPLE

Those who take care of the disabled should help them perform their religious obligations, such as purifying their body, performing *wuḍū'*, facing the *Qiblah*, sitting up for the prayer, performing *ḥajj*, etc. In the following discussion, the "disabled's ability" implicitly includes whatever help is available for them from other people.

BODILY PURITY AND *Wuḍū'*

As much as he can, a disabled person must remove all *najāsah* off himself. If, when the prayer-time comes, there is still *najāsah* on him that he cannot take off, and nobody is available to help him with it, he should pray like that. However, it would be better, as much as possible, to collect the *najāsah* into a bag, and to remove it during the prayer as far from the body as is possible.

Some female companions used to suffer from dysfunctional uterine bleeding ¹. When they prayed in the *Masjid* behind the Prophet (ﷺ), they placed bowls under themselves because of excessive bleeding. Knowing that the menstrual blood is a *najāsah* by consensus of the scholars, we can similarly conclude that it is permissible for a disabled person to attend the *jamā'ah* prayer in the *masjid*, even if he has a urine or feces bag connected to his chair, or if he carries it under his clothes.

If a disabled person cannot perform a complete *wuḍū'*, he should wash the *wuḍū'*-organs to the best of his physical ability. If he cannot

1 This means that their menstruation is irregular, prolonged (far beyond normal duration), and is accompanied with excessive bleeding.

perform any parts of the *wuḍūʿ*, he may perform *tayammum*. If he cannot perform *tayammum*, both of *wuḍūʿ* and *tayammum* are waived for him, and he should pray without performing either.

COVERING THE BODY

Some of the disabled, such as those afflicted with severe burns or skin diseases in areas of their body, cannot cover parts of their *ʿawrah*. Such persons may perform the prayer without having to cover the afflicted parts of their *ʿawrah*.

FACING THE QIBLAH

A disabled person must direct himself toward the *Qiblah* during the prayer. If he cannot, he may face any convenient direction.

PRAYER-TIME

One must perform each prayer within the prescribed time intervals. A disabled person should try to determine the correct prayer-time. If this is not possible, he may pray when he presumes that it is prayer-time.

PERFORMING THE PRAYER

The obligatory prayers are never waived for a person unless he is unaccountable due to insanity.

Accountability is only temporarily lifted from a sleeping person or a comatose while they are unconscious. But they must perform any missed prayers as soon as they wake up.¹

In contrast, if an insane person regains sanity, he does not have to perform the prayers that he missed during his insanity, because he was unaccountable then.

1 It should be emphasized that one may not deliberately miss a prescribed prayer because of sleep—this constitutes a major sin that results in a great punishment in the grave, as well as the hereafter (review Part IV of this series). Thus a person going to sleep should take all precautions to wake up on time for the mandatory prayers.

Therefore, those who are afflicted with any disabilities other than insanity must perform the mandatory prayers— even if they cannot fulfill some of their prerequisites and conditions. They may join *zuhr* and *'aṣr*, or *maghrib* and *'ishā* prayers. Also, they are exempted of any part of the obligatory prayer that they cannot perform. For instance, it is permissible to pray sitting down if they cannot stand up, and lying down if they cannot sit. If they cannot read *al-Fātiḥah*, they may just pass it through their heart. If they cannot make *rukū'* or *sujūd*, they may make signs representing those postures instead. ¹

FASTING

A person with a disability that prevents him from fasting, a person with a chronic disease, a very old person, and other people of comparable situations, do not have to fast the month of *Ramaḍān*. They should simply feed at least one poor person for every day that they missed, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ
أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ
خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿﴿﴾»

البقرة ١٨٣

«(Fasting is ordained for) a fixed number of days. So whoever among you is then ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. As for those who can fast, but with difficulty, they have to offer a ransom by feeding a poor person (for every day).» ²

As for those whose disability does not interfere with fasting, such as the blind and deaf, they should fast, and this obligation is not

1 Review the earlier discussion of this p. 44.

2 *Al-Baqarah* 2:184.

waived for them.

HAJJ

Hajj is mandatory for a disabled person who is financially able, and who possesses the means to reach Makkah and perform the rites of pilgrimage, even if this should be done with the aid of an instrument, such as a wheel-chair.

If one cannot do this, the *hajj* mandate is waived for him, and a close relative may perform it on his behalf. ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that a woman from the tribe of Khath‘am asked Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) during his Farewell Pilgrimage, “O Allāh’s Messenger! *Hajj* was ordained by Allāh at a time when my father is a very old man who cannot sit steady on the camel. Should I perform *hajj* on his behalf?” He (ﷺ) replied, <Yes, perform *hajj* on your father’s behalf.> ¹

FIGHTING FOR ALLĀH’S CAUSE:

Those who are afflicted with severe disabilities, such as blindness, limp, or serious sickness, are exempt from fighting for Allāh’s cause. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَىٰ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَاجِ حَرْجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ
حَرْجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾ الفتح

«There is no guilt upon the blind, nor is there guilt upon the lame, nor is there guilt upon the sick (for not joining the war): And whoever obeys Allāh and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens beneath which rivers flow; and whoever turns away, He will punish him with a painful punishment.» ²

1 Al-Bukhārī and others.

2 Al-Fatḥ 48:17.

However, the disabled should not be prevented from going out for fighting if they wished, especially if they can be of use, as did 'Amr Bin al-Jamūh (ﷺ) during the battle of Uḥud. Abū Qatādah (ﷺ) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said to the *ṣaḥābah*, **«March forth to a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious.»** 'Amr then stood up and said, “By Allāh, O Allāh's Messenger, I want to fight until I get killed for the cause of Allāh, and then stroll with my unsteady limp in *Jannah*.” Subsequently, 'Amr was killed in that battle, and the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by his body and said:

«I see you walking, with this leg well and healthy, in *Jannah*.»¹

Fatwās Concerning Disabilities

In what follows we present a selection of *fatwās* concerning disabilities issued by a number of contemporary distinguished 'ulamā'². The *fatwās* have sometimes been abbreviated for space reasons.

MARRIAGE OF CLOSE RELATIVES

Question: Is some doctors' claim true that marrying cousins or other relatives results in deformed or disabled children?

Answer (by Ibn 'Uthaymīn):

This claim, also made by some people of knowledge, is not totally true. There is surely an effect for heredity, as is reported by Abū Hurayrah (ﷺ) that a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) complaining that his wife gave birth to a black child—as if implying her unfaithfulness.

1 Recorded Aḥmad, ath-Thahabī (in *as-Siyar* 253), Ibn Abī Shaybah (in the Stories of al-Madīnah), and referenced by Ibn Ḥajar (in *al-Iṣābah* 2:523). This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan* according to Abdul-Khāliq.

2 The *fatwās* in this section are mostly translated from “*al-Lū'lu' uth-Thamīn min Fatāwa 'l-Mu'awwaqīn*”.

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, <Do you have camels?> He replied, “Yes!” He asked him, <What are their colors?> He replied, “Red.” He asked him, <Is there a grey one among them?> He replied, “Yes.” He asked him, <How did it get that color?> He replied, “Perhaps a root (from other ancestors) has caused it.” He (ﷺ) said, <So it is for this child of yours: perhaps a root has caused (its black color).> ¹

However, *Islām* does not support that marrying the relatives certainly results in deformed children. It is all in Allāh’s hand, and deformation has other reasons beside this.

The most important consideration in marriage is *Dīn* and character, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<A woman is sought in marriage for four reasons: her wealth, lineage, beauty or *Dīn*. So, procure the woman with *Dīn*—that you may be prosperous.> ²

And he (ﷺ) said:

<If someone whose *Dīn* and character satisfy you approaches you (for marriage), give him (your daughters, etc.) in marriage. If you do not do that, a tribulation and great mischief will arise on earth.> ³

Many situations are known where people married their cousins and found in that nothing but good. ‘Alī Bin Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) married the Prophet’s (ﷺ) daughter Fāṭimah (رضي الله عنها), who was his cousin, thereby giving birth to the two chiefs of the youth of *Jannah*: al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنهم) ⁴.

USING MUSIC FOR REHABILITATION

Question: Is it permissible to use music in the special rehabilitation

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

2 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه).

3 Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others, from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1022).

4 This statement is recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, and others from a large number of the *ṣaḥābah*, and is verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 796).

programs for the disabled?

Answer (by Ibn Jibrīn):

All musical instruments are prohibited in *Islām*. Therefore, they may not be used in such programs, because Allāh (ﷻ) has not made the cure of this *ummah* in things that are prohibited for it. There are surely other methods to replace the music and provide rest for the disabled, such as reciting *Qur'ān*.

FAVORING THE DISABLED CHILD

Question: Is it permissible for a parent to designate a specific amount of his inheritance to a disabled child?

Answer (by Ibn Jibrīn):

It is not permissible to give one child more than the other children, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Have *taqwā* of Allāh, and be fair among your children.»¹

However, it is permissible to designate a house or property as a *waqf*² that can be used by that child as well as other people, without giving him ownership of that property.

HOW WOULD A PARALYSED PERSON PRAY AND FAST

Question: Falling down from the second floor has resulted in my paralysis from the breasts down. Thus I cannot control the escape of urine or gas, and have a bag to collect the urine. I cannot sit on the ground, nor wash my private parts or feet. On Fridays, I go to the *masjid* in a wheel chair, and find difficulty in mounting the steps. Before going to the *masjid*, I empty the bag from urine. But after the prayer I find that there is some urine in it. How would I then perform

1 Al-Bukhārī and Muslim from an-Nu'mān Bin Bashīr (رضي الله عنه).

2 *Waqf*: An endowment or gift given in Allāh's way for the benefit of Muslims.

wuḍū' and *ṣalāh*? And do I have to go to the *masjid*?

Furthermore, this accident has affected my kidneys and urinary passages, and the doctors order me to drink large quantities of water on a continuous basis. Am I then required to fast, especially that I did try fasting, but that caused me to bleed?

Answer (by Ibn 'Uthaymīn):

First, we ask Allāh (ﷻ) to grant you patience and expectation of His rewards for your condition. Second, you should realize that Allāh does not demand from you more than what you are able to do.

When the time comes for an obligatory prayer, wash as much as you can of your body-parts that are contaminated with *najāsah*, and put on a clean bag. Then perform *wuḍū'*, washing your feet by yourself or with the help of one of your family members. Then pray as much as you want of obligatory or voluntary prayers.

You do not have to go to the *masjids* except for *Jumu'ah*, especially since the *masjids* around you appear to have stairs at their entrance, making it hard for you to enter with your chair.

Since your situation does not seem to warrant fasting, you should not fast, but should instead feed one poor person for each day of *Ramḍān* that you do not fast. Thus you may meet your obligation for the whole year in one of two ways:

- a) You prepare food and invite to it thirty poor men.
- b) You distribute six *ṣā'*s¹ of rice equally among thirty poor men, and give them an appropriate amount of meat or chicken with it.

A MAN TREATING A DISABLED WOMAN

Question: Is it permissible for a male specialist to conduct the physical rehabilitation for a disabled woman?

Answer (by Ibn Jibrīn):

It is well known that a man may not touch a stranger woman, except in the case of necessity, such as to save her from drowning or burning

1 A *ṣā'* is a measure approximately equal to four scoops, with the hands cupped together, of an average man.

or some other accident, in which case he may touch her, even if this leads to exposing some parts of her body. All of this is controlled by the rules of necessity, and may not be extended beyond that.

Thus, a man may treat a woman, or vice versa, if there is a necessity for it, and to the extent of that necessity. Similarly, it is permissible for a man to conduct physical rehabilitation for a disabled woman in the case of necessity, but not if a woman is available to conduct that treatment, even at a higher cost.

A DISABLED PERSON LEADING THE PRAYER

Question: A disabled person memorizes the *Qur'ān*. Is it permissible for him to lead the prayer?

Answer (by Ibn 'Uthaymīn):

If a person cannot stand in the prayer, he may sit, and his prayer is acceptable. The same is true if he cannot fulfill other actions such as *rukū'* or *sujūd*. And once a person's prayer is acceptable, it is permissible for him to lead the prayer. The Prophet (ﷺ) once led his companions in prayer while he was sitting. They prayed standing behind him, and he pointed to them to sit. After finishing, he instructed them that they must follow the example of the *imām*, adding:

<And if he prays sitting, all of you pray sitting.>¹

A BLIND PERSON LEADING THE PRAYER

Question: Is it permissible for a blind man to lead the prayer in the presence of knowledgeable seeing people?

Answer (by Ibn Bāz):

There is nothing wrong in a blind man's leading the prayer if he is worthy of that. It is authentically reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) put Ibn Umm Maktūm (رضي الله عنه), who was blind, in charge of al-Madīnah, and he

¹ Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

led the people in prayer. ¹

WIPING OVER A CAST

Question: What is the ruling concerning wiping over a *jabīrah*?

Answer (by Ibn ‘Uthaymīn):

Jabīrah originally means a thing used to splint a bone fracture. In the convention of the *fiqh* scholars, it means anything that covers a part of the body, due to a legitimate need, such as a cast put over a fracture, a bandage put over a wound, plaster put over an irritated muscle, etc.

All *ḥadīths* relating to wiping over a *jabīrah* are weak, even though some scholars believe that they can collectively strengthen each other to an acceptable level. Because of this, the scholars differ as to how to perform *wuḍū’* or *ghusl* in the presence of a *jabīrah*. Some say that the location covered by a *jabīrah* is to be totally eliminated from the required washing. Others say that one should perform *tayammum* for the sake of that part instead of wiping over it. However, the opinion that appears to be strongest to us is to wash whatever is accessible and wipe water over the *jabīrah* if it covers a part that is required to be washed.

After performing *wuḍū’* or *ghusl* as described above, if the *jabīrah* is removed, the *ṭahārah* or *wuḍū’* remain valid, because of the absence of any evidence to the contrary.

It is to be noted that the following differences exist between wiping over a *jabīrah* and a *khuff* ²:

Description ↓	<i>Khuff</i>	<i>Jabīrah</i>
a Duration:	Three days and nights for a traveller, and one day and night for a resident.	As long as it continues to be needed.

1 Recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd from Anas (رضي الله عنه). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī.

2 *Khuff* is a thin leather footwear, but the term is generally used in *fiqh* to refer to shoes, socks, or other types of footwear that cover the whole foot.

Description ↓	<i>Khuff</i>	<i>Jabīrah</i>
b Applicable body-part:	The feet.	No restriction.
c Valid <i>wuḍūʿ</i> prior to wearing it?	Required.	Not required.
d Part of it to wipe:	The upper part only.	All of it.
e Wiping in the case of <i>wuḍūʿ</i> or <i>ghusl</i> ?	<i>Wuḍūʿ</i> only.	Both <i>wuḍūʿ</i> and <i>ghusl</i> .

WASHING ARTIFICIAL LIMBS?

Question: How would a person who lost one of his limbs perform *wuḍūʿ*? And if he has an artificial limb, does he have to wash it?

Answer (by Ibn ‘Uthaymīn):

If a person loses one of his *wuḍūʿ* members ¹, the obligation of washing it drops, even if an artificial member is installed in its place. This may not be compared to the two *khuffs*, because the latter are worn over an existent *wuḍūʿ* member, whereas an artificial member is installed in the place of a non-existent member. However, the people of knowledge are of the opinion that when a *wuḍūʿ* member is severed up to the edge, one would be required to wash that edge during *wuḍūʿ*. For instance, if the arm is severed to the elbow, one should still wash his elbow; and if the foot is severed to the ankle, one should still wash his ankle.

HIDING AWAY A DISABLED CHILD

Question: If they have a disabled child, some parents try to hide him away and exclude him from all social functions. They are apprehensive of letting the people know about him, and some of them feel that he represents a punishment from Allāh. What is your opinion about this?

¹ A *wuḍūʿ* member is a member that is required to wash during *wuḍūʿ*.

Answer (by Ibn Jibrīn):

The birth of a disabled child in the family could indeed be a form of expedited punishment for a parent who had previously made fun of a disabled person. It is often the case that one who made fun of a leper is punished by leprosy in some of his children, and one who made fun of a limp is punished by a limp in some of his children, and so on. But this cannot be taken as a consistent rule that applies to every family with disabled children. Affliction is sometimes meant to test a person's belief and acceptance of Allāh's decree, raise his status (in *Jannah*), or increase his record of good deeds, as is the case for the prophets and righteous people.

Therefore, when seeing an afflicted person, one should praise his Lord and thank Him for granting him health and well-being. If, after that, he or his family members are afflicted with a disability, they should accept it with full submission to Allāh (ﷻ). As a demonstration of their acceptance of Allāh's decree, they should not hide away a disabled child, but should rather let others see him so as to thank Allāh for his favors and take lesson from His creating people of varying levels of health and perfection.

THE DISABLED'S INVOLVEMENT IN FIGHTING

Question: Is the requirement of *jihād* dropped for a blind, a limp, or one who lost one of his extremities?

Answer (by Ibn Jibrīn):

The *āyah* in *sūrat ul-Fath*¹ indicates that individuals with certain disabilities cannot perform *jihād* (face-to-face). A blind man needs a guide, cannot see the enemy, and cannot use the weapons to shoot. A man with intense limp cannot pursue the enemy or run away, which could lead to his killing or capture. As for a man who lost one of his hands or eyes, he can still fight and run, thus the requirement of *jihād* is not dropped in his case.

1 Cited p. 124.

TREATING EPILEPSY

Question: Some people who are afflicted with epilepsy go to so called “Arabian Doctors” who tell them that they are enchanted or inhabited by *jinns*. They summon *jinns* and perform strange actions for treating them, taking large sums of money in return. What is your advice in this regard?

Answer (by Ibn Bāz):

It is permissible to treat epileptic or enchanted people with *Qur’ānic āyāt* and acceptable medications, provided that the person conducting the treatment is known to be of correct belief and adherence to *Shar’*.

As for those who claim knowing *ghayb* and summon *jinns*, or their likes of conjurers and tricksters who practice obscure manners of treatment, it is not permissible to go to them, ask them, or seek treatment from them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever goes to a soothsayer or fortuneteller and believes in what he says has indeed rejected that which has been revealed to Muḥammad.»¹

This and several other related *ḥadīths* all prohibit going to conjurers and tricksters and believing them. We mean by conjurers and tricksters those who claim knowing *ghayb* or seek the help of *jinns*, as would be indicated by their actions and behavior. Also in this regard, Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Nashrah is of the doing of Satan.»²

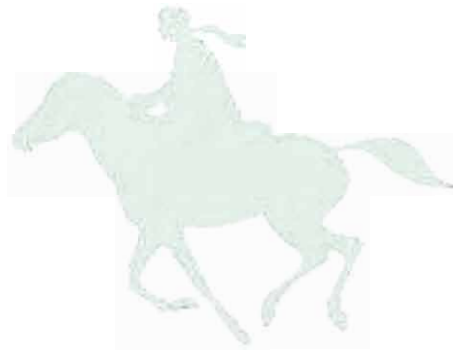
The ‘*ulamā*’ explain *nashrah* as things that used to be done during *Jāhiliyyah* to counter magic with another magic. In analogy, the same ruling applies to any treatment done by conjurers and tricksters and

1 Recorded by Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim from Abū Hurayrah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 5939).

2 Recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2760).

people of lying and falsehood.

Therefore, treating all forms of sickness, including epilepsy, is only permissible using *shar'* and acceptable means, including reading *Qur'ān* and saying correct supplications.



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ARABIC TERMS

A number of Arabic terms are frequently used in *Islāmic* discussions, and seem to constitute a basic vocabulary that needs to be available to the readers of most books on *Islām*. We attempt to provide such terms, together with their definitions, in the following “Glossary” section. Other terms pertinent to the current book are included in the “Index” section, together with a page-reference indicating where they are defined in this book.

A: Glossary of Common Terms

Term	Definition
<i>Al-Fātiḥah</i>	The first chapter of the <i>Qur’ān</i> .
<i>Anṣār</i>	Residents of al-Madīnah who supported the Prophet (ﷺ).
<i>Āyah</i>	A <i>Qur’ānic</i> phrase approximately equal to one sentence, but sometimes longer or shorter than that; plural: <i>āyāt</i> .
<i>Āyāt</i>	See “ <i>āyah</i> ”.
<i>Bid’ah</i>	Innovation in the creed or in acts of worship.
<i>Da’wah</i>	Call or mission.
<i>Dīn</i>	Religion. It is usually used in reference to the religion of <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Du’ā</i>	Supplication.
<i>Fajr</i>	Dawn. It usually applies to the first obligatory prayer of the day, whose time extends from dawn until sunrise.

Term	Definition
<i>Fard</i>	Obligation.
<i>Fard Kifāyah</i>	A communal obligation; if some Muslims perform it, the obligation is considered fulfilled by all; and if none does, all Muslims are considered sinful.
<i>Fard 'Ayn</i>	An individual obligation, i.e., an obligation that each individual must fulfill.
<i>Fatāwā</i>	See "fatwā".
<i>Fatāwī</i>	See "fatwā".
<i>Fatwā</i>	A religious verdict; plural: <i>fatāwā</i> or <i>fatāwī</i> .
<i>Fiqh</i>	The ability to understand and derive conclusions from the available evidence. It is often applied to the subject of "Islamic jurisprudence" that deals with the practical regulations in <i>Islām</i> .
<i>Ghayb</i>	The world beyond our senses or perception.
<i>Ghusl</i>	A ritual bath required after intercourse, ejaculation, or after a women becomes clean from her menses.
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	Reports of the Prophet's sayings, actions, and approvals. We use <i>ḥadīth</i> (plural <i>ḥadīths</i>) with lower case ḥ to indicate individual report(s), and <i>Ḥadīth</i> with upper case Ḥ to indicate the subject of <i>Ḥadīth</i> specialty.
<i>Ḥajj</i>	Pilgrimage to Makkah.
<i>Ḥalāl</i>	Permissible.
<i>Ḥarām</i>	Prohibited.
<i>Ḥasan</i>	Good or acceptable. This is usually mentioned when indicating the degree of authenticity of some reports.

Term	Definition
<i>Imām</i>	A leader or distinguished <i>Islāmic</i> scholar.
<i>Īmān</i>	Belief or conviction.
<i>Isnād</i>	Chain of narrators of a <i>ḥadīth</i> .
<i>Jāhiliyyah</i>	The era of extreme ignorance (<i>jahl</i>) and disbelief that preceded the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).
<i>Jamā'ah</i>	A Muslim congregation or gathering. <i>Al-Jamā'ah</i> (the <i>Jamā'ah</i>) refers to the original community of the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> and their true followers through the times.
<i>Jannah</i>	The gardens of paradise.
<i>Jihād</i>	Striving or fighting for Allāh's cause.
<i>Jinn</i>	An indivisible creation that Allāh created from fire and smoke, and to which belongs Satan. It is sometimes translated as "demons".
<i>Jumu'ah</i>	Friday. It also applies to the Friday prayer.
<i>Kāfir</i>	See "kufr".
<i>Khamr</i>	Alcoholic beverages.
<i>Kufr</i>	Disbelief or rejection of faith. One who practices it is a <i>kāfir</i> .
<i>Maghrib</i>	Sunset. It usually applies to the fourth obligatory prayer of the day, whose time extends from sunset until the disappearance of the red light from the horizon.

Term	Definition
<i>Maḥram</i>	A person who is closely related to another in such a way as to permanently prohibit them from marrying each other. This relationship results from blood, suckling, or marriage ties. A woman's <i>maḥrams</i> are: her father, grandfather, son, grandson, brother, immediate uncle (from the mother's or father's side), father in law, son in law, foster son, foster brother, etc. Examples of non- <i>maḥrams</i> : cousins (from both sides), step brothers, brothers in law, etc.
<i>Masjid</i>	A mosque or a place designated for prayer.
<i>Mathhab</i>	Way or approach. It usually refers to one of the four <i>Islāmic</i> schools of <i>fiqh</i> established by the Four <i>Imāms</i> : Abū Ḥanīfah an-Nu'mān Bin Thābit, Mālik Bin Anas, Muḥammad Bin Idrīs ash-Shāfi'ī, and Aḥmad Bin Ḥanbal, - May Allāh bestow His mercy on them all.
<i>Muhājirūn</i>	The <i>ṣaḥābah</i> who migrated from Makkah to al-Madīnah.
<i>Mushrik</i>	See "shirk".
<i>Qadar</i>	Allāh's decree and measure.
<i>Qudusī</i>	Holy. A <i>qudusī ḥadīth</i> is a <i>ḥadīth</i> that the Prophet (ﷺ) relates from his Lord (ﷻ).
<i>Ramaḍān</i>	The month of fasting. It is the ninth month of the <i>Islāmic</i> lunar calendar.
<i>Rukū'</i>	The act of bowing in the prayer.
<i>Ṣadaqah</i>	Charity.
<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>	The Prophet's companions; singular <i>ṣaḥābī</i> .
<i>Salaf</i>	The early righteous pioneers and scholars of <i>Islām</i> —the <i>ṣaḥābah</i> and their true followers.

Term	Definition
<i>Ṣalāh</i>	The prayer.
<i>Salām</i>	Peace. It also means the greeting with peace among the Muslims.
<i>Shahādah</i>	Testimony; it commonly applies to the testimony of <i>Islām</i> that, "there is no true deity but Allāh, and Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger." It is also often applied to the most truthful form of testimony, which is martyrdom or dying in Allāh's (ﷺ) way. A person thus killed is called a <i>shahīd</i> .
<i>Shahīd</i>	See " <i>shahādah</i> ".
<i>Sharʿ</i>	Law or legislation. It is usually used specifically in reference to the <i>Islām</i> ic Law. The same applies to <i>Sharīʿah</i> .
<i>Sharīʿah</i>	See " <i>sharʿ</i> ".
<i>Shirk</i>	Polytheism, ascribing divinity to other than Allāh, or joining partners with Him in worship. A person who practices <i>shirk</i> is a <i>mushrik</i> .
<i>Ṣiyām</i>	Fasting.
<i>Sujūd</i>	The act of prostration in the prayer.
<i>Sunnah</i>	Way, guidance, teachings, etc.
<i>Sūrah</i>	<i>Qurʿānic</i> chapter.
<i>Tafsīr</i>	<i>Qurʿānic</i> commentaries and interpretations.
<i>Taqwā</i>	Fearing Allāh and revering him.
<i>Thikr</i>	Remembering Allāh and mentioning Him.
<i>Ummah</i>	Community or nation.

Term	Definition
<i>Wājib</i>	Obligatory or required.
<i>Wuḍūʿ</i>	Ablution for the prayer. It consists of rinsing the mouth, blowing the nose, washing the face, washing the forearms to the elbows, wiping over the head (including the ears), and washing the feet up to the ankles.
<i>Zakāh</i>	Obligatory charity.
<i>Zuhr</i>	Noon. It usually applies to the second obligatory prayer of the day, whose time extends from the sun's crossing the zenith until the time when the shadows are as long as the objects.
<i>ʿAbd</i>	Devoted servant and worshipper; plural: <i>ʿibād</i> .
<i>ʿĀlim</i>	A scholar or learned man; plural: <i>ʿulamāʿ</i> .
<i>ʿAṣr</i>	After noon. It usually applies to the third obligatory prayer of the day, whose time extends from the time when the shadows are as long as the objects until sunset.
<i>ʿIbād</i>	See " <i>abd</i> ".
<i>ʿĪd</i>	A day of <i>Islāmic</i> celebration. The Muslims have two annual <i>ʿīds</i> (<i>al-fiṭr</i> and <i>al-Aḍḥā</i>) and one weekly <i>ʿīd</i> (the day of <i>Jumuʿah</i>).
<i>ʿIshāʿ</i>	Night. It usually applies to the fifth and last obligatory prayer of the day, whose time extends from the disappearance of the red light from the horizon until the middle of the night (which is half way between sunset and dawn).
<i>ʿUlamāʿ</i>	See " <i>ālim</i> ".

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The Inevitable Journey

We inevitably go through the journey starting in this life and extending into the grave, before our final abode in the hereafter. In the process, we pass through stages of sickness, death, and the intermediate life in the grave (*al-Barzakh*). These are the subjects that "The Inevitable Journey" discusses over a sequence of titles:

1. Sickness, Regulations & Exhortations
2. The Final Bequest, Islamic Inheritance and Will
3. Funerals, Regulations & Exhortations
4. Life in al-Barzakh

This Book

This book is the first in the series. It deals with sickness, which continues to afflict human beings from birth until death. Sickness strikes as light as a simple cold or allergy, and as hard as a plague or cancer. It keeps the human being under check, reminding him of his weakness and giving him a chance to turn to the One who possesses to afflict and cure. This book deals with sickness, its regulations, and lessons associated with it. It presents the Islamic stand toward a number of modern medical issues, and also discusses important regulations relating to those with disabilities.



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