

# Let the Competitions Begin!

An important topic and one of the strongest ways for many to charge and ignite their Ibaadah is flipping back the pages of our golden history. There are many, many different ways to charge yourself into doing Ibaadah. We talked about igniting your yearning to Allah so let us talk about igniting your Ibaadah. One of the ways is warm up for Ibaadah (like the two Rak'ah the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam did), that gives you energy and excels your Ibaadah. Remembering death kills boredom and blows the sleep away, making room for your Ibaadah. Snippets of the lives of the Salaf overcomes laziness. It energizes, charges and gets one to excel and that is what I wanted to talk about.

Befriend the Salaf. Choose a friend from the Salaf and befriend him. Everyone has stars they look up to and Muslims have the Salaf as stars. Those are our stars. Someone will say how do I befriend the Salaf when they are all dead? Yes they all died (no doubt about it), but their legacy of Ibaadah to imitate and mimic lives on. Today the standards have become so low that if one does not do too many Haraams, he is considered a saint by many. The surrounding status around us has become so low that those who do Sunnah and Nawaafil for their Salah are labelled forerunners in Ibaadah, Saabiqun Bil-Khayraati Bi'ithnillah (سَابِقُ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ). But let us look at our forefathers, the real standards we look up to. I am not going to try to mention any example of their worship in Ramadhaan, I want to give you a glimpse of their life three hundred and sixty five days a year (a normal day to them). And if that is a normal day, let your mind wonder how their nights and days in Ramadhaan were.

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, the supporter of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, the Daa'iyah and one of two people who took Islam all the way to Yemen. Yemen and its surrounding areas, today Abu Musa al-Ash'ari and Mu'aadh in their graves get the reward of everyone there. That is one side we know, but he had another side like every 'Aalim, Mujaddid, Mujaahid and righteous Imaam, and like every pious Muslim should have. Abu Musa strived hard in his Ibaadah during his life. When they saw him in that fashion, they told him why do you not relax a little bit Abu Musa? He said when the horses are about to get at the end of the race or when they see and spot water and they are about to reach the water, they sprint to it. And I am at the end so let me continue until I die, and he did, radhiallahu 'anhu. Surprising? Well more stunning than that is that they did not say these kind of statements at the retirement age, they used to say such statements in their youth. Many were known to say such statements in their youth. When a person is doing a two mile run, he needs to maintain a form. He takes off at a slow pace, picks up a little bit and then in the final lap and the last yards, he sprints to the finish line. Their life and Ibaadah was not like that. Their life was like the last few yards, like the last lap that you are sprinting to.

Abu Muslim al-Khawlaani yearned so badly to meet the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam. A one man nation who single-handedly by the power of Allah took down al-Aswad al-‘Ansi (the man who popped up in Yemen claiming he was a prophet of Allah).

While the armies clashed and the memorisers of the Qur’an were being killed one after another (by the tens and in another narration by the hundreds) as they were fending off Musaylamah al-Kathaab, Abu Muslim al-Khawlaani on the other side of the world took down al-Aswad al-‘Ansi alone by the will of Allah. A man whose Du’aa was answered. He had a statement similar to that of his teacher Abu Musa al-Ash’ari, but he also said something amazing to the Sahaabah. When he was ousted out of Yemen, he quickly headed to Madinah to meet the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, only to find out that the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam had died just before he got there. In his agony of not reaching the level of a Sahaabi, he said do you companions think you will ever beat us? No Wallahi we will compete with you and we will beat you. Daring, bold statement from a giant. That should be my statement and your statement. We should compete with our Salaf, if you want their levels and if you want their companionship in Jannah.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ  
الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿آل عمران: ١٤٢﴾

Do you think that you will enter Paradise before Allah tests those of you who fought (in His Cause) and (also) tests those who are As-Saabireen (the patient ones, etc)? (Surat Aali Imraan: 142)

Do you think you will enter the same Jannah of Bilaal, Abu Bakr, Khaalid, Umar, Hafsah and Sumayyah without doing the work they did? Do you think just because I took my Shahaadah and I was born into Islam, I am granted a free shuttle pass into Firdaws without some sleepless nights of worship? It is amazing to read in the books that detail the biographies of the Salaf, statements like they said about so and so that if you were to tell him that he would die tomorrow, there is nothing he could fit in his schedule of Ibaadah. Wallahi, numerous times I read it. Every day of their lives was as if they are going to die that day or the following day. You may say we cannot be like them. Wallahil-‘Adheem it is possible. Sahaabah did not get revelation and neither did we. Tabi’een did not see the one who got revelation and neither did we. They were determined, we are not. That is the problem right there. It is difficult yes, impossible? No. We also mention such supreme examples so that if one does a small portion of what we say they did, then he will overcome the obstacle of all obstacles in becoming among those successful, saved from Hell and admitted to Paradise.

فَمَنْ زُحِرَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ  
الْغُرُورِ ﴿آل عمران: ١٨٥﴾

And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, he indeed is successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception (a deceiving thing). (Surat Aali Imraan: 185)

Examples that inspire one to not let the blessed days enter and leave without taking advantage of them. And it is not only the quantity of their Ibaadah, but rather it is also the quality of their Ibaadah. Qataadah said Mawriq al-'Ajli said the ideal example of a believer on this earth is a man whose ship has sunk and he is floating on a small piece of wood shouting Yaa Allah, Yaa Allah so that Allah can deliver him out of the water safely. That is how life should be. Their entire lives were like a man in an ocean, his life depends on a small piece of wood, desperate that Allah delivers him to the shore (what they meant by that is Jannah).

They used to describe Sufyaan ath-Thawri as though he was on a sinking ship. Most of his saying was Yaa Rabb Sallim (يا رب سلم), Yaa Rabb Sallim (O Allah safety, O Allah safety), the Du'aa of the Messengers on the Day of Terror. Fatimah Bint Abdul-Maalik, the wife of Umar Ibn Abdul-Azeez the great Khaleefah said I never saw anyone more into Salah or fasting or fearful from Allah than Umar. Fatimah said he used to make Ishaah' then cry and weep, slumbering in and out all night long. She said that when he would be in bed with me, he would remember a verse or a matter of the life after and then he would begin to shake and shiver like a wet bird, sit up and cry all night long as I tried to cover and comfort him. Let me give you more. Fatimah told al-Mugheerah Ibn Hakeem one time that there may be those who prayed and fasted more than Umar Ibn Abdul-Azeez but none of you came close to his fear of Allah. These were men whose Ibaadah nourished and raised them to be the revivers they were.

Uqbah Ibn Naafi' said I went to Fatimah and I asked how was the worship of your husband Umar? They sought to learn from each other so we need to learn from them, and this is our topic. Uqbah went to Fatimah to learn the secrets of Umar Ibn Abdul-Azeez, from the only person who possibly might know. He wanted to know what he did behind those closed doors and behind those walls. Why do you think Uqbah went to her to find out? Because in his two years, four months and some odd days as a Khaleefah, Umar Ibn Abdul-Azeez spread justice and the law of Allah on this earth and he made not only the Muslims rich, rather he made the entire Muslim world rich with the Ahl ath-Thimmah included in that. Listen to her one liner answer. She said I do not know that he showered from Janaabah since he became a Khaleefah. A respectable way of saying in the two years and four months we did not have any relationship. In the day time, it was worship in establishing justice and the rule of Allah on this earth. That is worship, that is the Tawheed of Allah. At night, it was establishing the personal Tawheed of Allah. No time for relationship with his wife for two years, four months and some odd days.

They asked 'Aamir Ibn Abdillah how do you sustain so much Ibaadah? He said simple, all I do is delay my food until night and move my sleep a little bit to the day. Easy? Yes, easy on giant souls only. Another time they asked him and he said when I get tired, I remember Jahannam and it blows the sleep out of my eyes and keeps me up all night. Ahmad Ibn Harb said it astonishes me that one may know Jannah is getting decorated above him and Jahannam is blazing under him and he rests in sleep in between them.

When people saw Mansoor Ibn al-Mu'tamir, they would say this man has been hit with a calamity. His eyes are always teary, his heart is always broken and he is low toned. His mother would tell him what have you done? You cry all night and you never stop weeping, did you kill anyone? He would say mother, I know what I did.

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا... ﴿السجدة:

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Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope. (Surat as-Sajdah: 16)

In the life of Safwaan Ibn Saleem, I read one time that he used to have pain in his feet from standing all night every day. They said this about him. They said he reached the point of Ibaadah where if you tell him the Judgment Day is tomorrow, he could not add anymore Ibaadah to his schedule. He would say all the time:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَحِبُّ لِقَاءَكَ فَأَحِبِّ لِقَائِي

O Allah I love to meet You, so love to meet me.

Yearning for Allah and yearning for meeting Allah was like the gentle breeze constantly blowing on their hearts, extinguishing the blaze of the Dunya on their hearts. Musa Ibn Isma'eel said if I tell you that I never saw Hammaad Ibn Salamah laughing, would you believe me? He was always occupied with teaching, he was an 'Aalim. He was either teaching, reading Qur'an, glorifying Allah (making Dhikr) or going to Salah and that is how his entire day was spent. Hammaad Ibn Salamah said we never saw Sulaymaan at-Taymi but in obedience to Allah. He was either in Salah or leaving from the Masjid, going to a Janaazah or leaving from a Janaazah, teaching or learning. We said this man could not even commit a sin. Is he infallible or are they saying he is infallible? We are not Shi'ah. They said it based on what appeared to them, that the man could not commit a sin even if he wanted to because he did not have time to. His whole life roamed around Ibaadah. Wakee' said al-A'mash was seventy years old and he never missed Takbeer al-Ihraam (Allahu Akbar) behind the Imaam. For sixty years he did not miss the first Rak'ah of Salah.

