

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“Do You Recognise Me?”

Shahin-ur Rahman

The religion of Islām has been completed to such perfection that it has left absolutely no stone unturned. Allāh ﷻ mentions:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ﴾ [المائدة : ٣]

“Today, I have completed your religion for you.”⁽¹⁾

The details of this completion are found in numerous āyāt of the Qur’ān and in many chests from the treasures of Ḥadīth - from establishing the concept of *Tawḥīd* and *Risālah* to removing a harmful object from the street. Big or small, Islām has got it all!

From among these intricate teachings of Islām is one very important *Sunnah* which, unfortunately, has been confined to mere theory; the Muslim *Ummah* across the globe have practically disregarded it. This is the *Sunnah* of behaving appropriately when visiting a fellow human being on his/her deathbed. The ‘*Ulamā*’ have recorded ample ḥadīths wherefrom such a *Sunnah* is physically demonstrated.

Imāms al-Bukhārī and Muslim ﷺ have recorded a ḥadīth in their *Ṣaḥīḥayn* on the authority of Sayyidunā al-Musayyib ﷺ that when Abū Ṭālib – the beloved uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ – had reached his final moments, the Prophet ﷺ was encouraging him to pronounce the statement of *Īmān*.⁽²⁾

Imām al-Bukhārī ﷺ has related another ḥadīth on the authority of Sayyidunā Anas ﷺ that a young Jewish boy who used to serve the Prophet ﷺ became ill. The Prophet ﷺ visited the youngster and requested that he accept Islām. He looked at his father, who advised him to obey Abū ’l-Qāsim – i.e. the Prophet ﷺ – and, subsequently, he embraced Islām. The Prophet ﷺ then left the home of the young boy and said:

«الحمد لله الذي أنقذه من النار»

“All praise is due to Allāh who has saved him from the Fire.”⁽³⁾

These two ḥadīths display the Prophet’s ﷺ compassion for both the old and young alike; hence, we learn this is something ought to be practised wherever and whenever possible. It is also worth noting that the Prophet ﷺ neither differentiated between family and non-family, nor prioritised Muslims over non-Muslims.

⁽¹⁾ [Al-Mā’idah: 5/3].

⁽²⁾ Al-Bukhārī (3884) and Muslim (24).

⁽³⁾ Al-Bukhārī (1356).

This methodology was applied by the great companions of the Prophet ﷺ after his demise. We learn from another incident reported by Imām Muslim ﷺ that when ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ ﷺ had reached his final stages, his son ‘Abdullāh ﷺ was consoling his father and reassuring him that everything is looking positive, and then reminded him that the Prophet ﷺ had verified his success.⁽⁴⁾

Here, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ ﷺ practically illustrated what one ought to say and do when visiting a person on his/her deathbed.

Today, it is a shame to see many Muslims say the most inappropriate of things, e.g. “Do you recognise me?” “Do you remember we went to such-and-such a place together many years ago?” and the likes. Instead, we should be pointing their attention to the hope in Allāh’s ﷻ Forgiveness and Vast Mercy, along with motivating them to increase their desire to meet the Lord of all the Worlds.

May Allāh ﷻ enable us to revive this *Sunnah* of His beloved Prophet ﷺ. Āmīn.

⁽⁴⁾ Muslim (121).