



An Easy Path to Jannah

Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani



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Few Words

(Translator's Foreword – In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praises are due unto Allah Most High who has blessed us with iman and made us from the Ummah of Sayyidina Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace).

This publication before you is a translation of a lecture delivered by the current Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafi'Usmani, and was delivered at the 'Majlis Siyanatul Muslimin', an annual ijtima' (gathering) which takes place at Lahore, Pakistan, and was initiated by those linked to Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (may Allah have mercy on him). People gather here, where the mashayikh deliver lectures and offer advice, and souls receive nourishment.

Mufti Rafi' is the son of Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Usmani and the khalifah of Shaykh Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy 'Arifi who was the khalifah of Hakim al-Ummah. After the demise of Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy, Mufti Rafi' developed a spiritual link with Masih al-Ummah Mawlana Muhammad Masih Allah Khan (may Allah have mercy on him).

Mufti Rafi' is the current mufti a'zam (grand mufti) of Pakistan and the chancellor of Dar al-'Ulum Karachi. His father established this Dar al-'Ulum in 1951. The madrasah currently has approximately five thousand students. Among other faculties, this Dar al-'Ulum specializes in the faculty of ifta, known as the Mufti Course.

Hadrat Mufti Sahib is very widely travelled and understands the spiritual needs of the Ummah. It is hoped that one and all will benefit from this inspiring lecture. May Allah Most High grant us the tawfiq(ability) to practice these priceless advices. Amin.

May Allah Most High grant Mufti Rafi' a long life, excellent health, and may the Ummah benefit from him tremendously. May Allah Most High accept his efforts. Amin.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ ، وَ نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا ، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَ مَنْ يَضِلَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ ، وَ نَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ، وَ نَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ سَنَدَنَا وَ مَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَ رَسُولَهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَى آلِهِ وَ صَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ ، أَمَا بَعْدُ :

فَاعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَ لَا تَمُوتُوا إِلَّا وَ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ، (آل عمران)

Honorable elders, esteemed 'ulama and respected audience! Many thanks unto Allah Most High that annually He grants us the tawfiq to host this national ijtima'Majlis Siyanatul Muslimin'. There are numerous benefits in holding this ijtima'. It becomes a meeting place for those who conduct majalis throughout the country. Also, there are many barakahs in the gathering of the Muslims. When Muslims gather in a place to learn the din (religion), the rain of the Mercy of Allah descends, the angels spread their wings for the attendants, and du'as (supplications) are accepted. At this moment there is a collision of various topics in my mind and I am faced with the dilemma of which one to choose, for there are several necessary topics to be discussed. In such a situation it is best to hand over the

matter to Allah Most High. Insha Allah, there will be goodness in whatever He makes me speak.

Three types of people

I suddenly remembered something. Once Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) was sitting in the Masjid al-Nabawi (the Prophet's masjid in Madinah), and the Companions (Allah be well pleased with them) were gathered around him. Three people who were not aware that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) was sitting in the Masjid, entered. When they became aware that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) was present, one of them immediately joined the majlis. The second one also joined the majlis out of shame, thinking that if he goes away, it would look bad. The third person went away. Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: "Three people came. One of them placed himself in the protection of Allah Most High and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) has granted him protection. The second sat out of shame and Allah Most High also feels ashamed to deprive reward from a person who is in this majlis. He will also receive the reward that the others will receive. The third person has turned away from Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), thus Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) are not in need of him."

Dini gatherings are a gift from Allah

So this gathering which is solely for the pleasure of Allah Most High and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), is a means of holding fast to Allah Most High and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace). The reason for sitting here is to be able to listen to the talks of

Allah Most High and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), and so that the hearts can experience spiritual emotions, fear of Allah, concern for the hereafter, resulting in the rectification of our a'mal(actions) and akhlaq (character). These gatherings are priceless gifts from Allah Most High because one person receives advice from another. When one sees another performing good deeds, it affects the heart, and one also decides to the same good deeds. People learn from each other and this increases their bond and love. Performing of good actions becomes easier and through the Grace and Mercy of Allah Most High, in these gatherings, du'as are very quickly accepted.

I feel awkward to lecture at such a place where great saintly personalities have previously lectured, for, in comparison, I am still of the kindergarten level. Great khalifahs of Hakim al-Ummah have sat on this mimbar (pulpit) and lectured. Among them were Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Hasan, my honorable father Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Shafi', Mufti Zafar Ahmad Usmani, Mawlana Khayr Muhammad Jalandhari, Mawlana Qari Muhammad Tayyab, Mawlana Muhammad Idris Kandhalwi and Mawlana Masih Allah Khan (may Allah have mercy on them).

To even think of lecturing in such a place is difficult, but it is the instruction of the elders and part of the usual proceedings. Thus, willingly or unwillingly, I have sat down so that I can be included among you in discussing Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace).

The translation of the ayah, which I had recited in the khutbah, is: "O you who believe! Fear Allah as he should be feared." It means that stay away from those factors which

He has forbidden and do not be neglectful in those factors which He has commanded. This is taqwa (fear of Allah).

Allah further says (in the same verse): “And do not die except that you are in a state of Islam.” (Surah Al-’Imran)

No one has any knowledge of death

Life and death is not in the hands of man. No one knows when, where and how he will die. At times the Angel of Death is given a list of people who will die, whereas they are involved in years of planning and scheming. They plan that I will do this next year and I will do that next month, but the Angel of Death is amused that this wretched person does not know he has only a few hours of life left. Most probably the Angel of Death does not even pity him, because he is an obedient servant of Allah Most High. He merely carries out the orders he receives.

A famous story regarding the Angel of Death

It is well known that Allah once asked the Angel of Death: “You have removed many souls and this is your designated work night and day. Tell me, did you ever feel pity at the time of removing anyone’s soul?” The Angel replied: “I felt pity only on two people.” Allah said: “Who are the people that even you pitied?” The Angel of Death replied: “Once there was a ship at sea with women and children. A storm arose and the ship sank. A few people drowned and a few clung on to planks and managed to save themselves. Among them was a pregnant woman who had managed to hold on to a big piece of plank. She held tightly on to this plank although she was in the middle of the ocean and it was dark and stormy. In that condition she gave birth and held the baby to her chest. There was neither means of feeding the baby nor any means of protection. In that

condition O Great Master, You instructed me to remove the soul of that woman. O Allah! I removed her soul but till today I wonder what happened to that child.” Thereafter Allah asked: “Who was the second person you felt sorry for?” The Angel of Death replied: “There was a disobedient servant of Yours named Shaddad. You granted him kingdom and wealth in abundance. He said that he will construct a jannah (paradise) on earth and commenced with its construction. He spent thousands and millions of dinars and vowed that he will only enter it after it is fully built. After waiting many years (during the construction period), it was now time to enter it (when its construction was complete). He had his one foot in his ‘jannah’ and one outside when You instructed me to remove his soul. I removed his soul but till today I feel pity for him that after so many years, and so much effort and money had been spent, he did not have the opportunity of even seeing his ‘jannah’.”

You felt pity for the same person twice

Thereafter Allah said: “O Angel of Death! You felt sorry for the same person twice! You are not aware that Shaddad is the same baby whose mother’s soul you removed on that dark and stormy night. Through My extensive mercy and quality of divinity I saved that baby, reared him, and made him reach prosperity. I gave him intelligence and understanding, health, strength, honour, and finally made him a king. When he became king, he started constructing a ‘jannah’ in opposition to me. Thus, you had mercy on the same person twice.”

There is no complacency as regards to life and death. The Qur’an says: “And do not die except that you are in the state of Islam (in the state of obedience unto Allah).”

Death is not in our control. Yes, one thing is in our control, and that is to die in a favourable condition. Its method is to refrain from sin at all times, and whenever a sin is committed, immediately resort to tawbah and istighfar (repentance).

The doors of tawbah are open

The doors of tawbah (repentance) are open by Allah Most High. Sins are always being committed, the servant constantly seeks forgiveness, and Allah continuously forgives. But when the Angel of Death is seen and the agony of death is upon one, then the doors of tawbah are closed (for that particular person). Yes, if the person regularly and constantly engaged in istighfar and tawbah and Allah forbid, he dies while committing a sin, then that will be the only sin for which he hasn't sought forgiveness. Therefore, at all times, have this concern of abstaining from sin.

How to save one's self from sin

The question arises: How can a person save himself from sin, when fitnah is so rife that it has engulfed all facets of life? How then can a person save himself from sin? How will he protect his eyes, ears, hands, etc. (from sin)? To say it is easy, but to save oneself from sin is extremely difficult. Practically, it is a difficult stage to pass through, and this is the very stage that the 'ulama, the sufis, and the elders of the din stress upon.

In fact the Noble Qur'an instructs that we adopt the company of the righteous. Spend as much time as possible with them. They will let you undergo spiritual exercises (mujahadah) so that it becomes easy to stay away from sin and it becomes easy to perform good actions.

To summarize, the zeal for performing good actions is created in the heart and, subsequently, the fear and detestation for sin is formed. This condition is achieved by staying in the company of the pious. The Qur'an says: "O you who believe! Fear Allah (do not commit sin.) And (the method of achieving this is to be with those who are truthful." (Surah Tawbah)

Abstinence from sin is a boon from Allah and complacency towards sin is the wrath of Allah

The fact of the matter is that when a person develops a firm relationship with Allah Most High, even if he tries to commit sin, he will not be able to do so. Such a nur (light) is developed in the heart that fear is perceived even when just approaching sin. Thereafter Allah Most High makes such arrangements and means that the heart becomes disinclined towards sin and though unintended, one is saved from sin.

On the other hand, when a person adopts an indifferent attitude towards sin, that is the Wrath of Allah, for, when one receives laxity (from Allah), thereafter seizure takes place suddenly and swiftly.

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an: "Verily the seizure (of punishment) of your lord is severe." (Surah Buruj) By staying in the company of the buzurghs (saintly elders), performance of good actions becomes easy and pleasurable, the commission of sin becomes difficult, and one becomes frightful of it.

My request of becoming bay'ah to my father

Those who know my father Mufti-e-A'zam Pakistan Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Shafi' (may Allah have mercy on him) are aware of his extreme kindness and affection he

had for his children. In fact people would use him as an example to illustrate this love and affection. He was also my ustadh (teacher), therefore the love was even more. I requested my respected father to become bay'ah with him on numerous occasions. Every time he would say: "Become bay'ah with Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy 'Arifi." We could never understand his insistence on becoming bay'ah to Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy. Once I travelled to South Africa with my father and stayed there for approximately two and three quarter months. Because of people flocking to him in Karachi, it was difficult to get time alone with him. During the journey, being alone with him, I took advantage of the opportunity and again requested him to make me bay'ah. That day my father very solemnly said: "History can produce many examples where the son became bay'ajto the father, and Alhamdu Lillah they were successful. But in this type of situation both have to be very careful, because in the connection of piri muridi (between the shaykh and the murid) informality and freedom is harmful, especially in the initial stages. The contact between father and son is usually one of informality. Therefore this will be difficult on both of us, so become bay'ah with Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy."

Conceit on knowledge is a means of destruction

Thereafter he said: "One of its greatest benefits will be that when an 'alim (scholar) becomes bay'ah to such a murshid (spiritual guide) who is not considered to be a qualified 'alim, the conceit of knowledge ('ilm) will be removed from the mind. For, the leading factor in the destruction of an 'alim is conceit in knowledge, which will lead him to jahannam (hellfire). Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said that a person with even an atom's amount of pride will not enter jannah." Anyway, our

respected father got us both (Mawlana Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahib and I) bay'ah with 'Arif Billah Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy (may Allah have mercy on him).

'Arif Billah Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy 'Arifi

Sometimes I ponder regarding the great favours of my father upon myself; he is my extremely kind father, he is my ustadh, and also my spiritual guide. But one of his greatest favours is that he placed our hands in the hands of an 'Arif Billah (one who recognizes Allah).

When my father passed away, the janazah was placed and I was standing near the feet (of the janazah) and Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy also came to stand there. I said to Dr. 'Ab al-Hayy: "We do not consider ourselves to be orphans with you among us." He did not say anything immediately, but thought for a few moments and then said: "Yes, you should think like that, I will try to fulfil this responsibility." Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy made such a statement, which he fulfilled in an exceptional manner till the end. No matter how muchshukr I make for this, it will never be enough.

Four golden actions

He once said: great sacrifices and strivings (mujahadah) were undergone in former times for the islah of the nafs (rectification of the self). Nowadays people, due to not having that courage, cannot undergo those strivings. I will show you a simple formula that is extremely concise, but very effective. These are four a'mal (actions) and these four are the core of Shar'iah and Tariqah, and are so easy that to practice on them does not cost money, time or effort. The person who makes these four things a habit will develop a special link with Allah Most High. He will experience its benefits during his life and the heart will be conducive

towards islah (reformation). Eventually he will reach such a stage that even if he wishes to commit sin, he will be unable to do so.

The four a'mal are:

- [1] Shukr (gratitude)
- [2] Sabr (patience)
- [3] Istighfar (seeking repentance)
- [4] Isti'adhah (seeking refuge)

Whatever Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy said on that occasion was written down by my brother Mufti Taqi Usmani and is printed in booklet form under the name Ma'mulat-e-Yawmiyah, and has been translated into many languages.

One day he (Dr. 'Abd al-Hayy) said; "Maulwi Rafi! Do you read the Ma'mulat-e-Yawmiyah?" I replied: "Alhamdu Lillah, I read it." He then said: "Read every single letter of it, and when it is completed, restart it." Thereafter he smiled and said: "I actually prepared this booklet for you two brothers and I have this concern that the world will benefit from it and the two of you will forget about it." He then related his own story: "Once my murshid Hakim al-Ummah (may Allah have mercy on him) presented me with a bottle of honey. I happily took it home thinking that if I eat this tabarruk (an object of barakah, usually given by an elder) without thought, it will be finished very quickly. Thus I should protect it and eat from it on certain special occasions. I wrapped it and kept it in a safe place. Many months passed and one day I was fasting, so I thought that I would make iftar with the honey. When I opened it I saw that the bottle was filled with huge ants and the honey was finished. I have this concern regarding the Ma'mulat-e-Yawmiyah also,

that others will benefit from it and you will keep it in a place of safety.”

Gift of the murshid

Today I will present you with the gift of my murshid (spiritual guide) which he presented in the fourteen years of contact with him. I hope that you will appreciate it, for, my murshid used to say: “This is a gift from my murshid.” And his murshid (Hakim al-Ummah) used to say: “This is a gift from Allah and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace).” He would often say that “Develop the habit of shukr, sabr, istighfar and isti’adhah.”

(1) Shukr

The first point is Shukr, which should be inculcated foremost. Ponder lightly regarding yourself and the environment morning and evening before sleeping, over the gifts of Allah related to mundane and religious matters and thank Allah comprehensively. Especially on the gift of iman which Allah has given us, and on ‘afiyah (general goodness and safety). Thank Allah from the heart and make a firm intention to use the Divine gifts in an appropriate manner. Besides these, whenever remembering any ni’mah (favor), thank Allah quietly from the heart. In short, whenever anything happens which is according to your desire, which the heart becomes pleased with, then quietly say **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ** (Alhamdu lillah) or say **اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَ لَكَ الشُّكْرُ** (Allahumma lakal hamdu wa lakash shukr).

Many occasions of shukr

From morning till evening, so many things take place that is according to a person’s wishes and desire. When the eyes open in the morning, one’s health is in a good condition, then say Alhamdu Lillah (All praise belongs to Allah). You

saw that the family is safe and sound, quietly say Alhamdu Lillah. You proceeded for the Fajr Salah and performed it with jama'ah (congregation), say Alhamdu Lillah. You ate breakfast on time, say Alhamdu Lillah. You left for work and had the worry that you will reach late, but reached on time, say Alhamdu Lillah. The traveller was worried that he will miss his transport but made it on time, he should say Alhamdu Lillah. He mounted the transport and was worried that he will not get a seat but found one, he should say Alhamdu Lillah. When returning home, one found the family well, say Alhamdu Lillah. During summer a cool wind blows, say Alhamdu Lillah.

To summarize, anything big or small that takes place according to ones wishes, or a du'a gets accepted, or anything which pleases the heart and gives joy, or one is given the tawfiq (ability and guidance) to fulfil a good action, make it a habit to thank Allah with the heart and tongue. This doesn't cost time, money, or effort.

We enjoy countless bounties

In fact, Allah forbid, if a difficulty or calamity befalls one, before remedying the situation, ponder over the countless bounties Allah has bestowed upon us without us being worthy of them, and which are a means of comfort to the heart. If these bounties were not with us, what would have been the situation in this calamity? (Without these bounties, the situation could have been much worse). Insha'Allah, by thinking in this manner, mental composure will be achieved, even though the emotional aggravation may remain. Without exaggeration, we enjoy countless bounties of Allah Most High at all times. If not on all, then in this manner shukr will be made on at least a few of His bounties. By practicing to makeshukr in this manner, a

person will develop such a habit of making shukr, that for every pleasing thing he will be making shukr in his heart and no one will even be aware of it. Also, he will be fulfilling a great 'ibadah (worship) free from ostentation. The stages of such a person are raised to such levels that you cannot fathom.

Anyway, man should be such that he makes shukr in every condition. Initially it may seem difficult, but by practicing on this, in most conditions one will remember and it will develop into a habit.

By making shukr bounties are increased and one is protected from punishment

Allah Most High says: "What has Allah to do (gain) by punishing you if you thanked Him and believed in Him" (Surah Nisa'). It is learnt from this that those with iman who make shukr will be protected from the punishment of Allah.

Allah Most High says in another place: "If you give thanks I will give you more" (Surah Ibrahim). From this it is learnt that for whichever blessing shukr is made, the blessings will increase and this worldly life will become easier. If you doubt this, then try it yourself.

It will become very clear to the person who does this and he himself will experience that there are pleasurable changes taking place in his life.

This is a beloved 'ibadah unto Allah

How beloved this 'ibadah of shukr is unto Allah Most High can be gauged from the following: From among the revealed books of Allah the greatest and dearest is the Noble Qur'an. Allah Most High began this kitab (book) with Surah al-

Fatihah and He began this surah with the words Alhamdu Lillah. The summary of the entire Qur'an is in Surah al-Fatihah and this surah begins with the words Alhamdu Lillah. There must be a reason for placing these words of shukr in a place of such importance. And how much does Allah Most High love this surah? This can be judged from this that not only in every salah but He instructed us to recite it in every rak'ah. One of the reasons for this (instructing us to recite it in every rak'ah) is this surah contains the praises and glorification of Allah and Allah Most High loves to be praised.

This 'ibadah will continue in Jannah

There will be no 'ibadah (form of worship) in Jannah; salah, fasting, zakah, Hajj, all forms of worship will come to an end. There will be only pleasure and enjoyment. Only one worship will remain, and that is shukr. It is mentioned in a hadith that shukr will flow from the mouths of the people of Jannah continuously. Like in this world breathing takes place without being conscious of it, in a like manner will the people of Jannah be praising Allah (continuously and without being mindful of it).

In this world when one develops the habit of making shukr for the small and big favours of Allah, the following benefits will be accrued:

- [1] Safety from the punishment of Allah.
- [2] Favours will be increased.
- [3] Through this 'amal (action) the love for Allah is developed.
- [4] The bond with Allah is strengthened.
- [5] Proximity unto Allah Most High is enhanced.
- [6] Pleasurable changes come into one's life.

[7] One experiences the pleasure of contentment in ones condition.

[8] Life becomes full of security and safety.

The story of a woodcutter

The like of the throne of Sayyiduna Sulayman (may the peace of Allah be upon him) was never possessed by any king. The jinns would carry it in the air. The birds would form shade over it. A huge amount of the creations of Allah would travel with the throne.

This throne was being flown with all its might and glory when it was seen by a woodcutter. He involuntarily said: “Subhan’Allah!(Glorious is Allah!) The majesty and splendour of the family of Dawud!” The wind carried these words to Sayyiduna Sulayman (may the peace of Allah be upon him). He instructed the throne to be lowered and said: “Take me to the woodcutter.” The woodcutter became fearful and started shivering, pondering as to what blunder he had committed. Sayyiduna Sulayman asked him: “What did you say?” Because of fear, he could not remember what he had said. After thinking for a while he replied: “I only said Subhan’Allah! The majesty and splendour of the family of Dawud.” Sayyiduna Sulayman (may the peace of Allah be upon him) said to him: “You saw the army of Sulayman and became envious. What you do not know is that a thousand such armies are nothing compared to the Subhan’Allah you said once! You are also not aware of the lofty status you have received by saying Subhan’Allah just once!”

Sabr and taqwa are developed from shukr

The shukr of Allah is such a treasure that from it countless ease and bounties are achieved. When a person constantly makes shukr, the quality of sabr will also be developed.

Thus he will never complain when in a difficulty. He will feel embarrassed when committing a sin, thinking that the Being whom I make shukr unto morning and evening, how can I now disobey Him? So this is the barakah (blessing) of this ‘amal, that because of making shukr, sins decrease. He achieves salvation from destructive diseases like jealousy, greed and lust, wasting and miserliness, etc.

Pride is eradicated

One of the great benefits of making shukr is that the person is protected from pride. He does not consider the ni’mahs he receives as his own achievement and accomplishment, but acknowledges them as bounties from Allah and keeps on saying it. So when he does not think of them as his own accomplishments and refers to them as gifts solely from Allah, then how will he be boastful and proud? Pride is such a dangerous major sin that Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said: “That person will not enter Jannah who has an atom’s worth of pride in his heart. (Narrated by Muslim from Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him))

(2) Sabr

Thus far one action i.e. shukr has been discussed. Now I will explain the second action, sabr. Sabr means to refrain from doing anything impermissible when something occurs which is against one’s wishes. Like from morning to evening, many things occur which are according to one’s wishes, in a like manner many things occur that are against one, e.g. you reached the bus stop but the bus has already departed. Anything minor or major that occurs and is against one, focus on Allah and do not lose control over oneself. This is sabr and it is a very significant action of the heart. Through this (calamities), Allah Most High tests the strength of a

person's iman. So many things happen in life daily, morning and evening, which are displeasing and difficult on the self.

Sometimes one is saddened by personal sickness or a friend's sickness or problem, or by someone's death, or there is harm to wealth or status. In short, anything that causes disruption to ones inner peace and tranquillity becomes a test of sabr. But because it is not by choice, it is wajib (compulsory) to believe that it is from Allah, for in this (attitude) there are many a wisdom and mercies. For such conditions Allah Most High Himself through His Grace and Mercy has granted a very beneficial and effective cure for peace of the heart. He exhorted us (to recite):

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un ((To Allah we belong and to Him is our return. (Surah al-Baqarah)))

By reciting this, mental peace and physical endurance will be formed. Thus, the easiest method of inculcating sabr is to recite 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un' whenever anything occurs that is against ones wishes, whether it is a major calamity or a minor displeasing matter. In this also, money or time is not used. Here in our country (referring to Pakistan) load shedding of electricity has made this action even easier. Whenever the electricity goes, recite 'Inna lillahi...', and whenever it returns, recite 'Alhamdu Lillah'. So much so, in the narration it is mentioned that when remembering a past calamity, recite 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un' and you will receive the same reward which you received (for reciting it) at the time of the calamity.

The recital of Inna lillahi... is not restricted to death

It has become common in our society that Inna lillahi ... is only recited when someone dies, whereas it is not correct to restrict its recital to death only. It is mentioned in a narration that once in front of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) a lamp extinguished and he recited 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un'. Sayyidatuna A'isha (may Allah be pleased with her) thereupon asked him: "O Messenger of Allah! Is this also a calamity?" He replied: "Whatever troubles a Muslim is a calamity and there is a promise of reward for it." In another hadith it is mentioned that a Muslim receives reward even when a thorn pricks him. In yet another narration it is mentioned that a Muslim is successful in every condition. For, when he receives joy, he makes shukr, and when a calamity befalls him, he makes sabr. And Allah Most High loves the servant who makes sabr and shukr.

Mullah Nasiruddin

By the way I have recalled something regarding Mullah Nasiruddin. He is the same person whose witty remarks are famous. It is mentioned that Mullah was very handsome and his wife was ill-looking. So once he said to his wife: "Wife! You are a jannati (one who will enter Jannah) and I am also a jannati." She asked him "How is that"? He replied: "Because when you look at me you make shukr that you got such a handsome husband. When I look at you I make sabr, and the one who makes shukr and also the one who makes sabr are jannatis!"

The mercy of Allah is on the sabir (on the one who adopts sabr)

Sabr should be made on every displeasing matter, big or small, and 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un' should be

said. This is because the closeness of Allah Most High is achieved through sabr. Allah Most High says in the Qur'an: "Verily Allah is with the patient ones." (Surah Baqarah)

Thus, who can harm that person whom Allah is with? Regarding those people who read 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un', the Qur'an says: "They are those on whom are the salawat (who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those) who receive His mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones." (Surah Baqarah)

To summarize, by reading these words at the time of difficulty, it will become evident and clearly felt that the Mercy of Allah is with one. I swear by Allah that if a person inculcates these four points within himself, in a few days he will perceive that someone (Allah) has placed His Mercy in his heart and that someone (Allah) is protecting him. Thus, his loneliness has been removed and joy will re-enter his life. Through this 'amal, steadfastness, control, perseverance and dignity will be developed. The strength to overcome difficulties will be acquired, and the ability to be pleased with the decree of Allah Most High will be formed, and this is a very high level of servitude. Those with sabr are not inclined to anger and taking revenge regarding themselves. And if they do get inclined, it is short-lived. Such people are saved from these types of emotions.

(3) Istighfar

The third action is istighfar. This action also does not utilize wealth, effort, or time. Whenever a sin is committed, big or small, say: **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ** (Astaghfirullah), i.e. O Allah! I seek Your forgiveness.

The challenge of Satan

Satan laid a challenge just prior to Sayyiduna Adam (may Allah's peace be upon him) was sent down to earth. He said: "O Allah! I will lead your servants astray and direct them to Jahannam (hellfire)" [because man is my rival and it is because of man that I have been dismissed from my high position]. Sayyiduna Adam (may Allah's peace be upon him) pleaded unto Allah: "O Allah! You have given my enemy Satan so much power, which my progeny and I do not possess. He can adopt different forms and he can come in such forms in which we cannot see him but he can see us. He is a jinn and we are human beings. There are many differences in our dispositions. He will drive us into Jahannam!"

The weapon given by Allah

Allah Most High replied: "O Adam! Undoubtedly We have given him tremendous powers, but there is a weapon to overcome his powers. We will give you that weapon and as long as you use that weapon, no attack of his will be effective, and the name of that weapon is istighfar." So, whenever a sin is committed, say Astaghfirullah from the depths of your heart.

Sins are forgiven through istighfar

Allah Most High does not send His punishment on those who make istighfar. The Noble Qur'an says: "He will not punish them while they seek forgiveness (from Allah)." (Surah Anfal)

Allah Most High has placed the desire for sin in our hearts and has also placed (a certain amount) of pleasure in them, thus it is not easy to save oneself from sin. Man inadvertently goes towards them. Therefore, through His

vast Mercy, Allah Most High has opened such an extensive door, when we commit sin, then with genuine regret, make istighfar and tawbah (repentance), forgiveness will be granted.

The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said: “A person who makes tawbah from a sin is like that person who has not committed a sin at all.” (Narrated by Ibn Majah from Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (may Allah be pleased with him))

Make tawbah every time a sin is committed

When a sin is committed once, make tawbah. When the same sin is committed again, make tawbah again, Allah Most High will forgive. So much so that if the same sin is committed seventy times and tawbah is made every time, it will be forgiven every time because the doors of tawbah are always open. So even if the tawbah is broken a thousand times, keep on repairing it, that Rahim (Merciful), Karim (Benevolent) will forgive a thousand times. A poet has explained this beautifully (in Urdu):

Jam mera tawbah shikan, tawbah meri jam shikan

Samne dher hai tutai huwe paymano ke

My goblet breaks the tawbah, my tawbah breaks the goblet

In front of me lies a pile of broken goblets and tawbahs.

The [Urdu] word paymano is the plural of payman and also the plural of paymane. Payman means promise, and tawbah is also a promise unto Allah Most High that this sin will never be committed again. Paymana is a wine goblet, which is also called jam. So the poet is saying that my wine goblet breaks my tawbah, i.e. it encourages me to consume liquor and I start drinking, resulting in the tawbah breaking. But my tawbah also breaks the wine goblet i.e. it makes me

break my wine goblet. I maketawbah and break the wine goblet. This series carries on; at times I am breaking my tawbah and at times the wine goblet. The result is that there is a pile of broken paymano (broken tawbas) and brokenpayman (broken wine goblets) lying in front of me.

If death comes in this struggle wherein the tawbah is breaking the wine goblet and the wine goblet is breaking the tawbah, there will be success. The sin is committed and tawbah is made, the sin is again committed and tawbah is also made again, the sin is kept on being forgiven. The reality of tawbah is to repent from the sin and promise not to do it ever. Every sin is forgiven through tawbah. If it involves the rights of man then tawbah will not suffice. The aggrieved person has to also forgive or the outstanding right has to be fulfilled.

The benefits of istighfar

There are many benefits of istighfar; istighfar is an ‘ibadah, it is a means of forgiveness from sin, and it is a means of nearness unto Allah. When a person repeatedly makes istighfar, there will come a time when he will feel ashamed to commit sin and he will perceive the vastness of the Mercy of Allah Most High, that how many times I am committing sin, yet He is favouring me. Pride will never develop in that heart which constantly recognizes its faults and has regret over them, nor will there be vanity overtaqwa. The reason for this is that he will be more conscious of his sins than his ‘ibadah.

Anyway, istighfar is also an ‘ibadah which is not confined to any particular time but is required all the time as there are so many sins being committed intentionally and so many due to negligence. Sometimes sins are committed and we

don't even realize it and we don't consider them sins! Thus, in all these conditions, whenever realization sets in, immediately, in the heart, with full regret, turn towards Allah Most High and with the tongue say Astaghfirullah. Say: "O Allah! I am extremely remorseful, so please forgive me and protect me from this in the future!"

This is such an 'amal that through it numerous and unparalleled Mercies of Allah Most High open up. With the regret of the heart, the cognition of belief is also built, resulting in the iman being protected and the achievement of the treasure of taqwa. Such a person then does not commit a sin wilfully, and if he does, it will be very seldom. Also, such a person does not harm the creation. Allah Most High, solely through His Grace and Mercy has granted His sinful servants the formula of istighfar so that they may gain success in this world and salvation in the hereafter.

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ وَ الشُّكْرُ

To Allah all praises and gratitude.

The buzurghs have advised that all sins of the past, major or minor, whatever you can recall, ponder, and with complete regret and remorse make tawbah and istighfar a few times, and this will suffice. Insha'Allah, all sins will be forgiven. Thereafter never become preoccupied in endlessly remembering past sins and agitating yourself. If any sin comes to mind by itself (without deliberately recalling it), then silently make istighfar once. If the sin is related to the rights of others, then to fulfil that outstanding right or to seek those persons forgiveness is fard (obligatory) and wajib (compulsory).

(4) Isti'adhah

The fourth action is isti'adhah. Isti'adhah means to seek protection. We usually recite **أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ** (A'udhu billaahi minash shaytanir rajim) when commencing recitation of the Noble Qur'an. It means 'I seek the protection of Allah from Satan the rejected'. This action of ours is also isti'adhah because it means: 'O Allah! Take us into Your protection from the evil of Satan'. It is necessary to recite 'A'udhu billaahi ...' before commencing the recitation of the Noble Qur'an. The Noble Qur'an itself has given this instruction.

Recite A'udhu billaah at the time of every fear

Life is full of calamities and happenings and we are always faced with the onslaught of the nafs (lower self) and Satan. We should, therefore, constantly seek protection from these. There are hazards and pitfalls in dealings and relationships, and at times one cannot fathom a way out, nor is there any choice. At such times the heart is strengthened by instinctively seeking the protection of Allah. So this should be developed into a habit that whenever any such thing is worrying, A'udhu billaah should be said from the depths of the heart.

Man goes through various worrying thoughts and fears from morning till evening. He does not know what is going to happen tomorrow. Will he lose his job? Will his dignity and respect be lost? Will his belongings be stolen? Will an enemy attack him? Will there be a loss suffered in business? Will he suffer from a certain sickness or sudden death? Will anything bad happen, etc? No one is free from such fears and thoughts. The means of protecting oneself from all the fears of this world and the hereafter is the powerful 'ibadah of isti'adhah.

Whenever any worry or fear enters the heart, silently say A'udhu billaah. O Allah! I enter into Your protection. If a person does not know the Arabic words, he should say it to Allah in his own language.

The more wealthy a person is or the higher his position, his worries increase accordingly. On the other hand, a person who does not possess wealth, fame, and position, his worries will be less, proportionately.

The helplessness of a thief

A thief entered a house. He went around the entire house but found nothing. Actually, there was nothing, no utensils, clothes, or any other goods. After searching for a while he saw a person on the veranda sleeping peacefully. The thief thought to himself that I cannot leave empty-handed, I must take something, or it will become bad luck. He looked closer and saw a heap of wheat at the head-side of the sleeping person. So the thief spread his shawl to fill it with wheat. He did not as yet touch the wheat when suddenly the sleeping person turned on his side on to the thief's shawl! Instead of taking, the thief had to give (his shawl now caught under the sleeping person)! The sleeping person was in a deep sleep and it was a winter's night. The thief sat down and waited, thinking that when he changes sides again, he will retrieve his shawl, but the sleeping person did not change sides! The poor thief becomes befuddled, thinking that even if I do not get the wheat, at least I should retrieve my shawl! While waiting, the adhan of Fajr commences. He thought that he has to leave now. When he reaches the door he hears a voice saying: "Close the door as you leave." The thief was angry so he said to himself: "Forget it! Someone will also come and give you a shawl to

cover yourself with!” (My shawl is under you, someone else will come and place another shawl over you!)

So no one is free from fears. The higher the person, the more his worries, the lower the person the more security he enjoys. In short, at every worrying juncture say A’udhu billaah or say O Allah! I seek Your protection. If you have the fear of failure in any matter, if you fear loss or harm to wealth or life due to someone’s opposition or jealousy, if you fear that you may get involved in any type of physical or internal sin due to the evil effects of Satan and nafs, if you have the fear of being apprehended in the hereafter, if an impure desire enters the heart, then immediately recite A’udhu billaah or recite the following du’a:

اللَّهُمَّ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَأَ مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ

Allahumma la malja’a wa la manja’a minka illa ilayk.

This means O Allah! There is neither a place of protection nor a means of salvation but You. This difficulty is from You. Safety from this is only in Your power and control.

Cling to the robe of the archer

A buzurg asked the people about a powerful archer who never errs in his aim. The sky is his bow and all the difficulties and calamities of the universe are the arrow. Tell me, what is the way of saving yourself from him? They answered that it is not possible to save oneself from him. The buzurg then said: There is only one way, and that is to cling to the robe of the archer. So brothers! Seek the protection of Allah Most High. Whenever any fear enters the heart, immediately say: O Allah! I seek refuge in You and Your protection. He is such a benefactor that He never refuses ones who asks with sincerity.

You ask yourself if on a dark and rainy night bandits are chasing a lone child and the child is screaming save me, save me! Will you not give such a helpless and desperate child protection? Even if you are living in a shack, you will still grant him safety. After all, Allah is Rabb al-Arabab (Sustainer of all sustainers) and Arham al-Rahimin (Most Merciful of all those who show mercy). When His servant becomes agitated due to difficulties and seeks His protection, then He will definitely open the doors of protection and refuge.

Isti'adhah is such an 'amal through which a person witnesses the greatness, sustaining quality, and mercy of Allah Most High. He receives protection, satisfaction, and contentment in his heart from Allah Most High. He receives the treasures of tawakkul (trust in Allah) and tafwidh (assigning oneself to Allah). Such people do not develop the urge to harm others. So make this 'amal a habit that whenever a fear is perceived in the heart, then say A'udhu billaah from the depths of the heart.

When you seek the protection of Allah, you will witness that as the worries are developing, so is the Mercy of Allah opening up unique and astonishing ways of protection.

Make these four actions a habit

The result of this discussion is that there are four a'mal; shukr, sabr, istighfar and isti'adhah.

Regularly practice on all four that they become habit, gradually your whole life will come in accordance with the din, Insha' Allah. The din and dunya will be protected, hatred will be formed for sins, and an inclination towards the performance of good deeds will be developed. The

proximity unto Allah Most High will keep on increasing and one will experience a special bond with Allah Most High.

Three tenses are under protection

There are three tenses in man's life; past, present and future. The past becomes protected through *istighfar*. The present becomes protected through *shukr* and *sabr* and the future through *isti'adhah*. When all three tenses have been protected, the whole life has been protected. The person who makes these four actions a regular practice, will Insha' Allah always enjoy the aid and mercy of Allah.

Pass this gift to others

This gift of my murshid is invaluable, very easy, and extremely effective. I have presented this gift to you. I request you to forward this gift to your acquaintances and also to your families. By practicing on this, one will be protected from countless sins, calamities and difficulties Insha' Allah.

Also make *Isal al-Thawab* (pass on *thawab* or reward) to my murshid 'Aarif Billah Dr. 'Abdul Hayy (may Allah have mercy on him), who presented us with this great gift.

May Allah Most High grant us the *tawfiq* to regularly practice on these four a'mal. Amin.

وَ أَخْرُ دَعَوَاتَنَا أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ،