

The Gardens of Virtue

Prof. Faissal Saud Alhalabi



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Dedication

To my dear brother and great mentor Dr, Khaled, may Allah care for, and cause benefit to come from him. I am at a loss as how to dedicate the “Gardens of Virtue” to you, being one of its innovative cultivators. How many times had you sowed its most gorgeous seeds and nurtured them properly, then reaped from it the most ripe and delicious fruits, wandering the earth, spreading in its extremities the fragrance of its flowers and the best of its crop bearing a kind soul, full of love, hope, and optimism. Congratulations, oh cavalier of virtue! May it bring you, your family, and offspring happiness amongst your nation and home-land, in this Worldly life and the end life.

Your brother and student

Faissal

In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Gardens of Virtue

Introduction

Oh Lord! With what thanks may I attain your praise? Oh Lord! With what gratitude do I mention your grace? Oh Lord! With which of your names do I ask your bounty? Oh Lord! With what of your attributes do I plead your blessings? All praise is due to you. All thanks is rightfully yours, to you is all grace and grace but returns unto you. You are peace and peace comes from you. Blessed be you oh One of Glory and Grace.

Oh Initiator of Innovative Creation and Guarantor

The Means for all, the clouds of your Grace deliver

Oh Fulfiller of generous dutifulness and Extender of beautiful concealment

Encompassing is your Grace and longer

Oh Knowledgeable of hidden secrets and Loyal

Accomplisher of promises, Judgment of your reign is just

Grand are your attributes oh Great One

Prodigious to account for due praise by utterer

Sins by your Grace are forgiven

And repentance of sinners by your tolerance endured.

I bear witness that there is no god save Allah alone with no associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his messenger, the trustworthy guide, bringer of good tidings and warning, shining beacon, best of creatures, most prudent advisor, most gentle with his nation, merciful with his beloved, Allah's prayers and peace be upon him and his family and companions all together.

Oh honorable reader, traveler, pauper, lost, struck by thirst, bent by hunger, exhausted by the journey.

Travelers: no matter how long the life. Paupers: no matter how grand the wealth. Lost: astray from light, in darkness. Thirsty by wrongdoing cannot quench. Bent by the hunger of sin, cannot fill. Exhausted by disorientation, cannot find guidance.

Yet a godly light has captured their minds, awakened them from their oblivion, and brought them good tidings post bewilderment. “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a lamp, the lamp is in glass, the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east (i.e. neither it gets sun-rays only in the morning) nor of the west (i.e. nor it gets sun-rays only in the afternoon, but it is exposed to the sun all day long), whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though no fire touched it. Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything”¹

Those who have felt the membrane² shatter from their hearts, and that success is near. Their souls rejuvenated, their will resolved. In the distance their sight caught by a cohesive correlation of greens, their hearing caressed by trickling water throwing its self onto the waterways of vegetation. So they hasted, and raced and when they approached it, they were mesmerized by its trees, and astonished by its fruits, and enchanted by its streams. So what great gardens are these? What marvelous oasis is this? They are the gardens of virtue and the oasis of faith, plentiful shade, sweet water, pleasant breezes, and easy picking. Labor in it is joyful, sincerity illuminant, and honesty is with happiness. No sorrow befalls who enters, no regret by who works in it. These are gardens of true happiness, initiated by Allah for those who love him, created by Allah for those who desire bliss, established by Allah for those who want salvation in the low life and the end.

¹ Quran (Al Nour : 35) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

² Referring to “Ran” a membrane described by Allah and his Prophet which accumulates upon the heart as a result of wrong doing and obstructs faith from affecting the heart and shields.

Oh brother in faith, perhaps you are longing to shelter in the shade of one of its vines, to smell its fragrance and benefit from its virtue, to relieve your soul from some of its burdens. Then join me for a round of faith that I may spend some jubilant time of belief with you in the shade of some of these succulent gardens. Not all of them! For there are too many, and its shades extend very far. But I am sure that once you tests its seeds, and follow up with irrigation, and if your Lord wished you to gain happiness from it, you will not leave it until you reap its fruits, and be jubilant in its rays, in its beginnings and its ends. So let us journey to these gardens.

The First Garden

Concealment of Muslims' Shortcomings

Concealment, dear brother, is two types, physical, and figurative.

As for the figurative type, you may find a Muslim who had committed a sin, or engaged in wrong doing. In such a case you do not expose him (or her), rather you advise him to cease in a soft manner filled with compassion and pity. You cover his exposure and do not publicize it and do not disrobe whom Allah has concealed.

Maaez Al Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him), had confessed with his own tongue, in the presence of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), of falling in the grave sin of adultery. Yet the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), tried to entice him to conceal his sin and to repent privately between him and his Lord and told him: “Woe unto you! Return in repentance to your Lord and make penance with him.”³ Maaez would shortly return and proclaim to the Prophet: “Cleanse me!” And the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) would repeat what he had told him before, until this reoccurred thrice. Then, when the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was certain that the man had fallen in this grave sin, and was insistent that he be cleansed from its filth, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) commanded the companions to perform the penance punishment for transgression of the boundary. They went and commenced to cast him with stones. But when he was struck by the stones, he fled from their intensity, but they pursued him and stoned him to death. And in a narration by Abu

³ Narrated by Muslim.

Dawood: when the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) learned of his flight, he told them:” would you not have left him that he might have repented and Allah may have accepted his repentance?” Then he said about him:” He is now in the streams of paradise submerging in them.”

Astonishing!! Those who sit in waiting for any grave sin to be committed or any wrong doing to happen, not to report to the properly ascribed entities so that they may prohibit it in lawful ways, but to broadcast amongst the masses, and spread it on the internet and what have you of methods. It is the ecstasy of spreading news that has blinded and disfigured without proper verification of information and confirmation with the virtue of concealment. How far are those from the foundations of lawful advice? Where do they stand from what Allah said:” Verily, those who like that (the crime of) illegal sexual intercourse should be propagated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not.”⁴

Let those fear their own exposure if they do not abandon the pursuit of the faults of others. The father of Barzah Al Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “The Prophet of Allah (peace and prayers be upon him) called until he was heard by the Awatequ⁵ and said:” Oh you who have embraced faith with your tongue, and belief has not entered into your heart. Do not back bite the Muslims and do not pursue their faults. For he who pursues the faults of his brother, Allah will pursue his faults until he exposes him even in his own home.” *Narrated by Ahmad and is correct due to other (similar in meaning). Its narration line is good.*

⁴ Quran (Al Nour : 18) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

⁵ The young girls who rarely leave the home.

As for physical concealment, it is for you to be kind to someone who has been disrobed by clothing him and concealing him from the sight of the people. The story of Maaez Al Aslami (may Allah be pleased with him) joined both types of concealments. For it is reported in the narration of Abu Dawood that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) enticed a man called Hazzal to conceal Maaez. He said to him:” If you had cloaked him with your robe, it would have been good for you.” *Narrated by Abu Dawood.*

So contemplate oh you whom Allah cares for, how intent the Prophet (prayer and peace be upon him) was on concealment of the Muslims’ faults physically and figuratively, alive or dead.

Listen, oh you who are successful, to a conversation between two of the early predecessors of our nation as they reminisce the guidance of the selected one (prayers and peace be upon him) regarding concealment of the Muslims. For here is Abdullah Al Hawazuni saying:” I met Billal, the Prophet’s (peace and prayers be upon him) caller to prayer in Aleppo. I said Oh Billal, tell me of the Prophet’s (peace and prayers be upon him) spending? He said:” He didn’t do any of it since he allocated that task to me from the time Allah sent him, till the day he passed. When a man would come to him having embraced Islam, and he would see him unclothed, he would command me and I would go and borrow, then purchase a cloak and cover him with it and I would feed him. Until one day, I was stopped by one of the disbelievers who said: Billal! I am one of plenty! So don’t borrow from anyone other than me. And so I did. Then one day, I had performed my ablution, and was preparing to call for prayer, and the disbeliever approached me with a gang of merchants. He said: Abyssinian! I said: At his service! He looked at me angrily and spoke to me rudely. He said to me: Are you aware how far it is between now and the end of the month? I said: It is near. He

said: between you and the month's end are four. Then, for what you owe, I will return you to herding sheep as you did before⁶. So I felt in myself as one would feel (in this situation) until I prayed the prayer of darkness, and the messenger of Allah returned to his folk, I requested an audience, and he granted me. I said: Oh messenger of Allah, by my father and mother do I value thee, the disbeliever I used to borrow from said such and such to me. And you have nothing to pay on my behalf nor do I, and he is about to expose me. So give me permission to flee to some of these neighborhoods that have embraced Islam, until Allah provides for his Prophet what he can pay with on my behalf. Then I went to my house and placed my sword, shield, pouch, and shoes near my head until the first column of dawn split, I wanted to journey, when a man approached saying: Oh Billal, answer the call of the messenger of Allah. So I went till I came to him and I found four camels sitting with their loads full. I sought an audience, and the messenger of Allah said to me:” Rejoice, for Allah has provided for your compensation.” Then he said:” Did you not see the four sitting camels?” I said: Yes.” He said:” For you are their necks and what they bear. Verily, they bear clothing and food gifted to me by the great of Faddak⁷. Take them and pay your debt....(also in the narration that when Billal paid off the debt he informed the messenger of Allah, prayers and peace be upon him, who greatened and praised Allah for fear that death may catch up to him whilst he still possessed (such riches)” *Narrated by Abu Dawood and authenticated by Al Albani.*

Concealment is a wonderful virtue which grand souls possess. The soles which cleanse themselves from speaking of peoples honor in their

⁶ Hinting that he will return Billal (may Allah be pleased with him) into slavery due to the debt.

⁷ An oasis near Khaybar in the Arabian Peninsula.

gatherings, and lift their pens from underlining their mistakes, and purify their hearing from listening of their exposures. Woe the beauty of concealment, for it reminds us of the grace of Allah who had clothed us after being born bare. “O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover yourselves (screen your private parts, etc.) and as an adornment, and the raiment of righteousness, that is better. Such are among the *Ayat* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, that they may remember.”⁸ And He was gracious with us and did not expose our shortcomings and sins before his creation when he had seen us commit them. Is there a greater concealment than that of Allah concealing you on the day when all is exposed and sin is revealed? For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Allah brings close the believer until engulfment and conceals him and says: Do you know this sin? Do you know this sin? He says: Yes Lord. Until he confesses all his sins and thinks that he will perish. He says: I had concealed them in the low life and today I forgive them. And he is given his book of good deeds. But the deniers and hypocrites, witnesses say: Those are the ones who lied to their Lord. Damned are the transgressors.” *Narrated by Al Bukhari.*

Irrigate, oh beloved one, the garden of concealment with the waters of sincerity, to reap its sweet fruits. For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:” He who conceals upon a Muslim, Allah will conceal upon him in the low and last life.” *Narrated by Muslim.*

O Lord, conceal upon us with your beautiful concealment and have mercy upon us oh Most Merciful Most Tolerant.

⁸ Quran (Al A'raf: 26) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

The Second Garden

Fulfillment of Muslims' Needs

Dear brother let me prelude to talking about this garden with a story narrated to me by an honorable sheikh⁹. This youth who had reached eighteen years of age headed in his car, unaccompanied, from Al Ahssa to the city of Dammam. He was afflicted with acute asthma, and as soon as he arrived at his relatives there, he felt a rumbling in his chest which is a sign, known to those with asthma, of serious on coming complications which require swift and wise actions and attentiveness to the patient and care of his health.

And because the youth was aware that he might be susceptible to fainting or falling, and was fearful of falling in the presence of his hosts, causing him embarrassment and anxiety, so he decided to return to Al Ahssa immediately. Those around him sensed his difficulty in breathing and discomfort in the chest and were determined that he not return in this condition, and insisted upon him in many manners but he rejected all of that. He got in his vehicle venturing home. The minutes were lapsing slowly and heavily, each one captivating a part of his soul. He looks around not to find a sympathetic father to save him, or a mother to shade him with her mercy, nor a brother to aid him. As he looks ahead, all he sees is the extension of the road which he no longer has the strength to carry on. Midway, his ailment strengthened, he lost balance, and his vision blurred, and he felt that everything was about to end. He parked his car under a nearby bridge. He no longer had the strength to

⁹ He is my friend the honorable sheikh Ibraheem son of Salleh El Tennim, inviter to Allah and lecturer in the College of Shareya of Al Ahssaa. Sheikh could mean elder or someone specializing in religion or both.

seek the help of passerby on this road. He lost hope in all things, and turned to Allah the most High to surrender the trust of his soul. Alone, a solo traveler, he couldn't do anything except exiting his vehicle without consciousness and throw himself upon its forepart, perhaps Allah the Most High, will have mercy on his frailness, and look upon his estrangement with gentleness. Here, and in this condition, he passed out and became unconscious of what was around him. All that he knew was that he was close to leaving life and parting with its glamour. But the mercy of Allah was watching over him. And how would it not whilst He is the Most Merciful, Most Forgiving, the Most Tolerant, Most Affectionate? Glory be to Him.

When the night of hardship falls, Dark the paths of salvation, balked
is hope

Despair looms in the face of salvation, for nor causality nor
proximity in scope

From His Gentleness comes the opening unexpected whilst you
were oblivion swope

A traveler passes by, to see the frail young man laying on his car, unconscious. He sees no evidence of an accident or any other direct reason for this situation. He didn't leave room for himself to ask many questions. He was decisive in aiding him. As soon as he held him by the hands he sensed a faint motion from the hand of the lad pointing to his mouth and nose signaling that he was out of life giving breath. The good doer was pleased to know he lives, and felt that Allah had sent him to save him with his hands. He moved quickly to take him to a clever

doctor who specializes in the chest and respiratory system in a near town. Once they arrived, the doctor fulfilled the duties placed upon him in the best of manners, and the good doer standing at his head, listening to that choppy breath and rumbling chest. He forgot all about his journey on which he had embarked, and left behind all worldly things and focused only on saving a soul which was about to depart its body. To return it by the will of Allah, not for previous acquaintance, nor for future favor, but for the love of good doing in this opportunity that Allah bestowed upon him. He continued to watch over you young man, and cover him with his care, laboring his tongue with prayer for him that Allah may grace him with recovery and bring him back to life. Step by step until he heard the breaths receding, and the gravity of the situation decreasing, the extremities moving, the light of life shining in the eyes. The good doer looks to the doctor seeking hope in his eyes, the smile of salvation on his mouth. Moments pass and the mercy of your Lord is near the good doers. Life started to move through the youth, and the doctors' face began showing optimism, speaking of life anew. Here the good doer asked the ailed boy for his family's telephone number, and disappeared without anyone verifying his identity, only to successfully complete his deed by calling the boy's family and informing them of his condition and location.

But!! Who are you oh Caller? Who are you? May Allah make you successful. Who are you oh good doer? Tell us your name. Let us speak of your nobility. Let us describe your kindness. Let us return to you part of your gifts. Truly, what can we repay someone like you with when you were cause for returning life to our son with the permission of Allah. Shall we not have an opportunity to be generous towards you and to be kind to you?

Only a good doer! The only two words he answered, preferring reward from Allah the Most Merciful the Most Gracious. May your hands be blessed oh good doer. May your steps be sturdy and may Allah protect you from all evil and watch over you. May Allah bless you and your health and your life and your offspring, and make paradise our and your destination.

The Elder said to me: hands are still lifted towards Allah in supplication for this good doer every occasion his deeds are remembered.

It was a need he fulfilled for his brother, and what a need it was? It was his soul that is between his wings, so what joy will this honorable one experience after saving his brother? What success has he achieved by coming to his aid? It is the success that Allah speaks of when he said: "... and worship your Lord and do good that you may be successful"¹⁰

Oh my successful brother, do not hesitate to fulfill the needs of your brother even if this puts constraints on your time and efforts. Be confident in your creator that he will aid you in your need, to lighten your burden, and lift your distress, and bless your wealth. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "He who aids his brother in need, Allah will aid him in his need." *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

¹⁰ Quran (Al Hajj, 77)

And also said:” The completion of favors protects form bad afflictions.” *Narrated by Al Tabbarrani and is deemed good (Hassan)*¹¹

And also said:” To help a man mount his animal or to load his luggage on it is charity.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

Perhaps you have heard the story of the heroic sergeant Jumhur son of Abdullah Al Ghamidi (may Allah have mercy on him), whom Allah pleased by saving a father and two children of drowning at the beach of half moon. This was when he received the calls for help whilst he was on his way to the house of Allah to perform the prayer of Asser (afternoon). He did not delay a moment in response to the call of consciousness and the voice of favor. He commenced to tare his way between the waves in his efforts to save the three who were about to drown. He first was able to bring the father to a nearby place, where a colleague helped him to the safety of the beach. Then immediately, with determined resolve, and unmatched sacrifice, he returned to the two children, saving them whilst cheapening his life and soul. And Allah was gracious to allow him to save them, but at that time, his strength failed to help him reach the coast of safety. He felt exhaustion and was overwhelmed by the undercurrents of the sea and its waves pulled him inward, and his strength dwindled slowly until the light of life extinguished from between his eyes, and Shahada¹² in the way of Allah was the medal which he had awaited. This is what we consider and Allah is the One who accounts. This hero vanished from sight and drowned in the waters of the sea after carving, with his heroism, the most beautiful murals of selflessness and sacrifice and altruism. Truly, these are rare examples and heroism in our time. I have nothing to say

¹¹ A degree of authenticity just below (sahih) “correct”, and above (daef) “weak” closer to correct.

¹² To die in the service of Allah and his way.

except: May Allah have wide mercy upon you Jumhur, and may He give you residence in heaven, and that he place you in the positions of the matters and good people. He is the most Benevolent, most Merciful, most Gentle.

The need of your brother is a burden you lighten, help you may aid, debt you may pay off, money you may lend, defending his honor, companionship you may comfort him with, supplication on his behalf that may relieve him, any assistance in good doing, all are deeds that will gain the love of Allah most high for which you may attain his grace.

The Third Garden

Spending and Charity in the way of Allah

Oh beloved: Godly promises, multifold loans, generous wages, and sustained gardens of continuous crops and shade, for those who give in abundance with contentment and a happiness of the soul visualizing the verses of generous promise. “Who will lend Allah a good loan which He will multiply for him and shall receive a great reward”¹³

“Those who spend their wealth by night and day, in secret and in public, their reward is with their Lord. No concern do they warrant, nor shall they grieve.”¹⁴

Charity is a streaming spring whose currents washes away the waste of life and its hindrances. And spending in welfare is the balm of healing of the greatest medicine. And giving in secret is blessing of wealth promised by the Lord of the heaven and earth. “Say my Lord makes plentiful the livelihood for whoever He wishes of his subjects and restricts for him and anything that you spend (in His way), He shall replenish, and He is the best of sustainers”¹⁵

Your charity, oh generous benefactor, is a seed sowed by the most generous person to tread on earth (peace and prayers be upon him.) “For the messenger of Allah was more generous with welfare than the sent wind.” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

¹³ Quran (Al Hadid: 11).

¹⁴ Quran (Al Baqara:274).

¹⁵ Quran (Sabaa: 39).

Let us all approach this flower of many in this garden to read from its pedals the following tale:

In a room of white beds laid on the middle bed a man in total comma. He was unaware of all that surrounded him of heart, pulse and breathing monitoring devices, and tubes of medical solutions.

Every day, for more than a year passed, not skipping a day, this man's wife would visit him accompanied by her fourteen year old son. They would gaze upon him with concern and pity. They would change his clothes, check up on him, and ask the doctors about him. No change in the condition. The status quo remains. No improvement or regression in his case. The coma was absolute, and there was no hope for recovery, save for hope in Allah. Yet this patient woman and her young boy would not leave his side until after raising their hand in supplication to Allah be glorified asking for his well being and healing, as if their predicament spoke:

You are the called upon in every event

You are the sanctuary for those inept

You are the savior for the astray

You are the guide for whom ever lost his way

They would leave the hospital only to return for another visit the same day. So they would do, every day, without discontinuity or boredom or complaint. These are hearts that have been joined by love,

and grew on each other by honesty, and bloomed in hardship the most beautiful flowers of endurance and compassion and nurture.

The patients, nursing staff and doctors are constantly amazed of the double daily visits of the wife and son of this practically deceased man. Despite no development in the patient's condition, how strange! What is this persistence upon two daily visits, despite the patient being unaware of anything around him? The doctors, and their assistants, were blunt that her visitation was to no avail, and out of concern for the woman and her boy, they pleaded with her to reduce her visits to once a week. But the compassionate woman would only reply: I seek support from Allah...Allah is my benefactor...

One day, shortly before the woman and her son's visit, something strange and exciting happened. The afflicted man was moving in his bed, turning side to side. Moments later, he opened his eyes and began to remove the oxygen mask and sat upright. Then he called the nurse, amongst the amazement of all, and demanded the removal of the medical devices. She refused and called the doctor who was in total awe. The latter performed some test and found the man is excellent health and requested the removal of the devices and to clean their traces from his body.

It was about time for the woman's customary visit. She entered accompanied by her son to their love's room. With what words, oh you whom Allah cares for, do you wish me to describe those tender moments? How can I organize the articulation of description? There was an embrace of gazes, and mingling of tears. Bewildered smiles upon lips, silencing the speech of emotions, save that of thanks and praise for Allah the Most Generous, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Answerer, who completed the bounty of health upon her husband.

The story doesn't end here, oh people of goodness. There are yet secrets to unfold. The doctor could not hold back till he could unveil. He directed his questions to the wife asking: Did you expect to see him this way one day? She said: Yes by Allah, I expected to walk in one day and see him sitting upright waiting for us. He said: There is something, that has come to be, which nor the hospital nor the doctors played a part in. By Allah I implore thee, tell me, why do you come twice a day and what do you do? She said: Since by Allah you asked me, I shall tell you. From the first visit, I would visit my husband to check up on him and pray for him, then my son and I would go to the poor and the needy, and present them with charities, that we may come closer to Allah for his healing. Allah did not disappoint her nor her supplication, for she left for the final visit, with her husband, to the home which long awaited the return of its owner, so that the smiles and happiness would return to him and the members of his family.

How ripe is this fruit and how good is its taste. "Those who spend their wealth by night and day, in secret and in public, their reward is with their Lord. No concern do they warrant, nor shall they grieve."¹⁶

This story was told by the honorable teacher Ahmad Sallem Badwellan in his book "Do Not Despair", May Allah grant him success and reward him on our behalf the best of rewards.

The grace of Allah is great for he says:" By no means shall you attain *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, etc., it means here Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah's Cause) of that which you love..."¹⁷ So let us search for its ways and places. One of its most

¹⁶ Quran (Al Baqara : 274).

¹⁷ Quran (Al Imran : 92) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

noble places is spending on family and relatives with the intention of coming closer to Allah. Here Um¹⁸ Sallamah (Allah be pleased with her) comes to the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) and says: Oh messenger of Allah, will I gain reward for spending on Abu¹⁹ Sallamah's children for I cannot let them be like this and like that for they are my children? He said: "Yes, for you is the reward for what you spend on them" *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Is there a day free of spending on our spouse and children? But the matter requires intention towards Allah and asking for his reward. For the Prophet (prayers and blessings be upon him) said: "No amount which you spend seeking Allah except will you receive its reward, even that which you place in the mouth of your woman." *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

So if Allah has blessed your sustenance, then do not be miserly with yourself and your brethren, in and outside your country, and spend blessedly, little or abundant.

As for little, it reminds me of a story one of the mosque imams informed of how he admired one of the poor mosque janitors, how quick he was to respond to the caller for spending in the way of Allah. Despite of his weakness and poverty, he would not hesitate in that. Every time, he would give a Rial²⁰, or close to that. Whatever he could afford, perhaps half of a Rial. Beware not to fall in the trap of detest. For it may warrant a great status with Allah, with his permission. Do you know why? Because the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "He who spends in charity the equivalent of one date fruit, from

¹⁸ Means mother of (in Arabic).

¹⁹ Means father of (in Arabic).

²⁰ Monetary unit used in parts of Arabia.

honest earning, and Allah only accepts honest earning, Allah will receive it with his right and care for it as one of you cares for his weanling²¹, until it becomes like a mountain.” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

It is only half a Rial!! But perhaps it might turn onto a protecting shield, with Allah’s permission, from hell fire. Will you not recall with me what the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Safeguard form hell fire even by half a date fruit.” *Agreed upon*

Let us move to another destination of goodness to observe this generous scene. A boy on the eve of the feast, hand to the one in charge of collecting donations, approximately two hundred Rials. He was no older than ten years old. Astonished, he asked him: where did you come by such cash? And what do you wish to do with it? He replied: This is the cash given to me by my father to buy clothes for the feast. I wish for one of the Muslim orphans to buy new clothes for the feast, as for me, what I am wearing will suffice. May Allah irrigate the home that you grew up in my child! And may you always be its pride and joy in the low and end life.

As for grand spending, Remember what was reported by Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said:” Abu Talha was the wealthiest of the supporters of Madina. And the dearest to him of his wealth was Al Bayruhaa²², and it was facing the mosque, and the messenger of Allah (prayers and blessing be upon him) used to enter it

²¹ A horse that has recently been weaned or a foal.

²² A garden near the Prophet’s mosque.

and drink from its good water. Anas said: When this verse was revealed “By no means shall you attain *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, etc., it means here Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah's Cause) of that which you love...”, Abu Tallha came to the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and said: Oh messenger of Allah, Allah most High says;” By no means shall you attain *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, etc., it means here Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah's Cause) of that which you love...”, and my most beloved wealth is Bayruhaa, and it is a charity for Allah, and I look forward its piety and its continuous flourishing with Allah. So place it, oh messenger of Allah, where Allah shows you. The messenger of Allah said:” Well done! That is a profitable wealth. That is a profitable wealth. And I heard what you had said, and I see that you make it for relatives. So Abu Tallha said: I shall do oh messenger of Allah. And Abu Tallha divided it amongst his relatives and (paternal) cousins.”
Narrated by Al Bukhary

Beloved brother, be one of those whom the angels supplicate to Allah for saying:” Oh Allah give spenders replenishment” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Beloved brother, be one of those whom Allah said about in the sacred hadith²³:”Spend, oh son of Adam, and ye shall be spent upon”
Agreed upon

Beloved brother, know that what you spent is what remains and did not perish. What perishes, is what we hold back.

²³ When the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) relates that Allah said something (other than Quran) it is called a Qudsi Hadith or Sacred Saying.

You belong to wealth if you hold it, but if you spend then the wealth is yours.

On the authority of Aaysha (may Allah be pleased with her):” That they had slaughtered a lamb and the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:” What is left of it?” She said: Nothing is left except the shoulder. He said:” All of it is left except the shoulder.” *Narrated by Al Tirmizi and he said this is an authentic hadith (saying)*

No! Not only what we spend remains, it also grows and increases. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:” Charity had never diminished wealth.” *Narrated by Muslim*

One the inviters²⁴ to Allah informed me that a grand merchants²⁵ of the richest from this good land, used to tell him: Never did I spend something in the way of Allah, but did I see its increase before me, from the blessings due to charity and its bounty.

Listen to this hadith, which will bring close to you a fruit of this beautiful garden. It is related by Abu Huraira, that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him said:” Whilst a man was in an emptiness of land, he heard a voice in a cloud: Irrigate the garden of so and so. And the cloud changed direction and emptied its water in a barren land. And as if the water gathered in one single stream of many. All the water collected in that single stream, he followed the water, and there stood a man in his garden directing the water with his shovel. He said to him: Oh subject of Allah! What is your name? He said: So and so, the same name he had heard in the cloud. He said to him: Oh subject of Allah!

²⁴ He is my brother, Dr Khalid son of Saoud Al Haleebi may Allah grant him success.

²⁵ He is the great benefactor and sheikh Abdulah son of Abdulaziz Al Naaim, may Allah have wide mercy for him, for he had extensive contributions to philanthropy in the province of Al Ahssa and beyond.

Why do you ask me my name? He said: I heard a voice in a cloud, of which this is its water, saying: irrigate the garden of so and so, your name, so what do you do with it? He said: As you have spoken such, I see what comes out from it, and I pay a third in charity, and consume a third along with my family, and I put a third back into it. And in another narration, I dedicate a third for the poor and those who ask and vagabonds.” *Narrated by Muslim*

Spending is a good trait. And its beauty is magnified if he were already in a state of need, then generosity and altruism meet. Let me tell you about what gained Allah’s admiration whilst He is the Most Generous, The Benefactor. It is reported by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him):” A man came to the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and said: I am strained (meaning he was suffering from bad life conditions and hunger). So the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) sent to one of his wives but he said: By He who sent you with the truth, I have nothing but water. So he sent to another and she said the same, until they all said that. By He who sent you with the truth, I have nothing but water. So the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: Who will host this (man) tonight? A man from the supporters²⁶ said: Me oh messenger of Allah. So he took him to his place and said to his wife: be generous with the guest of the messenger of Allah (peace and prayers be upon him) [in another narration he said: Do you have anything?] She said: No, except a portion for my boys. He said: Occupy them with something, then if they want their supper, let them sleep, then when our guest enters, extinguish the lamp, and show him that we are eating. They sat, the guest ate, and they slept with bent bellies²⁷. When the

²⁶ Muslims of Madena whom supported the Prophet and were referred to as Al Anssar (the supporters).

²⁷ Bellies bent from hunger.

morning came, he went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He said:” Allah admired what you did with your guest that night” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

It was a community raised upon the morals of prophecy, and drew from its pristine spring. A society that knows not selfishness nor egoism. Here is a specimen of its kinds, which the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) commends with exemplary attributes of kindness. If the nation follows its path, there would not remain a single pauper. They are the Asharries²⁸, whom the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said of:” if the Asharries are scarce of provision whilst invading, or if their dependant’s food is in short supply in the city, they would gather what they have in one robe, and divide it equally amongst them in one bowl. They are of me, and I am of them.” *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

Be careful, oh generous one, to be overshadowed by hopelessness, for there remains in the nation, kind ones who follow the footsteps of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) and his good successors. We will not forget the good campaigns and donations for our vulnerable brothers everywhere. These are images of giving which inspires joy in the souls as a result of generosity, and makes the hearts happy. Those who witness it can see that it is a safeguard for this earth, and the secret of its stability and security. All grace and thanks is due to Allah.

I liked two incidents mentioned by Sheikh Ali Al Tantawi (may Allah have mercy upon him) in his memoirs. He said in the prelude:” The sheikh of my father, Sheikh Saleem Al Masouty, despite his poverty, would never deny one who asks of him. Whenever he would wear a cloak or fur, and would come by someone cold and shivering, he

²⁸ A tribe from Yemen, of which the honorable companion Abu Musa Al Ashaary is from.

would take it off and give it to him, and would return to his house wearing just a wrap²⁹. Many times did he remove the food setting from in front of his dependants to give an asker. One day in Ramadan, the table had been set and in wait for the cannon³⁰, and an asker came by and swore that he and his dependants were without food. So the sheikh sought a moment when his wife was not paying attention, and opened the door and gave him all the food. When his wife saw this, she caused a commotion, and yelled and swore she would not stay with him. He remained silent, and barely half an hour elapsed when the door knocked, it was someone carrying plates of different kinds of food and sweets and fruits. So he asked: What is the story? Apparently, the story was, that the prince had invited some dignitaries, and they had declined, which angered him and he pledged that he would not eat any of the food and that it be sent entirely to the home of Sheikh Saleem Al Masouty (may Allah have mercy upon him).

Never have I seen a taste better than good doing

As for its colors the most beautiful in seeing

As for the second story; it is a story of a woman whose son had traveled and she sat on day to eat and there was nothing in front of her except for a little soup and a piece of bread. An asker came by, so she deprived her mouth from the bite and gave it to him, and spent that night

²⁹ Called the "Izzar", which is a simple wrap of cloth that covers the minimum of the body from the navel to just below the knees.

³⁰ A tradition started in the Ottoman era where they would set off a cannon at the time of sunset in Ramadan to signal to the people that the time of breakfast had arrived.

in hunger. When her son returned, he would tell her what he had seen in his travels. He said: one of the strangest things that happened is that once I was being trailed by a lion, and I was alone so I fled from him, but he jumped upon me and soon I found myself in his mouth. Then a man in white robes appeared and rescued me and he said: “A bite for a bite.” But I did not understand what he meant. His mother asked him about the timing of this event. As it turned out, it was the same day she gave that pauper the food. She removed the bites from her mouth to spend it in the way of Allah, so Allah removed her son from the mouth of the lion.”

He who does kindness shall not nullify its cost

Good deeds amongst people and Allah are not lost

Miserable is miserliness, it only cloaks its owner with humility degradation, broken what it reaps, foul of smell, it only inherits destruction for individuals, nations, and people. The truthful speaker of truth (prayers and peace be upon him) says:” Beware of miserliness, for miserliness had perished those who preceded you. It caused them to spill each other’s blood and violate their prohibitions.” *Narrated by Muslim.*

The Fourth Garden

The Garden of Mercy

It is a garden aromatic of the fragrances Arabian Jasmine and roses, and its branches sway in harmony to the approach of the merciful hearted. The hearts that are accustomed to submission before the Most Merciful, so they softened towards his creation, and were gentle with his subjects, seeking the mercy of their Lord and the gentleness of their creator.

Merciful! That is how the creator wishes us to be. From the helper of empathy do we feed, from the helper of compassion do we drink. “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate (in prayer), seeking Bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure.”³¹

Here is the Prophet of mercy (prayers and peace be upon him), he is handed a young boy who’s soul is crackling in his small body trying to exit. Blessed tears pour from the eyes of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him). Saaid said to him:”Oh messenger of Allah, what is this?” He said:” This is a mercy that Allah has placed in the hearts of his subjects. Indeed! Allah has mercy upon his merciful subjects.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

Know, you whom Allah nurtures, that mercy is a path to paradise of the most beautiful of paths. How could it not be, when Allah granted paradise to a man due to the mercy that overwhelmed him. To what

³¹ Quran (Al Fatteh: 29) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

end? Let us allow the truthful speaker of truth (prayers and peace be upon him) tell us the chapters of the story with the most concise and accurate sentence. He (prayers and peace be upon him) said:” Whilst a man was journeying, he was harshly struck by thirst, he descended in to a well and drank from it then exited, and found a dog panting, eating the sand of thirst. He said: This reached as I had reached (of thirst). So he filled his shoe and held it with his mouth, then he ascended and quenched the dog. So Allah thanked him and forgave him.” They said: Oh messenger of Allah, do we gain reward in (treatment of) animals? He said:” In every moist liver there is reward.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

How miserable is the rude and uncouth. Man to him is not treated mercifully not even by a smile he could draw on his life, so how would he treat an animal deaf and dumb? Woe onto a condition as his. It is not you or I who passes judgment upon this type of people being wretched. Indeed, the messenger of mercy (prayers and peace be upon him) judged him as such, He said:”Mercy is only stripped from the wretched.” *Narrated by Ahmad and Al Tirmizzi and its narration line is good*

Oh Muslims! Is there misery greater than hell? Here is a woman who warranted the fire of hell, and wretched a destination it is, when the instinct of mercy is demised in her dark arrogant heart. The beloved Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) tells us of her fate and says:” A woman was tormented because of a cat she had imprisoned until it died and entered for that into the fire. Neither did she feed it, nor did she give it drink as she imprisoned it, nor did she leave it to eat from the scratches of earth.” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Have you experienced, dear brother, how happiness overcomes you, on a visit to a sufferer who's eyes have been struck by insomnia and is kept awake all night due to pain? The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) says:" Not but a Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim in an afternoon, except seventy thousand angels will pray upon him until dusk. And if he visits at night, then seventy thousand angels will pray upon him till morning, and he shall have an ascribed harvest in paradise." *Narrated by Al Tirmizzi and said this is a good (Hassan) hadith*

Beloved brother, extend the hand of sponsorship to an orphan who has lost the tenderness of a father and suckled from the misery of its loss, so that you may have a share in this saying of the beloved (prayers and peace be upon him):" The sponsor of the orphan and I are in paradise like this! And he signaled with his index and middle fingers slightly separated." *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Be a friendly comfort to a widow who death had parted her from her love and broke her heart, and burdened her shoulders with need. For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:" He who strives for the widow and the pauper is like the striver in the way of Allah or like the one standing (in worship) by night, fasting by day." *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Lower the wings of mercy, dear brother, for a weakling who has been riddled by sorrow and scattered by ailment. For Allah says:" Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression, and repulse not the beggar."³²

³² Quran (Al Duha: 9-10) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

Shade with the tents of mercy your wife and daughters and women folk. For no matter what they achieve in knowledge or riches, they will still need you and your compassion. Remember, you seeder of good deeds, that your harvest is blessed and what you reap is good. Aysha (may Allah be pleased with her) said:” A poor woman came to me and she was carrying her two daughters. I fed her three date fruits. She gave each of them a date fruit and raised a date to her mouth to eat it, but her two daughters wanted her to feed them, so she split the date fruit that she was about to eat amongst them. I was impressed by her act, so I mentioned what she had done to the messenger of Allah (prayers and peace be upon him). He said: Allah has obliged paradise for her because of that, or has freed her from (hell) fire” *Narrated by Muslim*

And maintain your connections with relatives of the womb, for it is derived from mercy, and you shall taste its sweetness in the low life before the end life. The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:” Whom it pleases if his sustenance is extended and his mention be long lasting, let him maintain relations with his womb relatives” *Narrated by Muslim*

Remember, oh you whom Allah has made wealth of his bounty, that your servant only came to you due to calamity, and hard life which afflicted his offspring, so don't be harsh on him and forgive his errors. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said:” I served the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) for ten years and never once did he say (uff)³³ to me or why did you do? Or why did you not do?” *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

And it is reported by Aysha (may Allah be pleased with her) she said:”The messenger of Allah never struck a servant of his, nor a woman of his, nor did he strike with his hand save for striving in the way of Allah.” *Narrated by Ahmad and it is authentic*

³³ An utterance that expresses discontent or irritation.

And on the authority of the Son of Omar (may Allah be pleased with them both) that a man came to the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) and said: my servant does wrong and transgresses, do I strike him? He said:” You forgive him seventy times every day” *Narrated by Ahmad and Al Tirmizzi and it is authentic*

Astonishing! How we ask for rain and we have all these shortcomings towards our weak, as if we have forgotten what our Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:”Are you not sustained and victorious save by the weak amongst you” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Helping the vulnerable is of the guidance of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him). Following him is reward, and maintaining it is honor and dignity. The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) used to delay in the march and gently guide the weak and walk behind him and pray for him.” *Narrated by Abu Dawood with a good backing*

There are still, in the nation, those who strive for the poor and the needy. They are kind to the weak, clothe the nude, sponsor the orphan, and watches over the widow.

This is a story that is popular amongst the people, yet I find solace in mentioning it, and an example in telling it. A man saw in a dream that the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) came to him and said: Go to so and so son of so and so in such a place and give him good tidings of paradise. He tried to recall the person that the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) named, but he could not remember anyone of that name. So he went to a dream interpreter. He told him: Tell the one in the dream about it. So he kept on asking and asking until he learned in which village he lived. He went there and asked about the man and was directed to him, then he met him and said: I have good tidings for you, but I will not inform of it until you inform me of your good deeds. The man said: I have no more than other Muslims. He said: then I don't tell you. And he kept on insisting to know what good deeds he does. Then he told him: Hey you! I labor and spend on myself and my family.

But when my neighbor died and left a wife and children, I started splitting my monthly wages between my house and that of my neighbor's. Then the man who had the dream said: this is what allowed you to attain. Know that I saw the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) in a dream, and he gives you good tidings of paradise.

Maintain the covenant of a friend you once kept

And the covenant of thy neighbor protect from all

Connect with a brother of the womb. His sympathy kept

In calamity from victory he will not let you fall

Connecting with him for lasting generations may set

And in so doing, perhaps longevity may not stall

Be gracious to a beggar whose dignity he left

Even with little, almost nothing at all

The Fifth Garden

The Garden of Honoring Parents

It is a deed of good doing comparable to none. Where do I begin to speak of it and where do I end? It is a devotion that Allah prescribed after maintaining his oneness, and his Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) encouraged upon it, and scholars and speakers and lecturers spoke of extensively. What can I add after what Allah said:” And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. **24.** And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small." **25.** Your Lord knows best what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then, verily, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn unto Him again and again in obedience, and in repentance.”³⁴

What is left to say after what the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” In spite of him, in spite of him, in spite of him.” It was said: Who? Oh messenger of Allah. He said:”Whose parents reach old age in his life, both of them or one of them, and doesn’t enter paradise.”
Narrated by Muslim

The calamity is that we forget that the tree of devotion to parents matures quickly, its fruits dangling, its owner sees this clearly and frankly in his low life, and saves the grander portion of it for the end life. So why do the trials of life shake our certainty in this until it sways us from benevolence towards our parents? Miserable is life where kindness

³⁴ Quran (Al Issra: 23-25) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

is not returned with kindness. And what kindness is the parents' kindness?

How can you deny a mother who bore your weight as you twisted in her belly for months

And she wet nursed you for two years complete whilst in her lap you sat

With kindness she treated and raised you until you grew and stood as you are

The father his nurturing do not deny, and champion him closely if his age becomes high

For his rights you will not fulfill no matter you do, even a pilgrimage treading on your eye.

Kind devotion to parents is the secret to success in life, and the way to avoid many hardships. With it souls rejoice, and hearts open, and the one dutiful to his parents sees happiness with his own eyes in the form of blessings in his health and his wealth and his offspring.

Lend your ear to this hadith and turn your heart towards it and contemplate the doing of good deeds and what it reaps.

The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Whilst three men were journeying, they were taken by rain, so they took refuge in a cave in a mountain. A bolder from the mountain fell on the mouth of their cave and closed it. They said to each other: recall good deeds for Allah you have done and ask Allah by it, perhaps Allah may relieve upon you. One of them said: My Lord, I had two elderly parents, my

wife and young boys I used to shepherd to support them. When I would return, I would milk for them and I would start (offering drink) with my parents before my boys. One day I was drawn far by the bush, so I didn't return till the evening and found they had slept. So I milked as I used to milk, and brought the milk and I stood at their heads hating to wake them, and hating to let the boys drink before them, and the boys were causing commotion at my feet, and that remained my struggle with them until dawn. If you know that I did that seeking you, then, make an opening that we may see the sky from. So Allah made an opening from which they could see the sky." *Narrated by Muslim*

And such, each one supplicated to Allah by a good deed he had done to come closer to Allah until Allah dispelled upon them and they exited that cave.

They saw life after death and salvation after demise. It is the harvest of devotion and its reaping that you will witness in the goodness of your children and their love for you and their care and love for their mother. So enjoy the blessings in your life and after. What, by your Lord, would one gain from disobedience of parents? Except discomfort in life, and heavy chests, and bad omen is sustenance, and disobedience of children. Woe on to those souls who are rough with their parents if they do not return to Allah. Woe on to those hands that assault the parents if they do not repent to Allah. Woe on to those domineering tongues used on parents if they don't ask forgiveness from Allah.

His mother raised him, despite her weakness and gave him drink of her blood³⁵, and fed him of her flesh and bone. She weakens that he become strong, he sleeps whilst she remains awake, the world darkens if he is afflicted, and life smiles if he smiles, she forsakes all pleasures for his comfort, and prefers him in the best of food and drink, lullabies him

³⁵ Meaning her milk.

a youngster, her hopes for him high. Then when he reached his strength, and his arms hard and his tongue fluent and she wed him to the woman he loved and felt joy for his joy and was more jubilant than he. Yet, dear reader, I am surprised by the sound of a ringing telephone resonance in my ears. I hear a frail weeping voice mixed with the roughness of an afflicted chest and tones of crying that tear the heart. It is the voice of an elderly mother who began to tell me her painful tale of her disobedient son. She said: His father died of a heart attack, and I had a boy who was about ten years old. I was afflicted with several chronic illnesses, and he lived in the upper floor with his wife. He insults me every time he comes down and passes by. He descends upon me with the ugliest of insults and vilifications. And whenever his younger orphaned brother would fight with his son, he would demise his brother with harsh beating whilst I cannot defend him due to the severity of my illness and age. Not only that, he holds down his brother to enable his son of him so that he may exhaust him hitting and kicking until he cools his rage, and leaves his brother with the bitter taste of conquest and deprivation instead of the compassion of brotherhood. Indeed sometimes he covers his face as he passes by that he may not see me. And he says to in avoidance: you are not my mother and follows through with what those who have no mercy or compassion would even say and he dose and dose..

I never thought that I would hear such an anguished narration from within our conservative society. But it is an anomaly, this wretchedness. I began to offer that I may advise him, perhaps he would awaken from his oblivious status. She said to me in fear: No! Don't speak to him. He may harm me or harm his brother. I have no persuasion with him or with his strength and aggression. Her complaints continued about a variation of cruelty and roughness. I could not bear, I said to her: Then,

I will raise him to the judiciary. Her voiced rose saying: Judiciary you say? Will I sue the light of my eyes? Will I sue whom I raised with my own hands, and gave drink from my breast? He is my beloved, the essence of my heart. Would it please me to give him scandal and shame? But I raise his predicament to The Most Merciful The Most Compassionate that He may guide his heart, and ratify his condition.

I knew then that these were painful screams that she need to vent off her chest and lighten her burden. Allah is the only God! How compassionate is the mother's heart and how tender is her chest?

Dear beloveds, I had later learned of his condition that he lives alone tense of the nerves, turbulent is status. Not strange, for he has drifted astray from the satisfying garden of devotion, and acquired in its place the desolation of misery and the desert of disobedience.

Let us take example from others. Happy is he who learns from the example of someone else.

The Sixth Garden

The Garden of Raising Children

This garden has a long and laborious path, though it very colorful and beautiful. It is a tiresome journey, but its result good and praise worthy. Children are young green trees, if you irrigate them with the water of virtue, beautiful flowers, if you care for them with proper upbringing, dawning fields, if you illuminate them with the light of faith. So be patient in the way of raising them, so that you may reap what pleases and satisfies you. For one of their successes is sufficient to let you forget the many times they tired you. Their excelling one year will make you forget the late night of many years. Don't be concerned about how difficult they were in childhood, for this will yield happiness in adulthood. Follow up on their studies, their health and well being, be with them soul and body, if not, then with heart and prayer. And know that they are a trust. Do not let it in vein. "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you will be asked about his flock." *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

They are years of nurturing and irrigation which grows a life of flowers and fruits. Years you endure, yet they will fill your world with jubilation when they (the children) come to you. One of them has become a brilliant engineer, another one a skilled physician, or a master craftsman, or a successful teacher, or a potent preacher. With all of that, they surround you with their devotion, and you can rejoice by their goodness and righteousness. What garnish decorates better than this? It is the result of the supplication of the subjects of The Most Merciful.

“And those who say: Our Lord, grant us from our partners and our offspring fulfillment and make of us leaders of the pious.”³⁶

You shall gain from the garden of good upbringing even after death by the supplications of your children for you. For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” when a human dies, his deeds are discontinued save from three. Save from an ongoing charity, or knowledge that is beneficial or a good child who prays for him.”
Narrated by Musilm

And you shall sample its harvest when your status is raised in paradise with the permission of Allah. For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Allah The Most Prominent and Exalted raises the status of a good subject in paradise and the subject says: Oh Lord, how did I attain this? He says: by your child asking forgiveness for you.” *Narrated by Ahmad with good reference*

How beautiful are the fields of good upbringing and its shade. So continue its labor and let us reap its fruits.

³⁶ Quran (Al Furqan:74).

The Seventh Garden

Intercession on Behalf of Muslims

It is the garden which we have shortcomings in cultivating it. Allah said: "He who makes a good intercession shall have a share of it..."³⁷

It is Allah's promise that you will have a share from the good that comes from your intercession in addition to your reward for the intercession. These are Godly guarantees for those who made room in their heart for love of their brethren, and translated that love into a vigorous pursuit with the means available of proof or influence to lighten what he can for them. It is narrated in the agreed upon hadith that the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: "A believer to a believer is like a structure holding each other, then he laced his fingers. And the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) was sitting when a man came asking, or had a need, he (the Prophet) came upon us and said: intercede and be rewarded. And let Allah exert, via the tongue of his Prophet, what he wills."

Is it not sufficient, that you are rewarded, even if your intercession was not heard, or you did not achieve your aim? Your example in this is the beloved (peace and prayers be upon him); for the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) interceded once and did not get what he interceded for. On the authority of Ibn Abbass (may Allah be please with them) that Baryra's husband was a slave named Mugheith. As if I am looking at him circling behind her – meaning behind his wife Baryra who was freed whilst he remained a slave so she decided to leave him- and kept

³⁷ Quran (Al Nisaa: 85).

crying and his tears running down his beard. Then the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said to Abbass:” Oh Abbass! Are you not astonished from Mugheith’s love of Baryra, and of Baryra’s hate of Mughieith?” Then the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said to Baryra:” If you would take him back!” She said: Oh messenger of Allah, do you command me? He said:” I merely intercede.” She said: I have no need for him. *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

Try once to intercede on behalf of one of the people for a need of his so that you may feel the heartwarming due to the joy you brought your brother, and to rejoice from his prayer for you. It is a moment of happiness which generates long felt jubilation. Exerting an hour, may lead to a happy life.

The Eighth Garden

Mending Relations (Amongst People)

“Verily believers are brethren, so mend relations amongst your brethren and fear Allah that you may receive clemency”³⁸

Oh successful brother, good souls do not agree with deviation nor does it harmonize with it. Contrary, it considers it a contaminated environment far from pristine, repulsed of purity. There for, it cannot find shade save only under the cover of purity, and is not tame except in the light breeze of brotherhood, and is never comfortable save between the fields of love and the flowers of friendship. Therefore, you will find that one of them is never at rest when the wind of conflict storms the beloved, or if the wind of hatred blows upon them. You will see him as a peace dove, never nesting until it brings hearts back together, and to souls their purity. How serene is the heart of the peace maker and how good is his compassionate soul?

The fruit of this garden is the contentment of Allah and great reward. “There is no good in much of their covert consultation, save he whom orders charity or good doing or conciliation between people. And he who does this seeking the contentment of Allah, We shall grant him great reward”³⁹

³⁸ Quran (Al Hujurat: 10).

³⁹ Quran (Al Nissa : 114).

Start the conciliation between of your brothers by supplication to Allah that He may open their hearts to this benefit, for Allah says:” ...And conciliation is good...”⁴⁰

Bring pints of view closer, and lessen the points of conflict. Draw yourself closer to them, and inform each one of the love the other has for him, and that he holds no animosity or hate in his heart towards him, even by bending the truth, for the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Lying is not when one is conciliating amongst the people nurturing goodness or saying good things.” *Narrated by Al Bukhari*

Conciliating between your brethren is charity, so do not forget your intent on receiving reward from Allah for it, for it is the secret to success, and the key to mending relationships, and the way of acceptance (of the deeds by Allah), for the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:”Every day the sun rises in, if you make right what is between two, it is charity⁴¹.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*.

⁴⁰ Quran (Al Nissa :128).

⁴¹ This is in the context that each of us owes a daily charity due to Allah bestowing upon us good health and a functioning body free of pain and all his daily blessings upon us which we cannot account for. Smiling in a brother’s face is a charity and removing dangers from the path is charity etc.

The Ninth Garden

The Garden of Teaching and Inviting to the Way of Allah

What a beautiful garden it is by Allah! Grand are the selections of its fruits, enticing are its blossoms, monotony does not become its visitor, its water never goes dry, its shade has no boundaries, and its springs are uncountable. The successful is he who labors his mind, tongue, and heart in it like a restless bee transporting pollen and making honey, for the worker in it is well rewarded, and the harvester happy and benefited.

Be a caller to Allah's way via a good word, for good words a charity. Be one who invites (to the way of Allah) with a smile, for your smile in the face of your brother is charity. Be one who invites (to the way of Allah) by your good virtue, for you will not reach the people with your wealth, rather with your good manner. Relate of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) even one verse. Make dear to your beloveds at least one of the traditions of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him). Make desirable in their hearts the obedience of Allah. Invite them wisely and by good advice, and stay far from roughness and rudeness. "But by the Mercy of Allah, you were lenient towards them. And had you been rude and harsh-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you; exonerate them and ask (Allah) forgiveness for them and consult them on matters. Then if you are determined, rely on Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who rely (on him)."⁴² Account for your forgiving

⁴² Quran (Al Imran : 159).

those who wronged you as an invitation for him, and intend the help you offer your disobedient brother to guide him (to the way of Allah) by your hands. Light your eyes with the illumination of pity upon those who stray from the path of Allah that that light may shine upon those you wish guidance for. Be one who invites (to the way of Allah) with a recording you gift to your neighbor, and a book you send to your friend, or a sincere supplication (to Allah) on behalf of your Muslim brother that Allah may bestow him with guidance. Be a caller (to Allah's way) with all your capabilities and thoughts. Be blessed in whatever land you may tread. Do not imagine hindrance before yourself, and do not inflate matters. Start your calling by consulting with the people of knowledge and awareness of this field, so that your work will be based upon good insight. "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and debate them with what is better. Your Lord knows best who is astray from His paths and He is more knowledgeable of those who are guided."⁴³

You only are required to relay the message. "And our duty is only to convey plainly (the Message)."⁴⁴ And Allah manages the guidance of hearts and opening their locks for whom He wishes of his subjects. "...That is the guidance of Allah. He Guides therewith whom He pleases and whomever Allah sends astray, for him there is no guide."⁴⁵

Rejoice when you see that your calling has yielded its fruits, ripe. And make every success you achieve a venue to another which awaits you and anticipates your steps.

⁴³ Quran (Al Nahhel : 125).

⁴⁴ Quran (Ya Seen : 17) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

⁴⁵ Quran (Al Zummar : 23) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

How happy was the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) with the guidance of his folk? Indeed, the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) was happy for the guidance of a Jewish boy who was ill. For on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), he said:” There was a Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) who fell ill. The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) went to visit him and sat near his head and said to him: embrace Islam. So the boy looked at his father who was present and said: Obey Aba Al Qassim (peace and prayers be upon him). So he accepted Islam then the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) left saying:” Praised be Allah who saved him from (hell) fire.” *Narrated by Al Bukhari.*

Hear these phrases illuminated by the Prophet as they were uttered by the first most inviter to Allah towards one of his most devoted workers. It is what the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) on the day of Khybar:” Invite them to Islam then inform them of what is (obligatory) upon them. By Allah, for Allah to guide someone through you, is greater than a herd of red camels.⁴⁶” *Narrated by Al Bukhary*

Count not the rewards you will receive be inviting to Him, or for teaching any of his laws. For anyone who does by your invitation or implements of your knowledge, you will receive an equal reward without diminishing any of theirs, and Allah is of great bounty.

Begin with yourself, then with your family, then the closest to you and then the next. Perhaps Allah would bless your efforts, and accept your good deeds, He is Most Giving, Most Generous.

⁴⁶ Signifying a great fortune.

Listen to this scene of good invitation to Allah, narrated to us by the participant himself. He is the Italian Alberto O’Pacini, he said:” Praise be to Allah for guiding me to the true religion. After being an agnostic, ill mannered drunk, worshiping myself and its desires, materialism had overcome my existence. I hated all heavenly religions, foremost Islam, which in our traditions, represented the worst image of religion in history. For Muslims, in our common collective minds, were pagans who refused to engage reality, and rely on mysticism in seeking solutions for their problems, bloody tyrants, aggressors who reject peaceful coexistence with others. I grew up in this environment, charged against Islam, but Allah had destined Islam for me by the hands of a Muslim youth who had migrated to Italy to earn his living. I had met him through no will of my own. One night, I was partying in a bar till the early hours of the morning, and I was returning home, completely intoxicated, wandering the streets, unaware. I was struck by a speeding vehicle, and I fell to the ground soaked in my blood. The surprise was, that I was saved by this Muslim youth. He notified the police of the speeding vehicle, and took care of me until I was well. I could not believe that a Muslim did this for me, so I drew closer to him, and asked him to explain the principals of Islam; what it commands and what it forbids, and where it stands from other religions. I got to know Islam, and lived it through the mannerisms of this youth. I became certain in the end that I had been treading aimlessly in falsehood, and that Islam was the true religion. Truth is Allah’s words, for he said:”And he who seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him...”⁴⁷, so I embraced Islam.”

⁴⁷ Quran (Al Imran : 85).

Implement, as you may, knowledge, that those who follow you may be guided

Mindful of the peoples and their guidance, eternal bliss you shall be rewarded.

The Tenth Garden

Offering Breakfast to the Fasting

It is a multifold of harvest for those who participate in earnest of Allah. As if you are fasting two days in one, by offering little good sustenance, you will bask in the shades of this vivid garden. The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said: "He who offers breakfast for one fasting, receives an equal reward without diminishing any of the one's fasting reward." *Narrated by Al Tirmizzi and said it is good (Hassan) & authentic*

And today, by the bounty of Allah, good entities all over the world have made this worship easy, whereby they show you how to participate by the simplest of methods, and with little means. This is all by the mercy of Allah upon the needy, and multiple rewards for philanthropist. Perhaps you have seen with your own eyes these breakfasts, where the tables of generosity are extended in the court yards of Allah's houses, and the poor of Muslim (and other) communities had gathered around in harmony, love and happiness. And your emotions overflow with faith as you witness the wealthy serving those estranged and needy people, offering cold water, and warm bites, and different kinds of sweets made sweeter by brotherly smiles full of compassion. What an environment of faith is this which makes you proud of your religion that impels the rich to strive to draw smiles on the faces of the poor, and indeed seek him, and give him until he is content.

I cannot forget, by Allah, that wonderful brotherly scene, of one of the guarantors putting a bite of food in his hand then placing it in the mouth of one of his workers. The worker was overwhelmed by shyness,

and left the place running, and the guarantor followed him until he put the bite in his mouth. This is not a new scene, for it is the implementation of what the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” If one of you brings his servant his food, and if he does not sit with him, then may he hand him a bite or two, for he was the laborer of its mending.⁴⁸” *Narrated by Al Bukhari.*

⁴⁸ Meaning the servant was the one who labored to make the food by lighting the fire and cooking, etc.

The Eleventh Garden

The Garden of Easing Hardship

Gracious brother, if Allah The Most High bestowed His grace upon you and you extended your hand of easing to your brother who was in need of some money, do not ruin your blessed gift by persisting pay back. Contrary, facilitate ease, and give him grace of time. Don't follow your generosity by mentioning favor and insistence on speedy payment. For the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” He who eases upon those with (monetary) difficulties, Allah will ease upon him in low and last (life)” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

Let your garden of good deeds be decorated by some money you set aside to make some payments off this one with (monetary) difficulties. By this you would have done much favor. Favor first on yourself due to the reward (from Allah), and further by easing his debt, for the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” Whomever it pleases that Allah save him from one of the hardships of the day of resurrection, let him vent upon one with difficulties, or remove off him (a burden).” *Narrated by Muslim*

How often do we seek happiness in the low life? Though we may mistake its way, or imagine its existence, let us be sure hearted in Allah's promise in his book and via the tongue of his Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) to find happiness in the low and end (lives).

The Twelfth Garden

Removing Harm from the Path (of the people)

The Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:” And you remove harm from the path (of people) is charity.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

This task was not originally assigned to sanitary workers, may Allah help them. It is a task for all of us, and we only need them because of our shortcomings in this good doing, which some people look down upon, and think they are above doing it, but with Allah it holds a great status, and rich prize; listen to this Hadith in which the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) says:”A man passed by a branch laying on the road and said: By Allah I shall push this (branch) aside from the (path of) Muslims that it may not harm them, so he was admitted paradise.” *Narrated by Muslim*

A tree branch you lift from the road may be rewarded with paradise the width of the heavens and earth. They are the gardens of virtue and a compassionate gracious Lord.

The Thirteenth Garden

The Good Word

Beloved brother, if you are unable to extend your hand with generous giving, and you find it too difficult to spend your time, power, or strength in the aid of Muslims, or you could not for one reason or another, there is nothing lesser than to offer a good word to your Muslim brother. And it is truly great, pleases your Lord and comforts your brother, and with it comes great reward, for the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) said:” And a good word is charity.” *Narrated by Al Bukhari.*

The Fourteenth Garden

Preventing Harm Coming to People

Many are the gardens of virtue, and Allah's bounty for them is great, and the paths for good in them are many, neither is the occasion sufficient, nor is time enough, it is but mention. Otherwise, there is in the book of Allah the Most High, and the traditions of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) what heals. But some souls may do injustice to its self, and be stingy on its pages, and hold back from its brethren even a kind word which only requires movement from the body, the tongue. For good deeds they do not give, and the kind words they will not speak, so there is nothing left to say to them but: do your selves a favor, and refrain from harming others. Do not harm them neither by action nor speech. For Abu Therr said:" I asked the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) which was the best of deeds? He said: Belief in Allah, and striving in his way. I said: Then which necks⁴⁹ are better? He said: The highest in price and the most precious to their families. I said: and If I do not do (one of those)? He said: You help one who is lost (in debt), or you make for a clumsy⁵⁰. I said: And if I do not do? He said: Abandon the harming of people, for it is a charity that you do upon yourself." *Narrated by Al Bukhary.*

⁴⁹ Meaning types of slaves to free.

⁵⁰ Someone who cannot make for himself.

Five Recommendations on your Path to the Gardens of Virtue

These are five short recommendations that will help protect yourself and your good deeds from being lost, with Allah's permission.

First, make sure your intent is for the sake of Allah, and follow in this the guidance of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), for good deeds are not correct save by these two conditions. "So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."⁵¹

Second, do not procrastinate in response to the call of good doing. Haste towards it with a good, content, and happy attitude, for that is of piety. Allah says" And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and paradise the width of the heavens and earth prepared for the pious"⁵²

And hear this rarity of good doing, and it is that Abdullah Ibn Omar (may Allah be pleased with them) was praying a voluntary prayer and his servant Nafeeh was sitting beside him waiting in case he needed anything. It is no secret that Nafeeh was a grand scholar and one of the narrators of Al Muwataa by Mallek (may Allah have mercy on him), and Ibn⁵³ Omar was very fond of him due to qualities he saw in him. So whilst Abdullah Ibn Omar was reciting Quran in prayer, he reached what

⁵¹ Quran (Al Kahf : 110).

⁵² Quran (Al Imran : 133).

⁵³ Means "son of" in Arabic.

Allah Most High said:” By no means shall you attain *Al-Birr* (piety, righteousness, etc., it means here Allah's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allah's Cause) of that which you love; and whatever of good you spend, Allah knows it well.”⁵⁴, then Abdullah Ibn Omar (may Allah be pleased with them) motioned with his hand, but Naffeeh did not understand what he was motioning about, even though he was very careful to execute the command. He waited until the end of the prayer to ask: What he was motioning at? Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I contemplated my possessions, and found that non of them were dearest than you, so I wanted to motion to you that you are free during prayer, for fear that my desire (to keep you) would conquer me after the prayer and I would change my mind. That is why I motioned. Naffeeh quickly initiated, he said: Companionship then? Ibn Omar said: That is yours!

Thirdly, if Allah enables you to do good deeds, then do them diligently. For Allah says:” For those who have done good is the best (reward, i.e. Paradise) and even more (i.e. having the honour of glancing at the Countenance of Allah) Neither darkness nor dust nor any humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the dwellers of Paradise, they will abide therein forever.”⁵⁵

Be careful when doing good to be diligent

For that is more hopeful for what is expected

⁵⁴ Quran (Al Imran : 92) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

⁵⁵ Quran (Yunus : 26) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

Put yourself in place of your brother who needed you, and remember what the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:” One of you does not believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” *Agreed upon (in authenticity)*

Fourthly; do not remind yourself of the good deeds you do. Do not hold favor over those whom you have bestowed generosity. Do not speak of it to others unless there is a benefit from it. Allah says:” O you who believe! Do not render in vain your *Sadaqah* (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury...”⁵⁶

And know with certainty, that it has been placed in your scale with Allah even if the ones concerned deny it.

A good deed by male or female, shall not be in vein no matter long time lapsed

If you do not encounter anyone worthy, then of it be worthy don't get left behind

Save the desperate whenever broken, for Allah cares always for situations dilapidated

⁵⁶ Quran (Al Baqara : 264) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

Fifthly, Reward those who have done you a favor minimally with a kind word. For that will help you, after Allah, in doing good deeds. For Allah says:” ...And do not forget liberality between yourselves...”⁵⁷

Reward the good does for what they have done. For good done upon the free is like rain

Be not like a swamp which has not been rained upon, be like a field flowers and fruit it will gain

Remember always a free man who gave you riches, and in modest robes from him did you gain.

⁵⁷ Quran (Al Baqara : 237) Translation from www.noblequran.com.

In Conclusion

These were some of the gardens of virtue, and some of its fields, easy for access, open of doors, sweet of fruit, generous of surroundings and impressions. So thanks and praise to you my Lord, for your grants, and generous bounty. My Lord we ask you success in that which you love and pleases you, and we ask you to give us paradise and save us from (hell) fire. Our Lord favor our land specially and the lands of Muslims generally with security and safety and righteousness. Our Lord bless what you have granted us of partners and offspring and wealth, and make them a source of satisfaction in the low and end lives. Our Lord, forgive us and our parents and all Muslims. You are indeed All Hearing, Capable of Answering.

And may prayers and peace be upon our Prophet Mohammad and upon his family and his companions.

So wrote the one who is in need of Allah's forgiveness: Faisal son of Saoud Al Haleebi on this Saturday 29-6- 1423 Hijri. WhatsApp: 0504930209 Bomazens1f@gmail.com

*** Note: All Translation is by the translator unless otherwise indicated.*

Contents

Dedication	4
Introduction	5
The First Garden: Concealment of Muslims' Shortcomings.....	9
The Second Garden: Fulfillment of Muslims' Needs.....	14
The Third Garden: Spending and Charity in the way of Allah.....	20
The Fourth Garden: The Garden of Mercy.....	32
The Fifth Garden: The Garden of Honoring Parents.....	38
The Sixth Garden: The Garden of Raising children.....	43
The Seventh Garden: Intercession on Behalf of Muslims.....	45
The Eighth Garden: Mending Relations (Amongst People).....	47
The Ninth Garden: The Garden of Teaching and Inviting to the Way of Allah.....	49
The Tenth Garden: Offering Breakfast to the Fasting.....	54
The Eleventh Garden: The Garden of Easing Hardship.....	56
The Twelfth Garden: Removing Harm from the Path (of the people).....	57
The Thirteenth Garden: The Good Word.....	58
The Fourteenth Garden: Preventing Harm Coming to People.....	59
Five Recommendations on your Path to the Gardens of Virtue	60
In Conclusion	64

The Gardens of Virtue

Prof. Faissal Saud Alhalabi



They are the gardens of virtue and the oasis of faith, plentiful shade, sweet water, pleasant breezes, and easy picking. Labor in it is joyful, sincerity illuminant, and honesty is with happiness. No sorrow befalls who enters, no regret by who works in it. These are gardens of true happiness, initiated by Allah for those who love him, created by Allah for those who desire bliss, established by Allah for those who want salvation in the low life and the end.

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