

Questions from Habib `Umar's Internet Lessons on Tazkiyah

Lesson 4 in Imam al-Haddad's "Beneficial Counsels"

(11 Dhu-l Qa`dah / 9th October 2011)

Answered by **Sayyidi al-Habib `Umar bin Hafiz** (may Allah preserve him and benefit us by him).

1. How do we strengthen our awareness of Allah in this place in which we are surrounded by those drowning in heedlessness and good company is rare?

Reading books such as the one we are studying, following these lessons and reading the biographies and virtues of the pious and connecting your heart to them are all types of companionship. Even if you are in a place where you are surrounded by the heedless and by disbelievers, you may take a portion of the secrets of this company. If Allah allows for you to have presence when you are remembering Him, then you are sitting in the presence of the One you are remembering. Allah says "I am the companion of the one who remembers Me." [*Hadith Qudsi*]

You may also enter into the company of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) by truly loving him, sending abundant blessings upon him, by intending to follow him in everything you do, by reading his biography and by realising his greatness in the sight of Allah. Through keeping the company of the pious you prepare yourself to keep the company of the most pious of them (the Messenger of Allah) and then you are ready to be in the company of Allah through pure sincere slave-hood.

2. A famous man recently died who is not Muslim. He was someone who invented things which were of benefit to the Muslims. We find some Muslims asking Allah to show him mercy. Is this allowed?

What you are allowed to do is to pray for the guidance of his family. It is not permissible to ask Allah to forgive and show mercy to someone who dies disbelieving in the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). Allah says: *Truly Allah does not forgive those who associate partners with Him.*¹ Thus anyone who associates partners with Him will dwell eternally in the hellfire. These partners could be idols which people worshipped, or their caprice which prevented them from responding to the message, provided that it reached them.

Allah says in the Quran: *Those who reject (truth) among the People of the Book and among the Polytheists will be in Hell-fire to dwell therein forever. They are the worst of creatures.*² It is impermissible to pray for them for mercy and forgiveness. It is permissible to pray for his family and his offspring that Allah guides them to the truth. It is impermissible to pray directly for the mercy and forgiveness for someone who died in a state of disbelief. However, it is permissible to say: “O Allah if You know that he died in a state of belief in You and Your Messenger, then forgive him” because there may be something in his heart between him and Allah that people are unaware of them. This is in the case of someone who did not explicitly state their opposition to Allah and His Messenger.

As for the fact that he invented things which were of benefit to the Muslims Allah subjugates whatever thing He wishes for whatever purpose He wishes. This does not change the decree of Allah. If Allah brings about benefit at the hands of someone and this person was cut off from faith and divine revelation, this person lives with his own self and ego. In doing what he is doing he may desire material benefit, or fame, or his *fitra* (natural disposition) may make him love to benefit people, but he is not seeking the pleasure or reward of Allah. Allah subjugates whatever thing He wishes for whatever purpose He wishes. He uses angels, the righteous, the believers and the disbelievers in service of his creatures. While inventions and discoveries may bring about benefit to the Ummah, they also bring about harm, and the harm often outweighs the benefit. In any case, Allah only rewards in the hereafter those that surrender to Him and believe in the

¹*Al-Nisa'*, 4:48

²*Al-Bayyinah*, 98:6

message with which the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was sent. The one who does not do this will have no reward in the hereafter. Allah says about such people: We shall turn to whatever deeds they did (in this life) and make such deeds like scattered dust.³

You find in the realm of humanity that if someone harms another, and then he wants to serve the one he has harmed, then the harmed person will say “I don’t want your service, nothing can make up for what you have done.” So what value is the service of someone who opposes Allah and belies His Messenger and message?

In conclusion it is impermissible to ask Allah to show mercy to someone whom the message has reached who then opposes the cause of Allah and apparently dies in that state. Allah says: *It is not fitting for the Prophet and those who believe to pray for forgiveness for those that associate partners with Allah, even though they be of kin, after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire. Ibrahim prayed for his uncle’s forgiveness only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he dissociated himself from him: for Ibrahim was most tender-hearted and forbearing.*⁴

3. Can you recommend books compiled by the *Ba Alawi Sadah* (masters of the *Ba Alawi Path*) on the biographies of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Prophetic Household)?

You can read *al-Mashra` al-Rawi*, *Ghurar al-Baha’ al-Dawi* and *Sharh al-`Ayniyyah* by Imam Ahmad bin Zayn al-Habashi. These are some of the books that contain biographies of many of the Imams of the pure *Ahl al-Bayt* of the *Ba Alawi* that have been published. These books and similar books (some of which have not yet been published) may be read.

Studying history in general and the accounts of the pious specifically teaches you many lessons and has the effect of rectifying the heart and filling it with love for and attachment to the friends of Allah and a loathing for those whom He loathes. All of this brings one closer to Allah.

³ *Al-Furqan*, 25.23

⁴ *Al-Tawbah*, 9.113-114

4. We always here about children showing righteousness to their parents. Is there a righteousness that can be shown by parents to children? Do you have advice for parents in their dealings with their children to stop them from disobeying them?

There is both righteousness shown from parents to children, and from children to parents. Someone who is righteous will be good to the father, mother, children, grandparents, brothers, sisters, spouse, sons and daughters, and all relatives. The extent of the goodness will be according to a person's truthfulness, aspiration and striving to worship Allah.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "May Allah have mercy on a father who helps his child to be good to him." Parents should be gentle in their dealings with their children. They should use various means to convince their children to respect them and make it easy for them to do so. They will thus prevent their children from falling into the calamity of disobeying them. They must be avid for their sons and daughters to be upright and must not be harsh in seeking their rights from them which may in turn cause them to disobey them and we seek refuge in Allah from that.

5. When I was in Tarim I loved the modesty that girls showed in their clothing and transactions at home and outside. How can we make this modesty a feature of our communities in the West in an environment which does not welcome these etiquettes?

It is possible for all these etiquettes to be followed. However, if it is difficult to implement some of them, it does not mean that they should all be left, and we should do what we can.

The various environments that we find ourselves in are not an obstacle for someone with a strong resolve and high aspiration whether they be a man or a woman. This strong resolve is the most important thing, and the effects are greater if one works gradually with wisdom. The modesty that you see in Tarim and many places amongst the pious people of the *Ummah* is the result of

the teaching of the Prophet, who came to a degenerated society where the modesty of women was exposed. This is the state of disbelieving societies today.

Allah says: ***Do not expose yourselves like the exposure of the former times of ignorance.***⁵

However the society of the Prophet was transformed due to strong faith and resolve. Similarly disbelieving societies may change if there is this resolve and aspiration combined with Prophetic guidance. Allah in His wisdom may cause things to happen in the short term or in the long term and the whole affair belongs to Him. We succeed and triumph by expending our efforts to try to bring about change to the extent of our ability sincerely for the sake of Allah.

6. Should a menstruating woman read the *dhikr* (remembrance) which she would normally read before and after the prayer?

If she continues to read these *adhkar* this a means for her to attain more good. However, when she is on her cycle she is not commanded to pray and this includes the obligatory prayer and the recommended and the *adhkar* which are attached to the prayers. Even if she does not read these *adhkar* she will be considered to have read them, just as she is considered to have prayed. The most perfect state for a woman is to read the *adhkar* which she customarily reads at the prayer times as if she was praying. She should read everything other than the Qur'an, and this will be a means for her to attain more light and a higher rank in the sight of Allah, the Almighty, the All-Forgiving.

⁵ *Al-Ahzab*, 33.33