

THE PRESCRIBED PATH OF SEEKING ALLAH ^(SWT)
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In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

The very word Islam means to entirely submit oneself to the Will of Almighty Allah, and a true Muslim is the one who does so. This act of total submission can be carried out easily only by that servant who loves his Lord the most.

“.....But those who believe, love Allah more than anything else” (Surah Baqarah, verse: 165)

As stated in the Holy Quran, this is the devotion that is needed to become a true believer:

It is this love that constantly motivates us to strive for good, in order to reach Allah. It is this love that guides us to give up these worldly attachments, the worldly illusions, for the Sake of Allah. It is this love that makes us humble, truthful, and generous. It teaches us compassion and honesty. It is this love that gives us the courage to sacrifice, and the discipline to give up this world with the intention to return to the Almighty.

The importance of our love for Allah has been emphasized in the teachings of Huzoor Nabi E Akram ^(pbuh) and Huzoor Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh). Once a man came to the Prophet ^(pbuh) and asked him about the Hereafter. The Prophet ^(pbuh) asked him, “What have you prepared for that time?” The man replied, “Nothing, except that I love Allah and I love you.” The Prophet ^(pbuh) then replied, “You are with the ones you love.” Likewise, Huzoor Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh) used to say, “We have brought the religion of lovers (of God)”.

It is also necessary for us to understand that this love towards Allah is not possible without loving The Prophet ^(pbuh), Mahdi ^(pbuh), and all His beloved servants. It is stated in the Holy Quran:

*“Say : If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline and the dwellings in which you take delight **are more beloved to you than Allah and His Messenger**, and striving hard in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are disobedient” (Surah Taubah, verse 24)*

To nurture the love of Allah ^(SWT) in our hearts, it is imperative for us to follow The Prophet ^(pbuh) as Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

“Say, if you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you greatly and forgive your sins for Allah is oft-Forgiving and most Merciful.” (Surah Al-Imran, verse 31)

It is written in history that before the advent of Mahdi ^(pbuh), the condition of Muslim community in all aspects was demeaning. Due to the growing nature of materialism, even the acts of religion were not done for the sake of Allah or for His love, but instead to gain this world. The reason for this chaotic condition was the absence of Love for Allah and the sincerity (*Ikhlas*) in their practices, without which the deeds are not accepted. Consequently, for the revival of the true spirit of Islam, Allah ^(SWT) sent His Caliph, Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh). In favor of Mahdi Maud ^(pbuh) and his people, Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion, Allah will surely bring forth a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, striving in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers.....” (Surah Maidah, verse 54)

In this verse, the implication is to become the true and sincere believer, which would be to practice an unconditional nature of love. Huzoor Mahdi Maud (pbuh) has emphasized the nurturing of love, which is a key element for the servants of Allah to reach Him.

By the Command of Allah, Huzoor Mahdi Maud (pbuh) has made some practices as mandatory on us and they are called Faraiz e Vilayat. These are discussed below:

ZIKR E ILAHI:

"Only in remembrance of Allah do your hearts find peace" (Quran 13:28)

When you love someone, it is only natural that you think of them most. You want to speak of them to your family and friends. You don't ever get tired of talking, thinking, or being with them. You willingly carry out your commitments to them; without a single second thought. Do you see where this is going? If you would do that for anyone else, why *wouldn't* you do that for your Lord? In the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says: *So remember me; I will remember you (Surah Baqarah: 152)*. What can be more beautiful than that?

What else would anyone want than to be remembered by their Lord? The more you remember Allah (SWT), the more you love Him and the easier it is for you to follow the straight path. Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) has said that the most excellent Zikr is the Zikr of Kalima “La Ilaha Ilallah.” Hazrath Mahdi Al Maud (pbuh) says that the Zikr of this Kalima with the depth of the heart purges the heart of the believer.

“Just as a spark of flame sets ablaze a whole room filled with cotton, reducing it to ashes, so also the spark of this Kalima LA ILAHA ILLALLAH burns all his worldly desires and makes his heart pure for the divine Love of Almighty.” According to the Commands of Almighty Allah, Hazrath Mahdi Al Maud (pbuh) has made perpetual remembrance of Allah obligatory for us. Put in simpler terms; for a Muslim, Zikr is a matter of life and death.

SOHBAT E SADIQEEN:

"Oh! Ye who believe, have fear of Allah, and keep company with Sadikheen (truthful). (Surah At-Tawbah: 119)

As it has been said in the given verse, Sohbat e Sadiqeen is an essential element of faith. Since the day we are brought into this world, our parents make sure that we have good companionship; that we have virtuous and righteous friends. Companionship is a positive factor not only in the formation of a character, but in the estimation of man's true faith.

In an authentic Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “Man is influenced by the faith of his friends, therefore, be careful of whom you associate with.” We should choose such a friend who believes and abides by our religion and helps us grow closer to Allah (pbuh). In another tradition, it is stated that once the Prophet (SAW) was asked, “What person can be the best friend?” The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) counseled, “He who helps you remember Allah (SWT), and reminds you when you forget Him.” Prophet

(pbuh) was further asked, "Who is the best among people?" "The one, when you look at him, you remember Allah (SWT)," He replied.

Thus by the Command of Allah Most High, Sohbat e Sadiqeen (Company of the truthful) was made obligatory by Mahdi Maud (pbuh) upon all believers. Allah (SWT) has said in the Quran, "Find a means to reach Allah." Without the company of Sadikheen and Murshideen, the methods for the love of Allah and the methods of praying cannot be practiced properly. (The Mahdi Al Maud)

We know books are good companions as well. As the younger generation, we are familiar with getting attached to fictional characters. Upon reading their stories, we get inspired and admire them as we embark on our own adventures. Rather, what if we read instead, the books and biographies of our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Hazrath Mahdi Maud (pbuh) and their Companions and Caliphs? When we read about them, it can give us companionship that can help us shape our lives in a beautiful way. The more we read, the more we get fond of them; the more attached we feel, the more we love them. And ultimately, the more we want to be like them.

UZLAT AZ KHALQ

"So remember the name of Allah and devote thyself with a complete devotion" (Surah Muzzammil:8)

It is well-known that before the Prophet hood was explicitly declared by our beloved Prophet (pbuh), he used to spend a considerable amount of time in the cave of Hira away from the people. It was there where the first revelation came to him.

We may notice that we often struggle with having total concentration in prayers. It is because whatever we do outside our prayer reflects within our prayers. For absolute attentiveness, seclusion from this world is necessary, which increases the love of Allah in our hearts. It is also important for the seeker of Allah to stay away from those people who may attract towards the lust of this world and intervene in the remembrance of Allah (SWT) as Almighty Allah ordains us, *"And leave alone those who take their religion as play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world....."* (Surah Al An'am, verse 70).

Hazrath Mahdi Al Maud (pbuh) in accordance with Divine orders made Uzlat az Khalq obligatory. The obligation helps us concentrate and meditate without outward disturbances and thus helps in seeking the love of Allah (SWT). Huzoor Mahdi Al Maud (pbuh) asked, "What is the attribute required to enable a seeker of Allah to reach Him?" He himself replied, "It is the deep love of Allah" (Insaaf Nama P 12).

TAWAKKAL AL ALLAH

".....And put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed" (Surah Al-Ma'idah:23)

A fundamental human need is trust. It is natural that we put our trust in someone we love, and who loves us. We trust someone when we believe that they have the power, knowledge, means to carry out the things we expect from them, and who wishes nothing but good for us. So, who is more knowledgeable and powerful, than Almighty Allah (SWT)? One cannot trust the other unless there is love involved. We leave our matters, troubles, worries in the hands of Allah (SWT) because of the love that exists. It is this

love, that makes us take a blind leap of faith even when our life is in grave danger, and there is none so worthy but Allah ^(SWT).

Ibrahim ^(pbuh), the Khaleel of Allah, had an amazing recognition of Allah ^(SWT). There was such a big fire burnt with so much of wood collected to burn him alive. The face of death was right in front of his eyes and when he was about to be thrown into the fire, Jibraeel ^(pbuh) came to him and asked him if he needed any help, but Ibrahim ^(pbuh) replied, "*Hasbiyallahu wa ne'mal wakeel*" (Allah is my protector and the best of aids).

When thrown into the flame, he felt as if he was sitting in a cool garden. The flames were still there, but did not burn for Allah; the Almighty had issued His Command. Ibrahim ^(pbuh) glorified and praised Almighty Allah, with a heart that contained only the love of Allah. There was not any vacant space therein, for fear, awe, or worry. It was filled with love only. Allah ^(SWT) says in the Holy Quran,

"And whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him" (Quran 65:3)

There is a beautiful Hadith reported by Ibn Abbas ^(Rz) in which he said, "I was behind the Prophet ^(pbuh) one day. He said, 'Young man, I will teach you some words. Hold fast to Allah and He will preserve you! Cling to Allah and you will find Him before you! If you ask, ask Allah. If you seek help, seek it from Allah. Know that even if the community were to join together to do something to benefit you, they could only benefit you in what Allah has written for you. And if they were to join together to do something to harm you, they could only harm you in what Allah has written for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages are dry'" (Mishkat).

When things don't go our way, the way we planned, we must thank Allah ^(SWT) as things are going the way He wants and no plan can be better than His plan. In trials and tribulations, in happiness and joy, in every moment of our life, we must never lose the trust in Allah ^(SWT) and therefore, our Tawakkal shall only increase and help us grow closer to Allah ^(SWT).

Hazrath Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh) said, "Tawakkal in respect of food is not the real Tawakkal, because Allah Himself has promised that the supply of food is His responsibility to one and all under the sun. If you have faith in the promise of God you are a Momin, otherwise you are not a Momin. The real Tawakkal should be in respect of Allah Himself, and your endeavor day and night should be only to see him."

HIJRATH

"Lo! As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask, In what were ye engaged? They will say: we were oppressed in the land. The angels will say: was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein?" (Surah An Nisa: 97)

Do we not leave our hometown and travel across the world for wealth, family, and a better economical life? It is more than common now to migrate to other places for higher studies, for a better job, and for a luxurious or a more comfortable life. It is a part of human weakness to believe that the possibilities of a pleasant life are limited to a certain land, and abandonment of those possibilities means the end of life. But the fact is, the end of life could very well be a place where you are restricted from practicing religion.

Thus, there must be no problem migrating from one place to another for the Sake of Allah ^(SWT). If one is suffering at the hands of kuffar and practicing Islam gets tough, then he must migrate. Migration must be for God's sake. That is the only type of migration that earns a reward. When the purpose of migration is serving God's cause, it is to seek the pleasure of Allah, or the love of Allah. Then the person who undertakes it will find many places of refuge and great abundance.

"Anyone who migrates for God's cause will find on earth many places of refuge and great abundance" (Quran 4:100). Thus, Hazrath Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh) in accordance with Divine order made migration obligatory. The Prophet Muhammad ^(pbuh) and Hazrath Mahdi Maud ^(pbuh) along with their companions migrated from their native places only for the sake of Allah and the preservation of religion.

TARK

E

DUNYA

"So for he who transgressed and preferred the life of this world then Indeed Hellfire will be his refuge. But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from desires and lusts then Indeed Paradise will be his refuge." (Surah Nazi'at:37-41)

In our daily lives, we know people who have dreams to become an artist, a doctor or a businessman. We also know that they do everything in their capability to make those dreams come true. People are passionate about their dreams and goals. It becomes the core purpose of their lives because they are in love with their dream and would do anything to make it a reality. They separate and alienate themselves from everything that becomes an obstacle in reaching their goal. They even avoid mingling too much with friends and family, because nothing seems more important to them than their dream to come true.

In the same manner, the love for this world is to be abandoned in order to attain the Divine Love of Allah (swt) since the love of this world and the love of Allah ^(SWT) can never be together. Indeed, sailing in two different boats at the same time is impossible.

In a very famous tradition it is given that Prophet ^(SWT) has said, "The love of this world is the root cause of all evil, and the abandonment of this world is the *zenith* of all virtuous deeds". In another tradition, the Prophet ^(pbuh) said, "Abandon this world for its people." (*Dunya ko dunya daron k liye chod do*). Hazoor Mahdi Al Maud ^(pbuh) has said: "The world is for you, O infidels; and the Hereafter is for you, O imperfect believers; and the Lord is for me and those who follow me." (Insaaf Nama). Thus, the true objective of Tark e dunya is to seek the Love and the Vision of Allah.

TALAB E DEEDAR E KHUDA

"And whoever is blind in this world will be blind in the hereafter, and more astray from the path" (Surah Al-Isra 17:72).

It is an intrinsic desire to see the one whom we love and admire. We become restless and try to do our best we can in our capacity to meet them. When we have that desire towards people we love, we must reassess our level of anxiousness to see our Lord.

It is very natural to have an intense desire to see Him. In fact, we *should* have an intense desire to see Allah (SWT). This desire is known as Talab E Deedar e Khuda which Hazrath Mahdi Maud (pbuh) has declared obligatory for us according to the Divine Orders.

This desire to see Almighty Allah is directly related to the Love the believer has for Him (SWT).

Some of the companions of Imam Mahdi (pbuh) have learned from him that a believer is he who sees Allah with his own eyes, or the eyes of his heart or in a dream. Or the person who seeks to achieve this attribute although he may not have seen Allah in all the three forms described above, even he is included among the momins.

The Imam (pbuh) asked, "What is obligatory on a seeker of Allah to reach Him? He himself replied, "It is love (ishq)." He (pbuh) asked, "How does one achieve Love?" The Imam (pbuh) himself replied, "By keeping the heart's attention always focused towards Allah in such a manner that no other thing comes between (him and Allah). To achieve this, one should always be in seclusion, and should not indulge in meetings with others, neither with friends, nor with strangers. Standing sitting or lying down, eating and drinking, one should be in remembrance of Allah and always keep one's attention towards Allah". (Insaaf Nama)

Quoting Allah, Prophet (pbuh) has said: "When my remembrance and his indulgence in Me dominates My servant, I grant him pleasure and enjoyment (lazzat) in My remembrance, and when he relishes pleasure and enjoyment in My remembrance, he becomes My devotee, and I become his '*ashiq*'. And I remove all the veils between him and Me". (Insaaf Nama)

As a result, we can see that this desire to see Allah (SWT) is obligatory and it is this desire that accompanies the love of Allah. One with such desire always seeks the pleasure of Allah alone, submits himself to Allah, follows the footsteps of Prophet (pbuh) and Hazrath Mahdi Maud (pbuh), and saves himself from the evil of this world.

The love and desire to see Allah can be attained by constant remembrance of Allah, by having righteous company, by putting absolute trust in Allah, by giving up this world, taking seclusion from public, and migrating in the cause of Allah. All these actions are interrelated to each other. Each is necessary for the other to take its course and to lead us towards a righteous life and follow the straight path. And the core of all these actions is *Ishq e Ilahi*.

The essence of Islam is the Love of Allah, His beloved Prophet (pbuh), His Caliph (pbuh) and all His beloved servants, the Prophets, the sahabas, and the Aulia Allah. This love has no bounds, nor does it have barriers.

May Allah (SWT) fill our hearts with His Love (Ishq), guide us towards the right path and help us reach Him (SWT). (AMEEN)