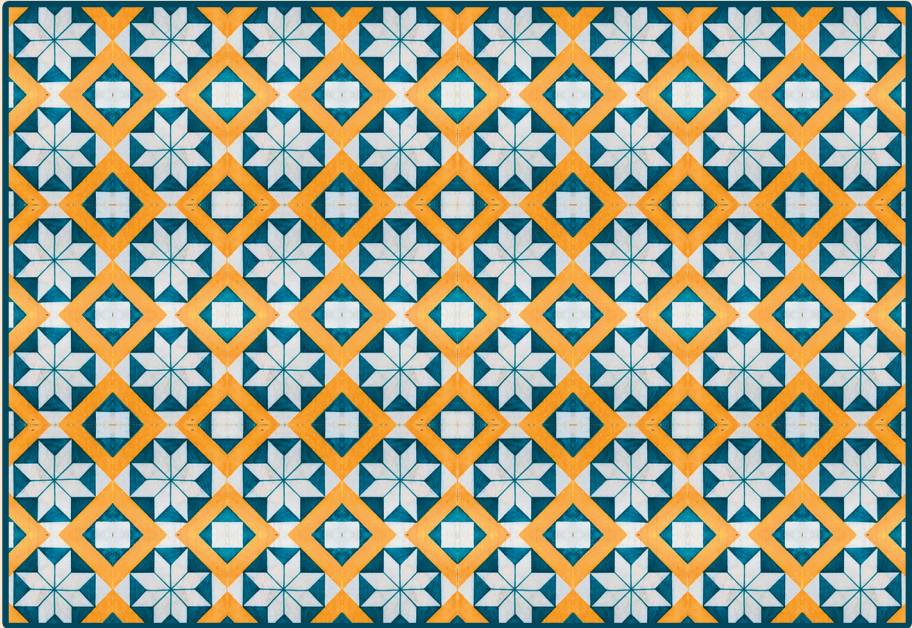


NEVER

Turn Away From Allāh سُبْحَانَكَ
وَتَعَالَى



by Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā
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ISLĀMIC DA‘WAH ACADEMY

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NEVER TURN AWAY FROM ALLĀH ﷻ

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِتَقَى اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ. أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي. سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ. اللَّهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنَا وَعَلِّمْنَا مَا نَنْفَعُنَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا، اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ

The Purpose of Life and Meaning of 'ibādah

Allāh ﷻ has created us for His 'ibādah (worship).

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي

I have not created the jinns and the humans but so that they worship me. (51:56)

What is 'ibādah? 'Ibādah is to carry out the Dos of Allāh ﷻ and abstain from the Don'ts of Allāh ﷻ. 'Ibādah is not to carry out the dos only.

Shayṭān has instilled the wrong definition of 'ibādah in our hearts and minds. He has made us believe that 'ibādah is only to

do good; ‘ibādah is only to perform ṣalāh; fast in the month of Ramaḍān; perform ḥajj and ‘umrah; recite the Qur’ān; engage in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ; perform i‘tikāf; etc.

When we assess our lives, we only look at this aspect of ‘ibādah (the dos), thus we remain happy and content. We think to ourselves, ‘Alḥamdulillāh, I am performing the five daily ṣalāh regularly, I perform ‘umrah every year and I also frequently perform ḥajj. Every day I engage in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ; I recite اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ and ṣalat alan-Nabī so many times.’ Thereafter, we remain happy with our ‘religious’ condition, without realising that this is only half of ‘ibādah and the other half is being neglected. We do not realise that abstaining from consuming alcohol, from consuming drugs, from selling drugs, from casting lustful glances, from lying, from cheating, from using vulgar language, from obscenity and from violating the rights of parents is also ‘ibādah.

Allāh ﷻ has created us to carry out His Dos and abstain from His Don’ts. Allāh ﷻ has not created us to carry out His Dos only. My young friends! My respected elders! Let us make a firm resolution that inshā’allāh, from now until we breathe our last, our goal will be to abstain from the don’ts along with carrying out the dos, as not doing so will be a sin. Come what may, we will not sin, even if we have to give our lives.

The objective of our lives now is to abstain from sins; to abstain from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. This is why Allāh ﷻ has created us.

Allāh ﷻ created us and granted us everything. And He will continue to grant us whatever we require till the last breath. In return, He desires only one thing from us: That we do not disobey

Him. Therefore, we must carry out the dos because if we don't then we will be disobeying Allāh ﷻ, and we must abstain from the don'ts because if we don't then we will be disobeying Allāh ﷻ. It is only by abstaining from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, we will be able to carry out 'ibādah in its totality as Allāh ﷻ desires.

Taqwā is also 'Ibādah

Another term used for 'ibādah is taqwā. Taqwā is to abstain from anything which will displease Allāh ﷻ. Taqwā is derived from the word wiqāyah, which means a shield, partition or barrier. Accordingly, taqwā refers to creating a shield, barrier, partition, curtain or wall between ourselves and anything that displeases Allāh ﷻ, be it minor or major.

Thus, 'ibādah is taqwā and taqwā is 'ibādah. Now we can conclude that Allāh ﷻ has created us for His 'ibādah and taqwā. Allāh ﷻ has granted us whatever we require and will continue to do so until we breathe our last. Allāh ﷻ has granted us hundreds of thousands of blessings and favours and desires only one thing in return: That we do not displease Him; we do not disobey Him with either our eyes, ears, tongue or mind. We do not disobey Him with the vigour of youth, the knowledge He has given us or any other resource He has granted us. If we disobey Him, He will become displeased and if we obey Him, He will remain pleased.

This is the purpose of our creation; that we live a life pure from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. When carrying out anything, we must first check whether the action is pleasing or displeasing to our Creator. If it is pleasing then we should carry it out and if it is displeasing, then we must shun it.

Leave All Sins

Displeasing Allāh ﷻ is a sin and one who has love and reverence for Allāh ﷻ will not view a sin on the basis of it being major or minor, he will view it as a sin which is simply disobedience to the Creator. Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ used to say,

كُلُّ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ كَبِيرَةٌ

Everything that Allāh ﷻ has made forbidden (be it major or minor) is in reality major.¹

This is because it is disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, and disobeying Allāh ﷻ can never be minor, it is always very grave.

حَلَّ الذُّنُوبَ كَبِيرَهَا وَصَغِيرَهَا ذَاكَ التَّقَى
وَاصْنَعْ كَمَا شِ فَوْقَ أَرْ ضِ الشَّوْكِ يَحْذَرُ مَا يَرَى
لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ صَغِيرَةً إِنَّ الْجِبَالَ مِنَ الْحَصَى

Abstain from all sins, major and minor, that is taqwā;

And behave like the one walking on a thorny path making sure he remains safe from the thorns that he observes;

Never take a minor sin lightly, because mountains form from the accumulation of small pebbles.² (If you continue to ignore minor sins, they will soon become a mountain, i.e. a major sin.)

1 Al-Mu‘jamul-Kabīr, Ḥadīth: 293

2 Rūḥul-Ma‘āni, part 1 p.111

The Toiling of Shayṭān

Allāhu Akbar, how Shayṭān and nafs play with us! Shayṭān is our eternal enemy. He is never going to enter Jannah and it is his utmost desire that none of the children of Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ enter Jannah. It is Shayṭān's utmost desire that Salīm, Aḥmad, 'Abdullāh, 'Imrān, etc. never enter Jannah, and as a result of this utmost desire, he exerts effort and toils. We also have many good desires but we are lazy; we do not toil. Shayṭān is not lazy, he toils. He has been toiling for thousands of years and will continue to toil until the Day of Qiyāmah. To lead each individual astray, he will continue to toil until every individual breathes his last. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ﷺ was in his final moments when Shayṭān said to him, 'O Aḥmad! You have escaped me.' Imām Aḥmad ﷺ replied, 'Not until I have died.'³

The Deceit of Shayṭān

Shayṭān toils and works very hard. The prevalent misconceptions about 'ibādah and its false definitions are also created by Shayṭān. He has deceived us into thinking that 'ibādah refers to the dos only. We do not say this, but subconsciously, it is what we think and practically, it is what our actions show. Nobody pays attention to the don'ts and Shayṭān is very happy with this, because when an individual's actions will be weighed on the Day of Qiyāmah, he will have less dos and more don'ts and as a result he will fail.

We need to keep the Hereafter in our minds and continue to assess our lives. Shayṭān misleads us by making us think, 'It is only makrūh, so it is okay if I carry it out' or 'It is only

3 Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, part 14 p.421

mustahabb, so it is okay if I leave it out.’ We are heard saying, ‘It is only sunnah.’ We do not even consider whether it is sunnah mu’akkadah or sunnah ghayr mu’akkadah. Look at the mindset that Shayṭān has created.

What is makrūh? Makrūh is something that is detestable. What is mustahabb? Mustahabb is something that is desirable. Is something desirable to do or to leave? Is something detestable to leave or to do? It is called makrūh whether it is makrūh taḥrīmī or makrūh tanzīhī. Makrūh Taḥrīmī is impermissible and makrūh tanzīhī is permissible but if a person abstains from it, then he will acquire a high status in the Court of Allāh ﷻ. If makrūh tanzīhī is detestable, then one should try his utmost to abstain from it and if mustahabb is desirable, then one should try his utmost to carry it out.

The Importance of Small Deeds

The ‘Ulamā have said that one who becomes negligent in his nawāfil (optional deeds) will soon become negligent in his mustahabbāt (desirable deeds). Once he becomes negligent in his mustahabbāt, then the next stage is that he will become negligent in his sunan. Then he will become negligent in his farā’id. The stage after this is ‘aqīdah (belief), because without a‘māl (deeds), ones ‘aqīdah becomes weak. If a person does not have the fortress of a‘māl, it becomes very easy for Shayṭān to corrupt his ‘aqīdah at the time of death.

Similarly, if a person is not careful with regards to makrūhāt tanzīhiyyah, soon he will enter makrūhāt taḥrīmiyyah. If he is not careful with regards to makrūhāt taḥrīmiyyah, he will soon enter ḥarām, and if he enters ḥarām, then the danger of nifāq

(hypocrisy), shirk (idolatry) and disbelief looms over ones head.

Purpose behind Speeches

My friends, May Allāh ﷻ accept you all. You have exerted much effort to attend this three-day programme, Pearls of Paradise, organised by Masjid Abu Bakr. May Allāh ﷻ accept you all and through your barakāt, may Allāh ﷻ accept me also.

Let us not confine ourselves to just listening to the speeches. We normally leave gatherings saying that it was a nice speech or this speaker was good, etc. In order to benefit, we need to focus on the substance of the speeches. The substance of Islamic speeches is the knowledge and understanding of how to draw near to Allāh ﷻ. Let us all try to understand what Allāh ﷻ desires from us. Those who are in their sixties and seventies should be more concerned, but that does not mean that those of us who are young still have a long way to go.

Prepare for Death

One of my students, a graduate of the Islāmic Da‘wah Academy, passed away recently. He was a pious young ‘Ālim. He passed away at the age of 34. On the day before his passing, he performed all of his ṣalāh in congregation and then sat down to eat with his family after the ‘Ishā ṣalāh. Suddenly he started feeling severe pain in his head which eventually led to him collapsing and within 24 hours he had departed from this world. Allāhu Akbar. My friends, let us have concern for the Hereafter. Let us give a little bit of sacrifice in this temporary world so that we can enjoy Jannah forever and ever in the Hereafter. Either we enjoy here and suffer there or we suffer here and enjoy there. The difficulty and

mujāhadah (striving to please Allāh ﷻ by suppressing unlawful desires) here will only exist in the initial stages. Once we become spiritually healthy, we will enjoy every moment of our ‘ibādah and we will enjoy every moment of our dhikr. It is for this reason Nabī ﷺ said,

إِتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ

Fear (the Displeasure of) Allāh ﷻ wherever you may be.⁴

Wherever you are, create a barrier between yourself and disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, because disobedience to Allāh ﷻ leads to the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ. Wherever you are, stay with taqwā, because when a person spends his moments with taqwā, his Creator is happy with him. When a person spends his time pleasing his Creator, then at that moment he is the beloved of Allāh ﷻ.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Allāh ﷻ loves those who abstain from the Displeasure of Allāh.

(3:76)

Allāh ﷻ loves those who have taqwā and those who live a life of taqwā abstain from sins. As soon as we sin, Allāh ﷻ becomes displeased with us and we no longer remain beloved to Him. Therefore, the advice of Nabī ﷺ is, ‘Stay away from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, wherever you may be.’ Disobedience to Allāh ﷻ is turning away from Allāh ﷻ.

Wherever you maybe, in the masjid or in the market place,

4 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الصَّلَاةُ وَالْبِرُّ chapter: ما جاء في معاشرَة النَّاسِ
Hadīth: 1987

in daylight or in the darkness of the night, in open or behind closed doors, always remember that Allāh ﷻ is watching you. Remembering Allāh ﷻ (dhikr) plays a very important role in preventing a person from disobeying Allāh ﷻ.

A Noteworthy Episode

Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ was once walking in the streets of Madīnah Munawwarah at night. He was keeping watch over Madīnah Munawwarah as per his habit. Whilst resting under the shadow of a wall, he heard a lady say to her daughter, thinking that no one would hear her, ‘Get up and mix the milk with water!’ Selling milk was her livelihood. She was telling her daughter to quickly mix some water into the milk in the darkness of the night. This was a deceitful way of increasing the amount of milk and thereby earning more money.

The daughter said, ‘Do you not know that Amīrul-Mu’minīn ‘Umar ؓ has prohibited us from mixing milk with water?’ The mother replied, ‘Get up and mix it with water, because you are in a place where ‘Umar ؓ cannot see you.’ But the level of the daughter’s remembrance of Allāh ﷻ was higher, so despite having just woken up from her sleep, she said,

إِنْ كَانَ عُمَرُ لَا يَرَانِي فَإِنَّ رَبَّ عُمَرَ يَرَانِي

*If ‘Umar cannot see me then the Rabb of ‘Umar is observing me!*⁵

Never Disobey Allāh ﷻ

We must never sin and never disobey Allāh ﷻ as sinning and

5 Tarikh Dimishq, part 29 p.95

disobeying Allāh ﷻ is turning away from Him ﷻ. If we turn away from Allāh ﷻ then we must immediately return to Allāh ﷻ through tawbah (repentance). Nabī ﷺ is telling us not to turn away from Allāh ﷻ so that we do not have to return to Allāh ﷻ. Why should we turn away from Allāh ﷻ when we know the highway to Jannah.

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ بَيْنِي أَدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ نَعْمَ عَدُوٌّ
مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي ۗ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

Did I not advise you, O children of Adam! Do not obey Shayṭān, he is your open enemy, and obey me, this is the straight path.

(36:60-61)

The Straight Path is the highway to Jannah and it requires obedience to Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ is with those people who adopt taqwā and totally obey Him ﷻ.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا

Allāh ﷻ is with those who adopt taqwā... (16:128)

Therefore, my friends, we must hold fast to ‘T and T’; taqwā and tawbah. Our aim should be that we will never disobey Allāh ﷻ. We are not immune from sin like the Ambiyā ﷺ, therefore, according to the level of our Īmān, sooner or later we will make mistakes. Nevertheless, we must have a firm resolution that we will not sin.

‘We will never sin. We will refrain from sin until we breathe our last. How can we sin? How can we disobey our Creator?’ This should be our zeal. This should be our resolution and in order to carry out this resolution, we must use all the resources that are available: dhikrullāh, good company, good environment,

muḥāsabah, murāqabah (contemplation) of the Hereafter, etc.

We should regularly contemplate that a day is going to come when the Angel of Death will come and extract our souls and we will breathe our last; we will be buried in the grave and angels will come to question us. We should do this at least once a week, for five to ten minutes during the night.

Let us make a firm resolution that we will never sin. Despite all our weaknesses, our resolution should be maintained. We should not leave Masjid Abu Bakr this weekend without this resolution that enough is enough, we will never sin. A poet supplicates to Allāh ﷻ and says,

گنہگاری میں کب تک عمر کاٹوں
بدل دے میرا رستہ دل بدل دے

For how long will I spend my life sinning?

(O Allah!) Change my path, (from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ to the obedience of Allāh ﷻ. And in order to change my path, purify my heart and) change the condition of my heart.

After making this resolution, stay in good company, stay away from wrong environments, be particular with the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, associate yourselves to an expert pious Shaykh and seek his guidance, sit in the company of the ‘Ulama and acquire ‘ilm from them; participate in their durūs of Qur’ān and Ḥadīth and Dīnī lectures.

Come what may, we are not going to disobey Allāh ﷻ from now until we breathe our last. We should make this resolution and utilise all the resources we can. Despite this resolution and utilising all the resources available to us, if we are overcome by

nafs or Shayṭān and we turn away from Allāh ﷻ by disobeying Him, then we need to utilise the great bounty of tawbah gifted to us by Allāh ﷻ and return to Allāh ﷻ again.

Benefits of Tawbah

Tawbah has many benefits. The Qur'ān states,

وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

And repent to Allāh, O believers, all of you, so that you may achieve success. (24:31)

After disobeying Allāh ﷻ, when a person turns to Him through tawbah, Allāh ﷻ grants him falāḥ. The literal translation of falāḥ is 'success', but falāḥ is not merely success; falāḥ is the success of this world and the Hereafter. Thus, through tawbah, a person is able to solve his problems of not only the Hereafter, but of this world as well. Allāh ﷻ quotes Sayyidunā Nūḥ ؑ who said to his people,

اسْتَغْفِرُكُمْ وَأُوبِيكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

Ask forgiveness from your Rabb; He is the Most-Forgiving. (71:10)

As a result of this istighfār and tawbah, what will Allāh ﷻ do?

يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ۖ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ۚ

He will send down rain upon you in abundance, and He will help you with wealth and children, and He will make orchards for you and make rivers [flow] for you. (71:11-12)

Thus, istighfār also solves the problems of this world.

‘Allāmah Qurṭubī ﷺ has quoted an incident regarding Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ. Once, a person came to him and complained of being afflicted with drought.’ Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ advised him to seek the Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ. Shortly after, another person came and complained of poverty. Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ said, ‘Seek the Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ.’ Another person came and said, ‘Make du‘ā to Allāh that He grants me a child.’ Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ said, ‘Seek the Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ.’ Another person complained of his orchard being barren. Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ said, ‘Seek the Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ.’ When he was asked as to why he had given the same answer to all those who had come to him with various needs, Ḥasan Baṣrī ﷺ answered, ‘I have not given them any advice of my own; I have only repeated what Allāh ﷻ has promised:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ۝ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ۝ وَ يُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِائِدًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ۖ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ ثَمَرٍ أَكْرَهْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ صُلُوبَ الَّذِينَ أَنفَكُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ۝
 يُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ غَلًّا وَ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ۚ وَ يُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِائِدًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ۖ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ ثَمَرٍ أَكْرَهْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ صُلُوبَ الَّذِينَ أَنفَكُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ۝

Seek forgiveness from your Rabb; He is the Most-Forgiving. He will send down rain upon you in abundance, and He will help you with wealth and children, and He will make orchards for you and make rivers [flow] for you. (71:10-12)⁶

Our Beloved Nabī ﷺ has said,

مَنْ لَزِمَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ ضَيْقٍ مَّا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَرَجٍ وَ مِنْ كُلِّ هَمٍّ فَرَجًا
 وَ رَزَقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

Whoever holds fast to istighfār, Allāh creates a way out for him from every difficulty and grants him relief from every worry and provides him sustenance from sources he cannot even imagine.⁷

6 Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkāmīl-Qur’ān, part 21 p.255

7 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الإستغفار. chapter: في الستر. Hadīth: 1511

Istighfār and tawbah are solutions for every difficulty of this world and the Hereafter.

Taqwā and Tawbah: Two Paths Leading to the Same Destination

The effect of taqwā and tawbah is the same, as both attract the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. A person who acquires taqwā and remains upon it until he breathes his last will experience no problems because he is the beloved of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Allāh ﷻ loves those who adopt taqwā. (3:76)

Similarly, a person who strives to live a life of taqwā, but slips and soon thereafter makes tawbah and leaves this world in the state of tawbah will also experience no problems because he is also the beloved of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

Allāh ﷻ loves those who repent excessively. (2:222)

On the other hand, a person who sins and leaves this world before repenting is not the beloved of Allāh ﷻ because he is neither on the platform of taqwā nor on the platform of tawbah.

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

And those who do not repent are the wrongdoers. (49:11)

This is why Allāh ﷻ commands us in the Glorious Qur'ān to repent:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا ۗ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ

عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

O you who believe! Repent to Allāh a sincere repentance. It is hoped that your Rabb will write off your faults and enter you into gardens beneath which rivers flow... (66:8)

If we sincerely repent and ask Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness, then Allāh ﷻ will definitely wipe away our sins and grant us entry into Jannah under which rivers will flow; rivers of pure water, milk, wine and honey.

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ^ط فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ^ع وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ^ع وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ^ع وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى^ط وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ

(Here is) a description of the Paradise that is promised for the people of taqwā! In it there are rivers of water, never spoiling, and rivers of milk the taste of which would not go bad, and rivers of wine, delicious to the drinkers, and rivers of honey, fully purified. And for them there are all sorts of fruits, and forgiveness from their Rabb. (47:15)

Conclusion

I am concluding now my friends. We only have two lessons to learn and carry out: taqwā and tawbah. Taqwā is to make sure that we carry out all the dos and abstain from all the don'ts. And if we ever fail to carry out a do or abstain from a don't, then we will not wait a second in turning to Allāh ﷻ to seek His forgiveness. This is tawbah. We will not wait for the time of tahajjud or until we enter the masjid. We will not wait for 'umrah or ḥajj. We will not wait for Laylatul-Qadr or Laylatul-Barā'ah. Wherever we are, we will repent immediately.

My friends! The most blessed moment and the most blessed place for a person is that moment and that place wherein one turns to his Creator and says, ‘O my Merciful Creator! I have repented.’ Laylatul-Barā’ah is a very blessed night, but if we do not repent in it, then it is not a blessed night for us. Makkah Mukarramah and Madīnah Munawwarah are very blessed places, but if we do not repent in them, then they are not blessed places for us. On the other hand, if we are strolling in a park in Toronto and Allāh ﷻ showers us with His Faḍl and we sincerely repent saying, ‘O Allāh! We have repented’, then this park is blessed for us.

A Deception of Shayṭān

It is another deceit of Shayṭān that in gatherings such as these we make a firm resolution that we will refrain from sin, but we do not stop immediately. We think to ourselves, ‘I will stop next Sunday’, ‘I am going for ‘umrah, I will stop then’, ‘After three weeks, inshā’allāh. That is the cut-off point’, ‘Ramaḍān is not far, only two months away.’ etc. These are deceptive thoughts which never prevail. Shayṭān compels us to keep delaying our tawbah so that we die as sinners. Therefore, we should not say, ‘I will repent.’ Instead, we should firmly resolve not to sin and say, ‘O my Rabb! I have repented.’

Nabī ﷺ said,

مَجْمَعُ الدَّعْوَةِ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةِ
 ISLĀMIC DA’AWAH ACADEMY
 التَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنْبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ

*The one who repents from sins is like the one who has no sin.*⁸

8 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: ذكر التَّوْبَةِ chapter: التَّوْبَةُ chapter: 4250

Muftī Muḥammad Shafī‘ ṣāḥib ﷺ has written in Ma‘āriful Qur’ān that every particle of this universe works as the Secret Service of Allāh ﷻ which knows every criminal inside out and keeps a record of his or her crime and when the time comes, it speaks out the truth.⁹ Thus, on the Day of Qiyāmah, the darkness that envelopes us and in which we disobey Allāh ﷻ will give testimony against us. The doors, the walls, the ceiling, the floor, the earth, the sky and our own hands and feet will give testimony against us.

However, our Beloved Nabī ﷺ has given glad tidings to those who sincerely repent. He says,

إِذَا تَابَ الْعَبْدُ أَنْسَى اللَّهُ الْحَفْظَةَ ذُنُوبَهُ وَأَنْسَى ذَلِكَ جَوَارِحَهُ وَمَعَالِمَهُ مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ حَتَّى يَلْقَى اللَّهَ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ شَاهِدٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ بِذَنْبٍ

When a servant repents, Allāh makes the angels forget his sins and makes his limbs and the places on earth where he committed the sins forget until he meets Allāh in a state that there is no witness on sins from Allāh against him.¹⁰

Nabī ﷺ also said,

فَمَنْ تَابَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا أَنْسَى اللَّهُ حَافِظِيهِ وَجَوَارِحَهُ وَبِقَاعَ الْأَرْضِ
كُلَّهَا خَطَايَاهُ وَذُنُوبَهُ

Whoever repents to Allāh sincerely, Allāh will make his two guardians (Kirāman-Kātibīn), limbs and the whole earth forget his mistakes and sins.¹¹

9 Ma‘āriful Qur’ān, part 5 p.54

10 Tārīkh Dimishq, part 14 p.17

11 Kanzul-‘Ummāl, Ḥadīth: 10166

We feel so happy when we hear such statements of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ. We learn from these Aḥādīth that the person who has sincerely repented will be resurrected on the Day of Qiyāmah, and only Allāh ﷻ will have the knowledge of his past. Therefore, hold fast to taqwā and tawbah.

Regular Tawbah

A further point to bear in mind is that we are all sinners; even after tawbah, we need to continually make further tawbah. We should do tawbah and istighfār a hundred times daily. Any of the following formulae of istighfār can be recited:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I seek forgiveness from Allāh, my Rabb, for every sin and I repent to Him.

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

I seek forgiveness from Allāh besides Whom there is no deity, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining, and I repent to Him.

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ

I seek forgiveness from Allāh.

Whenever we remember, we should do istighfār and in abundance. If we are filthy with sins, then this istighfār will wash away our sins and if we are not filthy, then there are so many other benefits of istighfār. Due to these other benefits, even Nabī ﷺ would do istighfār daily, despite being immune from sins. The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ say that we would hear Rasūlullāh ﷺ say the following a hundred times in one gathering:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي، وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

*O My Rabb! Forgive me and accept my repentance. Indeed, You are the Most-Relenting, the Most-Merciful.*¹²

In another Ḥadīth, Nabī ﷺ said,

وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

*By Allāh! Verily, I seek forgiveness from Allāh and turn to Him in repentance more than 70 times every day.*¹³

What We Must Do

In this very gathering, turn to Allāh ﷻ and say, ‘O Allāh! I have repented from every sin. O Allāh! I will never sin. O Allāh! Help me to remain steadfast on this tawbah.’ Thereafter, for the next twenty-four hours which we will spend in the masjid, we must continually seek the Help of Allāh ﷻ, ‘O Allāh! Help me to abstain from sins. O Allāh! Only you can help me.’ Then when we leave the masjid, we must try our utmost to restrain ourselves from the desire to sin. We must control our nafs and use all the resources that are necessary and hold fast to the company of the ‘Ulamā and Mashā’ikh. Their company is vital. Through the company of the Mashā’ikh – the pious servants of Allāh ﷻ - we gain the strength to resist sins, and through the company of the ‘Ulamā we acquire knowledge through which we are able to understand the Dos and Don’ts of Allāh ﷻ better. Despite our efforts, resolution and use of all the resources, if we slip, then

12 Sunan Abi Dāwūd, kitāb: تفریح أبواب الوتر chapter: الإستغفار Ḥadīth: 1516;
Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: مجلسه إذا قام من مجلسه Ḥadīth: 3434

13 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: الإستغفار النَّبِيِّ ﷺ في اليوم واللييلة Ḥadīth: 6307

we should not wait for the next moment, second or minute. We must immediately turn to Allāh ﷻ and say, ‘O Allāh! I am very regretful over my mistake I have again repented and I will never return to this sin again.’ If we fail a hundred times, we will return to Allāh ﷻ a hundred times. If we turn away from Allāh ﷻ a thousand times, we will return to Allāh ﷻ a thousand times. We have no choice. If we turn away from Allāh ﷻ a million times, then we will return to Allāh ﷻ a million times.

جو نا کام ہوتا رہے عمر بھر بھی
 بہر حال کوشش تو عاشق نہ چھوڑے
*That lover who continually fails throughout his life
 Should not forsake his endeavours.*

We are lovers - the lovers of Allāh ﷻ. There is nothing more precious to us than Allāh ﷻ. If we are unable to acquire anything but Allāh ﷻ then we are successful alḥamdulillāh, and if we acquire everything but Allāh ﷻ, then we are nothing but losers.

اگر ایک تو نہیں میرا تو کوئی شئی نہیں میری
 تو ایک میرا تو سب میرا فلک میرا زمیں میری
*If You are not mine then nothing is mine
 If You are mine then everything is mine; the heavens are mine
 and the earth is mine.*

Even if we fail a thousand times, we must keep on repenting. Despite failing throughout our lives, we must continue to pull ourselves together and convince ourselves that inshā'allāh this time I will succeed.

جو نا کام ہوتا رہے عمر بھر بھی
بہر حال کوشش تو عاشق نہ چھوڑے
یہ رشتہ محبت کا قائم ہی رکھے
جو سو بار ٹوٹے تو سو بار جوڑے

*That lover who continually fails throughout his life
Should not forsake his endeavours.*

This relationship of love should be retained

If it breaks a hundred times then join it a hundred times.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq to practise. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the zeal and the courage to become His beloved through taqwā and tawbah. May Allāh ﷻ accept our gathering in Masjid Abu Bakr. May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to value every moment of our stay in Masjid Abu Bakr and may we leave Masjid Abu Bakr tomorrow with a complete change in our lives. It is possible for a person to change overnight and there are many examples of this. May Allāh ﷻ also enable us to value each and every second of our lives until we breathe our last. Just as He has, only through His Mercy and Grace, united all of us here in His House today for His Pleasure, May Allāh ﷻ unite us all in Jannatul-Firdaws in the company of the Ambiyā ﷺ, the ṣiddīqīn, the shuhadā and the ṣāliḥīn. Āmīn.

ISLAMIC DA'WAH ACADEMY

