

# القاسم

## AL-QASIM

GUIDANCE OF ISLAM IN LIGHT OF QUR'AN, HADITH, AND FIQH

### ASHAB AL-SUFFAH:

*The First Shelter & Earliest  
Madrasah*

### PROPHETIC EQ:

*The Emotional Intelligence of  
Prophet Muhammad ﷺ*

### WINTER BLUES

*Building spiritual defense  
against seasonal depression*

### Q&A

*From JQU's Ifta  
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# A Letter from the Editor

*As-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuhu.*

All praise is for Allah ﷻ, Lord of all the worlds. Allah has blessed us immensely by granting us the gift of imān and Islām. He has also honored us by making us part of the ummah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and by giving us the priceless guidance of the Qur’an and Sunnah, guidance that benefits us in both this life and the next.

Although today we do not fully appreciate their worth, on the Day of Judgment their real value and significance will become clear to us. If Allah ﷻ accepts us, both in this world and in the Hereafter, then our worldly life and our eternal life will both be successful.

For our worship, our acts of obedience, our deeds, our charity, and every good action to be accepted by Allah ﷻ is a tremendous favour. That’s why we should strive for this acceptance and constantly make du‘ā’ that Allah accepts our efforts.

*Qābiliyyah*, or “capability”, is not what Allah ﷻ looks at. We tend to focus only on ability, but in the sight of Allah, *qabūliyyah*, or “acceptance”, is far greater than personal ability. The desire for acceptance instead of capability should live within our hearts. We should cultivate this longing for acceptance from Allah ﷻ.

People often say, “So-and-so is very *qābil*, capable” or, “He has great *qābiliyyah*.” At other times they say, “So-and-so has gained great *maqbuliyyah* with Allah ﷻ,” meaning he has become someone whose deeds are accepted by Allah ﷻ.

Anyone who works hard, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, righteous or immoral, pious or sinful, may eventually develop *qābiliyyah* (capability) with enough effort. Being a Muslim is not a condition for having ability, rather, continuous hard work is. Whoever strives will eventually gain ability. But having *qabūliyyah* (acceptance) does not automatically come with ability. There are many examples of this around us. For *qabūliyyah*, imān is essential, along with other necessary qualities.

Sometimes people possess various talents; some are extremely capable. Yet those who gain true *qabūliyyah* with Allah ﷻ are often people who appear outwardly very simple or with very limited capabilities.

In this world, people often protest, “I am so capable and have so many degrees, yet I’m still left behind, while so-and-so has advanced and gone far ahead.” *Qābiliyyah* is, to some extent, within a person’s control. But *qabūliyyah*, being accepted by Allah ﷻ, is not in our hands. It is something Allah ﷻ grants to whomever He wills and loves.

Furthermore, if someone argues or clashes with a person who has *maqbuliyyah*, he is not merely opposing that person: he is, in reality, opposing Allah ﷻ. As the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in a ḥadīth:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: "مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ"

*Narrated by Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Allah said: Whoever shows hostility to a friend (walī) of Mine, I have declared war upon him.” (Sahih al-Bukhari 6502)*

This is not to say that one should not pursue *qābiliyyah* (ability). We should have an education, we should have qualifications and experience, but in and of themselves, these things are not everything. Despite having all of this, our real effort and concern should be this: how can we attain *qabūliyyah* (acceptance) in the sight of Allah ﷻ?

We should constantly make du‘ā’ that Allah ﷻ grants us *qabūliyyah*. Without acceptance, nothing in this world will truly benefit us. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur’an:

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Allah accepts only from the God-fearing.”

(Surah al-Maidah, 27)

At all times, those who live with piety, precaution in their religion, and fear of Allah ﷻ are called *muttaqin* (God-fearing), as they are mentioned in this verse. *Taqwā* means avoiding sins and obeying the commands of Allah ﷻ. This sense of fear and concern should always remain within us: “The action I just performed, was it accepted by Allah ﷻ or not?”

We ordinary Muslims seek forgiveness (*istighfār*) for our sins, but the Prophets ﷺ would even seek forgiveness for their good deeds. They would feel that the good they performed was not worthy of being presented before Allah’s court. The Sunnah and blessed practice of the Prophet ﷺ was that after every obligatory prayer, he would make *istighfār*. Consider this: prayer is such a beloved and blessed act, yet even after it, he would seek forgiveness, saying in effect, “O Allah, I was not able to worship You in the way You truly deserve. O Allah, forgive me. The prayer should have been performed with full humility and concentration, but I could not fulfill it as it should have been. The sincerity and the presence of heart that should have been there was not complete. So forgive me.” Even for salah, *istighfār* was being made.

As for us, even after committing sins we simply say, “Allah is forgiving,” and do not care for *istighfār*. We even try to justify our sins. The Prophets عليهم السلام would make *istighfār* for their good deeds, while we hesitate to repent even for our wrongs.

Those who remain fearful about their good deeds, wondering whether or not they will be accepted by Allah ﷻ, are precisely the ones whom Allah ﷻ accepts. Allah ﷻ places His love in their hearts. Allah ﷻ loves them, and He places their love in the hearts of all creation: in the angels, in the people of this world, even within the fish of the sea.

To conclude, we should frequently engage in *istighfār*. Along with ability (*qābiliyyah*), we must pay attention to the avenues of acceptance (*qabūliyyah*) and stay away from sins. Whenever a sin occurs, we should immediately turn to *istighfār*. We should never feel pride or arrogance over our degrees or abilities. In this way, our worldly matters also become easier, and in the Hereafter we gain acceptance as well. This is why, along with ability (*qābiliyyah*), we must also pay attention to *qabūliyyah*, to whether our actions and efforts are accepted by Allah ﷻ or not. We should constantly ask ourselves: “Is this action of mine pleasing to Allah? Is Allah satisfied with what I am doing?”

May Allah ﷻ grant us the ability to act upon this. May Allah ﷻ make all of us His accepted servants, and may He accept our good deeds and keep all of us away from sins. *Āmīn*.

*As-salāmu ‘alaykum.*

- Mufti Adam Koya,  
Translated by Anas Mezaan

# ASHAB AL-SUFFAH:

## THE FIRST SHELTER & EARLIEST MADRASAH

By Mufti Abrar Koya,  
Teacher, JQU

### WHO WERE THE AŞĤĀB AL-ŞUFFAH?

The *şuffah* (lit. “shade/roof”) was a northern area behind the Prophet’s Mosque shaded by a rooftop (as-Sakhawī 136).

The *Aşĥāb aş-Şuffah* (The People of the Shade) were granted this name by the Prophet ﷺ himself (al-Bayhaqī, *al-Kubrā* 624). They were given that name either because they resided under the roofed area at the back of the mosque, or because they would make a row (*şaff*) at the door of the mosque (Qādi Iyād 325; al-Urmawī 301).

The *şuffah* was a refuge for the destitute, those without family support or wealth, or simply bachelors who did not have a place to stay. When an immigrant arrived, they would camp with their chiefs. If they had no chief, they would join the *ahl aş-şuffah* (al-Bayhaqī, *al-Kubrā* 624; al-Īmān 215).

Primarily, they comprised of destitute *muhājirūn*, since the *anşār* lived in their homes (as-Sakhawī 144).

They were the “Guests of Islam” as mentioned by Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه (*Şaĥiĥ al-Bukhārī* 6452). At times, people would give them gifts; sometimes they would give them charity, and other times they would host them at their houses.

The Prophet ﷺ would divide them among the affluent *muhājirūn* (immigrants) and *anşār* (the helpers, residents of Madinah). He encouraged his companions to host them. He would advise those who had enough food for two people, to take a third (person), and those who had food sufficient for four, take a fifth. The Prophet ﷺ once took ten, and Abū Bakr took three. It is reported that Sa’d ibn Ubādah رضي الله عنه would host eighty of them every night for dinner (as-Sakhawī 103). In spite of their poverty, they dedicated their life to acquiring knowledge (as-Sakhawī 115). Due to a lack of nourishment, some of them, such as Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, would faint (*Şaĥiĥ al-Bukhārī* 5375, 7324). There were instances where some of them would fall during prayer due to the pangs of hunger (*Jami’ at-Tirmidhī* 2368).

Generally, their clothing consisted of a single garment, a cloak or a lower garment, which they would tie to the back of their necks (so that their bodies would not become exposed). At times, their clothing would reach half their shins or ankles; hence, they would hold it fearing their private part would be exposed (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 442).

## THEIR RANK

The Prophet ﷺ had immense love for these companions and would actively take care of them. He would sit and converse with them (al-Bayhaqī 624).

At times, he would encourage others to give them charity. Sometimes he would host them at his own house. Once, he invited them to his house. After ‘Aisha رضي الله عنها fed them, he gave them a choice to sleep there or go back to the mosque and rest. They chose the latter (an-Nasa’ī 215; Harbī 35).

Once, when Abū Sufyan رضي الله عنه passed by a few of them, they said, “The swords didn’t do their job on the neck of the enemy of Allah.” Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “You say this to an elder and leader of the Quraysh?!” He then informed the Prophet ﷺ of what transpired. The Prophet ﷺ

responded, “Oh Abū Bakr! Perhaps you have upset them. I swear by He in whose hand my life is in, if you upset them then you have upset your Nurturer (Allah).” Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه then went and apologized to them. When the Prophet's beloved daughter, Fātimah رضي الله عنها, asked him to provide them with a slave to assist them in the home, he responded by saying he can’t leave the people of the ṣuffah hungry and give her what she asked for. Instead, he preferred to sell the slaves and spend money on them. Later, he taught her and Alī رضي الله عنه a divine prayer (*tasbīḥ*) which gives strength (al-Bayhaqī 624).

He would boost the morale of the *ahl aṣ-ṣuffah* by reminding them that the destitute will enter heaven 500 years prior to the affluent.

Since their staple diet was fruit from the salvadora tree and dates, they complained about the burn in their stomachs from constantly eating dates. The Prophet ﷺ spoke of this from the pulpit and consoled them, “If I had bread and meat, I would have fed you.” He then prophesized a future where they would receive endless pots of food. They asked, “Oh Messenger of Allah, will we be in a better state then or now?” He responded, “No! Rather you are in a better state now. Today you are brothers (you love one another) and on that day you will be in a state of turmoil” (al-Bayhaqī 2: 624). People would visit them later on to acquire blessings (barakah) (as-Sakhawī 133).

## THEIR NUMBER

The number of *ahl aṣ-ṣuffah* varied over time. Some say they were 400 (Nawawī 177). Others mention 70. At times, their numbers would decrease to 10. In reality, it would fluctuate based on their joining an expedition, travelling, or moving out, etc. (as-Sakhawī 143).

## THEIR NAMES

Ḥafīẓ ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī relates that some scholars, such as Ibn al-A'rābī (D: 340 A.H.), as-Sulamī (D: 412 A.H.), al-Ḥakīm (D: 405 A.H.) (as-Sakhawī 143), and Abū Nu'aym (D: 430 A.H.) made an effort to compile their names (Ibn Ḥajar 122). Each scholar has mentioned some names that the other has not mentioned. Ibn Ḥajar notes that there is some criticism regarding the inclusion of certain names (536).

Ibn Ḥajar's student, as-Sakhawī, authored a treatise in which he compiled the names of these blessed companions, drawing primarily from Abū Nu'aym. He notes Abū Nu'aym has gathered around 100 names, many unestablished, which he himself clarifies he has reservations about, and he even explicitly mentions some who were incorrectly attributed to this group (as-Sakhawī 144).

## A LESSON FROM THE ASHAB AL-SUFFAH:

The hardships endured by the *Ashāb aṣ-Ṣuffah* are well documented, and the fruits of their efforts continue to benefit the ummah to this day. They willingly bore difficulty for the sake of knowledge and the accompanying of the Prophet ﷺ. Despite their poverty and material deprivation, they were far

from unhappy; their hearts were attached to the love of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Though they were capable of seeking livelihood and enjoying the comforts of life, they recognized the transient nature of this world and devoted themselves to what is everlasting.

Their lives remind us to prioritize what truly matters, i.e. seeking the pleasure of Allah and the rewards of the Hereafter. Our time should not be consumed solely in pursuing worldly gain and accumulating wealth. Imām al-Ghazālī advises that a day consists of only twenty four hours, so one should not let sleep exceed eight of them, for if a person lives sixty years, he will have slept twenty of them, a third of their life gone. To appreciate the true value of time, one may consult the remarkable work of Shaykh Abd al-Fattāh Abū Ghuddah, *Qimat az-Zaman 'ind al-Ulamā* (or: *The Value of Time*), which illustrates how our predecessors guarded every moment for the sake of Allah.

Regarding the attractions of this world, reflect on the advice of the Prophet ﷺ, as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (2963), for it teaches a path to contentment,

*"Look at those who are below you and not at those who are above you, for this will prevent you from belittling Allah's favour upon you."*

Here is a list of a few Companions who were from the *Ashāb al-Ṣuffah*:

# أَصْحَابُ الصُّفَّةِ

## THE COMPANIONS OF THE SHADE

An excerpt from Imam Sakhāwī's compilation in *Rujhān al-Kiffah*

AL-BARĀ' IBN MĀLIK IBN AL-NAḌR

BILĀL IBN RABĀḤ

THAWBĀN, MAWLĀ RASŪL-ALLAH

SĀLIM IBN 'UMAYR

SĀLIM, MAWLA ABI ḤUDHAYFAH

SA'D IBN ABI WAQQAS, ABU ISHAQ

ḤUDHAYFAH IBN ASĪD, ABŪ SARĪḤAH, AL-GHIFĀRĪ

HANẒALAH IBN ABI ĀMIR AL-RAHIB, GHASĪL AL-MALĀ'IKAH

JUNDUB IBN JUNĀDAH, ABŪ DHARR, AL-GHIFĀRĪ

JĀRIYAH IBN ḤUMAYL IBN NUSHBAH IBN QURAṬ

KHUBAYB IBN YASĀF IBN 'INABAH, ABU 'ABD AL-RAHMAN

ḤĀRITHAH IBN AL-NU'MĀN AL-ANṢĀRĪ AL-NAJJĀRĪ

KHUNAYS IBN ḤUDHĀFAH AL-SAHMĪ

KHABBĀB IBN AL-ARATT

WĀBIṢAH IBN MA'BAD AL-JUHANĪ

ṢUHAYB IBN SINĀN

‘ABD-ALLAH IBN UMM MAKTŪM

‘AMMĀR IBN YĀSIR

ABŪ THA‘LABAH AL-KHUSHANĪ

‘AMR IBN ‘AWF AL-MUZANĪ

‘UWAYMIR, ABU AL-DARDĀ’

‘ABD-ALLAH IBN MAS‘ŪD

‘UQBAH IBN ‘ĀMIR AL-JUHANĪ

ṢAFWAN IBN BAYḌĀ’

‘UKKĀSHAH IBN MIḤṢAN AL-ASADĪ

‘ABD-ALLAH IBN UNAYS AL-JUHANĪ

RABĪ‘AH IBN KA‘B AL-ASLAMI

SAFĪNAH, ABU ABD AL-RAHMAN, MAWLĀ RASUL-ALLAH

ZAYD IBN AL-KHATTAB, ABU ‘ABD AL-RAHMAN

SA‘D IBN MALIK, ABU SA‘ĪD, AL-KHUDRI

‘ABD AL-RAḤMĀN IBN ṢAKHR, ABŪ HURAYRAH, AL-DAWSĪ

KA‘B IBN ‘AMR, ABŪ AL-YUSR, AL-ANṢĀRĪ

RIFĀ‘AH, ABU LUBĀBAH, AL-ANSARI (ALSO REPORTED:  
BASHIR IBN ‘ABD AL-MUNDHIR)

MU‘ĀWIYAH IBN AL-ḤAKAM AL-SULAMĪ

‘ABD-ALLAH IBN ‘AMR IBN ḤARĀM AL-ANṢĀRĪ AL-SULAMĪ, ABŪ JĀBIR

‘ABD-ALLAH IBN ‘UMAR IBN AL-KHAṬṬĀB

HILĀL, MAWLĀ MUGHĪRAH IBN SHU‘BAH

MUṢ‘AB IBN ‘UMAYR

TALḤAH IBN AMR AL-NAṢRI

*May Allah be pleased with them all*

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# the EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF THE PROPHET ﷺ

By N. Baig,  
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لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

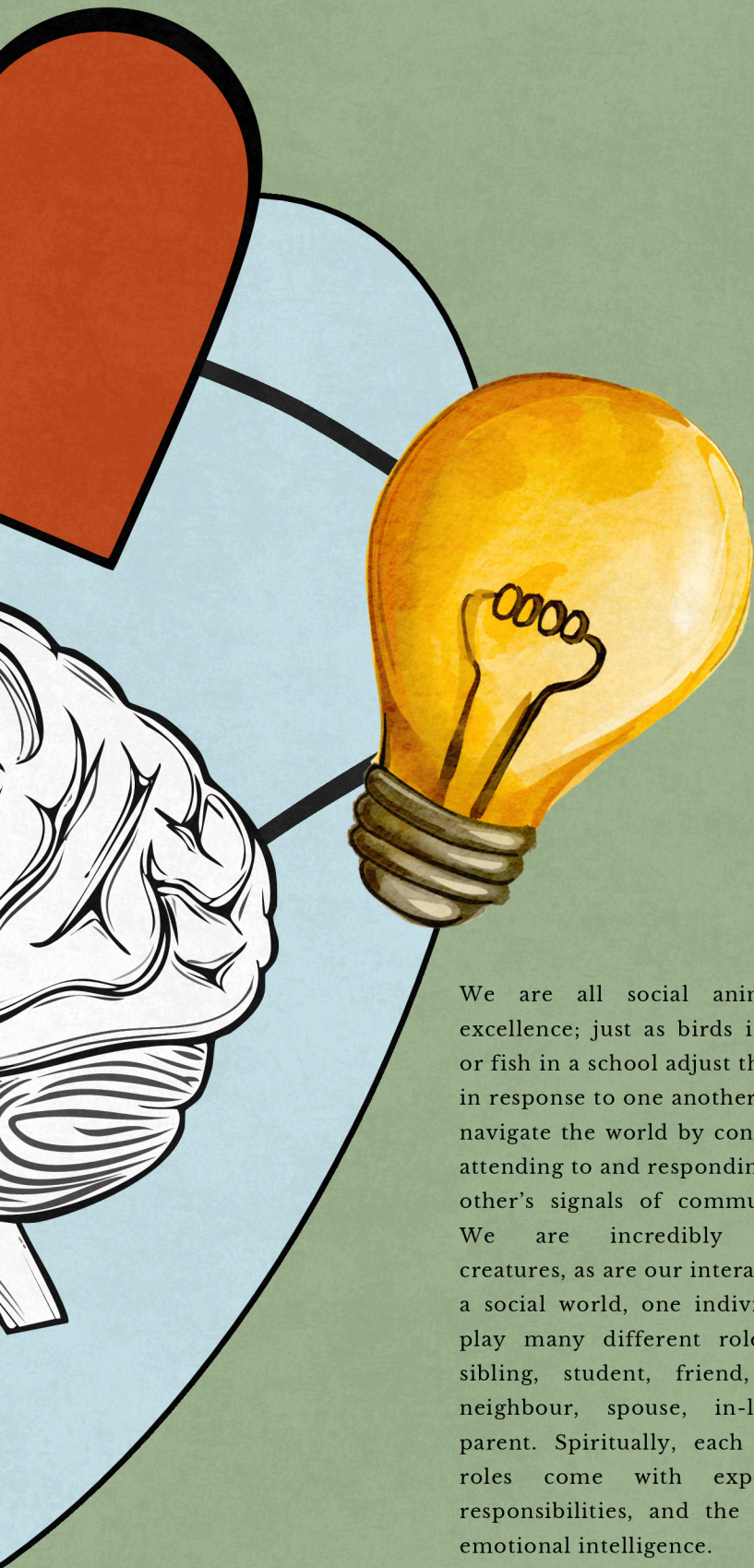
*Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent  
example, for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day,  
and remembers Allah often  
(Surah al-Ahzab, 21)*

As Muslims, we believe that the Prophet ﷺ was sent to teach believers a complete way of life, to explain the Qur'an, and to demonstrate practical methods of its application. The Prophet ﷺ taught us everything, from cleaning ourselves after using the washroom to running governments, and everything in between. Beyond the foundations of *aqeedah* (creed) and *ibaadah* (worship), there are other very important branches of Shari'ah: *mu'amalat* (mutual dealings), *mu'asharat* (social etiquette), and *akhlaq* (moral character). All of these holistically create the Shari'ah that we follow.

Since the verse above titles the Prophet ﷺ as *uswah hasanah*, an excellent example, his role was to be a model in all these aspects of Shari'ah. As such, he was also a man of truly great character (Surah al-Qalam, 4), sent to perfect it (*Muwatta Imam Malik*, 1614). When Aisha رضي الله عنها was asked to explain the character of the blessed Prophet, her reply was, "His character was the Quran" (*al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 308). By studying the character of the Prophet ﷺ, we see that he possessed a high level of emotional and social intelligence because he was, simply put, taught by Allah ﷻ (Smith 73). As an excellent example, he was given the tools needed to be a role model in emotional intelligence, too.

Whether we like it or not, we have to interact and deal with other human beings throughout our life.





We are all social animals par excellence; just as birds in a flock or fish in a school adjust their paths in response to one another, humans navigate the world by continuously attending to and responding to each other's signals of communication. We are incredibly complex creatures, as are our interactions. In a social world, one individual can play many different roles: child, sibling, student, friend, worker, neighbour, spouse, in-law, and parent. Spiritually, each of these roles come with expectations, responsibilities, and the need for emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "the ability to recognize, understand, and deal skillfully with one's own emotions and the

emotions of others (as by regulating one's emotions or by showing empathy and good judgment in social interactions)" (Merriam-Webster). We experience feelings all the time. Often, we feel friction with people around us, but are unaware of those emotions and their impact on our behaviour—and on people. For our relationships and community to be healthy, we need a level of understanding and emotional investment (Smith 62). The Prophetic model of emotional intelligence is important as it is rooted in morals; it allows us to develop spiritually, effectively communicate the message of Islam and properly fulfill the *huqooq al-ibaa*d, or the rights of the creation of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet's emotional intelligence can be seen in his tone, body language, context, and words (Smith 82). If we read the *seerah* of the Prophet ﷺ and study his life, we will see examples of this everywhere. In fact, there is an ayah that appreciates this quality of his (Smith 58):

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ  
حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

*There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves, who is concerned by your suffering, anxious for your wellbeing, and gracious and merciful to the believers.*

(Surah at-Tawbah, 128).

To get a glimpse of the Prophet's ﷺ beautiful character and be inspired to follow in his footsteps, we will be looking at a few examples of how he regulated his own emotions, how he dealt with the emotions of others, and finally, how he taught us to be emotionally intelligent human beings.

## HOW THE PROPHET ﷺ REGULATED HIS OWN EMOTIONS

Usually, the first step in emotional intelligence training, and any kind of spiritual training, is self-awareness; being able to acknowledge our inner state and the situation we are in. There are many examples in the ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ understanding, expressing, and regulating

his emotions through verbal articulation and body language. He ﷺ acknowledged his emotions without allowing them to dictate his actions or beliefs. For example, when the Prophet ﷺ witnessed his son, Ibrahim, nearing the end of his life, his eyes filled with tears, and as he wept, he uttered,

إِنَّ الْعَيْنَ تَدْمَعُ، وَالْقَلْبَ يَحْزَنُ، وَلَا نَقُولُ إِلَّا مَا يَرْضَى رَبُّنَا، وَإِنَّا بِفِرَاقِكَ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَمَحْزُونُونَ

*“The eyes shed tears, and the heart is grieved, but we will not say anything except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrahim, indeed we are sorrowful for your departure.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1303)*

It is not easy to lose a family member, and especially not a baby. The Prophet ﷺ was not immune to sorrow or grief; he was deeply hurt many times in his life from deaths and persecution to a social boycott, an entire year of sorrow, and continuous physical harm. All of these challenges built resilience and patience in him. In this scenario, the Prophet ﷺ showcased his awareness of his own feelings as well as the correct reaction to loss.

When faced with disrespect, the Prophet ﷺ was graceful in tolerance and mercy. Anas رضي الله عنه reported an example of this: “I was walking with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was wearing a Najrani cloak with a very thick border when a bedouin happened to meet him. He grabbed the side of his cloak and pulled it violently. I noticed that the violence of the jerk had bruised the neck of Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The bedouin said, ‘O Muhammad! Give me out of Allah's wealth what you possess.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned to him, and smiled, and directed that he should be given something” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 6088). If someone were to approach us in a similar manner, perhaps we would be inclined to react in turn or defend ourselves in some way. But the Prophet ﷺ did not react with anger. Instead, he paused, turned to him with a smile, and gave him what he asked for. This is self-restraint, mercy, and calmness in its most beautiful form. The Prophet chose to respond with *ihsan* (excellence); he demonstrated to us the stronger course of action. That takes a different level of ego disciplining, which is a core duty in the spiritual journey of a Muslim.

The Prophet ﷺ consistently embodied the Qur'anic virtue of forgiveness and overlooking personal injuries throughout his life. However, in some exceptional scenarios, he set boundaries. After the conquest of Makkah, Wahshi ibn Harb, the assassin of the Prophet's uncle Hamza رضي الله عنه, came forward to convert to Islam and ask the Prophet for forgiveness. The Prophet ﷺ

agreed, but requested:

فَهَلْ تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تُغَيِّبَ وَجْهَكَ عَنِّي

*“Can you please hide your face from me?”*

(Sahih al-Bukhari, 4072)

As the assassination of Hamza رضي الله عنه was a deep emotional pain, the Prophet ﷺ paired his forgiveness with setting specific terms and boundaries for that relationship; Wahshi was free to go, but the Prophet ﷺ would not see him without recalling the pain of his uncle's death (Palanpuri 8/163).

We also face difficult emotions in our lives. This world is a test, so everyone will be challenged both physically and mentally. Instead of developing hard-heartedness or (on the flipside) a victim mentality, the Prophet ﷺ's tests built his character and nurtured true emotional strength.

## HOW THE PROPHET ﷺ CONSIDERED THE EMOTIONS OF OTHERS

For a messenger to convey their message, they must remove any barriers that come between them and the people receiving the message. To connect with minds and hearts, they need a lot of understanding, sensitivity to, and awareness of others. Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها gives an example of the emotional awareness of her husband, the Prophet ﷺ:

*“While I was laying down with the Prophet of Allah under a single woolen sheet, I suddenly got my menses. So, I slipped away and changed into the clothes which I wore during my menses. The Prophet then said to me, ‘Has your menstruation started?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied. He then asked me to rejoin him under the blanket and lay down close to him. So, I came back and laid down with him under the covers.” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 298)*

The Prophet ﷺ was perceptive here—he verbally confirmed that he noticed his wife's behaviour, showing his mental awareness. On top of that, he asked her to come back and continue lying with him. This conveyed to her that his love was “unconditional and constant” (Smith 74). He would not distance himself from her just because of her change in ritual cleanliness, nor deprive her of affection and closeness that she needed from her husband, especially in that vulnerable moment (Smith 74). In another example of gentle consideration to his wives, Aisha رضي الله عنها reported: “By Allah, I remember the Messenger of Allah ﷺ standing on the door of my apartment screening me with his mantle, enabling me to see the sport of the Abyssinians as they played with their daggers in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He

kept standing for my sake till I was satiated, and then I went back; and thus you can well imagine how long a girl tender of age who is fond of sports (could have watched it)" (*Sahih Muslim*, 892). These examples make clear that his steady compassion contributed to the emotional security and psychological well-being of his wives.

In a narration by Abu Musa رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ once entered a garden, and was subsequently joined by Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman رضي الله عنهم respectively (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3695). One report adds that the Prophet ﷺ was sitting in a place where there was water, and he was uncovering both his legs or one leg, and when Uthman رضي الله عنه entered, he covered them (or it). A similar response was seen from the Prophet when Uthman رضي الله عنه entered his ﷺ house to speak with him one day (*Sahih Muslim*, 2401). This is because comfort looks different to everyone, and Uthman رضي الله عنه was a very shy and extremely modest man. The Prophet ﷺ was more relaxed with Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه and Umar رضي الله عنه, but covered himself up more when Uthman رضي الله عنه arrived, only to make him more comfortable. His emotional awareness is also displayed in another hadith where the Prophet ﷺ said,

*"When I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it, but hear a child crying, so I make my prayer brief, not wanting to cause hardship for his mother."* (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 707)

The Prophet's emotional intelligence was not reserved for adults, but included children too. Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه said, "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to come to visit us. I had a younger brother named Abu Umair by *kunyah* (epithet). He had a sparrow with which he played, but it died. One day, the Prophet ﷺ came to see him and saw him grieved. He asked, 'What is the matter with him?' The people replied: 'His sparrow has died'. He then responded:

يَا أَبَا عُمَيْرٍ مَا فَعَلَ السُّبَيْرُ

*'O Abu Umair! What has happened to the little sparrow?'*  
(*Sunan Abi Dawud*, 4969)

The Prophet ﷺ went out of his way to console a child because of his pet. How many of us get jaded from the bitterness of life and find that we cannot afford any sort of emotional labour with adults, let alone with children? Remarkably, the Prophet ﷺ understood the feelings, interests, and comfort levels of everyone around him.

## HOW THE PROPHET ﷺ TAUGHT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The Prophet ﷺ's excellent character served as a powerful catalyst for change. Through compassion,

wisdom, and deep emotional investment, he was able to prove himself as the best teacher, leader, and role model. Mu'awiyah ibn al-Hakam رضي الله عنه relates that he once spoke out loud during the prayer when someone near him sneezed, unaware of the ruling to not speak in salah. The companions reacted with stern looks, but the Prophet ﷺ waited until the salah was finished and then gently explained the ruling to him. Mu'awiyah later said, "...I declare that neither before him nor after him have I seen a leader who gave better instruction than him. I swear that he did not scold, beat, or insult me but said, 'Speaking is not appropriate during salah, for it is only for glorifying Allah, proclaiming His Greatness, and reciting the Qur'an'" (*Sahih Muslim*, 537). Similar was his calm education to the bedouin who urinated inside the masjid; he responded by getting the area cleaned and then explaining that the masjid is not for urinating in (*Sunan Ibn Majah*, 628). He consistently prioritized compassion in his education and exemplified patience, no matter how inappropriate the mistakes of those under his guardianship.

In terms of cultivating good character and emotional intelligence in the ummah, oceans of his advice can be found in classical texts. For instance, from the many etiquettes of gathering and of socializing, Abdullah رضي الله عنه reports that the Prophet ﷺ said,

*"When you are three persons sitting together, then no two of you should hold secret counsel excluding the third person until you are with some other people too, otherwise that would grieve him."* (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 6290)

This can mean two people whispering or talking privately in front of a third person, or speaking in a language they don't understand. This matters because it might make the third person feel excluded, uncomfortable, or left out. Even small acts of consideration are addressed in the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. The ahadith on the rights of neighbours, for instance, encourage sharing food whose aroma might reach others, reflecting thoughtfulness and generosity (*Riyadh as-Saliheen*, 304). Likewise, the Prophet ﷺ advised those who had eaten raw garlic to refrain from entering the mosque, demonstrating sensitivity to the comfort of others by preventing any potential discomfort from unpleasant smells (*Sahih Muslim*, 563). These examples illustrate the depth of empathy and attentiveness that Islam promotes in our daily interactions.

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ's perceptiveness to individual circumstances and his ability to vary his responses based on context taught us essential principles in navigating the Shari'ah. One narration highlights this:

*“A young man asked if he could kiss while fasting, and the Prophet ﷺ said no. When an old man asked the same question, the Prophet ﷺ said yes, explaining that the older man was better able to control himself.” (Musnad Ahmad, 19972)*

The Prophet's responses varied according to the situation and the individual, reflecting his deep understanding of personal needs and circumstances. He demonstrated the jurisprudential complexities of the Shari'ah, as it deals with lived human realities.

The Prophet's teachings are all embedded with mindful consideration. These are a few examples of how he corrected with kindness, cultivated empathy, and raised the standard of awareness for all.

## CONCLUSION: HOW CAN WE BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT MUSLIMS?

If we want to navigate our relationships in a Prophetic manner, we have to be open to learning why people feel and act the way they do. But this comprehension is based on our ability to understand our own selves. In a world where people are increasingly disconnected from themselves and others, here are some ways to build Prophetic emotional intelligence:

- Contemplation and reflection; recognize emotions, be aware of them, and understand how they influence behaviour
- Practice the right response; guard the tongue, exercise *sabr*, and build a spiritually-healthy system for emotional regulation
- Train the heart; maintain its purification with dhikr and du'a
- Seek balance; neither suppress emotions to the point of harm, nor release to the point they govern
- Develop concern and empathy for others; choose compassion over harshness
- Read literature; take lessons from the life of the Prophet ﷺ by reading from the books of *seerah* and hadith
- Spend quality time in the company of the righteous; character, whether good or bad, is contagious.

Emotional intelligence is vital to best follow the Prophet ﷺ and fulfill *huqooq al-ibad*. As social creatures, we are accountable for the way we treat ourselves and those around us. Our Western Muslim communities are so diverse that emotional and social intelligence is needed, not optional, to cultivate *akhlaq*, *mu'asharat*, and *mu'amalat*. We live in a world where we're very reserved about who gets our good behaviour, who deserves our respect and attention. But that's not necessarily how the Prophet ﷺ and Sahabah رضي الله عنهم lived. We cannot forget the deeply compassionate and considerate nature of our religion. So, when faced with a tough emotional or social situation, unsure of how to react or move forward, let us find an answer in the life and character of the Prophet ﷺ.

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## Questions to Ask Yourself to Know You're Ready for Marriage:

- Is your primary intention to get close to Allah ﷻ and complete half your religion?
- Do you want to marry for the love and pleasure of Allah ﷻ, or because of feeling pressured?
- Do you know your responsibilities? Do you know your rights?
- Have you considered what life's priorities look like after marriage?
- Have you envisioned the life you want to build with your spouse in the long term? Are the foundations based on this world or the next?
- Is the shared end goal of the relationship Jannah or worldly milestones?
- Are you planning your wedding more than your marriage?
- Are you ready for the potential of parenthood, or the potentiality of never becoming a parent? Will you be content either way?
- Can you expect, accept, and constructively work through conflict?
- What kind of partnership do you want? Does it align with the Shari'ah?
- Do you know yourself? Your weakness to work on?
- Do you, yourself, embody what you seek? This ranges from cognitive maturity to good manners, honesty, and lifestyle.
- Do you have dealbreakers? What about areas for negotiation?
- Do you have and exercise your boundaries in a healthy manner?
- Are you willing to have open conversations with a potential spouse—about financial expectations, education, and ideological values?
- Do you emulate the Islamic expectations you seek?

# Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ

# PEARLS OF THE PAST

Excerpts from *Scattered Pearls of Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi* رحمۃ اللہ علیہ by Mufti Zakaria Makada

## The Sign of Perfection In Man

Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ once mentioned:

“If *insaan* (man) possesses the qualities of expressing servitude, obedience and submission before the command of Allah ﷻ, then he is worthy of being called a human being. If he does not possess these sublime qualities within him, but rather follows the dictates of his temptations and desires, he will be no different to an animal, rather he will be worse than an animal. As Allah ﷻ Himself has mentioned regarding the *kuffar* in the Qur'an Majeed:

أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلَّ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

*They are like animals. Rather, worse in being astray.*

(Surah al-A'raf, 179)

In this regard the poet says:

گر بصورت آدمی انسان بدے ابو بکر و ابو جہل ہم  
یکسا بدے

*If insaan is worthy of being called a human by virtue of his outer form and appearance, then there would be no difference between Abu Bakr and Abu Jahl.*

“A complete and perfect person is one who is a personification of servitude, obedience and submission before the command of Allah ﷻ. At every moment he fulfills the commands of Allah ﷻ and he regards his being able to obey and fulfil the commands of Allah as the grace of Allah upon him. He does not attribute any good to himself at any time.”

## Acquiring Perfection in Deen is Dependent on Adab

Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ once mentioned:

“A complete and perfect person is one who is immersed in knowledge and conducts himself with *adab* (etiquette). Our pious predecessors were a combination of both.”

## The Adab and Respect Which the Deen Deserves From A Believer

Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ once mentioned that “the true respect of *deen* (religion) is that one accepts the command of Allah ﷻ in every situation without subjecting his obedience to his own logical reasoning and understanding.”

## The Sahabah's Adherence to the Sunnah

Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ once mentioned:

“In current times, the amassing of wealth and possessing the capability to acquire it is deemed as true progress, whereas Islam has discouraged one from making the amassing of wealth his primary goal.

“The Sahabah emulated Rasulullah in every facet of their lives. However, when we examine their lives, we find that they neither attached importance to the accumulation of wealth nor did they regard it as being their main goal in life. Instead, their idea of true progress and success was always obedience to Allah ﷻ and His Messenger and upholding the *deen*.

“Likewise, we will neither come across any situation where Rasulullah went on accumulating wealth during his *mubaarak* (blessed) life nor will we find him exhorting the ummah in his *mubaarak* ahaadith to do the same.

“The outcome of the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم upholding *deen* was that Allah ﷻ not only blessed them with progress in Deen, but also bestowed upon them the wealth of the world. Allah ﷻ blessed them with such wealth that the wealthy of these times cannot even dream of.”

# Q&A

Authorized by Mufti Adam Koya

Answered by Darul Ifta, JQU

**Q: If an individual's income is haram, can one go to his house for a dawat or accept a gift from him?**

A: If the majority of his income is from halal sources, then one can attend his *dawat* and accept gifts. If most of his income is from haram sources, but he's hosting the event or gifting using halal money, and his word can be trusted on this matter, this is fine as well.

(*Fatawa Darul Uloom Zakariyya* 6/714)

**Q: Can one drink with their left hand?**

A: The Prophet ﷺ would prefer to use his right hand in positive affairs; therefore, a believer should give preference to using the right hand, while intending to follow the Prophet's habit. Nonetheless, if someone were to use their left hand, they would not be sinful.

(*Majma' al-Anhur* 1/16)

**Q: Are Muslims allowed to cut their nails after nightfall?**

A: It is permissible to cut nails at night. (*al-Fatawa al-Hindiyyah* 5/358)

TO SEND IN A QUESTION,

EMAIL:

ASKMUFTI@JQULOOM.CA

**Q: Is a man or woman allowed to get an irreversible contraceptive procedure?**

A: Under general circumstances, getting a permanent, irreversible contraceptive procedure for birth control purposes is not permissible. (*Fatawa Mahmudiyyah* 18/291)

**Q: If I borrow \$10 CAD, do I give back the same amount a few months later if the value has changed? What if I pay back in a different currency?**

A: You will pay back \$10 CAD even if the value has fluctuated. If the agreement was to pay back in a different currency, the current rate of \$10 CAD will be taken into consideration.

(*Fatwa Qasimiyyah* 21/140)

**Q: Can I advertise mehndi on my social media using pictures of hands I've worked on?**

A: Although the hand is not from *satr* (necessary areas of the body to conceal), hence permissible to expose, it is better to use a plastic/synthetic model. The human body has honour and is not a means of acquiring business.

(*Fatawa Darul Uloom Zakariyya* 10/749)

**Q: What does it mean to join the imam before he finishes the prayer?**

A: It is important to note that "joining the *farḍ*" means catching the imām in the final *tashahhud*. Therefore, if the imām has not yet reached a point in the prayer that would prevent him from catching the *tashahhud*, the musalli may start his Sunnah and then join the imām's *farḍ* prayer in the final sitting. (*Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr li-Qāḍikhān* 1/116-117)

**Q: Can women have multiple ear piercings?**

A: It is permissible as long as it is the common practice of both Muslims and non-Muslims, and not specific to *kuffar*.

(*Fatawa Darul Uloom Zakariyya* 7/279)

**Q: Can an item placed as collateral for a loan be used for personal benefit by the creditor?**

A: The *fuqaha* (Islamic jurists) are in agreement that it is impermissible for a creditor to derive any form of benefit from an item pledged as collateral and placed in his possession by the debtor, unless the debtor explicitly grants permission. If such permission is given, then benefiting from the collateral becomes permissible.

However, it is important to note that if the permission to benefit is made a condition of the lending transaction, it will be *makrūh taḥrīmān* (prohibitively disliked) and considered a form of *riba* (interest). If, on the other hand, the permission is granted independently and not tied to the loan agreement itself, then deriving benefit from the collateral is permissible. (*Al-Fulk al-Mashḥūn fīmā yata'allaqu bi-intifā'i l-murtahin bi l-marḥūn*)

**Q: Should I perform the 2 sunnahs before fajr if Salah with the Imam has already begun?**

A: The two *rak'āt* Sunnah before Fajr are highly emphasized. However, if a person fears that performing them will cause him to miss the *farḍ* prayer, he should proceed directly to the *farḍ* and not begin the Sunnah. If he is confident that he can complete the Sunnah before the imām finishes the prayer, he may pray the Sunnah first and then join the *farḍ* with the imām. (*al-Aṣl li-Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan* 1/140)



# Spiritual Ammo to Combat SAD

## *(Seasonal Affective Disorder)*

By: M.N, Student, JQU

As you step out your front door, you realize it's one of those mornings again. The sky is dark, even though dawn has come and gone, and the weak, watery sun is struggling to shine through the grey clouds. You breathe in the heavy air, and it matches the heaviness inside as you think, "Four more months of this." You would not be alone in feeling this way. According to the Canadian Psychological Association, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) affects approximately 15% of Canadians at some point in their lives. Canadians are at a higher risk due to the diminished sunlight they receive during the winter months (Canadian Psychological Association).

The most common symptoms of SAD include heavy emotions (like stress and hopelessness), feeling more irritable or sensitive with loved ones, energy feeling drained even after a whole night's sleep, sleeping longer than usual and waking up tired, losing interest in hobbies or activities that once brought joy, and pulling one's self

away from close relationships or connections. These are taken directly from the Canadian Psychological Association website, which, alongside listing the symptoms, suggests that psychology is the most effective defence against SAD and its symptoms.

These feelings, brought on by the winter blues, although they manifest physically and psychologically, also touch the spirit. Islamic psychology has long maintained that the heart and soul are inextricably linked to the mind, and it is through spirituality that many find their most profound healing (Ghazali). Modern psychology admits that although there are biological and psychological components, a spiritual component is also part of the pieces that make up the human mind (Emmons and McCullough). Essentially, spiritual intelligence is a person's ability to perceive, reflect on, and draw meaning from the world around them. It is a person's ability to connect the dots between everyday experiences and the bigger picture or

purpose. For us as Muslims, this means being able to connect our everyday life to our Creator, which involves an aspect of reframing our perspective and, by extension, our worldview. It is our ability to slow down and assess the *ayat* (signs) of Allah ﷻ around us and offer gratitude for them that reframes our perspective, allowing us to be satisfied and happy with what is currently around us. This is because "gratitude is related to fewer depressive symptoms through positive reframing and positive emotion" (Lambert, Fincham, and Stillman). Positive reframing and emotion are just mechanisms used to achieve satisfaction through gratitude. To put it into perspective, let us use the scenario presented in the beginning. One way to reframe that situation would be to notice the change in the season (because it tends to happen quite abruptly, alas) and see it as a sign from Allah ﷻ testifying to the changing and short-lived nature of this world and use it to remind themselves that this season, too, shall pass. A person with high spiritual intelligence can extract positive meaning and significance from the events that unfold around them, which then helps motivate optimism, inspiration, and promotes perseverance. I mean, is that not the point? As evidenced by the Qur'an:

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

And [He] gave you hearing, sight, and intellect so perhaps you would be thankful. (Surah an-Nahl 78)

Fortunately for us, Islam provides us with many different ways in which we can show gratitude to our Lord and Creator, but it does so in ways that are accessible and easy via two primary methods: dhikr and du'a. This does not dismiss other meaningful methods, such as salah and *tilawah* of the Qur'an, which hold more reward and importance. However, SAD symptoms are not always predictable—they strike wherever and whenever. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, we will focus on those that can be used "on the go" and require minimal effort, as part of SAD includes having insufficient motivation and not being readily able to do things.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort. (Surah ar-Ra'd 28)

First and foremost, we have popular and short supplications that are easy to remember and require minimal effort to say. They come directly from the Prophet ﷺ and the Qur'an. The first of them being a narration from Asma' bint 'Umais رضي الله عنها, who said,

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught me some words to say at times of distress:

اللَّهُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي لَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا

Allah, Allah is my Lord, I do not associate anything with Him." (Sunan Ibn Majah, 3882)

We also have the famous litany of Prophet Yunus when he was in the belly of the whale,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.

(Surah al-Anbiya, 87)

Another few used by the Prophet ﷺ to regularly seek protection from certain calamities and misery include,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ، وَدَرَكِ الشَّقَاءِ، وَسُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ، وَشَمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ

O Allah, I seek refuge in You from the severity of trials, from being overtaken by misery, from an evil decree, and from the gloating of enemies,

as narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr bin Al-'As رضي الله عنه from the Prophet ﷺ (Sunan an-Nasa'i 5487).

عَنْ أَنَسٍ رضي الله عنه ، قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يَقُولُ : اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ، وَضَلَعِ الدِّينِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ.

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه : The Prophet ﷺ used to say, "O Allah! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief, from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being overpowered by (other) men." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 6369)

Another popular du'a meant to ward off the dreaded blues is narrated by Anas ibn Malik رضي الله عنه from the Messenger of Allah, يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْثُ ("O Living, O Self-Sustaining Sustainer! In Your Mercy do I seek relief") (Jami' at-Tirmidhi, 3524). Speaking of good things coming in small packages, this one packs a punch: لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ("There is no might nor power except Allah") as told to Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه by the Prophet ﷺ as a means to alleviate distress. It's an easy one that is very light on the tongue, requiring minimal effort with maximum payoff (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3601). The relief is immediate, almost invisible, as you get lost in the rhythmic litany of it, just affirming to yourself that truly, there is NO might and NO power except Allah ﷻ.

This short yet powerful reminder leads us into the next phase of the two-part defence against SAD. Once you have equipped yourself with the tools of dhikr and du'a, the second part requires you to honestly believe in لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ. This serves not only as a spiritual

safeguard, but also as a psychological one. It allows us to hand over the bulk of our worries and the weight of our own limitations to a higher and more powerful Being ﷻ. Once we hand it over, we can be more grateful. If only we can learn to reframe worry or distress and find that silver lining, then we will see the strength to combat most of the causes of daily grievances. As evident in the study conducted by Lambert et al., when people practice gratitude, they naturally shift their perspective, seeing challenges differently. In that case, we can make it a natural extension of our *taqwa* (God consciousness) and *tawakkul* (reliance). As a *mu'min*, this is just a natural next step. Once we acknowledge that God is aware of our grief and worry, we can then draw on that God-consciousness to nurture our reliance on Him and know that if He ﷻ sees it, He ﷻ will also resolve it.

If we can learn to harness the true power of du'a and dhikr, combine it with the power of positively reframing our situations and circumstances, and train our thoughts to align with our *aqeedah*, then SAD stands no chance. In the end, dhikr and du'a help anchor our hearts. Reframing our perspective through gratitude, using *taqwa* and *tawakkul*, allows us to remember that we are not alone. Together, these tools transform heaviness into hope

and remind us that even small acts of remembrance carry great strength.

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Imam Ahmad narrates a hadith from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri رضي الله عنه who reports that the Prophet ﷺ said:

**"Winter is the spring (best season) of the believer."**

*Al-Bayhaqi and others also narrate this, and add:*

**"Its nights are long so one can stand in them [in prayer], and its days are short so one can fast in them."**

Winter is the springtime for the believer because he is able to graze in the gardens of obedience and the fields of worship. He can uplift his heart in gardens of easy good deeds, the way animals graze the spring fields, through which their bodies become enriched and strengthened.

In the same way, the faith of the believer can be strengthened in the winter with acts of worship made easy by Allah ﷻ in that time. For indeed, the believer is capable of fasting during the day in winter without incurring hardship or difficulty from hunger or thirst, as the days are short and cold.

(Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, *Lata'if al-Ma'arif*)

If you attended high school in Ontario, you likely faced the stressful decision of taking academic classes or applied classes, effectively requiring you to start thinking about your post-secondary education at the ripe age of 14 or 15. Although this is designed to be considerate of different learning styles, the underlying message is clear: if a student chooses academic courses, they intend to go on to university, while those in applied classes would be steered to college institutions. This early sorting often determines where they end up.

To put it another way, from such a young age, we are indoctrinated to believe that the pinnacle of success is acceptance into a university—once accepted, we are deemed intellectually superior to others and on a sure path to affluence. This, unfortunately, could not be further from the truth. Have we once considered that this isn't the path for everyone? Of course, as Muslims, we should be conducting everything with *ihsan* (excellence), but does that mean our worth and our work are reliant on a grade point average? Is extensive secular education necessary for everyone?

Our *deen* is very balanced, and we do not label something as haram



# UNIVERSITY: UNIVERSAL PATH OR NOT?

By M. China,  
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or halal without clear evidence. When deciding whether to pursue university and college, every Muslim should consider their intention, the financial responsibility they may undertake, and the personal responsibilities and guidelines mandated by Allah ﷻ upon them. While many students enjoy learning their chosen field, most do not invest thousands of dollars solely for that reason. Their motivations are usually a mixture of interest, career goals,

and a cultural sense of necessity. As Muslims, if we plan to attend university or college, our primary intention should be to seek the pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

Alongside this central intention, there are other good intentions to cultivate: serving Allah's creation, filling a position that spreads the message of Islam, and avoiding financial dependency. Living in the West, our community often struggles to meet its basic needs due to a shortage of Muslims in those essential fields. Common examples include finding a female Muslim doctor for women, a Muslim lawyer, a female Muslim personal trainer, or a male Muslim nurse. The more we diversify our fields of expertise, the easier it can be for the Muslim community at large to easily practice their *deen* in the West. Ultimately, we should have a higher goal than monetary gain, because for the believer, the truest pinnacle of success is to attain the pleasure of Allah ﷻ; to know the avenues that please Him and to pursue those paths with diligence.

Once a person determines their purpose for higher education, the next consideration is financial feasibility. The vast majority, especially in today's time, seek higher education to secure a stable or sizable income. This can make it very tempting to invest a small amount of haram wealth in hopes of earning a long-term halal income. However, Islam does not permit financing anything through impermissible means. Under no circumstances should a person tread this path with haram wealth, particularly interest-bearing loans. The Qur'an is very clear in its stance against *riba* (interest):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ  
مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ٢٧٨

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
وَإِن تَبُتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا  
تُظْلَمُونَ ٢٧٩

*O believers! Fear Allah, and give up outstanding interest if you are believers. If you do not, then beware of a war with Allah and His Messenger! But if you repent, you may retain your principal—neither inflicting nor suffering harm.*

(Surah al-Baqarah, 278-279)

A war with Allah ﷻ can never be won. Some may argue that a university education is a *dharurah* (necessity), and therefore they can benefit from taking interest-based loans. Living in Canada, the option to deal with *riba* is easy and accessible, especially where government financial assistance programs for students exist, such as The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). According to a fatwa issued by the Darul Ifta of Jamiah Qasimul Uloom,

“Students who possess the financial stability to pay off their OSAP loan before the grace period are permitted to take the credit because no interest is owed before the start of the grace period. However, if a student fears that they will not be able to pay off their tuition and will be forced to pay interest on their loan, it will be impermissible to take OSAP” (4). Some jurists have given concession to acquire interest-based loans, but that applies for certain circumstances and is not the general case.

*Riba* is a clear path to spiritual destruction, regardless of its intended purpose. Besides the prohibition of interest, are four to eight years a worthy tradeoff to countless years of debt? This burden will make us feel severely debilitated when trying to buy our first car, start a business, settle down and have a family, or achieve any other significant milestone in our early adulthood. Debt is so severe that even the Prophet ﷺ refrained from leading

the janazah prayer for the one who had an outstanding debt, as mentioned in the hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُؤْتَى بِالرَّجُلِ الْمُتَوَفَّى عَلَيْهِ الدَّيْنُ فَيَسْأَلُ هَلْ تَرَكَ لِدَيْنِهِ فَضْلاً فَإِنْ حَدَّثَ أَنَّهُ تَرَكَ لِدَيْنِهِ وَقَاءَ صَلَّى وَإِلَّا قَالَ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ صَلُّوا عَلَى صَاحِبِكُمْ.

*“It has been narrated from Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه that whenever a deceased person in debt was brought to Allah's Messenger ﷺ he would ask, ‘Has he left anything to repay his debt?’ If he was informed that he had left something to repay his debts, he would offer his funeral prayer, otherwise he would tell the Muslims to offer their friend's funeral prayer...” (Sahih al-Bukhari, 2298)*

Pursuing higher education must never come at the cost of engaging in what Allah ﷻ has clearly forbidden.

A person must also assess their personal responsibilities and the specific obligations they have. Having halal financial means does not automatically make university the right choice. One must ask: Do I have aging parents who need my support? Are there financial or marital obligations that require my presence? Do my children need more of my time? Are there religious commitments that may be compromised by the timing and schedule of classes and assignments? One must honestly reflect on their priorities. No class is more important than the daily salah. No assignment overrides marital and parental responsibilities. No networking social event outweighs the observance of correct hijab. Every single command and responsibility that is upon us from Allah ﷻ must come before the pressures and pace of university life.

To safeguard oneself from falling into the common spiritual pitfalls of

university, a student should remain connected to a reliable masjid, and seek guidance from a trusted scholar of the same gender. Investing time into Islamic education also provides an essential anchor against non-Islamic ideologies one may counter. Shaytan comes from all sides and preys on isolation and vulnerability, so having someone or something connecting us to faith will be a great asset in navigating the many forms of *fitnah* (tests) that students may encounter.

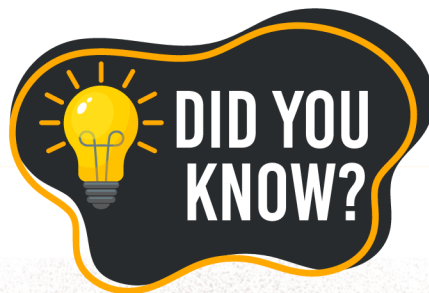
When an individual has established a clear halal purpose, halal means to pursue their studies, and has a spiritual mentor and/or a religiously

competent advisor, insha Allah, their education will benefit themselves and the ummah at large. Postsecondary education should not be inherently discouraged; rather, it should be approached with guidance and intentionality. Knowledge is powerful. When a student can pair secular education with structured guidance and connection to scholars, they will find themselves enlightened to the greatness of Allah ﷻ everywhere and find His signs in everything — whether in the sciences, arts, business, or finance. Not every person has to pursue a postsecondary degree, and this

article serves to counsel those who are considering it but are unsure if it is suitable for them. These are not the only conditions to consider, but they are important, prereqital guidelines. Ultimately, Muslims need to be cautious of and challenge Western notions of “success” and the traps they disguise, and instead focus on the true success: the acceptance and pleasure of Allah ﷻ.

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Shaykh Yunus Jonpuri رحمه الله would point out the correct spelling and pronunciation of:

جُمَادَى الْآخِرَةِ  
(Jumādā al-Ākhirah)

**Jumādā** is a feminine word, hence **ākhir** (masculine) would be grammatically incorrect.

Similarly, the form **Ākhirah** is better than **Ukhrā** (“other/another”), as **Ākhirah** means “the last” or “the end”, which accurately reflects that this is the second of the two Jumādā months.

(Also see: al-Misbāh al-Munīr)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reported:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

"(The mercy of) Our Lord Almighty descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of every night, saying:

*Who is calling upon Me that I may answer him?*

*Who is asking from Me that I may give him?*

*Who is seeking My forgiveness that I may forgive him?"*

(Sahih al-Bukhari 1145, Sahih Muslim 758)

## 1 ALLAH ﷻ LISTENS EVERY NIGHT

As Christmas approaches, many kids hear stories about Santa coming **once a year**.

But Allah ﷻ listens to us **every night**. We don't have to wait for a special holiday. We can talk to Him anytime.

Allah ﷻ is All-Hearing, Ever-Present, always listening and observing.



## 2 ALLAH'S ﷻ GIFTS ARE BETTER

Allah ﷻ gives us things no one else can:

- Happiness
- Peace
- Guidance
- Jannah

Allah ﷻ protects us from things no one else can:

- Sadness
- Hunger
- Sickness
- Danger

## 3 ALLAH'S ﷻ MERCY IS FOR EVERYONE

In Santa's story, he gives to those on his "nice list" and avoids those on his "naughty list."

But Allah's generosity and mercy is for everyone who asks. Allah ﷻ doesn't need a nice list. If we make mistakes, we can say "I'm sorry," and Allah ﷻ forgives us.

Allah is the Most-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.



## 4 THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIGHT

During Christmas people decorate their houses with colourful lights.

But the Prophet ﷺ told us:

**"Verily, when the Qur'an is recited in a house, it shines to those in the heavens just as the stars shine to those on the earth."**

(Bayhaqi, 1829)

The Qur'an is the best light to decorate our homes with.

Allah ﷻ has given us gifts more beautiful than any holiday. He gave us:

- Gifts no one else can give
- His attention
- A religion full of mercy
- A Book that fills our homes with light.

Reminding ourselves of this helps us stay grateful and confident in the beautiful religion Allah ﷻ chose for us.

رَضِيتُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيًّا

I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islam as my religion,  
and with Muhammad ﷺ as my Prophet.



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