

## The Criterion

How many of you want to be losers? How many of you want to be winners? Who is a winner and who is a loser?

When we counsel students about making career choices, one very powerful option we suggest is for them to identify someone who has 'arrived' so to speak, in that profession and then spend a few days in his or her company and live their life and see how it feels. That is a very good criterion to judge how life is likely to be for you in that profession. For some it is hugely motivating. For others, it helps them to see that that particular profession is not for them.

So let us see the situation about the modern 'live your dream' sales pitch – meaning indulge yourself, seek name and fame and above all seek money. More the better. Let us see what those who achieved this dream have to say or show. Here is a list of those who achieved that dream of name, fame and money – above all else comes money. Robin Williams, Whitney Houston, Marilyn Monroe, Robert Wilson (Net worth: \$ 1 billion), Adolf Merkle (Net worth: \$ 12 billion). (\$ 1 Billion = Rs. 5000 crores)

So what's common between all of them? They all committed suicide. So what happiness did the name, fame and money get them? Why am I focusing on happiness? Because how many people commit suicide because they are happy? Suicide is the ultimate action of the one in complete despair who has lost all hope. Losing hope is Kufr and so suicide is Haraam.

Allah ﷻ mentioned Yaqub ﷺ's advice to his sons in Sura Yusuf:

يَا بَنِيَّ اذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيَاسُؤْا مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَيْئَاسُ مِنْ رَّوْحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الْقَوْمُ  
الْكَافِرُونَ

*Yusuf 12: 87. "O my sons! Go you and enquire about Yusuf and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's Mercy. Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve."*

In China, the average age of extremely wealthy people who kill themselves is 50. See the use of the word 'extremely' which is used to describe life threatening sickness – extremely sick. Nobody says, 'He is extremely healthy.' Among the extremely wealthy in China, suicide was the cause of 23.6 percent of deaths between 2008 and 2010. Many wealthy people have the same complaint: That their money fails to bring them contentment. Actor Jim Carrey said, 'I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see this it is not the ANSWER.' So what are we chasing? Those who have it all commit suicide. So what do we think we are going to get when we get it all – if we ever do.

So therefore, Viola! See what Allahﷻ told us long, long ago – All mankind is in loss. Let me draw the veil away from the shining face of the Dunya you see before you. Let us see what is behind the veil. Behind the veil is the reality of this world which is truly a mirage. A mirage is an optical illusion caused by very hot atmospheric conditions, especially the appearance of a sheet of water in a desert or on a hot road caused by the refraction of light from the sky by heated air. Those who chase a mirage die of thirst. Allahﷻ mentioned this Dunya and called it a mirage.

He said:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ  
وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

*A'al Imraan 3: 185. Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Jannah, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing).*

The consumerist world – the mirage – began with the first Industrial Revolution in 1760 and the invention of the spinning mill and the world was literally never the same again. Until then the world was an agrarian society and economy and the main source of income for the government and capitalists was from land – taxing the farmer. But with the Industrial Revolution land owners were replaced by factory owners and progressively land tax became less important and was replaced by sales income. Factory production needed people – far more than farming needed. It needed people to change their traditional lifestyle to conform to the requirements of assembly lines and work shifts and so three fundamental changes were made: time of day, role of parents, role of women.

In an agrarian society the day begins when the sun rises and ends when it sets. But in a factory the day begins when the shift begins and it ends when the shift ends. In an agrarian society the parents were also the teachers of the children. Children learnt all their life skills, culture, religion and professional skills from their parents. The parents were their role models. So children were clear about the value of parents in their lives and so didn't need a lecture on being respectful to them. But when both parents were no longer at home children learnt – not what they needed to learn but what was decided to be taught to them from strangers – baby sitters, day care center attendants, teachers in schools and hold your breath, the television. All of these presented life and what was important in life from their own perspective – not yours. And as they say, the rest is history. Very big price to pay for a daily wage. The third fundamental change was in the role of women. Factories needed people. Women are at least 50 % of the population but the problem had to do with two things – what women considered important and their sense of honor and what women wore. Women – all rightly thinking women – consider raising children and creating a home which is safe, wholesome and nurturing, their primary responsibility. This needed to be changed. So the story was sold to them that this was subjugation to male dominance and not something in which a woman could possibly find fulfillment and happiness. What the woman needed was money which would give her independence and power and so she needed to get out of her home and work in a factory. Which brought into focus the issue of honor and dress. Women traditionally considered appearing dignified in demeanor and clothing as a mark of femininity.

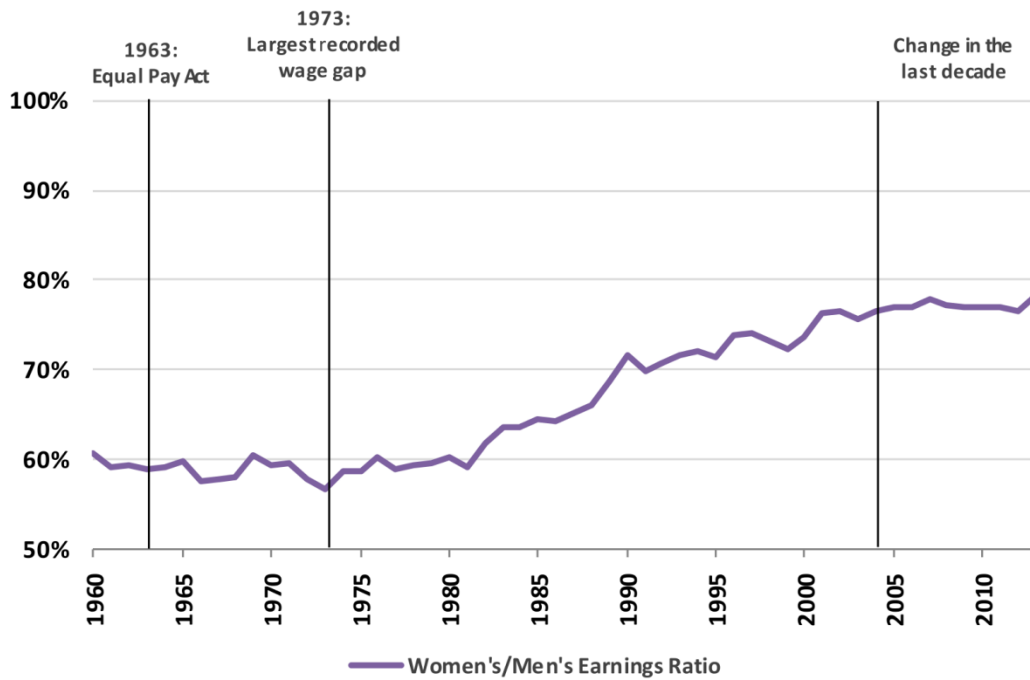
So this was broken by selling them the story – if you got it, flaunt it. Show it. Let them drool. That is your power. Use it. Obviously that is difficult to do in long skirts, full sleeves and heads in hats and veils – so take them off. Prove that you are liberated from the confines of all that cloth. Shake out your hair, paint your nails and show your body. And women bought this story, hook, line and sinker.

Truly you have to hand it to the story tellers – not only did they get the labor they needed in their factories – women actually agreed to give up their children and homes to go to work in factories for a pittance – but this gave birth to the cosmetics, hair care and fashion industries. Billions upon billions of dollars into the coffers of the capitalists while giving them the labor they needed. Now try to understand why they are targeting the Muslim woman today for her burqa and hijab. She is seriously bad news because she is living proof that the story they sold to women for 300 years was false. That a woman can be covered in dignified clothing and still be a productive member of society – especially a society where she no longer has to work in a factory. And as for power – well the woman in hijab has shaken the whole world – so what more do I need to say about her power? Our own apologetic, frightened little sisters who don't wear hijab need to grow up and stop buying these stories which have been used for centuries to oppress women, use them for commercial benefit and destroy our homes and cultures. Time to wake up.

Teachers replaced parents and schools replaced homes. Women were taken out of homes and into factories but were paid much less than men for the same work. It may surprise you to know that to this day (2014) in America – no less – women are paid 23% less than men for the same work. Please see the graph below showing the gap between the earnings of women and men in America. A similar situation remains all over the West which draws its inspiration from America. Yet the West harps on about equality of women and blames Islam for oppressing them – while Islam always propagated equality in reward both with Allahﷻ and in the world.

## The Wage Gap Over Time

### Ratio of Median Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers



Source: Census Bureau, Current Population Survey

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Since land tax was replaced with sales income you needed to maximize sales. For that you needed to create a society which buys more and more. How can you do that if people want to save, recycle, make things last, be charitable and responsible? Grow their own food and have a sustainable lifestyle? Enter commercialism. Notice that the suffix –ism– is used for religions, philosophies and theologies. So what is your religion? As I mentioned, the old values are an impediment to increasing the wealth of the capitalists and so they needed to be replaced. Once again our story tellers sold the story – You are what you wear! Your handbag is your signature! Your watch is not to tell the time, it is to tell the world! A diamond is a woman’s best friend! Fair is beautiful! (which is why fairness creams sell the most in India and Africa – we were taught to hate ourselves and like the slaves we are, we agreed and they laugh all the way to the bank). Crinkly hair which is natural is bad so straighten it. But you ask, ‘Why do you get a perm?’ Then you are told – or should be told – for the same reason we get a tan. I thank

Allahﷻ that I have a natural tan and don't have to fry myself in the sun and invite skin cancer to get one which will wear off through the winter anyway.

The new values – market compliant – were showing off, flaunting wealth by buying more and more, flaunting your body for which you needed different clothing for winter and summer – paying more and more for less and less. Believe that your possessions are more important than your character. Hold people who have money in the highest estimation only because they have money. You want to dispute that? Then let me ask what you do with members of your clubs who are indicted in embezzling scams. They still remain members and office bearers and you don't feel ashamed to go to the same club; you still attend their parties and invite them to yours. So what are you saying about the primary determinant of a person's value? High net worth individual – means someone with a lot of money. Remember that this was the same criterion in the time of Rasoolullahﷺ where Abu Lahb was an HNI. Islam retained the concept of high net worth but changed the criterion to determine net worth – from money to character, Taqwa and closeness to Allahﷻ. Islam changed the concept of High Net worth Individual from Abu Lahb to Abu Bakrﷺ.

The new values include throwing away instead of recycling, each one for himself and remaining single and unattached. Research shows that married people buy less than bachelors – so families need to be broken up and marriage delayed as much as possible. That is when name changes came into being. Change the name and the billy goat will smell like a rose. Or at least that is what they told you and you believed them.

So when you asked, 'What about fornication?' They replied, 'Forni-who? We call it a live-in relationship.' You asked, 'What about illegitimacy of birth thanks to premarital sex?' They said, 'It is not the child's fault. Legalize it. So no illegitimacy.' Neat, eh! 'What about the bachelor men and women on the prowl which used to result in what we used to call adultery?' They said, 'That is merely having an affair. That's okay. Why don't you also have one? You

find that difficult to conceive – well watch Bold & Beautiful – you will see how easy it is and absolutely no problem – except with how do I address someone who used to be my sister in law and is now suddenly my mother in law. Well that is also easy – just call her Agnes.’ Name change is one of the most powerful tools for the make-believe world we live in which convinces us that it is still palatable and enables the mentally challenged to shut their eyes to the fact that you can call a tiger Sher Mamu (Tiger Uncle) – but he will still eat you.

As I mentioned, sales became the new god – and they needed to convince people to worship that god. They did that by convincing you that you need more and more things and that unless you are buying, something is wrong with you. And if something is, in fact wrong with you, then buying will cure it – so Retail Therapy. Malls are the new temples – open 24 x 7. Admen are the high priests who create the mythology on which the whole edifice of lies rests. The most telling comment in this regard is in the acceptance speech of Jerry Seinfeld of Ogilvy & Mather who won the Clio Award for advertising. He said, ‘I love advertising because I love lying.’

Watch "Jerry Seinfeld's Clio Acceptance Speech" on YouTube - Jerry Seinfeld's Clio Acceptance Speech: <http://youtu.be/uH WX4pG0FNY>

And we love advertising because we love being lied to. We love being fooled. We love being taken for a ride. We are suckers and one is born every minute. So we have created a society which believes that the key to success is to buy what you don't need, to impress those you don't like and then spend the next twenty years paying for this vanity. And that is why Allahﷻ said, ‘Verily all mankind is in loss.’ So let us decide if we want to be losers. Or break out of the cycle.

Let us see what the Ultimate Judge said about winners and losers. Why must we listen to what He said? Because He is the only one who will decide. Not you. Not me. Not the media. Not Grammy or Clio or Nobel Committees. But Allahﷻ alone.

وَالْعَصْرِ

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

*By Al-'Asr (the time). 2. Verily! Man is in loss, 3. Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar (which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience.*

Four characteristics of winners – who Allah ﷻ delineated from the losers:

1. Imaan,
2. A'amal us Saleh,
3. Tawasaw bil Haq
4. Tawasaw bis Sabr

(Faith, good deeds, inviting towards the truth and inviting – advising – to have patience)

#### 1. Imaan (Belief): What is that belief?

That there is nobody worthy or worship except Allah ﷻ and nobody whose help we seek except His and nobody we rely on except Him and nobody who can forgive sins except Him and to Him is our return. That Muhammad ﷺ is His Rasool, the last and final one after whom there is no other. We believe in Muhammad ﷺ – that he was a true divine Messenger ﷺ - and we believe in what he brought – the Qur'an – as being the literal Word of Allah ﷻ and we believe in the teachings of Muhammad ﷺ – both the meaning of the Word of Allah ﷻ as well as its explanation and demonstration of how to implement it – the Hadith and Sunnah.

Imaan refers to all the different branches of Imaan in Allah ﷻ, His angels, books, messengers, life after death, resurrection, Day of Judgment and destiny. Imaan is possible only when we learn what we are supposed to believe in. That is why it is essential to learn the correct Aqeeda because the acceptability of our actions depends on what we believe. It is knowledge of Aqeeda and acting on that knowledge that saves us from Shirk and Kufr. It is knowledge of Aqeeda and acting on it which ensures that we fulfill our duties to Allah ﷻ and follow the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ.



From this follows practicing of this faith in terms of all Ibaadaat the first of which is Salah. That is why the affirmation of faith – La ilaha ill-Allah – demands that we demonstrate that belief by action – of worshipping only the one we affirmed as worthy of being worshipped. Salah differentiates between Islam and Kufr. The one who deliberately leaves Salah has by his action, denied his faith and left Islam as Rasoolullah ﷺ informed us.

Al Ahadalladhi bainana wa bainahum As-Salah. Faman tarakaha faqad Kafar. (The covenant between us i.e. between Rasoolullah ﷺ and the Muslims is As-Salah. Whoever leaves it, he has committed Kufr (disbelief) [Musnad Imam Ahmad]

Allah ﷻ mentions Salah with his own remembrance.

اتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

**Ankabut 29: 45.** Recite (O Muhammad ﷺ) what has been revealed to you of the Book (Qur'an), and establish As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat). Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha (great sins) and Al-Munkar (rebelliousness) and the remembering (praising) of (you by) Allah (in front of the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering) Allah. And Allah knows what you do.

In this beautiful Ayatul Kareema Allah ﷻ gives us a meter to judge the effectiveness and quality of our Salah – that it protects us from all disobedience. If that is not happening then we must improve the quality of our Salah. And then Allah ﷻ promises us the greatest of rewards – that He will remember and mention us. And He tells us that His remembering us is greater than our remembering Him. It is useful to remember this when we pray so that our appreciation for Salah increases. It is important to teach our children the benefits of Salah so that they learn its value and so that we all love to establish it in our lives.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى  
وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

*Ankabut 87: 14. Indeed whosoever purifies himself (Tazkiyya) shall achieve success, 15. And remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Rabb (worships none but Allah), and prays (Fardh and Nawaafil).*

Allah ﷻ ordered his Nabi Musa ﷺ as His first instruction when Musa ﷺ was given prophethood to establish Salah. That was the resource of prophets. It is ours today. Do we appreciate it and use it like they did? If not who must we hold responsible?

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

*Taha: 20: 14. "Verily! I am Allah! La ilaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and establish As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) for My Remembrance.*

Salah is the first act that the person will be held accountable for. 'Abdullah ibn Qart ﷺ related that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The first act that the slave will be accountable for on the Day of Judgment will be Salah. If it is good, then the rest of his acts will be good. And if it is evil, then the rest of his acts will be evil." (Tabarani)

It is the last thing that Rasoolullah ﷺ recommended to his nation before he died, saying, "Salah, Salah and what your right hand possesses."

It will be the last thing taken away from the religion. When it perishes, Islam will perish.

Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "If Islam was stripped away, piece by piece, people would hold tight to the next one. The first thing taken would be ruling and governance, and the last thing would be Salah." (Related by Ibn Hibban from the hadith of Abu Umamah)

The first quality of the Winners is therefore to recognize and worship their Rabb.

The first quality draws our attention to the rights of Allahﷻ that He alone should be worshipped. Please note that everything else follows because everything else is dependent on Uboodiyat. Only when we worship Allahﷻ do we enter Islam. Only by worshipping Allahﷻ do we remain in Islam. Only by worshipping Allahﷻ can we build a connection with Him and draw from His power and treasures. Only by worshipping Allahﷻ do we renew our covenant with Him. Only by worshipping Allahﷻ do we remind ourselves of our meeting with Him one day. Salah is the proof of Imaan. Salah is a reminder of death and the Day of Judgment. Salah is a shield from sin. Salah is sustenance. Salah is a means of asking Allahﷻ for help. Salah is a weapon against the enemy. Salah is a guide for our life. Salah is life. Salah is the light in the grave after we die. Salah is our key to Jannah. The one who leaves Salah leaves all these things.

## 2. Al a'amaal us Saleh – Good deeds. What are they?

The second criterion of Winners is how they live in the world. Does their Islam show itself in their lives? Do they live as people who actually believe that one day they will meet Allahﷻ and are anxious to ensure that that meeting will be a good one? Do they live as people who are convinced that they will die and that their actions alone are their earning assets? Do they try to maximize their assets? Salah is the foundation for the rest of life – so Allahﷻ mentioned Imaan first. The effect of Salah begins when we step out of the masjid. That is when the quality of our Salah shows up. Does our Salah enable us to speak the truth without fear? Does our Salah enable us to avoid useless talk, arguments, cursing, backbiting, slander, cheating, wasteful expenditure – I will let you complete the list – but ask if you are seeing the effect of the Salah. Remember how you learnt to pray. Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'Sallu kama ra-aitumooni usalli (pray as you see me pray). Salah therefore is Sunnah. So does your Salah enable you to stop destroying the Sunnah in your life and enable you to follow the Sunnah more and more closely? Salah is Sunnah. You ask for the Sunnah in Suratul Fatiha. How then can you destroy the Sunnah? Wake up people. Wake up before they come to wake you up.

The first criterion is about Huqooqullah – Aqeeda and Ibaadah. The second criterion is all about Huqooqul Ibaad. Between the two our whole life is covered. Rights of people. Rights of neighbors, employees, employers, rulers, family, friends, animals and environment. Let us ask if we are fulfilling them. Let me share with you some Ahadith of Rasoolullahﷺ so that we can have a meter to judge ourselves by.

Abu Hurairahؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said: " By Allah, he does not (truly) believe! By Allah, he does not (truly) believe! By Allah, he does not (truly) believe! Someone asked: " Who, O! Rasoolullahﷺ? " He (Rasoolullahﷺ) said: " He whose neighbour is not safe from his mischief". (Bukhari, Muslim)

In Muslim's report (it says): "He will not enter Jannah whose neighbour is not safe from his mischief".

Abdullah bin Umarؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said, "The best companion in the eyes of Allahﷻ is he who behaves best to his companion, and the best neighbour in the eyes of Allahﷻ is he who behaves best to his neighbor." (Tirmidhi)

Ibn Umarؓ narrated Rasoolullahﷺ said : "O you who declare Islam with your tongues but whose hearts have not been reached by faith, do not annoy the Muslims nor seek out their faults, for he who seeks out the faults of his brother Muslim will have his faults sought out by Allahﷻ, and when Allahﷻ seeks out someone's faults, He exposes them, even though he may be in the interior of his house." (Bukhari, Muslim)

Abu Hurairahؓ reported that he heard Rasoolullahﷺ saying, "The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best character, and the best of you are those who are best to their wives". (Tirmidhi)

Muadh bin Jabalؓ said that he heard Rasoolullahﷺ say : Allahﷻ said : "My love is due to those who love each other for my sake, who sit with each other for my sake, who visit one another for my sake, who spend on each other for my sake" (Malik)

From Abu Hurairahؓ: Rasoolullahﷺ said : "One who visits a sick person, or visits a brother of his for the sake of Allahﷻ, a caller calls him (saying) : "May you be well, and may your passage be well, and may you occupy a place in Jannah." (Tirmidhi)

Abu Hurairahؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said, "Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the greatest falsehood. Do not try to find fault with each other, do not spy on one another, do not vie with one another, do not envy one another, do not be angry with one another, do not turn away from one another, and be slaves of Allahﷻ, brothers to one another, as you have been enjoined. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim, he does him no wrong, nor does he let him down, nor does he despise him. Fear of Allahﷻ is here, fear of Allahﷻ is here, and he pointed to his chest. It is evil enough that a Muslim should look down on his brother. For every Muslim is sacred to one another: his blood, his honour, and his property. Allahﷻ does not look at your bodies or your forms, or your deeds, but He looks at your hearts". (Bukhari, Muslim)

From Amr bin Shu'aib, from his father, from his grandfather: Rasoolullahﷺ said : "He is not of us who has no compassion for our little ones and does not honour our old ones " (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

Jabirؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said : " If one makes excuses to his brother, but he does not excuse him, or accept his apology, he is as sinful as one who takes an unjust tax " (Baihaqi)

From Abu Ayyub al-Ansariؓ Rasoolullahﷺ said, "It is not right for a man to abandon his brother for more than three days." (Bukhari, Muslim)

From al-Miqdam bin Ma'dikaribؓ: Rasoolullahﷺ said, "When a man loves his brother he should tell him that he loves him." (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

From Anas bin Malikؓ : Rasoolullahﷺ said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, a slave (of Allah) does not believe (truly) until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself." (Bukhari, Muslim)

From Abu Hurairahؓ : Rasoolullahﷺ said, "He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah." (Ahmad, Tirmidhi)

Abdullah bin Umarؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said, "The Merciful One shows mercy to those who are themselves merciful (to others). So show mercy to whatever is on earth, then He who is in heaven will show mercy to you." (Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi)

Jabir bin Abdullahؓ said that Rasoolullahﷺ said, "Allah is not merciful to him who is not merciful to people." (Bukhari, Muslim)

This list is not exhaustive by any means but I narrated these Ahadith to you to remind you and myself about the importance about the rights of people, fulfilling which is the essence of doing good. Allahﷻ used deeds as the measure of his Mercy on the believer as when Rasoolullahﷺ said:

Anas ibn Maalikؓ narrated that Rasoolullahﷺ said: "When Allahﷻ wills good for His slave, He uses him." They asked, "How does He use him?" He said, "He guides him to do good deeds before he dies." Imam Ahmad, 11625; al-Tirmidhi, 2142;

Rasoolullah ﷺ said: “When Allah ﷻ wills good for His slave, He sweetens him.” He was asked, “What is this sweetening?” He said, “Allah ﷻ guides him to do righteous deeds before he dies, then He takes (his soul) whilst he is in that state.” Imam Ahmad, 17330

Allah ﷻ mentioned the importance of good deeds in gaining His Pleasure and reward.

There are many Ayaat in the Qur’an which speak about the importance of conduct and show the link between our actions and lives. I will quote just two. Allah ﷻ said:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ  
قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ

**Rum 30: 41.** Evil (sins and disobedience of Allah, etc.) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds, etc.), that Allah may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging His Pardon).

**42.** Say (O Muhammad): “Travel in the land and see what was the end of those before (you)! Most of them were Mushrikun (idolaters).”

Allah ﷻ shows us that there is a direct link between our actions and the conditions we find ourselves in and that our actions are the cause of those conditions.

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

**Anaam 6: 44.** So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows.

Allah ﷻ showed us how changing our way of life and repenting our evil deeds also produces results. He mentioned the story of Nuh ﷺ and said:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا

وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

*Nuh 71: 10. "I said (to them): 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; 11. 'He will send rain to you in abundance; 12. 'And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers.' "*

I remind myself and you that the laws of Allah ﷻ don't change. What worked for the people of Nuh ﷺ will work for us. So let us repent and make Istighfaar and return to Allah ﷻ. I ask Allah ﷻ to accept your repentance and dua and to fill your lives with His Baraka.

Islam is about action – not about sterile belief. Islam is not merely a theology or philosophy but a practice which gives results as soon as it is brought into action.

We understand the importance of action in our worldly lives. We live by that understanding allowing it sometimes even to destroy our Tawakkul, where when someone says, 'Make dua', we say, 'You need Dawa with dua. Dua alone can't do anything.' I won't argue with that but will ask why we don't apply the same standard to our Islam? How do we expect Imaan to build and strengthen without effort? How do we expect to build a connection with Allah ﷻ without effort? How do we expect to get Khushoo in our Salah without effort? How do we expect to get Yaqeen in our hearts without effort? How do we expect to get power in our dua without effort? How do we expect to get Hayaatun Tayyiba without effort? Why do we fool ourselves?

Allah ﷻ said:



أَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى  
 وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى  
 وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَى  
 ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَى  
 وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ

*Najm 53: 38. That no burdened person (with sins) shall bear the burden (sins) of another. 39. And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad). 40. And that his deeds will be seen 41. Then he will be recompensed with a full and the best recompense 42. And that to your Lord (Allah) is the End (Return of everything).*

Reminder after reminder that one day we will meet our Rabb and answer for what we did and what we chose not to do. So what is our action plan? Do we really believe that we will die? That is the fundamental question that I believe we need to settle for ourselves. Until we do that our lives will continue the way they are going until we meet death and realize that the game is over. So what to do?

1. Make Tawba
2. Stop disobeying Allah ﷻ
3. If in doubt about anything ask someone who knows
4. Stop playing games with Allah ﷻ - you can't win

It's quite simple really if we only understand. And the icing on the cake is that our lives will become full of grace, happiness and contentment. You can't lose. So the question is – do you want to win or do you want to lose? It's your call.

### 3. Tawasaw bil Haq – Inviting towards the truth

The third quality of winners is to invite towards the truth. This is the reason Allah ﷻ sent His Anbiya into the world – to give the people a criterion of judging between truth and falsehood; between reality and mythology; between fact and conjecture. Allah ﷻ sent the Anbiya to set

an example by living by their own preaching – by walking the talk. And that to me is the crux of the matter – the most powerful invitation is by demonstration. And that is what we need today – demonstrators, not salesmen and women. All the sales pitch in the world is not worth one instant of demonstration. Seeing is believing. People don't care what you say until they see what you do. So let us ask ourselves, what do we do? And if we are not sure, let us ask our wives and husbands, our neighbors, friends and employees.

In the corporate world we do what is called a 360° Appraisal. In this process, the appraisal form is sent to all those who you come into contact with – not only your boss, but also your subordinates, colleagues, colleagues in other departments you deal with, suppliers, consultants and even friends. All are asked to assess you on the parameters in the form. This result is collated and put together by an external agency and you are given the final outcome with some statistical analysis which also compares you to others who were also assessed. So it gives you a picture of how your whole world sees you, as well as how you fare when compared to others and a standard rating. I ask myself what rating I would get if someone did a 360 for me Islamically speaking – assessing my Applied Islam. This is a term we coined to differentiate from theoretical Islam to help us to look at Islam as practiced by us. For we will be assessed by Allahﷻ on what we did, not on what we knew – except that if we did even after knowing – then the cost is much higher.

So what do we know and what do we do?

Know	Do
How many know that Salah is Fardh five times a day at its correct time?	Pray/Don't pray
How many know that Zakat is to be paid every year?	Pay/Don't pay
How many know that Hajj is Fardh as soon as you have the means?	Did Hajj/Didn't
How many know that interest is Haraam in all its forms?	Deal/Don't deal
How may know that Allahﷻ declared war on those who deal in interest?	Accept war/Don't accept war
How many know that it is Haraam to lie, cheat, give false witness?	Lie /Don't lie

How many know it is Haraam to do Gheeba/Nameema/slander?	Do gheebat /Don't
How many know that Allahﷻ called ostentatious spenders Brothers of Shaytaan?	Still spend/Don't spend
How many know that Hijab is Fardh?	Do Hijab /Don't
How many know that to follow the Sunnah is Fardh?	Follow Sunnah /Don't follow
How many know that gambling is Haraam no matter what you are betting on?	Still gamble/Don't gamble
How many know that selective obedience is disobedience?	Obey selectively/ Obey completely

I think this list is enough for now. I will let you add your own elements to it – and please do that depending on what you are doing in your life. And then ensure that you tick the right boxes because remember that this is the measure of your and my Islam which the world sees. This is our Tawasaw bil Haq.

I used to ask this question: What car does the Chairman of Toyota drive? (Lexus) What car does the Chairman of General Motors drive? (Cadillac) What car does the Chairman of BMW drive? (BMW) What car does the Chairman of Mercedes drive? (Mercedes) What car does the Chairman of Tata Motors drive? (Mercedes)

This proves that your actions speak the truth. They display your real beliefs. And that is what the world is asking today – if Islam is really so good, how is it that you don't practice it yourself? This delta between our word and deed – Qawl and Fa'il – is the problem. Credibility falls through the gap between talk and walk. Allahﷻ mentioned this and said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ  
كَبِيرٌ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

*Saff 61: 2. O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? 3. Most hateful it is to Allah that you say that which you do not do.*

Allah ﷻ sent us to benefit people and that is the most powerful Da'awa.

Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "The most beloved of people to Allah ﷻ is he who brings most benefit to people, and the most beloved of deeds to Allah ﷻ is that you bring happiness to a fellow Muslim, or relieve him of distress, or pay off his debt or drive away hunger from him. It is more beloved to me that I walk with (help) my brother Muslim in his time of need than that I stay secluded in the masjid (Itikaaf) for a month." (Tabarani – Hasan, Silsilah Saheeha, Albani)

Abdullah bin Amr ؓ said that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "There are four traits; he who has all of them is a certain hypocrite and whoever has one of them has some hypocrisy, until he gets rid of it: when being given a trust, he betrays; when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he quarrels he commits excesses." (Bukhari)

The second part of Tawasaw bil Haq is to say what needs to be said at any time. It is a fact that many of us become participants in doubtful or clearly Haraam activities even though we don't want to because we burden ourselves down with the thoughts, 'What will people say? My friends will be hurt if I don't participate. People will criticize me and think I am radical or extremist if I don't participate' and so on. Rasoolullah ﷺ called this silence 'humiliating' yourself – because it goes directly against Tawasaw bil Haq. You were supposed to speak out against the disobedience of Allah ﷻ but instead you not only kept silent but you participated albeit unwillingly.

On the authority of Abu Said Al Khudri ؓ, who reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "Let not any one of you humiliate himself. They said, "O Rasoolullah ﷺ how can any one of us humiliate

himself? He (Rasoolullahﷺ) said, “He finds a matter concerning Allahﷻ about which he should have said something but he does not say (it), so Allahﷻ will say to him on the Day of Resurrection : What prevented you from saying something about such-and-such? He will say (it was) out of fear of people. Then Allahﷻ will say: Rather it is I whom you should have more properly feared.” (Hadith Qudsi, Ibn Majah)

Let us see what those who understood the importance of Tawasaw bil Haq did.

When Khalifatur Rasoolillah Abu Bakr As Siddeeqﷺ passed away he had two pieces of cloth and one mule. He gave instructions that he was to be shrouded in one of the pieces of cloth and that the other cloth and mule were to be handed over to Sayyidina Omar Ibn al Khattabﷺ who was to be the Khalifa. When this was done Sayyidina Omar wept and said, ‘Abu Bakr has set a very high standard and made it very difficult for the Khulafa who come after him.’

Every morning before Fajr, Abu Bakr Siddeeqﷺ used to go to the outskirts of Madina to a tent. He would enter the tent and spend some time there and then would return. After he passed away Sayyidina Omarﷺ decided to find out who lived in this tent. He went there and found an old woman who was almost blind with age. He asked her about herself and she replied, ‘I am an old woman who has nobody in the world and I live alone here with my sheep. Every morning there is a man from Madina who comes here, sweeps my tent, cooks my food, milks my sheep and takes care of them and leaves. Without him and his care I would have been unable to survive.’ Omarﷺ asked, ‘Do you know who that is?’ She said that she had no idea who the man was. He never told her. Omarﷺ told her, ‘That was the Khaifatur Rasoolillah Abu Bakr Siddeeqﷺ.’

Abu Bakrﷺ was a rich merchant, and his business depended on the goodwill of the people around him. He knew that his conversion to the new faith would make him unpopular with people around him, and that would adversely affect his business. He was well aware that by such conversion he would be inviting the wrath and hostility of the Quraysh. But his mind

was made up. He felt convinced that Muhammad ﷺ had brought the truth and that it was required of him to support the cause of the truth. Remember that the Sahaba were also human and had the same compulsions and problems as we do. But their conduct is a lesson for us to follow. Years later, Rasoolullah ﷺ recalling the conversion of Abu Bakr ؓ said, "Whenever I offered Islam to any one, he always showed some reluctance and hesitation and tried to enter into an argument. Abu Bakr was the only person who accepted Islam without any reluctance or hesitation, and without any argument."

Abu Bakr ؓ left Makkah one day with the intention to migrate to Abyssinia. He took the road to Yemen from where he was to sail for Abyssinia. When he had proceeded some five stages from Makkah, he met Ad-Dughna at Barka al Ghamaad. Ad-Dughna was an old friend of Abu Bakr. He was the chief of the Qarah tribe, a section of the Quraysh. The Qarah tribe was in alliance with the Bani Zuhra.

Ad-Dughna asked Abu Bakr ؓ where he was going, and he told him that he was going to seek refuge in Abyssinia as the Quraysh of Makkah would allow him no peace. Ad-Dughna said: "O Abu Bakr, we cannot allow you to go from Makkah. You are an asset to the city. You are always keen to fulfill the needs of others. You are so good and noble. I take you under my protection, and you should come back with me to Makkah. Rest assured no harm will come to you."

Back in Makkah, Ad-Dughna declared that Abu Bakr ؓ was under his protection and that no one should trouble him in any way. Abu Bakr ؓ built a small masjid by the side of his house. Abu Bakr ؓ used to pray in that masjid and would recite Qur'an. The Khashiyat of Allah ﷻ and understanding of His Kalaam is the tune in the voice of the Qari and so you can well imagine what the recitation of Abu Bakr ؓ would have sounded like. The people of Makkah would stop by his masjid and listen to the recitation and see Abu Bakr ؓ in Salah and would be affected by it and some would enter Islam. So when Ad-Dughna offered his protection the

Quraysh put a condition that Abu Bakr ﷺ should not pray in his masjid outside but must pray inside his house where nobody could see him. Abu Bakr ﷺ agreed and abided by that agreement for a couple of days. But praying in hiding was not his nature – so on the third day he was back in his masjid. The Quraysh complained to Ad-Dughna. Ad-Dughna advised Abu Bakr ﷺ to pray indoors and not to annoy the Quraysh.

He said to Ad-Dughna, “You are advising me as I am under your protection. What if I renounce your protection?”

“In that case I will have nothing to say,” answered Ad-Dughna. Thereupon Abu Bakr said, “Under these circumstances I renounce your protection. The protection of Allah ﷻ is enough for me.”

The reason I say this is because Tawasaw bil Haq is a matter of making a choice. Of making Hijra from the disobedience of Allah ﷻ to His obedience. It is a spiritual Hijra which has as much significance today as the physical Hijra has at the time of Rasoolullah ﷺ.

About the Hijra Allah ﷻ said:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

*Az-Zumar 39: 10. Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): "O My slaves who believe (in Allâh), be afraid of your Rabb (afraid of disobeying Him) and keep your duty to Him. Good is (the reward) for those who do good in this world, and Allâh's earth is spacious (so if you cannot obey Allâh at one place, then go to another)! Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning*

Allah ﷻ gave permission for the Muslims to move to another place when life in Makkah became untenable. Allah ﷻ also said:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَا جَزَاءَ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرَ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

*An-Nahl 16:41. And as for those who emigrated for the Cause of Allâh, after suffering oppression, We will certainly settle them in a good place in this world, but indeed the reward of the Hereafter will be greater, if they but knew! 42. (They are) those who remained patient (in this world for Allâh's sake), and put their trust in their Rabb (Allâh Alone).*

When Omar ibn Al Khattab ؓ used to give gifts to Al Muhajiroon he would say, 'This is a gift for you from Allah ﷻ and what Allah ﷻ has for you in the Aakhira is better.'

The Da'awa of the Sahaba was the most superior because it was the Da'awa of practice. The Sahaba didn't debate or argue with anyone nor did they accost anyone on the street and 'present' Islam. They lived Islam and those who came into contact with them smelt the fragrance of Islam as you smell the fragrance of perfume at the shop of an Attaar so that you ask him what the name of that perfume is. And then you buy that perfume. Consider the Da'awa of Islam like selling perfume. And if you don't believe me, try to sell perfume by distributing pamphlets about it, or arguing with people about it or debating with them but without letting them smell its fragrance. If you let them smell its fragrance, then you have to answer only one question, 'What does it cost?' In the case of Islam, the answer is, 'It's free'.

Tawasaw bil Haq is to open a perfume store and ensure that you keep all the bottles of perfume open so that their fragrance wafts on the breeze and reaches far and wide and attracts people



to your shop. It is the nature of perfume to attract people, especially those who value purity and cleanliness. It is the nature of Islam to attract those who value purity and cleanliness – Nafaasat of the spirit. People who are Saleem-ul-fitrat – whose nature is uncontaminated and unsullied by shirk and kufr. People who may not be Muslim but whose nature is innocent and pure. These come to Islam like butterflies go to drink the nectar from flowers. You don't have to lead the way. You just have to ensure that the flowers are blooming.

You are the flowers of Islam, my brothers and sisters. You are those who Rasoolullahﷺ prayed for and said that he would be with you on the Day of Judgment. Anas bin Malikؓ narrated that Rasoolullahﷺ said, 'I wish I could meet my brothers.' The Sahaba asked, 'Aren't we your brothers?' He replied, 'You are my Sahaba. My brothers are those who will believe in me without having seen me. (Saheeh, Albani, Silsilah as Saheeha)

The key to this however is action. I will end with just one example but which extends to every aspect of life and to every Sunnah to be followed because we love Rasoolullahﷺ and want his company of the Day of Judgment.

Rabi'a bin Ka'abؓ narrated, 'I was with Rasoolullahﷺ one night and I brought him water and what he wanted and he said to me, 'Ask me anything you want.'

I said, 'I ask for your company in Jannah.'

He said, 'Anything else?'

I said, 'That is all that I need.'

He said, 'Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself to Sujood.' (Muslim)

What is Sajda?

Sujood is the essence of Islam. It is the icon of Islam. It is the most evocative and powerful symbol of Islam. Sujood is a position of total and complete submission and that is why it is prohibited to everyone other than Allah ﷻ.

Complete and total submission only to Allah ﷻ superseding submission to anyone or anything else. Submission that overrides our desires of the desires of our family and friends. Submission to Allah ﷻ in the way of Muhammad ﷺ who showed us what the Sujood actually is. That is the way of Islam. Obedience to Allah ﷻ the way Muhammad ﷺ did it. Not obedience the way you see fit and proper. Obedience the way Rasoolullah ﷺ did it – there is no escape from the Sunnah. And indeed only the one who is devoid of Imaan seeks to escape the Sunnah when Sunnah is the name of the road to Jannah. Who but someone who has no Imaan would want to escape that road? I ask Allah ﷻ to fill your hearts with His Noor and the love of His Rasool ﷺ and help you to mould your lives on the way of Muhammad ﷺ so that you become his companions in Jannah.

#### 4. Tawasaw bis Sabr

The last criterion of winners is Tawasaw bis Sabr – inviting (advising) towards patience.

Abdullah Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, “The Muslim who meets with people and endures any harm they may do is better than he who does not mix with them and does not endure any harm they may do.” (Tirmidhi)

Islam doesn't teach us to shun the world, to stay away from people. It teaches us to live amongst people but not be led by them but to lead them. To live in the world but to live as a stranger focused on the real world in the Hereafter – not as a lover of this perishable world, engrossed in it.

This world is like a block of ice and we are like ice sellers. The most successful ice seller is the one who can get rid of his ice the fastest and can convert it into cash. If the ice seller is in love

with his block of ice then at the end of the day he will have neither the ice nor anything to show for it. The one who is focused on using the ice to get cash will have cash that he can use for his own benefit.

But what is Sabr?

Allah ﷻ used the word Sabireen for Anbiya and Mujahideen. He said:

الآن خَفَّفَ اللهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِئَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِئَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ  
أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*Anfal 8: 66. Now Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is weakness in you. So if there are of you a hundred Sabireen, they shall overcome two hundred (enemies), and if there are a thousand of you, they shall overcome two thousand with the Permission of Allah. And Allah is with As-Sabireen*

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*Anbiya 21: 85. And (remember) Isma'il and Idris and Dhul-Kifl; all were from among As-Sabireen*

And then Allah ﷻ advised those who are in difficulties or who face a difficult task to take the help of Sabr and Salah. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*2: 153. O you who believe! Seek help in Sabr and As-Salat. Truly! Allah is with As-Sabireen.*

For those who do this Allah ﷻ didn't say that He would help them or give them victory; He said something even more powerful. He said, Allah ﷻ is with them. Imagine the implications of Allah ﷻ being with you. Do you realize why I am saying that is more than the promise of help or reward?

So what is Sabr?

The concept of Sabr is unique in Islam because it is not what is commonly understood by patience, i.e. bearing difficulty in silence. It is important to remember that in Islam patience or Sabr is not merely a fatalistic acceptance of whatever happens. It is to strive in the cause of Allah ﷻ with all one's might and wealth but to realize that eventual victory will come only by the Permission and help of Allah ﷻ and not because of our striving. Allah ﷻ used the word 'sabiroom' to mean 'mujahidoon' in several places. A mujahid does not simply sit and wait for the help of Allah ﷻ to come. He strives in the path of Allah ﷻ with all that he has and then he prays for help. Obviously someone fighting in battle is not sitting silently bearing the difficulty. He is fully alive, engaged, thinking, planning and making the utmost effort that he can make to win the battle. He is putting everything he has on the line including his life. He is the epitome of commitment. He has invested everything he had because he believes that the cause is worth that investment. But at the end of his effort, he stands before his Rabb and asks for His help because he knows that without that help he can achieve nothing.

Sabr is action; to make the ultimate effort and then to rely on Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ put Sabr before Salah for two reasons – one because to return to the Dunya after you make Rujoo il-Allah ﷻ; after you turn to Allah ﷻ would be inappropriate. And secondly so that the person doesn't begin to believe that success happened because of his effort. He is asked to make the effort and then stand before Allah ﷻ and admit that even his effort was the result of the Tawfeeq of Allah ﷻ and the strength, resources and wisdom that Allah ﷻ gave him and it is only with the help of Allah ﷻ that he can succeed. The Salah after Sabr is the guard for one's Tawheed. It is the shield against Kibr. The Salah is the sign of Uboodiyat. The law Allah ﷻ created is that the effort must be made before dua (Salah).

The finest example of this is from the Battle of Badr.

The embodiment of this concept of Sabr is the action of Rasoolullahﷺ at the Battle of Badr where after making all preparations that he could do, using his meager resources to the best of his ability, he then stood before his Rabb and made his famous dua. Rasoolullahﷺ prayed ceaselessly for help from Allahﷻ and said, “O Allâh! The conceited and haughty Quraysh are already here defying You and belying Your Messenger. O Allâh! I am waiting for Your victory which You have promised me. I beseech You Allâh to defeat them. O Allâh! Should this group (of Muslims) be defeated today, there will be nobody left to worship you on the earth.”

He continued to call out to his Rabb, stretching forth his hands and facing the Qibla, until his cloak fell off his shoulders. Then Abu Bakrؓ came, picked up the cloak, and put it back on his shoulders and said: “Ya Rasoolullahﷺ you have cried out enough to your Rabb. He will surely fulfill what He has promised you.”

Immediate was the response from Allâh, Who sent down angels from the heavens to help His Messengerﷺ and his companions. Allahﷻ revealed:

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ  
فَاضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَاضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ

**Anfal 8:12** “Verily, I am with you, so keep firm those who have believed. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who have disbelieved.”

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ

**Anfal 8:9** “I will help you with a thousand of the angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession.”

Rasoolullahﷺ was in the lean-to that had been made for him and he dozed off a little and then raised his head joyfully crying: · “O Abu Bakrﷺ, glad tidings for you: Allah’s victory has approached, by Allah, I can see Jibreel on his mare in the thick of a sandstorm.” He then came out reciting:

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ

**Qamar 54:45** “Their multitude will be put to flight, and they will show their backs.”

On the instruction of Jibreelﷺ, Rasoolullahﷺ took a handful of sand and gravel, cast it at the enemy and said: “Confusion seize their faces!” As he flung the dust, a violent sandstorm blew like a furnace blast into the eyes of the enemies.

With respect to this, Allahﷻ said:

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَى وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءٌ حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

**Anfal 8:17** “And you [Muhammad] threw not when you did throw but verily Allâh threw.”

This Ayah in my view is the manifestation of Wallahu Ma’as-Sabireen – Allahﷻ is with those who make Sabr.

The records of Hadith speak eloquently of the fact that the angels did appear on that day and fought on the side of the Muslims. Ibn ‘Abbasﷺ said: “While on that day a Muslim was chasing an enemy soldier and he heard over him the crack of a whip and the voice of the rider saying: ‘Charge! Haizum’. He saw that the enemy soldier had fallen on his back, beheaded. An Ansaari came to Rasoolullahﷺ and related that event to him. Rasoolullahﷺ replied: ‘You

have spoken the truth. This was the help from the third heaven.” In Badr Rasoolullahﷺ demonstrated the epitome of the Qur’anic injunction to take the help of Sabr and Salah when faced with difficulty. He made all preparations and then asked His Rabb.

As I mentioned earlier Allahﷻ used the term Sabireen also for the Anbiya. He said:

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

*Anbiya 21: 85. And (remember) Isma’il and Idris and Dhul-Kifl, all were from among As-Sabireen*

Who can say that they work harder than the Anbiya Alaihim us Salaam? The life of every Nabi is an embodiment of struggle to the utmost. Or being steadfast in the face of great difficulty and of remaining positive and never giving up. That is Sabr. And every Nabi stood in the night before his Rabb and told him his story and asked for His help.

This is the Tawasaw bis Sabr that Allahﷻ mentioned as the criterion of winners.

In conclusion to sum up the world in general and all human beings are losers except those who have four qualities:

1. Imaan
2. A’amal us Saleh
3. Tawasaw bil Haq
4. Tawasaw bis Sabr

(Faith, good deeds, inviting towards the truth and inviting – advising – to have patience)

The first quality is Imaan on Allahﷻ and worshiping only Him. This is expressed by Salah. This includes all actions of Ibaadah – Huqooqullah – Rights of Allahﷻ.

The second quality is A’amal us Saleh – fulfilling Huqooqul I’baad – Rights of the people. This begins with following the Sunnah of Rasoolullahﷺ because to follow his Sunnah is the first and foremost among the rights of people. Then come the rights of parents, family, relatives, neighbors and all others. This also includes being positive and beneficial to all things and creatures and to the whole world in general.

The third quality is to invite towards the truth by our speech and action. To become living models of the goodness of the Islamic way. To be demonstrators, not salesmen and women. To open perfume shops of Islam from which the beautiful smell of the perfume of Muhammadur Rasoolullahﷺ will waft on the breeze and reach every home on the face of the earth. It is the nature of perfume to attract those who love purity and beauty. Islam attracts all such people from everywhere.

The last quality is to demonstrate total commitment – in word and deed. Invest everything unstintingly in the service of Islam knowing that the cause is worth investing in and then to stand in the night and ask for the help of Allahﷻ. To spend all our strength and energy in pursuit of that goal which is superior to all others – to bring every living soul into the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allahﷻ and save it from His wrath and anger. What is more laudable than to want eternal happiness for all mankind? This is Islam. And these are the Muslims.

#### 4. Tawasaw bis Sabr

The last criterion of winners is Tawasaw bis Sabr – inviting (advising) towards patience.

Abdullah Ibn Umarؓ reported that Rasoolullahﷺ said, “The Muslim who meets with people and endures any harm they may do is better than he who does not mix with them and does not endure any harm they may do.” (Tirmidhi)

Islam doesn't teach us to shun the world, to stay away from people. It teaches us to live amongst people but not be led by them but to lead them. To live in the world but to live as a stranger focused on the real world in the Hereafter – not as a lover of this perishable world, engrossed in it. Today we are like little monkeys who imitate everything others do – mindlessly which is why it is called 'aping' – behaving like a stupid ape.

Let me give you a few examples which are all known to you but which may have slipped your mind. Rasoolullahﷺ gave us a beautiful system of marriage. A simple Nikah in the masjid



followed by a simple Walima to which you invite your family and friends. No cost to the family of the bride because it is the groom who gives his bride the Mahr and he and his family pay for the Walima. If the wedding is done in this way, it is Ibaadah and Allah ﷻ will reward you for it. But we don't like this system. We don't like simplicity. We don't like to please Allah ﷻ. We don't want His reward. We want ostentation. We want to be little apes. So we include in our weddings customs like Dowry (is there anything more shameful than this?), Sanchak, Mehndi, Chauthi and Jumagi (4-8 of them) and now the latest I am told is Sangeet. All these customs have nothing to do with Islam. All of them adulterate the Sunnah and convert your wedding from being an act of Ibaadah to an act that will become punishable before Allah ﷻ. But you don't care. In addition to these completely un-Islamic customs you also ensure that you attract the punishment of Allah ﷻ by being as ostentatious as your purse will allow you and you compete in this. And others who have nothing to do with any of this – participate in this circus and comment on it – adding Gheebah to the litany of lies that we have made our lives. So where is the Tawasaw bil Haq? And the crowning glory or the cherry on the cake – depending on whether you like royalist or culinary innuendo – is that when someone attempts to advise you against this, you get offended and criticize, not the wrong doing but the one who tried to save you from it. Allah ﷻ said:

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

فَقُطِعَ دَابِرُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

**An'am 6: 44.** So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows. 45. So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And all the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Rabb of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists).

My brothers and sisters, save yourselves from the anger of Allah ﷻ. Save your children from the curse of beginning their lives with the disobedience of Allah ﷻ. How can that life have any

Khair if it begins with angering Allah ﷻ? Advise your family and friends not to indulge in these customs and not to be ostentatious. And if they don't listen to you, boycott that wedding. Not only the un-Islamic functions but the whole roadshow. It is not appropriate for you to be counted among those who are disobeying Allah ﷻ when the angels write the names in their records. Fear Allah ﷻ instead of fearing those whose opinion will not be asked when they and you stand before Allah ﷻ. Boycott such weddings. Those who are getting married – take charge of your lives and refuse to allow such functions in your weddings. It is YOUR wedding. All these things are being done in your name. You are responsible. Make no mistake – you are responsible and accountable before Allah ﷻ. So fear Allah ﷻ.

We are entering the last part of the year in which a sea of sin will flood the environment. Make sure you are nowhere in it. Make sure the sharks don't eat you. Make sure you don't drown or that your life doesn't end on the dance floor in a New Year's Eve dance. Should I be saying these things to a completely Muslim crowd in a Juma? Do you think it is necessary? Or Do you think it is necessary. Am I right or am I right? As I mentioned, Allah ﷻ sent us to show the way. Not to follow others. It is because we lost our way that people have lost respect for us. People respect teachers. But when we start scratching in the dirt like everyone else and lose our plot we also lose the respect of people. The respect of people is a product of the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. When we lose one we lose the other. I advise you and myself to make Tawba immediately and return to the way of Rasoolullah ﷺ so that we regain Allah ﷻ's pleasure and the respect of the world. To start with, do two things – don't be seen in any Haraam function – decline to participate and tell people why you are not participating. If they change it's good for them. If not, at least you are safe.

This world is like a block of ice and we are like ice sellers. The most successful ice seller is the one who can get rid of his ice the fastest and can convert it into cash. If the ice seller is in love with his block of ice then at the end of the day he will have neither the ice nor anything to show for it. The one who is focused on using the ice to get cash will have cash that he can use for his own benefit.

But what is Sabr?

Allah ﷻ used the word Sabireen for Anbiya and Mujahideen. He said:

الآن خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِن يَكُن مِّنْكُمْ مِّثَّةٌ صَابِرَةً يَغْلِبُوا مِن تَيْنٍ إِذِ ابْنَ يَكُن مِّنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا  
أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Anfal 8: 66. Now Allah has lightened your (task), for He knows that there is weakness in you. So if there are of you a hundred Sabireen, they shall overcome two hundred (enemies), and if there are a thousand of you, they shall overcome two thousand with the Permission of Allah. And Allah is with As-Sabireen

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Anbiya 21: 85. And (remember) Isma'il and Idris and Dhul-Kifl; all were from among As-Sabireen

And then Allah ﷻ advised those who are in difficulties or who face a difficult task to take the help of Sabr and Salah. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

2: 153. O you who believe! Seek help in Sabr and As-Salat. Truly! Allah is with As-Sabireen.

For those who do this Allah ﷻ didn't say that He would help them or give them victory; He said something even more powerful. He said, Allah ﷻ is with them. Imagine the implications of Allah ﷻ being with you. Do you realize why I am saying that is more than the promise of help or reward?

So what is Sabr?

The concept of Sabr is unique in Islam because it is not what is commonly understood by patience, i.e. bearing difficulty in silence. It is important to remember that in Islam patience or Sabr is not merely a fatalistic acceptance of whatever happens. It is to strive in the cause of Allah ﷻ with all one's might and wealth but to realize that eventual victory will come only by the Permission and help of Allah ﷻ and not because of our striving. Allah ﷻ used the word 'sabiroom' to mean 'mujahidoon' in several places. A mujahid does not simply sit and wait for the help of Allah ﷻ to come. He strives in the path of Allah ﷻ with all that he has and then he prays for help. Obviously someone fighting in battle is not sitting silently bearing the difficulty. He is fully alive, engaged, thinking, planning and making the utmost effort that he

can make to win the battle. He is putting everything he has on the line including his life. He is the epitome of commitment. He has invested everything he had because he believes that the cause is worth that investment. But at the end of his effort, he stands before his Rabb and asks for His help because he knows that without that help he can achieve nothing.

Sabr is action; to make the ultimate effort and then to rely on Allahﷻ. Allahﷻ put Sabr before Salah for two reasons – one because to return to the Dunya after you make Rujoo il-Allahﷻ; after you turn to Allahﷻ would be inappropriate. And secondly so that the person doesn't begin to believe that success happened because of his effort. He is asked to make the effort and then stand before Allahﷻ and admit that even his effort was the result of the Tawfeeq of Allahﷻ and the strength, resources and wisdom that Allahﷻ gave him and it is only with the help of Allahﷻ that he can succeed. The Salah after Sabr is the guard for one's Tawheed. It is the shield against Kibr. The Salah is the sign of Uboodiyat. The law Allahﷻ created is that the effort must be made before dua (Salah).

The finest example of this is from the Battle of Badr.

The embodiment of this concept of Sabr is the action of Rasoolullahﷺ at the Battle of Badr where after making all preparations that he could do, using his meager resources to the best of his ability, he then stood before his Rabb and made his famous dua. Rasoolullahﷺ prayed ceaselessly for help from Allahﷻ and said, *“O Allâh! The conceited and haughty Quraysh are already here defying You and belying Your Messenger. O Allâh! I am waiting for Your victory which You have promised me. I beseech You Allâh to defeat them. O Allâh! Should this group (of Muslims) be defeated today, there will be nobody left to worship you on the earth.”*

He continued to call out to his Rabb, stretching forth his hands and facing the Qibla, until his cloak fell off his shoulders. Then Abu Bakrؓ came, picked up the cloak, and put it back on his shoulders and said: *“Ya Rasoolullahﷺ you have cried out enough to your Rabb. He will surely fulfill what He has promised you.”*

Immediate was the response from Allâh, Who sent down angels from the heavens to help His Messenger ﷺ and his companions. Allah ﷻ revealed:

إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَيُّ مَعَكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَأَلْتَنِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّعْبَ فَاصْرُبُوا  
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