

EASY ROAD TO PARADISE: GOLDEN DEEDS THAT LEAD TO SUCCESS

by Shaykh Mufti Mohammad Rafi Uthmani (translated by Imtiaz Madni)

This article has been extracted from a booklet in Urdu entitled '*Jannat ka Asan Rasta*' which can be translated as "*Easy Road to Paradise*." The booklet was transcribed from a lecture delivered by the renowned *Islamic* scholar *Shaykh Mufti Mohammad Rafi Uthmani* at a National Gathering of Scholars.

The respected scholar introduced his talk with the following verse from the Qur'an (*Al-Imran, The Family of Imran*) [3:102]:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

What *Allah* says in the first part of this verse is "O believers! Fear *Allah* as He ought to be feared" which means "O believers! Do not approach that which He has forbidden you, and do not delay in fulfilling what He has ordered you to do." Then *Allah* continues: "and die not except in a state of *Islam*." It is clear that death is not within our control. However, what is in our control is our condition at the time of death – that it may be auspicious for us. The way to achieve that is to protect ourselves from every form of sin at all times, and whenever a sin is committed, to hasten towards *Taubah* (repentance) and *Istighfar* (begging forgiveness from *Allah*).

Allah (swt) has kept the doors of repentance open, so that a person keeps committing sins and keeps repenting and *Allah* keeps forgiving, until the time when the angels of death become visible to the person and the throes of death begin, for at that time the door of repentance closes. However, if one is habituated to *Taubah* and *Istighfar*, then even if, *Allah* forbid, death comes to him while he is committing a sin, there will only be that one sin for which he did not have a chance to make *Taubah*. The uncertainty of death is a very important reason why one should always be concerned about staying away from sins.

Today, however, a flood of mischief has engulfed the entire society. In this situation, how can a person save oneself from sins? How can one protect one's eyes, ears, hands, etc. from indulging in forbidden acts? To protect oneself from sins under these circumstances is easier said than done. To overcome this problem, the *Qur'an* has ordered us and so have the *'Ulama* (scholars) and pious elders of *Islam*, to acquire the company of the righteous people and to try to spend as much time as possible with them. This is so that by being in their company, the heart may develop a fondness for good deeds and a fear and distaste for sins, and, consequently, it may become easier to save oneself from sins and do good deeds.

Allah says in the *Qur'an* [*at-Taubah* 9:119]:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

O you who believe! Fear *Allah* and be with the righteous people.

The truth is that once a strong connection with *Allah* is developed, a person cannot commit a sin even if he tries. The heart is filled with such *nur* (light) that one is afraid even when coming close to sin. Thereafter, *Allah* (swt) turns his heart away from sin and creates such circumstances that, even without any conscious intention, he continues to be protected from sin. It is due to *Allah's* immense generosity that *Allah* (swt) saves man from sin.

Four Golden Deeds

The respected scholar mentioned that one day his eminent teacher and spiritual guide *Arif Billah Dr. 'Abdul Hye (rahm)* said to him, "I will show you an easy prescription for rectification of the heart. This prescription is very brief but it is very swift in its effect. It consists of four *a'mal* (good deeds) that are the life of the *Islamic Shari'ah* and *Tariqah*, and

they are so easy to do that you do not have to spend your life, wealth, or time to do them. If a person makes it a habit of doing them, a special connection with *Allah (swt)* is created whose effect one begins to feel in one's life. The heart becomes willing to accept rectification and then gradually a state is reached when even if the person wants to commit sin, he is unable to do so. Those four deeds are:

- 1) *Shukr* (Gratitude to *Allah*),
- 2) *Sabr* (Patience, Perseverance),
- 3) *Istighfar* (Seeking Forgiveness from *Allah*), and
- 4) *Isti'azah* (Seeking *Allah's* Protection).

Shaykh Mufti Rafi Uthmani Saheb then said to the audience, "Today I am giving you the gift that my teacher gave to me during my fourteen years as his student. I hope that you will appreciate its value, because my teacher used to say, "This is my teacher's gift," and his teacher used to say, "This is the gift given by *Allah* and *Allah's Messenger (saw)*." Furthermore my teacher used to tell me very often, "Make it a habit to practice these four deeds: *Shukr, Sabr, Istighfar, and Isti'azah*.""

1. **SHUKR**

The first deed is *Shukr* (Gratitude to *Allah*). Firstly, you need to make it a habit that every day when you get up in the morning and before you sleep at night you glance at yourself and your circumstances and then reflect on the spiritual and material Blessings that *Allah* has bestowed upon you, and give a collective thanks to Him for them. Especially you need to reflect on the wealth of Iman (true faith in *Allah*) and easy circumstances that *Allah* has given you and give your heartfelt thanks to Him for them, and resolve to use those gifts in a proper way. Besides this, whenever a thought crosses your mind about any of the bounties from *Allah* that you enjoy, you should thank Him quietly, in your heart.

In other words, whenever something happens according to what you wished or wanted and you feel happy about it and your heart feels peace, you should quietly say, "*Al-Hamdulillah*" or "*Allahumma Lakal-Hamd wa Lakash-Shukr*."

The Many Occasions of Shukr

Every day from morning to evening, so many things happen according to a person's wishes and desires, for which one can express one's thankfulness to *Allah (swt)*. For example, one opens one's eyes in the morning in a condition of good health and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." He sees all his family members also healthy, and quietly says, "*Al-Hamdulillah*." He goes to the Masjid and is able to join the Jama'at (congregational prayer), and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." He gets his breakfast on time and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." He reaches work on time, and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." Someone who travels by bus and is worried that he may miss the bus, but actually gets it, says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." He climbs on the bus and is able to find a seat, and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." On returning home from work, he finds his wife looking fine and says "*Al-Hamdulillah*." The weather is hot but there is a cool breeze blowing, so he says "*Al-Hamdulillah*."

In summary, if an affair, no matter how small or big, happens according to one's wishes, or one's prayer is accepted by *Allah (swt)*, or if *Allah* enables one to do some good deed, anything that makes the heart feel pleasure and happiness, one should make it a habit to be thankful to *Allah* from one's heart and tongue. This gratitude does not require any time, money or effort.

We have Been Given Unlimited Bounties

In fact, if, *Allah* forbid, some difficulty or problem comes upon us, before trying to get out of it, think about how many bounties *Allah* (swt) has surrounded us with, without our deserving them. This gives strength to our heart and allows us to face such situations. *Insha-Allah* by thinking in this manner, we will attain peace of mind even if the problem may persist. We can say without exaggeration that at every moment *Allah* (swt) is showering countless bounties upon us, and in this way, we will have at least thanked *Allah* (swt) for some of those bounties. By doing this consistently, a person makes it a habit to thank *Allah*, so that on seeing anything that pleases him, he keeps on thanking *Allah* in his heart. And he does this act in secret so no one knows about it. Thus, a very elevated worship of *Allah* (swt) is carried out in which there is no *riya* (showing off), hence his rank with *Allah* is raised beyond our imagination. In summary, a person should mould himself so that in whatever condition he may be, he keeps thanking *Allah* (swt). Initially this may seem to be difficult, but with continuous practice and an awareness of *Allah's* bounties under most circumstances, it will, *Insha-Allah*, become a habit.

Gratitude Leads to Increase in Bounties and Protection from Punishment

Allah (swt) says in the *Quran* [An-Nisa 4:147]

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَعَآمَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا

Why should Allah punish you if you are grateful to Him and believe in Him. And Allah is Ever All Appreciative (of good), All-Knowing. ...

From this we learn that those who believe in *Allah* and are always grateful to *Him* are protected from *Allah's* punishment.

Allah (swt) also says [Ibrahim 14:7]

لَإِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

If ye are grateful, I will increase the (bounties) on you;

From this we learn that for whichever bounty we keep thanking *Allah*, that bounty will keep increasing and thus our worldly life will become easy. If you find this hard to believe then try it yourself. Whoever does this will clearly feel a pleasant change taking place in his life.

Shukr is a Worship that is Loved by Allah

We can understand how beloved this worship is to *Allah* (swt) from the following facts. The greatest and most beloved among all of *Allah's* revealed Books is the noble *Qur'an*, and *Allah* (swt) begins this Book with *Surah Al-Fatihah*, and the very first word with which *Surah Fatihah* begins is

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

All Praise and Thanks be to Allah

Surah Al-Fatihah contains the summary of the entire *Qur'an*, and its very first word is

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

There has to be a reason why *Allah* (swt) gives so much importance to praise and thanks or gratitude to *Him* in the *Qur'an*. How much does *Allah* like this *Surah*? This can be gauged from the fact that it is ordered to recite this *Surah* not only in every *Salah* (prayer) but in every *Raka'* (cycle) of prayer. Furthermore, *Allah* (swt) becomes pleased when His servant praises *Him*.

This Worship will also Continue in Paradise

There will be no worship in Paradise. *Salah, Sawm, Zakah, and Hajj* will all cease. That will be a place for luxury, enjoyment, peace, and happiness. However, one form of worship, i.e., *Shukr* or thankfulness, will continue there as well. It comes in a *Hadith* that *Hamd* (Praise and thankfulness) will constantly flow from the mouths of the people of Paradise without any effort, just as people breathe air in this world without any conscious intention or effort.

Therefore, if we make it a habit in this world to thank *Allah (swt)* for every big or small bounty, *Allah (swt)* will save us from His punishment and will increase His bounties on us. Our hearts will develop love for *Allah (swt)*, our connection with *Allah* will become strong, we will come closer to *Allah*, and a pleasant change will take place in our life. We will feel the pleasure from contentment and our life will be full of peace and safety.

A Woodcutter's Story

Sulaiman (as) had a Throne that no King ever possessed. *Jinns* carried it in the air, birds flew overhead to provide shade, and many other creatures traveled along with it. Once *Sulaiman (as)*'s throne was flying in the air with all its pomp and splendor, when a woodcutter in the jungle happened to see it and spontaneously exclaimed, "*Subhan-Allah* (Glory be to *Allah*). How great is the honor and grandeur of the family of *Dawud (as)*." The wind immediately carried his voice to *Sulaiman (as)*. He ordered that the Throne be brought down and said, "Take me to the woodcutter." The woodcutter started trembling with fear, wondering what crime he may have committed. *Sulaiman (as)* asked him, "What did you say?" The poor woodcutter was so terrified that he could not remember. After thinking for a while, he recalled and replied, "I only said "*Subhan-Allah*. How great is the honor of the family of *Dawud (as)*"" *Sulaiman (as)* said, "You saw the army of *Sulaiman* and felt desirous, but you do not realize that thousands of such armies have no value compared to the word *Subhan-Allah*. You have no idea how high a station you have obtained by saying *Subhan-Allah* just once."

Shukr Leads to Sabr and Taqwa

Being grateful to or thanking *Allah* is such a wealth that brings with it countless blessings of happiness, tranquility, ease, and other bounties. Furthermore, when man will always be thankful, the quality of *Sabr* will develop in him so that he will not complain during times of difficulty. He will also feel shy to commit sin (he will gain *Taqwa*), because he will question himself as to how he can disobey the One who he has been expressing his thanks and gratitude to from morning to evening. Therefore, this is also a blessing from the act of *Shukr* that a thankful person commits very few sins. He also remains free from the diseases of envy, greed, lust, extravagance, miserliness, etc.

Shukr Drives Away Arrogance

Another great benefit of being thankful to *Allah (swt)* is that the person remains protected from arrogance. This is because whatever bounties he continues to receive, he does not take credit for them but considers them as gifts from *Allah (swt)*, and he keeps acknowledging this. So when he keeps connecting whatever he has to *Allah (swt)* and not to his own abilities, then on what grounds could he become arrogant? Arrogance is a major sin and it is so dangerous that *Allah's Messenger (saw)* said, "*La yadkhulil Jannata man kana fi qalbihī mithqala zarratim-min kibr.*" This can be translated as "A person who has the smallest particle of arrogance in his heart will not enter Paradise." [*Muslim, narrated by 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud*]

2. SABR

The second deed is *Sabr* (patience, forbearance). *Sabr* is to stop oneself from committing sin or doing something impermissible when something happens against one's wishes. In our daily life, many things happen the way we want. Similarly, many things happen that we do not like. For example, I reach the bus stop and find the bus has already left. So, whether the incident that happens against our wishes is big or small, under all circumstances, we need to have *Allah (swt)* in our minds and keep ourselves under control. This is what *Sabr* is, and it is a very important 'amal of the heart. In this *Allah (swt)* tests the strength of His servant's *Iman*. In our daily life, so many things keep happening that are unpleasant and that are hard on our *nafs*. Sometimes we hear the news of our loved one being sick, in trouble or even dead. Sometimes we may lose our hard-earned money, or we may lose our job or do not get increment or promotion. Each of these things disturbs us mentally, we feel bad, we feel sorry or sad, but these things are continuously testing our patience. As none of these things is under our control, we can never force the results to be what we want. Therefore, we must have a firm belief that these situations come from *Allah (swt)*. Such belief carries much wisdom and many mercies. On such occasions, *Allah (swt)* has, by His grace and generosity, given us a very beneficial and effective treatment for our peace of mind and heart. *Allah (swt)* instructs us in the Qur'an to say **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return [Al-Baqarah 2:156]

This gives us peace of mind and develops in our nature the ability to bear hardships. So, the easiest way to practice patience when something happens against one's wishes, whether it is a major shocking sad news or just a minor discomfort, is to say **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**. This also does not require any time, money or effort. In his talk the respected scholar gave an example of the Indian Subcontinent where electricity is interrupted frequently due to load shedding and said that whenever the power goes off, we should say **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un** and when it returns, we should say "Al-Hamdulillah." It has been proved from *the Ahadith* that even on remembering some event from the past that brought sadness or some discomfort if we recite **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**, we will gain the same reward for *Sabr* as we gained at the time of its original occurrence.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un is not only Associated with Death

A prevalent perception in our society is that the words **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un** are only recited at the time of someone's death. However, this perception is not correct. There is one *Hadith* where the Prophet ﷺ is quoted to have said "**Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**" when the lamp went off at night. *Ayesha Siddiqah (radh)* asked him, "O Messenger of Allah. Is this also a calamity?" *Allah's Messenger* ﷺ replied, "Yes. Whatever hurts or causes difficulty to a *Muslim* is a calamity and on bearing it patiently, it carries *Allah (swt)*'s promise of reward." In another *Hadith* *Allah's Messenger* ﷺ said, "**Never is a believer stricken with a discomfort, an illness, an anxiety, a grief or mental worry or even the pricking of a thorn but Allah will expiate his sins on account of his patience.**" [Bukhari and Muslim] In yet another *Hadith* *Allah's Messenger* ﷺ says, "How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity comes to him, he expresses gratitude to *Allah* and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him." [Muslim]

And *Allah (swt)* loves His servant who is patient and grateful.

Mulla Nasruddeen

Mulla Nasruddeen was a philosopher and wise man, widely remembered for his funny and witty stories and anecdotes. There is an incident about *Mulla Nasruddeen*. It is related about him that he was very good looking and his wife was just the opposite. Once he said to his wife, "Dear wife. You and I will both go to Paradise". She asked him, "Why is that?" The *Mulla* replied, "Because when you see me you thank *Allah* for giving you such a handsome husband, and when I see you, I exercise patience. And the patient and the grateful will both go to Paradise."

Allah's Mercy Descends on the Sabir

The lesson is that we should be patient in the face of unpleasant circumstances, whether big or small, and recite **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**, because with patience we are blessed with *Allah's* proximity. As *Allah* says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ
Verily Allah is with those who patiently persevere. [Al-Baqarah 2:153]

Who can cause any harm to the one who has gained *Allah's* closeness? And about those who, when facing calamities and difficulties and unpleasant circumstances, say **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**, *Allah* says:

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

They are those on whom (descend) blessings from Allah, and Special Mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance. [Al-Baqarah 2:157]

To summarize, at the time of any difficulty, if one recites the words **Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un**, one will actually feel that *Allah's* special mercies are with him. This act creates in the person the quality of perseverance and the dignity to bear and endure hardship, develops in him the strength to face calamities, and attracts divine help so that he remains pleased with *Allah's* decisions about himself, which is a very high position in one's life. The one who practices patience (*Sabr*) does not develop feelings of anger or of revenge for personal reasons, and if these feelings do develop, they disappear quickly, so that he remains protected from acting on those feelings.

By the way, when *Allah's* servant makes it a habit of doing the four golden deeds mentioned earlier, then in a few days he will begin to feel that someone has placed a hand of mercy on his heart and is supporting or backing him so that he does not feel alone anymore and his life starts to become enjoyable.

3. ISTIGHFAR

The third deed is *Istighfar* (seeking forgiveness from *Allah*), and this too does not require us to spend of our life, wealth, or time. Whenever a person happens to commit a small or big sin, he should immediately feel remorseful about it and say *Astaghfirullah*, which means: "O *Allah*. I seek Your forgiveness."

The Challenge of Shaytan

When *Adam (as)* was being sent to this world, even before he could arrive here, *Shaytan* came with this challenge: "O *Allah*! I will lead your servants astray and take them to Hell (because man is my enemy, because of whom I lost my high rank)." *Adam (as)* said, "O *Allah*! You have given my enemy *Shaytan* so much power that neither I nor my children possess. He can acquire different forms and appearances and he can come upon us in ways that we cannot see him but he can see us. He is a *jinn* and we are human beings, and our characteristics are different. He will for sure push us to hell".

The Weapon Given by Allah

Allah (swt) said, "O Adam! There is no doubt that We have given him many powers. However, We are giving you one weapon to counter his many powers. As long as you will keep on using this weapon, none of *Shaytan's* attacks will succeed. The name of that weapon is "*Istighfar*". Whenever you happen to commit a sin, say "*Astaghfirullah*" from the depth of your heart.

Sins are Forgiven through Istighfar

Allah (swt) does not send punishment on those people who do *Istighfar* (seek Allah's forgiveness). As Allah says in the Noble Qur'an

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

And Allah would not punish them while they would seek His Forgiveness. [Al-Anfal 8:33]

Allah (swt) has placed in our hearts the urge to commit sins and He has put pleasures in sin. Hence, it is not easy to stay away from sins as a person automatically gravitates towards them. That is why Allah, in His all-encompassing Mercy, has opened such wide doors of His forgiveness, that if we happen to commit a sin, we should just feel remorseful and sincerely repent and seek Allah's Forgiveness, and the sin will be forgiven. *Abdullah Bin Mas'ud (radh)* narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: **At-ta-ibu minaz-zambi kamal-la zamba lahu.** Translation: "The person who repents of his sin is like a person who did not commit any sin." [Ibn Majah]

Repent after every Sin

If we commit a sin once, we should repent and seek forgiveness and Allah will forgive the sin. If we commit the same sin again, we should repent again, and Allah (swt) will forgive the sin again. So much so that if we commit the same sin seventy times and every time we repent and seek forgiveness, then each time that sin will be forgiven. This is because the doors of repentance are open. So even if the repentance is broken a thousand times, mend it each time with repentance (*Taubah*), and the One who is most merciful and most generous will forgive even a thousand times. If a person dies in a state where he sins, then repents, then breaks his repentance by sinning again, but then repents again, and this process continues, then he is successful, because he followed each sin with repentance, which caused each sin to be forgiven. This is the reality of repentance, that there should be remorse after committing the sin, and a firm resolve not to commit the sin again. Every sin is forgiven by repentance, except if we have violated other people's rights, for they are not forgiven only through repentance, until the other person forgives us or his rights are restored once again.

The Benefits of Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allah)

There are many benefits of *Istighfar*. *Istighfar* is an act of worship (*'Ibadah*). It is also a means for forgiveness of sins and of gaining closeness to one's Lord. When I will repeatedly seek Allah's forgiveness then gradually, I will begin to feel shy while committing sins, I will gain an awareness of the vastness of Allah's mercy through which He continues to provide me with His bounties while I am committing so many sins. Someone who, in his heart, is always aware of his own mistakes and is remorseful over his sins, will never become arrogant or boastful, nor will he ever develop pride over his piety, because he will remember his sins more than his acts of worship, no matter how many they may be.

Istighfar is such a deed that has no set time for it and we need it all the time because we do not know how many sins we keep on committing either knowingly or unknowingly. Some sins are such that we are not even aware of having done them, and there are others that we do not even consider as sins. Under all of these conditions, whenever we become aware

that a sin might have been committed, we should immediately turn towards *Allah*, our heart filled with remorse, and say with our tongue "*Astaghfirullah*" meaning "O *Allah*! I am very sorry. Please forgive me and please also protect me from this sin in the future."

Seeking *Allah's* forgiveness is such a deed by which the doors of *Allah's* unlimited and complete mercy open for His servant. Besides feeling remorse in his heart, he also becomes aware of his conviction (*Aqidah*), his faith (*Iman*) is protected, and he is blessed with the wealth of piety (*Taqwa*). Such a person does not intentionally commit any sin or at the most he commits very few of them, and such a person also does not cause harm to *Allah's* creation. *Allah (swt)* has, through His *Fadl* (grace) and *Karam* (mercy), bestowed a great favor upon His sinful servants by providing them with *Taubah* (repentance) and *Istighfar* as a means for them to attain success in this world (*duniya*) and salvation in the Hereafter (*Akhirah*). *Falillahil-Hamdu wash-Shukr. So for Allah is the praise and the thanks.*

Pious elders have advised that we should try, as far as we can recall, to **remember and reflect on all our sins committed in the past, whether major or minor, and then with full sincerity and with complete remorse and humility, repent (make *Taubah*) and seek *Allah's* forgiveness (make *Istighfar*)** for them. This should be enough. *Insha-Allah*, all our sins will be forgiven. Thereafter, we should not make it a habit to repeatedly remember them and become disturbed. Rather, if ever a sin is unconsciously recalled, we should quietly seek *Allah's* forgiveness for it once. Remember, however, that it is obligatory on us to fulfill others' rights, under all circumstances.

4. ISTI'AZAH

The fourth deed is *Isti'azah*. *Isti'azah* means to seek protection. Before we begin to recite the Qur'an we recite

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

which means "I seek *Allah's* protection against the accursed and rejected *Shaytan*." This action of ours is also *Isti'azah* because what we are essentially saying is, "O *Allah*! Take us within your protection against the harm from *Shaytan*." We have to recite "*A'uzubillah*" before reciting the Qur'an because its order is given in the Qur'an itself [*An-Nahl* 16:98]:

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

When you read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Shaytan the rejected one.

Recite "A'uzubillah" (I seek Allah's Protection) During Every Occasion of Danger

This worldly life is filled with all kinds of events and happenings, and we always face *Shaytan* and our inner desires. Hence, we should continue to seek the Protection of *Allah (swt)* all the time. There are some dangers associated with monetary dealings and relationships with people, and we may not be able to find any solution to avoid those dangers, nor may the matters be within our control. On such occasions, seeking the protection of *Allah (swt)* naturally provides great strength to our hearts. Therefore, we must make it a habit to say "*A'uzubillah*" from the depth of our hearts whenever we face any such difficulty. From morning to night, man is surrounded by different kinds of whispers from *Shaytan* and worries about things to come. "I do not know what may happen tomorrow. What if I lose my job, or lose my respect, or my possessions get stolen, or an enemy attacks me, or I lose money in my trade or business, or I get sick with such and such disease, or I die, or get in an accident, and so on." No one is free from such possible dangers. The way to save oneself from all dangers of this world and the Hereafter is this

great worship called *Isti'azah* (seeking *Allah's* protection). Whenever the heart receives any whisper from *Shaytan* or a worry or concern about something that might happen, quietly say "*A'uzubillah*" which means "O *Allah!* I seek Your protection". If you cannot remember the *Arabic* word, you can convey this supplication to *Allah* in your own language. Note that the more wealthy a person is, and the higher a position he holds, the more worries and dangers he has, and the one who possesses neither wealth nor fame nor position of any significance, also has less worries and dangers.

The Helplessness of a Thief

A thief entered a house. He searched all over but could not find anything to steal. This was because there was nothing there to steal, neither utensils nor clothes, nor any furniture. After searching for some time, he noticed a man sleeping very peacefully in the verandah. The thief thought to himself that he must take something from this house otherwise it may bring bad luck. When he looked carefully, he saw a pile of flour close to the sleeping man. The thief spread his sheet on the floor in order to transfer the flour onto it. However, just as he was about to pick up the flour, the sleeping man turned over onto the thief's sheet. Now instead of taking something, the thief was actually losing his own belonging, because the man was sound asleep. It was a cold wintry night, and the thief sat down to wait for the sleeping man to turn over to the other side so that he could pick up his sheet, but the man showed no signs of moving. The poor thief was shivering from waiting so long in the cold and he was just beginning to think that he did not care any more about the flour, he just wanted to take his sheet with him, when he heard the *Adhans* (calls for prayer) for the *Fajr* (dawn) prayer. The thief decided it was time to leave, and as he was stepping out of the door, he heard a voice from behind him saying, "Close the door on your way out." The thief was so frustrated that he replied, "Let it stay open. Someone else may come in and provide another sheet to cover you."

Thus, nobody is free from worries and danger. The more important a person is, the more are his worries and dangers, and the less important a person is, the more peace and tranquility he enjoys. During every situation of worry or danger, one should say "*A'uzubillah*" which means "O *Allah!* I seek Your Protection." One may have fear of failure in achieving one's goal, or one may be afraid of losing one's life or wealth due to the evil from an enemy or envier. One may also have the fear of being involved in an open or secret sin due to mischief from one's inner desires and *Shaytan* or of being punished in the Hereafter, or maybe some unclean desire enters the heart. In all cases one should immediately recite "*A'uzubillah*" or recite the following *Du'a* (supplication): "**Allahumma la malja-a wa la manja-a minka illa ilaik**" which means: "O *Allah!* There is neither refuge nor any safety from You except in You." In other words, "Difficulties are also sent by You, and only You can provide us safety from those difficulties."

Cling to the Archer

A wise man once asked the people: "There is a tremendous archer who never misses his target. The sky is his bow, and all the calamities and sorrows of this world are his arrows. What is the way to save yourself from him?" The people replied, "It is impossible to be safe from such an archer." The wise man then said, "There is only one way: Cling to this archer." So brothers! Seek the protection and refuge of *Allah (swt)*. Whenever you feel any fear or anxiety in your heart, immediately say "O *Allah* I seek your refuge and your protection." He is such a Giver that He never refuses anyone who sincerely begs from Him. Just imagine this scenario: It is a dark night and the rain is pouring down heavily. Some robbers are chasing a lone child, who is running away from them and screaming, "Save me! Give me shelter!" Would you not give refuge to such a helpless child? It is obvious that you would give him shelter even if you lived in a hut. *Allah (swt)* is the Lord of all and He is the most

merciful of those who show mercy. When His servants who are overwhelmed by difficulties seek His protection, He surely opens for them the doors of refuge and protection.

Isti'azah (seeking *Allah's* protection) is a deed by which *Allah's* servant experiences *Allah's* majesty, the greatness of His *Rububiyah* (Lordship), and His all-encompassing beneficence, and he feels in his heart the protection and peace from *Allah (swt)*. He is also blessed with the wealth of *Tawakkul* (complete trust and reliance on *Allah*) and *Tafwid* (being content with *Allah's* decisions about him). Such people will never harbor any desire to harm others. So, let us make it a habit that whenever we feel danger, we say a heartfelt "A'uzubillah". When we will genuinely seek *Allah's* protection, we will be able to witness for ourselves *Allah's* mercy opening strange and unexpected ways for our protection from dangers as they advance towards us.

Make it a Habit to Practice these Four A'mal

So, in summary, four good deeds were discussed: *Shukr*, *Sabr*, *Istighfar*, and *Isti'azah*. Be constant in practicing all four of them. Make it a habit. Then *Insha-Allah* step-by-step one's entire life will gradually become patterned according to *Deen (Islam)*. Both *Deen* and *duniya* (worldly life) will remain protected and one will develop hatred for sins and fondness for good deeds. One will continue to develop more and more closeness to *Allah*, and will begin to feel a special connection with Him.

Three Periods of Time are Protected

At any time in man's life, there are three periods: past, present, and future. Through *Istighfar*, the past is protected. Through *Shukr* and *Sabr*, the present is protected, and through *Isti'azah* the future will be protected. When all three periods are protected, the entire life is protected. Whoever makes it a habit to perform these four good deeds, *Insha-Allah* at every moment he will experience *Allah's* help and beneficence.

Convey this Gift to Others

In concluding his talk, the respected scholar said, "I have a request from you all. What I presented in front of you today is a priceless gift given to me by my esteemed teacher and spiritual guide. It is extremely easy to do and very effective. Please convey this gift to your family and your acquaintances. *Insha-Allah* by sticking to it you will be protected from so many uncountable sins, accidents and calamities. And you can do one more thing – please send thawab (reward for good deeds) to the soul of my teacher and spiritual guide 'Arif Billah Dr. 'Abdul Hayy 'Arifi (rahm) who gave us this great gift. May *Allah (swt)* enable us to be constant in doing these four *a'mal* (good deeds). *Ameen*.

Note:

swt = Subhanahu wa Ta'ala
saw = Sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam
as = 'Alaihis-Salam
radh = Radhi-Allahu 'anhu
radh= Radhi-Allahu 'anha

The articles, booklets and *Khutbahs* are published to enhance your knowledge of Islam. The references of Quran and *Hadith* are the approximate translation of the Arabic text. The editors have not verified the accuracy of the the English translation. The scholarly reader is encouraged to refer to the original Arabic script if there is any doubt.