

# With Allah

Dhul Hijja 1444/July 2023  
Amman, Jordan

Dear Believers: as-Salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatu Llahi was barakatuh.

In the Name of Allah Most Merciful and Compassionate: All praise to Allah Most High, and blessings and peace upon His beloved Prophet Muhammad, who has made plain to us everything needful in this world and the next.

To commence: Those with time and Iman or ‘true faith’ are doubly blessed by Allah when He inspires them to organize their days and nights into regular acts of worship that they always do and never leave. As Allah says in verse 42.23 of Surat al-Shura, as a general rule of guidance:

وَمَنْ يَقْتِرْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا

“And whoever keeps faithfully doing a fair deed,  
We shall increase for him in it  
of splendid fair good.”

Here, the verb *yaqtarifu*, which I have translated as “keeps faithfully doing,” derives from the Arabic root *qarafa*, meaning to be admixed with something, blended with it, or to put it on as armor. Every rind, peel, or bark of something can be termed a *qaraf* in Arabic. In the modern day, the verb *yaqtarifu* is mostly used for ill deeds, but in the times the Quran was revealed, it was used for both good and ill. In this verse it means to *acquire* a good deed, pick up on it, then *engage* in it with determination and one’s utmost effort, as though one were putting it on and wearing it. The emphasis of Allah’s using this verb is that (1) it is as though one is cladding oneself with armor; (2) one is so faithful in doing the good deed that it becomes like the clothes one wears, because it always unfailingly accompanies one, day in and day out, like the very skin on one’s body; and (3) it entails doing one’s *utmost*, just as we say in conversational English, “He’s really *into* it.”

So the action of this verb comes after having acquired the practice of a good deed, then *perfecting* it by becoming really attached to it in one’s heart and daily works and gradually eliminating all that is wrong with it. So it “enwraps” one, and one perfects its practice until mind and heart are “with Allah” in a special way; as in one’s *salat*, for example, whether the prescribed prayer, the sunnas with it, or one’s *tahajjud* at night.

Muslim relates in his *Sahih* from Anas ibn Malik that he said: “A desert Arab said to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), ‘When is the Final Hour?’ The Messenger of Allah asked him, ‘What have you readied for it?’ He replied, ‘Love of Allah and His messenger.’ He said: ‘You shall be with whom you love’” (*Sahih Muslim*, 4.2032 (2639). S). So if we are really *into* what we are worshipping Allah with, and our heart is filled with love of Allah, Allah shall be with *us*, meaning with every help and good.

And whoever keeps faithfully doing a fair, meaning *beautiful*, deed, Allah promises, “We shall increase for him in it of splendid fair good.” How does Allah increase him? The *ulema* of *tafsir*, or ‘scholars of the meaning of the Quran,’ say that Allah may do so in several ways. One is that if one’s good deed is deficient, such as a prayer in which one is sometimes not thinking of Allah, then Allah will help *perfect* it for one, as when in the fullness of time He makes the heart more and more attached to Him until at last *all* the prayer is performed with Allah at heart. Another is that if the work at the beginning counts for just one good deed, then if one keeps on bettering it faithfully, Allah may *multiply* it into many, as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has described by saying: “If someone decides to perform a good deed and then does it, Allah records it for him as ten good deeds, up to seven hundred times that, or up to many many times that over” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 8.128 (6491). S). Thus good deeds seem to matter to Allah to the degree that Allah matters to the person doing them. Yet another way Allah increases a deed is that if a fellow Muslim follows one’s lead and does the good deed out of following one’s example, one has the reward of it each time it is done by that person, who also has his own reward for doing it. All these three, and others, are of Allah’s increases. The “splendid fair good” which Allah increases one in is expressed in Arabic by the word *husnan*, in the indefinite, which in itself is super emphatic, and actually means, “splendid fair good that imagination cannot even conceive.” On top of this, Allah uses “We” in this verse to emphasize the tremendous *magnitude* of His gifts of “splendid fair good” to whoever regularly does the work sincerely for Him.

To summarize everything, as Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allah once said: “There is no Helper but Allah, no guide but the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace), no travel-provisions but godfearingness (taqwa), and no good works but those always faithfully performed.”

Question of the Month (rendered generically): ‘as-Salam ‘alaykum. I am doing a lot of time. What do I have to look forward to as a *murid* (disciple of a sheikh), as I am unable to visit the sheikh, attend the gatherings, or have the experiences as a murid that other murids do?’

Answer: Wa ‘alaykumu s-Salam wa rahmatu Llah. There are no walls high enough or gates strong enough to keep out Allah’s generosity and *tawfiq* if He wants to show them to a murid or any one else. Of the ulema of *Ihsan* or ‘scholars who know about spiritual change to *excellence*’—which the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) described as ‘to worship Allah as though you see Him’—many have left behind them collections of letters to their students, which shows that they believed their instruction could benefit the murid even if absent, as long as their words reached him intact, in the form of letters.

Too, the greatest obstacle of murids in our times is not lack of gatherings to go to, but rather the tidal wave of *dunya* or ‘this-worldliness’ that blasts their senses at almost every moment: especially through the small screens that people peer into by day and by night. These screens keep any thought of Allah further from minds than any wall could ever do. Now people who make time for Allah, whether they are inside or outside, Allah makes time for them. But the *dunya* has come forth to those on the outside in our times with all its makeup and fake-up, and imprisoned the main share of them, helpless captives in its grasp. People with time to turn to Allah grow fewer and fewer: so those who *can* worship Allah and get closer to Him should thank Him for the time and opportunity, and make the most of it. Allah willing, I will write a bit about the particulars of this in future letters, but can mention here something tremendous by which anyone Allah gives *tawfiq* to can draw nearer to Him and His mercy and favor, with every breath they take.

It is a *dhikr* or ‘remembrance of Allah’ that one can do without disturbing anyone else, because it is silent, and the words are said in the heart, not with the tongue or lips. One simply says in the heart as one breathes in: “La ilaha illa Llah” (No god is there but Allah), and as one breathes out says: “Sayyiduna Muhammadun Rasulu Llahi salla Llahu ‘alayhi wa sallam” (Our liegelord Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace). Imam Qushayri mentions in the chapter of *dhikr* in his famous *Risala* the agreement of the ulema of *Ihsan* that such ‘heart-*dhikr*’ is valid.

So this is a spiritual practice that brings great peace to the heart and great closeness to Allah, when done out of pure worship and love of Him, particularly if done regularly and with devotion, as the Quran mentions above. It is called ‘*Naseem al-Wasl*’ in Arabic, which means ‘The Fair Breeze of Rejoining in Love.’ Anyone who reads this and wishes may practice it and draw nearer to Allah wherever they are.

The path to Allah is the way of the *akhirah* or ‘next world,’ and only there shall we see the full fruits of what we do here and now. But the essence of the way, and of Islam, is love of Allah, love of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), love of the next world, and love of those close to Allah, whom Allah loves. Finally, al-‘Arabi al-Darqawi has said, “Whoever dies while still on his way, closeness (*wilaya*) to Allah will come to him after death, for certain”—by Allah’s generosity. I hope this answers some of your question.

All of which is enough for the moment and till next month, Allah willing; with greetings of peace and felicity to everyone; was-Salamu ‘alaykum wa rahmatu Llahi wa barakatuh.

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[Note: I have been asked to write a monthly letter about Islam, Iman, and Ihsan to believers presently in gated communities, of which this is the first one. The letter will be called *With Allah*, since that is the best thing anyone can be, wherever one lives. Permission is given for each letter to be copied, sent out, shared by anyone with anyone who wishes to read it, or collected, though the text is under my copyright and the words may not be changed, nor several letters be printed together in a book or put up on a website without written permission.]