

‘Ashara Mubaraka 1441 H, Colombo
Majlis 3
Reflections

Hope is an essential trait, one which enables a person to remain optimistic and positive even in the most trying of circumstances. The third set of counsels Amirul Mumineen ^{AS} bestowed upon his *shahzada* Imam Hasan ^{AS} called upon him to hope for three things: hope for Allah’s forgiveness, hope for excellence and sublimity in all actions and hope to receive the intercession of Nabi Mohammed ^{SAW}.

Teaching Mumineen to instill in themselves hope and optimism, al-Dai al-Ajal Syedna Muayyad al-Shirazi ^{RA} writes:

سيفتح باب اذا سد باب * نعم و تهون الامور الصعاب

Surely, whenever one door closes another will open in the near future and difficulties will diminish.

Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin ^{TUS} observed that when a door of opportunity opens some people become full of positivity and expectation. However, when a door of opportunity closes they also become disillusioned. Syedna Abdeali Saifuddin’s ^{RA} actions reveal his optimistic and hopeful outlook, especially in times of adversity. He encourages us to remain optimistic when opportunities seem to be taken away. When famine struck Nagar and the livelihood of entire populations was compromised, Syedna ^{RA} invited 10,000 Mumineen to Surat and opened for them new doors of livelihood. He provided them with places to stay, offered them daily meals and ensured that they were taught various skills and crafts through which they could earn a livelihood. He set aside their earnings from for safekeeping and handed it to them when the time came for them to return to their

hometowns. This initiative opened multiple doors of opportunity, for apart from returning to Nagar, Syedna ^{RA} also sent them abroad to East Africa and Southeast Asia, including Sri Lanka. Over the years, Du‘at Mutlaqeen ^{AS} have guided Mumineen to never lose hope and always remain optimistic. It is due to this positive outlook that Mumineen have remained happy wherever they may be and no matter the upheavals and tribulations they encounter.

Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} mentioned the influence and impact that hope and remaining positive has upon the effectiveness of medical treatment. In many cases, if a person loses hope his or her treatment becomes ineffective whereas a positive mentality and demeanour often expedites recovery from illnesses.

Mufaddal Maula ^{TUS} narrated the story of two elderly women of the Banu Israel (Israelites) in which he further emphasized the importance of positive thinking and remaining hopeful. Due to antagonism between a man’s wife and his mother, his wife demanded that her husband take his mother to the wilderness and leave her there. Heeding his wife’s instructions, he left his mother in the wild where at night she began hearing the sounds of dangerous animals. An angel descended upon her and asked her how she felt, the sounds of the wild animals unceasing. She replied, ‘it will be okay’. ‘It is probably the sound of a camel weeping’, she said. Upon hearing her response, the angel gifted her a hundred goats. The next morning, at his wife’s instructions, the man returned to see what had become of his mother and found her alive, a hundred goats in tow. He returned home with his mother and her hundred goats and explained to his wife what had unfolded the previous night. Enticed by her mother-in-law’s boon from the wilderness, she demanded that her husband take her own mother there as well giving specific directions to make

sure her mother's 100 goats remain separated from her mother-in-law's. As his wife instructed, the man abandoned his mother-in-law in the same place as he had his own mother. As night fell, she too began hearing the sounds of wild animals. The same angel asked her what she was feeling. She replied, 'I am overcome with fear and am certain that these animals will attack me and I will not be spared'. Upon hearing her response, he replied 'so be it' and what she feared—transpired. Concluding the narration, Mufaddal Maula ^{TUS} pointed out that both women were faced with the same predicament, yet it was their attitude and approach that made all the difference.

Rasul Allah ^{SA} states that the *du'a* of a Mumin will always be heard for as long as he does not succumb to haste. In this context haste means that if there is a delay in his prayers being answered, his mindset changes from a positive one to one of negativity. If he remains positive, the Almighty will hear his prayers and eventually answer them.

This first of the three counsels was that one should hope for forgiveness of one's sins. Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} explained that it is due to our sins that our hopes and desires remain unfulfilled. Thus, the hope for forgiveness is the foundation for all his other hopes and desires. If one does not seek forgiveness for his sins, he will face further hardships and troubles which will ultimately hinder the fulfillment of his other hopes and desires. However, if one remains patient in times of difficulties and offers praise to the Almighty considering such trials and tribulations as a blessing and as an opportunity to cleanse himself of his sins, then he will eventually see his other hopes realized. On the contrary, if in place of gratefulness he resorts to complaining then he has missed out on the opportunity to seek forgiveness for his sins.

Syedna Saifuddin ^{TUS} has repeatedly stated that business is in the blood of the Dawoodi Bohra community. In today's *wa'az mubarak* he stated that sins deprive one of livelihood. He then asked how can one seek forgiveness from such sins and draw sustenance towards him? By ensuring that all his business dealings are halal. When complying with the tenets of Islam, business becomes an *'ibaadat* and provides *sawab* (divine reward) and cleanses sin just as does haj, umrah and other acts of sharia.

Dealing in interest on the other hand is tantamount to polytheism. This is because the one dealing in interest believes that it is his wealth that provides for him and not the Almighty who is the true provider of sustenance and livelihood. The Quran makes it explicit that Allah forgives all sins except that of polytheism. By giving and taking interest, he becomes entrapped in the gravest of sins, depriving himself of peace and comfort and denying himself the realization of all his other hopes and desires.

Rasul Allah ^{SA} states that an entrepreneurial businessman is rewarded while a risk-averse one remains empty-handed. An entrepreneurial businessman is one who has faith in Allah Ta'ala, spending his efforts and hoping that Allah Ta'ala graces him with his blessings as He sees fit for there is no limit to what He can bestow. The deeper his faith in Allah Ta'ala, the more he is an entrepreneur.

For years al-Dai al-Ajal Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin ^{RA} encouraged Mumineen to become business-minded and not service-minded. A service-minded individual is one who believes that it is a person or a company that provides him with his livelihood. Even though a Mumin may be in the services of an individual or a company, he remains business-minded. His

mindset becomes evident when he has to take leave for Ashara Mubarakah. Even if his employer refuses to grant him leave to attend the *majalis* of Imam Husain ^{AS} he attends regardless knowing very well that it is Allah Ta'ala who is the Provider of livelihood. In contrast, there are many with thriving businesses yet they are ensnared in a service mindset. They lack the courage to attend the *majalis* of Imam Husain ^{AS} thinking that if they do so they will lose customers who they wrongly perceive as their providers of sustenance and livelihood.

The second thing one should hope for is sublimity in action in all endeavours, what Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} explained as *khubi*. Whatever one does, it should be done sublimely with the aim of excellence and perfection. For hopes to be fulfilled, especially the hope of sublimity and excellence in action, one must first act. Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} clarified this notion with the analogy of a piece of land ideal for farming. The land cannot produce quality crops unless it is cultivated. Similarly, the hope to reach sublimity in action is preconditioned with actual action. Mufaddal Maula ^{TUS} continued by explaining that if someone hopes or desires for Allah Ta'ala to fulfill his wishes, this desire must be seen in his actions. If that is not the case, then his hope is nothing but in name. A Mumin's actions, Maula ^{TUS} explained, no matter the circumstances in which he finds himself, always resonate with his *muhabbat* and love for Wali Allah ^{AS}.

To further illustrate the meaning of sublime actions, Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal ^{TUS} narrated the incident when Nimrood cast Ibrahim Nabi ^{AS} into a blazing fire. The people of Nabi Ibrahim's ^{AS} time complained to Nimrood and demanded that he set the Nabi on fire for he had lit a fire in their hearts. Revealing new nuances to the popular narration, Mufaddal Maula ^{TUS} elaborated that Nimrood first put Ibrahim Nabi ^{AS} into a large iron oven, yet the

fire could not harm a single hair of the Nabi ^{AS}. Then Nimrood started a wood fire whose flames rose to the skies. The heat was so intense that birds that flew overhead perished. The fire was so great, that Ibrahim Nabi's ^{AS} enemies were unable to approach it let alone cast him into it. As has been his *modus operandi* elsewhere, Iblees posing as an elderly man suggested the use of a catapult. After the roaring flames were transformed into a lush garden, upon his inquisition, Ibrahim Nabi ^{AS} revealed to Jibra'eel the reason behind his responses. He said he sought help from neither him nor Allah because if it pleased Allah that the enemies' fire consume him, how could he question Allah's Will. Hearing his explanation, Jibra'eel exclaimed, '*Maa shaa' Allah*'. Ibrahim Nabi's ^{AS} thoughts and actions were sublime.

The third hope is for intercession of the Nabi Mohammed ^{SA}, the Arabic word *rajaa* also means *waseela*, or intercession; to intercede on behalf of someone. Without intercession neither of the previous two, forgiveness and sublimity of action, can be hoped for. Through intercession, a pauper can become king, a drop can become an ocean; one tear can become 8 *jannat*.

We have often heard the story of the fallen angel, Fitris. He had been given instructions which he delayed in fulfilling meriting Allah's displeasure. He was left bereft of the power of flight and abandoned upon an island where he remained for 700 years in the worship of Allah Ta'ala. When Imam Husain ^{AS} was born Jibra'eel ^{AS} was sent with 1000 angels to give felicitations to Rasul Allah and en route they landed upon this island. Fitris pleaded to be lifted and taken before Rasul Allah ^{SA} and Jibraeel obliged carrying him on the tip of his wings. Having been informed of Fitris' situation, Rasul Allah ^{SA} instructed that he crawl to Husain Imam ^{SA} and gently caress his wings upon his *jism mubarak* and then return. He did so and his sins were forgiven

and his flight restored. He pledged that from then on no one would do ziyarat of Imam Husain ^{AS}, or pray salam or *salawat* upon him but he would convey it to Imam Husain ^{AS}. When Imam Husain ^{AS} was slain Fitris swooped down from his lofty station accompanied by a congregation of angels to Karbala, where he committed to *matam* and *bukaa* ' at the place of his martyrdom.

Maulana Hurr ^{AS} encompassed all three hopes on the Day of Ashura. He sought forgiveness for being the one who had stopped Imam Husain's ^{AS} horse. He showed sublimity in action by falling at Imam Husain's ^{AS} feet and asking to be the first *shaheed*. Finally, he was graced with intercession as he lay with his head cradled by Imam Husain ^{AS} who wiped the sand from his face and declared that your mother named you Hurr and I pronounce you free in this world and the next.

Maulatona Umme Salama ^{RA} let out a shrill on the eve of the eleventh of Moharram, a shrill so loud that the people of Madina came out of their houses to attend to her. She called for the Hashimi ladies to gather with her in crying and lamentation as she told them how Rasul Allah ^{SA} had come to her in a dream, his blessed head and beard covered with the sand of Karbala. He queried why it was that she looked every day at the bottle of sand he had given her but not on this day? She entered the room where it was kept and observed that the sand was no more, and in its place the container was filled with blood which she took and spread over her face before sitting in the majlis of *matam* and *bukaa* ' upon Imam Husain ^{AS}.

As we attend these *noorani mawa 'iz* here in Colombo and Chennai, or seek the *barakat* of Imam Husain's ^{SA} *zikr* with those with *raza* all across the world, we are doing so with these three hopes very much in our hearts and minds. The hope for

forgiveness of our past transgressions and avoidance of the same in future. The hope of future actions that would be sublime by being in accordance with the teachings and guidance of the Awliya Allah ^{AS} whose narrations we hear. And above all, the hope for the intercession of our Maula ^{TUS} to take our fragile repentance and acts and turn them into ever-lasting rewards. And today he did so, emphatically declaring that Syedna Burhanuddin ^{RA} has witnessed our *matam* and *aah-o zaari* from *jannat* - and is pleased.

May Allah Ta'ala grant his *shahzada* and successor, our beloved Aali Qadr Maula, a long life in everlasting health and vitality, until the Day of Qiyaamat.

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