

Forgotten Sunnahs



Abu Sahl Al Ansari

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All praise is to Allâh. We thank Him for blessing us with Islam; He completed the religion for us, perfected the blessing on us and chose Islam as our religion. May the blessings and peace be upon His slave and Messenger, who called upon people to obey their Lord and cautioned against extravagance, innovation and disobedience. May Allâh bless his posterity, his Companions and those who follow his footsteps until the Day of Judgement.

We praise Allâh and thank Him for sending the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to us as the best of examples to guide us to the straight path. We thank Allâh that we have been left with the two, the Qur'an and the Sunnah. We thank Allâh that clear authentically proven Hadiths are available for us to follow and to implement the Sunnah. We ask Him to make us amongst those who love and follow the Sunnah!

Table of Contents

Chapter I - THE OBLIGATION OF FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH	18
What Is The Sunnah?	18
The Obligation of Following the Sunnah	20
Why Do We Need The Sunnah?	21
The Rewards & Benefits of Following the Sunnah	27
Revive The Sunnah	31
Chapter II - FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO SALAH	32
Forgotten Sunan of Wudhu	33
Using the Siwaak before Prayer	39
Using a Sutra	40
- Stopping Someone Who Tries to Pass in Front	41
Walking Calmly to the Masjid	42
Arriving Early	43
The First Row	45
Tahiyyatul Masjid	46
Straightening the Rows	46
Du'a al-Istiftaaah	48
Pausing after each ayah of Surah al-Fatihah	49
Saying "Ameen" aloud	52

Raising the hands in prayer	53
Reciting Qur'an in the last two rak'aat of Dhuhra	54
Lengthening Salah adhDhuhr	54
Invoking Allah During Recitation of Qur'an in Prayer	55
Dry Spitting to Ward off Shaytan	57
Straightening the Back in Ruku'	57
Making Each Position Equal In Time	59
Sitting for a brief period of time before standing up for the Second or Fourth Rakah	59
Sitting Mutawarrikan	60
Remember Death	61
Supplicating After The Final Tashahhud	61
Varying The Recitations In Prayer	63
Sajdah as Sahw	70
Variations of Tasleem	72
Wearing shoes during prayer	73
Delaying Isha	74
Praying the Sunnah prayers at home	76
Four rak'ah before 'Asr	78
Offering the Sunan arRawaatib	79
Making up missed sunnah prayers	80
Praying the Sunnah of Fajr early	80
Hastening for Jumu'ah	82
Tahiyyatul Masjid even if Khutbah has started	83

Sitting down without disturbing others	84
Offering Nasil Prayers before Jumah Khutbah	84
Salaat adDuha	84
- The time of Saalat Duha prayer:	86
- Du'a after Duha Prayer	86
Witr	87
- Witr prayers narrated in the Sunnah	88
- Making up Witr Prayer	89
Qiyaam al Layl	90
Repeating Salah for your Brother	92
Loving Prayer	93
Khushoo'	94
Chapter III – FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF OTHER IBAADAAT	96
The Qur'an	96
- Reciting the Qur'an regularly	96
- Du'a After Recitation	98
- Reciting beautifully	99
- Memorizing the Qur'an	100
- Implementing the Qur'an	101
Repentance	103
Shukr – Being Thankful to Allah	106
- Sajdah ashShukr	107

Adhkaar (Remembering Allah)	109
- Some of the highly recommended adhkaar	110
- Adhkaar to be recited after the obligatory prayers:	112
DU'A	114
- Using the Names of Allah	114
- We should praise Allâh as He deserves before we call upon Him	114
- Send blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ	115
- Doing good deeds	115
- Recommended Times when Duas are accepted	118
Ramadan	120
- Forgotten Sunan of Ramadan	120
- Eid	122
Voluntary Fasts	125
Umrah	132
- Applying perfume	133
- Raml	133
- Drinking Zamzam	134
- Du'a during Sa'ee	134
- Takbeer during the first 10 days of Dhu'l Hijjah	135
Correcting People	137
Being Consistent	140

Chapter IV – FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF DAILY LIFE	142
Waking up	142
- Sunan after Waking up	142
- Waking at night	145
Sleeping	145
- Supplications before sleeping	145
- Reciting Qur'an before sleeping	147
- Other practices	150
Forgotten Sunan related to Eating	155
Sunan related to Drinking	158
Miscellaneous Etiquettes	159
- Using the siwaak	159
- Responding to the adhaan	161
- Remembering Allah while ascending and descending	163
- Seeking help by offering Salatul Istikhaarah on every matter	163
- Saying Bismillah when stumbling	165
- Greeting when entering a home	165
- Walking barefoot sometimes	166
- Reciting Relevant Supplications	167

Chapter V- OTHER GENERAL FORGOTTEN SUNAN	168
Sunan of Rainfall	168
Offering Nafil Prayer on Returning from a Journey	171
Times of Trial, Difficulty, and Calamity	171
Worshipping Allâh in Difficult Times	173
Sunan of the Eclipse	175
Being Mindful and Seeking Protection from the Dajjaal	176
- Memorizing from Surah Al-Kahf	178
Chapter VI – FORGOTTEN SUNAN WITH FAMILY	180
Parents	180
- Forgotten Sunan with Parents	182
Sposual Relationships	186
- Forgotten Sunan in Sposual Relationships	187
- Intimacy	195
o Du'a Before Intercourse	196
o Doing Wudhu Between Encounters	197
o General Intimacy	198
Children	199
- Forgotten Sunan with Children	200
Forgotten Sunan with Relatives	209

Chapter VII – FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF SOCIETY	214
Unity	216
- Support One Another	217
- Standing in Prayer	218
- Being a good neighbour	220
Loving for the Sake of Allah	221
- Benefits & Rewards of Loving for the Sake of Allah	222
- Tell Someone That You Love Them	225
The Bonds of Faith	228
Finding excuses	236
Volunteering	239
Miscellaneous Forgotten Sunan of Society	240
- Gift giving	240
- Caring for widows and orphans	241
- Taking care of the poor who doesn't beg	242
- Speak good or remain silent	243
- Don't be nosy	244
- Smile	244
The etiquette of sneezing	245
- When a Kafir sneezes	245
Join the funeral	246
Forgotten Sunan of the Market Place	247
Forgotten Sunan of Greeting	250

Visiting the Sick	255
- Visiting strangers who are ill	256
- Visiting nonMuslims who are ill	256
- Reciting supplications for the ill	257
Social Gatherings	258
- Mention the name of Allah	260
- Kaffaratul Majlis	261
- Not expecting others to stand up to show respect	262
- Host leading prayer	263
- Not sitting on the Streets	263
- Do not argue	264
o Fiqh of the Internet	265
Make things easy	266
- Simplify Marriage	268
- Ease, not abandonment	269
Shura (Consultation)	270
Clean the Masjid	272
Chapter VIII- CULTURE VS SUNNAH	274
The Honour of Daughters	275
Not spoiling children	276
Taking Children to the Masjid	277
Women Doing I'tikaaf	280

Saying JazaakAllahu Khayran	281
Respecting Labourers	282
Marriage and weddings	283
- Marry Early	284
- Don't Wait for Others	284
- Educating Daughters to accept Polygyny	286
- An Easy Mahr	287
- Don't Delay the Mahr	288
- Simple Weddings	288
- You do not have to invite everyone you know	289
- Inviting the Poor	290
- Congratulate the bride and groom	290
The Etiquette of Food	291
 Chapter IX – FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO LIFESTYLE	 294
Simple Life	296
Being Content	298
Money Matters	299
- Rizq is Written	302
- Ways from Sunnah to increase Rizq	302
- Giving the Surplus	308
- Giving away beloved possessions	308
- Not looking down on poor relatives	310

- Preparing a will	311
Forgotten Sunan of Business Transactions	311
Chapter X – FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF GOOD CHARACTER	316
Getting along with others	318
Don't talk too much	318
Reconcile	320
Do Not Get Angry	320
- Controlling One's Anger	322
Be Positive	324
Be Gentle & Forbearing	325
Saying "I Don't Know"	326
Be Generous	326
Other Aspects of Good Character	327
Chapter XI – FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO HEALTH	330
Healthy sleeping habits from the Sunnah	331
Exercise	334
Hijama (Cupping)	336
Siwaak	337
Healthy Eating habits	338
Recommended foods	342

Common cures from the Sunnah	347
Mental Health	350
Chapter XII – WHY SUNAN ARE ABANDONED?	352
Diseased hearts	352
Lack of knowledge	353
Not loving the Prophet ﷺ	354
Forgetting the purpose of life	354
Prioritizing the Dunya	355
Lack of patience	356
Lack of good companionship	357
Practising bid'ah	358
Not striving to do good	359
Asking too many questions	360
Procrastinating	360
To Conclude	362

PREFACE

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the Prophet of Allah ﷺ, his family, his companions and all those who follow them on the righteous path.

Surrounded by fitnah and bid'ah today, from all sides, we are left wondering how can we implement more of the deen in our lives apart from praying 5 times a day and fasting for a month, once a year. The fact that the Sunnah is not just for acts of worship, but a handbook to implement on all walks of life is often forgotten by us.

We often lead our lives in a way in which our culture precedes the deen and the Bid'ahs precede the Sunnah. The fact is that if we start practicing all the Sunnahs of our daily life, there will be no time left to practice the Bid'ahs even if we want to. Only when we go away from the Sunnah is when the innovations seem attractive to us and the shaitaan encourages us to take part in it by disguising it as a means to earn more rewards.

I have lived in and experienced three different cultures; the west, the sub continent and the Middle east and found them to be strikingly different, yet there was something common among all- all of their social problems could be solved if their lives are led in the Sunnah way as Islam is a way of life, and that way of life is taught through the Sunnah.

This book is a product of my efforts to make Sunnahs more common as I believe that if we start leading our lives the Sunnah way, our lives will be way more simplified and easy. It's the culture that makes lives hard for us, especially for the vulnerable ones (physically, emotionally and financially) in the society. Practicing the Sunnah, and the Sunnah alone is the solution to all problems in the society

and the only way to bring unity in the Ummah and eradicate the evils of the society.

On a personal level, leading life the Sunnah way will enable us to a better Muslim, a better human being who is more productive and more successful. It brings our personal and social life together and equips us with the tools to do better in all walks of our lives.

When I started my quest to learn about all the Sunnahs of daily life, I couldn't find any comprehensive book which covered the forgotten (not being practiced by the common man like me) Sunnahs enlisted according to different aspects of our lives, hence this book came into being. I have categorized it to make it easier for the reader to work on (and practice the Sunnahs of) a specific area of their lives at a time. I have only taken ahadeeth from Bukhari & Muslim and those that have been authenticated by Sheikh Albani.

After you read this book, I hope, by the will of Allah, you will be equipped with a toolbox which will help you to lead your day to day life in the best possible way - the way of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

Islam is a way of life, and that way of life is taught through the Sunnah.

Abu Sahl Al Ansari

FOREWORD

Abu Sahl Al Ansari is the founder of Learn Islam, a non profit organization providing free online, Islamic courses under the guidance of Sheikh Yasir Al Jabri (Jeddah,KSA), since 2010. In the past 10 years, the organization has conducted about 30 Islaimc courses with a total of more than 40,000 students studying under them.

Abu Sahl has been my student for about 10 years now. I love him for the sake of Allah especially because of his Ikhlaas, dedication and hardwork in the name of Allah, keeping himself anonymous and away from fame. He is also a part of my team and is known for his sincere advice and insight. This book is a product of that.

-Sheikh Yasir Al Jabri
(Bachelors in Islamic Shari'a, Madina University)

Abu Sahl has studied with me for 5 years. He is a people's person, connects with the masses and understands them well. A visionary who aims to bring positive change in the Ummah, he is known for his beneficial advice and help to others. The layout and structure of this book reflects his vision- to simplify the learning of Islam for the masses.

-Sheikh AbuBakr Mukhtar
(Bachelors in Islamic Shari'a, Umm Al Qura University, Makkah)

CHAPTER 1

THE OBLIGATION OF FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

WHAT IS THE SUNNAH?

Sunnah is an Arabic word which linguistically means ‘a path’ or a ‘way.’ However, in the terminology of the Shari’ah, the word *Sunnah* refers to the laws taken from the actions, words or sayings, and from the approvals of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

The Sunnah refers to everything that is well-established and associated with the Prophet ﷺ; that is, his actions, his mannerisms, his likes and dislikes, his methodology, his path and his way.

THE SUNNAH IS PART OF THE DIVINE REVELATION

It is vital that every Muslim knows and believes that the Sunnah is one of the two parts of Divine revelation. The Sunnah is, in and of itself, revelation (*wahy*) from Allâh, which explains to the people that which was revealed to them in the Book of Allâh, may He be exalted. It teaches them the rulings that they need to practise their religion. Allâh says in the Qur'an (which means):

*{And Allâh has revealed to you the Book and (wisdom...)}
(4:113)*

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allâh have mercy upon him, said, “The Book is the Qur’ân, and the wisdom is the Sunnah as agreed by consensus of the scholars of the righteous predecessors.

Allâh also says:

{Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a Revelation revealed.} (53:3-4)

In a hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As, he said: “I used to write down everything I heard from the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, in order to memorise it. The Quraysh prohibited me from doing so, saying: ‘Do you write everything that you hear from him, while the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ is a human being who speaks in anger as well as pleasure?’

So, I stopped writing, and mentioned it to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. He indicated with his finger to his mouth and said: ‘Write, by He in Whose hand my soul lies! Only the truth emerges from it.’¹

It is important to note that the scholars say that both the âyah and the hadith are talking about the rulings issued by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and not his regular speech.

Thus, it is mandatory on all Muslims to accept that both the Qur’ân and Sunnah are to be followed as an obligation; we cannot and should not choose between them. Indeed, it is the Qur’ân and Sunnah together which will save us from straying from the right path - the path which Allâh is pleased with.

¹ Sunan Abi Dawood; authenticated by al-Albani

THE OBLIGATION OF FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

There is no doubt or dispute regarding the obligation to obey Allâh. Unfortunately, however, some people have come forward rejecting the Sunnah, while saying that the Qur'an is enough for them.

{Whosoever obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed Allâh.}
(4:80)

This makes it clear that obeying the Messenger is an obligation upon us, commanded by Allâh. To obey Allâh, we must also obey the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "... Whomsoever disobeys me, disobeys Allâh."²

This obligation is further stressed by the verse where Allâh says:

{But no, by your Lord, they can have no faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept them with full submission.} (4:65)

Without a doubt, the one who rejects the Sunnah is out of the fold of Islam. Although every *fardh* (obligation) is a Sunnah, not every Sunnah is a *fardh*. However, rejecting the Sunnah altogether is an act of *kufr* (disbelief).

² Sahih Bukhari

In *Sharh Al-'Aqeedah At-Tahaawiyah* [of Ibn Abil-'Izz Al-Hanafee] it is stated Pg 217 4th Edition,

"It is an obligation to completely submit to the Messenger; *أَن تَطِيعُوا رَسُولَكُمْ* to follow his orders, and meet his reports with acceptance and firm belief, without contradicting that by false notions that we consider 'reasonable,' or which constitute a misconception and doubt. Or that we put before it the views of men and the rubbish held in their minds. We must single the Prophet *صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ* out with regards to making him the judge, submitting to him, obeying him and complying with him, just as we single out the One who sent him in worship, humility, submissiveness, repentance and reliance (to Him).

The Prophet *صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ* said: "*I have left behind two matters. Those who hold fast to them will never go astray: The Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger.*"³

Islam is a way of life, and that way of is taught through the Sunnah.

WHY DO WE NEED THE SUNNAH?

We have explained above that the Sunnah is the second part of Divine revelation and thus a source of completing our religion. That alone is enough to emphasize the need for Sunnah in our lives. The Sunnah is needed for us to understand Islam and to live our lives accordingly. Below, we will mention some of the most important examples of why we need the Sunnah in our lives.

³ Muwata Imam Malik, graded as Sahih by Ibn Abdul Barr

THE SUNNAH IS NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND THE QUR'AN

There is no way for us to fully and comprehensively understand the noble Qur'an without referring to the Sunnah.

It is a fact that without turning to the Sunnah, it is impossible for us to understand the Qur'an, even if someone is a scholar of the Arabic language. It's safe to assume that no one in this day and age, when language has been tarnished and made so imperfect with the use of colloquial vocabulary, can understand the Qur'an better than the companions of the Prophet ﷺ - those who learned directly from him, and whose everyday speech was composed of the purest Arabic.

That's why it is said in Qur'an that: *{We revealed onto you Qur'an in your language so you may understand.} (12:2)*

The Sunnah is in conjunction with the Qur'an. It explains its meanings; it provides details and specifies what are otherwise general statements; it elaborates on the objectives of the Qur'an itself. The Sunnah is a practical manifestation of what is revealed in the Qur'an.

The wife of the Prophet ﷺ, the Mother of the Believers A'ishah said: "...His character was that of the Qur'an."⁴ Thus, his practice is the best way to understand the Qur'an, and he ﷺ is the *only* way to understand the Qur'an.

If we ponder on books such as the Bible and the Baghavad Gita, they talk about worshipping one God, but the lack of Divine explanation makes them incomplete. We see them worshipping God in ways that

⁴ Sahih Muslim

they desire, which in fact go against the teachings of the very books they follow.

In Islam, the Sunnah explains general commands that are given in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an commands us to pray and to give Zakâh, both of which are the pillars of Islam. However, the Qur'an does not provide us with the details of how to do them practically or in detail. Instead, we were taught how to fulfil those rites and obligations by the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, through his own prayers and actions. He ﷺ said: "Pray as you have seen me praying."⁵ The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ then described the exact details of how he ﷺ performed his prayer, and taught it amongst themselves and to later generations.

In the Qur'an, Allâh made Hajj obligatory on us; the Prophet ﷺ said, "Take the rites of Hajj from me."⁶

Similarly, many other parts of the Qur'an are explained and clarified by the Sunnah.

'Ali ibn Abi Talib said: "If the religion were based on opinion, it would be more important to wipe over the under parts of the leather socks than the upper, but I have seen Allâh's Messenger (rad) wiping over the upper parts of his leather socks."⁷

It is Allâh the Most Wise who sent us a role model, a practical example, and the best of creation to follow and base our lives on.

⁵ Sahih Bukhari

⁶ Sahih Muslim

⁷ Abu Dawood, authenticated by Albani

{Surely there was a good example for you in the Messenger of Allâh.} (33: 21)

AlHamdulilah, we have the Sunnah to guide us, and to help us worship Allâh in the way that He expects, and in the manner that He finds acceptable.

FULFILLING THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Allâh says: *{And I (Allâh) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).} (51:56)*

Aside from our five daily prayers, we have no other stringent obligations in our daily lives – so how is it that, if we were created to worship our Lord, we can simply get away with the *Salah*? Every *fardh* prayer combined does not usually exceed more than an hour of our day; even if one is to include fasting, giving *zakah*, or doing Hajj, none of those obligations are required to be fulfilled except for once a year or once in a lifetime.

How, then, are we expected to spend our lives in worship, outside of performing prayers and fulfilling other specific ritual acts of worship?

It is the Sunnah which thus provides us guidance on how to fulfill our purpose of life – by providing us ways to turn even our everyday actions into acts of worship. Eating, drinking, sleeping and even being intimate with one's spouse can be counted as a good deed if done in accordance to the Sunnah.

Islam is a way of life, and that way of life is taught through the Sunnah.

DEMONSTRATING LOVE FOR THE PROPHET ﷺ

It is common for most Muslims to verbally express their love for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, yet when it comes to following his guidance, they often hesitate or make poor excuses. Even worse, many will dismissively say, "It's just a Sunnah!" – which is an abhorrent statement for any member of the Ummah to make. There are Muslims today who choose to follow anything and anyone other than the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

As with any other aspect of Islam, mere emotion or words are not sufficient. Action must be taken in order to confirm or deny the words that have been uttered.

If we truly love someone, we follow them – just as so many people follow their beloved celebrities, imitating their sense of fashion, their behavior, and so on. Remember that on the Day of Judgment, we will be raised with the ones whom we love; we should show our love by following the Sunnah. By doing so, we will inshaAllah be raised with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, rather than with disbelievers who will be crying out to be turned to dust.

My dearest brothers and sisters in Islam, the Prophet's guidance is indeed the best guidance for humankind.

"For verily the best speech is the Book of Allâh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad."⁸

The enemies of Islam have shown their hate by degrading and belittling the Sunnah. Now, we must show our love for the Sunnah by implementing it in our daily lives.

⁸ Sahih Muslim

THE SUNNAH PROTECTS US FROM DEVIATION

Abû Bakr Al-Siddîq said: "I will not leave anything Allâh's Messenger ﷺ did, except that I will also do it; for I fear that if I were to leave any of his commands and ways, I would deviate."⁹

After recording this narration, Ibn Battah states:

*'This, my brothers, is the greatest As-Siddîq (true believer i.e. Abû Bakr), fearing that he would fall into deviation if he were to leave any of the commandments of his Prophet ﷺ. What then is to happen in a time in which people deride their Prophet ﷺ and his commandments, and compete with each other and show off in contradicting him and mock his Sunnah? We ask Allâh to protect us from slipping and to save us from evil deeds.'*¹⁰ End Quote.

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ would repeat these words often in his speeches, emphasizing to all Muslims the importance of following his Sunnah.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Verily I have left with you two things. If you hold unto them, you will never go astray: The Book of Allâh and my Sunnah."¹¹

The Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ is a ship of salvation and a haven of safety. The Prophet ﷺ urged us to adhere to it and not neglect it.

⁹ Sahih Bukhari

¹⁰ Ibn Battah, Al-Ibânah article 77

¹¹ Muwatta Malik, Authenticated by Albani

He said: "You must adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who come after me..."¹²

We live in a time when evil and corruption are prevalent and openly accepted, while a righteous and just person is viewed as strange. This is a time of widespread innovations and tribulations; those who uphold the Sunnah are considered bizarre. Know that the reward for the one who adheres to the Sunnah in these times will be much greater, as Prophet ﷺ left them glad tidings to rejoice with.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Islam began as something strange and will revert to being something strange, so glad tidings to the strangers." It was said: Who are they, O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ? He said: "Those who are righteous when the people are corrupt."¹³

Follow the Sunnah and be amongst the ones who have been left glad tidings by the Prophet ﷺ

THE REWARDS & BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH

Whenever someone fulfills an obligation in Islam, they are rewarded appropriately by Allah; similarly, following the Sunnah comes with its own great rewards and benefits.

¹² Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi, Authenticated by Albani

¹³ Saheeh Muslim

ALLÂH LOVES YOU

Attaining the Love of our Lord is our ultimate goal in life! Allâh says in the Qu'ran:

{Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love Allâh, follow me; Allâh will love you and forgive you your sins. Allâh is Forgiving, Merciful.} (3:31)

This Divine Verse reiterates the fact that following the *Sunnah* plays a major role in guiding us to fulfill the purpose of our creation. It also provides us with the powerful motivation of knowing that Allah loves those who follow His Messenger ﷺ.

THE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE WILL LOVE YOU

We attain the love of Allâh when we obey Him and follow His Messenger ﷺ; and when Allâh loves us, He causes the people around us to love. Social acceptance is something that many people seek and strive for, often in the wrong ways. Whereas many people pursue worldly goals and accomplishments as a way of earning admiration, it is actually following the Sunnah that will bring us honour.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "When Allah loves a slave, He says to Jibreel, "I love so-and-so, so love them," so Jibreel loves them. Then he calls out to the people of heaven, "Allah loves so-and-so, so

love them,” and the people of heaven love them, and then acceptance is placed in the Earth for them.”¹⁴

SubhaanAllâh being honoured, being loved, and being looked up to are all things that most people want. Many will do everything in their means to make people around them pay attention to them. Particularly in the age of social media, when so many people are preoccupied with showing off, even if it is worth nothing that it is far more likely to result in jealousy and resentment rather than love and respect. Instead, the love, honour, and respect that people desire will only come with following the Sunnah.

THE SUNNAH MAKES UP FOR OUR SHORTCOMINGS

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: “The first of his deeds for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is sound, then he will have succeeded but if it is not sound then he will be lost and doomed. If anything is lacking from his obligatory prayers, the Lord will say: ‘Look and see whether My slave has any voluntary (prayers),’ and the shortfall from his obligatory prayers will be made up from that. Then all his deeds will be dealt with in like manner.”¹⁵

The voluntary prayers are the *Sunnah* prayers; by performing them regularly, we can actually be saved from Hell.

¹⁴ Sahih Bukhari

¹⁵ at-Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood, authenticated by Albani.

WE DEVELOP THE BEST OF ETHICS

Allâh says:

{Indeed, in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day and remembers Allâh much.} (33:21)

Anyone with a conscience wants to be a good person. We teach our children ethics, manners, and moral values from our respective cultures. Being known as a person of good morals and honourable character is something which earns the respect of others. However, in the process of absorbing certain values, which includes learning from people who may or may not be Muslims, there are times when we internalize certain ideas and behaviours that go against the teachings of Islam.

It is imperative for us to understand the best of manners, the purest of morals, and the highest of ethics are all found in and taught to us by the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “I have only been sent to perfect good manners.”¹⁶

My dearest brothers and sisters in Islam, know that our Prophet ﷺ is the greatest of creation, and the perfect role model to follow. Know that by following the Sunnah, we become better people, have better manners and develop an overall righteous character.

¹⁶ Sahih Bukhari

Researches in medical science have time and again substantiated how practices of the sunnah are healthy and beneficial when followed regularly.

Above all, by following the Sunnah, we become good Muslims and gain the love of Allah.

REVIVE THE SUNNAH

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever starts a good thing (revives a Sunnah) and is followed by others, will have his own reward and a reward equal to that of those who follow him, without it detracting from their reward in any way...”¹⁷

It is appalling to see how some people reject many of the actions that we have been taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, dismissing them as ‘just Sunnah’. It is following the Sunnah which will help us receive our books of deeds in our right hands on the Day of Judgment; it is following the Sunnah which will make up for our inevitable errors; it is following the Sunnah which will earn us the love of our Lord and, subsequently, the eternal bliss of Paradise.

¹⁷ Al-Tirmidhi. He said, this is a saheeh hasan hadith; Also narrated by Ibn Majah.

CHAPTER II

FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO SALAH

WUDHU

'Wudhu' the form of ablution that must be performed and is mandatory for the Salah to be accepted. Its virtue is evidence from the hadith of Abu Hurairah (radhiAllahu 'anhu), who said:

*"I heard the Prophet ﷺ say, On the Day of Resurrection, my followers will be called [by the title]al-Ghurr al-Muhajjalun¹⁸, due to the traces of ablution. Whoever is able to increase the area of their radiance should do so [by performing wudhu often]."*¹⁹

¹⁸ Imam anNawawi said, "The word "Ghurr" is the plural of "Agharr" which means shining or white. It is used for animals (like a horse), i.e., a white mark on its face. Here, it refers to that radiance which will issue from the brows of the believers on the Day of Resurrection and which will make them prominent. Muhajjalun is from Tahjil which also means whiteness but it is used for that whiteness which is found on all the four or at least on three legs of a horse. Here, it refers to that light which will shine through the hands and feet of the believers because of their habit of performing Wudu'. This means that the believers among the Muslims will be distinguished from other communities by virtue of the radiance issuing from their faces, hands and feet on the Day of Resurrection in the same way that a horse with a white forehead is easily distinguished from other horses."

¹⁹ Sahih Bukhari

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Many of us know that doing wudhu is performed by washing the hands, rinsing the mouth and nose, washing the face, washing the arms (up to and including the elbows), wiping the head, and then washing the feet (up to and including the ankles), all these done thrice and the wiping done once. This is indeed the standard, requisite acts of wudhu – however, there are other actions that are related to or part of the wudhu which have been mentioned in the authentic ahadith, and which Muslims should learn about and put into practice.

Some of the forgotten sunan related to wudhu are:

Using the siwaak before wudhu

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Were it not for the fact that I did not want to make things too hard for my ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwaak at the time of every prayer.”²⁰ According to another report narrated by al-Bukhari, he said: “...at every time of making wudhu.”

The siwaak (also known as the miswaak) is a twig of the arâk tree, traditionally used to clean the teeth. While it is preferred to fulfill this sunnah by using an actual siwaak, which can be purchased relatively easily in many areas, it is also permissible to brush one’s teeth using a regular toothbrush.

²⁰ Agreed upon

Using one handful of water for the mouth and nose

There are narrations that indicate that RasulAllah ﷺ used to rinse the mouth and nose at once, with a single handful of water.

'Abd Allâh b. Zayd, while describing the Prophet's ablution, relates that: "... the Prophet ﷺ would then rinse his mouth and nose with a single handful of water, and he would do so thrice."²¹

The commonly practiced Sunnah of rinsing the mouth and nose is to do so separately; that is, to rinse the mouth three times, and then to flush the nose three times afterwards. However, this hadith indicates that it is also part of the Sunnah to use one handful of water for both the mouth and the nose at once. This is helpful if one wants to conserve water as well, as it would mean using three handfuls of water in total rather than six.

Running one's fingers through the beard

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal recorded that Abu Wa'il said, "I saw 'Uthman when he was performing wudhu'... when he washed his face, he passed his fingers through his beard three times. He said, I saw the Prophet ﷺ do what you saw me doing."²²

²¹ Agreed upon

²² At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi classed it Hasan Sahih & Bukhari graded it

Hasan.

Washing once or twice

The commonly practiced Sunnah is to wash each part three times – with the exception of wiping of the head (*mas'h*). However, there is also the option of washing each part merely once or twice, which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is recorded to have done at times.

The scholars have unanimously agreed that what is obligatory in wudhu is to wash each part once, although washing each part two or three times is a stronger Sunnah.

Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: The Prophet ﷺ did wudhu' washing each part once.²³

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Zaid: The Prophet ﷺ performed ablution by washing the body parts twice.²⁴

Note that we can wash different parts a different number of times; for example, it is permissible to wash the face three times, the hands twice and the feet once – or any other order. However, we should not persist in washing each part only once; rather, we should strive to do that which is most perfect and will increase us in reward.

Wiping the head two or three times

The best known Sunnah is to do *mas'h* of the head once, but it is also proven in the Sunnah that it is permissible to wipe it two or three times. Ar-Rubayyi' daughter of Mu'awwidh ibn Afra' narrated: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to come to us.

²³ Sahih Bukhari

²⁴ Sahih Bukhari

He once said: Pour ablution water on me. She then described how the Prophet ﷺ performed ablution saying: “....he wiped his head twice....”²⁵

Humran said: I saw ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan performing ablution... “He wiped his head three times. He then washed his feet three times.

He then said: I saw the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ performing ablution in a like manner. He (the Prophet ﷺ) said: He who performs ablution less than this, it is sufficient for him...”²⁶

Conserve Water

With flowing water available at the twist of a tap, responsible water usage is something which many people are heedless of. The Sunnah of RasulAllah ﷺ is not to waste – water or anything else. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to make wudhu with a much smaller amount of water than most of us do. Wudhu is a type of ‘ibaadah (act of worship) that is done for the Sake of Allah, and He dislikes wastage. In the course of seeking Allah’s pleasure, we should avoid doing those things that are displeasing to Him; it makes no sense to incur sins in the pursuit of good deeds.

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas (may Allâh be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ passed by Sa‘d when he was doing wudhu’, and he said, “What is this extravagance, O Sa‘d?”

²⁵ Sunan Abi Dawood, classed as Hasan by Albaani.

²⁶ Sunan Abi Dawood, classed as Hasan Sahih by Albani.

He said: Can there be any extravagance in wudhu'?

He ﷺ said, "Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river."²⁷

It was also narrated from Ibn 'Abbas: ".....I stayed overnight in the house of my aunt, Maimuna, the Prophet ﷺ slept for a part of the night, and late in the night, he got up and performed ablution from a hanging water skin, a perfect ablution and stood up for the prayer...."

²⁸

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allâh have mercy on him) said:

We should realize that using a lot of water for wudhu' or ghusl is included in the words of Allâh:

{And waste not by extravagance. Verily, He likes not Al-Musrifoon (those who waste by extravagance) ...} (6:141)

Hence the fuqaha' (may Allâh have mercy on them) said: It is makrooh to waste by extravagance even if one is on the bank of a flowing river, so how about if water is drawn by mechanical means?

To sum up: wasting by extravagance when doing wudhu' and otherwise is a blameworthy action. End quote²⁹

It is beneficial for us to know that our wudhu is acceptable even if we are to wash certain parts like our arms or feet only once, especially in times or areas where water is scarce and we are required to conserve water.

²⁷ Imam Ahmad & Ibn Maajah, classed as Hasan by Albani.

²⁸ Sahih Bukhari

²⁹ Sharh Riyad as-Saaliheen

Cleaning between the toes

Mustawrad Ibn Shidad Al-Fahry said: "If the Prophet ﷺ would perform wudhu, he would rub [between] his toes with his little (or pinky) finger."³⁰

While seemingly insignificant, this action guarantees that water reaches all the requisite parts of the body.

The du'a after wudhu

The Prophet ﷺ said: "There is no one among you who does wudhu' and does it properly and does it well, then he says, (the below Dua) but the gates of Paradise will be opened to him and he may enter through whichever of them he wishes."³¹

أشهُدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهُدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
 'Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allâh wahdahu laa shareeka lah, wa
 ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu,'

A report adds:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
 "Allâhumma ij'alni min al-tawwaabeena wa'j'alni min al-
 mutatahhireen

(O Allâh, make me one of those who repent and make me one of
 those who purify themselves)."³²

³⁰ Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Maajah, classed as Sahih by Albani.

³¹ Sahih Muslim

³² Sunan Abi Dawood, classed as saheeh by al-Albaani

Perform 2 Rak'aat after Wudhu

The Prophet ﷺ said to Bilal: "Tell me of the best deed you did after embracing Islam, for I heard your footsteps in front of me in Paradise." Bilal replied, "I did not do anything worth mentioning except that whenever I performed ablution during the day or night, I prayed after that ablution as much as was written for me."³³

After learning all of this, it is hoped that we will try to implement these various practices of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with regards to the wudhu. Awareness of, and a concerted effort in acting upon these different sunan will encourage us to be more conscious while we are doing wudhu, and make it an even greater source of reward.

May Allâh make us amongst those whose limbs shine brightly on the Day of Judgment, Ameen.

USING THE SIWAAK BEFORE PRAYER

Allâh's Apostle ﷺ said, "If I had not found it hard for my followers or the people, I would have ordered them to clean their teeth with the Siwak for every prayer."³⁴

It is clear from this narration that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ cared for his Ummah, and did not make this action obligatory upon us. To show our appreciation, we should in turn strive to follow this Sunnah as though it was a *fardh* (obligation), or at least to do so as much as possible.

³³ Agreed upon

³⁴ Agreed upon

USING A SUTRA

A *sutra* is an object used by a person performing the salah as a barrier between themselves and anyone that may pass in front of them. The idea behind it is that the worshipper should refrain from looking beyond the sutrah, and focus properly so that their mind will not wander; it is also to prevent others committing sin by passing directly in front of them.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*When one of you prays, let him pray facing towards a sutrah and draw close to it, and not let anyone pass in front of him.*”

And he ﷺ said: “*Let one of you use a sutrah when he prays, even if it is an arrow.*”³⁵

The sutrah is *mustahabb* (preferred) according to the majority of fuqaha’, and some of them are of the view that it is obligatory.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said, after quoting the evidence for both points of view: “The evidence of those who say that the sutrah is Sunnah, who are the majority, is stronger, and this is the more correct opinion.”³⁶

The sutrah can be anything – a wall, a chair, a small box, a bag, even a stick. If nothing is available, a line can be drawn by a stick and taken as a sutra.

³⁵ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as Hasan Sahih by Albani

³⁶ al-Sharh al-Mumti’ (3/277).

STOPPING SOMEONE WHO TRIES TO PASS IN FRONT

Once the praying person has established the sutra and begun the prayer, they should not allow anyone to pass in front of them.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “When any one of you prays facing an object that he is using to screen him from the people, and someone wants to pass in front of him, let him push him away, and if he insists let him fight him, for he is no more than a devil.”³⁷

Preventing a person or an animal from passing in the place of prostration by putting out your arm or pushing them away is prescribed, as related by Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri, who said:

“I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying: ‘If one of you prays with something in front of him protecting him from [passing] people, and someone wants to pass in front of him, then he should push him, and if he refuses to [turn back], then fight him, for he is a devil.’³⁸

It was narrated from ‘Amr ibn Shu’ayb from his father that his grandfather said: “We stopped with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ in Thaniyat Adhaakhir and the time for prayer came, so we prayed facing a wall. The Prophet ﷺ faced the wall and we were behind him. An animal came and wanted to pass in front of him, and he kept pushing it back until his stomach touched the wall, then it passed behind him.”³⁹

³⁷ Agreed upon

³⁸ Sahih Bukhari

³⁹ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as Hasan Sahih by Albani

This indicates that stopping others from passing in front of you while praying is not restricted only to stopping adults; rather, it applies to children and animals as well.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*If someone passing in front of a person performing the prayer knew of the penalty for it, it would be better for him to wait for forty.*”⁴⁰

Whether the Prophet ﷺ said forty days, months or years was not mentioned by the narrator. However, the narration indicates the seriousness of passing in front of a praying person. Whether you are the praying person or the person passing by someone who is praying, keep this in mind.

Therefore do not hesitate to stop any one, remember by stopping them, you are actually doing them a favor by saving them from a sin.

WALKING CALMLY TO THE MASJID

There is great virtue in walking to the Masjid. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*Whoever purifies himself in his house then walks to one of the houses of Allâh in order to perform one of the duties enjoined by Allâh, for every two steps he takes, one will erase a sin and the other will raise him one degree in status.*”⁴¹

⁴⁰ Sahih Bukhari

⁴¹ Sahih Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "When you hear the iqamah, proceed to the prayer with calmness and dignity, and do not rush. Pray what you can (with congregation) and complete what you miss."⁴²

Another sunnah that many of us miss out on is reciting the du'a while going to the masjid. Some people who rush to the masjid forget to say the du'a, while others who take their time may be distracted by talking to others or being engrossed with their mobile devices.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعِلْ فِي قَلْبِي نُورًا ، وَفِي لِسَانِي نُورًا ، وَاجْعِلْ فِي شَنَاعِي نُورًا ، وَاجْعِلْ مِنْ خَلْفِي نُورًا ، وَمِنْ أَمَامِي نُورًا ، وَاجْعِلْ مِنْ قَوْقِي نُورًا ، وَمِنْ تَحْتِي نُورًا اللَّهُ مُأْغِظِنِي نُورًا

O Allâh, place within my heart light, and upon my tongue light, and within my ears light, and within my eyes light, and place behind me light and in front of me light and above me light and beneath me light. O Allâh, bestow upon me light.⁴³

ARRIVING EARLY

It is known that the Sunnah for men is to arrive early for the congregational prayer and to strive to be in the first row.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The best of the men's rows (in Salah) is the first row and the worst is the last..."⁴⁴

⁴² Agreed upon

⁴³ Sahih Muslim

⁴⁴ Sahih Muslim

Unfortunately, much of the Ummah has become complacent and think that they are doing enough simply by attending the prayer in congregation. (As for those who are not doing even that much, that's another problem altogether.) The attitude of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ was very different; they would compete against each other to be the best. Even 'Umar tried to compete with Abu Bakr in doing good deeds.

When a believing man tastes the sweetness of faith and feels the joy of worshipping his Lord, he is eager to go to the masjid and hear the Adhaan. Such a person will always hasten to the masjid even before the time of prayer. He is as the Prophet ﷺ described: the person whose heart is attached to the masjid, who will be shaded by the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgment – that day when there is no shade but His.

Sufyaan al-Thawri said: “*Your coming to the prayer before the iqamaah is a sign of respect for the prayer.*”⁴⁵

Wakee' ibn al-Jarraah used to say: “*Whoever does not catch up with the first takbeer, do not hope for any good from him.*”⁴⁶

Ibn al-Mundhir narrated from Anas ibn Maalik⁴⁷ about the meaning of the verse:

{Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord.} (Qur'an 57:21), that it refers to the first takbeer. This was narrated by some of the mufassireen from Mak'hool and Sa'eed ibn Jubayr among the Taabi'een.

⁴⁵ Fath al-Baari (3/533).

⁴⁶ Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab al-Eemaan (3/74).

⁴⁷ al-Durr al-Manthoor (2/314)

THE FIRST ROW

There are many ahadith about the virtue and rewards of praying in the first row:

- The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*If the people knew what (reward) there is in the call and the first row, and there was no other way to settle the matter than drawing lots, they would draw lots for it.*”⁴⁸
- Al-Baraa’ ibn ‘Aazib said: “*The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to walk up and down the rows, wiping our shoulders and chests, and he would say, ‘Do not let your rows be ragged lest this create disharmony in your hearts,’ and he used to say, ‘Allâh and the angels send blessings on the front rows.*”⁴⁹
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “*When he enters the mosque, he is in a state of prayer so long as the prayer is what is keeping him there, and the angels send blessings on any one of you so long as he remains in the place where he prayed, saying, ‘O Allâh, forgive him, O Allâh, have mercy on him...’*”⁵⁰

It was narrated that Ibn al-Musayyab said: I have not missed the first takbeer for fifty years, and I have not looked at a man’s back whilst praying for fifty years.⁵¹ i.e., he used to pray in the front row.

Coming early to the masjid allows a person to offer other Sunnah prayers and to make du’ā between the adhaan and iqama – a time when supplications are more likely to be accepted.

⁴⁸ Agreed upon

⁴⁹ Abu Dawood & al-Nasaa’i; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

⁵⁰ Agreed upon

⁵¹ Al-Siyar (4/30)

TAHIYYATUL MASJID

The Prophet ﷺ said: "If any one of you enters a mosque, he should pray two raka'at before sitting."⁵²

This particular prayer is called Tahiyatul Masjid, and is a way of honouring the masjid as well as reminding ourselves of the purpose of our attendance – to worship Allah alone. Its importance is highlighted in the hadith of Jabir who said: A man came in on Friday when the Prophet ﷺ was delivering the khutbah. He ﷺ said: "Have you prayed?" He said: No. He ﷺ said: "Get up and pray two rak'ahs."⁵³

STRAIGHTENING THE ROWS

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

- "Straighten your rows, for straightening the rows is part of perfecting prayer."⁵⁴
- "Straighten the rows, for you form rows like the angels, and keep your shoulders in line with one another, and fill the gaps, and do not leave any room for the Shaytaan. Whoever joins a row to complete it, Allâh will take care of him and whoever interrupts a row, Allâh will cut him off."⁵⁵

⁵² Agreed upon

⁵³ Agreed upon

⁵⁴ Agreed upon

⁵⁵ Ahmad and Abu Dawood, classed as Sahih by Albani

It was narrated that Nu'maan ibn Basheer said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to face the people and said, 'Straighten your rows,' three times, 'for by Allâh either you straighten your rows or Allâh will create division among your hearts.' And I saw men standing shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee, ankle to ankle."⁵⁶

Note that the majority of the fuqaha say that it is sinful to disrupt the lines by standing head and heels ahead of the line. Someone's toes being a little bit behind or someone's heels behind a little ahead of someone else is not a problem; however, the sunnah is that we should try to perfect the lines as much as possible.

It was narrated that Nu'maan ibn Basheer said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to straighten our rows, as if he was straightening the shaft of an arrow, until he saw that we had learned it. Then he came out one day and was about to say the takbeer, when he noticed a man whose chest was sticking out from the row. He said: "Slaves of Allâh! Make your rows straight or Allâh will cause discord among you."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Abu Dawood; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

⁵⁷ Agreed upon

DU'A AL-ISTIFTAAH

The supplication recited after the opening Takbeer of the prayer, and before Surah al-Fatihah is called *Du'a' al-Istiftaaah* (opening supplication).

Many of us have been taught one version of the du'a, i.e. "Subhanakal-lahumma wabihamdi... ", although there are several other authentic supplications recorded from the Sunnah.

لَهُمْ بَاعْدَ بَنِي وَبَيْنَ حَطَابِيَّاتِكُمْ بَاعْدَتْ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ، اللَّهُمَّ تَقْنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنْقَى الثَّوْبُ الْأَيْضُ مِنَ التَّسِينِ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ حَطَابِيَّاتِكُمْ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ

'Allahumma, baa'id baini wa baina khatayaya kama baa'adta baina l-mashriqi wa l-maghrib. Allahumma, naqqini min khatayaya kama yunaqqa th-thawbu l-abyadu mina d-danas. Allahumma, ighsil khatayaya bi l-maa'i wa th-thalji wa l-barad

(O Allah! Set me apart from my sins (faults) as the East and West are set apart from each other and clean me from sins as a white garment is cleaned of dirt (after thorough washing). O Allah! Wash off my sins with water, snow and hail.)⁵⁸

This is a supplication mentioned in the Hadeeth of Abu Hurairah R.A.

A Muslim should alternate between the various supplications, thus keeping the Sunnah alive. Being mindful of which du'a one recites is also a means of increasing in khushoo' (concentration and spiritual awareness); rather than reciting out of habit, the heart is present when one is attentive and understands what is being said.

⁵⁸ Sahih Bukhari

PAUSING AFTER EACH AYAH OF SURAH AL-FATIHAH

Surah al-Fatiyah is usually the first chapter of the Qur'an which we all memorize, and as a result, also recite the fastest out of habit. Alas, it is due to our lack of knowledge regarding the virtues, benefits and rewards of Surah al-Fatiha that most of us end up reciting it just for the sake of recitation.

Few of us know that Surah al-Fatiha is an incredible supplication in and of itself; indeed, it is a direct conversation with Allah, who responds to each verse that we recite. Thus, the Sunnah is to pause between each verse, reflecting on the meaning of the words and understanding that Allah is responding to us directly. This is perhaps one of the most powerful means of attaining khushoo' and even reaching a state of Ihsaan⁵⁹.

In a Hadith Qudsi (Divine saying), Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,

"Whoever performs any prayer in which they did not read Umm Al-Qur'aan (Surah al-Fatiyah), then their prayer is incomplete."

He repeated these words three times. Someone said to Abu Hurairah, "Even though we are behind the Imam?" He said: "Recite it to yourself, for I have heard the Messenger of Allâh say:

⁵⁹ "[Jibreel] said: said, "Inform me about Ihsan." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet (know that) He sees you." (Sahih Muslim)

Allâh the Exalted said: "I have divided prayer between Myself and My slave into two halves, and My slave shall have what they have asked for."

When the slave says:

[الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ]

"All praise and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of existence"

Allâh says, "My slave has praised Me."

When the slave says,

[الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ]

"The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

Allâh says, "My servant has glorified Me."

When they say,

[مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَنَ]

"The Owner of the Day of Recompense"

Allâh says, "My slave has glorified Me," or "My servant has related all matters to Me."

When they say,

[إِلَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِلَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ]

“You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.”

Allâh says, “This is between Me and My slave, and My slave shall acquire what they sought.”

When they say,

[صِرَاطُ الَّذِينَ أَنْهَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا مَغْضُوبٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ - اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ]

“Guide us to the straight path. The way of those on whom You have granted Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray”

Allâh says, “This is for My slave, and My slave shall acquire what they asked for.”

These are the words of an-Nasaa'i, while both Muslim and an-Nasaa'i collected the following wording, “A half of it is for Me and a half for My slave and My slave shall acquire what they asked for.”

SAYING “AMEEN” ALOUD

In congregational prayers, when the imam is reciting Qur'an audibly, it is Sunnah for the congregants to say “Ameen” out loud when the imam finishes reciting Surah al-Fatihah.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “When the imam says ‘Ameen’ then say ‘Ameen,’ for if a person’s saying Ameen coincides with that of the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven.”⁶⁰

An-Nawawi said: “Saying “Ameen” is Sunnah for every worshipper after al-Fatihah, whether he is leading the prayer or is following an imam, or praying alone; for men, women and children, whether they are praying standing up, sitting down or lying down (i.e., if they have an excuse); whether they are praying an obligatory prayer or a naafil prayer; whether the prayer is one in which Qur'aan is recited silently or out loud. There is no difference of opinion concerning this among any of our companions.”⁶¹

Ibn Qudaamah said: “It is Sunnah for the imam and the members of the congregation to say it (Ameen) out loud when Qur'aan is recited out loud, and to say it silently in prayers where Qur'aan is recited silently.”⁶²

Ruling for women: It is permissible for a woman to recite Qur'aan and say Ameen out loud in prayer, unless she is praying in the presence of a non-mahram man, in which case she should say it silently.⁶³

⁶⁰ Agreed upon

⁶¹ al-Majmoo', 3/371

⁶² al-Mughni (2/162):

⁶³ al-Mughni (2/162)

RAISING THE HANDS IN PRAYER

It is proven from the Sunnah to raise one's hands at four points during the prayer:

- When pronouncing Takbeeratul-Ihraam (the first Takbeer)
- Before bowing in Ruku”
- After rising from Ruku”
- When standing up for the third Rak'ah (after the first Tashahhud)

Ibn ‘Umar (may Allâh be pleased with him) narrated that when the Prophet ﷺ started his prayer, he would say “Allâhu akbar” and raise his hands; when he bowed in ruku” he would raise his hands; when he said “Sami’ā Allâhu liman hamidah (Allâh hears those who praise Him),” he would raise his hands; and when he stood up after two rak’aat, he would raise his hands.⁶⁴

Imaam al-Bukhari (may Allâh have mercy on him) wrote a separate book on this issue which he called *Juz’ fi Raf’ al-Yadayn* (Section on Raising the Hands). In this book, he proved that the hands should be raised in prayer and he strongly denounced those who go against that. He narrated that al-Hasan said: “The Companions of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to raise their hands during prayer when they bowed and when they stood up (from bowing).” Al-Bukhari said, “Al-Hasan did not exclude any of the Sahaabah from that, and it was not proven that any one among the Sahaabah did not raise his hands.”

⁶⁴ Sahih Bukhari& Abu Dawood

It is important for us to not allow our laziness or our pre-established habits – that is, of not raising our hands at those prescribed points – to prevent us from following the Sunnah. It is true that the Salah is acceptable without performing this particular Sunnah (or any of the additional sunan, for that matter). However, what reason will we give to our Lord on the Day of Judgment, in front of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, for abandoning such a simple yet worthy Sunnah?

RECITING QUR'AN IN THE LAST TWO RAK'AAT OF DHUHR

Aboo Sa'eed al Khudri (radiAllâhu 'anhu) said that the Prophet ﷺ used to recite in the first two rak'ahs of Dhuhr prayer approximately thirty verses in each rak'ah, and in the last two rak'ahs approximately fifteen verses, or he said: half of that. In the first two rak'ahs of 'Asr he used to recite in each rak'ah approximately fifteen verses, and in the last two rak'ahs approximately half of that.⁶⁵

So it is Sunnah to sometimes recite a surah (after al-Fatihah) in the last two raka'aat, and sometimes to recite only Surah Fatihah and nothing after that in the last two raka'aat.

LENGTHENING SALAH ADH DHUHR

It is common for many people to shorten the Dhuhr and 'Asr prayers, including in the congregational prayers at the masjid. A person could arrive at the masjid just as the *iqaamah* is being made,

⁶⁵ Sahih Muslim

but by the time they complete their wudhu and join the congregation, they will have already missed half the prayer.

In contrast, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would prolong the prayer to such an extent that:

"the Zuhra prayer would have started, and someone could go to a plain: al-Baqi,' fulfil his need, [come back to his place,] make his ablution, and then come (to the mosque) while the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was still in the first rak'ah, it was that long."⁶⁶

They (the companions) used to think that he did it so that the people could catch the first rak'ah.⁶⁷

INVOKING ALLAH DURING RECITATION OF QUR'AN IN PRAYER

Du'a and conversing with one's Lord is one of the dearest of actions to Allâh; it expresses humility and is a clear declaration of one's need for His Mercy. This is something that Allâh loves to see from His slaves.

Hudhaifah reported: I performed the prayer with the Prophet ﷺ one night, and he started reciting Surah Al-Baqarah. He ﷺ then started reciting Surah an-Nisa' which he followed with Surah Aal-Imran. He recited leisurely. When he recited an Ayah which mentioned the *tasbeeh* (glorifying Allah), he would say *SubhanAllâh*; when he recited the Ayah which spoke of how Allah is to be asked,

⁶⁶ Sahih Muslim

⁶⁷ Abu Daawood with a saheeh isnaad & Ibn Khuzaimah

the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ would then ask from Him; and when he ﷺ recited an Ayah asking one to seek the protection Allâh, he would seek the protection of Allâh...”⁶⁸

There are many other *ahadith* and *adhkaar* from early generations who used to invoke Allâh a great deal during their prayers, as prayer is a means to converse with your Lord.

Similarly, invoking Allâh during *sujood* (prostration) is a sacred time to connect with Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*The closest one of you comes to his Lord is while he is prostrating (Sujood); (therefore) make many supplications therein.*” And he ﷺ also said, “*During the bowing, Glorify the Lord. During the prostrations, strive your hardest in making supplications (Dua). Most likely, you will be listened to.*”⁶⁹

My beloved brothers and sisters in Islam, make your prayers the most beautiful of times by making it a deeply personal and intimate conversation between you and your Lord. Praise Him, glorify Him, open your heart up to Him, confide in Him, seek His guidance, His love, and His mercy – and in doing so, achieve true tranquility of heart, as well as receive incredible rewards, such that the mind cannot comprehend.

However, this particular form of engagement with Allah during the prayer should be restricted to the optional prayers rather than the obligatory ones.

⁶⁸ Sahih Muslim

⁶⁹ Sahih Muslim & Ahmad and others

DRY SPITTING TO WARD OFF SHAYTAN

Khushu' (concentration, spiritual awareness) is the essence of prayer. Prayer without *khushu'* is like a body without a soul. Shaytan is keen to misguide the Muslim and deprive him of the great rewards of prayers and so he whispers with his evil.

One of the Sahaabah complained to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ about waswasa (insinuating doubts/ anxieties) during prayer, and he said: "The Shaytaan comes between me and my prayers and my recitation, confusing me therein." The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "That is a devil called Khanzab. If he affects you seek refuge in Allâh from him and spit drily to your left three times." He [the Sahaabi] said, I did that and Allâh took him away from me.⁷⁰

Of course, one should be careful in doing this when praying in congregation, as it could be distracting or off-putting to other worshippers.

STRAIGHTENING THE BACK IN RUKU'

The Prophet ﷺ commanded us to do *ruku'* (bowing) and *sujood* (prostration) perfectly and completely.

A hadith describes the prayer of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: If the Prophet ﷺ was in *ruku'*, he would straighten his back such that if water was poured on his back, it would remain (i.e. it would not spill).⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sahih Muslim

⁷¹ Al-Tabarani in al-Muj'am al-Kabir and al-Muj'am al-Saghir, 'AbdAllah Ibn Ahmad in Zawa'id al Masnad and Ibn Majah

While we should do our best to carry out this sunnah as best as we can, we should also be extremely careful to not judge others who may not be able to perform this as well as we can. As long as they are making their own best effort, Allah will reward them.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “A man’s prayer is not good enough until his back is straight in ruku” and sujood.”⁷²

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “The worst type of thief is the one who steals from his prayer.” The people asked, “O Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, how can a person steal from his prayer?” He said: “By not doing ruku” and sujood properly.”⁷³

There is no doubt that lacking the proper composure in prayer is disliked, and the person who does not make an effort to correct themselves should be advised and taught to do better.

Abu ‘Abdullaah al-Ash’ari reported that the Prophet ﷺ led his Companions in prayer, then he sat with a group of them. A man came in and started to pray, but made his movements rapid like a chicken pecking the ground. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Do you see this? Whoever dies having done this has died outside of the community of Muhammad, and his prayer is like a crow pecking blood. The person who bows then pecks in his sujood is like a hungry man who eats no more than one or two dates - what good will that do him?”⁷⁴

⁷² Sunan Abu Dawud, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁷³ Imaam Ahmad, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁷⁴ Reported by Ibn Khuzaymah in his Saheeh 1/332; see also al-Albaani, Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (The Prophet’s Prayer described), 131)

MAKING EACH POSITION EQUAL IN TIME

It is the Sunnah to make the ruku”, the standing after ruku”, the two prostrations and the sitting between the two prostrations approximately equal in length. Narrated Al-Bara (May Allâh be pleased with him): *The bowing, the prostrations, the period of standing after bowing and the interval between the two prostrations of the Prophet ﷺ used to be equal in duration.*⁷⁵

There are many supplications which one can memorize and recite during each position, which will help in lengthening the positions accordingly.

SITTING FOR A BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE STANDING UP FOR THE SECOND OR FOURTH RAKAH

It is a sunnah to sit and have a brief rest after the two prostrations of the first and third Rakahs before standing up for the second and fourth Rakahs respectively.

Narrated by Malik bin Huwairith Al-Laythi “I saw the Prophet praying and in the odd Rakat, he used to sit for a moment before getting up.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Sahih Bukhari

⁷⁶ Sahih Bukhari, Tirmidhi & Abu Dawood

SITTING MUTAWARIKAN

Sitting *mutawarrikan* in prayer is a proven Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

Tawarruk or sitting *mutawarrikan* is to sit in such a manner that the left foot is laid down, the right foot is held upright, with the buttocks on the ground.

A description of the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ was mentioned, in which it was said: “And when he sat in the final rak’ah, he put his left foot forward and held the other foot upright, and sat on his behind.”⁷⁷

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allâh have mercy on him) was asked in *Liqâ’ al-Baab il-Mafsooh*: When should a worshipper sit *mutawarrikan* in prayer, and in which prayers?

He replied: *Tawarruk* is done in the final tashahhud of every prayer that has two tashahhuds, i.e., the last tashahhud in Maghrib, and in ‘Isha’, and in ‘Asr, and in Zuhr. As for the two-rak’ah prayers, such as Fajr, and the regular Sunnah prayers, there is no *tawarruk* in them. So *tawarruk* is only in the last tashahhud of every prayer that has two tashahhuds. End quote.

⁷⁷ Sahih Bukhari

REMEMBER DEATH

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Remember death in your prayer, for the man who remembers death during his prayer is bound to pray properly, and pray the prayer of a man who does not think that he will pray any other prayer."⁷⁸

The Prophet ﷺ also advised Abu Ayyoob (may Allāh be pleased with him): "When you stand up to pray, pray a farewell prayer."⁷⁹ This statement is to emphasize the fact that none of us knows when we will die – and thus, the prayer we are about to perform may well be our last. With this mindset, we will be far more likely to have strong khushoo' in our prayer, being mindful of perfecting it as much as possible.

SUPPLICATING AFTER THE FINAL TASHAHHUD

The Prophet ﷺ said: "When you sit after every two Rak'ahs, then say:

*At-tahiyyaat al-tayyibaat As-salawaatu Lillaahi (All compliments, blessed words, prayers, pure words are due to Allāh ...) until he ﷺ said: 'And that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger,' and then each of you should select the supplication they like best and supplicate to Allāh."*⁸⁰

⁷⁸ al-Silsilat al-Saheehah by al-Albaani, 1421

⁷⁹ Ibn Majahm classed as Sahih by Albani

⁸⁰ Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasaa'I, classed as Sahih by Albani.

In this narration, RasulAllah ﷺ is instructing us to say the *tashahhud*, the *durood*, and to follow it up with any *du'a* of our own. This is an opportunity for us to ask for Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and reward – as well as anything else we desire in this world or the Next – and is an example of how the prayer is meant to be a personal interaction with Allah, as opposed to mere ritual.

It is also an opportunity to utilize other supplications from the Qur'an and Sunnah. After that, one may complete their prayer by saying the *tasleem*.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "When any one of you has finished the last *tashahhud*, let him seek refuge with Allâh from four things and say:

لَهُمْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَخْيَا وَالْفَمَاتِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ
الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجِيلِ

*Allâhumma inni a'oodhu bika min 'adhaabi jahannam wa min
'adhaab il-qabri wa min fitnat il-mahyaa wa'l-mamaat wa min sharri
fitnat il-maseeh il-dajjaal.*

(O Allâh, I seek refuge with You from the torment of Hell and from the torment of the grave and from the trials of life and death and from the evil of the trial of the Dajjaal).⁸¹

The Prophet ﷺ also taught the Companions the *tashahhud*, and then said: "Let him ask for whatever good things he wishes."⁸²

⁸¹ Agreed upon, (this version narrated by Muslim).

⁸² Agreed upon

Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq said to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ: “Teach me a du’aa’ that I may say in my prayer.” He said: “Say:

اللهم إني ظلمت نفسي ظلماً كثيراً، ولا يغفر الذنب إلا أنت، فاغفر لي مغفرة من عندك، وارحمني، إنك أنت الغفور الرحيم ”

‘Allâhumma inni zalamtu nafsi zulman katheeran wa laa yaghfir ul-dhunoob illa anta, faghfir li maghfiratan min ‘indaka warhamni, innaka anta al-Ghafoor al- Raheem.

*(O Allâh, indeed I have wronged myself greatly, and there is none who forgives sins besides You. So grant me forgiveness from You and have mercy on me, for you are the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful)*⁸³

There are numerous other supplications which one can find from the Qur'an and Sunnah, and which are appropriate to be recited in the prayer. Many of them can be found in books like "Hisnul Muslim - (Fortress of a Muslim)" or "al Adhkaar" by Imam an-Nawawi.

VARYING THE RECITATIONS IN PRAYER

It was a practice of RasulAllah ﷺ to vary what he would recite in the salah. This sunnah is one which encourages us in our memorization of Qur'an, as it requires us to know more than just a handful of verses.

Memorizing the Qur'an is a highly virtuous act, and acting upon it even moreso.

⁸³ Agreed upon

The Prophet ﷺ said: "It will be said to the companion of the Qur'aan: Recite and rise in status, recite as you used to recite in the world, for your status will be at the last verse that you recite."⁸⁴

This is referring to what will happen on the Day of Judgment, after the people have been judged and the believers will enter Paradise.

Memorizing the Qur'an is meant to be more than mere lip service; the worshiper is meant to learn the meanings of the verses, to ponder on them, to understand how they apply to our daily lives, to our faith, and to our Hereafter. If we only memorize a handful of short chapters of the Qur'an, we are truly missing out on both the reward for memorizing Qur'an, and the spiritual benefits of our prayer and contemplation of the Divine Verses.

It is also recommended for us to memorize and recite the chapters that the Prophet ﷺ used to recite often in each prayer, as was recorded in several authentic ahadith.

Fajr Prayer

RasulAllah ﷺ would often recite longer *mufassal* chapters (from the last seventh of the Qur'an), such as:

- Surah al-Waaqi'ah (Chapter 56)⁸⁵
- Surah atToor (Chapter 52)⁸⁶
- Surah Qaaf (Chapter 50)⁸⁷

⁸⁴ At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

⁸⁵ Ahmad, Ibn Khuzaimah Haakim declared it Saheeh

⁸⁶ Agreed upon

- Surah Al-Room (Chapter 30)⁸⁸
- Surah Yaa-Seen (Chapter 36)⁸⁹
- Surah Saaffaat (Chapter 37)⁹⁰
- Surah Al-Mu'minoon (Chapter 23)⁹¹

Some of the shorter mufassal chapters that RasulAllah used to recite in Fajr are:

- Surah at-Takweer (Chapter 81)⁹²
- Surah Al-Zalzalah (Chapter 99)⁹³
- Al-Mu'wadatayn - Surah al-Falaq & Surah an-Naas (Chapters 113 & 114)⁹⁴
- On Fridays, he would recite Surahs As-Sajdah & al-Insan (Chapter 32 & 76)⁹⁵
- He used to make the First Rak'ah longer than the second.

⁸⁷ Sahih Muslim & Tirmidhi

⁸⁸ Nasaa'i & Ahmad with good isnad.

⁸⁹ Ahmad with sahih isnad

⁹⁰ Ahmad & Abu Ya'laa in their musnads

⁹¹ Agreed upon

⁹² Sahih Muslim & Abu Dawood

⁹³ Abu Dawood & Baihaqi with a sahih isnad

⁹⁴ Abu Dawood, Ibn Khuzaimah and others, Haakim & Dhahabi declared it Sahih

⁹⁵ Agreed upon

Dhuhr Prayer

It was reported that in Salat al-Dhuhr, he ﷺ would recite the equivalent of thirty verses in each of the two rak'ahs, and that he recited:

- Surah As-Sajdah (Chapter 32)⁹⁶
- Surah Inshiqaaq (Chapter 84)⁹⁷
- Surah Al-Burooj (Chapter 85)⁹⁸
- Surah Al-Taariq (Chapter 86)⁹⁹
- Surah A'laa (Chapter 87)¹⁰⁰
- Surah Ghaasiyah (Chapter 88)¹⁰¹
- Surah Al-Layl (Chapter 92)¹⁰²

It was also narrated that sometimes he ﷺ would recite two surahs in the first two rak'ahs of Dhuhr prayer, making the first one longer than the second.¹⁰³

Sometimes "he would let them hear an aayah or so."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Sahih Muslim & Ahmad

⁹⁷ Ibn Khuzaimah in his Saheeh

⁹⁸ Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Khuzaimah, the latter declared it sahih

⁹⁹ Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Khuzaimah, the latter declared it sahih

¹⁰⁰ Bukhaari in Article on Recitation & Tirmidhi, who declared it sahih

¹⁰¹ Bukhaari in Article on Recitation & Tirmidhi, who declared it sahih

¹⁰² Agreed upon

¹⁰³ Agreed upon

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Khuzaimah in his Saheeh & Diya'a' al-Maqdisi with a sahih isnaad

Asr Prayer

In Salat al-'Asr, he ﷺ would recite the equivalent of fifteen verses in each rak'ah¹⁰⁵, and he would recite the surahs already mentioned in connection with Salah adhDhuhr.

Maghrib Prayer

In Salat al-Maghrib, he ﷺ would recite short mufassal surahs¹⁰⁶ such as:

- Surah At-Teen (Chapter 95) in the Second Rakah¹⁰⁷
- Surah Muhammad (Chapter 47)¹⁰⁸
- Surah At-Toor (Chapter 52)¹⁰⁹
- Surah Al-Mursalaat (Chapter 77)¹¹⁰

Sometimes "he would recite the longer of the two long surahs (233) (A'raaf 7:206) [in two rak'ahs]." ¹¹¹ Or he would recite al-Anfaal (8:75) in two rak'ahs. ¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Sahih Muslim & Ahmad

¹⁰⁶ Agreed upon

¹⁰⁷ Ahmad with sahih isnaad

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Khuzaaimah & Tabraani with sahih isnaad

¹⁰⁹ Agreed upon

¹¹⁰ Agreed upon

¹¹¹ Sahih Bukhari, Abu Dawood, Ahmad and others

¹¹² Tabraani in Mu'jam al-Kabeer with a sahih isnaad

Isha Prayer

In ‘Ishaa’ he ﷺ would recite medium-length mufassal surahs¹¹³, such as:

- Surah Al-Qalam (Chapter 68)
- Surah Al-Inshiqaq (Chapter 84)¹¹⁴
- Surah Al-A’laa (Chapter 87)¹¹⁵
- Surah Ash-Shams (Chapter 91)¹¹⁶
- Surah Al-Layl (Chapter 92)¹¹⁷
- Surah Teen (Chapter 95) in First Rakah¹¹⁸
- Surah ‘Alaq (Chapter 96)¹¹⁹

Witr Prayer

When offering a three rak’ah prayer¹²⁰, he ﷺ used to recite:

- Surah Al A’laa (Chapter 87) in first rak’ah
- Surah Al Kaafiroon (Chapter 109) in second rak’ah
- Surah Ikhlas (Chapter 112) in the third rak’ah

¹¹³ Nasaa’i & Ahmad with sahih isnaad

¹¹⁴ Agreed upon

¹¹⁵ Agreed upon

¹¹⁶ Ahmad & Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan.

¹¹⁷ Agreed upon

¹¹⁸ Agreed upon

¹¹⁹ Agreed upon

¹²⁰ Nasaa’i (Hasan isnaad), Haakim & Bayhaqi with Sahih isnaad.

Night Prayers

In Qiyaam al-Layl, RasulAllah ﷺ used to recite the long chapters. It was reported that he used to recite 200 or 150 aayaat, and sometimes he would shorten the recitation¹²¹.

Optional Prayers

The Prophet ﷺ used to recite Surah al-Kaafiroon in the first rak'ah and Surah al-Ikhlaas in the second rak'ah, in the Sunan arRawaatib (additional, optional prayers before Fajr¹²² and after Maghrib¹²³ and the two rak'aat offered after Tawaaf¹²⁴..

Fajr Sunnah

He would recite the aayah "Say: We believe in Allaah and therevelation given to us..." (Baqarah 2:136) in the first rak'ah; in the second, the aayah "Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you..." (Aal-'Imraan 3:64). ¹²⁵

¹²¹ Nasaa'i with sahih isnaad

¹²² Sahih Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nisaa'i, Ibn Majah

¹²³ Tabarani, classed as Sahih by Albani

¹²⁴ Sahih Muslim

¹²⁵ Sahih Muslim

Eid Prayer

In the Eid prayers, RasulAllah ﷺ would recite Surah al-A'laa (Chapter 87) in the first rak'ah, and recite Surah al-Ghashiyah (Chapter 88) in the second rak'ah.¹²⁶

This is what has been mentioned in authentic ahadith, and one should try to recite these surahs in the way that the Prophet ﷺ used to do so. We should not restrict our recitation in salah solely to these surahs, but be aware of the Sunnah of RasulAllah ﷺ.

SAJDAH AS SAHW

Sajdah As Sahw (prostration of forgetfulness) is a Sunnah that we were taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to do when we forgetful how many rak'aat we have already offered.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “*When anyone of you stands for the prayers, Satan comes and puts them in doubts till they forget how many rak'aat they have prayed. If this happens to anyone of you, they should perform two prostrations of Sahw while sitting.*”¹²⁷

If someone has forgotten how many rak'aat they have prayed and are uncertain of whether to do an extra rak'ah or not, they should go by the number that they are certain of. After performing the extra rak'ah, they should do the tashahhud, do *Sujood asSahw* (two prostrations, as one performs regular prostrations), and then say the

¹²⁶ Sahih Muslim

¹²⁷ Sahih Bukhari

tasleem. This also applies if one accidentally omits to do something else in the prayer, like the first *tashahhud*.

If someone adds something to the prayer by mistake, then the prayer is not invalidated. However, it does require doing *Sujood asSahw* after the *tasleem*.

Ibn Mas'ood (may Allâh be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ led them in praying Dhuhr, and he prayed five rak'ahs. When he had finished it was said to him: "Has something been added to the prayer?"

He said: "Why are you asking that?"

They said: "You prayed five (rak'ahs)."

So he turned towards the qiblah and prostrated twice.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Agreed upon

VARIATIONS OF TASLEEM

The giving of one Tasleem is obligatory, as the Prophet ﷺ said: “....*exiting oneself from the prayer is by giving Tasleem.*” And giving two Tasleems is Sunnah.¹²⁹

The majority of Muslims perform the tasleem in a fairly standard manner – turning one’s head first to the right shoulder, saying “As-salaamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullaah,” and then turning one’s head to the left shoulder and repeating it.

However, there are other variations of performing the tasleem that we should know about and try to implement.

- 1) Saying “*As-salaamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh,*” *on both sides - right and left.* ¹³⁰
- 2) Saying “*As-salaamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh,*” *to the right, and “As-salaamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullaah” to the left.*¹³¹
- 3) “*As-salaamu ‘alaikum wa rahmatullaah,*” *to the right, and “As-salaamu ‘alaikum” to the left.*¹³²
- 4) Saying one salaam, tilting the head slightly to the right.¹³³

¹²⁹ Sheikh Albani - Silsilat Al-Hadeeth As-Saheehah

¹³⁰ Abu Daawood, Ibn Majah and others

¹³¹ Abu Daawood & Ibn Khuzaimah (1/87/2) with a saheeh sanad

¹³² Nasaa'i & Ahmad with a saheeh sanad

¹³³ Ibn Khuzaimah, Baihaqi with Sahih Isnad This narration is the same as that narrated by Anas R.A. that the Prophet ﷺ used to conclude the prayer with one Tasleem. Al-Albaani classified it as authentic.

WEARING SHOES DURING PRAYER

The Prophet ﷺ prayed wearing shoes is to be found in the hadith, “Be different from the Jews, who do not pray in their shoes or in their leather slippers.”¹³⁴

Also Anas ibn Maalik (may Allāh be pleased with him) was asked, “Did the Prophet ﷺ pray wearing shoes?” He said, “Yes.”¹³⁵

The condition is that the shoes must be *taahir* (pure, clean). If there is any *najaasah* (impurity) on them, then one should not pray wearing them. It is a pre-condition of prayer that both one’s garments and the location one is praying in that they be free of any *najaasah*.

Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri who said: “While the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was leading his companions in prayer, he took off his shoes and placed them to his left. When the people saw that, they took off their shoes too. When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ finished his prayer, he asked, ‘What made you take off your shoes?’ They said, ‘We saw you take off your shoes, so we took ours off too.’”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, ‘Jibreel (peace be upon him) came to me and told me that there was something dirty on them.’ When any one of you comes to the mosque, let him look and if he sees anything dirty on his shoes, let him wipe them and then pray in them.”¹³⁶

One great lesson for us to take from this narration is how swift the Sahabah were to imitate the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. They did not

¹³⁴ Sunan Abu Dawood; classed as sahih by al-Albaani.

¹³⁵ Agreed upon

¹³⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood; classed as sahih by al-Albaani

wait until after the prayer to ask him why he had removed his shoes; instead, they followed suit immediately with asking him any questions.

This Sunnah should be applied when appropriate, such as when one is praying outdoors or in a public place. If a masjid is carpeted, one is discouraged from wearing shoes inside as it will track in dirt.¹³⁷

DELAYING ISHA

The time of Isha starts when the red afterglow in the sky after sunset disappears completely, and the time for it ends completely before Fajr. However, the best and preferred time for praying Isha is before half the night has passed.

It is important to note that the halfway point of night is not calculated based on “midnight” (12pm), but on the hours between Maghrib and Fajr. For example, if sunset is at 5pm, and Fajr begins at 5am, then the middle of the night would be calculated at 11pm.

Although it is generally advised to offer the prayers at the beginning of their times, there is an exception for Isha. As long as it does not cause undue hardship, it is recommended to delay Isha prayer somewhat, based on the following hadith.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allâh be pleased with him), he said that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Were it not that it would be too hard

¹³⁷ Fataawa Samaahat al-Shaykh ‘Abd-Allâh ibn Humayd, p. 81.

*for my ummah, I would have commanded them to delay 'Isha' until one-third of the night had passed, or one half."*¹³⁸

A'ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) narrated: The Prophet ﷺ stayed late one night until most of the night had gone and the people in the mosque had fallen asleep. Then he went out and prayed. He said, "*This would be its time, were it not that this would be difficult for my ummah.*"¹³⁹

It was also narrated that Jaabir said, when he mentioned the times when the Prophet ﷺ prayed: "*He sometimes delayed 'Isha', and sometimes brought it forward if he saw that they had gathered early. But if he saw that they were coming late, he would delay it.*"¹⁴⁰

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allâh have mercy on him) said:

It is better to do the prayer at the time required in the shari'ah. Hence the Prophet ﷺ said, answering the one who asked him which deed is most beloved to Allâh, "*Prayer done on time.*"¹⁴¹ He did not say, prayer at the beginning of its time. That is because the prayers include some which it is Sunnah to pray sooner and some which it is Sunnah to pray later.

It is Sunnah to pray 'Isha' later, after one-third of the night has passed. Hence if a woman is at home and asks which is better for me, to pray 'Isha' when I hear the adhaan or to delay it until one-third of the night has passed? We say, it is better to delay it until one-third of

¹³⁸ at-Tirmidhi, 167 & Ibn Majah, classed as sahih, different wordings were recorded in Sahih Mulim

¹³⁹ Sahih Muslim

¹⁴⁰ Agreed upon

¹⁴¹ Agreed upon

the night has passed, because the Prophet ﷺ delayed one night until they said, "O Messenger of Allāh, the women and children have fallen asleep," so he went out and led them in prayer, and said, "This would be its time, were that not too difficult for my ummah." So if a woman is in her house, it is better for her to delay it. End Quote¹⁴²

Note that the majority of scholars consider it obligatory for men to pray in congregation. If the congregation in his area is held when the time for Isha begins, then the man should join the congregation rather than delaying his prayer.

PRAYING THE SUNNAH PRAYERS AT HOME

Another neglected sunnah is that of praying the optional sunnah prayers at home, whether before or after the obligatory prayers. It is a means of blessing the home, and creating an atmosphere of spirituality in the house.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

- "*O people, pray in your houses, for the best of prayer is a man's prayer in his house, apart from the prescribed prayers.*"¹⁴³
- "*When any one of you finishes his prayer in his mosque, let him give his house a share of his prayer, for Allāh will create*

¹⁴² Fataawa Arkaan al-Islam p.287

¹⁴³ Agreed upon

something good (ie bless him) in his house from his prayer.”¹⁴⁴

- “*Man’s voluntary prayer, where people do not see him, is twenty five times as equal as that which he performs publicly.*”¹⁴⁵

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Shaqeeq said: I asked A’ishah about the voluntary prayers of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. She said: He used to pray four rak’ahs before Dhuhr in my house, then he would go out and lead the people in prayer, then he would come in and pray two rak’ahs. And he used to lead the people in Maghrib prayer, then he would come in and pray two rak’ahs. And he would lead the people in praying ‘Isha’, then he would come into my house and pray two rak’ahs. And he would pray nine rak’ahs of night prayer (*qiyaam al-layl*), including Witr...”¹⁴⁶

Ibn Qudaamah said: Offering voluntary prayers at home is preferable, because praying at home is closer to sincerity and furthest removed from showing off. It is an act that is done in secret, whereas doing it in the mosque is in public, and secrecy is better. End Quote¹⁴⁷

It serves as a reminder to the forgetful, and a method of teaching those in the household who are not aware of this sunnah.

Sadly, the sunnah of praying the voluntary prayers at home has become so rare that if a person leaves the masjid without offering the

¹⁴⁴ Sahih Muslim

¹⁴⁵ Musnad Aboo Ya’ala, Hadith 3821, Authenticated by Shaykh al-Albaani

¹⁴⁶ Sahih Muslim

¹⁴⁷ Al-Mughni, 1/442

nawaafil (optional prayers), people become judgmental. Rather than realizing the increased reward of praying the sunan at home, people criticize them for not offering the voluntary prayers at all.

Note that these voluntary prayers are those other than the ones specifically recommended to be prayed in congregation (such as the eclipse prayer) or in the masjid (such as the optional prayers before Salah al-Jumu'ah).

FOUR RAK'AH BEFORE 'ASR

'Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ used to perform four rak'aat before the 'Asr prayer, separating them with tasleem (sending blessings on) the favoured angels and those who follow (in their footsteps, with regards to worship) from the Muslims and the believers.¹⁴⁸

Ibn 'Umar (may Allâh be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "May Allâh have mercy on a man who performs four Rak'ah before the 'Asr prayer."¹⁴⁹

Based on the two ahadith quoted, the four rak'aat can be offered in two separate prayers, each consisting of two rak'aat, or in one prayer consisting of four rak'aat. Many scholars are of the opinion that the former method is better, as it is prescribed for us to offer optional prayers in units of two at a time. Although this particular prayer is not a strongly emphasized one, it is still a proven and praiseworthy sunnah to implement in our lives.

¹⁴⁸ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan

¹⁴⁹ Abu Dawud & At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan by Albani.

OFFERING THE SUNAN ARRAWAATIB

The Sunan arRawaatib are those voluntary prayers which have been specifically associated with the obligatory prayers.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Allâh will build a house in Paradise for whoever is diligent in observing 12 Sunnah Rak'aat (as follows): 4 Rak'aat before and 2 after the Dhuhra prayer, 2 after the Maghrib prayer, 2 after the ‘Ishaa’ prayer and 2 before the Fajr prayer.”¹⁵⁰

Many people who offer the obligatory prayers often pray the two rak'aat of sunnah for Fajr, Dhuhra, Maghrib and Isha. However, many people neglect the four rak'aat before Dhuhra. We should make at least some effort to incorporate this particular sunnah into our lives.

Think about it – just four extra rak'aat, in addition to the sunnah prayers that many of us already offer, and Allah will build a house for us in Jannah! How much easier can the glorious Deen of Allâh be?

¹⁵⁰ At-Tirmidhi; classed as Sahih by Albani

MAKING UP MISSED SUNNAH PRAYERS

While it is obligatory to make up for missed Fardh prayers, it is also recommended that we make up the sunnah prayers that we miss.

It was narrated that The Prophet ﷺ made up the Sunnah of Dhuhr after praying 'Asr.¹⁵¹

On the Day of Judgment, the first deed we will be asked about is the prayer. We should seek to perfect it as much as possible, and the best way to perfect it is by applying as many sunan as possible.

May Allāh make us of those who implement the sunnah; may He give us the guidance to stand in front of Him in prayer as He would like us to. Verily, we are in need of Him and He does not need our prayers!

PRAYING THE SUNNAH OF FAJR EARLY

A'ishah reported: "When the muezzin fell silent after the first call to Fajr prayer, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would get up and pray two short rak'ahs before Fajr prayer, after the dawn had broken, then he would lie down on his right side until the muezzin came to him to recite the iqamah."¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Agreed upon.

¹⁵² Sahih Bukhari

Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*When any one of you has prayed two rak’ahs of Fajr, let him lie down on his right side.*”¹⁵³

Al-Haafiz said:

Some of the pious predecessors were of the view that this is permissible at home, but not in the mosque. This was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar, and was regarded as a strong opinion by some of our shaykhs, because it is not narrated that the Prophet ﷺ did this in the mosque. It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar used to throw pebbles at those who did this in the mosque; this was narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah.

Scholars have said that the reason for this lying down is to rest if one is tired after praying *qiyaam al-layl* (the night prayer) to renew energy for Fajr prayer.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: if a person is tired after his *tahajjud* (night prayers), he may rest by lying down on his right side. This is on condition that there is no fear of his being overtaken by sleep that will make him miss the prayer. If there is such a fear, then he should not sleep.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Abu Dawood and at-Tirmidhi with a sahih isnaad

¹⁵⁴ Sharh Riyad al-Saaliheen, 3/287

JUMU'AH

HASTENING

An easy way to earn great rewards is by coming early to the Friday prayer, and offering as many voluntary prayers as possible before the khutbah (sermon) is given.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Whoever does ghusl on Friday like ghusl for janaabah, then goes to the prayer (in the first hour, i.e., early), it is as if he sacrificed a camel. Whoever goes in the second hour, it is as if he sacrificed a cow; whoever goes in the third hour, it is as if he sacrificed a horned ram; whoever goes in the fourth hour, it is as if he sacrificed a hen; and whoever goes in the fifth hour it is as if he offered an egg. When the imam comes out, the angels come to listen to the khutbah."¹⁵⁵

It was narrated from Aws ibn Aws al-Thaqafi that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Whoever does ghusl on Friday and causes (his wife) to do ghusl, and sets out early, and comes close to the imam and listens and keeps quiet, for every step he takes he will have the reward of fasting and praying qiyām for one year."¹⁵⁶

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Causes (his wife) to do ghusl" means has intercourse with his wife. This is how it was interpreted by Wakee'.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Agreed upon

¹⁵⁶ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani

¹⁵⁷ Zaad al-Ma'aad, 1/285

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever does ghusl then comes to Jumu'ah, and prays as much as Allāh decrees for him, then listens attentively until the khutbah is over, then prays with him (the imam), will be forgiven for (his sins) between that and the next Jumu'ah and three more days."¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, we see many people only begin to arrive at the masjid after the khutbah has already started. It is even sadder when we hear people ask about the time of the Jumu'ah prayer itself, rather than the beginning time for the khutbah – meaning that they don't even have the intention of coming for the khutbah and listening to it. Know, my dearest brothers and sisters, that the angels at the doors of the masaajid leave once the khateeb says his salaam... and with them goes the reward of being present for the Jumu'ah prayers. Even if one is unable to arrive hours before, at the very least, we must strive to be present before the khateeb ascends the minbar.

TAHIYYATUL MASJID EVEN IF KHUTBAH HAS STARTED

Narrated Jabir bin 'Abdullah: A person entered the mosque while the Prophet ﷺ was delivering the khutba on a Friday.

The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Have you prayed?" The man replied in the negative. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Get up and pray two rak'at."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Sahih Muslim.

¹⁵⁹ Sahih Bukhari

SITTING DOWN WITHOUT DISTURBING OTHERS

Abd-Allâh ibn Busr (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: A man came and started stepping over the people one Friday when the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ as delivering the khutbah, and the Prophet ﷺ said to him: "Sit down, for you have annoyed (people)." ¹⁶⁰

OFFERING NAFIL PRAYERS BEFORE JUMAH KHUTBAH

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever does ghusl then comes to Jumu'ah, and prays as much as Allaah decrees for him, then listens attentively until the khutbah is over, then prays with him (the imam), will be forgiven for (his sins) between that and the next Jumu'ah and three more days." ¹⁶¹

SALAAT ADDUHA

We are a generation who is forgetting the excellence of optional prayers to such an extent that when we perform the obligatory acts, we do not taste its sweetness. We ask questions about how to taste the sweetness of prayer while ignoring the fact that experiencing the beauty of worship comes through performing acts of worship that are

¹⁶⁰ Abu Dawood & Ibn Majah; classed as sahih by Al-Albani

¹⁶¹ Sahih Muslim

excellent. Salaat adDuha is, undoubtedly, one of the particularly powerful acts of worship that we should seek to practice.

Abu Huraira (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "My Khalil (close friend; i.e. the Prophet, ﷺ) advised me to observe three things and I shall not stop doing them until I die:

1. To observe Saum (fasting) three days every (lunar) month;
2. To offer the Duha prayer;
3. To offer Witr prayer before sleeping."¹⁶²

The Prophet ﷺ said: "*In a human (body) there are 360 joints and man must make a charity for each one.*" The people said: "Who can do that, O Messenger of Allāh?" He responded: "*One may cover the mucus that one finds in the mosque or remove something harmful from the road. If one could not do that, he could pray two rak'at of duha and that will be sufficient for him.*"¹⁶³

To pray Salaat adDuha is, in a way, like paying zakaah for our bodies. If we were to contemplate the many blessings that we enjoy related to our bodies and our health, we would realize that this sunnah is the least we could do to express our gratitude to our Creator.

¹⁶² Agreed upon

¹⁶³ Ahmad and Abu Dawud, classed as sahih by Albni

THE TIME OF SAALAT DUHA PRAYER:

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said: Ishraaq prayer is Duha prayer done at the beginning of its time.¹⁶⁴

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen defined it as being from a quarter of an hour after the sun has risen until ten minutes before Dhuhur prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "It is preferable to offer Duha prayer when the sun's heat has become so intense that even the young of the camels feel it."¹⁶⁵

Although it is preferred to offer Salaat adDuha at the end of its time, its time begins shortly after the sun has risen, and ends just before the time for Dhuhur. There is no set limit to how many rak'aat one may pray for Salaat adDuha. The minimum is 2 rak'aat, and one may do as many more as they desire, so long as it is performed in units of two.

DU'A AFTER DUHA PRAYER

Narrated from 'Aa'ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her), who said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ prayed the Duha prayer, and then said: Allâhumma ghfir lee wa tub 'alai, Innaka Antat-Tawwaabur-Raheem until he said it one hundred times."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 11/401

¹⁶⁵ Sahih Muslim

¹⁶⁶ Authenticated by the Sheikh Al-Albani in: Sahih Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, 619

WITR

The word ‘witr’ means ‘odd’ (as in, an odd number). The witr prayer is performed at the end of the night, and is meant to be the last prayer one offers before Fajr. The majority of Muslims around the world perform Witr as a prayer of three rak'aat. This prayer may be performed in either of the following methods proven from the Sunnah:

- Offering all the three rak'aat continuously without break (i.e. not sitting for tashahhud on the second rak'ah).
- Offering two rak'aat, saying tasleem, and then offering a single rak'ah.

It is performed differently from Maghrib, as the Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not pray Witr with three rak'aat that resemble Maghrib.”¹⁶⁷

Raising hands in the third Rakah before Qunoot is not proven from the Sunnah

Witr in and of itself is, increasingly, a forgotten sunnah; however, what even fewer people know is that witr is not restricted to three rak'aat. The minimum rak'aat of witr is one, and the maximum that RasulAllah ﷺ used to perform was eleven.

¹⁶⁷ Hakim & Bayhaqi, Ibn Hajar said, its isnaad fulfills the conditions of the two Shaykhs al-Bukhaari and Muslim.

WITR PRAYERS NARRATED IN THE SUNNAH

- **Five or seven rak'aat.**

Umm Salamah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The Prophet ﷺ used to pray Witr with five or seven (rak'ahs) and he did not separate between them with any salaam or words."¹⁶⁸ There is to be only one tashahhud in the last rak'ah.

- **Nine rak'aat.**

In witr with nine rak'aat, it should also be continuous. However, on the eighth rak'ah, one should sit down for the tashahhud, then stand up and continue the ninth rak'ah. At the end of the ninth rak'ah, one should again recite the tashahhud and then say the tasleem.

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) was asked about the Witr of the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ and she said: "The Prophet ﷺ used to pray nine rak'ahs during which he would not sit except in the eighth rak'ah, when he would remember Allaah and praise Him and call upon Him, then he would get up without saying the salaam, then he would stand and pray the ninth rak'ah, then he would sit and remember Allaah (dhikr) and praise Him and call upon Him, then he would say a tasleem that we could hear."¹⁶⁹

- **Eleven rak'aat.**

When offering Witr with eleven rak'ahs, one is to say the tasleem after every two rak'aat. At the end of five sets of two, one should then offer one rak'ah to raise the total number of rak'aat to eleven.

¹⁶⁸ Ahmad & al-Nasaa'i, classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

¹⁶⁹ Sahih Muslim.

As we have repeatedly emphasized, Muslims should alternate the various sunan so that we can implement them more often in our lives, and as a means of keeping our hearts alive during prayer.

MAKING UP WITR PRAYER

If we miss Witr, we are recommended to make it up by by making it even numbered by adding one rak'ah. That is, if one usually prays three, then he/she should make it four, and if he/she usually prays five, he/she should make it six, and so on, saying the tasleem after each two rak'ahs.

It was narrated from Aishah R.A. that: When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not pray at night because he was prevented from doing so by sleep- meaning, sleep overwhelmed him- or by pain, he would pray twelve rak'ahs during the day.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ An-Nasaai, Also narrated in Sahih Muslim, Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah

QIYAAM AL LAYL

Qiyaam al Layl, also known as Tahajjud, is the prayer performed at night. It is one of the greatest voluntary acts of worship that a Muslim can do.

Allâh describes the people who offer Qiyam in the following terms (interpretation of the meaning):

{And those who spend the night in worship of their Lord, prostrate and standing.

And those who say: "Our Lord! Avert from us the torment of Hell. Verily, its torment is ever an inseparable, permanent punishment."

Evil indeed it (Hell) is as an abode and as a place to rest in.

And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes).

And those who invoke not any other deities along with Allâh, nor kill such person as Allâh has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment.

The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace;

Except those who repent and believe (in Islamic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds; for those, Allâh will change their sins into good deeds, and Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

And whosoever repents and does righteous good deeds; then verily, he repents towards Allâh with true repentance.

And those who do not bear witness to falsehood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity.

And those who, when they are reminded of the Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat.

And those who say: "Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders of the Muttaqoon (the pious)."

Those will be rewarded with the highest place (in Paradise) because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect.

Abiding therein excellent it is as an abode, and as a place to rest in.} (al-Furqaan 25:64-76)

From these verses, we should ponder on the virtue of Qiyaam and the amazing rewards that should not be ignored. It is also one of the means of avoiding the punishment of Hell and attaining Paradise.

There are many other verses where Allah describes the characteristics of the pious, and of those qualities is that they pray Tahajjud.

{Verily, the Muttaqoon (the pious) will be in the midst of Gardens and Springs (in the Paradise),

Taking joy in the things which their Lord has given them. Verily, they were before this Muhsinoon (good-doers).

They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allâh) and praying, with fear and hope].} (Qur'an 51:15-17)

The Prophet ﷺ said:

- “The best prayer after the obligatory prayer is prayer at night.”¹⁷¹
- “You should pray qiyaam al-layl, for it is the custom of the righteous who came before you and it brings you closer to your Lord, and expiates sins and prevents misdeeds.”¹⁷²
- “Jibreel came to me and said: ‘O Muhammad, live as long as you want, for you will die. Love whomever you want, for you will leave him. Do whatever you want for you will be requited for it. Remember that the believer’s honour is his praying at night, and his pride is his being independent of people.’”¹⁷³

Indeed, Qiyaam al-Layl is a deed that brings us close to our Lord, which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to perform himself and reminded his Companions to maintain regularly and used as a yardstick to approve of someone's goodness..

May Allāh make us amongst those who adhere to this great Sunnah.

REPEATING SALAH FOR YOUR BROTHER

If one is at the masjid and has already prayed with the congregation, and then sees a latecomer arrive who begins to pray by themselves, it is encouraged for us to join them in their prayer. While they are performing their *fardh* (obligatory prayer), for us it would be considered a *naafilah* (voluntary prayer).

¹⁷¹ Sahih Muslim

¹⁷² At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan by Albani

¹⁷³ Al Hakim, classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Jaami', 73.

Abu Sa'eed (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated, that a man came when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had prayed, and he said: “*Won’t some man be charitable towards this man and pray with him?*”¹⁷⁴

The version narrated by Abu Dawood says: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saw a man praying by himself and said: “*Won’t some man be charitable towards this man and pray with him?*”¹⁷⁵

LOVING PRAYER

The Prophet ﷺ loved prayer so much that he said, “... and my joy has been made in prayer.”¹⁷⁶

We cannot over emphasize the importance of prayer in Islam. It is mentioned constantly in the Qur'an and ahadith; we are reminded, over and over, of the status of prayer and the praise given to the believers who uphold their prayers.

“The first matter that the slave will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is the prayer. If it is sound, then the rest of his deeds will be sound. And if it is bad, then the rest of his deeds will be bad.”¹⁷⁷

The most excellent of deeds, the prayer, should be fulfilled with utmost humility and spiritual consciousness, leaving behind all else. This state of awareness and submission is called khushoo’.

¹⁷⁴ Ahmad, Abu Dawood and at-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

¹⁷⁵ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by al-Albaani.

¹⁷⁶ Musnad Ahmad & An Nisai'i, classed as sahih by Albani.

¹⁷⁷ al-Tabarani & Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

KHUSHOO'

Allâh says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their salaah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness." (Qur'an 23:1-2)

Khushoo' means calmness, serenity, tranquility, dignity and humility. What makes a person have this khushoo' is fear of Allâh and the sense that He is always watching.¹⁷⁸

Khushoo' means that the heart stands before the Lord in humility and submission.¹⁷⁹

Khushoo' in prayer come only when a person clears their heart from all else for prayer and prefers their over everything else in life - as should be the case when meeting with one's Lord.

Its virtue can be seen in the hadith where the Prophet said: "Whoever does wudhu' and does it well, then prays two rak'aat focusing on them completely [according to another report: and does not think of anything else], will be forgiven all his previous sins [according to another report: will be guaranteed Paradise]."¹⁸⁰

Having khushoo' directly impacts how much we are rewarded for our prayer. The Prophet ﷺ said: "A person might perform his Salah and

¹⁷⁸ Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Daar al-Sha'b edn., 6/414.

¹⁷⁹ al-Madaarij, 1/520.

¹⁸⁰ Sahih Bukhari

he is rewarded only for one-tenth of it or one-ninth of it... Until he said: or for one-half of it."¹⁸¹

Prayer is the second pillar of Islam, preceded only by the shahaadah (testimony of faith), which is an inward action – thus, prayer will be the first outward action that one will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. The importance of presence of mind and humility in prayer must not be forgotten, as that is the purpose of standing before Allāh in prayer.

Love your Prayer. Love the time you have with the Lord of the Worlds. Pray as if you see Him for if you do not see Him, know that He most definitely sees you.

May Allāh give us all the guidance to offer prayers that please Him!

¹⁸¹ Abu Dawud & Ahmad, classed as Hasan by Albani.

CHAPTER III

FORGOTTEN SUNNAH'S OF OTHER IBADAAT

THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is the Word of Allah; a guidance for humankind, a book that gives glad tidings to those who believe and warnings against disbelief; reminders for the heart and the mind. It is the Divine Speech of the Lord of the Worlds, eloquent and precise, yet incredibly detailed and laden with numerous meanings. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions strove to recite, memorize, understand, and apply it in their daily lives.

The Qur'an has its rights over each and every Muslim: to be recited, understood, and applied as much as possible.

RECITING THE QUR'AN REGULARLY

It is reflective of the sad state of the Ummah that, when we should be talking about understanding the meanings of the Qur'an, we are still obliged to focus on simply reciting it at all. In many Muslim homes,

days and weeks go by without a single person reciting the Qur'an from the mus'haf. However, we should all be aware of the many virtues of reciting the Qur'an.

Abu Umamah (may Allâh be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ saying, *"Read the Qur'an, for it will come as an intercessor for its reciters on the Day of Resurrection."*¹⁸²

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, *"The believer who recites the Qur'an is like a citron whose fragrance is sweet and whose taste is delicious...."*¹⁸³

Ibn Mas'ud (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, *"Whoever recites a letter from the Book of Allâh, he will be credited with a good deed, and a good deed gets a ten-fold reward. I do not say that Alif-Lam-Mim is one letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter."*¹⁸⁴

SubhanAllah! What more motivation do we need to start reciting the Qur'an on a regular basis? Not only is it a source of incredible reward, but it will also be the means of intercession for us on that day when neither our parents nor our spouses nor our children will be concerned with us.

May we be of the people of the Qur'an, who love it and live according to it every day!

¹⁸² Sahih Muslim

¹⁸³ Agreed upon

¹⁸⁴ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan Gharib by Tirmidhi & Sahih by Albani.

DU'A AFTER RECITATION

It is common for many people to complete their recitation of the Qur'an with the words "Sadaqa Allāhu al-'Azeem (Almighty Allāh has spoken the truth)." However, this is not a practice from the Sunnah, nor was it a practice of the Sahabah or the Tabi'een. Rather, it was introduced in later times, when some reciters would say these words on the basis of the aayah: "Say: Allāh has spoken the truth" (Qur'an 3:95). Rather than being recognized as a later addition, people began to attribute this practice to the Sunnah.

Unfortunately, in the process of doing so, an authentic sunnah has been abandoned.

A'ishah [may Allāh be pleased with her] said:

"The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would not sit in a sitting, nor recite Qur'an nor pray a prayer except that he would end it with certain words." She said: "So I said: O Messenger of Allāh, I see that you do not sit in a sitting nor recite Qur'an nor pray a prayer except that you end it with these words?"

He ﷺ said: "Yes, whoever said anything good, a seal is placed upon that good for him and whoever said any evil it is expiation for him:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَأُتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ

{O Allāh, far removed are You from any imperfection and praise to You, there is none worthy of worship except You, I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You}.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁵ An Nisaai; classed as sahih by Albani

RECITING BEAUTIFULLY

The Word of Allâh deserves to be recited in the best of ways. We should seek to recite the Qur'an with the best pronunciation and enunciation, as well as a melodious tone of voice. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Beautify the Qur'an by your voices."¹⁸⁶

He ﷺ also said, "He is not one of us who does not make his voice beautiful with the Qur'an."¹⁸⁷

To beautify the voice while reciting Qur'an means observing the rules of tajweed, and without altering the sounds of the letters and words of the Qur'an. One must strive to learn the correct rules of recitation, so that we do not inadvertently pronounce the words of the Qur'an wrong in such a way as to change the meaning of the verses themselves.

RasulAllah ﷺ gave glad tidings to those who find it difficult to do so, but are still trying their best.

'Aa'ishah said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "The one who is skilled in reciting Qur'an will be with the noble, honourable scribes and the one who recites Qur'an and falters therein, and finds it difficult, will have a double reward."¹⁸⁸

Verily, Allâh has made His Deen easy for everyone and has shown us through our beloved Prophet ﷺ innumerable ways to earn great rewards – the greatest of all being His Pleasure. Thus, the point is to try and make a sincere effort for the Sake of Allâh.

¹⁸⁶ Ahmad, Ibn Majah, An-Nasa'I, classed as Sahih by Albani

¹⁸⁷ Agreed upon

¹⁸⁸ Agreed upon

MEMORIZING THE QUR'AN

Memorizing the Qur'an is a sunnah which everyone knows of, and is considered by many to be particularly extraordinary. Sadly, many people also feel discouraged to even begin memorizing the Qur'an, saying that it is a sin to forget what one has memorized. They give up before they even begin!

The Prophet ﷺ said: "It will be said to the companion of the Qur'aan: Recite and rise in status, recite as you used to recite in the world, for your status will be at the last verse that you recite."¹⁸⁹

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

*"The Qur'aan will come on the Day of Resurrection and will say, 'O Lord, adorn him.' So he will be given a crown of honour to wear. Then it will say, 'O Lord, give him more.' So he will be given a garment of honour.' Then it will say, 'O Lord, be pleased with him.' So Allâh will be pleased with him. Then it will be said to him, 'Recite and advance in status, and for each verse you will gain one more hasanah (reward for good deed)."*¹⁹⁰

SubhanAllah, what an honour to be clothed and crowned on a day when everyone will be naked! The narrations are also referring to being raised to higher levels of Paradise; as explained in other ahadith, the distance between one level and the next in Paradise is equal to the distance between the heavens and the earth. With this knowledge, surely we cannot be satisfied with memorizing just a few short chapters of the Qur'an!

¹⁸⁹ At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

¹⁹⁰ at-Tirmidhi, he said it is Hasan Sahih, classed as Hasan by Albani

Think of it this way: how much effort do people put in to get to the penthouse suite of a building, or the prized “corner office” of a business? Now think about the effort we put in to get to a higher level of Paradise – are we trying hard at all?

We should all try to memorize as much Qur'an as possible, beginning with the shorter, easier chapters, and then moving onto others. It is recommended that one memorize those chapters which have been specified in the sunnah as having unique importance. Some of those include Surah al-Mulk and Surah Sajdah, which RasulAllah used to recite before going to bed; and Surah al-Kahf, the first and last ten verses of which are a protection from the Dajjaal. The virtues of the various chapters of the Qur'an are many, and we should strive to benefit from them all. The bottom line is that we should not be content with knowing so little; we should try to memorize as much of the Qur'an as possible.

May Allah bless us with hearts that are filled with the Qur'an!

IMPLEMENTING THE QUR'AN

While reciting the Qur'an and memorizing it results in great rewards, it is also true that memorizing without knowing or understanding the Qur'an is simply not good enough. How many times have we seen *huffaadh* (people who have memorized the Qur'an in its entirety) engaging in shirk, or practicing bid'ah? The reason is obvious – though they have memorized the Words of Allah they have not understood its message.

Ali Abdur-Rahman Abdullah ibn Habib ibn Rabee'ah was one of the Qurra (reciters) from among the Tabi'een, and one of the children of

the Sahabah. Ali Abdur-Rahman described the way that his teachers from the Sahaba used to teach them the Qur'an:

*"The companions of the Prophet (salAllâhu'alayhi'wa'salaam) used to teach us the Qur'an the way the Prophet would teach them, they would receive 10 ayaat from the Prophet and would not move on to the next 10 ayaat until they had gained the knowledge from the first 10 and practiced them (al-ilim wal-amal). We acquired not only knowledge but the practice of implementing that knowledge."*¹⁹¹

After the Prophet ﷺ passed away, the Mother of the Believers 'Aishah was questioned by Sa'd ibn Hishaam ibn 'Aamir, when he came to Madinah, "What was the character of the Prophet?" to which she replied, "*His character was nothing but the Qur'an.*"¹⁹²

An-Nawawi (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: What this means is that he acted in accordance with it, adhering to its limits, following its etiquette, paying heed to its lessons and parables, pondering its meanings and reciting it properly.¹⁹³

There are great rewards for those who understand and implement it An-Nawwas bin Sam'an (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ saying, "*The Qur'an and its people who applied it, will be brought on the Day of Resurrection preceded with Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Al-'Imran arguing on behalf of those who applied them.*"¹⁹⁴

May Allâh make us amongst the companions of the Qur'an, ameen.

¹⁹¹ Imam Ahmad in his Musnad on the authority of Abu Abdul-Rahman

¹⁹² Sahih Muslim

¹⁹³ Sharh Muslim (3/268):

¹⁹⁴ Sahih Muslim

REPENTANCE

Repenting for our sins is an extremely important aspect of our faith, and something which many of us have forgotten the necessity of doing. Much of the Ummah has become complacent and minimize the severity of our sins, without taking account of just how serious many of our actions are. Whether it be lying, taking advantage of others, deceiving others, insulting the poor, looking at that which is haram, listening to music, or so much more, most of us commit sins daily. However, the Prophet ﷺ said: “*Every son of Adam sins, and the best of those who sin are those who repent.*”¹⁹⁵

Our role model, the Prophet ﷺ - who was forgiven all his past and future sins - used to repent to Allah at least a hundred times a day. He ﷺ said: “*O people, repent to Allāh and seek His forgiveness, for I repent one hundred times a day.*”¹⁹⁶ How much moreso should we be seeking Allah’s forgiveness?

If this hadith is not enough to encourage us to increase in our repentance, then perhaps knowing that Allah loves those who repent will:

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*Allāh rejoices more over the repentance of His slave than any one of you who finds his camel after having lost it in a desolate land.*”¹⁹⁷

There are many supplications in the Sunnah that results in forgiveness from Allāh.

¹⁹⁵ At-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by al-Albani.

¹⁹⁶ Sahih Muslim

¹⁹⁷ Agreed upon

The Prophet ﷺ said:

- “Whoever says ‘SubhanAllâhi wa biHamdihi’ (Glory be to Allâh and Praise Him) a hundred times during the day, his sins are wiped away, even if they are like the foam of the sea.”¹⁹⁸
- “Whoever says ‘AstaghfirAllah al’Adheem, al’ladhi laa ilaaha illa Huw, alHayy alQayyum, wa atoobu ilayh’ (I seek the forgiveness of Allâh the Mighty, besides Whom there is none worthy except Him, the Living, The Eternal, and I repent unto Him), Allâh will forgive him even if he deserted the army’s ranks.”¹⁹⁹
- “Whoever says (the below Dua) during the day with firm faith in it, and dies on the same day before the evening, he will be from the people of Paradise; and if somebody recites it at night with firm faith in it, and dies before the morning, he will be from the people of Paradise.”.²⁰⁰

لَهُمْ أَنْتَ رَبِّي، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا
اسْتَطَعْتُ، أَغُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنَعْمَاتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ لَكَ بِذَنْبِي،
فَاغْفِرْ لِي، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

‘Allâhumma anta Rabbi la ilaha illa anta; khalaqtani wa ana abduka, wa ana 'ala ahdika wa wa'dika mastata'tu. A'udhu bika min Sharri ma sana'tu, abu'u laka bini'matika 'alaiya, wa abu'u laka bidhanbi faghfirli innahu la yaghfiru adh-dhunuba illa anta

¹⁹⁸ Agreed upon

¹⁹⁹ Abu Dawood & At Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani.

²⁰⁰ Sahih Bukhari

(O Allâh! You are my Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but You. You created me and I am Your slave, and I am faithful to my covenant and my promise as much as I can. I seek refuge with You from all the evil I have done. I acknowledge before You all the blessings You have bestowed upon me, and I confess to You all my sins. So I entreat You to forgive my sins, for nobody can forgive sins except You.)

This du'a is known as the Sayyid al-Istighfar, and is a superior way of asking for forgiveness from Allâh.

To reiterate, Allâh loves those who repent. Our beloved Messenger ﷺ used to beg for Allah's forgiveness a hundred times a day, even though he had already been forgiven his past and future sins. The Companions would weep until their beards were wet. Are we truly following the Sunnah of repentance? The least we can do is memorize these supplications and recite them regularly.

May Allâh make us of those who repent often and sincerely, and may the Oft Forgiving forgive our sins.

SHUKR - BEING THANKFUL TO ALLAH

It is in Human nature to thank, to be grateful and to praise the one who has done any good, we teach our children to say thank you to anyone who offers them anything. But do we thank enough the one who is most deserving of our gratitude, for the endless blessings we have been bestowed with? Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): *"Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me"* [2:152]

Allah loves those who are thankful, He has described the prophets as shaakir and shakoor (thankful). Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

He (Ibrahim) was thankful for His (Allah's) favours. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a Straight Path"
[16:121]

There are many ayahs in the Quran mentioning the favours Allah has bestowed upon us and reminding to be thankful to our Lord. Surah Rahman is filled with these reminders, in Surah A'raf Allah mentions about the provisions and also says we are not thankful enough.

"And surely, We gave you authority on the earth and appointed for you therein provisions (for your life). Little thanks do you give"
[7:10]

How do we show our gratitude? Is it just by saying Alhamdulilah all the time?

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Gratitude may be in the heart, in submission and humility; on the tongue, in praise

and acknowledgement; and in the physical faculties, by means of obedience and submission. (Madaarij al-Saalikeen 2/246)

There are three ways: -

1. Gratitude of the heart: This is to believe and acknowledge that whatever good there is our lives is from Allah alone! And this affirmation is obligatory otherwise we fall into the risk of committing Shirk,
2. Gratitude of the tongue: It is acknowledge verbally, and to make Dhikr, and reciting the supplications from Sunan like praising Allah after eating.
3. Physically: This is by physically engaging in worship and by keeping away from sins. Another form is to perform Sajdah ash-Shukr (Prostration of Thankfulness)

SAJDAH ASHSHUKR

Sajdah ashShukr is the prostration of thankfulness, and is a sincere expression of gratitude to Allah whenever something good happens to us – whether it is gaining benefit from something, or being protected from harm.

Abu Bakrah (may Allâh be pleased with him), said that when the Prophet ﷺ heard any news that made him glad, he would fall down prostrating to Allâh, may He be exalted.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Abu Dawood, At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah, classed as Hasan by Albani,

Also 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn 'Awf narrated: The Prophet ﷺ went out to the place where the sadaqah (*charitable donations*) was kept, then he faced the Qiblah and fell in prostration, remaining like that for a long time. Then he raised his head and said, "Jibreel came to me with good news, he said, 'Allâh says to you, 'Whoever sends blessings on you, I will send blessings on him, and whoever sends greetings of peace to you, I will send greetings of peace to him,' so I prostrated in thankfulness to Allâh."²⁰²

Think about it – who is most deserving of thanks when we receive good news? Obviously, the One who deserves such thanks and gratefulness is the One who made it possible... our Lord, Allah.

We are closest to Allah when we are in prostration, and thus, it makes sense that to express our true thankfulness, we humble ourselves into that position. Since this is the way that we have been taught to thank our Lord, nothing should hold us back from doing so, no matter where we are. We should never be shy of other people or the environment we are in; rather, we should be even prouder to show our devotion and gratefulness to our Creator, the Provider of all blessings and provisions.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My blessings); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily, My punishment is indeed severe'" [14:7]

May Allah make us of those who are thankful to Him, and thank Him in a manner that is most pleasing to Him.

²⁰² Ahmad with sahih isnaad

REMEMBERING ALLAH (ADHKAAR)

Dhikr Allâh (remembrance of Allâh) is one of the best ways to bring us closer to Allah, and is counted as one of the greatest of deeds.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

- {O you who believe! Remember Allâh with much remembrance. And glorify His Praises morning and afternoon} (Qur'an 33:41-42)
- {...and the men and the women who remember Allâh much with their hearts and tongues. Allâh has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise).} (Qur'an 33:35)

There are numerous ahadith which tell us about how valuable dhikr is to us as Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ: “Shall I not tell you of the best of your deeds, the most pleasing to your Sovereign, those that raise you most in status, and that are better than your giving gold and silver, or meeting your enemy (in battle) and you strike their necks and they strike your necks?” They said: “Yes,” He said: “Remembrance of Allâh (dhikr), may He be exalted.”²⁰³

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to do that when he said: “Keep your tongue moist with the remembrance of Allâh.”²⁰⁴

²⁰³ At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah; classed as sahih by al-Albani.

²⁰⁴ At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah & others, classed as sahih by Albani.

SOME OF THE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED ADH KAAR WE WERE TAUGHT ARE:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

La illaha ilAllâh(u) (There is No God But Allâh)

The best form of remembrance is this.²⁰⁵

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

SubhaanAllâh

Whoever recites [the above] one hundred times, a thousand good deeds are recorded for him or a thousand bad deeds are wiped away.²⁰⁶

- سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَسُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

SubhanAllâhi wa biHamdihi, Subhan-Allâhi 'l-'adheem

(Glory be to Allâh, and Praise, Glory be to Allâh, the Supreme)

"Two words are light on the tongue, weigh heavily in the balance, and they are beloved to the Most Merciful One."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Sahih Muslim

²⁰⁶ Sahih Muslim

لَا حُوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ

{*La Hawla wa la Quwatta illa Billah*} There is no Might or Power except with Allâh

*The above is a treasure from the treasures of Paradise.*²⁰⁸

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

La illaha ilAllâhu, waHdahu la shareeka lahu, lahul Mulku, wa lahul Hamd, wa Huwa ala kulli shaiy'in Qadeer

{There is No God But Allâh Alone, who has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the raise, and He is Able to do all things}

*Whoever says the above ten times, will have the reward for freeing four slaves from the Children of Isma'il.*²⁰⁹

In another narration: "Whoever says the above one hundred times, has the reward of freeing ten slaves, a hundred good deeds are recorded for him and a hundred bad deeds are wiped away and he has gained refuge from the devil that day until evening and none shall come with anything better except someone who has done more".²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Agreed upon

²⁰⁸ Agreed upon

²⁰⁹ Agreed upon

²¹⁰ Agreed upon

ADH KAAR TO BE RECITED AFTER THE OBLIGATORY PRAYERS:

1. استغفر الله . *AstaghfirAllah* (three times).

"I seek Allah's forgiveness."

2. Immediately thereafter, the worshipper may recite the following supplication:

لَهُمْ أَنْتُ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكُمُ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتُ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Allahumma antas-Salaam, wa minkasSalaam, tabarakta yaa Dhal Jalaali wa'l Ikraam.

O Allâh, You are peace, peace comes from You. Blessed are You,
O Possessor of glory and honour

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَةٌ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. 3.

Laa ilaaha illAllah, wahdahu laa shareeka lah; lahu'l mulku wa lahu'l hamd, wa Huwa 'alaa kulli shay'in qadeer. (Ten times after Fajr and Maghrib, three times after the other prayers.)

There is no god but Allâh, alone, without partner. To Him belongs all sovereignty, and to Him is all the praise, and He has power over everything.

4.

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa billah.

There is neither might nor power except with Allâh.

5.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ، وَحْسِنْ عِبَادَتِكَ

Allahumma a'inni 'alaa thikrika, wa shukrika, wa husni 'ebaadatak.

"O Allâh, help me in remembering You, thanking You and conducting my worship to You in a perfect way".

6. The worshiper is encouraged to say, thirty-three times each:

SubhanAllah (glory be to Allah); *alHamdulillah* (praise be to Allah);
Allahu akbar (Allah is the greatest)

7. It is recommended to recite Ayatul Kursi, Surah al-Ikhlaas, Surah al-Falaq, and Surah an-Naas.

Many other supplications can be found in books like *Hisnul Muslim* (the Fortress of a Muslim). Audios are found online, and one can easily download them to listen to and memorize throughout the day.

May Allâh make us amongst the ones who moisten their tongues with His remembrance.

DU'A

Our Lord is the most generous, and He loves to be asked for His forgiveness, His mercy, His blessings, and His gifts. Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning): *{And your Lord said: "Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).}* (Qur'an 40:60)

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Du'a' is worship." Like every act of worship, there is a sunnah way to do it.

USING THE NAMES OF ALLAH

Allah tells us to call upon Him by His Most Beautiful Names.

{And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allâh, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names.} (Qur'an 7:180)

WE SHOULD PRAISE ALLÂH AS HE DESERVES BEFORE WE CALL UPON HIM

Fadaalah ibn 'Ubayd (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: "Whilst the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was sitting, a man came in and prayed and said, "O Allâh, forgive me and have mercy on me." The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "You have been too hasty, O worshipper. When you have prayed and are sitting, praise Allâh as

*He deserves to be praised, and send blessings upon me, then call upon Him.*²¹¹

According to another version²¹²: “When one of you prays, let him start with praise of Allāh, then let him send blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), then let him ask whatever he likes after that.” Then another man prayed after that, and he praised Allāh and sent blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said: “O worshipper, ask and you will be answered.”

SEND BLESSINGS UPON THE PROPHET ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Every du'a is kept back until you send blessings upon the Prophet.”²¹³

DOING GOOD DEEDS

Qasim bin ‘Abd said: “I said to Anas bin Malik: ‘O Abu Hamzah, pray to Allāh for us.’ He said: ‘Du'a is elevated by good deeds.’”

The Prophet ﷺ told a story of three men, each of whom supplicated to Allah and mentioned a good deed that they had done earlier in their lives.

²¹¹ At-Tirmidhi classed as sahih by Albani

²¹² At-Tirmidhi classed as sahih by Albani

²¹³ At-Tabaraani, classed as sahih by Albani.

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar reported that the Messenger ﷺ said:

Three men of a people before you, were on a journey when they were overtaken by a storm and therefore they took shelter in a cave. A rock slipped down from the mountain and blocked the exit from cave.

One of them said:

"The only way for deliverance left is to beseech Allah in the name of some virtuous deed."

Thereupon one of them supplicated,

"O Lord, my parents were very old, and I used to offer them their nightly drink of milk before my children and the other members of the family. One day I went astray far away in search of green trees and could return only after my parent had gone to sleep. When I had milked the animals and brought their nightly drink to them. They were fast asleep, but I did not like to disturb them, nor would give any part of the milk to my children and other members of the family till after my parents had their drink. Thus, with the vessel in hand, I awaited their awakening till the flush of dawn, while the children cried out of hunger at my feet. When they woke up, they had their drink. O Lord, if I did this thing seeking only your pleasure, then do relieve us of the distress wrought upon us by this rock."

Thereupon, the rock moved a little, but not enough to let them pass.

Then the second man supplicated:

"O Lord, I had a cousin that I loved more passionately than any man could love a woman. I tried to seduce her but she would refuse, till in a season of great hardship due to famine, she approached me (for help) and I gave her one hundred and twenty Dinars on the condition that she would have sexual intercourse with me. She

agreed, and when we got together and I was just going to have intercourse with her, she pleaded, 'Fear Allah, and do not break the seal unlawfully', whereupon I moved away from her, despite the fact that I desired her most passionately; and I let her keep the money I had given her. O Lord, if I did this thing seeking only your pleasure, then do move the distress in which we find ourselves."

Again the rock moved a little, but not enough to let them pass.

Then the third supplicated:

"O Lord, I hired some labourers and paid them their dues, but one of them left leaving behind what was due to him. I invested it in business and the business prospered greatly.

After a while, the labourer came back and said: 'O servant of Allah, hand over to me my wages.' I said to him: 'All that you see is yours; camels, cattle, goats and slaves.' He said: 'Don't mock me or joke with me, O servant of Allah.' I assured him: 'I am not joking.' So he took all of it sparing nothing. O Lord, if I did this seeking only for your pleasure, do relieve us of our distress."

The rock then moved away, and all the three came out of the cave safe and sound.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Agreed upon

RECOMMENDED TIMES WHEN DUAS ARE ACCEPTED

Du'a in the last third of the night

This is the time when Allāh descends down to the lowest heavens to bestow His bounty upon His slaves, to meet their needs and to relieve their distress, when He says: "Who will call upon Me, that I may answer Him? Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?"²¹⁵

Although the virtues of the last third of the night are well-known, there are only a few people who sincerely make the effort to take advantage of it.

Du'a when it rains

Sahl ibn Sa'd that is attributed to the Prophet ﷺ : "There are two which will not be rejected: du'aa' at the time of the call (to prayer) and when it is raining."²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Sahih Bukhari.

²¹⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as Sahih by Albani

When the rooster crows

The Prophet ﷺ said: “When you hear the crowing of a rooster, ask Allāh of His bounty, for he has seen an angel.”²¹⁷

Visiting the ill

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When you visit a sick person, say good things, for the angels say Ameen to whatever you say...”²¹⁸

The traveler's supplication

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Three supplications will not be rejected: the supplication of the parent for his child, the supplication of the one who is fasting, and the supplication of the traveller.”²¹⁹

While it is common for people today to spend their travel time listening to music or watching movies, we should remember this hadith and take advantage of this time to supplicate to Allah.

May Allah grant us the guidance to turn to Him in supplication, in the most beautiful of ways, at the most accepted of times.

²¹⁷ Agreed upon

²¹⁸ Sahih Muslim

²¹⁹ al-Bayhaqi & at-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih

RAMADAN

Ramadan is the most blessed of all months, and RasulAllah ﷺ gave his Companions glad tidings upon its arrival. He informed them that in this month, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained.

He ﷺ said: “*When the first night of Ramadan comes, the doors of Paradise will be opened and the doors of Hell will be closed, and the devils will be chained, and it will be said, 'O you who desires virtue! Come forth and O you who desires evil! Stay behind', and Allâh has people whom He frees from Hell every night (in that month).*”²²⁰

AlHamdulillah, most Muslims fast and many offer Taraweeh; however, there are still many sunan that have been forsaken by the Ummah. These sunan yield great rewards and make us feel the true essence of fasting and Ramadan.

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF RAMADAN

i) Combining fasting with feeding the poor

Combining fasting with feeding the poor is one of the means of reaching Paradise, as the Prophet ﷺ said: “*In Paradise there are rooms whose outside can be seen from the inside and the inside can be seen from the outside. Allâh has prepared them for those who feed the poor, who are gentle in speech, who fast regularly and who pray at night when people are asleep.*”²²¹

²²⁰ Agreed upon

²²¹ Ahmad, classed as Hasan by Albani

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever gives food to a fasting person with which to break his fast, will have a reward equal to his, without it detracting in the slightest from the reward of the fasting person.”²²²

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: “What is meant is that he should feed him until he is satisfied.”²²³

A number of the pious predecessors (may Allâh have mercy on them) preferred the poor over themselves when feeding them at the time of iftaar. Among these were ‘Abd-Allâh ibn ‘Umar, Maalik ibn Deenaar, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and others.

‘Abd-Allâh ibn ‘Umar would not break his fast unless there were orphans and poor people with him.

Look at them, and then look at the people of today – people who are more concerned with searching for the best buffets for iftaar. These are places where people are focused on everything except remembering Allah; places of extravagance, wastage, and distractions that cause one to completely forget making du'a and turning to Allah. How are we to feel the deeper connection to Allah? How are we to appreciate the hunger and thirst, when we're doing little more than skipping a meal in order to eat an extravagant dinner?

May Allah make us amongst the people who prefer the Aakhirah over this dunya.

²²² al -Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan by Albani

²²³ Al-Ikhtiyaaraat al-Fiqhiyyah, p. 109.

ii) Du'a after iftaar

A well-known du'a that is widespread amongst Muslims is, "Allahumma laka sumtu, wa bika amantu, wa 'alayka tawwakaltu, wa 'ala rizqika astartu." However, the majority of scholars have declared this to be a weak narration. The authentic du'a to recite after breaking the fast is reported in the hadith narrated by Ibn 'Umar, according to which the Prophet ﷺ, when he broke his fast, would say:

ذَهَبَ الْجُنُونُ وَابْتَلَتِ الْفُرُوقُ وَبَثَتِ الْأَخْرَى إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

*Dhahaba al-dhama'u, wa'b tallati al-'uroouq, wa thabat al-ajru
inshaAllâh*

(The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened and the reward is confirmed, if Allâh wills.)²²⁴

It is unfortunate that the Ummah has preferred a weak hadith while abandoning what is a proven sunnah.

EID

The two 'Eids are days of celebration for the Ummah. Commonly followed sunan are taking a bath, wearing the best clothing, and congratulating one another; however, there are also other sunan that have been forgotten by many people.

²²⁴ Abu Dawood and others, classed as hasan by Albani

a) Eating before Salatul 'Eid on 'Eid al-Fitr

Anas ibn Maalik said that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used not to go out on the morning of Eid al-Fitr until he had eaten some dates... of which he would eat an odd number.²²⁵

Whoever does not have dates should eat something else before going out, but it is highly recommended to eat something before going out for Eid prayer.

Note that for Eid ul Adha, it is recommended to *not* eat anything before the prayer, and that it is preferred that the first meal comes from the Udh'hiyah, if they have offered the sacrifice.

b) Going to and returning from prayer by different routes

Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allâh (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: On the day of Eid, the Prophet ﷺ would vary his route, i.e., he would go via one route and come back via a different route.²²⁶

c) Women attending the prayer

According to a report narrated by at-Tirmidhi: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to bring out the virgins, adolescent girls, women in seclusion and menstruating women on the two Eids, but the menstruating women were to keep away from the prayer place and

²²⁵ Sahih Bukhari

²²⁶ Sahih Bukhari

witness the gathering of the Muslims. One of them said, “O Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, what if she does not have a jilbaab?” He said, “Then let her sister lend her one of her jilbaabs.”²²⁷

It is clear that the Sunnah is for women to attend the ‘Eid prayers, regardless of their age or menstruating status. However, it is also required of them to observe hijab correctly.

d) Eid greetings

The most popular ‘Eid greeting is “Eid Mubarak,” but the greeting we have been taught by RasulAllah ﷺ is to say: “TaqabbalAllah minna wa minkum.”

Shaykh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) said: “As for people greeting each other after the Eid prayer by, ‘TaqabAllāhu minna wa minkum,’ (may Allāh accept it from you and us) – it is reported that some of the shahabah practiced it, and the scholars permitted it.”²²⁸

²²⁷ Agreed upon

²²⁸ Majmoo al-Fataawaa (24/253)

VOLUNTARY FASTS

Fasting a great act of worship that draws one closer to Allâh, and shields us from the fire of Hell. Fasting is not restricted to Ramadan; rather, it is an act of worship that should be kept alive throughout the year. There are certain months in which we should be even more eager to fast, due to the virtues and rewards for them mentioned in the ahadith.

Fasting is the only act of worship that a person cannot do to show off – it is always possible for someone to eat and drink when they are not alone, and not actually fast. If a person does complete their fast, it is something valuable only to Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said in a Hadith Qudsi that, “Allâh said: ‘Every deed of the son of Adam is for him except fasting; it is for Me and I shall reward for it...’”²²⁹

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allâh have mercy upon him) said: ‘All acts of worship can be seen when done, and they may be contaminated with some element of showing off, unlike fasting.’

Just as there are voluntary prayers that we may offer, so too there are voluntary fasts that are highly recommended for us outside of Ramadan.

The Prophet ﷺ said “Whoever fasts one day for the sake of Allâh, Allâh will keep his face seventy years' distance from Hell.”²³⁰

²²⁹ Agreed upon

²³⁰ An-Nasaa'i, classed as sahih by Albani

A Muslim who is keen to do good should realize the great virtue of voluntary fasts, and strive to observe them as much as possible. We list here the weekly, monthly and yearly times that fasts are recommended.

WEEKLY

Mondays and Thursdays

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was keen to fast on Mondays and Thursdays."²³¹

The Prophet ﷺ was asked about fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, and he said: "Those are two days on which people's deeds are shown to the Lord of the Worlds, and I want my deeds to be shown to Him when I am fasting."²³²

He was asked about fasting on Mondays and he said, "On that day I was born and on that day revelation came to me."²³³

²³¹ al-Nasaa'I, classed sahih by Albani

²³² al-Nasaa'i, Ibn Majah, & Ahmad, classed as sahih by Albani

²³³ Sahih Muslim

MONTHLY

The White Days (Ayyaam al-Beedh)

It is mustahabb to fast in the middle of the hijri month, on the 13th, 14th and 15th of each month, known as Ayyaam al-Beedh (the White Days, in reference to the full moon).

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said concerning the virtue of the three fasts: “*The observance of three days' fast every month and that of Ramadan every year is equivalent to fasting for the entire year...*”²³⁴

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: “My close friend [the Prophet ﷺ] advised me to do three things which I will never give up until I die: fasting three days each month, praying Duha, and sleeping after praying Witr.”²³⁵

It was narrated that Abu Dharr said: “The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said to me, ‘If you fast any part of the month then fast on the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth.’”²³⁶

²³⁴ Sahih Muslim

²³⁵ Agreed upon

²³⁶ al-Nasaa'i, At-Tirmishi & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahib by Albani.

YEARLY

Day of ‘Ashura

‘Ashura is the tenth day of Muharram.

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him) was asked about fasting on the day of ‘Ashura. He said, “I do not know of any day on the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ fasted that was better than this day and any month that was better than this month, meaning Ramadhan.”²³⁷

‘Abd-Allâh ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: When the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ fasted on the day of ‘Ashoora and told the people to fast, they said, “O Messenger of Allâh, this is a day that is venerated by the Jews and Christians.” The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “Next year, if Allâh wills, we will fast on the ninth day.” But by the time the following year came, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ had passed away.²³⁸

It is mustahabb (highly recommended) to fast on the ninth of Muharram along with ‘Ashura; however, if someone misses it, they may fast on the eleventh of Muharram, so as to differentiate from the Jews.

²³⁷ Agreed upon

²³⁸ Sahih Muslim

Day of Arafah

'Arafah is the ninth day of Dhu'l Hijjah.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "...I seek from Allâh that fasting on the day of 'Arafaah may atone for the sins of the preceding and the coming years, and I seek from Allâh that fasting on the day of 'Ashura may atone for the sins of the preceding year."²³⁹

This is only for those who are not performing Hajj; rather, the pilgrims standing at 'Arafah are not supposed to fast.

The First Nine Days of Dhu'l Hijjah

The virtues of the first 10 days of Dhul Hijjah are well known, and have been narrated in many ahadith. The Prophet ﷺ also used to encourage the believers to do even more good deeds on the first ten days of Dhu'l Hijjah.

The Prophet ﷺ used to fast on the first nine days of Dhu'l Hijjah. It was narrated from Hunaydah ibn Khaalid from his wife, that one of the wives of the Prophet ﷺ said: *The Messenger of Allah used to fast on the first nine days of Dhu'l-Hijjah and the day of 'Ashura, and three days each month, the first Monday of the month and two Thursdays.*²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Sahih Muslim

²⁴⁰ Ahmad, Abu Dawood & At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

Six Days of Shawwaal

Fasting six days in Shawwaal after one has fasted Ramadan earns a reward equivalent to fasting for a full year; and if someone fasts all of Ramadan and then also fasts the addition six of Shawwaal, it is as though they have fasted for an entire lifetime.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Whoever fasts Ramadhan then fasts six days of Shawwaal, it is as if he fasted for a lifetime.”²⁴¹

Muharram

It is from the Sunnah to fast whatever one can in the month of Muharram because of the Hadith in which RasulAllah ﷺ said: “The best of fasting after Ramadaan is the month of Allâh, Muharram, and the best of prayer after the obligatory prayers is prayer at night.”²⁴²

First Half of the Month of Sha'baan

It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) said: “The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to fast until we thought that he would never break his fast, and he would not fast until we thought that he would never fast. I never saw the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ fast an entire month apart from Ramadaan, and the month in which I

²⁴¹ Sahih Muslim, Abu Dawood, at-Tirmidhi, al-Nisaai and Ibn Maajah.

²⁴² Sahih Muslim

saw him fast the most was Sha'baan. He used to fast all of Sha'baan or all of it apart from a few days.”²⁴³

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When Sha'baan is half over, do not fast.”²⁴⁴

It is the Sunnah to fast the first fifteen days of Sha'baan, but not after that – unless one is already in the habit of fasting Mondays and Thursdays, in which case they may continue doing so.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Do not anticipate Ramadaan by fasting one or two days before it begins, but if a man habitually fasts, then let him fast.”²⁴⁵

In many Muslim countries, supermarkets and malls tend to have all kinds of Ramadan sales and special offers, with specific foods and treats marketed as “Ramadan delicacies.” Many of us become distracted from the true purpose of Ramadan, and end up focusing on the food we will be eating during iftaar. Instead of preparing themselves for Ramadan by reducing the amount of entertainment they consume, some people will in fact make a point of watching even more TV or movies so that they don't miss out on anything in the coming month.

We think of food, while the sunnah is to think of the fast!

²⁴³ Agreed upon

²⁴⁴ Abu Dawood, at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Naajah, classed as sahib by Albani

²⁴⁵ Agreed upon

By Allâh, there are many great benefits in fasting, for both body and soul. It keeps one's body healthy, as proven by many of the modern medical researches but above all, the greatest benefit is the spiritual purity and well-being that it facilitates. The primary goal of fasting is to attain taqwa (God-consciousness); it keeps us humble and focused on our Hereafter rather than being fixated on the Dunya.

May Allâh make us of those who enter Jannah from the Gate of Rayyan!

UMRAH

Umrah is known as 'the minor Hajj,' and is a great act of worship that can be performed any time of the year. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The performers of Hajj and Umrah are deputations of Allâh. If they call Him, He answers them and if they seek His forgiveness, He forgives them." ²⁴⁶ This clearly shows the great significance of Umrah and how much Allâh loves those who sacrifice their time and wealth for His cause. In another hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said: "One Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed between it and another Umrah."²⁴⁷

Since 'Umrah is a deed with such high status, one should seek to fulfill all the related sunan as much as possible. Below are some of the forgotten sunan of 'Umrah.

²⁴⁶ Ibn Majah, classed as sahih by Albani

²⁴⁷ Agreed upon

APPLYING PERFUME

Although perfume is not allowed when in Ihraam, it is sunnah to apply good scents to the head and body (and for men, the beard) after doing ghusl and before making the intention of Ihraam.

'Aa'ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) said: "I used to put perfume on the Prophet ﷺ, using the best perfume he could find, until I could see the glistening of the perfume on his head and beard."²⁴⁸

RAML

Raml means walking quickly, striding, or jogging. It is the sunnah for men to do *raml* in the first three rounds of *tawaaf*, but not required of women. However, the person performing 'Umrah should not be disturbing others doing *tawaaf*.

At-Tirmidhi reported from Jaabir that: "*When the Prophet came to Makkah, he entered the Mosque and acknowledged the Black Stone, then he passed to the right of it and ran for three (circuits of Tawaaf) and walked for four...*"²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Sahih Bukhari

²⁴⁹ Ahmad & At-Tirmidhi, Tirmidhi said the hadeeth of Jabir is Hasan Sahih.

DRINKING ZAMZAM

Drinking Zamzam water after offering two rak'aat after tawaaf is mustahabb. It is mentioned in the hadith reported by Jaabir (relating to the Prophet's Farewell Hajj) that the Prophet ﷺ, completed his tawaaf, and then went to Maqaam Ibrahim and prayed two rak'aat.

According to the same hadith, the Prophet ﷺ then went to the Well of Zamzam and drank of its water, as well as pouring some of it over his head.

It is recommended that one drinks as much as possible, due to a hadith which mentions that *the difference between the believers and the hypocrites is drinking one's fill of Zamzam.*²⁵⁰ It is also strongly encouraged to make du'a while drinking Zamzam.

DU'A DURING SA'EE

Sa'ee is the practice of walking/running between Safa and Marwa, and it is a sunnah for us to make du'a during that time. In particular, we are taught to climb Safa until we can see the Ka'bah, then to face it, raise one's hands, praise Allah, and supplicate to Him.

²⁵⁰ Ibn Maajah & al-Haakim, Al-Suyuti & Al-Boosairi said this is a saheeh isnaad.

The Prophet ﷺ used to say:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ أَنْجَزَ وَعْدَهُ، وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ، وَهَزَمَ الْأَخْرَابَ وَحْدَهُ

"Laa ilaaha ill-Allâh wahdahu laa shareeka lah, lahu'l-mulk, wa lahu'l-hamd, wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadeer. Laa ilaaha ill-Allâh wahdah, anjaza wa'dah, wa nasara 'abdah, wa hazamaa al-ahzaaba wahdah."

{There is no god but Allâh alone, with no partner or associate; His is the Dominion, all praise is due to Him, and He is able to do all things. There is no god but Allâh alone; he fulfilled His promise, granted victory to His slave, and defeated the confederates alone.}²⁵¹

It should be repeated three times, and then we are encouraged to make our own supplications as well.

May Allah accept the Hajj and 'Umrah of all the Muslim pilgrims, and accept their du'aa, ameen.

TAKBEER DURING THE FIRST 10 DAYS OF DHU'L HIJJAH

Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him and his father) reported that the Prophet ﷺ: "There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allâh than these ten days." The people asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allâh?" He said, "Not even jihaad for

²⁵¹ Sahih Muslim.

*the sake of Allâh, except in the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause, and came back with nothing.*²⁵²

Based on this Hadith and other ahadith the scholars say that these ten days are better than any of the days during the year, which include the days of Ramadan. In these blessed days, many Muslims do fast and do extra good deeds as mentioned in the Sunnah.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "There are no days greater in the sight of Allâh and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him than these ten days, so during this time recite a great deal of Tahleel ("La ilâaha ill-Allâh"), Takbeer ("Allâhu akbar") and Tahmeed ("Al-hamdu Lillaah")."²⁵³

However, one sunnah that has been abandoned by the men of the Ummah is that of reciting the takbeer aloud in public places, reminding people of the commencement of these blessed days. It is proven from authentic hadith²⁵⁴ that it was a practise of Ibn Umar & Abu Hurairah (may Allâh be pleased with them) to do so.

Saying the takbeer out loud should not be done in a way that causes people to recite it in unison, but rather, to do so individually and as a reminder to others.

²⁵² Sahih Bukhari

²⁵³ Ahmad, Ahmad Shaakir stated that it is saheeh.

²⁵⁴ Quoted by Bukhari (2/20).

CORRECTING PEOPLE

Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is an obligation upon every believer, as is made clear in many verses of the Qur'an.

{They used not to forbid one another from Al-Munkar (wrong, evildoing, sins, polytheism, disbelief) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do.} (Qur'an 5:79)

Ibn 'Atiyah (may Allâh have mercy on him) said:

There is consensus that forbidding evil is obligatory for the one who is able to do it, and is safe from harm to himself or the Muslims. But if he fears (harm) then he may denounce it in his heart and shun the doer of evil and not mix with him.²⁵⁵

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "Whoever amongst you sees an evil, he must change it with his hand; if he is unable to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to do so, then with his heart; and that is the weakest form of Faith."²⁵⁶

Failure to enjoin the good and forbid the evil leads to a punishment brought upon all of society. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "If the people see an evildoer and do not take him by the hand [to put a stop to his evil], soon Allâh will punish all of them."²⁵⁷

Undoubtedly, correcting and guiding people is part of worshipping Allah. We must keep in mind, however, that the Messenger of Allah

²⁵⁵ Tafseer al-Qurtubi (6/253)

²⁵⁶ Sahih Muslim

²⁵⁷ Abu Dawood, at-Tirmidhi, ibn Majah and al-Nasaa'I, classed as sahih

ﷺ taught us how to do so in a sensitive, considerate, and thoughtful way. Many times, people try to correct others, but instead of softening their hearts and guiding them to something better, they offend and upset them due to their harsh and insensitive approach. As with every other deed, there is a sunnah way of enjoining the good and forbidding evil.

We must remember that our own intentions should be to help someone do what is right – not for us to win an argument, or to upset the other person. The only way for us to help someone else is by doing so in a manner that is appreciated by the person being corrected.

The best of speech is that of the Prophet ﷺ, and the best of ways are his ways. As Muslims, we should learn these ways from the Sunnah so that Allāh blesses our efforts and intentions. Below are some forgotten sunan related to enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

- Having a pure intention. Our intention in correcting someone should never be an issue of personal ego or agenda. Rather, it must be done for the sake of Allah, with the hope that Allah will be pleased with us and with them.
- Being patient and remaining calm. The moment that we allow our own anger and frustration to take over the conversation is the moment that we lose the other person's trust and willingness to listen.

- Referencing the Qur'an and Sunnah as the basis for all corrections. Don't simply say "my shaykh said this" or "my shaykh said that." Provide authentic evidence.
- Understand that many people's incorrect actions are due to ignorance, a lack of education (or wrong education), and misconceptions of culture vs. religion.
- Show compassion. Mercy and compassion beautifies all interactions, and especially those which relate to religion.
- Explain the harmful effects of the mistake being made, and offer a positive alternative.
- Advise in private, and do not confront in public. Don't embarrass and humiliate the other person; rather, be considerate about their environment and who is around them.
- Denounce the mistake, not the person. Do not insult or denigrate the other person; remember that we want to benefit others, not harm them.
- Always remember that the intention is to seek Allah's Pleasure and to avoid Allah's anger.

May Allâh make us all amongst those who remind each other to do the good and forbid evil, with the manners of the Messenger; and may He open our hearts to accept such reminders.

BEING CONSISTENT

Emaan (faith) increases and decreases – this is one of the beliefs of AhlusSunnah wa'l Jamaa'ah. Many of us have experienced something called “emaan rush” – when we listen to lectures or attend gatherings where the environment is one of remembering Allah and increasing in worship and Islamic knowledge. We then make great resolutions about what we will start doing and how we will change our lives, but unfortunately few of us follow through on those goals.

The silver lining to this is that this is a sign that the heart is not dead; rather, it is alive and responding positively to spiritual reminders. One should thank Allah for this, and do their best to act on those reminders.

Unfortunately, the drawback is that the way people react to an increase in emaan is often short-lived. Making many resolutions and only doing them for a few days is not as beneficial as doing something small, consistently, such that it becomes a part of our daily life. Rather than over burdening ourselves by trying to do a lot of deeds at once and burning out quickly, we should start slow, be consistent, and regularly strive to add more good deeds as we go along.

Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Take up good deeds only as much as you are able, for the best deeds are those done regularly even if they are few."²⁵⁸

Go slow but be consistent; make doing good a part of life, and then add more sunan until our lives are filled with actions based on the life of RasulAllah ﷺ!

²⁵⁸ Sunan Ibn Mâjah, classed as sahih by Albani

CHAPTER-IV

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF DAILY LIFE

There are activities that are part of our daily lives that are basic necessities and functions of being human. Sleeping, waking up, eating and drinking are all actions which every person – regardless of faith, race, and gender – do as part of life. What differentiates Muslims from everyone else, however, is that even these mundane actions can become acts of worship that make it seem as though we have spent our entire day in 'ebaadah. There are more than a thousand different sunan which can be done throughout our day and night; in following these, there leaves little time and energy to devote to bid'ah instead.

WAKING UP

Waking up is when the day starts. If the first thing we do is start our day in accordance to the Sunnah, we will find our day filled with blessings and our spiritual well-being improved. Sadly, almost all the sunan related to waking up and starting the day can be categorized as "forgotten sunan," even though they should be well known.

WIPING THE FACE

"When the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ woke up, he would sit up and rub away the effects of sleep from his face with his hands thrice."²⁵⁹

SUPPLICATION FOR WAKING UP:

الحمد لله الذي أحيانا بعده ما أماتنا وإليه التسavor.

Alhamdu lillahil-lathee ahyana ba'dama amaatana wa-ilayhin-nushoor.

*"All praise is for Allâh who gave us life after death (sleep) and to Him is the resurrection."*²⁶⁰

USE A SIWAAK

"When the Prophet ﷺ woke up from the night (sleep), he used to clean his mouth with a Siwaak."²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Sahih Bukhari

²⁶⁰ Agreed upon

²⁶¹ Sahih Bukhari

SNUFF WATER

Narrated Abu Huraira (R.A.): Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said:

*"When one of you wakes up from his sleep, he must blow his nose (with water) three times, for the Satan spends the night inside one's nostrils."*²⁶²

WASHING HANDS

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever gets up after sleeping, let him not put his hand in the water container until he washes them thrice, for he does not know where his hands rested at night."²⁶³

RECITING FROM SURAH AAL IMRAN

Ibn 'Abbas (may Allâh be pleased with him) narrated, that he stayed one night with Maymoonah, the Mother of the Believers, who was his maternal aunt. He said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ slept until halfway through the night, or just before or after that. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ woke up and started wiping the sleep from his face with his hand. Then he recited the last ten verses of Surah Aal 'Imran, then he got up and went to a water skin that was hanging there, and did wudu (ablution) from it and did it well, then he stood and prayed.²⁶⁴

²⁶² Agreed upon

²⁶³ Agreed upon

²⁶⁴ Agreed upon

WAKING AT NIGHT

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever wakes up at night and says:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ،
سُبْنَخَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ
الْعَظِيمِ

Laa ilaaha ill-allaahu wahdahu laa shareeka lah, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu, wa huwa 'alaa kulli shay'in qadeer, subhaan-allaahi wal-hamdu lillaah, wa laa ilaaha ill-allaahu wallaahu akbar, wa laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaahil-'aliyyil-'azeem rabbigh-sir lee

'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone and with no partner, to Him belongs [all] sovereignty and praise, and He is able to do all things; How far from imperfections Allah is, and all praise is for Allah, and none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, Allah is the greatest, and there is no power nor might except with Allah, The Most High, The Supreme,'

and then supplicates:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي

'O my Lord forgive me,' will be forgiven."

In another narration: "and then asks [for something], he will be answered. If he then performs ablution and prays, his prayer will be accepted."²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Sahih Bukhari & Abu Dawud

My brothers and sisters in Islam, start every day with the name of Allâh. Praise Him, ask Forgiveness from the Oft Forgiving, and each day will be filled with success – in both this world and the Hereafter. Remember, the best way to do this is by following His Messenger

ﷺ

SLEEPING

In this age of smart phones, how many times do people fall asleep with their devices in hand? In fact, how many times has it happened to you? So many people spend their evenings engaged on social media, chatting on instant messaging apps, or playing time-wasting games.

Unfortunately, many of us have forgotten the beautiful sunan to be done before going to bed. By being distracted with useless things, that will not benefit us either in this world or the next, we put ourselves at risk of harming ourselves in numerous ways.

SUPPLICATIONS BEFORE SLEEPING

It was narrated that Hudhayfah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said, “When the Prophet ﷺ went to bed at night, he would put his hand under his cheek, then say,

اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَاٰ or بِاسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَاٰ

Allâhumma bismika amootu wa ahya’ or ‘BismikAllahumma amootu wa ahya.’

*O Allâh, in Your name I die and I live.*²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Sahih Bukhari

RECITING QUR'AN BEFORE SLEEPING

Mu'awatayn and Surah al-Ikhlaas

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prescribed numerous chapters and verses of the Qur'an for us to recite before bed. In particular, he made it a nightly practice to recite Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Naas (known as the Mu'awatayn), as well as Surah al-Ikhlaas, in a specific manner.

'When retiring to his bed every night, the Prophet ﷺ would hold his palms together, dry-spit in them, recite the last three chapters (Al-Ikhlas, Al-Falaq, An-Nas) of the Qur'an and then wipe over his entire body as much as possible with his hands, beginning with his head and face and then the rest of his body. He would do this three times.'

267

Surah al-Kaafiroon and the last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah

It was narrated that Nawfal al-Ashja'i (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to me: "Recite *Qul yaa ayyuha'l-kaafiroon*, then go to sleep at the end of it, for it is a disavowal of shirk."268

²⁶⁷ Sahih Bukhari

²⁶⁸ Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Ibn Hajar & sahih by Albani.

Abu Mas'ood al-Ansaari (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever recites the last two verses of Suraa al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him."²⁶⁹

Ibn al-Qayyim said: They will suffice him against any evil that may harm him.²⁷⁰

It was narrated that 'Ali (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "I did not think that any sane person could sleep without reciting the last three verses of Surah al-Baqarah."

Ayatul Kursi

Abu Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ entrusted me with the task of looking after the Zakaat of Ramadaan. Someone came to me and started to scatter the food about, so I grabbed hold of him and said, 'I will take you to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ!'"...

He (that intruder) said: 'When you go to your bed, recite Aayat al-Kursi, then there will stay with you a protector from Allāh, and no shaytaan (devil) will approach you until morning comes.'

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'He spoke the truth even though he is a liar; that was a shaytaan.'²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Agreed upon

²⁷⁰ al-Waabil al-Sayyib (132)

²⁷¹ Sahih Bukhari

Surah al-Mulk

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "A surah from the Qur'aan containing thirty verses will intercede for a man so that he will be forgiven. It is the surah Tabaarak Alathi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Surah al-Mulk]."²⁷²

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allâh ibn Mas'ood said: Whoever reads Tabaarak Allâhi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Surah al-Mulk] every night, Allâh will protect him from the torment of the grave. At the time of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ we used to call it *al-maani'ah* (that which protects). In the Book of Allâh it is a surah which, whoever recites it every night has done very well.²⁷³

Dhikr

'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allâh be pleased with him) said that Fatimah (upon whom be peace) came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him for a servant. He said, "Shall I not tell you of something that is better for you than that? When you go to sleep, say 'Subhaan Allâh' thirty-three times, 'AlHamdulillah' thirty-three times, and 'Allâhu akbar' thirty-four times."²⁷⁴

An-Nawawi (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: 'It is better for a person to do all that has been narrated of this matter, but if he cannot do that he should do whatever he is able to do.'²⁷⁵

²⁷² At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahih by Albani

²⁷³ An-Nasaa'i, classed as hasan by al-Albani

²⁷⁴ Sahih Bukhari

²⁷⁵ al-Adhkaar (221)

OTHER PRACTICES

Make wudhu before sleeping

This was narrated in a hadith, in which the Prophet ﷺ said: "When you go to bed, do wudhu' as for prayer."²⁷⁶

An-Nawawi said: if a person has wudhu', that is sufficient for him, because the point is to go to sleep having wudhu', lest he die in his sleep; and so that he dreams will be more true, and so that the Shaytaan will be less likely to play with his dreams and terrify him.

Sleeping on the right side with rights hand under the cheek.

It was narrated that Hudhayfah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said, "When the Prophet ﷺ went to bed at night, he would put his hand under his cheek, then say, 'BismikAllahumma amootu wa ahya.' (O Allah, in your name I die and I live.)"²⁷⁷

Ibn Hajar said: The right side is singled out for a number of reasons, such as: this lets a person wake up more quickly; it also allows the heart to lean towards the right-hand side.

Ibn al-Jawzi said: the doctors have stated that this position is more beneficial to the body. They said to start by lying on the right for a while, then turn over to the left, because the former aids peristalsis and sleeping on one's left side facilitates digestion.

²⁷⁶ Agreed upon

²⁷⁷ Sahih Bukhari

Dusting the bed

Abu Hurayrah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: The Prophet ﷺ said: “*When one of you goes to his bed, let him dust off his bed with the inside of his lower garment, for he does not know what came onto it after he left it. Then let him say:*

بِاسْمِ رَبِّي وَضَعْتُ جَنْبِي، وَبِكَ أَرْفَعُهُ؛ إِنْ أَمْسَكْتُ نَفْسِي فَأَرْجِمَهَا،
وَإِنْ أَرْسَلْتُهَا، فَاحْفَظْهَا بِمَا تَحْفَظُ بِهِ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحِينَ

*Bismika Rabbee wada'tu janbi wa bika arfa'uhu wa in amsakta nafsi
farhamhaa wa in arsaltahaa fahfazhaa bimaa tuhfaz bihi 'ibaadika al-
saaliheen.*

*In Your name, my Lord, I lie down, and in Your name I rise. If You should take my soul then have mercy on it, and if You should return my soul then protect it as You protect Your righteous slaves.*²⁷⁸

Not sleeping on the stomach

He ﷺ prodded the one sleeping on his belly with his foot and said, ‘*Do not lay down in this manner, for it is a way of laying down that Allâh hates.*’”

According to another report, the Prophet ﷺ prodded him with his foot and woke him up, and said, “*Do not lay down like this, for this is how the people of Hell lay down.*”²⁷⁹

Many doctors recommend sleeping on firm floors and on one’s back, noting that sleeping on the stomach is related to various health issues.

²⁷⁸ Agreed upon

²⁷⁹ Ahmad, at-Tirmidhi & by Abu Dawood, classed as Sahih by Albani

Sleeping simply

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ slept in a very simple manner, without luxurious bedding.

‘Aa’ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) said: “The pillow of the Prophet ﷺ on which he slept at night was made of leather stuffed with palm fibres.”²⁸⁰

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him) reported that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab entered upon the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ when he was lying on a mat of palm fibres that had left marks on his side. ‘Umar said, “O Messenger of Allâh, why do you not get something more comfortable than this?” He ﷺ said: *“What do I have to do with this world? My relationship with this world is like that of a traveller on a hot summer’s day, who seeks shade under a tree for an hour, then moves on.”*²⁸¹

As Muslims, we should remember the importance of Qiyam al-Layl, and do what is necessary to ensure that we awaken for it – and if not for Tahajjud, then certainly for Fajr.

If we think about the sunan mentioned above, we should recall the words of Imam AnNawawi: “lest we die [in this state].” The time before going to sleep is a time when we should clear our hearts and minds, our smart phones kept aside, knowing that we have no guarantee that we will awaken the next morning. Do we not want to be of those whose last words and actions are following the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?

²⁸⁰ Abu Dawood and Ahmad. Saheeh al-Jaami’, 4714.

²⁸¹ Ahmad and al-Haakim, Saheeh al-Jaami’, 55445.

May Allāh make us amongst those who start and end their days with the remembrance of their Lord, just as His Messenger ﷺ did.

EATING

The consumption of nutrients is a necessity of life not just for humans, but all living things. Again, however, what differentiates Muslims from others is that by following the Sunnah even in basic matters like eating, we have the potential to earn great rewards.

SAYING BISMILLAH IF ONE FORGETS TO SAY IT AT THE START

It was narrated from Umm Kalthoom from 'Aa'ishah (may Allāh be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "When any one of you eats, let him mention the name of Allāh. If he forgets to mention the name of Allāh at the beginning, then let him say 'Bismillaahi fee awvalihi wa aakhirih'i (In the name of Allāh at the beginning and at the end)." ²⁸²"

²⁸² at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahih by Albani

EATING WITH THREE FINGERS

Ka'b bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ eating with three fingers and licking them after having finished the food.²⁸³

In Fat'h Al Baari it is stated that it is Sunnah to eat with three fingers (the thumb, index and the middle finger); If it is necessary to use more than three, because the food is light and cannot be gathered in three fingers, then he may use the fourth or fifth.²⁸⁴

PASSING FOOD TO THE RIGHT SIDE

Anas (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: Milk mixed with water was brought to Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. On his right side was a Bedouin, and on his left side was Abu Bakr (May Allâh be pleased with him). He ﷺ drank from it and handed the rest to the bedouin saying, "One who is on the right has preference, then again the one who is on the right."²⁸⁵

NOT RECLINING WHILE EATING

The Prophet ﷺ said: "I do not eat whilst I am reclining."²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Sahih Muslim

²⁸⁴ Fat'h al Baari, 9/578

²⁸⁵ Agreed upon.

²⁸⁶ Sahih Bukhari

DON'T CRITICIZE FOOD

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet ﷺ never criticized any food, but he used to eat if he liked the food, and leave it if he disliked it.²⁸⁷

EATING COLLECTIVELY

Al-Wahshiyyi ibn Harb radiallaahu 'anhu related that some of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger ﷺ said: O Messenger of Allaah! We eat, but do not become satisfied.

So he said to them: "Perhaps you eat separately?"

So they replied: Yes.

So he said: "Eat your food collectively, mention the Name of Allaah upon it, then there will be blessings for you in it." ²⁸⁸

Shaykh Ibn al-'Uthaymeen said: "This indicates that it is essential to eat collectively from a single plate. So if there are five or ten people, they should eat collectively from a single dish, depending upon the situation. Indeed, doing so is a cause for barakah (blessings) to descend, whilst eating separately is a cause for barakah to depart."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ Sahih Bukhari

²⁸⁸ Abu Dawood, Classed as Hasan by Albaani

²⁸⁹ Sharh Riyaadhus-Saaliheen (7/231) of Ibn al-'Uthaymeen

RINSING THE MOUTH

To rinse the mouth after eating is recommended, based on the hadith by Suwayd ibn al-Nu'maan. He said, "We were with the Prophet ﷺ in al-Sahba' and the time for prayer came. He called for food, but he did not find anything but some saweq (barley porridge). So he ate some and we all ate with him. Then he called for water and rinsed out his mouth...."²⁹⁰

This practise of rinsing the mouth after eating was done especially when the food or drink contained some types of fatty residue.

Ibn Abbas (may Allāh be pleased with him) narrated the Prophet ﷺ drank some milk then called for some water. Once he got the water he rinsed his mouth then said, "*It has fat.*"²⁹¹

Shaykh Al-Uthaymeen said, "The reason why the Prophet ﷺ rinsed his mouth was because of the fat. It can be understood from this action that it's legislated to rinse the mouth from all foods which contain fat. It is good manners to rinse the mouth afterwards to remove the fat. If the substance is heavy in fat, then it's better to use siwak. For this reason, the scholars say: it's sunnah to use siwak to remove any fat after eating if the smell of the mouth changed."²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Sahih Bukhari.

²⁹¹ Agreed upon

²⁹² Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukahri

PRAISING ALLAH AFTER EATING

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Allāh is pleased with His slave when he eats something and praises Him for it, or drinks something and praises Him for it.”²⁹³

There are several different supplications narrated in the Sunnah, to be said after eating or drinking:

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَنَنِي هَذَا وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْ عِنْدِ حُوْلِي مِنْ نِي وَلَا قُوَّةَ

“Al-hamdulillaahi al-lathee at’amanii haatha wa razaqnihi min ghayri
hawlin minni wa laa quwwata.”

Praise be to Allāh, Who has fed me this and provided me with it with no power or strength on my part.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever eats some food then says (the above du’a), his previous sins will be forgiven.”²⁹⁴

الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ هَذَا كَثِيرًا طَبَّتَا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ عَيْرٌ مَكْفِيٌّ وَلَا مُؤْدَعٌ وَلَا مُسْتَغْنَى عَنْهُ رَبُّنَا

“Al-hamdulillaah hamdan katheeran mubaarakan fihi, ghayra
makfiyyin wa laa muwadda’in wa laa mustaghnan ‘anhu rabbana.”

*Praise be to Allāh, much good and blessed praise. O our Lord, You are not in need of anyone, and we cannot do without Your favour nor dispense with it.*²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Sahih Muslim

²⁹⁴ At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Maajah, classed as hasan by Albani

لَهُمْ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيهِ وَأَطْعِنْنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ

“Allâhumma baarik lana fihi, wa at’imna khayran minhu.”

O Allâh, bless it for us and feed us with better than it.²⁹⁵

DRINKING

The Sunnah narrated with regard to eating, and drinking comes under the same ruling.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The word ta‘aam (often translated as food) refers to anything that has a taste; it may be drink or it may be food. ²⁹⁶

So the common Sunnahs between eating and drinking are: -

1. Drinking with the right hand.
2. To say Bismillah before you begin to drink.
3. To praise and thank Allah after drinking.
4. To drink sitting down (although standing is also allowed).
5. The person passing out the drinks should start on his right hand side when distributing the drinks.

²⁹⁵ Sahih Bukhari

²⁹⁶ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan by Albani

²⁹⁷ Sharh Riyadhs as-Saaliheen (4/187).

DRINKING IN THREE OR MORE SIPS

Anas (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ used to breathe three times in the course of a drink (he used to drink in three gulps). 298

Ibn 'Abbas (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Do not drink in one gulp like a camel, but in two or three (gulps). Mention the Name of Allah (i.e., say *Bismillah*) when you start drinking and praise Him (i.e., say *Al-hamdu lillah*) after you have finished (drinking)." 299

MISCELLANEOUS ETIQUETTES

USING THE SIWAAK

Regularly using the siwaak is an act that is pleasing to Allah, and also beneficial for our health and hygiene.

'Aa'ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) who said: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, 'Siwaak cleanses the mouth and pleases the Lord.'"300

Siwaak is generally recommended to be done at all times of the day and night. However, there are also specific times when it is more highly recommended to use it, and which were specified by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

²⁹⁸ Agreed upon.

²⁹⁹ Riyad As Salihin & Tirmidhi.

³⁰⁰ Sahih Bukhari, Ahmad, and al-Nisa'i.

Before Wudhu and Salah

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Were it not for the fact that I did not want to make things too hard for my ummah, I would have commanded them to use the siwaak at every time of prayer."³⁰¹ According to another report he said: "...at every time of making wudhu."

When entering the house

'Aa'ishah was asked what the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ did when he first came home. She said, "When he entered his house, the first thing he would do was to use the siwaak."³⁰²

After waking up

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan (may Allâh be pleased with him) reported that when the Prophet ﷺ got up during the night, he would clean his mouth thoroughly with the siwaak.³⁰³

It is also recommended to use the siwaak while fasting, and also after eating. The scholars also encouraged using the siwaak before reciting Qur'an, entering the Masjid, or attending Islamic gatherings – all places and occasions where angels are present.

While there are many health benefits to brushing one's teeth, particularly with the siwaak, we should remember that our primary

³⁰¹ Agreed upon

³⁰² Sahih Muslim

³⁰³ Agreed upon

motivation is that we do it due to it being a beloved practice of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

May Allâh make us love what the Prophet ﷺ loved, and implement it in our lives!

RESPONDING TO THE ADHAAN

Responding to the *adhaan* is a sunnah which many people may know in theory, but few people practice it in reality. In some areas, where the *adhaan* is heard over the loudspeakers and in people's homes, some people might fall silent or pause the TV out of respect – but forget to respond to the *adhaan* as one should.

It is from the Sunnah to repeat each line after the mu'adhdhin, except for when he says "hayya 'alas-salaah, hayya 'ala'l falaah." When he says this, the listening should respond with, "Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaah billah."

There are other supplications to be recited after the *adhaan* as well.

It was narrated from Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allâh (may Allâh be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Whoever says (the below Dua) when he hears the call to prayer, my intercession for him will be permitted on the Day of Resurrection."

اللَّهُمَّ رَبِّ هَذِهِ الدُّعْوَةِ التَّائِمَةِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْقَائِمَةِ أَتِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالنُّصِيْلَةَ وَابْعَثْهُ الْفَقَامَ
الْمَخْمُودَ الَّذِي وَعَنْتَهُ

'Allâhumma Rabba hadhihi'd-da'wat il-tammah wa'l-Salah il-qaimah, aati Muhammadan al waseelata wa'l-fadeelah, wab'ath'hu maqamam mahmoodan alladhi wa'adtah.'

O Allâh, Lord of this perfect call and the prayer to be offered, grant Muhammad the privilege and the eminence (of intercession), and resurrect him to the praised position that You have promised.³⁰⁴

The following is to be recited after the mu'adhdhin completes the adhaan:

وَأَنَا أَشْهُدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولاً وَبِالإِسْلَامِ دِينًا

Wa 'ash-hadu 'an laa 'ilaaha 'illAllâhu wahdahu laa shareeka lahu wa
'anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa Rasooluhu, radheetu billaahi
Rabban, wa bi-Muhammadin Rasoolan wa bil'islaami deenan.

I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allâh alone, Who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger. I am pleased with Allâh as my Lord, with Muhammad as my Messenger and with Islam as my religion.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ Sahih Bukhari

³⁰⁵ Sahih Muslim

REMEMBERING ALLAH WHILE ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

Jabir (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: When we ascended (a height) we would proclaim: "Allâhu Akbar (Allâh is Greatest)," and when we descended (from the height) we would proclaim: "Subhan Allâh (Allâh is free from imperfection)."³⁰⁶

Some scholars are of the view that this is limited to climbing and descending from mountains or hills, while others say that it is a dhikr to be said in general situations and include taking the elevator/escalator and stairs.

Either way, it is a beautiful sunnah to put into practice, especially for those who live in hilly or mountainous regions and traverse these heights regularly. They are increasing their good deeds and worshipping Allah simply by remembering Him during their travel.

SEEKING HELP BY OFFERING SALATUL ISTIKHAARAH ON EVERY MATTER

'Istikhaarah' is to seek help of Allâh to choose between two matters.

It was narrated that Jaabir ibn 'Abd-Allâh (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: The Prophet ﷺ taught us to pray *istikhaarah*

³⁰⁶ Sahih Bukhari

concerning all our affairs as he would teach us a surah of the Qur'an.³⁰⁷

In these present times, Salah al-Istikhaarah has largely become a ritual performed when one is considering a marriage proposal, making a career change, and other such major decisions. In truth, however, the Sunnah is to pray Salah al-Istikharah regularly, for matters both serious and minor.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: "It (*istikhaara*) includes both important and insignificant matters, because important matters may stem from insignificant matters."³⁰⁸

Istikhara cannot be done for those things which are already prohibited – for example, one cannot pray istikhaarah about dealing with *riba* (interest), or attending an event being held at a forbidden location (like a bar). Istikhaarah is only for matters which are permissible, whether it has to do with one's property, family life, religious actions, and so on.

In conclusion, Salatul Istikhaarah is a necessary tool for every believer to utilize, in addition to using one's own reasoning and consulting with others. The Sunnah has taught us that there is always benefit in praying Salatul Istikhaarah, and to do so increases the blessings in whatever decisions we make.

³⁰⁷ Sahih Bukhari

³⁰⁸ Fath Al Bari 11/184

SAYING BISMILLAH WHEN STUMBLING

Abu Al-Malih narrated that a man said: "I was riding behind the Prophet ﷺ and his mount stumbled. I said: "May the Shaytan perish! The Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not say, May the Shaytan perish," because when you say that he swells up so much that he becomes like a house and says," By my power." Rather say say: Bismillah (In the name of Allâh), "for if you say that the Shaytan shrinks until he becomes like a fly."³⁰⁹

GREETING WHEN ENTERING A HOME

Allâh says: {But when you enter houses, give greetings of peace upon each other - a greeting from Allah, blessed and good.} (Qur'an 24:61)

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar said, "When someone enters a house which is not lived in, he should say, 'Peace be upon the righteous slaves of Allâh. (As-salamu 'alaynaa wa 'ala 'ibaadillahis'Saaliheen)³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Abu Dawud and Ahmad, graded Sahih by Shaykh Abdul Muhsin Al-Abbadd

³¹⁰ Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, graded Hassan

WALKING BAREFOOT SOMETIMES

Al-Hasan bin 'Alee narrated to us, Yazeed bin Haarun narrated to us, Al- Jurayri informed us on Abdillah bin Buraydah: that a man from the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ traveled to Fadaalah bin 'Ubayd -may Allah be pleased with him- while he was in Egypt. So he arrived at him and said: I have not come to you to visit you. But you and I have heard a hadeeth from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and I hope that you have some knowledge from Him (the Prophet ﷺ) about it. He said: And what is it? He said: Such and such. (Then) he said: Why do I see you dishoveled while you are the Leader of the land? He said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has forbidden us from indulging too much in the comforts of life. He said: Why don't I see any shoes on you? He said: The Prophet ﷺ used to command us to go barefooted sometimes."³¹¹

Note:

This does not mean one is to walk on coals and glasses bare feet like shia'as do. Rather this sunnah is to be followed without hurting ourselves.

³¹¹ Sunan Abu Daawud, classed as Sahih by Albani

RECITING RELEVANT SUPPLICATIONS

There are numerous different sunan that we may implement in our daily lives, from waking up to going to sleep to everything in between. There are various supplications to be recited in order to infuse our daily actions with blessings. It is a means of remembering Allah and protects us from being heedless and falling into sin easily.

May Allah make us amongst those who remember Him often, whose daily actions become acts of worship, and with whom He is pleased.

CHAPTER – V

OTHER GENERAL FORGOTTEN SUNAN

SUNAN OF RAINFALL

LETTING PART OF IT FALL ON YOU

Anas (b. Malik) reported: It rained upon us as we were with the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ removed his cloth (from a part of his body) till the rain fell on it. We said: Messenger of Allâh, why did you do this? He said: *It is because it (the rainfall) has just come from the Exalted Lord.*³¹²

On a light-hearted note, most of us likely remember playing in the rain as children. As we grow older, we tend to avoid being out in the rain.

Imam an-Nawawi said: The rainfall is a mercy which Allâh has just created, therefore use it as a blessing.

One should keep the following in mind regarding standing in the rain:

³¹² Sahih Muslim & Sunan Abu Dawood

1. The Sunnah of exposing oneself to the rain can be obtained by unveiling any portion of one's body, no matter how small the portion may be, such as one's head or arms.
2. One should not expose one's 'awrah (private parts - specifically, between the navel and the knees - for men).
3. Avoid standing in the rain if it may cause harm or sickness to oneself.

Another sunnah – and glad tidings for Muslims – related to the rain is that du'a is accepted during rainfall. The Prophet ﷺ said, "There are two which will not be rejected: du'aa' at the time of the call (to prayer) and when it is raining."³¹³

THE DU'A TO RECITE WHEN IT RAINS IS:

اللَّهُمَّ صَبِّرْنَا نَافِعًا

Allâhumma sayyiban nâfi'an.

"O Allâh, may it be a beneficial rain cloud."

Enjoy the rain... It's Sunnah!

³¹³ Abu Dawood; classed as sahih by Albani

SEEKING REFUGE IN ALLAH

Just as the rain is a blessing from Allah, it can also be a weapon. How many times have lives been lost due to heavy rains or flooding? Thus, it is a sunnah to ask Allah to make the rain be a source of mercy for us.

It was narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, (may Allâh be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "It is Allâh's mercy; it (sometimes) brings blessing and (sometimes) brings punishment. So when you see it, do not revile it, but ask Allâh for its goodness and take refuge with Allâh from its evil."³¹⁴

Rasool Allâh ﷺ used to supplicate to Allâh upon seeing the winds which precede rainfall. It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah, may Allâh be pleased with her, said: "When the wind blew strongly, the Prophet ﷺ used to say,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا، وَخَيْرَ مَا فِيهَا، وَخَيْرَ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا، وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا، وَشَرِّ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ

Allâhumma innî as'aluka khayrahâ wa khayra mâ fihâ, wa khayra mâ ursilat bihi. Wa a'ûdhu bika min sharrihâ, wa sharri mâ fihâ, wa sharri mâ ursilat bihi.

*"O Allâh, I ask You for its good and the good of what is in it and the good of what it is sent with, and I seek refuge in You from its evil and the evil of what is in it and the evil of what it is sent with."*³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Imam Ahmad and Abu Daawood, classed as sahih by Albani.

³¹⁵ Sahih Muslim

OFFERING NAFIL PRAYER ON RETURNING FROM A JOURNEY

Narrated Jabir: Once I returned from a journey and the Prophet ﷺ said (to me), "Offer two rak'at."³¹⁶

Narrated Ka'b: Whenever the Prophet ﷺ returned from a journey in the forenoon, he would enter the masjid and offer two rak'at before sitting.³¹⁷

TIMES OF TRIAL, DIFFICULTY, AND CALAMITY

Whether one is Muslim or not, all humans go through periods of great difficulty and distress in life. However, as Muslims, we have been taught that such times of tribulation can, in fact, be a source of good for us:

RasulAllah ﷺ said, "*How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for all of it is good, and that applies to no one except the believer. If something good happens to him he gives thanks, and that is good for him, and if something bad befalls him he bears it with patience and that is good for him.*"³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Sahih Bukhari

³¹⁷ Sahih Bukhari

³¹⁸ Sahih Muslim

He ﷺ also said: "There is nothing that befalls a believer, not even a thorn that pricks him, but Allāh will record one good deed for him and will remove one bad deed from him."³¹⁹

In another narration, we were told: "Trials will continue to befall the believing man and woman, with regard to themselves, their children and their wealth, until they meet Allāh with no sin on them."³²⁰

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ shared this unique item of knowledge: "On the Day of Resurrection, when people who had suffered affliction are given their reward, those who were healthy will wish their skins had been cut to pieces with scissors when they were in the world."³²¹

Even when we think that we are going through something incredibly painful, we are to remember Allah, have patience, and know that these trials can be a source of benefit and reward for us. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ reminded us of how we can cope with grief, sorrow, and feelings of personal struggle.

Umm Salamah (may Allāh be pleased with her) said: I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say: "There is no Muslim who is stricken with a calamity and says what Allāh has enjoined, but Allāh will compensate him with something better."

³¹⁹ Sahih Muslim

³²⁰ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani

³²¹ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ: اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِنِي فِي مُصَبِّتِي، وَاخْلُفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

'Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un.

Allâhumma aajirni fi musibati, wakhluflî khairan minha.'

'Verily to Allâh we belong and unto Him is our return. O Allâh, reward me for my affliction and compensate me with something better'

Umm Salamah (May Allâh be pleased with her) said: When Abu Salamah died, I repeated the same supplication as the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ had commanded me (to do). So Allâh bestowed upon me a better substitute than him (i.e. the Messenger of Allah ﷺ).³²²

WORSHIPPING ALLÂH IN DIFFICULT TIMES

It was narrated from Ma'qil ibn Yasar that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Worshipping at times of tribulation and confusion is like migrating to join me."³²³

An-Nawawi said: "The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Worshipping at times of tribulation and confusion is like migrating to join me.' The reason why worship at such times is of such great virtue is that people become negligent about worship and are distracted from it, and no one focuses on worship except a few."

³²² Sahih Muslim

³²³ Sahih Muslim

Al-Qurtubi said: "Tribulation and great hardship will happen until the matter of religion is taken lightly and people will care about nothing but their worldly affairs and how to earn a living. Thus, worship becomes very important at times of tribulation."

It is at the time of hardship and calamities that we discover who our true supporters and companions are, as the Prophet ﷺ said, "*The likeness of the believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion is that of the body; when one part of it suffers, the rest of the body joins it in staying awake and suffering fever.*"³²⁴

*And he ﷺ said: "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."*³²⁵

Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Were it not that Allâh treats His slaves with the remedy of trials and calamities, they would transgress and overstep the mark. When Allâh wills good for His slaves, He gives him the medicine of calamities and trials according to his situation, so as to cure him from all fatal illnesses and diseases, until He purifies and cleanses him, and then makes him qualified for the most honourable position in this world, which is that of being a true slave of Allâh ('uboodiyah), and for the greatest reward in the Hereafter, which is that of seeing Him and being close to Him."³²⁶

May Allâh make us of those who are forbearing in times of tribulation, and who pass their tests with patience and goodness, ameen.

³²⁴ Agreed upon

³²⁵ Agreed upon

³²⁶ Zaad al-Ma'aad, 4/195

SUNAN OF THE ECLIPSE

Solar and lunar eclipses are scientific phenomena which people become excited over, go out to observe, and wax lyrical about. More importantly, however, eclipses are signs of Allah – examples of His Might and Power, a reminder to all humankind of the Day of Judgment.

As Muslims, we should remember the way that Allah describes the Signs of the Last Day:

{When the sun is wrapped up [in darkness]; and when the stars fall, dispersing...} (Qur'an 81:1)

{He asks, "When is the Day of Resurrection?" So when vision is dazzled, and the moon darkens, and the sun and the moon are joined...} (Qur'an 75:7-9)

The Prophet ﷺ feared Allah more than anyone else. One day, he emerged from his home during a solar eclipse, and was deeply worried that the Final Hour had already begun. We, on the other hand, treat the eclipses as little more than exciting astronomical incidents, and do not think more deeply about the Lord of the sun and the moon. It is a disturbing sign of the lack of our awareness and consciousness of the Hereafter; it reflects a lack of knowledge and concern about the Signs of the Last Day, and our own spiritual states.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions would spend the duration of the eclipse in prayer, remembering Allah and reciting those verses relevant to the Day of Judgment. They knew that if it was indeed time for the Last Hour, then prayer should be their final actions; and if it were not yet that time, then they at least spent that time in remembering their Creator and the Hereafter.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allâh and they do not become eclipsed for the death or birth of anyone. But Allâh sends them to make His slaves fear (Him), so if you see that, then pray and make du'a' until it is over."³²⁷
 According to another version he said: "So if you see that, then hasten to remember Allâh and call upon Him and seek His forgiveness."

We ask Allâh to make us among those who fear Him and who are afraid of the Hour.

BEING MINDFUL AND SEEKING PROTECTION FROM THE DAJJAAL

The Prophet ﷺ taught his Ummah everything that we need to know about the False Messiah (*al Maseeh adDajjaal*), and how to protect ourselves from Him. He left us with a clear path, and whomsoever deviates from it is doomed.

The Dajjaal is one of the greatest tribulations that this Ummah will ever face. Every Prophet and Messenger warned their nations about him, but it was RasulAllah ﷺ who taught us the most, and described in detail the many ways we can protect ourselves against the fitnah of the false messiah (*al-maseeh al-dajjaal*). He left his ummah on a path that is clear, and no one deviates from it except the one who is doomed. He did not leave any good thing without pointing it out to his ummah, or any evil thing without warning them against it.

³²⁷ Sahih Bukhari

The Dajjaal is a human being who eats and drinks; though he will claim to be God, we must know that Allah is far above those characteristics. The Dajjaal will be one-eyed and ugly; Allah is not one-eyed, has no human form, and is the Most Beautiful. No one will ever see Allah until the Day of Judgment, but the Dajjaal lives on earth and will be seen by everyone when he emerges.

Supplications:

RasulAllah ﷺ taught us to recite various supplications to ask Allah for protection from the Dajjaal.

Umm al-Mu'mineen 'Aa'ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her), the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said that the Messenger of Allâh used to pray in his salaah:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجِيلِ، وَأَعُوذُ
بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ . اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْمَأْسِ وَالْمَغْرَمِ

“Allâhumma inni a'oodhu bika min 'adhaab al-qabri, wa a'oodhu
bika min fitnat il-maseeh il-dajjaal, wa a'oodhu bika min fitnat il-
mahyaa wa fitnat il-mamaat. Allâhumma inni a'oodhu bika min al-
ma'tham wa'l-maghram

*(O Allâh, I seek refuge with You from the torment of the grave, I seek
refuge with You from the fitnah of the Dajjaal, and I seek refuge with
You from the trials of life and death. O Allâh, I seek refuge with You
from sin and debt).³²⁸*

³²⁸ Sahih Bukhari

Abu Hurayrah (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: 'When any one of you says Tashahhud, let him seek refuge with Allāh from four things, and say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ، وَمِنْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمِ،
وَمِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمُخَيَا وَالْمُمَلَّاتِ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجِيلِ

"Allāhumma inni a'oodhi bika min 'adhaab jahannam wa min
'adhaab al-qabri wa min fitnat il-mahyaa wa'l-mamaat wa min sharri
fitnat al-maseeh al-dajjaal."

"O Allāh, I seek refuge with You from the torment of Hell, from the torment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the evil of the fitnah of the Dajjaal."³²⁹

MEMORIZING FROM SURAH AL-KAHF

The Prophet ﷺ commanded us to recite the first ten verses of Surah al-Kahf against the Dajjaal. Some narrations also mention the last ten verses.

"Whoever among you sees him (the Dajjaal), let him recite against him the opening verses of Surah al-Kahf."³³⁰

³²⁹ Sahih Muslim

³³⁰ Sahih Muslim

Abu'l-Dardaa' said that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever memorizes ten aayaat from the beginning of Surah al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjaal" Muslim said: "Shu'bah said, 'from the end of al-Kahf.' Hammaam said, 'from the beginning of al-Kahf.'"³³¹

An-Nawawi said: "The reason for this is because at the beginning of (this surah), mention is made of wonders and signs, and whoever ponders them will not be deceived by the fitnah of the Dajjaal. And at the end of this surah, Allâh says (interpretation of the meaning): {Do then those who disbelieve think that they can take My slaves as awliyaa' besides Me?} (Qur'an 18:102)"³³²

May Allah make us of those whose actions echo the Sunnah every day, whether in acts of worship or mundane activities, ameen.

³³¹ Sahih Muslim

³³² Sharh Saheeh Muslim, 6/93

CHAPTER - VI

FORGOTTEN SUNAN WITH FAMILY

PARENTS

Numerous books have been written on the topic of goodness to parents, and masaajid often echo with speeches and lectures about obedience to parents. Sadly, it still bears repeating – many Muslims do not give their parents what is due to them. There are those who may be fulfilling their daily acts of worship well, yet neglect their duties towards their parents.

Allâh says: {And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your mercy as they did bring me up when I was young."} (Qur'an 17:23)

It is obligatory upon every Muslim to be dutiful to their parents. The Qur'an emphasizes kindness and good treatment to parents in numerous verses, often linking it directly to worshiping Allah and obeying Him.

{And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents.} (46:15)

{And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents.} (29:8)

Shaykh al-Sa'di (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: *{be dutiful and kind to parents}* means: treat them kindly in all ways, in word and in deed.³³³

On the flip side, being disrespectful and disobedient to parents is a major sin.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Shall I not tell you of the greatest of major sins?" and repeated himself three times. The Companions answered, "Yes, O Messenger of Allāh." He said: "Associating others in worship with Allāh, and disobeying one's parents."³³⁴

Honouring our parents involves showing them love and respect; being patient with them; obeying them so long as it does not involve disobedience to the Creator; spending on them; making du'a for them; giving sadaqah on their behalf; and serving them in their old age.

³³³ Tafseer al-Sa'di, p. 524.

³³⁴ Agreed upon

BEST TREATMENT

What does it mean to show good treatment to our parents? The first thing we must do is ask ourselves, who do we show the best manners to? Who are we kindest and most considerate towards? Who do we show the most respect? It's common to see people going out of their way for their friends and colleagues, but don't extend the same behavior with their parents.

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'O Messenger of God! Who among the people is most worthy of my good companionship?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Your mother.' The man said, 'Then who?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Then your mother.' The man further asked, 'Then who?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Then your mother.' The man asked again, 'Then who?' The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Then your father.'³³⁵

Allah says: {We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents; in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth.} (Qur'an 46:15)

Indeed, a mother goes through a great deal of pain for her children, from birth to their adulthood. She experiences physical agony during pregnancy and childbirth, and emotional distress and difficulty as she dedicates decades of her life to raising them. No matter how many tantrums her children throw, or how sickly they get, or how exhausted she feels, a mother still does her best to fulfill her children's needs. It is due to this incredible sacrifice that Allah has elevated the status of mothers to such a high degree.

³³⁵ Agreed upon

PLEASING OUR PARENTS

It was narrated that ‘Abd-Allâh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘As (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “The Lord is pleased when the parents are pleased and He is angry when the parents are angry.”³³⁶

Many people are generous to anyone who shows them kindness or does them a favour even once or twice. How much more should we be grateful to our parents, who not only did everything they could to make us happy and provide us with the best, but also sacrificed their own comfort and well-being for ours?

We should be especially eager to please our parents, whether it is doing small things that make them happy – such as visiting them whenever we can or getting them gifts – but in other things that may seem like an inconvenience to us.

‘Abdullaah Ibn Mas’ood said: “I asked the Prophet ﷺ which deed is most beloved to Allâh. He ﷺ said: ‘Prayer offered on time.’ I asked him: ‘Then what?’ He ﷺ said: ‘Kindness and respect towards parents.’...”³³⁷

{And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], “uff,” and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.} (Qur'an 17:23)

³³⁶ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Hasan by Al-Albani. Also recorded in Adab Al Mufrad 2.

³³⁷ Agreed upon

The seriousness of dutifulness to parents can be seen in how Allah has immediately mentioned it after worshiping Him alone; and how the Messenger of Allah described it as the most beloved deed after praying on time. Thus, it can be said that obedience to parents is of such great importance that its status is similar to that of the first two pillars of Islam – tawheed and salah.

These enjoinders from the Qur'an and Sunnah should be more than enough to push us to strive to do our best towards our parents. Indeed, doing so is deserving of reward far greater than one would receive if we spent that same amount of time in other acts of worship.

Paradise can be earned by serving our parents, and attaining Allah's Pleasure and Paradise is the ultimate goal in our lives. Having been told what it is that will earn us Paradise, it is disgraceful for anyone to do the opposite.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "May his nose be rubbed in the dust, may his nose be rubbed in the dust, may his nose be rubbed in the dust." It was said: "Who, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ?" He said: "The one who lives to see his parents reach old age, one or both of them, and he does not enter Paradise because of them."³³⁸

³³⁸ Sahih Muslim

OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS AFTER DEATH

Even after one's parents have passed away, it is still possible to do good deeds that will be a source of reward and benefit.

Abu Usaid Malik bin Rabi'ah As-Sa'idi reported: We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when a man of Banu Salamah came to him and asked, "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ! Is there any obedience to parents left that I can show to them after their death?" He ﷺ replied, "Yes, to pray for them, to supplicate for their forgiveness, to fulfill their promises after their death, to maintain the ties of kinship which cannot be maintained except through them, and honour their friends."³³⁹

Showing love, respect, and obedience to parents doesn't end when they pass away. Rather, there are continuous ways to maintain this obligation, and continue earning Allah's Pleasure. Maintaining the ties of kinship and honouring their friends is a sunnah to combines several types of good deeds, and deserves particular attention. Visiting parents' friends (or hosting them as guests) carries its own reward for maintaining relationships for the Sake of Allah, and is even more praiseworthy when one is honouring them as elders.

³³⁹ Abu Dawud & Ibn Majah, classed as Hasan.

BEING GOOD WITH THE LOVED ONES (RELATIVES AND FRIENDS) OF ONE'S FATHER

It is commonly seen that people get along with the maternal family more than their paternal side but being good to the Father's relatives and loved ones is a very virtuous deed according to a Hadeeth in Sahih Muslim.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*The finest act of goodness is that a person should treat kindly the loved ones of his father.*"³⁴⁰

Being dutiful, patient, and loving towards one's parents is an obligation, and the Sunnah teaches us just what a high status it holds in our religion. Our treatment of our parents is a means of entering Jannah, which is our ultimate goal in life.

May Allah make us amongst those who are patient and are dutiful towards their parents.

SPOUSAL RELATIONSHPS

The marital bond is a beautiful one, which Allah describes as being a source of comfort and tranquility.

{And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find 186unnah186r186ty in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.} (Qur'an 30:21)

³⁴⁰ Sahih Muslim

{Good women are for good men, and good men for good women.}
(Qur'an 24:26)

Good spouses are a blessing from Allah, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The world is a provision, and the best provision in the world is a righteous woman."³⁴¹

There are many words of advice and recommendations from the Sunnah to ensure that one begins their marriage in the best way, and continues in the best way.

CHOOSING A RIGHTEOUS PARTNER

In many cultures, the choice of spouse is often dependent upon social status, wealth, or even just physical attractiveness. However, the Sunnah teaches us to look for a spouse whose primary qualities are good character and piety.

The Prophet ﷺ said, in the famous hadith: "*Women may be married for four things: their wealth, their lineage, their beauty and their religious commitment. Choose the one who is religiously-committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper).*"³⁴²

An-Nawawi (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: "The correct view concerning the meaning of this hadith is that the Prophet ﷺ spoke of what people usually do, for they seek these four characteristics, the

³⁴¹ Sahih Muslim

³⁴² Agreed upon

last of which in their view is religious commitment, but you who are seeking to follow the right way should seek the one who is religiously committed. This is not a command to do so... This hadith encourages us to seek the company of religiously-committed people in all things, because the one who keeps company with them will benefit from their good attitude and good ways, and will be safe from any bad influence from them.”³⁴³

The same applies for the husband; the basic principle is to seek a righteous person for marriage.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “If there comes to you one whose religious commitment and character pleases you, then marry [your female relative who is under your care] to him, for if you do not do that, there will be tribulation on earth and much corruption.”³⁴⁴

BEAUTIFYING ONESELF FOR YOUR SPOUSE

Jabir said, “So when we were about to enter the city, the Prophet ﷺ said to me, ‘Slow down, and enter at night, so that she who has not combed may comb her hair, and she who has not shaved may shave her private area.’ Then he said to me, ‘When you enter upon her, then be wise and gentle.’”³⁴⁵

In this hadith, we see that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ teaches spouses to groom themselves and beautify themselves physically in a way that makes them more attractive and desirable to their partners.

³⁴³ Sharh Muslim

³⁴⁴ Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani.

³⁴⁵ Agreed upon

This includes, in particular, grooming one's private areas; this includes washing carefully, and shaving (or removing in another manner) the pubic hair. This applies to both husbands and wives.

We also see from this hadith that the Sunnah is to be open and candid about matters of sexuality within marriage. Rather than stigmatizing it or making it seem like a shameful topic of conversation, it is instead encouraged in a beautiful manner.

It is important to note that beautifying oneself must be limited to that which is permissible. This means that one cannot pluck their eyebrows or undergo cosmetic surgery solely to enhance or alter one's physical features; tattoos are also impermissible. Regardless of whether one's spouse desires it, even if a husband specifically requests it, we are not allowed to disobey the Creator simply to please the creation.

Marriages are blessed when both partners strive to fulfill the Sunnah in the best way possible, and base their actions upon the guidance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

APPRECIATE THE GOOD

Abu Hurairah (May Allāh be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “A believer must not hate a believing woman (i.e., his wife); if he dislikes one of her traits he will be pleased with another.”³⁴⁶

Every person is not the same, and it is easy for spouses to become irritable with one another. RasulAllah encouraged the men of the Ummah in particular to remember and appreciate the good characteristics of their wives. While it’s normal for us to get annoyed or dislike certain qualities in our spouses, focusing on the positive will lead us to feeling more contentment and appreciation for them. We should always strive to thank Allah for the blessings He has given us in our spouses.

EXPRESS AFFECTION

Amr ibn al’Aas once asked the Prophet ﷺ, “Who do you love the most?” Expecting the answer to be his own name, Amr was shocked when the response was, instead, “A’ishah!”

Many men would feel embarrassed or even upset to mention their affection for their wives in front of other family members, let alone other men! They consider it to be unmanly and shameful – yet the greatest of all men, the most masculine of men, Muhammad ﷺ was proud to publicly declare his love for his wife.

³⁴⁶ Sahih Muslim

GESTURES OF AFFECTION

These are also very important. A'ishah said, "The Prophet ﷺ used to lean on my lap and recite Qur'an while I was menstruating."³⁴⁷

This hadith mentions several important points for married couples to keep in mind. It should be a common practice to spend time together in 'ebaadah; doing so is a source of barakah in the marriage, and increases love and respect for one another.

General acts of physical touch are comforting and increase the emotional bond between spouses. It is something which softens the hearts and brings partners closer together.

The narration is also an evidence that it is permissible for one to recline or lay down while reciting Qur'an, contrary to what many people believe culturally. It is also permissible for men to touch and be close to menstruating women, even while reciting Qur'an.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "*You will never spend anything seeking thereby the Face of Allāh, but you will be rewarded for it, even (the food) that you put in your wife's mouth.*"³⁴⁸

It was narrated from Shuraih that he asked 'A'ishah:

"Can a woman eat with her husband while she is menstruating? She said: 'Yes. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would call me to eat with him while I was menstruating. He would take a piece of bone on which some bits of meat were left and insist that I take it first, so I would nibble a little from it, then put it down. Then he would take it

³⁴⁷ Sahih Bukhari

³⁴⁸ Sahih Bukhari

and nibble from it, and he would put his mouth where mine had been on the bone. Then he would ask for a drink and insist that I take it first before he drank from it. So I would take it and drink from it, then put it down, then he would take it and drink from it, putting his mouth where mine had been on the cup.”³⁴⁹

These acts of tenderness are what engender deeper love, greater blessings, and even rewards from Allah.

HELPING IN HOUSE CHORE

‘Aa’ishah (may Allâh be pleased with her) was asked:

“What did the Prophet ﷺ do in his house?” She said: “He used to serve his family, then when the time for prayer came, he would go out to pray.”³⁵⁰

Unlike what many men think, doing chores and contributing to the household tasks is a sign of masculinity – it is the Sunnah of the greatest man who has ever lived.

³⁴⁹ An-Nasaa’i, Vol 1, Book 1, Hadith 280, classed as Sahih

³⁵⁰ Sahih Bukhari

SPENDING QUALITY TIME

'A'ishah said, "After finishing the (night) prayer, he used to look at me and if I was awake he would talk to me and if I was asleep, he would lie down."³⁵¹

She shared another beautiful story as well: While she was on a journey with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he invited her to race with him. Being young and swift on her feet, she outran him and won the race. Years later, when she had grown older and gained some weight, he raced with her again, and this time he won. He said to her, "This is for that!"³⁵²

These beautiful moments recorded in the ahadith show what an effort the Prophet ﷺ made to spend time with his wives in a meaningful manner.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allâh have mercy on him) was asked:

There are some young men – may Allâh guide them – who are committed to Islam but they do not treat their wives with kindness; they spend all their time doing many things that have to do with study and work, whilst leaving their wives on their own or with the children in the house for long hours on the grounds that they have work and study. What do you say about that; should study and work be at the expense of the wife's share of her husband's time?

He replied: There is no doubt that it is obligatory for husbands to treat their wives with kindness, because Allâh, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

³⁵¹ Sahih Bukhari

³⁵² Sunan Abi Dawud, classed as sahih by Abani

- {Live with them in accordance with what is fair and kind.} (an-Nisa' 4:19)
- {And they (women) have rights (over their husbands as regards living expenses, etc.) similar (to those of their husbands) over them (as regards obedience and respect, etc.) to what is reasonable, but men have a degree (of responsibility) over them. And Allâh is All-Mighty, All-Wise.} (al-Baqarah 2:228)

So what is prescribed for young men and others is to treat their wives with kindness, show compassion towards them and keep company with them according to what they are able to do; if it is possible for them to do some of their studying and work at home, then that is better so that they may spend some time in the company of their wives and children.

Whatever the case, what is prescribed is for the husband to devote some of his time to his wife so as to keep her company and show her kindness, especially if she is on her own in the house with no one else but her children or no one else at all.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The most perfect of the believers in faith are those who are best in attitude, and the best of you are those who are best to their womenfolk." And what is prescribed for the wife is to help her husband in his study and work and to be patient in putting up with unavoidable shortcomings that may occur, so as to achieve cooperation between them, acting in accordance with the words of Allâh: {Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety)} (al-Maa'idah 5:3) 353

³⁵³ Fataawa Islamiyyah, 3/289

WAKING THE SPOUSE FOR NIGHT PRAYER

Another way to spend a blessed amount of time with family is by waking them for *tahajjud*.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “May Allah have mercy on a man who wakes up at night, prays, and wakes his wife to pray; and if she refuses, he sprinkles water on her face. And may Allah have mercy on a woman who wakes up at night, prays, and wakes her husband to pray; and if he refuses, she sprinkles water on his face.”³⁵⁴

INTIMACY

Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allâh have mercy on him) says:

“Concerning sexual relations, the Prophet ﷺ brought the most perfect guidance, whereby health may be preserved and people may find pleasure and enjoyment, and it may fulfil the purpose for which it was created, because sex was created for a few basic purposes:

1. The preservation and propagation of the human race, until they reach the number of souls that Allâh has decreed should be created in this world.
2. Fulfilling physical desires and enjoying physical pleasure. This alone is the feature that will be present in Paradise, because there will be no producing of offspring there, and no retention which needs to be relieved by ejaculation.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Abu Daawood, An-Nisaa’I & Ibn Majah, classed as sahih by Albani

³⁵⁵ Zaad al-Ma’aad

Many people do not associate physical intimacy with religiosity; indeed, many people consider the two things to be completely separate. There are those who consider sexual relations to be 'bad,' 'dirty' and so on, not realizing that the Sunnah of RasulAllah ﷺ emphasizes the opposite – so long as that intimacy is taking place within marriage.

He ﷺ said: "*In the sexual intercourse of any one of you (with your spouse) there is reward.*" They said, O Mesenger of Allâh, when any one of us fulfils his desire, will he have a reward for that? He ﷺ said: "*Do you not see that if he were to do it in a 196unna manner, he would be punished for that? So if he does it in a halaal manner, he will be rewarded.*"³⁵⁶

This is a truly balanced and positive attitude to have, and one which Muslims need to reclaim.

DU'A BEFORE INTERCOURSE

Ibn 'Abbas reported that the Messenger ﷺ said: "When one of you wants to approach his wife, he should say (this below supplication). If it is then decreed that they have a child (from that intercourse), Satan will never harm it."

³⁵⁶ Sahih Muslim

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ، وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْنَا

Bismillah, Allâhumma jannibnash-Shaytan, wa jannib ash-Shaytana
ma razaqtana

*In the Name of Allâh, O Allâh, keep Satan away from us, and keep
him away from what You grant us*

DOING WUDHU BETWEEN ENCOUNTERS

The Prophet ﷺ said, “If one of you approaches his wife, and then wishes to repeat (intimacy), let him do wudhu, for it will make the recurrence more energetic.”³⁵⁷

Here, the Prophet ﷺ gives frank advice and encourages healthy intimacy between spouses. Doing wudhu in between sexual encounters is a way of encouraging further intimacy. Not only is it beneficial for men, but it is also excellent for women, who may not have been fulfilled during the first interaction.

³⁵⁷ Muslim & Abu Dawud

GENERAL INTIMACY

A’isha (Allâh be pleased with her) said: “The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ would kiss me before leaving for prayers, and he would not perform an ablution.”³⁵⁸

This hadith illustrates that kissing is an act of intimacy not restricted solely to the context of sexual relations; rather, it is also an act of tenderness and affection that can and should be practiced throughout the day. It is a means of emotional bonding and closeness, and something which the Prophet used to regularly. As well, this hadith teaches us that kissing does not break wudhu, unless there is emission due to sexual arousal.

As we can see, these and other narrations clearly encourage fulfilling intimate relations with one’s spouse. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ found comfort in his wives and enjoyed spending time with them; indeed, he mentioned that women are one of the most beloved aspects of the dunya.

Thus, we see that Islam does not view sexual intimacy and romantic relationships as evil and negative, but as a pure and encouraged within marriage. This, coupled with righteousness and piety, is one of the many blessings of Allah.

³⁵⁸ At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, An-Nisaa’I & Ibn Majah, classed as sahih by Albani

CHILDREN

Children can be the best of blessings, or the worst of trials (may Allāh save us from that). They are an asset which, if not taken care of properly, will become a liability. Parents are obligated to raise and educate their children, not only to benefit them in this world, but to protect them in the Hereafter.

Allāh says: {O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allāh, but do that which they are commanded.} (Qur'an 66:6)

Al-Qurtubi commented on this verse: "Muqaatil said: This is a duty that he owes to himself, his children, his family and his male and female slaves.

Ilkiya said: We have to teach our children and families religious commitment and goodness, and what they cannot do without of etiquette."³⁵⁹

The blessings of righteous children are many; they are a major source of Sadaqah Jaariya (ongoing deeds/rewards) for us, they can raise us in rank after our death, can free us from vows and debts that we left unfulfilled, and much more.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "When a person dies, all his deeds come to an end except three: sadaqah jaariyah (ongoing charity, e.g. a waqf or

³⁵⁹ Tafseer al-Qurtubi, 18/196

endowment), beneficial knowledge (which he has left behind), or a righteous child who will pray for him."³⁶⁰

He ﷺ also said: "A man's status will be raised in Paradise and he will ask, 'How did I get here?' He will be told, 'By your son's prayers for forgiveness for you.'"³⁶¹

Abu Hurayrah reported that a man said to the Prophet ﷺ: "My father has died and left money behind. He did not make a wasiyyah (a will); will it expiate for his sins if I give some of it in charity on his behalf?" He said, "Yes."³⁶²

These benefits of having righteous children will only come about if we put in the effort to raise our children to become the type of people to do these virtuous actions. In order to raise them correctly, we must practice the many sunan of training our children to become individuals of piety and good deeds.

FORGOTTEN SUNAN WITH CHILDREN

PRAYING FOR CHILDREN'S GUIDANCE

Not every righteous parent will have righteous children. While we all want the best for our children, sometimes we forget to focus on the most obvious priority – the spiritual well-being of the children. Many of us make du'a for our children's futures, asking Allah to make our children doctors, lawyers, or engineers; to become wealthy and have high social status. While this is permissible, the first and most

³⁶⁰ Sahih Muslim, At-Tirmidhi & An-Nisa'i

³⁶¹ Ibn Maajah, classed as hasan by Albani.

³⁶² al-Nisa'i, classed as sahih.

important thing we should be asking Allah for is that our children be guided to Islam and live their lives as pious, righteous Muslims.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "*Three prayers are undoubtedly answered: the prayer of one who is wronged, the prayer of the traveler & the prayer of a father for his child.*"³⁶³

It was the habit of all the Prophets to pray for righteous offspring, and it is a Sunnah which we should all be particularly keen on following.

DISCIPLINE WITH REGARDS TO RELIGIOUS DUTIES

It is very unfortunate that today, few Muslim parents correctly prioritize when disciplining their children. While great emphasis is given to secular, worldly matters such as school and work, many excuses are made to justify slacking in religious education and maintaining religious duties.

Whereas parents will enforce strict rules in order for their children to get up for school on time, they will make excuses to not wake them up for Fajr; while they may express anger and disapproval over poor grades, they will allow missed prayers and fasts without a word.

Neglecting our children's spiritual affairs while focused on worldly matters will not benefit them either in this world or the Hereafter; rather, the lack of religious awareness and practice will in fact impact the blessings of their worldly affairs. When parents are the ones who

³⁶³ Ibn Maajah; classed as saheeh by Albani

are responsible for their children's education in every sense, how can we blame the children for not having a sense of connection to Allah or obeying Him as He deserves?

If we want a good life for ourselves and our children, we must follow the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ. There is no better way for us to live, and no better way to guarantee a good death and an even better Afterlife.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Teach your children to pray when they are seven years old, and smack them (lightly) if they do not do so when they are ten, and separate them in their beds."³⁶⁴

Shaikhul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullaah) said, "Whoever has a child or a servant or an orphan in his care and yet he does not order them with the prayer, then it is the adult who is punished if he does not teach and command the young one – so he is rebuked and censured severely because he has disobeyed Allâh and His messenger."

Ibnul-Qayyim (rahimahullaah) stated, "Whoever pays no attention to teaching his child that which will benefit him and he leaves him to waste away without care, then he is extremely sinful. Most children are corrupted (and led to failure) due to their parents. They pay no attention to them and leave off teaching them the obligations of the religion and the Sunan. So they ruin them whilst they are still children. And they (the children) are not able to benefit themselves and their parents do not benefit them."³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Abu Dawood, classed as Sahih by Albani

³⁶⁵ Tuhfatul-Mawdood fee Ahkaamil-Mawlood, p.80

The ‘smacking’ mentioned by RasulAllah as a means of discipline is not violent beating, but a gentle swat that is meant to impart the seriousness of the matter.

- Do not hit hard or in a manner that causes harm or injury. Do not strike the child in a place that is especially dangerous, such as the stomach or kidneys.
- Never hit their faces. It is prohibited to strike anyone in the face. The Prophet ﷺ saw a man slap a slave (or a boy) in the face, and he said, “Do you not know that the face is sacred?”³⁶⁶

He ﷺ also said, “When any one of you fights, let him avoid (striking) the face.”³⁶⁷

Rather, if one is going to lightly smack a child, it should be on the hands, shoulders, or legs.

- It is prohibited to beat children out of anger and a desire to punish, rather than to discipline them for serious reasons.
- Do not get carried away and beat the child for a prolonged period of time. It is prohibited to strike someone more than ten times.

It was narrated from Abu Bardah al-Ansari that he heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ say: “No one should be given more

³⁶⁶ Sahih Muslim

³⁶⁷ Sahih Bukhari

than ten lashes except in the case of one of the 204 unpunishments of Allâh.”³⁶⁸

Some scholars noted that this form of discipline is not just for prayers, but for various other Islamic obligations as well. Remember that this should not be the first recourse, but as a stern method to be utilized only when necessary.

May Allah make us of those who raise our children to be a source of benefit in both this world and the next, and of those who are a Sadaqah Jaariyah to their parents.

RECITING DU'A OF PROTECTION

Jealousy, the evil eye, and black magic are all very real phenomena; unfortunately, due to lack of knowledge, many people adopt unIslamic practices to defend themselves. Some people turn to amulets (also known as *ta'weez*), turning to “saints” and so on. However, all these practices have aspects of shirk and kufr, by relying on other than Allah for protection and engaging in behavior that contradicts the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Instead, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught us how best to protect ourselves, in the best of ways.

Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: The Prophet ﷺ used to seek refuge with Allâh for al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and he said: “Your father (Ibraaheem) used to seek refuge with (these words) for Ismaa‘eel and Is’haaq:

³⁶⁸ Agreed upon

أَعِذْنَا بِكُلِّ كَوْكَبٍ إِلَّا هُوَ أَنَا
أَعِذْنَا بِكُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ وَهَامَةٍ وَمَنْ كُلِّ عَيْنٍ لَمَّا

A'oodhu bi kalimaat Illaahi't-taammah min kulli shaytaanin wa
haammah wa min kulli 'aynin laammah.

*(I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allâh from every devil and
every vermin, and from every bad eye.)*³⁶⁹

In addition, the Mu'awwadatayn (Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Naas), in addition to Surah al-Ikhlaas, are powerful forms of ruqya and protection against 'ayn (evil eye), hasad (jealousy), and sihr (magic). The Prophet used to seek refuge in Allah from all forms of evil and harm by reciting these verses for himself and others.

It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah said: "When the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ went to his bed, he would blow into his hands after reciting Qul Huwa Allâhu Ahad (Surah al-Ikhlaas) and the Mu'aawidhatayn, then he would wipe his face and whatever he could reach of his body with his hands. 'Aa'ishah said: And when he fell sick, he would tell me to do that for him."³⁷⁰

*May Allâh protect us and our children from all harm and evil; verily,
Allâh has power over all.*

³⁶⁹ Sahih Bukhari

³⁷⁰ Sahi Bukhari

BEING PLEASED WITH HAVING DAUGHTERS

An aspect of Jahiliyyah (ignorance) that remains in many cultures and societies is that people become upset when they have daughters. Women are looked down upon by their in-laws for not giving birth to sons, and mothers feel as though they are a failure for not producing more male children. Men become angry that they have daughters, feeling as though their lineage will not continue unless they have sons. Yet to the contrary of this attitude, Islam gives glad tidings to the parents – and specifically, to the fathers – of those with daughters.

The Prophet ﷺ has affirmed: "The man who raises three daughters or three sisters, educates them and teaches them good manners and behaves kindly towards them till they become independent of his care by the will of Allâh, is entitled by Allâh to enter Paradise." Thereupon a person asked: "What if they have only two daughters or two sisters?" The Prophet ﷺ affirmed: "The same reward will be given for similar conduct towards two daughters or two sisters."³⁷¹

The Sunnah teaches us to be grateful for having daughters, and to recognize the blessings therein.

BEING TACTFUL WITH THE SON-IN-LAW

In many cultures, the relationship between parents-in-law and their sons-in-law (as well as their daughters-in-law) is awkward and

³⁷¹ Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh, also by Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani

uncomfortable, or overly involved and nosy. The parents will try to get involved in the details of their children's marriages, often resulting in greater conflict and discomfort.

Sahl ibn Sa'd narrated that the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ came to the house of Fatimah, and he did not find 'Ali in the house. He said to her, "Where is your cousin (i.e. Ali)?"

She said: "There was an argument between us, and we became angry, so he left and did not take his afternoon nap here in the house."

The Prophet of Allâh ﷺ told a man to look for him, and the man came back and said that 'Ali was sleeping in the mosque.

RasulAllah ﷺ then went to him while he was lying down, and noticed that his upper garment had fallen on his side, and some of the dirt from the floor was on him. Smilingly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began to dust the dirt off his clothing, saying, "Get up, Abu Turaab (Father of Dust)!"³⁷²

Ibn Hajar said: "From the benefits of this narration is that it is wise to humor the husband of one's daughter and calm his anger if they (the couple) have a disagreement." ³⁷³

In this anecdote, we notice that RasulAllah ﷺ did not pry for details or ask for information regarding the marital spat between Ali and Fatimah. Instead, he went to his son-in-law and used humour to try and ease the situation, without delving into the fight or trying to get involved in figuring out who was to blame.

³⁷² Sahih Bukhari

³⁷³ Fath Al Baari 536/1

It is from the Sunnah for parents to be respectful of their children's marriages, and not to interfere without necessity.

In conclusion, we are to remember that we are responsible for our flocks – our families – and we will be questioned about them on the Day of Judgment.

As the Prophet ﷺ said: "Allâh will ask every shepherd (or responsible person) about his flock (those for whom he was responsible), whether he took care of it or neglected it, until He asks a man about his household."³⁷⁴

He ﷺ also said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. The ruler of the people is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. A man is the shepherd of his household and is responsible for his flock. A woman is the shepherd of her husband's house and children and is responsible for her flock. The slave is the shepherd of his master's wealth and is responsible for it. Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock."³⁷⁵

It is our obligation as parents to teach them the Sunnah, to make them love the Deen, and above all, to constantly make du'a for them. All guidance is truly from Allah.

May Allah give Hidayah to all parents, to be able apply the Beautiful Sunan and may Allah guide our children to the right path and keep them steadfast.

³⁷⁴ al-Nisa'i & Ibn Habban, classed as sahih by Albani

³⁷⁵ Agreed upon

FORGOTTEN SUNNAN WITH RELATIVES

Upholding the ties of kinship is an obligation, unanimously agreed upon by the scholars; on the flip side, severing the ties of kinship is considered a major sin. Unfortunately, it is a major sin that many people don't realize the severity of, and engage in regularly.

There are parents who command their children to stop talking to their aunts or uncles; we see children who disrespect their elders and abandon their parents in their old age. The importance of maintaining positive relationships with extended relatives has been forgotten, despite the fact that the Qur'an and Sunnah are filled with numerous commands to do so.

{... and fear Allaah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship)...}
(Qur'an 4:1)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: 'Allaah created the universe, and when He had finished, kinship (al-rahm) stood up and said, 'This is the standing up of one who seeks Your protection from being cut off.'

Allaah said, 'Yes, would it please you if I were to take care of those who take care of you and cut off those who cut you off?'

It said, 'Of course.'

Allaah said, 'Then your prayer is granted.'

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Recite, if you wish: {Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties

of kinship? Such are they whom Allaah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.}' (Qur'an 47:22-23)"³⁷⁶

It is deeply sorrowful that we see hatred, enmity, competition in worldly matters, and jealousy between close and distant family members. On the other hand, the Sunnah teaches us to have love and compassion with one another; to have good manners with one another; to give gifts and spend on one another.

BEING KIND & HELPFUL

It is a catastrophe in and of itself that being kind to one's family members is a forgotten 210unnah. We see young men and women being more than willing to help their friends or their colleagues but do everything to escape a situation where they would be expected to help a relative. We see youth trying to avoid their relatives when they see them outside, when they should be rushing to greet them and seeing if they can be of assistance in any way.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever would like his *rizq* (provision) to be increased and his life to be extended, should uphold the ties of kinship."³⁷⁷

Monetary provision and long life are two things which people strive for and put a great deal of effort into attaining – and here, RasulAllah ﷺ is telling us that the simplest way of attaining both is by maintaining the ties of kinship.

³⁷⁶ Sahih Muslim bi Sharh an-Nawawi, 16/112.

³⁷⁷ Agreed upon

One way of thinking about this is that if people are harsh with one another or fight for an extended period of time, the negativity eventually affects people's health for the worse; on the other hand, maintaining positive relationships increases people's happiness and physical well-being.

Being helpful to one another doesn't always mean being charitable in a financial sense. Rather, it includes visiting one another, helping one another at work or with business, or even reaching out to them and encouraging them to be better Muslims.

There are so many benefits to having positive relationships with one's family, yet it is also very common to find people who have cut off their relatives for years.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned us, "Whoever violates the rights of kinship shall not go Heaven."³⁷⁸

As Muslims, we are forbidden from forsaking a fellow Muslim for more than three days. The Prophet ﷺ said: "It is not permissible for a man to forsake his Muslim brother for more than three days, each of them turning away from the other when they meet. The better of them is the one who gives the greeting of salaam first."³⁷⁹

This prohibition is even more severe when that Muslim is a relative, such as a sibling, niece or nephew, aunt or uncle, and so on.

May Allah protect us from being of those who violate the rights of kinship, and open our hearts towards our relatives.

³⁷⁸ Agreed upon

³⁷⁹ Agreed upon

CHARITY TO POOR RELATIVES

To be able to be charitable to poor relatives, it is essential that we first hold good ties with them so we know their needs. In a time when many people look down on those who, even within the same family, do not have the same level of wealth, it is important for us to do our best to change these attitudes.

As Muslims, we know the emphasis that Islam has placed on charity. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Charity towards a poor person is charity, and towards a relation is both charity and maintaining the ties (of kinship).”³⁸⁰

Relatives have the first right to our charity, and it can be a means of earning extra reward.

BEING GOOD TO THOSE WHO CUT YOU OFF

Everyone deserves our good treatment. Why is it that when friends are rude or do something wrong, we are willing to forgive them and move on, but when family members upset us, we hold grudges for years?

The true test of maintaining ties of kinship is when we are faced with relatives who do not treat us with the same kindness that we show them. Being good to those who are good to us is not evidence of being a good person – it is something commonly done with strangers as well as friends.

³⁸⁰ At-Tirmidhi & An-Nisaa’l, classed as sahih by Albani

It is related by Abdullah bin Umar that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "One does not fulfill the claim of maintaining ties of kinship, who shows kindness to relatives in return for the kindness shown to them (by them). The person who truly fulfills the claim is the one who treats their relatives well (and does this duty) even when they are mean and unjust to them."³⁸¹

This hadith emphasizes how the true nature of one's sincerity and dedication is not in how easy a deed is to accomplish, but in how well one maintains it even and especially when it is difficult to do so. Even though it seems as though we are being expected to behave like angels, the truth is that we are simply being told how it is we will earn Allah's Pleasure.

We have been given glad tidings of great rewards as a motivation to doing the right thing for the Sake of Allah, and we have been provided with the best role model to teach us how to conduct ourselves in all situations.

A man said to RasulAllâh ﷺ: "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I have relatives with whom I maintain ties of relations, yet they cut-off from me. I treat them kindly, yet they treat me in an evil manner. And I am forbearing and patient with them, yet they behave rudely and ignorantly towards me." The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "If the situation is as you say, then it is as if you are filling their mouths with sand. And Allâh will continue to aid and support you as long as you continue doing what you are doing."³⁸²

May Allâh soften our hearts to our relatives, and make us of those guided to do good even when others treat us badly, ameen.

³⁸¹ Sahih Bukhari

³⁸² Sahih Muslim

CHAPTER – VII

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF SOCIETY

Islam is not a religion of individualism, or restricted to the private sphere of the home; rather, Islam is meant to be practiced at a societal level. Zakah, which is an obligation upon all Muslims who are eligible to pay it, is an example of Islam's focus on society. The Qur'an commands us to "enjoin the good and forbid the evil," which extends to the public sphere in particular; it is an ordinance which is meant to purify society at large. Numerous other actions that we have been recommended to perform, such as giving sadaqah, taking care of orphans and widows, and feeding the poor are all things which are intended to ensure social welfare of society. Not only do these deeds help others, but they are a source of great reward in the Hereafter.

The importance of living in and maintaining a pure, healthy society can be seen in the hadith where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*I disown every Muslim who settles among the mushrikeen.*"³⁸³

Obviously, not every Muslim deliberately chooses to live in a nonMuslim land; many of us are born and raised in nonMuslim countries, or are converts. However, insomuch as is possible, one should seek to move to a Muslim society, or at least have the intention of doing so at some point in their lives.

³⁸³ Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

While no Muslim society is perfect, a predominantly Muslim country is generally a place where it is easier to practice Islam. Having masaajid everywhere, hearing the adhaan regularly, having the structure of the day shaped by the salah times and Ramadan as well, are all examples of how a Muslim society can influence us to be more conscientious Muslims. Simply by virtue of being in an environment of normalized religiosity, we will integrate more spiritual habits into our lives.

To create a healthy, holistic society, we are commanded to build a solid foundation by fulfilling the rights of our family members, our neighbours, and even complete strangers. We are taught to be united, to be a source of strength and support for one another, to empathize with each others' pain, to eliminate corruption and to end racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination against one another.

Only by upholding the true values and morals of Islam will we be able to benefit not just ourselves and our immediate circles, but all of society.

UNITY

A united Ummah may seem something difficult to accomplish, but unity is an important aspect of our Deen when it comes to how we are meant to function as a global community of believers.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

*"The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever."*³⁸⁴

Despite our differences – whether in fiqh, politics, culture, and more – the basic unity that Muslims share is one based on faith in Allah and obedience to Him. Salah and Hajj are prime examples of how Islam brings us all together. No matter our race or social status or wealth, we all stand together and worship together; in Hajj, we are dressed identically, and no one can identify a king from a pauper.

{And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.} (Qur'an 3:103)

Islam doesn't just urge us to be united it has shown ways to achieve unity.

³⁸⁴ Agreed upon

1. **Worship Allah Alone:** There is no way the Ummah can be united until they come under the shade of Tawheed and they worship Allah alone.
2. **Follow the Sunnah:** The first is to follow the Sunnah in its entirety without leaving anything or adding anything to it.
3. **Adhere to the Jama':** The group which follows Quran & Sunnah on the way of the Sahaba.

Apart from these three core conditions laid for us to achieve unity, there are other advices from the Sunnah. Here we will be looking at the forgotten Sunnan of society that strengthens it and help us stand united.

SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “The relationship of the believer with another believer is like (the bricks of) a building, each strengthens the other.” He ﷺ illustrated this by interlacing the fingers of both his hands.³⁸⁵

Just as bricks are laid and cemented together to provide a strong structure, so too should Muslims be a source of support and strength to one another. We should not be competing with one another in worldly things, but rather, racing to assist one another in both this world and the Hereafter.

³⁸⁵ Agreed upon

{... And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.} (Qur'an 5:2)

We know that for every good deed we do, we will be given a proportionate reward, but what about the assistance that we provide to others? When we do something to help someone else do good, we in turn receive a reward for the good that we were able to facilitate.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever helps ease someone in difficulty, Allâh will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter... Allâh helps the servant as long as he helps his brother...”³⁸⁶

When we are promised of help by Allâh Himself, why on earth are we still not helping each other? How are we not running to help each other and make each other stronger? Who could be a better helper than Allâh? Is that not what we all crave for, the Help of Allâh?

As Muslims, we become stronger and better when we unite for the Sake of Allah’s Pleasure.

STANDING IN PRAYER

Although this is technically related to the rulings of prayer, it is also an important aspect of unity. Standing foot to foot in prayer, in a straight line is a deeply meaningful act which the Prophet strongly emphasized. It is sad to see many people rejecting this sunnah, despite the many narrations that enjoin us to stand together. We not

³⁸⁶ Sahih Muslim

just fail to do what the Prophet ﷺ has recommended us to do (Stand Toe to Toe), but also some of us have the audacity to actually resist following this Sunnah, so much so that people get irritated when someone tries to guide them to straighten the line. Similarly we see that when one touches the toe of another there are people who get offended by this and aggressively move their feet away with a frown on their faces. The Prophet advised us to not resist the hand of the Brother who tries to straighten the line.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*Make your rows straight, stand shoulder to shoulder and close the gaps, and do not resist your brothers' hands. Do not leave any gaps for the Shaytaan. Whoever complete a row, Allâh will reward him, and whoever breaks a row, Allâh will forsake him.*”³⁸⁷

Abu Dawood said: What is meant by “*Do not resist your brothers' hands*” is that someone should be easy-going if their Muslim brother or forward pushes them forwards or backwards to make the row straight.³⁸⁸

Anas ibn Maalik came to Madinah and it was said to him: What do you find has changed in us since the time of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ? He said: “*I do not find anything except that you do not straighten your rows.*”³⁸⁹

If we understood the meaning and beauty behind this sunnah, we would be eager to fulfill it and love to stand together, shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot.

³⁸⁷ Abu Dawood & al-Nasaa'i, classed as sahih by Albani

³⁸⁸ Awn al-Ma'bood

³⁸⁹ Sahih Bukhari

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

It is truly sad to see how much of the Ummah has abandoned the fulfilling of their neighbours' rights. Many of us are so insular and self-centered that we don't even know our neighbours' names, let alone know them well enough to be able to offer assistance when it is needed. Some people even avoid greeting one another due to race or social status; they fight each other over petty matters like parking spots.

However, in Islam, Allah has given neighbours an extremely high status in terms of how they are to be treated.

{Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.} (Qur'an 4:36)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Jibreel continued to advise me to treat neighbors well until I thought he would make them my heirs." 390

Along with the command to do good towards our neighbours, we are also warned against inflicting any harm against them – whether by annoying them with our actions, or treating them badly in another way.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He will not enter Paradise from whose harm his neighbour is not safe."391 In another narration, he

³⁹⁰ Agreed upon

³⁹¹ Sahih Muslim

سُلَيْمَان said: "Whoever believes in Allâh and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour."³⁹²

The scholars have said that the rights of the neighbours are to be greeted, to be visited when sick, to have food shared with them, to be offered condolences when calamity befalls, being congratulated during occasions of joy, to have their mistakes and flaws overlooked, and to be guided to that which will benefit them in both religious and worldly affairs.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best of companions with Allâh is the one who is best to his companion, and the best of neighbours with Him is the one who is best to his neighbour."³⁹³

May Allah make us amongst those who uphold the rights of our neighbours.

LOVING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLÂH

The concept of loving people for the sake of Allah is one which is rarely understood or practiced today. Indeed, the very idea of it seems strange; more people hold onto feelings of resentment and bitterness and other negative emotions towards one another. To truly love others for the sake of Allah, we must first learn to let go of those feelings, and thereby discover the the sweetness of this great deed.

³⁹² Agreed upon

³⁹³ Narrated by al-Bukhari in al-Adab al-Mufrad, 115

BENEFITS & REWARDS OF LOVING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

It's a means to Taste the Sweetness of True Faith

Indeed, learning how to love others for the Sake of Allah is a means of experiencing true faith.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Whoever would like to taste the sweetness of Eeman, then let them love a person – not loving them except for Allâh’s sake.”³⁹⁴

He also said: “By the one in whose hands is my soul! None of you can enter Jannah until you believe and none of you can believe until you love each other for Allah’s sake.”³⁹⁵

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “There are three characteristics that if a person has them, he will taste the sweetness of Eeman (faith)... [of them is] to love another only for the sake of Allâh.”³⁹⁶

And He ﷺ also said, “Verily the strongest handhold of faith is that you love for the sake of Allah and that you hate for the sake of Allah.”³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ Ahmad & al-Haakim, Al Hakim said its Isnaad is hasan

³⁹⁵ Sahih Muslim

³⁹⁶ Agreed upon

³⁹⁷ Ahmad, Ibn Abee Shaybah; hasan due to supporting narrations.

Allah's Love and Protection

In addition to experiencing true faith, another benefit of loving others for the Sake of Allah is earning Allah's Protection. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to refer to Allah as "arRafeeq al-A'laa" – The Sublime Companion.

Ibn 'Abbaas (radiAllâhu 'anhuma) said: "Whoever loves for the sake of Allâh, and hates for the sake of Allâh, and befriends for the sake of Allâh, and shows enmity for the sake of Allâh, will earn the Protection of Allah. Without abiding by this, no one can experience the real taste (sweetness) of Eeman, though they may have been a frequent offerer of prayer (Salah) and fasts. Today, people keep relationships and love only for some wordly reason, but this will not provide them any benefit (on the Day of Judgement)."398

As well as earning Allah's Protection, loving others for the Sake of Allah is a means of incurring His Love as well.

Abu Hurairah (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said,

"A man set out to visit a brother (in Faith) in another town and Allâh sent an angel on his way. When the man met the angel, the latter asked him, "Where do you intend to go?" He said, "I intend to visit my brother in this town". The angel said, "Have you done any favour to him?" He said, "No, I have no desire except to visit him because I love him for the sake of Allâh, the Exalted, and Glorious." Thereupon

³⁹⁸ Ibn Jarir

the angel said, "I am a messenger to you from Allâh (to inform you) that Allâh loves you as you love him (for His sake)."399

The Prophet ﷺ also said, "*Allâh, the Exalted, says: My love is due to those who love one another for My sake, meet one another for My sake, visit one another for My sake and spend in charity for My sake.*"⁴⁰⁰

Shade on the Day of Judgment

Loving someone for the Sake of Allah carries with it with something even more beneficial – becoming of those who will be shaded on the Day of Judgement. On that Day, the sun will be extremely close to people, such that they will be drowning in their sweat. On that Day, there will be no shade or protection provided except that which is provided by Allah.

Abu Hurairah (may Allâh be pleased with him) relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Allâh will ask on the Day of Judgment: "Where are those who loved each other for the sake of My glory? Today, on a day when there is no shade but Mine, I shall shade them with My shade."*"⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ Sahih Muslim

⁴⁰⁰ Ahmad, classed as sahih by Albani.

⁴⁰¹ Sahih Muslim

Raised Position in the Hereafter

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: Allâh, The Mighty and Majestic, says: '*Those who have mutual love for the sake of My Glory will have pillars (seats) of light and will be envied by the Prophets and martyrs.*'⁴⁰²

Imagine being amongst this group of people! Imagine being gathered with the ones you truly loved for Allah's Sake; imagine being honoured in such a way; and imagine being elevated in such a way that even the most beloved of people to Allah – His Prophets and the martyrs – are envious!

May Allah make us amongst those who love each one another for His Sake, ameen!

TELL SOMEONE THAT YOU LOVE THEM

It is from the Sunnah that when one of us loves someone else, for the Sake of Allah, we should not hide it from them. Rather, we should be open about it, knowing that sharing these bonds of love for the Sake of Allah is a beautiful thing to do. It is unfortunate that many of us have internalized the feeling that talking about platonic or spiritual love is awkward or embarrassing.

Abu Karimah Al-Miqdad bin Ma'dikarib (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "When a person loves their

⁴⁰² At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

brother or sister (for Allāh's Sake), let them tell them that they love them.”⁴⁰³

When was the last time we told someone that we love them for the Sake of Allah? Whether it is spouses or parents, siblings or good friends, or even a stranger at the masjid, very few of us practice the sunnah of expressing our love. Islam is unique in that not only are we encouraged to do good deeds in terms of actions, but that even sharing our positive emotions is something that is seen as a virtuous act.

Abu Dawood recorded that Anas bin Malik (May Allāh be pleased with him) reported:

A man was with the Prophet ﷺ when another man passed by and the former said: “O Messenger of Allāh! I love this man (for Allāh’s sake).” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ asked, “Have you informed him of this?” He said, “No.”

The Prophet ﷺ then said, “Tell him (that you love him).” So he went up to the man and said to him, “I love you for the sake of Allāh.” And the other replied, “May Allāh, for Whose sake you love me, love you.” ⁴⁰⁴

In some reports of the hadith it says: “Tell him, for it will strengthen the love between you.”⁴⁰⁵

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allāh have mercy on him) said: That is because this word will instill love in his heart, because if a person

⁴⁰³ At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud, classed as hasan by Albani.

⁴⁰⁴ Abu Dawood, classed as Hasan by Albani.

⁴⁰⁵ Narrated by Ibn Abi'l-Dunya in al-Ikhwaan (69)

knows that you love him, he will love you. [This is] even though hearts may recognize and love one another without actually speaking, as the Prophet ﷺ said: “Souls are like conscripted soldiers; those whom they recognize, they get along with, and those whom they do not recognize, they will not get along with.” But if a person says it with his tongue, this will increase the love in the heart, so you should say: “I love you for the sake of Allâh.”⁴⁰⁶

We see here that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ strongly encouraged his Companions to share their love for one another. We also discover from this narration how one should respond to someone who tells you that they love you for the Sake of Allah: “*AhabbakAllahu allathee ahababtani feeh.*” “May the One for Whose sake you love me, love you.”

It was also the habit of RasulAllah to share his love for someone before giving them sincere advice. The wisdom behind this was to soften their hearts and make them more inclined to remember and practise the advice being given.

Mu’adh ibn Jabal reported: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ held my hand and said, “O Mu’adh! By Allâh, I love you and advise you not to miss supplicating after every prayer saying:

‘*Allâhumma a’inni ‘ala dhikrika wa shukrika, wa husni
’ibadatika.*’

‘*O Allâh, help me remember You, expressing gratitude to
You & worship You in the best manner.*’”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Sharh Riyad al-Saaliheen

⁴⁰⁷ Abu Dawud & Nisaa’I, classed as sahih by Albani

THE BONDS OF FAITH

Islam places strong emphasis on the bonds of faith between Muslims. The seerah (biography) of RasulAllah ﷺ is filled with stories and examples of true brotherhood and sisterhood in Islam; indeed, these bonds were imperative in the development and growth of Islam itself.

Allâh says: {And obey Allâh and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and be patient. Surely, Allâh is with those who are As-Saabiroon (the patient).} (Qur'an 8:46)

When we lose our sense of brotherhood and sisterhood, we lose much of our strength as an Ummah. When that happens, we become weak and struggle to uphold our Deen on a global scale. It is important for us to know the many ways in which we can grow closer together, strengthen our bonds, and subsequently grow to become a better Muslim community.

Want for your fellow Muslim what you want for yourself.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "None of you shall become a true believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself."⁴⁰⁸ Truly, sincerely wishing goodness for your fellow Muslim – just as you want goodness for yourself, in this world and the Hereafter – is a sign of true belief.

⁴⁰⁸ Agreed upon

Fulfill their rights

RasulAllah ﷺ said: "A Muslim has six rights over another Muslim." The people asked, "What are they, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ?" He responded, "When you meet them, greet them with peace; when they invite you, accept their invitation; when they seek your advice, advise them; when they sneeze and praise Allah, invoke Allah's blessings upon them; when they fall ill, visit them; when they die, follow their funeral."⁴⁰⁹

Being allies to one another

Encouraging each other to do good, protecting each other when faced by enemies, and helping one another in times of difficulty are always to express being an ally of a fellow Muslim.

{Surely, the human being is at loss. Except for those who have faith and do righteous deeds and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to patience.} (Qur'an 103:2-3)

{The believing men and women are protecting friends of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong.}
(Qur'an 9:71)

The Prophet ﷺ said: "One should help his brother whether he is an oppressor or the one being oppressed. If he is an oppressor, forbid

⁴⁰⁹ Sahih Muslim

him from his oppression, and in that way you help him. If he is being oppressed, then come to his aid.”⁴¹⁰

The Prophet ﷺ also said: “Whosoever relieves from a believer some grief pertaining to this world, Allâh will relieve from him some grief pertaining to the Hereafter. Whosoever alleviates the difficulties of a needy person who cannot pay his Debt, Allâh will alleviate his difficulties in both this world and the Hereafter. Whosoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allâh will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter. Allâh will aid a servant (of His) so long as the servant aids his brother...”⁴¹¹

Providing assistance and aid to a fellow Muslim carries with it a priceless reward. No doubt, we all think that our lives are busy with “our” problems – but simply taking time to check in on others, and to do even small things to help one another, is something which Allah considers deserving of incredible rewards.

Jabir narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never said ‘no’ to anyone who asked him for anything.⁴¹² Remember that he was the greatest of all men, with the most serious of all missions – given the task of bringing Islam to the world, establishing a Prophetic society, and leading military battles when required. Yet he of all people was the most generous, the most considerate, and the most ready to help others when asked.

⁴¹⁰ Sahih Muslim

⁴¹¹ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁴¹² Agreed upon

Do not distress one another

We often overlook how easy it is for us to upset others, whether it is with words or actions. We underestimate the impact of our behavior, despite the fact that hurting another Muslim is a severe wrongdoing.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*It is not permissible for one Muslim to distress another.*”⁴¹³

Make du'a for each other

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*A Muslim’s supplication for his brother in secret is answered. At his head an angel is appointed, and whenever he supplicates for his brother with something good, the angel appointed to him says: ‘Amin, and likewise for you.’*”⁴¹⁴

Don’t hold grudges

The Sunnah teaches us to be forgiving and easygoing; studies show that those who have these characteristics are happier, have more friends, and are healthier overall.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*The deeds are presented on every Thursday and Monday and Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, grants pardon to every person who does not associate anything with Allah except the person in whose (heart) there is rancour against his*

⁴¹³ Abu Dawud & Tirmidhi who graded it hasan

⁴¹⁴ Sahîh Muslim

brother. It would be said: Put both of them off until they are reconciled.”⁴¹⁵

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Allāh will not increase a person who forgives others except in honour.”⁴¹⁶

There is a dual benefit in being someone who is forgiving towards others; not only are we rewarded by Allah for our forbearance, but we primarily earn the forgiveness of Allah Himself.

To help ourselves be kinder towards others, we must remember that none of us are free from fault. We all make mistakes, especially towards others, and just as we wish to be forgiven, we should forgive others and let go of grudges and rancor. It is Shaytan’s urging that pushes us towards being acrimonious towards others, dwelling on their perceived transgressions, and inclines us towards being harsh and unforgiving.

Making reparations

If we have wronged someone with our speech or actions, it is imperative that we seek their forgiveness. Even though we might feel ashamed or embarrassed for admitting to that action, let alone approaching them directly, we must know that the honour of a fellow Muslim is something more serious to consider than our own egos. Not seeking to make reparations in this world, for our bad behaviour towards others, carries it with severe repercussions in the Hereafter as well.

⁴¹⁵ Sahih Muslim

⁴¹⁶ Sahih Muslim

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Whoever has wronged his brother with regard to his honour or anything else, let him seek his forgiveness today, before there will be no dinar and no dirham, and if he has any good deeds to his credit they will be taken from him in a manner commensurate with the wrong he did, and if he has no good deeds, then some of his counterpart’s bad deeds will be taken and added to his burden.”⁴¹⁷

Something to note is that if the person you spoke ill of is not aware of what you said about them, rather than going to them directly and admitting what you did, it is preferable for you to go back to those whom you spoke to and speak well about that person instead.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: “Whoever wrongs a person by slandering him, backbiting about him or insulting him, then repents, Allâh will accept his repentance, but if the one who was wronged finds out about that, he has the right to settle the score. But if he slandered him or backbit about him and the person did not hear of that, then there are two views according to the scholars, both of which were narrated from Ahmad, the more correct of which is that he should not tell him that he spoke against him in his absence. It was said that he should rather speak well of him in his absence just as he spoke badly of him in his absence, as al-Hasan al-Basri said: the expiation for gheebah is to pray for forgiveness for the person about whom you backbit.”⁴¹⁸

We should never allow our own arrogance to prevent us from asking others’ forgiveness and to settle scores in this world rather risk being stripped of our good deeds in the Aakhirah.

⁴¹⁷ Sahih Bukhari

⁴¹⁸ Majmoo’ al-Fataawa.

Feel the pain.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever."⁴¹⁹

Although this hadith is well-known, few of us truly understand it and live according to it as we should. Feeling the pain of a fellow Muslim is not limited to giving charity to an international cause or watching videos of Muslims in war-torn lands and crying. Rather, it means that we should be aware of the situation of fellow Muslims both in our local communities as well as in far away countries. We must be engaged in and involved with the poor Muslims of our own neighborhoods, seeking to bring them ease in their situations.

We should never feel content with a handful of token actions. We should try our best to do whatever we can, whether a big gesture such as a fundraiser, or something much smaller in scale but far more consistent, such as contributing to a food bank, giving someone a ride to work, and so on.

Of course, the bare minimum that we should be doing for our brothers and sisters in Islam is to make du'a for them. The Prophet ﷺ used to weep in his prayers while he supplicated for the Muslim Ummah; we should be fulfilling his sunnah and doing the same.

⁴¹⁹ Agreed upon

Don't think ill of believers

A basic principle in Islam is to be on good terms with other Muslims and not to think ill of them or deal with them with suspicion. Instead, we should always think the best of one another and try to interpret each other's actions with positivity and good intentions.

Of course, this does not apply in cases where there is clear evidence that proves otherwise. However, we should always make the attempt to assume the best of fellow believers.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

*"Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech. Do not seek out one another's faults; do not spy on one another; do not compete with one another; do not envy one another; do not hate one another; do not turn away from one another. Be, O slaves of Allāh, brothers."*⁴²⁰ In another hadith, we were warned: *"It is enough evil for a Muslim to hold his brother Muslim in contempt."*⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Agreed upon

⁴²¹ Sahih Muslim

Do not seek their faults.

Part of thinking the best about fellow Muslims is also ensuring that we do not seek out their faults, or try to expose their faults. Doing so is not only ill-mannered, but a source of corruption in and of itself.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "If you seek out people's faults you will corrupt them."⁴²²

In another hadith narrated by Abu Barzah al-Aslami: "The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: 'O you who have spoken the words of faith but faith has not truly entered your hearts! Do not backbite about the Muslims, and do not seek out their faults. For whoever seeks out their faults, Allâh will seek out his faults, and if Allâh seeks out a person's faults He will expose him even in his own house.'"⁴²³

This hadith needs to be kept in mind especially in times and situations where we are upset at someone and quick to pass judgment on them; or in a situation of rivalry where we seek the upper hand over someone else.

Hiding Faults

In addition to not seeking out the faults of a fellow Muslim, we should be the first to hide those faults should we come across them.

Abu Hurairah (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allâh will cover up on the Day of Resurrection the defects (faults) of the one who covers up the faults of the others in

⁴²² Sunan Abu Dawood; classed as sahih by Albani

⁴²³ Ahmad & Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

this world.”⁴²⁴

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also said: “*A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. So he should not oppress him nor should he hand him over to (his satan or to his self which is inclined to evil). Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allâh will fulfill his needs; whoever removes the troubles of his brother, Allâh will remove one of his troubles on the Day of Resurrection; and whoever covers up the fault of a Muslim, Allâh will cover up his fault on the Day of Resurrection.*”⁴²⁵

Exceptions to the rule: There are a handful of situations where the rule of covering up the faults of another Muslim does not apply. Indeed, in certain specific situations, it is actually an obligation upon us to reveal those faults, in order to protect others from a greater harm.

These situations include where one knows about someone’s past history with cheating others in business transactions; when someone is being considered for marriage, but has certain negative traits or characteristics that could be harmful in the context of marriage; to warn others of someone’s evil; (when an individual is known to be a sexual predator, or violent abuser, for example); and so on.

⁴²⁴ Sahih Muslim

⁴²⁵ Agreed upon

FINDING EXCUSES

The next step after not seeking faults is to seek excuses for our brother/sister and not jump to conclusions.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said:

*"If you hear something about your brother that you dislike, then look for excuses for him, from one to seventy excuses; if you find an excuse for him (all well and good), otherwise say: Perhaps he has an excuse that I do not know of."*⁴²⁶

And Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Munazil (R.A.):

*"The believer seeks excuses for their brethren, while the hypocrite seeks out the faults of their brethren."*⁴²⁷

Again just as hiding fault in general sense doesn't mean we hide them all in all situations, making excuses does not mean that we still keep making excuses when one is apparent and proved. So if a fault is proven we take measures to protect oneself and others from harm.

Shaikh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is prescribed for the believer is to respect his brother if he offers an excuse to him, to accept his apology if possible, and to think positively of him as much as possible, striving to keep hearts free of resentment and aiming to bring about unity and co-operation in doing good.

⁴²⁶ Al-Bayhaqi narrated in *ash-Shu'ab* (8344)

⁴²⁷ *Adab al-Suhba*

It was narrated from ‘Umar (R.A.) that he said: “Do not think badly of any word uttered by your brother when you can find a good interpretation for it”.⁴²⁸

May Allah make our hearts kind enough to think positively of our brothers & sisters!

MISCELLANEOUS SUNAN OF SOCIETY

VOLUNTEERING

Many people think that sadaqah (charity) can only be done with money, but the truth is that even our time can be a form of charity. Volunteering for a good cause – whether it be at the masjid, for a da’wah organization, at an Islamic program, a woman’s shelter, the soup kitchen, or otherwise – is a deed considered to be just as important as financial charity.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The honest Muslim trustee who carries out duties assigned to him (in another narration he said, “Who gives”), and he gives that in full, with his heart overflowing with cheerfulness, to whom he is ordered, he is one of the two givers of charity.”⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ Majmoo‘ Fataawa Ibn Baaz, 26/365

⁴²⁹ Agreed upon

GIFT GIVING

Although the capitalistic societies we live in have turned gift-giving into an act of commercialization, the truth is that sincerely exchanging gifts is an Islamic practice meant to foster love and good feelings between people. Rather than having specific days or occasions on which we are socially obliged to give gifts, the Prophet encouraged us with the following words: "Exchange gifts, that you may love one another."⁴³⁰ A'ishah narrated that: "The Prophet ﷺ would accept gifts and reciprocate in giving them."⁴³¹

CARING FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

In every society, there is a segment of the population that is particularly vulnerable and often in need. Widows and orphans constitute a significant portion of this group, especially in countries where they lack a strong family support system. Many are forced to rely on government welfare or have no means of sustaining themselves beyond begging in the streets or working menial jobs which do little to cover their expenses.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "*The one who sponsors an orphan, whether it is a relative of his or not, he and I will be like these two in Paradise,*" and Maalik pointed with his forefinger and middle finger.⁴³² This hadith highlights just how virtuous it is for one to take care of an orphan – it is such a praiseworthy deed that it will bring one in close proximity to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself!

⁴³⁰ Sahih Bukhari

⁴³¹ Sahih Bukhari

⁴³² Sahih Muslim

Ibn Battal said: "It is the duty of every believer who hears this hadith to strive to follow it, so that he will be in Paradise with the Prophet ﷺ and the company of Prophets and Messengers, for there is no status in the Hereafter that is better before Allâh then the company of the Prophets."⁴³³

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said: "Sponsoring an orphan means taking care of his religious and worldly affairs, giving him an upbringing, guidance, education and so on that he grows up following the teachings of Islam and taking care of his worldly affairs by giving him food, drink and accommodation."⁴³⁴

Widows are women whose husbands have passed away, often leaving them with children and without strong financial support. As an individual, she is bereft of her intimate companion; it is an experience which leaves her particularly vulnerable in numerous ways. At the time of RasulAllah ﷺ, the Companions rushed to take care of widows in whatever ways they could, whether it was by providing them with financial stability or even welcoming them into their families by marrying them and taking care of their children as well.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "*The one who looks after a widow and a poor person is like the Mujahid (warrior) in the cause of Allâh, or like the one who fasts all day and stands (in prayer) all night.*"⁴³⁵

In our day and age, people tend to think that widows and orphans don't exist in our communities, or that they automatically have family members to look after them. However, the truth is that both

⁴³³ Sharh Ibn Battal (17/260)

⁴³⁴ Sharh Riyad al-Saaliheen, p. 311

⁴³⁵ At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

locally and internationally, there are many women who unexpectedly find themselves without husbands. There are many ways to take care of such women - some organizations offer monthly sponsorship packages, where a monthly payment is given towards covering their expenses. Seek out these options and know that you are earning Allah's Pleasure and making this Ummah stronger!

TAKING CARE OF THE POOR WHO DOESN'T BEG

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A miskeen (person in need) is not the one who goes pegging from the people and can be turned away with a morsel or two of food or dates. A true miskeen is the one who does not find enough to suffice themselves, nor do they disclose of their poverty to others, nor do they beg."⁴³⁶

Those most in need in our communities are not those who publicize their own poverty, but who struggle to take care of themselves and without relying upon others. The best way to find out who these people are is by being an engaged and involved individual in your own community; stay in touch with your family members, in case they happen to be of these people; network with others and be of those who can be relied upon to help in these situations.

⁴³⁶ Agreed upon

SPEAK GOOD OR REMAIN SILENT

This is truly a forgotten Sunnah, one which both “religious” Muslims as well as the non-practising have neglected. Gossip, backbiting and slander are all part and parcel of daily conversation; we are not conscious of or worried about the fact that every word we utter is being recorded by the angels on our shoulders, for which we will be held accountable.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever believes in Allâh and the Last Day should either speak what is good or remain silent.”⁴³⁷

Allah prohibited us from thinking and speaking ill of one another:

{O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allâh; indeed, Allâh is accepting of repentance and Merciful.} (Qur'an, 49: 12)

Much animosity and misunderstandings would be prevented between Muslims if only we followed these commands.

⁴³⁷ Sahih Bukhari

DON'T BE NOSY

Inquisitiveness over other people's lives is a disliked trait that every Muslim should try to avoid. Asking questions about people's personal lives, their marriages, their children, their finances, and so on is inappropriate and can cause great distress.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "*Part of the perfection of a person's Islam is his leaving that which is of no concern to him.*"⁴³⁸

SMILE

Being cheerful is a good deed! Unfortunately, many people are unhappy, disappointed, frustrated, and sad... and show it. It's difficult to find people who try to smile and stay positive regardless of how they feel. The Prophet ﷺ said: "*Do not belittle any good deed, even meeting your brother (Muslim) with a cheerful face.*"⁴³⁹

It is easy for us to vent our frustrations on others – on family members and strangers alike – but it is important for us to remember that the sunnah teaches us to do our best to be a source of joy to others. No good deed, not even a smile, is unnoticed by Allah.

⁴³⁸ At-Tirmidhi and others, classed as sahih by Albani

⁴³⁹ Sahih Muslim

THE ETIQUETTE OF SNEEZING

Although it may seem strange for us to discuss, there is a special etiquette that we are taught in the sunnah regarding sneezing.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allâh likes sneezing and dislikes yawning, so if someone sneezes and then praises Allâh, then it is obligatory on every Muslim who heard him, to say: May Allâh be merciful to you (yarhamukAllah)."⁴⁰

The Prophet ﷺ said: "When one of you sneezes, let him say, 'alHamdulillah 'alaa kulli haal (Praise be to Allâh in all situations),' and let his brother or companion say to him, 'YarhamukAllâh (May Allâh have mercy on you).' If he says, 'Yarhamuk-Allâh,' then let (the sneezer say, 'Yahdeekum Allâh wa yuslihu baalakum (May Allâh guide you and rectify your condition).'"⁴¹

Although it may seem a strange thing to focus on, it is a source of mercy from Allah and a reminder of Him throughout our day.

WHEN A KAFIR SNEEZES

يَهْدِكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَصْلِحُ بَالَّكُمْ

Yahdeekum wayuslihu balakum.

May Allah guide you and rectify your condition.

Narrated Abu Musa: The Jews used to sneeze in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ hoping that he would say: 'Yarhamukumullah (May Allah have mercy upon you).' So he said: 'Yahdikumullahu Wa Yuslihu Balakum (May Allah guide you and rectify your affairs).'"⁴²

^{⁴⁰} Sahih Bukhari

^{⁴¹} Sahih Bukhari

^{⁴²} Sahih Bukhari

JOIN THE FUNERAL

It is a right of a fellow Muslim to have us join their funerals and remain until the burial.

Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said, "There is no Muslim who dies and forty men who associate nothing with Allaah pray the funeral prayer for him, but Allaah will accept their intercession for him" ⁴⁴³

Honouring a Muslim by attending their funeral is beneficial for both them and for us; it is a symbol that true love for the Sake of Allah does not end with death. Another important point for us to note is that we are to observe the funeral in its entirety – that means not just praying Salatul Janaazah, but following the coffin to the grave.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Whoever attends the funeral until the prayer has been offered will have one qiraat (of reward) and whoever attends until the deceased has been buried will have two qiraats." It was said, "What are the two qiraats?" He said: "Like two great mountains." ⁴⁴⁴

This is not specific to friends and family of the deceased, as is usually practiced, but for any Muslim who finds out about the funeral. It is a reminder to us all that death is inevitable, and a means of reflection regarding the trials of the grave and the Day of Judgment.

⁴⁴³ Sahih Muslim & Abu Dawood.

⁴⁴⁴ Agreed upon

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF THE MARKETPLACE

The marketplace – or the mall, as it is commonly known as – is usually more than just a place to buy and sell goods. It also doubles as a hub for socializing, a place where modesty is often ignored in the images used for advertising, and so on.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*The most beloved places on Earth to Allāh are its mosques, and the most despised places on Earth to Allāh are its markets.*”⁴⁴⁵

Imam An Nawawi said in commenting on this Hadeeth in Riyad As Saliheen: The superiority of the mosques is self evident. People pray and worship Allah in the mosques and recitation of Qur'an goes on there. While in the market places people forget to remember Allah and indulge in such forbidden acts as fraud, lies and gossip. In fact, it is not the place itself which is disliked but the bad things which are bound to happen in it, they are not the places of choice and are not liked.”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“*Whoever cheats (or deceives) does not belong to me.*” And “*There are three to whom Allāh will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, or will He look at them, or sanctify them, and theirs will be a painful torment: Abu Dharr said: “May they be lost and doomed: He said: “....the one who sells his product by means of false oath,...*”⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ Sahîh Muslim

⁴⁴⁶ an-Nasa'i & Ibn Majah, graded Sahih

Although going to the marketplace or mall is not impermissible in and of itself, we should all be aware of these ahadith so that we may refrain from engaging in those actions that we have been warned against.

Buying and selling is actually encouraged in Islam, so long as one deals only with that which is permissible and abstains from *riba* (interest and usury), deception, and other prohibited matters. The Prophet and many of his Companions were merchants who engaged in business and trade.

In order to protect ourselves from the harm that arises from spending too much unnecessary time at the mall, we should observe the following forgotten sunan:

RECITE THE DU'A:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ informed us that:

“Whoever enters a market place and says (the below dua) Allâh will write for him thousand rewards, erase from him a thousand sins, raise him a thousand levels, and build for him a house in Jannah.”⁴⁴⁷

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ،

يَخْبِي وَنَيْسِتُ وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمْوُتُ ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

⁴⁴⁷ At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah, classed as hasan by Albani (but others classed it Daeeef).

Laa ilaaha illAllâhu wahdahu laa shareeka lah, lahul mulku wa lahul hamdu, yuhyee wa yumeetu wahuwa hayyun laa yamootu, biyadihu alkhayru wahuwa ala kulli shayyin qadeer.

"There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh alone, He has no partners, He has the dominion and for him is all the praise, He gives life and he takes life and he is the ever living and does not die, in his hand is goodness and he is capable of all things."

GIVE CHARITY:

The Prophet ﷺ said: "This market is mixed with errors and lies, so mix it with some charity."⁴⁴⁸ Just as we are quick to spend money on our needs and wants, we should remember that giving charity is a way of purifying our wealth and increasing us in barakah. This also helps us control our spending as it makes us ponder over the poor and stops us from buying things that are not needed.

HAVE GOOD MANNERS:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised us: "May Allâh have mercy on the person who adopts a kind attitude when he buys, sells and demands for repayment."⁴⁴⁹ Some people tend to become so self-absorbed while shopping that they forget that the people they're dealing with are human beings who deserve kindness and respect.

⁴⁴⁸ An Nasaai, classed as sahih by Albani

⁴⁴⁹ Sahih Bukhari

DON'T EXPLOIT WORKERS:

If you are someone who engages in business and hires others to work in your store, factory, and so on, it is imperative to remember the following hadith: "*Pay the worker his wages before his sweat has dried.*"⁴⁵⁰ It is unfortunately a common practice for many employers to exploit their workers, treating them unfairly, delaying their payment, and demanding more from them than is reasonable.

As Muslims, we are to take the middle path between extreme ascetism and wasteful excessiveness. We are meant to engage with society, but we must also know our limits and observe the guidelines that we have provided in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah tells us: {And do not forget your share of the worldly life.} [Qur'an 28: 77]

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF GREETING

Whether Muslim or not, everyone has a way to greet others. As Muslims, our greeting is not one based on language or culture, but a beautiful saying of peace that we were taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Indeed, the greeting of salaam is one which Allah Himself taught Prophet Adam, the very first of human beings, to say.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "When Allah created Adam A.S., He said to him: 'Go and greet that company of angels who are sitting there - and then listen to what they are going to say in reply to your greetings because that will be your greeting and that of your offspring.' Adam

⁴⁵⁰ Ibn Majah classed as Sahih by Albani

A.S. said to the angels: 'As-Salamu 'Alaikum (may you be safe from evil).' They replied: 'As-Salamu 'Alaikum wa Rahmatullah (may you be safe from evil, and Mercy of Allah be upon you)."451

Abu Hurayrah (may Allâh be pleased with him) said that the Prophet ﷺ said: "The Muslim has five rights over his fellow Muslim..." Amongst them, he mentioned "...he should return his salaams...."452

Messenger of Allâh ﷺ also said: "You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I not tell you about something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread salaam amongst yourselves."453

And he ﷺ said: "The Jews do not envy you for anything more than they envy you for the Salam and saying Ameen'."454

The greeting that we have been enjoined to spread between ourselves is far more than a mere polite phrase – it is a supplication for one another's well-being. It is something which we should teach our children from a young age, so that it comes naturally to them, and for us to practice ourselves regularly, with family and friends, elders and youth, and complete strangers as well.

⁴⁵¹ Agreed upon

⁴⁵² Agreed upon

⁴⁵³ Sahih Muslim, Ahmad, and at-Tirmidhi

⁴⁵⁴ Ibn Majah, Graded Sahih.

SAY SALAAM TO EVERYONE – KNOWN & UNKNOWN

One unfortunate habit that some Muslims have is to only greet those whom they know personally, while ignoring those whom they are not familiar with.

A man asked the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ: "What is the best thing in Islam?" He said, "*Feeding others and giving the greeting of salaam to those whom you know and those whom you do not know.*"⁴⁵⁵

Greeting those whom we know and don't know is an important part of increasing affection between Muslims and strengthening the bonds of Islamic sisterhood and brotherhood.

INITIATE THE GREETING

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "*The person nearest to Allâh is one who is the first to offer greeting.*"⁴⁵⁶ It is common for many people to avoid greeting one another entirely or, for cultural reasons, wait for the other person to greet them first, we see our brothers/sisters on seeing a person they know, puts their head into their Mobiles or turn their heads to look the other way, just to avoid saying Salam. This may be due to race, social status, wealth, and so on. All of this goes against the Sunnah, which teaches us to be the first to initiate the greeting.

⁴⁵⁵ Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Dawood, al-Nisaa'I, Ibn Hibbaan

⁴⁵⁶ Abu Dawud & At-Tirmidhi, graded as hasan

WHO SHOULD GREET FIRST

While we should all strive to be the first to say salaam, there is also a basic etiquette as to who should greet others first.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

'A rider should greet a pedestrian; a pedestrian should greet one who is sitting; and a small group should greet a large group (of people).'⁴⁵⁷ In the narration from Bukhari, there is the addition: "The young should greet the elderly."

GREETING CHILDREN

In many communities, children are the ones expected to approach others and greet them. While this should be encouraged, we should always do our part to show good manners and respect even to children, and sharing the salaam with them as well.

Anas ibn Malik (May Allāh be pleased with him) once passed by some children and greeted them (by saying as-salamu 'alaikum to them). Then he said: The Prophet ﷺ used to do the same.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ Agreed upon

⁴⁵⁸ Agreed upon

SHAKING HANDS

Part of greeting one another includes shaking hands with one another and smiling while we say the salaam.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said,

"Two Muslims will not meet and shake hands without having their sins forgiven (by Allâh) before they depart."⁴⁵⁹ Being aware of this sunnah and having the intention to follow it as a simple and effortless way of earning rewards while expressing affection for a fellow Muslim.

REPEATING THE SALAAM

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said,

"When one of you meets a brother (in Faith) he should greet him. Then if a tree or a wall or a stone intervenes between them and then he meets him again, he should greet him."⁴⁶⁰

This hadith emphasizes how important and meaningful the salaam is.

⁴⁵⁹ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

⁴⁶⁰ Sunan Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

VISTING THE SICK

Visiting the sick is considered a communal obligation upon the Ummah. One of the five rights that every Muslim has over another is to be visited when ill. There are many narrations which mention the virtues of visiting the sick. The Prophet ﷺ said,

“When the Muslim visits his (sick) Muslim brother, he is harvesting the fruits of Paradise until he returns.”⁴⁶¹

“Whoever visits a sick person or visits a brother in Islam, a caller cries out to him: ‘May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you occupy a dignified position in Paradise’.”⁴⁶²

“There is no Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim early in the morning but seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until evening comes, and if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until morning comes, and he will have a garden in Paradise.”⁴⁶³

SubhanAllah! These narrations should be more than enough incentive to us to seek out the ill in our community and to visit them, both with the sincere intention to cheer them up and for the rewards that Allah has promised us. If you think of it, such is the beauty of Islam that it never fails to take care of the ones in need, the Parents when old, the children, the neighbors, the poor, the widow, the orphan, the sick; Alhamdulilah every one of them have their rights and Allah has promised great rewards in return of taking care of them

⁴⁶¹ Sahih Muslim

⁴⁶² At-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani.

⁴⁶³ At-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani

When people are sick, being visited by a friendly face can make a huge difference in their day. The positivity from these visits have a positive effect on the patient's physical health as well, and can help their recovery.

VISITING STRANGERS

Visiting the sick is not restricted to just those whom you know; as with spreading the salaam, one should visit those you do not know as well. As well, so long as the rules of hijab are observed, a Muslim man may visit a non-Mahram woman who is ill, and vice versa.

Anas R.A. narrated that Abu Bakr said to 'Umar (may Allāh be pleased with them), after the Prophet ﷺ died: "Let us go to Umm Ayman and visit her as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) used to visit her," so they went to her.⁴⁶⁴

Ibn al-Jawzi said: "This is to be interpreted as referring to one from whom there is no fear of fitnah, such as an old woman".

VISITING NONMUSLIMS

Visiting the sick is not limited to Muslims, either. In fact, the Prophet used to visit nonMuslims as well.

A Jewish boy used to serve the Prophet ﷺ and he fell sick. The Prophet ﷺ came to visit him. He sat by his head and said: "Become

⁴⁶⁴ Sahih Muslim

Muslim." The boy looked at his father, who was also by his head, and his father said to him: "Obey Abu'l-Qaasim." So he became Muslim, and the Prophet ﷺ left, saying, "Praise be to Allah Who have saved him from the Fire."⁴⁶⁵

Visiting nonMuslims can be a means of da'wah, and can soften people's hearts towards Islam.

RECITING SUPPLICATIONS FOR THE ILL

One etiquette of visiting the sick is to make du'a for them, as was the habit of RasulAllah.

The Prophet ﷺ used to place his right hand on the sick person and say:

أَذْهِبِ الْبَأْسَ رَبُّ النَّاسِ، وَاشْفِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي، لَا شِفَاءَ إِلَّا شِفَاؤُكَ، شِفَاءٌ لَا يُغَادِرُ سَقَمًا

Adhib al-ba's, Rabb an-naas, wa'shfi anta al-Shaafi, laa shifaa'a illa
shifaa'uka shifaa'an laa yughaadir saqamaa.

"Take away the pain, O Lord of mankind, and grant healing, for You are the Healer, and there is no healing but Your healing that leaves no trace of sickness."⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ Sahih Bukhaari

⁴⁶⁶ Sahih Muslim

The Prophet ﷺ also said: “Whoever visits a sick person who is not yet dying, and says seven times in his presence (the following du'a), Allâh will heal him of that sickness.”

أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَشْفِيكَ

‘As’alu Allâha rabb al-‘arsh il-‘azeem an yashfiyaka

“I ask Allâh, Lord of the Great Throne, to heal you.”⁴⁶⁷

We are also encouraged to cheer up the patient with the words, “Laa ba’s, tahooran inshaAllah.” (Don’t worry, this is a purification, if Allah wills.)⁴⁶⁸

May Allah give health to the Sick Muslims and Hidayah to the healthy ones to visit their brothers and sisters who are unwell.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Islam is a way of life, and as such, takes into consideration such things as social gatherings. Gatherings are a part of life, with both family, friends, and strangers; they can either be filled with good influences, or negative ones. As Muslims, we should seek to attend gatherings that are reflective of good company and the remembrance of Allah.

⁴⁶⁷ Ahmad & Abu Dawud, classed as sahih by Albani

⁴⁶⁸ Sahih Bukhari

{O you who believe! Fear Allâh, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds).} (Qur'an 9:119)

The Prophet ﷺ said, “A man is upon the religion of his best friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.”⁴⁶⁹

Our social circles are reflections of who we are, and the topics of conversation and the activities that we do with them are an indication of our own character. Some people use social gatherings as an opportunity to gossip and backbite and to mock others. Allah tells us:

{O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. How bad is it to insult one's brother after having faith. And whosoever does not repent, then such are indeed wrongdoers.} (Qur'an 49:11)

{And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead?} (Qur'an 49: 12)

{Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allâh. Those are in manifest error.} (Qur'an 39: 22)

Just as Islam establishes guidelines for us to follow in other situations, the Sunnah also teaches us how to conduct ourselves in social gatherings.

⁴⁶⁹ At-Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud, classed as sahih by Albani

MENTION THE NAME OF ALLAH

Whether one is in an educational class or a social gathering, we should always try to remember the Name of Allah often.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "No people sit in an assembly without mentioning Allâh, and without asking Allâh for blessings on their Prophet, except that it will be a cause of sorrow upon them. Thus if He (Allâh) wishes He will punish them, and if He wishes He will forgive them."⁴⁷⁰

He also said: "No people may rise from an assembly in which they have failed to mention the Name of Allâh without it being as if they were getting off a dead donkey's rotting back, and it would be a cause of grief for them."⁴⁷¹

This is a vivid warning to us all of how forgetfulness and heedlessness of Allah and His Messenger – even in social gatherings – can have devastating consequences for us spiritually. On the other hand, we are reminded that: {Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do the hearts find rest.} (Qur'an 13:28)

If we want to ensure that there is peace and harmoniousness between ourselves and our friends and family, then we should make sure that we are of those who remember Allah often and keep the best company. In this way, Shaytan will be driven away from our hearts, and our time with our companions will be blessed.

⁴⁷⁰ At-Tirmithi, classed as sahih by Albani.

⁴⁷¹ Abu Dawud & Ahmad, classed as sahih by Albani

An example of how the Sahaba put this to practice

Many Sahabah used to recite Surah al-Asr to each other when they would meet.

Abu Madinah ad-Darimi, a companion of the Prophet ﷺ said: “When two men among the companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him) met, they did not part until one of them recited to the other Surah Al Asr, then one would say salam to (greet) the other.”⁴⁷²

This goes to show the emphasis that the Sahabah placed on reminding one another about the importance of time and obedience to Allah. Ibn Kathir reported: Ash-Shafi’ee said, “If the people were to reflect upon Surah Al-Asr, it would be sufficient for them.”⁴⁷³

KAFFAARATUL MAJLIS

At the end of a gathering, it is a sunnah for us to recite a du’ā known as ‘kaffaaratul majlis’ (expiation for whatever wrongdoing took place in the gathering). It is a simple way to remember Allah’s name, and to ask His Forgiveness for anything that was said or done in that gathering that displeased Him.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “Whoever sits in a gathering and indulges in useless talk and before getting up supplicates, he will be

⁴⁷² Abu Dawood, al-Tabarani & al-Bayhaqi, classed as sahih by Albani

⁴⁷³ Tafseer Ibn Kathir 103:1

forgiven for the sins he may have intentionally or unintentionally committed in that assembly.”⁴⁷⁴

سبحانك اللهم وبحمدك، أشهد أن لا إله إلا أنت، أستغفرك وأتوب إليك

Subhaanaka Allâhumma wa bi hamdika, ashhadu an laa ilaaha illa anta, astaghfiruka wa atoobu ilayk.

“Glory and praise be to You, O Allâh, I bear witness that there is no god but You, I seek Your forgiveness and I repent to You.”

NOT EXPECTING OTHERS TO STAND UP TO SHOW RESPECT

It is expected in some cultures that the younger ones in the gathering, or the ones holding lower positions in an office, to stand up out of respect when the elder or the person in authority arrives. And not standing up is taken as a sign of disrespect.

Anas ibn Maalik said: “No person was dearer to them than the Prophet ﷺ, but when they saw him they did not stand up for him because they knew that he disliked that.”⁴⁷⁵

However this doesn’t mean standing up is not allowed, as the Prophet ﷺ used to stand up for Fatimah R.A. and she would do the same for him out of love. Also in a Hadeeth Rasool Allah asked the companions to stand up for one who came back from travels so one shouldn’t be expected to stand, but there is nothing wrong if one does it out of love.

⁴⁷⁴ At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahib by Albani

⁴⁷⁵ At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahib by Albani.

HOST LEADING PRAYER

When we visit someone's home, and the time for prayer comes, it is often a cultural expectation that the eldest person in the gathering will lead the prayer. However, the Sunnah is for the host or hostess to lead the prayer.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: '*Whoever visits a people should not lead them in prayer. Let a man from among them lead them in prayer.*'⁴⁷⁶

It is permissible for a guest to lead the prayer, on condition that the host gives permission to do so.

NOT SITTING ON THE STREETS

It is common in many parts of the world for some people, especially youth and the transient, to gather together in groups and block roadways or inconvenience public spaces. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ disapproved of doing so.

Sadly, even the old men use streets as their gathering place, they sit for hours and hours on the streets causing nuisance to the passerbys and wasting time sitting idle and engaging in useless immoral talks.

Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri reported:

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Beware of sitting in the roads.*" They said, "O Messenger of Allah, we have nowhere else to sit and talk." The

⁴⁷⁶ at-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan sahibh by Abu Eesa Al Tirmidhi & Albani.

Prophet said, "If you insist, then give the road its right." They said, "What is its right, O Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Lower the gaze, refrain from harming others, return greetings of peace, enjoin good and forbid evil."⁴⁷⁷

DO NOT ARGUE

Arguing and debating unnecessarily, with only the end result of causing animosity and holding grudges, is a damaging habit of our time – and one which can have the even more dangerous effect of turning people away from Islam.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned us by saying, "No people go astray after being guided except that they indulge in arguments." Then the Prophet ﷺ recited the verse, {They strike an example for you only to argue. Rather, they are a quarrelsome people.} (Qur'an 43:58)⁴⁷⁸

For those who refrain from this behaviour, there is a promised reward: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I guarantee a house in Jannah for one who gives up arguing, even if he is in the right; and I guarantee a home in the middle of Jannah for one who abandons lying even for the sake of fun; and I guarantee a house in the highest part of Jannah for one who has good manners."⁴⁷⁹

The warning against arguments is even more in need of repeating for

⁴⁷⁷ Agreed upon

⁴⁷⁸ At-Tirmidhi & Ahmad, classed as Hasan by Albani

⁴⁷⁹ Abu Dawud, classed as sahih by An-Nawawi

those who frequently engage on social media. The Internet is an unrestricted forum, with both knowledgeable and ignorant people sharing their thoughts and opinions. While there is great benefit in some applications of technology, we must all be extremely cautious about our own personal usage.

It is all too easy for some people to spend hours on social media, debating religious matters that they do not have knowledge about. There are times when people will abandon praying salah in the masjid or attending taraweeh, simply because they are occupied with online debates. Shaytan has deceived such people in several ways – first, by causing them to abandon important acts of worship, and secondly, by convincing them that their arguments and debates are actually good deeds or Islamic responsibilities!

We need to all hold ourselves accountable for the interactions that we have with others. Are we arguing for the sake of our egos, or out of stubbornness, or unnecessarily partisanship? Are we wasting our time? Would the Messenger of Allah ﷺ approve of our discussion?

Always consider what the best usage of our time is and how pleasing our behaviour is to Allah. By changing our bad habits, we could be building houses for ourselves in Paradise itself.

FIQH OF THE INTERNET

All the rulings that apply to social gatherings and interactions in real life, are just as applicable to behaviour on the Internet. Whether it is avoiding *khalwah* (private interaction between men and women), refraining from gossiping, remembering Allah frequently, and so on, it is necessary to uphold Islamic standards and behaviour in all contexts.

MAKE THINGS EASY

A phenomenon of our generation is that it is perceived as religiosity to make religious and worldly matters difficult for one another. However, Allah tells us that: *{Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship...}* (Qur'an 2:185)

Allah has made Islam easy for us – the basic fundamentals of faith are a part of our innate nature (fitrah), such as the belief in *tawheed* and turning to Allah in prayer and supplication. The pillars of Islam are simple to carry out, and are not unreasonable or overly demanding.

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized this in numerous narrations: “*You are an Ummah for whom I want ease.*”⁴⁸⁰

And he ﷺ also said, “*Religion is easy, and no one overburdens himself in his religion but he will be unable to continue in that way. So do not be extremists, but try to be near perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded.*”⁴⁸¹

A general principle in our religion is that it is better to take the easier option in any matter, so long as it is not harmful or impermissible. A’ishah said: “*Whenever Allah’s Messenger ﷺ was given the choice of one of two matters, he would choose the easier of the two, as long as it was not sinful to do so, but if it was sinful to do so, he would not approach it.*”⁴⁸²

This approach was with regards to worldly matters; when it came to acts of worship, he always strove to do his best. As for the rest of us,

⁴⁸⁰ Musnad Ahmad, classed Hasan.

⁴⁸¹ Agreed upon

⁴⁸² Agreed upon

we too are encouraged to pursue as much worship as possible, but without overburdening ourselves or abandoning our worldly responsibilities.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Make things easy for the people, and do not make it difficult for them, and make them calm (with glad tidings) and do not repulse (them)." ⁴⁸³

His reminder to us, "Do not repulse them," is particularly poignant when we consider how many people who are interested in Islam or returning to Islam are pushed away by the ill manners and bad character of those who claim to be religious Muslims. Too many people try to make Islam seem overly restrictive in ways that it is not; due to the harshness and strictness of such people, it becomes easy for others to be misguided due to the ease they see from different groups that call to falsehood.

We should always seek to deal with other Muslims with wisdom, and make matters easy for them as much as possible; being harsh, strict, and unreasonable goes against the Sunnah and drives people away from the truth of Islam.

⁴⁸³ Sahih Bukhari

SIMPLIFY MARRIAGE

A perfect example of something that Muslims make difficult for themselves when Allah has simplified it is the issue of marriage. In the Shari'ah, the marriage ceremony is simple – it requires the wali, two witnesses, and the consent of the bride. It is sunnah to hold a small feast or a meal to which guests are invited and the marriage announced.

Today, people demand exorbitant mahr, expect lavish parties, and put themselves into debt for 'the perfect wedding.' In contrast, zina (unlawful sexual interaction) is made simple, and thus it becomes easier for Muslims to fall into the haram.

RasulAllah ﷺ said,

- “*The best of marriages is that which is made easiest.*”⁴⁸⁴
- “*One of the signs of a woman being blessed is that the process of proposing to her is made easy and the dowry is made affordable and she bears children easily*”⁴⁸⁵

The social consequences of ignoring this sunnah are severe. We see it every day, in the way that some Muslims delay marriage until they are middle aged, and in the way that many Muslim youth end up falling into zina – not just once or twice, but repeatedly.

Another terrible result of making marriage difficult is that the expectation of extravagance at weddings pushes people to borrowing money in impermissible ways, often dealing with *riba* (usury).

⁴⁸⁴ Ibn Habban, classed as Sahih by Albani.

⁴⁸⁵ Ahmad & Ibn Majah, classed as Hasan by Albani.

EASE, NOT ABANDONMENT

Making things easy for people should not be taken as an excuse to neglect those things which are a part of our faith. Too many people use the hadith "*Islam is easy*" to completely abandon and ignore important aspects of Islam.

While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ informed us that, "*The best of your religion is that which is easiest,*"⁴⁸⁶ he also commanded us to have taqwa and to obey Allah regardless of our circumstances.

He himself used to pray throughout the night until his feet swelled and bled from standing. A'ishah asked him, "Aren't your past and future sins forgiven?" His response was, "*Should I not be a grateful slave?*"

When teaching people about the religion, we must make things easy for them while not giving the impression that it is okay to abandon parts of Islam itself. Rather, we must do as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised us:

*"Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and worship Allah in the forenoon and in the afternoon and during a part of the night, and always adopt a middle, moderate, regular course whereby you will reach your target (Paradise)."*⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶ Musnad Ahmad, classed as hasan

⁴⁸⁷ Sahih Bukhari

SHURA (CONSULTATION)

Consulting others for advice is something which only the wise do; far too many people are so concerned with their egos that rather than seeking the advice of those who are experienced and wise, prefer to haphazardly do things their own way. Some people have the attitude that asking for help or for advice makes them look foolish. The truth is, anyone who *doesn't* ask others for advice is truly foolish.

When we are young we have no egos and we seek advice from others on almost everything but as we grow older we tend to grow an ego which makes us resist asking for advice from others. Our ego and arrogance makes us feel that we know enough and asking others would make us look foolish.

The Prophet ﷺ was the man with knowledge given to him by Allah himself, yet he regularly consulted his family and Companions. He would rarely make a decision without first discussing it and seeking the wisdom of those around him.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ informed us that, “*The religion is naseeha (sincere advice).*⁴⁸⁸” It is a religious duty to us all to seek the advice of trustworthy, experienced, wise Muslims, and to in turn provide advice to those who ask it of us. With sincere intentions, we will not only benefit one another, but also earn Allah’s reward.

He ﷺ took advice from his wives

When something was bothering the Prophet ﷺ, he would talk to his wives and he would consult them. As is narrated in the story of al-Hudaybiyyah. When the Prophet ﷺ made a peace deal with

⁴⁸⁸ Saheeh Muslim

Quraysh, agreeing to go back and not enter Makkah that year, he said to his companions: "Get up and offer your sacrifices." The narrator said: By Allah, not one man among them got up, until he had said that three times. When not one of them got up, he entered upon Umm Salamah and told her how the people had reacted. Umm Salamah said: O Prophet of Allah, do you want them to do that? Go out and do not say a word to any one of them, until you sacrifice your camel and call your barber to shave your head. When he did that, they got up and offered their sacrifices.⁴⁸⁹

The Prophet's companions after the death of the Prophet would usually consult the Prophet's wives in matters of juristic disputes. Another example is of Umar R.A. consulting Hafsa R.A. before passing a ruling & limit for a man to not be away from his wife for more than 6 months.⁴⁹⁰

Confiding and consulting one's wife is part of honoring her and the relation it strengthens the bond and mutual respect. Listening to her advice without dismissing it rightaway and accepting it when good helps her feel reassured and valued, it is a major part of treating them kindly.

Also we see from the Sunnah that the Prophet ﷺ would listen to the opinions of the youth as many of the early converts like Ali, Uqba bin Amir, Jabir bin Abdullah, Zayd bin Harith, Abdullah bin Masud, Zubayr bin Awwam, Muadh bin Jabel and Mus'ab bin Umair (may Allah be pleased with them all) were in their teenage.

⁴⁸⁹ Sahih Bukhari

⁴⁹⁰ Kashshaf al-Qina (5/193)

CLEAN THE MASJID

In many parts of the world, the masajid have staff who are paid to keep it clean at all times. In other parts of the world, however, there are no hired cleaners specifically for the masjid, and thus the community relies upon itself to maintain the facilities.

Regardless of whether there are paid cleaners or not, as Muslims, we should all feel keen to ensure that the masjid is kept as clean as possible. If we see a mess, we should hurry to clean it; if we make a mess, we should be the first to remove it; if we see others already cleaning it, we should offer our help.

‘A’ishah said: “The Prophet ﷺ saw some sputum on the wall of the mosque and scratched it off.”⁴⁹¹

Anas narrated that the Prophet ﷺ saw some sputum in the qiblah of the mosque and he got so angry that his face turned red. Then a woman from among the Ansaar came and scratched it and put some perfume in that place. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “What a good deed this is!”⁴⁹²

When you are at the masjid, do not be of the people who walk by trash and garbage that has been littered and ignore it. Rather, be of the people who hasten to take care of the House of Allah and seek to honour it, for the masajid are places of worship where the believers gather.

⁴⁹¹ Agreed upon

⁴⁹² Al-Nasaa’i & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahih by Albani

May Allah give us all the Hidayah to implement the Sunnahs individually which collectively makes our community and society stronger and united, and make us all a source and reminder for each other in doing good and attaining the common goal, Jannah!

THE FIVE PILLARS OF SOCIETY

Islam has five pillars that make up the structure of our society, and

the fifth pillar is the Sunnahs, which is the way of the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Sunnahs are the practices of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

The Sunnahs, which consists of 3000 narrations, which have been collected by the scholars, and can be found in the books of Sunnahs.

These Sunnahs are the pillars of our society, and they are the

pillars that hold up our society, and they are the pillars that hold up our society.

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CHAPTER – VIII

CULTURE VS SUNNAH

It is from the wisdom of Allāh and His great signs that we have all been created from different nations and cultures, speaking different languages and having our own special customs.

Allāh says: {And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours.} (Qur'an 30:22)

Traditions and culture are a part of what make us all unique, but what unites Muslims across the world is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. It is permissible for us to follow our local customs and traditions, so long as they do not contradict the Shari'ah in any way. As well, we must be cautious of glorifying our cultures and giving traditional practises the same level of authority as the Islamic texts.

Sadly, so many people consider their cultural practises to be superior to following religious commandments, such that an individual who chooses to follow the Sunnah instead is viewed as someone strange. However, as the Prophet reminded us, "*Islam began as something strange and will revert to being strange as it began, so give glad tidings to the strangers.*"⁴⁹³

⁴⁹³ Sahih Muslim

THE HONOUR OF DAUGHTERS

Islam came to a world which considered women to be inferior, and immediately commanded all Muslims to respect and honour women instead. However, the *jahiliyyah* (ignorance) of treating women badly persisted in many Muslim cultures, and nonMuslim cultures as well.

Unfortunately, there are many who give their sons special treatment over their daughters and hold double standards for their behavior.

However, the Sunnah emphasizes what an honour and a blessing it is to have daughters and raise them with the best of treatment.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Whoever has three daughters or three sisters, or two daughters or two sisters, and takes good care of them and fears Allâh with regard to them, will enter Paradise.”⁴⁹⁴

RasulAllah demonstrated how one should be with their daughters in his own behaviour towards his own daughters.

A’ishah said: “When Fatimah visited the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ, he would stand up to receive her, kiss her and seat her in his place. And when the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ visited Fatimah, she would stand up to him, kiss him and seat him in her place.”⁴⁹⁵

Al-Bara’ ibn ‘Aazib entered with Abu Bakr upon his family, after he reached Madinah as a migrant. A’ishah was lying down as she was suffering a fever. He said, “I [al-Bara’] saw her father kiss her cheek and say: How are you, O my daughter?”

⁴⁹⁴ Ibn Hibbaan in his Sahih

⁴⁹⁵ Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

Sadly, many of us have internalized negative aspects of cultures that make it seem shameful for fathers to show affection towards their daughters, or for daughters to be openly loving towards their fathers. Yet as we see from the narrations mentioned, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Companions did not consider it embarrassing or strange to demonstrate their love for their daughters.

NOT SPOILING CHILDREN

Another unfortunate habit that many parents have developed is equating material luxuries with love and care. Too many parents think that if they buy their children toys or other luxuries, it is proof that they are doing well for their children.

This is a dangerous mentality that causes children to value material wealth and property over genuine love and affection, and devalues hard work and commitment. This is not only detrimental to their own spiritual health, but will have further negative consequences throughout their lives and their relationships with their future spouses.

While there is nothing wrong with making our children comfortable, we must also teach them how to work hard and when to recognize the value of earning one's wealth. It is even more necessary to teach them the importance of spending on the poor and needy, knowing that this is pleasing to Allah and a means of earning Jannah.

'Ali narrated: "Fatimah complained about the effect on her hands from using the mill, so she came to the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ, to ask him for a servant girl. She did not find him, but she mentioned it to 'Aa'ishah, who mentioned it to him when he came home."

'Ali continued, "So he came to us when we had gone to bed. We were going to stand up, but he ﷺ told us: "Stay in your places."

Then he sat between us, until I felt the coldness of his feet on my chest. Then he said: "Should I not guide you two to what is better for you than a servant? When you go to bed, then say Allâhu Akbar 34 times, SubhanAllah 33 times, and AlHamdulillaah 33 times. This is better for you than a servant."⁴⁹⁶

It is said that the reason that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not give them a servant, despite his daughter's request, was because he preferred to donate to the poor and needy of the community over providing a luxury to his daughter. This was to teach her the value of patience, and the superior reward that she would receive for doing dhikr instead.

TAKING CHILDREN TO THE MASJID

A major controversy in the Muslim community that has resulted in many arguments and caused great distress to many families, is that of taking children to the masjid. In certain parts of the world, it is strongly disliked to bring children to the masjid, claiming that it disrupts the prayer and distracts worshippers.

Shaykh al-Albani wrote a short treatise on the topic of children younger than 7 years old attending the masjid:

"Our Prophet ﷺ, used to allow their children to enter his mosque.

⁴⁹⁶ Agreed upon

And you'll remember the story which one of the Companions narrated, [in which he stated] that one day he was praying 'Asr behind the Prophet ﷺ, and the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ prolonged the prostration during some of it, prolonging it to an extent which was not customary, so this Companion raises his head to make sure his Prophet ﷺ is okay, he feared that he may have passed away—when to his surprise he sees a strange sight, he sees him in prostration, and al-Hasan and al-Hussain ... so the Companion feels at ease [that the Prophet ﷺ is okay] and falls back into prostration.

After he ﷺ gave salaam to end the prayer, they said to him, 'O Messenger of Allâh! You prostrated in the prayer and prolonged it ...' so he ﷺ said, 'My son was riding on my back and I did not want to disturb him ...' this boy went to the mosque for the prayer, he was, as you said, not at an age where he was able to differentiate—reminding those who pray, whether men or women, not to bring their children with them to the mosque, was not part of his ﷺ guidance.

In fact, he used to endorse them doing that in opposition to the well-known hadith whose chain of narration is not authentic, 'Keep your infants, your insane, your evil ones and your buying and selling away from your mosques ...', even though the last part of the hadith is authentic, proven to be so by other authentic hadiths, as is not hidden from you, inshaa Allâh.

The point being, he ﷺ never used to prevent them [from bringing their children to the mosque], in fact, he used to endorse it, in fact, he had a ruling specific to it: [where] he took into consideration the feelings of the mothers who used to pray behind him in salaah, and whose children were crying, the Prophet ﷺ [even] while he was calling upon his Lord, would take note of the fact that there was a woman praying who had her child with her, and so, 'I stand in

prayer, then I hear a child crying, so I make my prayer brief because I do not want to cause hardship for his mother.'

Thus, he would shorten the lengthy recitation, which was a habit of his ﷺ, in order to free up a mother for her child. He ﷺ could have done the same as many of the ignorant Imaams do and have said, 'Why do you bring your children to the mosque, disturbing us?' and so on—he ﷺ did nothing of the sort.

So based upon this, it's more fitting that a child, if he were raised with an Islamic upbringing, and then longs to go to the mosque, even if it were [just] to play, even if it were [just] to play, if he asks to go with his father to the mosque then the father should fulfill his request, since it will get him used to going to the best of all places, [the place] about which the Prophet ﷺ was asked [the following question]: 'What is the best of all places and the worst?' and so he ﷺ answered, 'The best of all places are the mosques, and the worst are the markets.'

So if a child was raised like that, and then wants to go to the mosque instead of the streets or waste his time in the markets, then this is a blessing & very pleasing news.

So the father, in fact, the mother, should take advantage of this practice and facilitate the way for him to go to the mosque. Thereafter if he, and there is no doubt that this will happen, does something while playing or having fun which is not becoming in the mosque—and what play do you want which is greater than the Chief of Mankind ﷺ being taken as something to [climb and] ride on [as al-Hasan and al-Hussain did]—and even then he didn't rebuke him, in fact he carried out a ruling specific to it [i.e., he prolonged the prostration], just like he had there [in that other instance I mentioned, when he shortened the prayer upon hearing a child cry, out of concern for the mother].

If this were done today there would be shouting from all corners of the mosques, 'You made the prayer too long for us, O Shaikh ... the boy, why did you bring the boy [to the mosque]?'

They don't know the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ, they don't know his kindness and compassion for his *Ummah*, and Allâh spoke the truth when He said, *{... for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind, and merciful.}* (Qur'an 9:128)" End Quote.⁴⁹⁷

Abu Qataadah Al-Ansaari narrated that he saw the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ leading prayer while his granddaughter from Zaynab, Umaamah bint Abu Al-'Aas was on his shoulder. When he, sallAllâhu 'alayhi wa sallam, would bow down he ﷺ would put her down, and when he would rise up from the prostration he would lift her up.⁴⁹⁸

WOMEN DOING I'TIKAAF

In some cultures, women are prohibited from going to the masjid entirely, let alone going to the masjid to perform I'tikaaf (worship in solitude at the masjid).

'A'ishah said, that the Prophet ﷺ used to spend the last ten nights of Ramadaan in i'tikaaf until he passed away, and his wives observed i'tikaaf after he died.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁷ Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 668

⁴⁹⁸ Agreed upon. The wording is by Muslim

⁴⁹⁹ Sahih Bukhari

In many parts of the world, this is unimaginable. Cultural standards have made it so that women are often excluded from the masjid, and prohibited from engaging in I'tikaaf. Some masajid do not have even basic facilities for women.

This is contrary to the Sunnah, which always ensured that women were welcome in the Houses of Allah, so that they too may participate in worshiping Him.

SAYING JAZAAKALLAHU KHAYRAN

A simple but beautiful phrase that we were taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is, "JazaakAllahu khayran" (may Allah reward you with good). This should be said to thank a fellow Muslim who does something good for you.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Whoever has a favour done for him and says to the one who did it, 'Jazak Allâhu khayran,' has done enough to thank him."⁵⁰⁰

The Sahaabah used to say this phrase very often, and remind one another to do so as well. 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: "If one of you knew what there is in his saying to his brother, 'Jazaak Allâhu khayran', you would say it a great deal to one another."⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰⁰ Tirmidhi and Nasaa'i, classed as saheeh by Albaani.

⁵⁰¹ Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah (5/322)

RESPECTING LABOURERS

The Prophet ﷺ said,

"No food is better to man than that which he earns through his manual work. Dawud, the Prophet of Allâh, ate only out of his earnings from his manual work."502

He ﷺ also said, "Prophet Zakariyya was a carpenter."503

In today's day and age, "white collar" work is highly respected due to the prestige that is associated with it, while those who make a living doing manual or domestic labour are looked down upon. The truth is, however, that the former are no better than the latter; indeed, it could be that those whose professions are considered to superior are actually those whose *rizq* (provision) is tainted by forbidden things such as *riba*.

Rather than looking down upon those whose income is derived from manual or domestic labour, we should recognize that they are even more deserving of our respect. They work hard in order to guarantee that their earning is halaal and full of *barakah*.

⁵⁰² Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁰³ Sahih Bukhari

MARRIAGE AND WEDDINGS

Marriage is one of the blessings of Allāh and one of His signs. Allāh says: *{And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect.}* (Qur'an 30:21)

As a blessing from Allah, marriage should be a source of comfort and happiness, not a cause of stress or an excuse to show off to others. By turning a wedding into an occasion to put others down or put on an extravagant display of social status and wealth, we have moved away from the Sunnah.

The wedding industry is worth billions of dollars. People are brainwashed from a young age to believe that no marriage can start without spending exorbitant amounts of money for a wedding ceremony that will only last one day. Many of these weddings also involve actions that are prohibited for us, such as music and dancing between nonMahrams and so on. This is worrisome, as it results in the couple beginning their marital life by disobeying Allah and His Messenger.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*The best of marriages is that which is most affordable.*”⁵⁰⁴

The best guidance that we have with regards to marriage is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which is superior to what any culture teaches.

⁵⁰⁴ Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani.

MARRY EARLY

The Sunnah recommends that Muslims marry at a younger age; it protects people from engaging in zina, helps couples have children sooner rather than later, and stabilizes society as a whole.

Unfortunately, it is common to find men and women in their 30s and 40s who have not yet married, let alone had children. Oftentimes, the cost of a wedding is a deterrence to even considering marriage, which once again highlights the problem with choosing culture over Deen.

In some cultures, a younger sister cannot marry until her older sisters do; sometimes it is the sons who cannot marry until their sisters have all been married.

*Narrated Abdullah: We were with the Prophet ﷺ while we were young and had no wealth whatever. So Allâh's Apostle said, "O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty (i.e. his private parts from committing illegal sexual intercourse etc.), and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power."*⁵⁰⁵

DON'T WAIT FOR OTHERS

In both Eastern and Western cultures, it has become an expectation that women should wait for men to approach them for marriage. It is considered shameful for the woman or her wali to express interest in someone else first and approach them directly.

⁵⁰⁵ Sahih Bukhari

The Sunnah does not consider this to be a requirement. Indeed, it is encouraged for the fathers and guardians of women to look for those who have the qualities and characteristics to make a good husband.

The Qur'an gives an example of a father who approached a young man with the offer of marrying his daughter.

The Prophet Shu'ayb ('alayhissalaam) told Musa ('alayhissalaam) said: *{I intend to wed one of these two daughters of mine to you, on condition that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten years, it will be (a favour) from you. But I intend not to place you under a difficulty. If Allâh wills, you will find me one of the righteous'}*. (Qur'an 28:27)

Another example is Umar ibn Khattab, who approached both Abu Bakr and 'Uthmaan to marry his daughter Hafsa after her husband was killed. Though they both declined the offer, they did so only because they knew that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had already expressed interest in her.⁵⁰⁶

Commenting on this, al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar said: "From it we learn that a man may offer his daughter or other female relative under his guardianship in marriage to one who he thinks is good or suitable, because of the benefit that this will bring to the woman who is offered in marriage, and there should be no embarrassment in that."⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁰⁷ Fat'h al-Baari

EDUCATING DAUGHTERS TO ACCEPT POLYGYNY

One more lesson we learn from the above Hadeeth is that it is better to opt for married men who are righteous, rather than men whose character is not proven, unlike what the culture makes us believe that it is only ok for divorcees or old women or the likes to be married off as second wives. And as a result we see that women are forced to live with men who do not give them their rights, who are not righteous or are of bad character.

Allah has allowed multiple marriages for a reason, it is a Sunnah and looking at the lives of the companions and the societies they lived in, almost all had multiple wives. This gives high regard to good men and forces men who are unjust to set their affairs right. This also empowers women, as they wouldn't be scared to leave an oppressive husband as they would be sure that they can become the second wife of a good man instead of take this oppression, feeling that she doesn't have an option.

It is true that many Muslims have misused and abused the concept of polygamy, and given this practice a bad reputation. However, not all polygamous marriages are automatically harmful and bad. There are still some good, sincere Muslim men who have taqwa and do their best to ensure that they are doing justice between their wives.

Should a woman be interested in such a man, or a man like this interested in marrying another woman, we should not automatically reject them simply because of a dislike of polygamy. Instead, one should consider the individual on personal merit, look at the overall situation, and if it is acceptable to the woman being asked for marriage, a wali should not prohibit her from marrying a polygamous man.

While polygamy is not for everyone, it does have its benefits, and is permissible in Islam. Sadly, there are people who consider polygamy

to be worse than zina! This is an unacceptable attitude, since the former is one that Allah has allowed and the later is a grave sin that is punishable.

AN EASY MAHR

Part of many Muslim cultures today is to demand exorbitant amounts of money or property for the bride's mahr. Although the mahr is a Shar'i right for every woman getting married, it is disliked to ask for an unreasonable amount that puts the groom into unnecessary difficulty.

The mahr of the daughters and the wives of RasulAllah ﷺ were generally simple; his beloved daughter Fatimah received a simple amount of money that 'Ali ibn Abi Talib received from selling his coat of armour.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The best of mahrs is the simplest."⁵⁰⁸

The mahr should never be used to take advantage of the groom, or to show off to others. Rather, it is an obligatory gift that the groom must present the bride, which should be reasonable and accommodating to her while not going to extremes in either stinginess or exorbitance.

⁵⁰⁸* al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqi, classed as sahih by Albani.

DON'T DELAY THE MAHR

Partially due to the phenomenon of high mahr, it has become commonplace in some cultures to delay the payment of the mahr. This was not the practice of the Prophet or his Companions, who would offer the mahr immediately and without delay.

A serious problem with delaying the mahr is that some men will pretend to "forget" to give their wives the mahr, or will make excuses as to why they cannot pay it. Some will even pressure their wives to give up the mahr entirely, which contradicts the Shari'ah.

If the bride and groom mutually agree to a short delay, or a specific time period within which the mahr is to be paid, then this is permissible. However, men must realize that this is an obligation upon them to provide to their wives; not paying it is equivalent to a debt that is owed.

SIMPLE WEDDINGS

The extravagance of modern weddings drives many people to either delaying marriage or going into extreme debt. Weddings have become a means of showing off one's wealth and social status, with little consideration given to starting the marriage in a way that pleases Allah.

The Sunnah teaches us that this attitude is completely wrong, and that we should be focused on the true meaning of marriage rather than the fancy outward trappings.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best of marriages is that which is most affordable."⁵⁰⁹

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO INVITE EVERYONE YOU KNOW

Part of a simple wedding is limiting the number of people invited. While it is recommended to have a waleemah (wedding feast) and to publicize the marriage, it is not required to invite everyone that the families know. Many Companions of the Prophet got married without inviting him to their waleemah, and it was never considered to be an insult.

People nowadays invite almost everyone they know, that is one of the main reasons why the expenses have gone so high. Although it is good and advisable to invite and share the happiness with people we know, it doesn't mean we turn our wedding into a festival where thousands are invited and gathered to waste money, food, gossip and discuss useless issues.

⁵⁰⁹ Abu Dawood, classed as sahih by Albani

INVITING THE POOR

A forgotten sunnah that should be one of the first sunan to be implemented at weddings is to invite the poor to the waleemah. Today, people are eager to invite the wealthy, the famous, and those with high social status, while completely ignoring those in their own neighborhoods who go to bed hungry.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*The worst food is the food of the marriage banquet from which those are left out who would like to come; and to which those are invited who refuse to come. He who rejects an invitation disobeys Allâh and His Messenger.*”⁵¹⁰

Rather than throwing a lavish feast at a five-star hotel, consider holding the wedding at a more modest location, and ensure that the poor and needy from the community are invited to take part alongside everyone else.

CONGRATULATE THE BRIDE AND GROOM

On the joyous occasion of marriage, it is natural to share loving sentiments with the bride and groom. The Sunnah provides us with a beautiful du'a to tell the newlywed couple:

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَبَارَكَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَجَمِيعَ يَتَسْكُنُونَ فِي خَيْرٍ

“May Allah bless you, and may He send blessings upon you, and may He unite you both in good.”⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ Sahih Muslim

⁵¹¹ Musnad Ahmad & Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

THE ETIQUETTE OF FOOD

Food is a central part of many cultures, and can be a way of bringing people together and sharing positive experiences. However, many people are unaware of the sunan of eating and drinking, and as a result, engage in practices that are contrary to the Sunnah.

SHARING AND NOT WASTING IT

One of the problems with extravagance is that people waste food regularly and do not take it seriously. At restaurants, people order more than they can eat and then toss the leftovers in the garbage; at parties, people pile their plates with food and then don't finish it. In particular, it is a sad fact that in the Muslim world, Ramadan is a time when people waste the most food! This is completely unacceptable

The Sunnah is not only to be careful not to waste food, but to share it with others.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "The food for two suffices for three; and the food for three suffices for four people."⁵¹²

Contrary to the attitude that people have, sharing food does not result in a lack of food, but ensures that there is blessing in the food and that food is not wasted.

⁵¹² Agreed upon

USING THE RIGHT HAND

The Prophet ﷺ said, "When any one of you eats, let him eat with his right hand, and when he drinks, let him drink with his right hand, because the Shaytaan eats with his left hand and drinks with his left hand."⁵¹³

This is a simple Sunnah that is easy to follow, although it may be initially challenging to those who are left-handed.

Also, it is being commonly seen in the Muslims of sub-continent after eating when the right hand is not clean they use the left hand to hold the glass and put their right hand under it, this is NOT SUNNAH!

Sunnah is to use the right hand, if you care about the glass getting dirty, drink after you wash your hands or drink with your right hand then wash the glass along with your hands, either way do not try to modify the Sunnah because that is just not possible, something will either be Sunnah or not.

CLEANING THE PLATE

Related to the sunnah of not wasting food is that of ensuring that one not only finishes their food, but cleans their plates and utensils afterwards as well.

⁵¹³ Sahih Muslim

Anas ibn Maalik narrated that when the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ ate, he would lick his three fingers. Anas said: "And he said, 'If any one of you drops a piece of food, let him remove any dirt from it and eat it, and not leave it for the Shaytaan.' And he commanded us to clean the plate, and said, 'For you do not know where in your food the blessing is.'"⁵¹⁴

EATING A PIECE OF FOOD THAT FALLS ON THE FLOOR

In the same hadeeth stated above it is clear that it is Sunnah to pick up the food/pieces that fall down and eat as long as the place where it fell wasn't wet or filthy.

In conclusion, this chapter reminds us that regardless of our varied cultural backgrounds, the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger binds us all together and is a guide for us on how to live our lives in the best way possible. While our cultures can be a source of comfort for us in some ways, we must remember that there is no culture or tradition worth preferring over the Sunnah.

May Allah make us of those who strive to follow the Sunnah in every aspect of our lives, aameen!

⁵¹⁴ Sahih Muslim

CHAPTER - IX

FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO LIFESTYLE

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the greatest of all creation, the leader of humankind, was a man who lived in the simplest of ways. In his youth, he worked as a shepherd; as an adult, he was a merchant who worked for Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, the woman who later became his wife.

Later on, in his older age, he lived an even simpler life, such that A'ishah said: "We would look at the new moon, then another new moon, three new moons in two months, and no fire would be lit in the houses of the Prophet ﷺ." 'Urwah ibn azZubayr asked her, "O my aunt, what did you live on?" She responded, "The two black things, dates and water. But the Prophet ﷺ had some neighbours among the Ansaar who had milch-animals, and they used to give the Prophet ﷺ some of their milk, and he gave it to us to drink."⁵¹⁵

The last Prophet, the leader of all mankind, could have had whatever wealth and luxuries he wanted in this world... yet he chose to live with little, and set his goals for the Hereafter. He knew that when it came to worldly possessions, no human will ever be truly satisfied.

⁵¹⁵ Agreed upon

Prophet ﷺ said, "If the son of Adam had a valley full of gold, he would want to have two valleys. Nothing fills his mouth except dust, and Allāh will forgive whoever repents to him."⁵¹⁶

Of course, it is not sinful to work hard and earn money, nor is it encouraged to live a life of poverty; indeed, Allah loves those who earn wealth and spend it in His way. However, the greater one's wealth, the more accountable one becomes on the Day of Judgment with regards to how it is spent.

What is discouraged is the endless thirst for the Dunya and making it our primary goal in life. The Prophet ﷺ was most concerned about how many of his Ummah would be distracted by seeking wealth. He ﷺ said, "By Allāh, it is not poverty I fear for you, but rather I fear you will be given the wealth of the world just as it was given to those before you. You will compete for it just as they competed for it and it will destroy you just as it destroyed them."⁵¹⁷

Though he lived a simple life, the Prophet was still swift in giving charity; he was acutely aware of how many people around him were in need, and he cared more about the well-being of others than of himself. He knew that this world was temporary, and lived in a way that reflected that.

Abdullah ibn Umar said: "The Prophet ﷺ took me by the shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a wayfarer.'"⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Agreed upon

⁵¹⁷ Agreed upon

⁵¹⁸ Sahih Bukhari

The Prophet ﷺ also said: “*What have I to do with the world? In connection with the world, I am just like a rider who sits under the shade of a tree, then goes off and leaves it.*”⁵¹⁹

SIMPLE LIFE

As we have already seen, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lived a simple life; he never asked for great wealth, but enough sustenance for himself and his family to keep them going.

Abu Hurairah reported: Messenger of Allâh ﷺ used to supplicate: “*O Allâh, make the provisions of family of Muhammad a bare subsistence.*”⁵²⁰

The Companions of Messenger of Allâh mentioned the life of the world before him. He said, “*Do you not hear? Do you not hear? Simplicity (in life) is part of Faith, simplicity is part of Faith.*”⁵²¹

The details of his home, his food, and even his mattress were all related to us, to show us just how frugal a life he lived.

A’ishah said, “*The mattress of the Prophet ﷺ, on which he slept, was made of leather stuffed with the fiber of the date-palm tree.*”⁵²²

Such simple living can only be achieved when one decides to make the Hereafter a priority, recognizes that this world is temporary, and does not place have an undue attachment to worldly possessions.

⁵¹⁹ Tirmidhi; Ibn Majah & Musnad Ahmad, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁵²⁰ Agreed upon

⁵²¹ Sunan Abu Dawud, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵²² Agreed upon

Sahl bin Sa'd narrated that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "If the world to Allâh were equal to a mosquito's wing, then He would not allow the disbeliever to have a sip of water from it."⁵²³

Jabir bin 'Abdullah (May Allâh be pleased with him) reported: Messenger of Allâh ﷺ was passing through the bazaar with his Companions on his both sides, when he saw a dead skinny lamb. He held its ear and said, "Who of you would like to have it for a dirham?" They replied, "We do not like to get it for nothing, and what shall we do with it?". Then he ﷺ asked, "Would you like to have it for nothing?". They replied, "Had it been alive, it would have been defective because it is skinny; but when dead it is of no use." Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "Truly, the world is more contemptible to Allâh than this (the dead lamb) is to you."⁵²⁴

We should never feel envious of the disbelievers or the hypocrites and evil-doers who enjoy the wealth of this world. This world is for them, while Paradise is an eternity of joy and reward and everlasting luxury. Instead of focusing all our energy on this world, we should seek to put our best efforts into doing good deeds, earning Allah's Pleasure and His reward.

There is consolation as well for those who are always struggling financially in this world, those who live in poverty. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, "The poor will enter Jannah five hundred years before the rich."⁵²⁵

⁵²³ At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵²⁴ Sahih Muslim

⁵²⁵ At-Tirmidhi & Ibn Majah, classed as Sahih by Albani

BEING CONTENT

In addition to simple living, a key point that will assist the believer in living out the meaning of “live in this world as a traveler” is to be content with little. Some people may live a simple life, but constantly resent those who do not; they may be envious and jealous, hungering for more.

The Sunnah is to be aware that our ultimate goal in life is to please Allah and earn Jannah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ embodied this attitude in the best of ways.

He ﷺ said:

- “*Happiness is due to him who is guided to Islam and possesses provision that suffices him for his day and remains content.*”⁵²⁶
- “*Wealth is not in having vast riches, it is in contentment.*”⁵²⁷
- “*Whosoever begins the day feeling family security and good health; and possessing provision for his day is as though he possessed the whole world.*”⁵²⁸

A man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “O Messenger of Allâh, guide me to such an action which, if I do Allâh will love me and the people will also love me.” He said, “Have no desire for this world, Allâh will love you; and have no desire for what people possess, and the people will love you.”⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ At-Tirmidhi, he classed is hasan sahih.

⁵²⁷ Agreed upon

⁵²⁸ At-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan

⁵²⁹ Ibn Majah, graded as hasan

It is this attitude of contentment with simple living that distinguishes the believer who trusts in Allah, from those who rely upon earthly possessions to feel secure.

He explained to us the importance of being aware of our desires, and taught us the necessity of disciplining ourselves.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "No man fills a container worse than his stomach. A few morsels that keep his back upright are sufficient for him. If he has to, then he should keep one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for his breathing."⁵³⁰

MONEY MATTERS

The recommendation to live a simple life does not mean that we should all live harsh lifestyles of poverty or ascetism. As well as being a test, wealth can also be a blessing if one is able to spend it in the way of Allah.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: Some of the poor Emigrants came to Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said to him, "The wealthy have obtained all high ranks and everlasting bliss." He asked, "How is that?"

They replied: "They offer prayer as we do, and observe fasting as we do, but they give in charity and we do not, and they emancipate slaves and we cannot."

⁵³⁰ At-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani

He ﷺ said, “Shall I not teach you something whereby you will catch up with those who have preceded you and will get ahead of those who follow you, and no one will surpass you unless he does the same as you do?” They said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allâh.”

He said, “Say: Subhan Allâh, and Allâhu Akbar, and praise Him (by saying Al-hamdu lillah) thirty-three times at the end of every prayer.” They returned to him and said: “Our brothers, the possessors of wealth, having heard what we are doing, have started doing the same.” Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “This is Grace of Allâh which He gives to whom He wishes.”⁵³¹

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ also said, “Envy is permitted only in two cases: A man whom Alah gives wealth, and he disposes of it rightfully, and a man to whom Allâh gives knowledge which he applies and teaches it.”⁵³²

The Companions, such as Abu Bakr, ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan, and AbdurRahman ibn al-‘Awf were all successful businessmen; others from the Muhajireen and Ansar worked in agriculture and did well harvesting and selling crops. Others were skilled craftsmen, teachers, and so on. Earning one’s own living – and doing well at it – is a praiseworthy thing that is also a source of good deeds, if one has the correct intention.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to ask Allah for halal rizq (provisions) and would seek refuge with Allah from poverty. After Fajr, he used to supplicate:

⁵³¹ Agreed upon

⁵³² Agreed upon

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ عِلْمًا نَافِعًا، وَرِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَعَمَلاً مُتَقَبِّلًا

Allahumma inni as' aluka 'Ilman naafi'an, wa rizqan tayyiban, wa 'amalan mutaqabbalan

(O Allâh, I ask You for a good (halal) provision, beneficial knowledge and accepted deeds.)⁵³³

He would also say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكُفْرِ وَالنُّقْرِ وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ

"Allâhumma inni a'oodhu bika min al-kufri wa'l-faqri wa 'adhaab il-qabr."

(O Allâh, I seek refuge with You from disbelief, poverty and the torment of the grave.)⁵³⁴

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ urged us to seek our livings by doing honourable work when he said: "Whoever tries to be independent, Allah will enrich him. Whoever tries to be patient, Allah will give him patience, and no one is given a better or vaster gift than patience."⁵³⁵

What makes wealth a blessing is by following the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and spending it in those ways which are pleasing to Allah: providing for one's family, caring for one's dependents, taking care of one's parents, giving in charity regularly, and so on.

When it comes to money and seeking wealth, there are several things which we should all be aware of and strive to implement in our lives.

⁵³³ Ahmad & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵³⁴ An-Nasaa'i, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵³⁵ Bukhari, Muslim, Malik, Abu Dawud, an-Nasaa'i, at-Tirmidhi

RIZQ IS WRITTEN

Know that our provision is fixed – we will not die until we have consumed the last morsel that was decreed for us.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud narrated a lengthy hadith which describes the creation of the fetus and the soul:

“...The angel is then sent to him and he breathes into him the spirit. He is also commanded to issue four decrees: to record his sustenance, his life span, his deeds and [whether he will be] unhappy [by entering Hell] or happy [by entering Paradise].”⁵³⁶

Although our provisions have been written for us, this does not mean that we cannot seek to increase our rizq or the blessings in our rizq. Indeed, the Sunnah has taught us various ways for us to do so.

Istaghfaar (Seeking Forgiveness). Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “I said (to them): Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance; And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers” [Nooh 70:10-12].

“Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance that He may grant you good enjoyment for a term appointed and bestow His abounding grace to every owner of grace. But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a great day”. (Hūd 11:3)

⁵³⁶ Agreed upon

Taqwa (Piety)

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “*And whoever has taqwā of Allāh, He will make for him a way out (of difficulty) and provide for him from (sources) he could not imagine*”. (Talāq 65:2-3).

And also the saying of Allāh, the Exalted: *And if the people of the towns had believed andhadtaqwa (piety), certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they belied (the Messengers). So We took them (with punishment) for what they used to earn.* [A'rāf (7:96)]

Tawakkul (Reliance upon Allāh)

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *And who ever places his trust in Allāh, He will suffice him (in his needs). Verily, Allāh will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things.* [(65:3)].

Also the Messenger ﷺ, "If only you were to rely upon Allāh as He truly should be relied upon He would bestow you with sustenance just as the birds leave hungry in the morning and return full." 537

⁵³⁷ Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad & Ibn Majah, classed as Hasan.

Performing Hajj and 'Umrah often

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Follow up between (the performance) of Hajj and 'Umrah for they remove poverty and sins just like the bellow removes the dross from iron, gold and silver. And a righteous Hajj has no other reward but Paradise."⁵³⁸

Upholding ties of kinship

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever is pleased that his sustenance is enlarged and his life is extended then let him maintain the ties of kinship"⁵³⁹

Giving in charity

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "Say: Truly, my Lord enlarges the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and (also) restricts (it) for him, and whatsoever you spend of anything (in Allah's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of providers" [Saba' 34:39].

And it was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth."⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Ahmad and declared sahih by Albani.

⁵³⁹ Sahih Bukhari.

⁵⁴⁰ Sahih Muslim.

Caring for the poor and vulnerable

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Are you aided and granted sustenance except by way of the poor, weak ones amongst you?"⁵⁴¹

Hijrah (emigration) for the Sake of Allah

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "He who emigrates (from his home) in the cause of Allah, will find on earth many dwelling places and plenty to live by". [Nisā' (4:100)]

Du'a (supplication)

The Prophet ﷺ used to supplicate:

- "I seek refuge with you from the trial of poverty."⁵⁴²
- "Seek refuge in Allāh from poverty, scarcity and humiliation, and that you oppress (others) or are oppressed."⁵⁴³
- "O Allaah, I ask you for beneficial knowledge, good (halaal) provision and accepted good deeds)."⁵⁴⁴

Supplication is from the keys of opening upon sustenance and it also repels poverty and tribulations.

⁵⁴¹ Sahih Bukhari.

⁵⁴² Sahih Bukhari.

⁵⁴³ Adab Al Mufrad, Abu Dawood & Nisaai'i, classed as Sahih by Albani.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibn Majah, classed as Sahih by Albani.

Dedication in seeking halal earnings

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "O Allāh bless my ummah in its embarkment (of their affairs) in the earlier (part of the day)." ⁵⁴⁵

Shukr (Gratefulness)

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: *If you are grateful (give thanks), I will give you more (of My blessings), but if you are thankless (ungrateful), My punishment is indeed severe.*" (Ibrāhīm 14:7).

Being merciful to debtors in need

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "...Whoever is easy-going with a debtor who is facing hardship, Allāh will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter..." ⁵⁴⁶

The most important thing to remember is that pursuing any means of wealth that comes from prohibited sources or practices will always result in a loss of blessing and indeed, a loss of benefit from that wealth to begin with. We must know that we will receive only that which was decreed from us, and will never be able to escape or avoid it.

⁵⁴⁵ Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and others, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵⁴⁶ Sahih Muslim

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Even if the son of Adam were to flee from his sustenance as he tries to flee from death, his sustenance will still overtake him in the same way as death overtakes him.”⁵⁴⁷

Work hard, seek only the permissible, and have trust in Allah – Allah will provide for you in the best of ways.

{... And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out; And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.} (Qur'an 75:2-3)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ warned us against the fitnah that wealth would pose to us: “Verily, there is a Fitnah (trial) for every nation and the trial for my nation is wealth.”⁵⁴⁸

A balance must be struck between earning wealth, using it for beneficial purposes, and not growing attached to it or seeking it in an unhealthy manner. We must always remember to prioritize our faith above all.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Allâh has shared out your attitudes among you just as He has shared out your provisions. Allâh gives worldly provision to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love, but He gives religion only to those whom He loves. So whoever is given religion, Allâh loves him...”⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Al-Hilyah, graded Hasan by Albani in al-Saheehah.

⁵⁴⁸ At-Tirmidhi, authenticated by Albani

⁵⁴⁹ Ahmad; classed as sahih by Albani

GIVING THE SURPLUS

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “*O son of Adam, if you spend the surplus, it will be better for you; and if you retain it, it will be bad for you...*”⁵⁵⁰

What is the “surplus” we were told to give in charity? Many of us make an effort to save money for future luxuries – whether it’s a vacation to an exotic location, a fancier car, or something similar. Some people judge their stability and security based on how much money they have saved away, yet how many of them unexpectedly end up with absolutely nothing?

Those who have tawakkul in Allah realize that the only source of safety and security is Allah alone – and thus, instead of relying solely upon financial savings, are always mindful of Allah, and choose to spend the surplus of their wealth for the Sake of Allah.

GIVING AWAY BELOVED POSSESSIONS

Abu Talhah was the richest among the Ansar of Madinah, and possessed the largest property of palm-trees. Among his most beloved possessions was his garden known as Bairuha’, which was opposite the mosque, and the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ often visited it and drank from its fresh water.

Then this Qur’anic verse was revealed: {*By no means shall you attain Al-Birr (piety, righteousness – here it means Allâh’s reward i.e., Jannah), unless you spend in Allâh’s Cause of that which you love.*} (Qur’an 3:92)

⁵⁵⁰ Sahih Muslim

Abu Talhah came to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ and said, “Allâh says in His Book: {By no means shall you attain Al-Birr, unless you spend (in Allâh’s Cause) of that which you love}, and the dearest of my property is Bairuha’ so I have given it as Sadaqah (charity) for Allâh’s sake. I anticipate its reward with Him; so spend it, O Messenger of Allâh, as Allâh guides you.”

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “Well done! That is profit earning property. I have heard what you have said, but I think you should spend it on your nearest relatives.”

Abu Talhah then distributed it among his nearest relatives and cousins.⁵⁵¹

This narration is a beautiful example of how the Companions were eager to give up the best of their worldly property, in anticipation of the even greater reward of Allah in the Hereafter. They were ready to sacrifice that which they loved most, for the sake of the One they loved most.

We on the other hand, many a time opt not to give Sadaqah just because we do not want to get the change of a higher denomination note, even after the first intention was to give something but on seeing that we do not have any change in the pocket we opt not to give.

This hadith teaches us that the best charity is not to give from the leftovers of our property and wealth, but to give from that which we enjoy most. The best charity is that which we give from our hearts, knowing that we desire it, but willing to part with it for the Sake of Allah.

⁵⁵¹ Agreed upon

NOT LOOKING DOWN ON POOR RELATIVES

A characteristic that tends to accompany those who have cultivated a strong spiritual character is that, with wealth, some people become arrogant. The rich looking down upon the poor is not a new phenomenon, but it is one which we must all be extremely wary of. Feeling arrogant and looking down upon those who are less well off is a disease of the heart that must be rectified.

Mus'ab bin Sa'd bin Abu Waqqas reported: Sa'd considered himself better than his inferiors, so the Prophet ﷺ said to him, "You are given help and provision because of your weak ones."⁵⁵²

Unfortunately, the attitude of people looking down on those with lesser finances sometimes begins within families, with parents favouring a son who makes more money, with brothers who judge each other based on wealth, and so on. The Sunnah teaches us to have a different attitude – for us to recognize that sometimes the only reason we have been blessed with wealth is in order to take care of those who do not have what we do.

⁵⁵² Abu Dawood & Sahih Bukhari, these wordings are from Abu Dawood.

PREPARING A WILL

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “*It is the duty of a Muslim who has something which is to be given as a bequest not to have it for two (or three) nights without executing a written will.*”⁵⁵³

Ibn ‘Umar said: Since I heard the Messenger of Allâh say this, I have never spent a night without having my will with me.

None of us know our time of death, and thus, we should be constantly aware that we could die at any moment. Preparing a will is a means of reminding us of death, preparing ourselves for the Hereafter, and warding off future disputes with regards to property between the heirs. This is particularly important for those who do not live in Muslim countries or who live in places where the default law is not the Shari’ah.

FORGOTTEN SUNNAN OF BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

Even in business dealings, the Sunnah teaches us certain manners and practices that will elevate our behavior to become more blessed.

⁵⁵³ Agreed upon

BEING EASY TO DEAL WITH

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “May Allâh have mercy upon a man who is easy-going when he sells and when he buys and when he asks for payment.”⁵⁵⁴

This doesn’t mean that a person should be naïve or allows others to take advantage of them; rather, it means that instead of putting someone in hardship, they should be lenient and easy-going, within reason.

BEING GENEROUS

*The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ saw a man who weighed things for a fee and the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said to him: “Weigh and give a little more.”*⁵⁵⁵

Whereas it is prohibited to cheat someone by giving them less than what is paid for, the Sunnah encourages us to be generous even in our business dealings. Not only does giving a little extra engender good feelings between the buyer and the seller, but it is always good to err on the side of caution.

⁵⁵⁴ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁵⁵ at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawood, an-Nasaa’i and Ibn Maajah, classed as hasan sahih

ALLOWING RETURNS EASILY

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Whoever lets a Muslim off (a transaction), Allâh will relieve him of his distress on the Day of Resurrection."⁵⁵⁶

Allowing refunds and returns on transactions is a way of easing another person's situation; it is generosity on the behalf of the seller, as well as a good deed. Understanding that the buyer might be in unexpected financial difficulty, or discovers that the item they purchased was not what they were actually looking for, shows good will. Whomever is willing to be easygoing in this matter, Allah will be generous to them on the Day of Judgment.

THANKING THE CREDITOR

Someone who lends money to another person, without demanding interest or any other prohibited practices, should be appreciated. There are very few people who allow others to borrow from them without expecting something in return. Thus, the debtor should show appreciation when they pay back the creditor.

It was narrated from Isla'il bin Ibrahim bin 'Abdullah bin Abi Rabi'ah, from his father, that his grandfather said: "The Prophet ﷺ borrowed forty thousand from me, then some wealth came to him, and he paid me back and said: 'May Allâh bless your family and your wealth for you: the reward for lending is praise and repayment.'⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁶ Abu Dawood & Ibn Maajah, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵⁵⁷ Sunan an-Nasaa'I, classed as hasan by Albani

Making du'a for the lender and showing them appreciation for their good deed is not only good manners, but will often increase love for the sake of Allah.

BEING LENIENT WITH REPAYMENT

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ urged us to be kind, generous, and lenient when lending money to others. Many people borrow money due to their severe financial troubles, and may not always have the ability to repay the loan immediately or within a short period of time. Should a debtor request additional time for repayment, we are always encouraged to give them extra time to do so.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

- “Whoever waits for one who is in (financial) difficulty (to pay a debt) or waives it for him, Allâh will shade him in His shade.”⁵⁵⁸
- “...Whoever is easy-going with a debtor who is facing hardship, Allâh will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter...”⁵⁵⁹
- “May Allâh have mercy upon a man who is easy-going when he sells and when he buys and when he asks for payment.”⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁸ Sahih Muslim

⁵⁵⁹ Sahih Muslim

⁵⁶⁰ Sahih Bukhari

In conclusion, this chapter reminds us of the importance of remembering Allah with regards to our wealth and financial dealings. We should always strive to give in charity, to be kind to those in need, to support those who need financial assistance, and to seek Allah's Mercy and reward every step of the way.

Allah tells us: *{And give them something yourselves out of the wealth of Allâh which He has bestowed upon you.}* Qur'an 24:33

The wealth that we so often consider to ours, truly belongs to Allah; He gives provision to those whom He wills. We should never feel arrogant or superior to others based on our financial status, but must remember that Allah is Ever-Aware of the state of our hearts and how we deal with others.

We should seek only permissible earnings, be swift in giving in charity, and use our wealth for the Sake of Allah.

May Allah give us all good Provisions along with the Hidayah to use it in Halal ways and spend it in His cause.

CHAPTER - X

FORGOTTEN SUNAN OF GOOD CHARACTER

Our attitude in life – in private, in public, with close friends and family, with fellow Muslims, with strangers, with nonMuslims, with the rich and poor alike – is a major indication of our character. Our attitude is a reflection of who we truly are within ourselves, and a sign of whether we are true, sincere believers, or merely hypocrites putting on an act for others.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*There lies within the body a piece of flesh. If it is sound, the whole body is sound; and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily this piece is the heart.*”⁵⁶¹

The importance of a good attitude and character cannot be over emphasized. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*I have only been sent to perfect good character.*”⁵⁶²

He was asked about that which will admit most people to Paradise. He ﷺ said: “*Fear of Allāh and a good attitude.*”⁵⁶³

A positive attitude is one of the consistent traits of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. Good character is considered to be half of our faith; some of the Pious Predecessors said that good character is the

⁵⁶¹ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁶² Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁶³ at-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

fruit of knowledge and of implementing the religion. Sadly, we see some people claiming to be religious and knowledgeable in the religion, yet are amongst the most harsh and negative individuals to be around.

He ﷺ used to ask Allah for good character, saying, "O Allâh, You have made my outward form beautiful, so beautify my character."⁵⁶⁴

Allah created us all with different personalities and inclinations. For some people, good character – whether it is in being patient, generous, kind, always smiling and so on – is simply a part of their inherent nature.

For others, certain aspects of good character can be more of a struggle to cultivate. However, the reward from Allah is proportionate to the effort one puts into striving to be a person of good character.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Knowledge is acquired by seeking it, and patience is acquired by striving to be patient. The one who strives to attain good will be given it, and the one who strives to protect himself from evil will be protected."⁵⁶⁵

RasulAllah mentioned to us certain aspects of good character that we should all strive to embody. The ahadeeth showing his great character are numerous, and a lot of them like being truthful, humble, having gheerah etc are mandatory for every Muslim. But below we will enumerate some social traits missing in the Ummah today.

⁵⁶⁴ Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan; classed as sahih by Albani

⁵⁶⁵ Narrated by al-Khateeb and others from the hadith of Abu'l-Darda'; classed as hasan by al-Albaani

GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*The most perfect of the believers in faith is the one who is best in attitude and humble, who get along with others and others get along with them, and there is no good in the one who does not get along with others and they do not get along with him.*”⁵⁶⁶

While we are not expected to become best friends with everyone, we should make a sincere effort to be the kind of person whom others feel comfortable being around. To have good character, to be a modest person, and to be friendly with others are all characteristics that are praiseworthy.

DON'T TALK TOO MUCH

The tongue is one of the most dangerous body parts, for every word we utter is recorded and will be an evidence for or against us. The Prophet ﷺ said: “*Whoever believes in Allâh and the last day should either speak what is good or remain silent.*”⁵⁶⁷

If one refrains from gossiping, backbiting, discussing forbidden topics and so on, it will drastically reduce how much we speak in general.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “*Do not indulge in excessive talk except when remembering Allâh. Excessive talking without the*

⁵⁶⁶ Narrated by al-Tabaraani; classed as hasan by Albani

⁵⁶⁷ Sahih Muslim

Remembrance of Allâh hardens the heart; and those who are the farthest from Allâh are those whose hearts are hard.”⁵⁶⁸

‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir (may Allâh be pleased with him) narrated: “I said, ‘O Messenger of Allâh, what is salvation?’ He said, ‘Control your tongue, keep to your house and weep over your sin.’”⁵⁶⁹

At-Tirmidhi also narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said to Mu’adh (may Allâh be pleased with him), after teaching him some of the laws of Islam, “Shall I not tell you what is the foundation of all that?” I [Mu’adh] said: “Of course, O Prophet of Allâh.” He took hold of his tongue and said, “Control this.” I said, “O Prophet of Allâh, will we be held responsible for what we say with it?” He said, “May your mother be bereft of you, O Mu’adh! Will the people be thrown into Hell on their faces or on their noses for anything other than the harvest of their tongues?”⁵⁷⁰

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, “Whosoever gives me a guarantee to safeguard what is between his jaws and what is between his legs, I shall guarantee him Jannah.”⁵⁷¹

This sunnah is one that has been forgotten by most people, who derive great enjoyment in socializing simply for the sake of gossiping and talking unnecessarily. Getting together is not forbidden in and of itself, but one should seek to make social gatherings an opportunity to remember Allah, to enjoin good, and to implement good deeds.

⁵⁶⁸ At-Tirmidhi, graded hasan.

⁵⁶⁹ At-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵⁷⁰ Classed as saheeh by al-Albani.

⁵⁷¹ Sahih Bukhari

RECONCILE

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Shall I not tell you something that is better than the status of (voluntary) fasting, prayer and charity?” The people said: “Yes.” He said: “Reconciling in a case of discord...”⁵⁷²

Many people get into conflicts with one another, and few people are willing to intervene and reconcile the opposing parties – sometimes due to their own friendship loyalties, or out of a twisted enjoyment of watching people fight. However, to reconcile between Muslims who are in a state of discord with one another is a good deed that can be even more superior to voluntary prayer and fasting.

DO NOT GET ANGRY

Anger is one of the most powerful weapons of the Shaytan against us. It causes people to lose control and to say and do things which they regret severely merely moments later. To become angry easily is a characteristic which is disliked in Islam, and a disease of the heart.

A man said to the Prophet ﷺ: “Advise me.” He said: “Do not get angry.” He repeated his question several times and he said: “Do not get angry.”⁵⁷³

According to another report, the man said: “I thought about what the Prophet ﷺ said, and I realized that anger combines all kinds of evil.”⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² Abu Dawood & at-Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani

⁵⁷³ Sahih Bukhari

In another hadith Anas reported that the Prophet ﷺ passed by some people who were wrestling. He asked, "What is this?" They said: "So-and-so is the strongest, he can defeat any opponent." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Shall I not tell you who is even stronger than him? The man who, when he is mistreated by another, controls his anger, has defeated his own shaytaan and the shaytaan of the one who made him angry."⁵⁷⁵

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ knew how easy it is for people to say inappropriate things while angry. He would ask Allah to protect him from that by saying, "O Allâh, by Your knowledge of the Unseen and Your power over Your creation, keep me alive for as long as You know life is good for me, and cause me to die when You know death is good for me. O Allâh, I ask You to make me fear You in secret and in public, and I ask You to make me speak the truth in times of contentment and of anger..."

'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allâh be pleased with him) said: "It may be known whether a person is truly patient at the time of anger." And he used to say, "The beginning of anger is madness and the end of it is regret, and anger cannot be justified by offering a humble apology. Calamities arise because of anger." It was said to al-Shu'bi: "Why is a person who is quick to get angry also quick to calm down, and the one who is slow to get angry is slow to calm down?" He said: "Because anger is like fire; that which is easier to start is easier to extinguish."⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁴ Musnad Ahmad, 5/373

⁵⁷⁵ Reported by al-Bazzaar, and Ibn Hajar said its isnaad is saheeh. Al-Fath, 10/519

⁵⁷⁶ Al-Adaab al-Shar'iyyah, 1/183

CONTROLLING ONE'S ANGER

There are various practices that we have been taught in order to control and to manage one's anger. It is natural for people to lose their tempers, but it is required for us to know how to channel that anger and to control it, rather than letting it control us.

1. Seek refuge from Shaytan

When we feel anger overtaking us, the first thing that we should say is "A'uthu billaahi min ashShaytaan arRajeem" (I seek refuge in Allah from the cursed Shaytaan).

Sulayman ibn Sard said: "I was sitting with the Prophet ﷺ, and two men were slandering one another. One of them was red in the face, and the veins on his neck were standing out. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'I know a word which, if he were to say it, what he feels would go away. If he said "I seek refuge with Allâh from the Shaytaan," what he feels (i.e., his anger) would go away.'"⁵⁷⁷

2. Keeping silent

Speaking in haste out of anger can have devastating consequences. The best thing one can do is to The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent."⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁷⁸ Imaam Ahmad, Sahih Al Jaami'

3. Sit or lie down

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to us: "If one of you gets angry when he is standing, let him sit down, and if that does not take away his anger, then let him lie down."⁵⁷⁹

Changing one's position forces one to de-escalate their state of agitation, and control their actions.

4. Think of the reward for keeping calm

Controlling your anger when you are in a position of power or position is a truly admirable feat. Keeping yourself calm is something so important that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allāh will fill his heart with contentment on the Day of Resurrection."⁵⁸⁰

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever controls his anger at the time when he has the means to act upon it, Allāh will call him before all of mankind on the Day of Resurrection, and will let him choose of the Hul al-'Ayn whoever he wants."⁵⁸¹

5. Perform Wudhu

Abu Waa'il said, "We were sitting with 'Urwah ibn Muhammad when a man entered and said things to him that angered him. When he became angry he stood up and left, he returned having performed ablution and said: My father narrated to me that my grandfather

⁵⁷⁹ Ahmad & Abu Dawood,, authenticated by Albani

⁵⁸⁰ Reported by al-Tabaraani, classed as sahih by Albani

⁵⁸¹ Sunan Abu Dawud, classed as hasan by Albani

(who was a Companion) narrated to him that the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: "Indeed anger is from the Shaytaan, and indeed Shaytaan was created from fire, and indeed fire is put out with water. So if any of you were to become angry, perform ablution."⁵⁸²

These various sunan are all things we must implement in order to overcome this negative aspect of our character, so that we may conduct ourselves with the behavior appropriate for a believer.

BE POSITIVE

As Muslims, we should always be optimistic, and that optimism begins in how we think about Allah. We should always expect the best from Him, knowing that He is the Most Merciful and Forgiving. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us that Allah said: "I treat my servant in accordance with his opinion of me."⁵⁸³

We are encouraged to have a positive outlook in times of ease and times of hardship.

The Prophet ﷺ said "*How amazing is the case of the believer; there is good for him in everything, and this characteristic is exclusively for him alone. If he experiences something pleasant, he is thankful, and that is good for him; and if he comes across some diversity, he is patient, and that is good for him.*"⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸² Ahmad and Abu Dawood, classed as hasan by Ibn Hajar

⁵⁸³ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁸⁴ Sahih Muslim

To be optimistic and positive also means refraining from being suspicious and having unnecessarily negative perspectives of other people. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the falsest of speech....*”⁵⁸⁵

“Beware of suspicion” means: beware of following suspicion or beware of negative thinking, for suspicion is an accusation that comes to mind without any evidence.⁵⁸⁶

Ibn Baaz (may Allâh have mercy on him) said: “What is prescribed for the believer is to respect his brother if he offers an excuse to him, to accept his apology if possible, and to think positively of him as much as possible, striving to keep hearts free of resentment and aiming to bring about unity and co-operation in doing good...”⁵⁸⁷

BE GENTLE & FORBEARING

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said to Ashajj b. Qays: “*You possess two qualities that Allâh loves: forbearance and patience.*”⁵⁸⁸

He ﷺ also said, “*He who is deprived of forbearance and gentleness is, in fact, deprived of all good.*”⁵⁸⁹

In another narration, he ﷺ said: “*Allâh will not increase a person who forgives others except in honour.*”⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁵ Agreed upon

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Awn al-Ma’bood (9/2195-2196)

⁵⁸⁷ ‘Majmoo’Fatwa Ibn Baz, 26/365

⁵⁸⁸ Sahih Muslim

⁵⁸⁹ Sahih Muslim

Being patient and forbearing with others is a rare and valuable trait that we should all seek to cultivate. Not only will it earn Allah's Pleasure, but it will make you a person who truly stands out amongst all others. By tying in these qualities to your faith in Allah, others will recognize how it is the beauty of Islam that is shining through your character.

SAYING "I DON'T KNOW"

It is reported that 'Alī b. Abī Tālib – Allāh be pleased with him – said, "The servant [of Allāh] should not fear except his sins, and should not hope except in his Lord. The ignorant should not be ashamed to ask, and the knowledgeable should not be ashamed to say – if he does not know something – 'Allāh knows best.'"⁵⁹¹

Today, too many people are quick to answer questions that they do not have the knowledge to answer. The true scholars of Islam were never afraid to admit that they did not always know the answer, and they were the first ones to say, "I don't know" to a question. Never be so arrogant that you do not admit your own ignorance.

BE GENEROUS

Generosity is an attribute which is pleasing to both Allah and to others. The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of people, and

⁵⁹⁰ Sahih Muslim

⁵⁹¹ Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Eemaan, Vol.12 p195

all around him knew that if they were in need, they could turn to him for assistance.

Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Generosity is one of the attributes of the Lord, for He gives and does not take, He feeds and is not fed, He is the most generous of those who are generous. The most beloved of His creation to Him are those who seek to acquire the characteristics implied by His attributes. For He is Generous and loves those among His slaves who are generous; He is All-Knowing and loves those who have knowledge; He is All-Powerful and loves those who are courageous; He is Beautiful and loves beauty" 592

Generosity is not limited solely to giving money in charity, but with our words and our actions. Volunteering our time to good causes, to giving da'wah to others, to counselling those in distress; smiling at both friends and strangers and doing something small to brighten someone's day; giving gifts, teaching people Islamic knowledge or practical skills, reconciling differences between others, and so many more deeds are examples of generosity of character.

OTHER ASPECTS OF GOOD CHARACTER

- **Wish Well for Others:** The Prophet ﷺ said, "No one of you shall become a true believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself."593

⁵⁹² al-Waabil al-Sayyib (p. 543 of Majmoo'at al-Hadeeth)

⁵⁹³ Agreed upon ,

- **Don't Be Nosy:** The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: "Part of the perfection of a person's Islam is his leaving that which is of no concern to him."⁵⁹⁴
- **Don't Argue:** The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "I guarantee a house in lowest parts of Jannah for the one who leaves off argument even when he is right, and a house in the middle part of Jannah for the one who leaves off lying even if he's just joking, and a house in the highest part of Jannah for the one with good manners."⁵⁹⁵
- **Be Helpful:** The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ never said 'no' to anyone who asked him for anything.⁵⁹⁶
- **Be Cheerful:** The Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not look down on any act of kindness, even if it is just meeting your brother with a pleasant smile on your face."⁵⁹⁷

Having good character is something which we are all required to develop as Muslims. It is a means of spreading goodness in the world, and will also benefit us in the Hereafter.

Anas bin Malik narrated that a funeral procession passed and the people praised the deceased. The Prophet ﷺ said, "It has been affirmed to him." Then another funeral procession passed and the people spoke badly of the deceased. The Prophet ﷺ said, "It has been affirmed to him". 'Umar bin Al-Khattab asked, "What has been affirmed?" He ﷺ replied, "You praised this, so Paradise has been

⁵⁹⁴ at-Tirmidhi and others, classed as sahib by Albani

⁵⁹⁵ Sunan Abi Dawud, classed as hasan by Albani

⁵⁹⁶ Agreed upon

⁵⁹⁷ Sahih Muslim

*affirmed to him; and you spoke badly of this, so Hell has been affirmed to him. You people (believers) are Allâh's witnesses on earth.*⁵⁹⁸

In another narration by Abu Al Aswad, he said: "I came to Madinah when an epidemic had broken out. While I was sitting with 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, a funeral procession passed by and the people praised the deceased. 'Umar said, "It has been affirmed to him." And another funeral procession passed by and the people praised the deceased. 'Umar said, "It has been affirmed to him." A third (funeral procession) passed by and the people spoke badly of the deceased. He said, "It has been affirmed to him." I (Abu Al-Aswad) asked, "O chief of the believers! What has been affirmed?" He replied, "I said the same as the Prophet ﷺ had said, that is: 'If four people testify to the piety of a Muslim, Allâh will grant him Paradise.'" We asked, "If three people testify to their piety?" He (the Prophet) replied, "Even three." Then we asked, "If two?" He replied, "Even two." We did not ask him regarding one witness."⁵⁹⁹

May Allah give us the hidayah to be of good character, to be good with others, to be in the good books of our brothers and to be amongst those who get their book of deeds in their Right hand!

⁵⁹⁸ Sahih Bukhari

⁵⁹⁹ Sahih Bukhari

CHAPTER - XI

FORGOTTEN SUNAN RELATED TO HEALTH

One of the greatest blessings from Allah is that of good health. Being able to see, hear, touch, walk, and live life in general without difficulty or strain on our bodies is a blessing that we cannot thank Allah enough for.

Ibn al-Qayyim said, "Since health is one of the most precious favours Allâh has given to His servants, the most generous of His gifts, and most plentiful of His bounties, nay more, absolute health is the most precious of all favours, without exception - it is fitting that whoever is granted a portion of this good fortune, to cherish, preserve and to guard it against harm. Bukhari has related in his Saheeh form the hadith of Ibn Abaas: Ibn Abbas reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*There are two blessings which many people waste: health and free time...*"⁶⁰⁰

RasulAllah maintained habits in his life that not only had spiritual benefits, but physical health benefits as well. Thus, one of the benefits of following the Sunnah is that we will also improve our health. While the health benefits should not be our primary motivation in following the Sunnah, they can certainly be considered additional motivation for doing so.

⁶⁰⁰ Zaad al-Ma'aad 4/196

HEALTHY SLEEPING HABITS FROM THE SUNNAH

SLEEPING AND RISING EARLY

Going to sleep early and waking up early in the morning is a well-known practice implemented by successful individuals around the world.

The Prophet Muhammed ﷺ encouraged his companions not to be involved in any activity after Isha prayer. He ﷺ said, “*One should not sleep before the night prayer, nor have discussions after it,*” calling everyone to sleep early.⁶⁰¹

Since we are all obligated to awaken for Fajr, it is recommended for us to stay awake after Fajr as well to begin the rest of our day. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us that there are blessings in the early hours of the morning; he himself did not go back to sleep after Fajr, but rather stayed up and began his duties.

The Messenger ﷺ said: “*O Allâh, bless my people in their early mornings.*” When he sent out a detachment or an army, he sent them at the beginning of the day. Sakhr was a merchant, and he would send off his merchandise at the beginning of the day; and he became rich and had much wealth.⁶⁰²

Even when the pious predecessors would spend their nights in worship, praying and reciting Qur'an, they would still remain awake after Fajr in order to take advantage of the morning's blessings.

⁶⁰¹ Agreed upon

⁶⁰² At-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud & Ibn Majah, classed as sahih by Albani

SUNAN OF SLEEP

The Sunnah is a guide for us in every aspect of life, including sleep. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught us the following practices with regards to sleep:

“Whenever you go to bed, perform ablution like that for the prayer, and lie on your right side.”⁶⁰³

“When the Prophet wanted to go to sleep, he would put his right hand under his cheek.”⁶⁰⁴

It says in a medical report: Sleeping on the right side is the healthy position, because the left lung is smaller than the right, so the heart is under less pressure and the liver is settled and not suspended, and the stomach is resting comfortably on top of it, which as we have seen makes it easier to eliminate the food that is in it after it has been digested. Sleeping on the right side is also regarded as the best medical procedure that makes it easy for the tubes of the left lung to expel mucus discharges.

As for sleeping on the left side, it is not acceptable, because in that case the heart will be beneath the pressure of the right lung, which is larger than the left, and this will affect its function and make it less active, especially in those who are elderly. The full stomach will also be under pressure, which will increase the pressure on the heart and liver – which is the heaviest organ – which will not be fixed, rather it will be hanging, as it is located on the right side, so it will put pressure on the heart and on the digestive tract which will delay elimination.

⁶⁰³ Agreed upon

⁶⁰⁴ Adab Al Mufrad, Abu Dawood & Tabarani, classed as sahih by Albani

Experiments have proven that the passage of food from the stomach to the intestines takes between 2.5 and 4.5 hours, if a person is sleeping on his right side, but it takes 5 to 8 hours if he sleeps on his left side.⁶⁰⁵

This also helps in not going too deep into sleep, which helps us to wake up for Qiyam ul Layl or atleast Fajr.

A sunnah that was discussed in the book earlier - Sitting & rubbing the eyes for a while after waking up and not directly getting – is also said to have health benefits..

In contrast to this, sleeping on the stomach is heavily discouraged. The Prophet ﷺ told a man who was lying on his stomach, “*Allāh and his Prophet dislike this position.*”⁶⁰⁶

NAPPING

While sleeping after Fajr is disliked, the practise of napping in the midday time period is one that is common in various parts of the world, and is also a recommended part of the Sunnah. This nap is known as ‘qaylulah.’

Sahl ibn Sa’ad said, “We, [the Companions], would not take the qaylulah nor eat [the morning meal] except after Jum’ah.”⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁵ See: al-Tibb al-Nabawi fi Daw’ al-‘Ilm al-Hadeeth by Dr. Ghiyaath al-Ahmad, and al-Nawm ‘ala al-Jihah al-Yumna by Dr. Ibraheem al-Raawi.

⁶⁰⁶ Abu Dawood, Ahmad & al-Tirmidhi, authenticated by Albani.

⁶⁰⁷ Sahih Bukhari & Ibn Majah

Napping after lunch helps to prevent burden on coronary artery. According to cardiologist, having a nap after lunch produces positive effect on the heart. This is a common practice in the Eastern part of the world, even their work places promote taking nap after lunch, Nike has access to nap-friendly "quiet rooms", Google, a forerunner in employee perks, has a number of futuristic napping pods scattered throughout its Mountain View (Calif.) campus. Their productivity and efficiency is for everyone to see, it is unparalleled in the world.

NOT SLEEPING ON VERY LUXURIOUS BEDS

As stated earlier in the book, the Sunnah way was to not sleep on luxurious beds, that not only leads in missing Qiyam ul Layl or even Fajr prayer, but sleeping on hard floor is also beneficial for the back, the spine and general health.

People having back problems are recommended to sleep on hard floors, it realigns the spine, oxygenates blood, improves blood circulation. So again we see the Sunnah is healthier and also it doesn't cost anything, but has benefits over something that we would spend huge amounts on.

EXERCISE

In the time of RasulAllah ﷺ, most people already lived physically strenuous lives and thus were significantly healthier than many of us living privileged lifestyles today. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also specifically engaged in and recommended in certain types of exercise:

SWIMMING

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Every activity that does not contain the remembrance of Allāh is falsehood and heedlessness, except for a man doing four things: Walking between two purposeful goals, grooming his horse, playing with his family, or teaching someone to swim."⁶⁰⁸

WRESTLING

Muhammad ibn 'Alee ibn Rukaanah said, "Verily, Rukaanah wrestled the Prophet, and the Prophet took him down."⁶⁰⁹

BRISK WALK

Abu Hurairah said, "I did not see anyone walk faster than him, as if the earth folded for him. A few moments ago he would be here, and then there. We found it difficult to keep pace when we walked with him, and he walked at his normal pace."⁶¹⁰

Remaining fit and healthy is something that every Muslim should strive to prioritize within the context of their other responsibilities and relationships. Unfortunately, there are some people, particularly

⁶⁰⁸ Nisaa'i, Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah and others, classed as sahih by Albani

⁶⁰⁹ Abu Dawood & Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani

⁶¹⁰ Al Tirmidhi

men, who work out as a way to pass the time before marriage, or who are obsessed with it to the point that they abandon or delay their obligatory prayers for the sake of their workouts. However, we should always be balanced and always have the right intentions for living a healthy lifestyle.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told his Companion Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas: “Your body has a right over you.”⁶¹¹

It is important to note that for men who do work out and do bodybuilding, their intention cannot be to show off or uncover their ‘awrah in front of others. It is also impermissible for them to wear skintight clothing. Rather, the intention behind working out should be to improve their strength in order to be able to fulfill more acts of worship.

HIJAMA (CUPPING)

The practice of Hijamah (cupping) is a medicinal one that has been practiced for over a thousand years, across the world. It is a powerful treatment with both physical and spiritual benefits, and it is highly recommended in the Sunnah.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “I did not pass by an angel from the angels on the night journey except that they all said to me: Upon you is cupping, O Muhammad.”⁶¹²

He ﷺ also said, “Cupping is the most helpful procedure for human beings to cure themselves.”⁶¹³

⁶¹¹ Sahih Bukhari

⁶¹² Sunan ibn Maajah, it has corroborating evidence which strengthen it

"If there is any good in your medical treatments, it is in the blade of the copper and drinking honey."

Cupping is a means of treating various ailments, both common and obscure, mild and severe. It assists in blood flow, treating blood pressure, detoxing blood, eases headaches and migraines, back pain, muscle pain, neck pain, issues with vision, and much more.

It also alleviates the symptoms of depression, stress-related disorders, anxiety, and other psychological illnesses.

Hijamah is a relatively unknown sunnah with numerous benefits, but it is now becoming much easier to access those who are qualified to perform hijamah according to the Sunnah.

SIWAAK

The siwaak, or miswak, is a toothbrush made from the twig of a branch. Using the siwaak is considered to be a basic part of hygiene, and a strongly recommended sunnah.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "*The siwaak is purifying for the mouth and pleasing to the Rabb.*"⁶¹³

Regular use of the siwaak promotes healthy hygiene: it kills bacteria, strengthens the gums, contributes to better breath, and fights plaque. It is recommended to use the siwaak before wudhu, before salah, upon entering the home, and at any other time.

⁶¹³ Agreed upon

⁶¹⁴ Sunan An-Nasaa'ee no.5, Shaykh Al-Albaani graded it saheeh

HEALTHY EATING

EAT LESS

Abu Juhayfah said: "A man burped in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and he said: "*Keep your burps away from us, for the one who eats his fill the most in this world will be hungry for the longest time on the Day of Resurrection.*"⁶¹⁵

After hearing that, Abu Juhayfah did not eat his fill until he departed from this world; if he ate breakfast, he would not eat dinner, and if he ate dinner, he would not eat breakfast. He said: "I have not filled my stomach for thirty years."

We have a bad habit of over-eating, and encouraging or rather force our children to over-eat as well. It is considered normal to eat until one feels full, but what we need to know is that this is both unhealthy and contrary to the Sunnah. What we should do is eat until we are no longer hungry, but to eat until we feel stuffed is a type of extravagance that is frowned upon. Excessive eating causes laziness and sluggishness as well as numerous health issues.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "*A believer eats in one intestine, and a disbeliever or a hypocrite eats in seven intestines.*"⁶¹⁶

The meaning of this statement is that a true believer is satisfied with a little food, whereas those who have little or no faith are greedy for more.

⁶¹⁵ at-Tirmidhi, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁶¹⁶ Sahih Bukhari

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few morsels to keep him alive. If he must fill it, then one-third for his food, one-third for his drink, and one-third for air."⁶¹⁷

Allah condemns extravagance even when it comes to the permissible matters of this world, not just the prohibited.

Umar (May Allâh be pleased with him) said: "By Allâh, if I wanted I could wear the finest clothes among you, and eat the best food, and have the most luxurious life. But I heard that Allâh will condemn people for some of their actions and said: {You received your good things in the life of the world, and you took your pleasure therein. Now this Day you shall be recompensed with a torment of humiliation, because you were arrogant in the land without a right, and because you used to rebel against Allâh's Command (disobey Allâh).} (Qur'an 46:20)"

Ibrahim ibn Adham said: "Anyone who controls his stomach is in control of his deen, and anyone who controls his hunger is in control of good behavior. Disobedience towards Allâh is nearest to a person who is satiated with a full stomach, and furthest away from a person who is hungry."

Eating in moderation – and eating healthy food - is a part of the sunnah and proven to have medical benefits that will strengthen our bodies rather than weaken them.

⁶¹⁷ at-Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

SIT UP

When eating, one should not be laying down or reclining, but sitting upright. Doing so maintains better posture and prevents us from over-eating.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “*I do not eat whilst I am reclining.*”⁶¹⁸

SITTING AND DRINKING

Anas reported: “The Prophet ﷺ forbade us from drinking while standing.”⁶¹⁹

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allâh have mercy on him) said, explaining the negative effect of drinking whilst standing and the importance of drinking whilst sitting:

“Drinking whilst standing has numerous negative effects, one of which is that it does not fully quench the thirst and does not settle in the stomach so that the liver can distribute the nutrients to other parts of the body. Rather it comes to the stomach with speed and force, and there is the fear that it will cause a chill or disturbance, and may pass quickly to the lower parts of the body without moving gradually. All of that is harmful to the drinker, but if he does it occasionally or in the case of need, it will not harm him.”⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁸ Sahih Bukhari

⁶¹⁹ Sahih Bukhari

⁶²⁰ Zaad al-Ma'aad, 4/229.

DRINKING SLOWLY IN THREE OR MORE BREATHS

Anas b.Malik said : "when the Prophet ﷺ drank, he used to breathe three times in the course of a drink and say : It is more whole some ,thirst-quenching and healthier."⁶²¹

Although we do not need any further fact checks after the Prophet ﷺ said drinking in multiple breathes rather than gulping all the water at once is healthier, it is good to know that top dieticians today recommend the same.

"Studies have tested water's effects on the functioning of organs. They indicate that water retention in the body is variable and depends on the speed with which water is ingested--if it is gulped quickly, water is more likely to be excreted, while if it is sipped slowly, it is retained in the body".⁶²²

DO NOT BREATHE INTO THE VESSEL

Abu Qatadah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ forbade breathing into the vessel while drinking.⁶²³

Since we exhale carbon dioxide, breathing or blowing is considered unhygienic and unhealthy. Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

That is because if a person blows (into the vessel), some harmful things may come with the air that is exhaled, such as disease and the

⁶²¹ Abu Dawood, Classed as Sahih by Albani.

⁶²² American Society of Nephrology

⁶²³ Agreed upon

like. But some of the scholars made an exception in cases of necessity, such as if the drink is hot and he needs to drink it quickly. In that case some scholars granted a concession. But it is better not to blow on it, even if it is hot. If it is hot and he has another vessel, then he may pour some of it into that vessel then pour it back until it cools down. End quote. 624

RECOMMENDED FOODS

The Qur'an and Sunnah mention specific foods which have certain benefits.

HONEY

{There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think.} (Qur'an 16:69)

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Healing is in three (things): a drink of honey, the blade of a copper, and cauterization. And I prohibit my nation from cauterizing."625

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud said: "Upon you is the two cures: the honey and the Qur'an."626

Honey works as an anti-septic for burns and cuts, softens the skin, settles the stomach, and has numerous other anti bacterial benefits.

⁶²⁴ Sharh Riyad al-Saaliheen (2/457)

⁶²⁵ Sahih Bukhari

⁶²⁶ Ibn Maajah

HENNA

Umm Salamah said: "Allâh's Messenger ﷺ never suffered from a wound or a thorn without applying henna to it."⁶²⁷

"Whenever somebody came to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ complaints of headache, he directed him to undergo cupping and whosoever complained of pain in the legs, was advised to apply Henna."⁶²⁸

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned the benefits of henna in his Prophetic Medicine:

- For the treatment of headache and migraine
- Useful for burns caused by fire
- Beneficial for mouth ulcers and blisters in the mouth, when chewed
- Heals thrush in the mouth of children
- Beneficial for blisters on the body
- Bandaging with henna is beneficial for hot inflammations
- Mixing henna flowers with warm wax and rose oil is beneficial for pains
- Placing its flowers between the folds of wool cloths scent them and keep moths away
- When applied to fingernails as a paste, it improves their condition
- Makes the hair grow, and strengthens and beautifies it.

⁶²⁷ Tirmidhi, Bayhaqi

⁶²⁸ Sunan Abi Dawud

BLACK SEED (NIGELLA)

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Use black seed, for it contains a cure for every ailment except death."⁶²⁹

Ibn al-Qayyim mentions that Black Seed is used for:

- Improving memory
- Backache and muscular pains
- Sleeping disorder
- Asthma and bronchial and respiratory problems
- Hair loss
- Eye infection, pain and weak sight
- Flu and nasal congestion
- Toothache and gum
- Healthy complexion
- Diabetes
- Increase in flow of breast milk
- Vomiting

SENNA

Senna is a derivative of the cassia tree, and used in a variety of herbal treatments. It should, however, be used with caution and upon the advice of a doctor specialized in natural medicine.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Upon you is the Senna and the Sanoot (cumin) for indeed in the two of them is a cure for every disease

⁶²⁹ Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and others

except Saam." He was asked, "O Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, what is Saam?" He said, "Death."⁶³⁰

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, Senna is considered to be beneficial for treating angina, constipation, muscle tension, lice, and migraines.

VINEGAR

There are many different types of vinegar, and they all have many beneficial uses. They can be used in cooking, in medicine, for cleansing wounds, and much more.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "What an excellent condiments or condiment is vinegar."⁶³¹

Vinegar can lower blood sugar and fight diabetes, lowers cholesterol and heart disease, helps prevent infections, and reduces acid reflux.

AJWA DATES

Ajwa dates are a specific type of date grown in Madinah, and is a blessed fruit with both medicinal and spiritual benefits.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "If someone has takes seven 'ajwa dates in the morning, neither magic nor poison will hurt him that day."⁶³²

⁶³⁰ Ibn Maajah, classed as Sahih by Albani

⁶³¹ Sahih Muslim & Ibn Maajah

He ﷺ also said: “Ajwa dates are from Paradise.”⁶³³

“The ‘Ajwa’ dates of ‘Aliya’ contain heating effects and these are antidote in the early morning.”⁶³⁴

They contain vital minerals and other nutrients; they assist with digestion issues, prevent anemia, provide calcium to strengthen bones, and protect against various heart problems.

OLIVES AND OLIVE OIL

The olive tree is considered to be a blessed source of provision; both the olive fruit and the oil have numerous health benefits.

{And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters.} (Qur'an 23:20)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Eat the olive and anoint (yourselves) with it, for indeed it is from a blessed tree.”⁶³⁵

Olives and olive oil contain oleic acid, which reduces inflammation and a reduced risk of heart disease. They contain many vitamins and minerals, such as Iron, Vitamin E, Copper, Calcium, and Sodium. It also contains many antioxidants, and improves bone health.

⁶³² Sahih Bukhari

⁶³³ At-Tirmidhi, he said the chain is Hasan also authenticated by Albani

⁶³⁴ Sahih Muslim

⁶³⁵ Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Ibn Maajah, and Haakim, classed as sahih by Albani.

COMMON CURES FROM THE SUNNAH

Fever

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Fever is of the puffs of hell. So cool it with (cool) water."⁶³⁶

Diarrhea

Abu Sa'id Khudri reported that a person came to Allâh's Apostle ﷺ and told him that his brother's bowels were loose. Thereupon Allâh's Messenger ﷺ: "Give him honey." So he gave him that, and then returned and said: "I gave him honey but it has only made his bowels more loose." He said this three times; and then he came the fourth time, and the Prophet ﷺ said: "Give him honey." He said: "I did give him, but it has only made his bowels more loose." Whereupon Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said: *Allâh has spoken the truth and your brother's bowels are in the wrong.*" So he made him drink (honey) and he was recovered.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁶ Agreed upon

⁶³⁷ Sahih Muslim

Burns, wounds, and cuts

Sahl Ibn Sa'd was asked about how the Messenger's injuries in the battle of Uhud were treated. Sahl said: "The Prophet's face was injured, his tooth was broken and the helmet he was wearing was smashed on his head. Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ, was washing the blood off while 'Ali was pouring water on her hands with his shield. When Fatimah realized that the bleeding did not stop, she took a burned mat (of palm leaves) and inserted the ash in the wound of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ and the bleeding stopped."⁶³⁸

Tonsillitis

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "You should not torture your children by treating tonsillitis by pressing the tonsils or the palate with the finger, but use incense Qist Al Bahri."⁶³⁹

Umm Qays said that one of her sons had throat trouble, and she had pressed his palate and tonsils to deal with it. She took her son to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and he said, "Why do you pain your children by getting the palate pressed like that? Use the Ud Al-Hindi (certain Indian incense) for it cures seven diseases one of which is pleurisy."⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁸ Agreed upon

⁶³⁹ Sahih Bukhari

⁶⁴⁰ Sahih Bukhari

Headache:

The Prophet ﷺ was cupped on his head for an ailment he was suffering from while he was in a state of Ihram. at a water place called Lahl Jamal. Ibn 'Abbas further said: "Allâh's Apostle ﷺ was cupped on his head for unilateral headache while he was in a state of Ihram."⁶⁴¹

Salamah, the servant of the Prophet ﷺ, said: *"No one complained to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ of a headache but he told him to get himself cupped, or of a pain in his legs but he told him to dye them with henna."*⁶⁴²

Ibn Abbas said, "*Once, the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ delivered a speech while a cloth was tied around his head.*"⁶⁴³

Poisoning

Abdullah ibn Abbas reported that a Jewish woman gave poisoned meat to the Messenger ﷺ, so he sent her a message saying, "What caused you to do that?" She replied, "If you really are a Prophet, then Allâh will inform you of it; if you are not, then I would save the people from you!" When the Messenger ﷺ felt pain from it, he performed cupping (hijama). Once he travelled while in Ihram and felt that pain and hence performed cupping (hijama).⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Sahih Bukhari

⁶⁴² Sunan Abu Dawud, classed as hasan by Albani

⁶⁴³ Sahih Bukhari

⁶⁴⁴ Ahmad, graded hasan.

General pains

'Uthmaan bin Abil'Aas ath-Thaqafee said that he complained to the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ of a pain he felt in his body since the time he accepted Islam. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said to him: "Place your hand on the place on your body where the pain is, and say 'Bismillaah' 3 times, and then say 7 times: 'A'oothu billaahi wa qudratihi min sharri maa 'ajidu wa 'ahaathiru (I seek refuge in Allâh and His complete power and ability from the evil of what I feel and am wary of)." ⁶⁴⁵

MENTAL HEALTH

Islam gives great importance to Mental health, the Prophet ﷺ ordered us to have a positive mindset starting from Allah – to have good feelings about Allah – and then about our brothers – to not be suspicious and help each other – the Sunnah teaches us to do the right thing and not get indulged in cultural aspects that are one of the major reasons of women suffering from depression.

The highest level of Iman is Ihsan and that is a mental stage where one prays as if he sees Allah or atleast as if Allah sees him, these are all matters of the heart which helps develop the mental health of a person.

⁶⁴⁵ Sahih Muslim

Islam is a way of life, it provides us with code of conduct for everything, the Sunnah teaches us behaviour, ethics and social values which has great impact on the people around you as well as ourselves, as we have learnt in the previous chapters. The Sunnah teaches us to be adaptive and compassionate, it teaches us to help others and live in harmony all of which is a great source of positive energy and a mental wellbeing. Some sunan that helps the mental health:

- Having a positive Mindset
- Being content with little
- Not be arrogant
- Anger Management - Rasool Allah ﷺ has showed us ways of how to cool ourselves down i.e by reciting Aoudbillah, Keeping Silent, Lying Down, Remembering the reward of being patient, performing Wudoo.

May Allāh give us health and the hidayah to thank Him for it and use it for His cause.

CHAPTER - XII

WHY SUNAN ARE ABANDONED?

When there are so many sunan that have been recorded for us to follow, hundreds of which we could implement on a daily basis, why is it that so many Muslims are ignorant and unaware of them? It is not that there is lack of information – many books are available in English, Arabic, and numerous other languages that detail these sunan.

Rather, the problem is that many of us do not seek to learn more about the Sunnah or how to live according to it. Indeed, many Muslims choose to avoid learning more, or dismiss new information about the Sunnah with the phrase, “It’s just a Sunnah!”

REASONS SUNAN ARE ABANDONED

The reasons for which Muslims have abandoned the Sunnah are the following:

DISEASED HEARTS

To say “It’s just a Sunnah!” is a terrible sign of how diseased our hearts are, that we deliberately choose to abstain from doing those actions which are pleasing to Allah. Being aware of the state of our hearts is the first step in rectifying this problem.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Indeed there is a piece of flesh in your body that, if it be sound, then the whole body will be sound and if it be corrupt then the whole body will be corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart."⁶⁴⁶

If our hearts are pure, we will find ourselves being more eager to follow the Sunnah and do good deeds.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

We live in an age where there is an abundance of information but scarcity of knowledge.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Envy is permitted only in two cases: A man whom Allāh gives wealth, and he disposes of it rightfully, and a man to whom Allāh gives knowledge which he applies and teaches it."⁶⁴⁷

True knowledge is not just information, but application of that information in one's own life.

Allah says: {It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allāh.} (Qur'an 35:28)

Those who have knowledge and fear Allah are those who make a point of practicing the Sunnah in their daily lives, with the utmost effort.

⁶⁴⁶ Sahih Bukhari

⁶⁴⁷ Agreed upon

NOT LOVING THE PROPHET ﷺ

Following the Sunnah is an outward expression of loving the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which is an important tenet of our faith. The Prophet ﷺ said, “*None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind.*”⁶⁴⁸

Abandoning the Sunnah does not show love for RasulAllah ﷺ, but demonstrates the opposite. The more we love Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, the more we will make the effort to act upon the Sunnah – even and especially when it can be difficult for us to do so.

FORGETTING THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Fulfilling the Sunnah is part of our purpose of life – worshiping Allah in every way, both in ritual acts of worship and in our everyday actions. The Sunnah is one of the primary sources of learning how to fulfill these obligations. By having the intention of pleasing Allah, simple actions such as eating and drinking can be a source of good deeds and rewards, and reminds us of our ultimate purpose.

⁶⁴⁸ Sahih Bukhari

PRIORITIZING THE DUNYA

One reason that many people ignore the Sunnah is that they prioritize this world and its conveniences over the rewards of the Hereafter. Instead, we should ask Allah to provide us with both, and to always remember that the Next Life is more deserving of our efforts.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught us to say the following supplications:

رَبَّنَا آتَنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةٌ وَقَاتَ عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Rabbana aatina fid-dunya hasanah, wa fil 'aakhirati hasanah, waqina 'adhab an-nar.

“Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!”

Similarly, the du'a of Istikhaarah also asks Allah to guide us towards what is best for us in this world and the Next.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَخِرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَغْدِرُكَ بِغُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِيرُ وَلَا
أَقْدِيرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَمُ الْغُيُوبِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي كُنْتُ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي
وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي فَاقْدِرْنِي لِي وَبِسَرْرَةِ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرُ
شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي فَاضْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدِرْنِي لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ
كَانَ ثُمَّ ازْرَضِنِي

*Allâhumma inni astakhiruka bi ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa
as'aluka min fadlikal-azimi, fa innaka taqdiru walâ aqdiru wa ta'lamu
walâ a'lamu wa anta allamul ghuyubi. Allâhumma in kunta ta'lamu
anna hâdhal amra khayrun li fi dini wa ma-ashi wa aqibati amri*

*faqdir-hu li wa yassir-hu li thumma barik li fihi wa in kunta ta'lamu
 anna hâdhal amra sharrun li fi dini wa maâshi wa aqibati amri
 fasrifhu anni wasrifni anhu waqdir liyal-khayra haythu kâna thumma
 ardini.*

"O Allah, verily I seek the better [of either choice] from You, by Your knowledge, and I seek ability from You, by Your power, and I ask You from Your immense bounty. For indeed You have power, and I am powerless; You have knowledge and I know not; You are the Knower of the unseen realms. O Allah, if You know that this matter is good for me with regard to my religion, my livelihood and the end of my affair then decree it for me, facilitate it for me, and grant me blessing in it. And if You know that this matter is not good for me with regard to my religion, my livelihood and the end of my affair then turn it away from me and me from it; and decree for me better than it, wherever it may be, and make me content with it."

LACK OF PATIENCE

Some people try to implement new sunan, but end up abandoning them due to the difficulty in maintaining them or challenges in practicing them. Unfortunately, practicing the Sunnah is looked down upon as something strange, and many people face pressure from their parents, family, friends, colleagues, employers, and others. These are all tests from Allah, to see how truly dedicated we are to upholding the Sunnah.

Allah says:

{Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test?} (Qur'an 29:2)

{We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.} (Qur'an 2:155)

Knowing that our ultimate goal is Jannah, we should seek to maintain our practise of the Sunnah throughout our day and in various situations. Nor are we alone in doing so – there are many people who face similar challenges when they first accept Islam or choose to practise it sincerely.

LACK OF GOOD COMPANIONSHIP

The friends one keeps are a reflection of one's self. If we do not choose friends who follow the Sunnah themselves, it is likely that we ourselves will not be of those who make an effort to follow the Sunnah.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "A person is upon the path of his friend, so look whom you befriend."⁶⁴⁹

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like that of the seller of musk, and the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows (respectively). So as for the seller of musk then either he will grant you some, or you buy some from him, or at least you enjoy a pleasant smell from him. As for the one who blows the blacksmith's bellows then either he will burn your clothes or you will get an offensive smell from him."⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁹ Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by Albani

⁶⁵⁰ Agreed upon

The hadeeth emphasizes on having friends and companions of noble mannerisms, piety, knowledge, and good character, so that we are inspired. On the other hand, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ forbade us from sitting with those who do evil, commit sins openly, and backbite.

Attainment of beneficial knowledge, noble manner and righteous actions are from the results of keeping company with the pious, whereas keeping company with the wicked prevents all of that and on top of that can have an adverse affect on us, leaving us with bad habits.

We should thus look for those friends and companions who are a good influence on us, who love the Sunnah and encourage us to practice it.

PRACTISING BID'AH

Innovations in the Deen are common around the world, and unfortunately, many people are more invested in practicing those innovations than they are in following the Sunnah. An unhealthy attachment to false forms of worship results in a rejection of authentic recommendations from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ .

Hassaan Ibn 'Attiyah said: "*There is not a people that invent an innovation, except that they abandon a Sunnah to go along with it.*"

651

⁶⁵¹ Reported by ad-Daarimee& al-Laalikaa-ee, declared authentic by Albani

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “*You must adhere to my Sunnah and the way of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs who come after me. Adhere to it and cling to it strongly, and beware of newly-invented matters, for every newly-invented matter is an innovation (bid’ah) and every innovation is a going astray.*”⁶⁵²

NOT STRIVING TO DO GOOD

Allah says: {*So race to all that is good...}*} (2:148) Those who strive to do good always seek to do even more, and to do even better. Those who are content with doing little will never go out of their way to meet a higher standard.

A true believer should always try aim high when it comes to doing good deeds.

*“A believer is never satisfied doing good until he reaches Jannah.”*⁶⁵³

Many people look at those who do less than them in religious commitment, and feel arrogant or feel complacent that they are better than them. There are also those who look at those superior to them in religious commitment, and despair at being able to meet their standards, and thus do not even try to strive to do more.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “*Look at the one who is at a lower level than you, and do not look at the one who is above you, for that may keep you from scorning the blessing of Allâh.*”⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵² Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi, classed as sahih by Albani

⁶⁵³ At-Tirmidhi, authenticated by As-Suyutti.

⁶⁵⁴ Agreed upon

ASKING TOO MANY QUESTIONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Leave me as I leave you, for the people who were before you were ruined because of their questions and their differences over their prophets. So, if I forbid you to do something, then keep away from it. And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can."⁶⁵⁵

Under the guise and claim of "intellectualism" and "academia," some Muslims spend far too much time asking unnecessary questions that are merely a waste of time. Rather than seeking to understand the Sunnah so that they may implement it, their intention is to do nothing more than debate and argue. As true believers, we should instead follow the example of the Companions – they simple said, "We hear and we obey." So too should we immediately obey Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

PROCRASTINATING

There are those who claim that they will start doing specific good deeds "later..." "I'll wear hijab after I get married," "I'll grow a beard after I go for Hajj," and so on. This type of reasoning is dangerous – what is the guarantee that any of these events will happen? Who is to say that we will wake up tomorrow, let alone get married or go for Hajj? How can we expect Allah to provide these opportunities for us when we are not doing our job in pleasing Him in the first place?

Allah says in the Quran:

⁶⁵⁵ Sahih Bukhari

- “So hasten towards all that is good”. (2:148)
- “They used to hasten to perform good deeds and they worshipped Us and invoked Us upon hope and fear.” (21:90)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

- "Hasten to do good deeds before you are overtaken by one of the seven afflictions. Are you waiting for such poverty which will make you unmindful of devotion; or prosperity which will make you corrupt, or disease as will disable you, or such senility as will make you mentally unstable, or sudden death, or Ad-Dajjaal who is the worst expected absent, or the Hour? and the Hour will be most grievous and most bitter!"⁶⁵⁶
- "Hasten to do good deeds before there come tribulations like pieces of a dark night, when a man will be a believer in the morning and a kaafir by evening, or he will be a believer in the evening and a kaafir by morning, selling his religious commitment for worldly gain."⁶⁵⁷

The Ayahs & ahadeeth are clear warnings against the type of procrastination that is common amongst Muslims. We should instead seek motivation to hasten towards doing good deeds, knowing that we could die at any moment. Our next prayer could be our last. If we simply have the intention to obey Allah and His Messenger immediately; Allah will in fact make it easier for us to implement those sunan more swiftly and consistently.

⁶⁵⁶ At-Tirmidhi & also listed in Riyad As Saliheen

⁶⁵⁷ Sahih Muslim

TO CONCLUDE

The Sunnah is one of the two sources of salvation; it is the most perfect guide to living our lives in a manner pleasing to Allah. Allah tells us: *{whosoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah...}* (Qur'an 4:80)

As Sheikh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said, "The biggest sign that you love Allāh's Messenger ﷺ is that you choose his Sunnah over your desires."⁶⁵⁸

"The Sunnah is like the ship of Noah. Whoever embarks upon it reaches salvation and whoever refuses is drowned."⁶⁵⁹

Just like a perfectly working set of eyes cannot see their way out in the dark, we cannot see the right path without the Sunnah, the path that leads to Jannah can only be walked upon by following the Sunnah, abandon that and we go astray.

Reviving a Sunnah is a blessed practice that results in countless rewards; there is no limit to the treasures of Allah! Simply by practicing small, consistent acts of worship throughout the day – whether it is saying a du'a when waking up, using the siwaak, respecting one's parents, smiling to someone on the street, or reciting Qur'an regularly – we are demonstrating our love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ

⁶⁵⁸ Sharh Al Bukhari 63/1

⁶⁵⁹ Majmoo' ul-fataawaa (4/57)

With the correct intentions, one good deed can be magnified a thousandfold. Without realizing it, we could be teaching others, impacting others' lives for the better, and earning Allah's Love and Forgiveness. Be mindful that every day is an opportunity to become a stronger, better believer. Know that even when challenges arise in following the Sunnah, the reward is greater in proportion to the struggle of doing so.

May Allah make us all of those who love the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and honour him by following his Sunnah in every aspect of our lives, ameen.

*Love Him - Honour him – Follow Him
- SALALLAAHU ALAIHI WA SALLAM -*

Forgotten *Sunnahs*

About the Author:

Abu Sahl Al Ansari is the founder of Learn Islam, a non profit organisation providing free online Islamic courses under the guidance of Sheikh Yasir Al Jabri since 2010. In the past 10 years, the organisation has conducted about 30 Islamic courses with more than 40,000 students taking part.

"Abu Sahl is my student of more than 10 years. He is of the correct aqeedah and methodology and is very passionate about working in the way of Allah."

"He has been a part of my Dawah team and is known for his excellent advice and insight. He works hard to spread the Deen using modern technology on various platforms, while keeping himself anonymous."

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