

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



FORTY HADITH ON DIVINE MERCY

THE ROYAL AAL AL-BAYT INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC THOUGHT

2009 • JORDAN

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أربعون حديثاً
عن فضل الله
ورحمته

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INTRODUCTION

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and Peace and Blessings be upon His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, and upon his Family and Companions.

The *hadith*, sometimes called traditions, are texts which relate the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless him and grant him peace. In his famous book of forty *hadith*, Imam Nawawi (d. 676 A.H./1277 C.E.) relates that the Messenger of God said, “Whosoever commits to memory for my *ummah* (religious community) forty traditions concerning religion will be resurrected by God in the company of the jurists and the learned.” In other versions, it is said that the Prophet will be “an intercessor and witness” for such a person, or that they will be allowed to enter Paradise from any gate they wish, or that “they shall be recorded amongst the ranks of the jurists and resurrected in the company of the martyrs”.

Now, the scholars of *hadith* are in agreement that this tradition is weak, yet many of them have composed books of forty traditions, the most famous of which is Imam Nawawi's. In doing so, they have based themselves on other more authentic *hadith*, such as, "Let he who is present pass on to the one who is absent, for indeed the one who is present may pass on to one who will pay greater heed than he," (*Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 67, *Kitab al-'Ilm*) and, "God prospers the man who hears what I say, takes heed of it, commits it to memory, and passes it on. Indeed, it may be that he bears understanding to one whose understanding is greater than his own." (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2870, *Kitab al-'Ilm*)

The learned scholars of Islam have composed books of forty traditions on a wide range of themes, such as *jihad* (struggle), comportment (*adab*), or the sacred sayings (*hadith qudsi*, or words of the Prophet which quote God speaking, but are not part of the Quran and are not *wahy* or revelation). In a humble effort to be faithful to this tradition of collecting and publishing forty traditions of the Prophet, this book takes as its theme the subject of divine mercy, which comes from God and manifests in His Prophet and His religion.

INTRODUCTION

Each section quotes verses from the Quran, as the truths of the Quran give the *hadith* meaning and substance. The verses are cited with chapter and verse numbers, while the *hadith* citations refer to the numbering system of The Sunna Project's *Encyclopaedia of Hadith*, prepared in co-operation with the scholars of al-Azhar, which includes *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan Abu Dawud*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, and *Muwatta' Malik*. Generally only the words of the Prophet are quoted, without the *isnad* or chain of transmission, but for some *hadith* the context or questions posed to the Prophet are included. The Quran translations are based on Pickthall, with modifications.

Success comes only through God,
and all praise belongs to God.

PART ONE: MERCY, WHICH OUTSTRIPS

I MERCY

From reciting the Quran to sitting at table, Muslims begin their actions by saying *In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*. This sacred formula, whose author is God, is based firstly on the supreme name *Allah*, then on the two names *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim*, both of which derive from *rahmah*, or mercy, a word which can also mean love, kindness, and compassion. God did not chose two names of wrath (*ghadab*) or even a balance between mercy and wrath, because with God there is no balance between mercy and wrath. Even wrath, from a certain point of view, is a kind of mercy for the believer, because it can purify his soul and help make him ready to enter Paradise.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to mercy and compassion are the following, in which God Most High says:

Say: Unto whom belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth? Say: Unto God. He hath prescribed for Himself mercy.(al-An'am 6:12)

MERCY

Your Lord hath prescribed for Himself mercy, that whoso of you doeth evil through ignorance and repenteth afterward thereof and doeth right, (for him) lo! He is Forgiving, Compassionate. (al-An'am 6:54)

My mercy embraceth all things, therefore I shall ordain it for those who ward off (evil) and pay the poor-due, and those who believe Our revelations. (al-A'raf 7:156)

Lo! the mercy of God is nigh unto the virtuous. (al-A'raf 7:56)

Announce, (O Muhammad) unto My slaves that verily I am the Forgiving, the Compassionate. (al-Hijr 15:49)

Those who bear the Throne, and all who are round about it, hymn the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe (saying): Our Lord! Thou comprehendest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore forgive those who repent and follow Thy way. Ward off from them the punishment of hell. (Ghafir 40:7)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“God says, Great and Glorious is He, ‘My mercy outstrips my wrath.’” - *Sabih Muslim* no. 7146, *Kitab al-Tawbah*

“God is not merciful to one who is not merciful to people.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 7465, *Kitab al-Tawhid*

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 6170, *Kitab al-Fada'il*

The Messenger of God kissed (his grandson) Hasan, the son of 'Ali, while Aqra' bin Habis al-Tamimi was sitting nearby. Aqra' said, “I have ten children and have not kissed any of them.” The Messenger of God looked at him and said, “He who does not show mercy shall not be shown mercy.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 6063, *Kitab al-Adab*

An old man came looking for the Prophet, and the people were slow in making way for him, so the Prophet said, “He who is unkind to the young and disrespectful to the old is not one of us.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2043, *Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Silab*

“The merciful are shown mercy by the Merciful. Be merciful to those on earth, and He who is in heaven will be merciful to you. Kinship ties are connecting branches from the Merciful. Whoever maintains them will be maintained by God, and whoever cuts them will be cut off by God.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2049, *Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Silab*

MERCY

'Aisha (the wife of the Prophet) said, "The Messenger of God never struck anything with his hand, neither woman nor servant. He only did so while struggling in the path of God. Nor did he ever do harm to a thing such as to take vengeance upon its owner. He only did so when God's sacred bounds were violated, and would take vengeance for God, Great and Glorious is He."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 6195, *Kitab al-Fada'il*

"God made mercy one-hundred parts. He held back ninety-nine parts, and sent down one part to earth. It is from that part that creatures show mercy to each other, such that a mare will lift her hoof over her foal, fearing that she might harm him."

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 6066, *Kitab al-Adab*

"If the believer knew the punishment of God, he would never feel assured of His Garden, and if the unbeliever knew the mercy of God, he would never despair of His Garden."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 7155, *Kitab al-Tawbah*

II THE HEART AND INTENTION

The heart is the center of man, and is the place where mercy descends from God, and is the source from which man's mercy then manifests in the world. It is the heart that finds peace in the remembrance of God, and it is the heart into which the tranquility of God descends.

Intention is inseparable from the heart, because the heart commands all the faculties of the human soul, and lives in the hereafter where we will experience the consequences of our intentions and actions in this life.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to the heart and intention are the following, in which God Most High says:

And whosoever believeth in God, He guideth his heart. And God is Knower of all things. (al-Taghabun 64:11)

(The Day of Judgment is): *The day when wealth and sons avail not (any man), save him who bringeth unto God a whole heart.* (al-Shu'ara' 26:88-89)

Know that God cometh in between the man and his own

THE HEART AND INTENTION

heart, and that He it is unto Whom ye will be gathered.(al-Anfal 8:24)

(God guides those): Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of God. Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest! (al-Ra'd 13:28)

He it is Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith.(al-Fath 48:4)

Is not the time ripe for the hearts of those who believe to submit to God's reminder? (al-Hadid 57:16)

For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind. (al-Hajj 22:46)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“Actions come only through intentions. Every man shall have what he intended. Whoever emigrates to attain something of this world, or to marry a woman, emigrates for what he emigrates for.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 1, *Kitab Bad' al-Wahy*

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 5036, *Kitab al-Imarah*

“No man shall enter the Garden so long as he has a mote’s weight of pride.” A man said, “Men like to have beautiful clothes and sandals.” He said, “God is beautiful and loves beauty. Pride is to disregard the truth and to scorn people.”

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 275, *Kitab al-Iman*

“The permitted is clear, and the forbidden is clear. Between the two lie doubtful matters unknown to most people. Whoever is pious regarding doubtful matters is thereby thorough in his religion and his honor. As for he who falls into doubtful matters, he is like a shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, on the verge of entering it. Every king has a sanctuary, and indeed God’s sanctuary on earth is His sacred bounds. Behold! Within every body is a piece of flesh: when it thrives, the whole body thrives, and when it rots, the whole body rots, and indeed that is the heart.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 52, *Kitab al-Iman*

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 4178, *Kitab al-Masafah*

The Prophet said, “God does not look at your bodies or at your forms, but looks at your hearts,” and he used his fingers to point at his chest.

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 6707, *Kitab al-Birr wa’l-Silah wa’l-Adab*

The Messenger of God used to say, “O God, I seek refuge in Thee from a heart that is not humble, a prayer that goes unheard, a soul that is not satisfied, and knowledge that is of no use. I seek refuge in Thee from these four.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 3819, *Kitab al-Da'awat*

“The first person to be judged on the Day of Judgment will be a man who was martyred. He will be brought forth, shown the favors he enjoyed, and he will recognize them. He (God) will say, ‘What did you do concerning these?’ He will say, ‘I fought for Your sake until I was martyred.’ He will say, ‘You have lied. Rather, you fought so that it would be said, “He was bold,” and it *was* said.’ Then it will be commanded that he be dragged along on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. Then there will be a man who acquired and dispensed knowledge and recited the Quran. He will be brought forth, shown the favors he enjoyed, and he will recognize them. He will say, ‘What did you do concerning these?’ He will say, ‘I acquired and dispensed knowledge and recited the Quran for Your sake.’ He will say, ‘You have lied. Rather, you acquired knowledge so that it would be said, “He is learned,” and you recited the Quran so that it would be said, “He is a reciter,” and it *was* said.’ Then it will be commanded that he be dragged along on his face until he is thrown into the Fire. Then there will be a man whom God enriched and gave all manner of

wealth. He will be brought forth, shown the favors he enjoyed, and he will recognize them. He will say, ‘What did you do concerning these?’ He will say, ‘I left no path upon which you ordered that a bestowal be made without giving something there for Your sake.’ He will say, “You have lied. Rather, you did that so that it would be said, “He is generous,” and it *was* said.’ Then it will be commanded that he be dragged along on his face and then thrown into the Fire.”

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 5032, *Kitab al-Imarah*

III

PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Piety (*taqwa*) and righteousness (*birr*) can be seen, from a certain perspective, as the expression of mercy in all aspects of our life. Indeed, when we show mercy we must not limit it to certain people, or to certain situations, but must let our kindness, love, and respect shine through in everything we do. This must originate from our mindfulness of God’s mercy, and from reverential fear of His wrath should we choose the way of anger over the way of mercy.

PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Among the Quranic verses which relate to piety and righteousness are the following, in which God Most High says:

O ye who believe! When ye conspire together, conspire not together for crime and wrongdoing and disobedience toward the messenger, but conspire together for righteousness and piety, and keep your duty toward God, unto whom ye will be gathered. (al-Mujadalah 58:9)

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the most pious of you. Lo! God is Knower, Aware. (al-Hujurat 49:13)

So make provision for yourselves (Hereafter); for the best provision is piety. Therefore keep your duty unto Me, O men of understanding. (al-Baqarah 2:197)

What (plea) have they that God should not punish them, when they debar (His servants) from the Inviolable Place of Worship, though they are not its fitting guardians. Its fitting guardians are the pious. But most of them know not. (al-Anfal 8:34)

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and payeth the poor-due. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the pious. (al-Baqarah 2:177)

Ye will not attain unto righteousness until ye spend of that which ye love. And whatsoever ye spend, God is Aware thereof. (Al 'Imran 3:92)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“The best of you are those with the most virtuous character.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 3599, *Kitab al-Manaqib*

“None of you believe until you desire for your brother what you desire for yourself.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 13, *Kitab al-Iman*

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 179, *Kitab al-Iman*

PIETY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Speaking to his Companion Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet said, “Abu Hurayrah, be Godfearing so as to be the most worshipful of people, be content so as to be the richest of people, desire for people what you desire for yourself so as to be a believer, act virtuously with your neighbor so as to be a Muslim, and reduce your laughter, for excessive laughter kills the heart.”

- *Sunan Ibn Majah* no. 4357, *Kitab al-Zuhd*

“Whoever relieves a believer’s hardship in the world will have a hardship of the Day of Judgment relieved for him by God. Whoever eases a difficulty will be eased in the world and in the hereafter by God. Whoever covers a Muslim will be covered by God in the world and in the hereafter. God helps his slave as long as the slave helps his brother. Whoever travels a path to acquire knowledge will have his path to Paradise made easy by God. No group gathers together in a house of God, reciting the Book of God and studying it together, without tranquility descending upon them, mercy enveloping them, the angels encircling them, and God remembering them with those around Him. One who is slowed by his actions will not be quickened by his lineage.”

- *Sabih Muslim* no. 7028, *Kitab al-Dhikr wa'l-Du'a'*

IV FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness comes from mercy, and for the fallen soul forgiveness is that aspect of mercy which saves. God promises us forgiveness for our sins, but we must do our part in trying to make amends for our faults. If we are sincere and repentant, we have no reason to despair of His mercy.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to forgiveness are the following, in which God Most High says:

Lo! God pardoneth not that partners should be ascribed unto Him. He pardoneth all save that to whom He will.
(al-Nisa' 4:116)

(The prophet Joseph said to his brothers): *Have no fear this day! May God forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.* (Yusuf 12:92)

Say: O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God, Who forgiveth all sins. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate. (al-Zumar 39:53)
He is the Forgiving, the Loving. (al-Buruj 85:14)

FORGIVENESS

Lo! there was a party of My slaves who said: Our Lord! We believe, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for Thou art Best of all who show mercy. (al-Mu'minun 23:109)

And (O Mubammad) say: My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for Thou art Best of all who show mercy. (al-Mu'minun 23:118)

(The prophet Moses said, upon slaying the Egyptian): My Lord! Lo! I have wronged my soul, so forgive me. Then He forgave him. Lo! He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate. (al-Qasas 28:16)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“If none of you had any sins for God to forgive for you, God would bring forth a people with sins that he would forgive for them.”

- *Sabih Muslim* no. 7140, *Kitab al-Tawbah*

The Prophet said, “A slave sinned and said, ‘O God, forgive me my sin.’ God, Blessed and Most High, said, ‘My servant sinned and knew that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them.’ Then he sinned again and said, ‘O Lord, forgive me my sin.’ God, Blessed and Most High,

said, ‘My servant sinned and knew that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them.’ Then he sinned again and said, ‘O Lord, forgive me my sin.’ God, Blessed and Most High, said, ‘My servant sinned and knew that he has a Lord who forgives sins and punishes for them. Do what you wish, for I have forgiven you.’”

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 7162, *Kitab al-Tawbah*

The Prophet said that God said, “Son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. Son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. Son of Adam, were you to come to Me with faults nearly equaling the earth and were you then to meet Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly equaling the earth.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 3885, *Kitab al-Da'awat*

**PART TWO:
WRATH, WHICH IS OUTSTRIPPED**

**V
HARM AND WRONGDOING**

It is fitting, when remembering the divine mercy, to call to mind what opposes it. The Quranic term *zulm* can be translated as tyranny, wrongdoing, and darkness. The wrongdoer or tyrant chooses darkness over the light of God's mercy. His very act of doing harm to others or to himself is a turning away from that mercy. Indeed, from a certain point of view, God never withholds His mercy. It is we who enter into the shadows of our own souls, forgetting that the light of mercy is always shining regardless of what we do.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to harm and wrongdoing are the following, in which God Most High says:

They wronged Us not, but they did wrong themselves. (al-Baqarah 2:57)

Lo! God wrongeth not mankind in aught; but mankind wrong themselves. (Yunus 10:44)

Whoso transgresseth God's limits, he verily wrongeth his soul. (al-Talaq 65:1)

Those who do wrong will come to know by what a (great) reverse they will be overturned! (al-Shu'ara' 26:227)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

It was said, "Messenger of God, who is the best Muslim?" He said, "He from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 170, *Kitab al-Iman*

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 11, *Kitab al-Iman*

"God harms the one who harms, and God torments the one who torments."

- *Sunan Abu Dawud* no. 3637, *Kitab al-Aqdhiya*

- *Sunan Ibn Majah* no. 2432, *Kitab al-Abkam*

"Let there be neither harming nor requital to harm."

- *Sunan Ibn Majah* no. 2430, *Kitab al-Abkam*

The Prophet said that God, Blessed and Most High, said, "My slaves, I have forbidden tyranny for Myself, and have made it forbidden among you. So be not tyrants of one another."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 6737, *Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Silah wa'l-Adab*

“Abusing a Muslim is a sin, and killing him is unbelief.”

- *Sabih al-Bukhari* no. 47, *Kitab al-Iman*

- *Sabih Muslim* no. 230, *Kitab al-Iman*

The Prophet said, “By God, he does not believe; by God, he does not believe; by God, he does not believe.” It was said, “Who, Messenger of God?” He said, “One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his trespasses.”

- *Sabih al-Bukhari* no. 6084, *Kitab al-Adab*

“May he who believes in God and the Last Day do no harm to his neighbor, and may he who believes in God and the Last Day honor his guest, and may he who believes in God and the Last Day say what is good or keep silent.”

- *Sabih al-Bukhari* no. 6087, *Kitab al-Adab*

“Do not envy one another, nor expose one another, nor be angry with one another, nor be disparate from one another, nor let one sell what belongs to another. Be slaves of God, in brotherhood. A Muslim is a Muslim’s brother. He does not wrong him, abandon him, or mock him. Piety is here,” and he pointed to his chest three times, “It is enough evil for a man to mock his Muslim brother. The blood, property, and honor of all Muslims is inviolable by all others.”

- *Sabih Muslim* no. 6706, *Kitab al-Birr wa’l-Silah wa’l-Adab*

VI BIGOTRY AND TAKFIR

Often bigotry and *takfir* (meaning to declare another person to be an unbeliever or *kafir*) are disguises for the more fundamental sins of greed, jealousy, revenge, and the desire for power. *Takfir* is a means by which a soul justifies its taking of innocent life, when in reality such a person is merely covering his bloodlust and brutality with a pious veneer. He may fool himself into thinking that the human being he devalues has no right to life, property, or honor, but his judgment does not bind God, though God's judgment will bind *him*. Declaring another person to be an unbeliever, or to dehumanize him through any other form of bigotry and ideology, opens the door to the great sins of pride, avarice, and lust, which lead to theft, rape, and murder. *Takfir* and bigotry are thus the very antithesis of mercy.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to bigotry and *takfir* are the following, in which God Most High says:

And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of God, and do not separate. And remember God's favour unto you: How ye were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace; and (how) ye were

BIGOTRY AND TAKFIR

upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it. Thus God maketh clear His revelations unto you, that haply ye may be guided. (Al 'Imran 3:103)

Lo! As for those who sunder their religion and become schismatics, no concern at all hast thou with them. Their case will go to God, Who then will tell them what they used to do. (al-An'am 6:159)

O ye who believe! When ye go forth (to fight) in the way of God, be careful to discriminate, and say not unto one who offereth you peace: "Thou art not a believer," seeking the chance profits of this life (so that ye may despoil him). With God are plenteous spoils. Even thus (as he now is) were ye before; but God hath since then been gracious unto you. Therefore take care to discriminate. God is ever Informed of what ye do. (al-Nisa' 4:94)

The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to God that haply ye may obtain mercy. (al-Hujurat 49:10)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

A Companion of the Prophet related that, while on an expedition, "I came upon a man who said, 'There is no deity

but God,' and I ran him through. This occurred to me and so I mentioned it to the Prophet, and the Messenger of God said, 'He said, "There is no deity but God," and you killed him?' I said, 'He only said it out of fear of the sword.' He said, "Did you open him up to see if his heart said it or not?" He kept repeating that until I wished that I had entered Islam that day."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 287, *Kitab al-Iman*

"Whosoever is killed under the banner of pride, calling to tribalism or aiding tribalism, has a killing from the days of ignorance."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 4898, *Kitab al-Imarah*

"When a man declares his brother to be an unbeliever, one of them is deserving of it."

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 224, *Kitab al-Iman*

A man said to the Prophet, "Counsel me." He said, "Do not get angry." He repeated it a few times, and he said, "Do not get angry."

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 6184, *Kitab al-Adab*

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2152, *Kitab al-Birr wa'l-Silah*

"Whoever leaves off obedience and separates from the community and dies has died a death from the days of

WAR

ignorance. Whosoever fights under the banner of pride, standing up for some faction or calling to some faction or helping some faction, and is then killed, has a killing from the days of ignorance. He who rises against my *ummah* (religious community), assaulting its righteousness, attacking it, not sparing its believers, and not keeping his covenants, is not of me, nor am I of him.”

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 4892, *Kitab al-Imarah*

VII WAR

Islamic law promulgates the most merciful and just principles governing the causes and conduct of war, despite the abuses and crimes which take place in the name of Islam. We can never rid ourselves completely of war, any more than we can remove all the evil from human souls. Indeed, it is this evil which causes war.

In Islam, there is no good in war for its own sake, and no glory in fighting for its own sake, because a man may fight for an evil end. A Muslim can and must be merciful at all times and in all situations, especially in war, but he must be pure of heart, fight for what is good and just, not

for his own personal desires, and he must always obey the principles and rules set down by the *shari'ah*.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to war are the following, in which God Most High says:

Whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind. (al-Ma'idah 5:32)

Whoso slayeth a believer of set purpose, his reward is hell for ever. God is wroth against him and He hath cursed him and prepared for him an awful doom. (al-Nisa' 4:93)

And if they incline to peace, incline thou also to it, and trust in God. (al-Anfal 8:61)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

“The disappearance of the world is easier on God than the killing of a Muslim man.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 1455, *Kitab al-Diyat*

“Ever will the believer have latitude in his religion, so long as he does not draw inviolable blood.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 6946, *Kitab al-Diyat*

“If the denizens of heaven and earth were to conspire against the blood of a believer, God would throw them into the Fire.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 1459, *Kitab al-Diyat*

“The first thing to be judged between people is the matter of bloodshed.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 6948, *Kitab al-Diyat*

A woman was found slain in one of the campaigns of the Messenger of God, whereupon the Messenger of God forbade the killing of women and children.

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 3052, *Kitab al-Jihad*

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 1744, *Kitab al-Jihad wa'l-Sayr*

‘Abd al-Rahman bin Samurah was walking hand in hand with Ibn ‘Umar in one of the roads of Madinah when they came to a head that had been set up, upon which Ibn ‘Umar said, “This person’s killer is in torment.” When they had passed it he said, “I think this one is only in torment. I heard the Messenger of God say, ‘Whoever goes to kill a man of my *ummah* (religious community), let him say this, for the killer is in the Fire and the victim is in the Garden.’”

- *Sunan Abu Dawud* no. 4262, *Kitab al-Fitan*

“Do not be hopeful of meeting the enemy, and ask God for well-being.”

- *Sahih al-Bukhari* no. 7323, *Kitab al-Tamanni*

VIII

CORRUPTION AND SEDITION

Harmony is a dimension of beauty, which is itself a manifestation of mercy. As surely as there is beauty and harmony in color, shape, sound, and rhythm, so too is there harmony in human relations, and in the love connecting family, friends, and neighbors.

Through spreading corruption (*fasad*) in the earth and sewing the seeds of strife, we place fear in the place of hope, revenge in place of forgiveness, and destroy the beauty and harmony of human relations as surely as acid destroys a beautiful face, or a terrible screech a beautiful sound, or an earthquake a beautiful city. *Fitnah* is a word that can be translated as persecution, sedition, and trial, all of which can destroy the bonds we share as God’s creatures, robbing us of our ability to show mercy to one another.

Among the Quranic verses which relate to corruption and sedition are the following, in which God Most High says:

CORRUPTION AND SEDITION

Sedition is worse than killing. (al-Baqarah 2:191)

Sedition is more grievous than killing. (al-Baqarah 2:217)

Lo! they who persecute believing men and believing women and repent not, theirs verily will be the doom of hell, and theirs the doom of burning. (al-Buruj 85:10)

And guard yourselves against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrong-doers. (al-Anfal 8:25)

(The prophet Shu'ayb said): *Wrong not mankind in their goods, and work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering thereof. That will be better for you, if ye are believers.* (al-A'raf 7:85)

(The prophet Moses said): *Lo! God upholdeth not the work of mischief-makers.* (Yunus 10:81)

(Moses also said): *Eat and drink of that which God hath provided, and do not act corruptly, making mischief in the earth.* (al-Baqarah 2:60)

Seek not corruption in the earth; lo! God loveth not corrupters. (al-Qasas 28:77)

And from the *hadith* of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him peace:

Ibn ‘Umar said, “The Prophet said, ‘O God, bless us in Sham, O God bless us in Yemen.’ It was said, ‘In Najd?’ He said, ‘O God, bless us in Sham, O God bless us in Yemen.’ It was said, ‘O Messenger of God, in Najd?’. I think the third time he said, ‘There will be earthquakes and sedition there, through which the horn of Satan will rise.’”

- *Sabih al-Bukhari* no. 7183, *Kitab al-Fitan*

Abu Salamah and ‘Ata’ bin Yasar came to Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri and asked whether he had heard the Prophet say anything about the “hot wind” (*haruriyyah*). He said, “I do not know what the hot wind is. I heard the Prophet say, ‘Within this *ummah* (religious community) a people will come out’ - he did not say, ‘from this *ummah*’ - ‘whose prayers will be such that you hold your own prayers lowly. They will recite the Quran, but it will not reach past their throats - or their larynxes - and they will pass through this religion as an arrow passes through game. The shooter looks at his arrow, its head, the sinews, and the nock. Has any blood cleaved to it?”

- *Sabih al-Bukhari* no. 7017, *Kitab Istitabat al-Murtaddin*

- *Sabih Muslim* no. 2503, *Kitab al-Zakah*

“God does not withdraw knowledge from the people, but takes the learned and with them knowledge disappears. What remains among the people are ignorant leaders who make religious decisions for them without knowledge. They misguide and are misguided.”

- *Sahih Muslim* no. 6974, *Kitab al-‘Ilm*

Asked about the verse, *O ye who believe! Ye have charge of your own souls. He who erreth cannot injure you if ye are rightly guided.* (al-Ma’idah 5:105), the Prophet said, “Indeed, command what is right, and forbid what is wrong, until you see avarice obeyed, passions followed, this worldly life preferred, and every man charmed by his own opinion. Then, it will be your duty to care for your own soul, and to leave the rest. There are days coming after you, when patience will be like clutching a live coal. He who does a thing in those days will have a reward akin to that of fifty men who do as you do.” He was asked, “Messenger of God, fifty men from among us or among them?” He replied, “Indeed, fifty of you.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 3335, *Kitab Tafsir al-Quran*

Abu Darda’ related that the Prophet gazed at the sky and said, “These are times when knowledge is snatched away from the people such that they cannot make use of it at all.” Ziyad bin Labid al-Ansari asked him, “How can it be snatched away from us, as we recite the Quran? For

by God we recite it, our women and children as well.” He said, “Shame on you, Ziyad. I counted you among the learned of Madinah. The Torah and Gospel are with the Jews and Christians. Does it avail them anything?”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2865, *Kitab al-‘Ilm*

“The religion will gather itself up in the Hijaz as a snake gathers itself up in its burrow, and the religion will take refuge in the Hijaz as a goat does on a mountaintop. The religion began a stranger and is returning a stranger. Blessed be those who set right my Wont (*summah*) which the people corrupted.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 2839, *Kitab al-Iman*

“Beware of excessiveness in religion. Those before you perished only for excessiveness in religion.”

- *Sunan al-Nasa’i* no. 3070, *Kitab Manasik al-Hajj*

“I leave you that which, if you hold to it, will never let you go astray. The first is greater than the second: the Book of God is a rope extended from heaven to earth, and my progeny, the people of my House. These two shall never be separated, even unto their arrival with me at the Pond. So take care how you disappoint me concerning them.”

- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* no. 4157, *Kitab al-Manaqib*

- A similar *hadith* is found in *Sahih Muslim* no. 6378, *Kitab Fada’il al-Sababah*

FORTY *HADITH* ON DIVINE MERCY



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