

عثرات الطريق  
**HINDRANCES**  
**on the Path**

By

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In the Name of Allâh  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allâh in Islâm) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islâmic Monotheism), the men and the women who are obedient (to Allâh), the men and women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and the women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allâh has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allâh has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord — Allâh), the men and the women who give *Sadaqât* (i.e., *Zakât* and alms), the men and the women who observe *Saum* (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadân, and the optional *Nawâfil* fasting), the men and the women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts) and the men and the women who remember Allâh much with their hearts and tongues. Allâh has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Paradise).” (33:35)

## Introduction

All praises are due to Allâh, Lord of all that exists, and may Allâh’s peace and blessings be on the most honorable Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his progeny and Companions.

The Path to the Hereafter is long and hard and contains hindrances, barriers, shortcomings and errors. However, whenever any Muslim, male or female, falls into a type of shortcoming, he or she follows the mistake with repentance, invoking Allâh for forgiveness, returning to Him and seeking His Pardon.

There are many types of hindrances that Muslims might face on the Path (to Allâh and His reward in the Hereafter). Some examples of these hindrances are: laziness in performing the compulsory acts of worship, ignoring voluntary worship, excessive indulgence in disliked acts (that Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ did not prefer for Muslims, even though they are not a part of the prohibitions) and committing what Allâh has disallowed; the accompanying sign for all of this being the wastefulness of time and energy. No matter if the hindrances on the Path are few or many, they are still difficult barriers to surmount for those who have not prepared themselves adequately for this task.

It is a fact that sometimes, falling into shortcomings might signal the beginning of righteousness and a path that directs to repentance. If so, then one stays on the Path firmly until he or she reaches its end, when the sun of this life sets for the last time and the sun of the Hereafter rises, where the believers dwell in the Garden of Eden in delight and comfort. We ask Allâh to gather us all in that dwelling.

**Abdul-Malik Al-Qasim**



## First Hindrance

### **Neglecting the Rights of the Neighbors**

It is the sacred month of Ramadân, when Muslims are fasting in obedience to Allâh and to draw closer to Him; stomachs are hungry and the sunset is near. The family sits around the table on which the food for breaking the fast is placed. Every eye especially the children's, are following the mother in anticipation of the tasty food and drink that she has prepared for them. A few moments to break the fast remains, hands have been washed and sleeves rolled up. Then, the voice of the *Mu'adhdhin* (who calls the *Adhân* — the call to prayer) announces the termination of the tenth day of the sacred month. In haste, all hands race toward the plates, when all of a sudden, the sound of the bell shatters the silence of the moment. They wonder who would be coming at this very moment. One of the youngers who fasted until half the day only, (because he is still young and not required to fast the entire day yet) rushes to the door and inquires, "Who is it?" A voice that has weakened by hunger and shyness answers, "I am your neighbor." The boy went back to his mother in a hurry to tell her and a sense of anxiety overtakes the family, "What brought our neighbor at this time? Has any harm touched her or one of her children?" His mother suddenly remembered that her neighbor's husband has been absent for some time and she rushes to open the door, welcome her neighbor and ask her, "What is it, I hope to Allâh that everything is alright?" Her neighbor lowered her head and said in a shy voice, "We are looking for something to break our fast. My children are hungry and I am still fasting." So the mother pulls her neighbor kindly in and offers her, her kindness and generosity.

When the father went out for mosque to join the prayer in congregation, he lays his eyes on his neighbor's house and realizes that only a wall separates between hunger and full stomachs, poverty and abundance. He asks himself, 'Our neighbor only came to us when extreme need struck her. How is it that we did not ask about her condition? Why did we not visit her? Why did she come to us, is it because we are the closest neighbors to her, or because she is shy and feared that her own people would know that she is in need?'

There are many families who live in the same condition, living in intolerable conditions and lacking the ability to sustain their needs of food and drink. We should all fear Allâh's torment, for we go to sleep with the stomach full while our Muslim neighbors suffer from hunger, our relatives overwhelmed by sadness and our friends in desperate need.

Once, a relative of mine conducted research in a charity organization and came to know that some families, who belong to sub-tribes, known for their wealth, are among the recipients. He mentioned some family names, the rich members of whom can spend on their extended family and relatives for the rest of their lives from the charity they should pay in one year!

Materialism has shot its poisoned arrows at the hearts of many Muslims so much that it is feared the Muslim community will be affected in such and adverse way that the brother does not know or have contact with his own brother, and the same for relatives and neighbors. If we are not at the side of our relatives and neighbors in difficult times, when will we do that, when Allâh sends down His relief to them and they thus overcome the hardship?

No, there are orphans, widows and needy people all around

us. Therefore, make sure to inquire about their condition, help them acquire their needs so that they invoke Allâh for you, might that you never taste misery in this life ever.

### Tales from the *Salaf*

Shaqiq bin Ibrahim said:

“While we were with Ibrahim bin Adham, a man passed by us and Ibrahim asked, ‘Is not that man so-and-so?’ and he was answered in the positive. Ibrahim said to a man in the gathering, ‘Catch up with him and tell him that Ibrahim asks, ‘Why did you not greet us with the *Salâm*?’ That man said in reply, ‘By Allâh, my wife has just delivered a baby and I do not have anything, so I went out unaware of my surroundings.’ The man, returned to him and told what happened, and Ibrahim commented, ‘We all belong to Allâh! How is it that we were unaware about the condition of our friend until his condition deteriorated to this point?’ Ibrahim said to a man who was present, ‘Go to so-and-so and borrow two dinârs from him, then go to the market and buy whatever is possible with a dinâr and then give him. That man said, ‘I went to the market and bought whatever I could with one dinâr and then went to the man’s house. I knocked the door and his wife asked, ‘Who is this?’ I said, ‘I need your husband.’ She said, ‘He is not here right now.’ I said, ‘Then open the door and go inside.’ She opened the door, and we took whatever we carried on the camel inside her house and gave her the second dinâr. She asked, ‘Who sent all this?’ I said, ‘Your bother (in Islam) Ibrahim bin Adham.’ She said, ‘O Allâh! Do not forget what happened today from Ibrahim.’”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sifatus-Safwah*, vol. 4, p. 155

### Second Hindrance

### Lie regarding Marriage

The whole world cannot contain my happiness, which I do not hide, and a shy smile appears on my face, as I hear my best friend tell me about her brother, “He wants to marry you.” I said to myself, ‘Now I will have a best friend and her brother will be my husband.’ She praised his mannerism and good behavior and said while smiling, “You will live like the princesses of the Middle Ages. He will strive to provide you comfort and shower you with his affection.” Things happened fast since then and my happiness did not give space to careful thinking. I did not ask for anything, not even a specified *Mahr* (dowry) or where will I live. We did not verify that he even works or where he works, he was the brother of my best friend. I started making plans for the wedding dress,<sup>1</sup> and I took her advice in the type of fabric to use, the gold I should buy, kitchenware, what he likes and dislikes and the best gift to give him.

My father was amazed to my dedication to marry this man, but invoked Allâh to bless my efforts, especially since I am his only daughter.

My future husband chose the most expensive hotel for the wedding and was confused as to the gift he should give to

<sup>1</sup> Which is an evil innovation in the religion, wherein Muslim women wear white dresses like non-Muslim women wear in weddings, thus imitating them, even though Allâh forbade Muslims from imitating the disbelievers. Further, this white dress is nothing similar to the outer garment (the *Jilbâb* that Muslim women must wear no matter the occasion). Other types of *Bid'ah* and imitating the *Kuffâr* pertaining to weddings include wearing an engagement ring, conducting a wedding party where men and women mingle, music is played, and so forth. These are rather evil and unacceptable types of behavior and conduct in Islam.



me. Meanwhile, I overcome by my dreams and passion and during wedding day, I was especially happy. However, the dream ended when I realized that his face showed no concern and he spent a large part of the night out of the house. Whenever I wanted to address these concerns, my friend would tell me that I should forego these minor things because he is a husband! Then I realized that I was married to him not to my friend, and I finally picked up the phone and called my father, who was elated to hear my voice. But my voice was tired and I said, "I do not want him, he is a drug addict." My father asked with his strong voice, "How, where are you now?" The days of happiness ended quickly and elation turned into sadness, "How can you my best friend, lie to me like this? If someone like him wanted to marry you, would you agree? How could you have cheated me?"

Some women ask other Muslim women for marriage for their relatives, praise them in front of them and mention their good qualities. However, much of what is being said are lies or at least exaggerations. To these women we say:

"If someone lies to you, you would be bothered by being lied to. Why do you lie to people then, especially with regard to marriage? Would you agree that the same happens to your daughter?"

### **Tales From the *Salaf***

Examine this example of truthful statements: Ar-Rabi' bin Khaytham's sister came by and hugged his son saying:

"How are you, my son?" Ar-Rabi' asked her, "Have you breast fed him?" She said, "No." Ar-Rabi' said; "Why not then utter the truth by saying, 'My nephew?'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Kitabas-Samt*, p. 255

### Third Hindrance

### **Exposing one's Secrets**

There are TV cameras that are affixed on your face and transmit your statements, pains and hopes, what you long for and your happy moments, and even the smallest details about what happens between you and your husband in your bedroom. These television cameras transmit all this to listening ears using your own words.

To elaborate some women, especially who have just married, like to talk to their female friends and relatives about their husbands saying, "He said this and that, and I said this and that; he bought a gold piece for me, he took me to a nice place," and so forth. Some of them even repeat the words of affection that their husbands say to them, sometimes claiming that their husbands cannot stand staying away from them even for a short while! One of them might also talk about her husband's habits regarding sleep, and the problems she faced in this regard, describing her husband to her friends, mention his shortcomings and errors, and so forth. All this is unlawful in the religion, tasteless, and most importantly, a type of backbiting and spreading calumnies. It is not proper for the wife to even mention an act of righteousness that he performed for Allâh in sincerity, especially if he does not like people knowing this quality of him.

Dear sister in Islam! Why is it that you talk about a matter that has conveyed to you in confidence? Think about the women who like to listen to you when you expose your secrets to them, some of them would be elated to hear that her friend is happy, yet, she would wish to her friend's