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“Akhlāq: Achieving and Sustaining a Noble Character”

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OPENING DU’A

Bismillah ar Rahman ir Raheem; al Hamdu llahi Rabbi Alameen ar Rahman ir Raheem; wa salaatu wa salaamu alay Muhammad wa ala alahi wa sallim. Allāhumma salli wa sallim alā sayyidinā Muhammadin, wa alā ālihi wa sahbih; Al-hamdu-li-Llaahi, muqaliba-l-quluubi wa-l-absaar. Allaahumma thabit quluubana °ala siraatika-l-qaweem, Wa-j°alnaa li-wajhika muttajiheen, wa salli °ala-sh-shafee°i-l-habeeb, rahmatil-°aalameen, wa manaari-l-najiyeen, wa marsaa-l-°aarifeen

Praise be to Allah, the Turner of the hearts and sight. O Allah, fix our hearts on the best of Your ways, and make us face You in our way, and bestow blessings on the beloved intercessor, the mercy of all the worlds, the lighthouse of the survivors, the harbor of the knowers.

Asalaam alaykum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatuhu

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam, my dear friends and students, those who have fasted the month of Ramadān inwardly and outwardly, and faced the challenges of the body, the mind, the *nafs ammārra*, and the blessings and rewards of meeting those challenges: *Asalaam alaykum*.

Introduction: Emerging from Ramadān

As you know, we have reached the end of another Ramadān. Today, I want to speak to you about what we need to emerge from Ramadān with: specifically, a noble, humble, loving, trustworthy, devoted and dedicated character, *akhlaq*.

It is my hope in my talks this weekend to give you signs that you and I can use on a moment to moment basis, once they are fully ingrained in and embraced by us, to not only refine our character, but also to sustain it, even under the assault of destructive forces (self or other). We have all experienced those destructive forces and the challenges they bring; many of us even in this last month of Ramadān. It is at those times, that our character is most tested. How important is good character? It is the keystone in the arch of Islam and Sufism. Abdullah Ibn Amr ibn Al-As reported, the Prophet Muhammad (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) used to say, **“The best among you is he who has the best *akhlaq*.”** (Sahih Bukhari)

I asked Umar, "O chief of the believers! What has been affirmed?" He said, "I have said what the Prophet said. He said, 'Allah will admit into Paradise any Muslim whose good character is attested by four persons.' We asked the Prophet, 'If there were three witnesses only?' He said, 'Even three.' We asked, 'If there were two only?' He said, 'Even two.' But we did not ask him about one witness.'"

For us as Muslims and Sufis, this subject of character is of the utmost importance. Looking around at the world we live in, it would have been hard to imagine, even 25 years ago, how bereft of character, how ignoble and selfish, how much greed, partisanship, and arrogance not only exist in, but shape our society and culture. I will not dwell on what brought us, humanity, to the brink of self destruction, ethical corruption, and spiritual degeneration. But I do wish to take the time to look at the remedies, and indeed, the preventative measures one can take to strengthen our spiritual immune system. Strengthening our spiritual immune system means to cleanse our mind, heart, soul.

Character in the Words of Our Prophet (sal)

Let me share some *hadith* on character from our Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).

Yahya related from Malik that he had heard that the Messenger of Allah (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, "I was sent to perfect good character."

The Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) also made clear the pitfalls to nobility and good character, the barriers to awakening the potential for *akhlaq* in our self, and it should not surprise us that he describes it in relationship to others, not just as the qualities of an individual. Instructions on character come from the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) in the form a caution on how not to act, as well as knowledge of the reward of acting with good character:

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: Allah's Apostle (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, "Whoever has (the following) four characteristics will be a pure hypocrite: "If he speaks, he tells a lie; if he gives a promise, he breaks it; if he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous; and if he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent evil insulting manner (unjust). And whoever has one of these characteristics has one characteristic of a hypocrite, unless he gives it us." (Book #53, Hadith #403)

In contrast to that, the qualities of one with good character, the manifestation of *akhlaq* are also described to us,

The Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said: “There is nothing heavier than good character put in the scale of a believer on the Day of Resurrection.”

And also,

Narrated Abu Umamah: The Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, “I guarantee a house in the surroundings of Paradise for a man who avoids quarrelling even if he were in the right, a house in the middle of Paradise for a man who avoids lying even if he were joking, and a house in the upper part of Paradise for a man who made his character good.

And again,

"The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character." (See Hadith No. 56 (B) Vol. 8) (Book #56, Hadith #759).

Akhlaq and Its Components

When we speak of character we use the term *akhlaq*; it is a term we are all familiar with, so we tend not to think about it very much. Yet as we see in the *hadith* I just quoted, it is the cornerstone of the mission of the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*). *Akhlaq* refers to the unique potential and necessary attitude or disposition of the human being, whose purpose is not just to inhabit this earth, but also to be the integral link, the evolutionary example of the dynamic reality...Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta'ālā*) and His living attributes.

Let us take a minute to look at the root and meaning of the word *akhlaq* and to address the question of what makes up one's character. Why does one person have one character and another person a different character? *Akhlaq* is the plural for the word *khulq* which means disposition. "Disposition" is that faculty (*malakah*) of the soul. *Malakah* is a property of the soul that comes into existence through exercise and repetitive practice, and is not easily destroyed.

An individual’s character is made of up many facets and developed over time. A particular characteristic (*malakah*) may appear in a person because of one of the following reasons:

1. Natural and physical make up: some people are naturally more patient while others are touchy and nervous. Some are easily disturbed and saddened while others show greater resistance and resilience.
2. Habit: characteristics formed because of continual repetition of certain acts can lead to the emergence of a certain disposition.
3. Practice and conscious effort: if continued long enough will eventually lead to the formation of a disposition.

Even though the physical make-up of an individual may produce certain pre-dispositions in him or her, it is by no means true that we have no choice in the matter and are compelled to abide by the dictates of our physical make-up. On the contrary, we have the power to choose to overcome our pre-dispositions through practice and effort. We can control our lust, anger and other emotions and desires, and channel them to propel ourselves along the path of perfection and wisdom.

When I speak about the capacity to bring about changes in our dispositions, I am not saying to destroy our instincts of reproduction or self-preservation. What I mean is that one should avoid going to either extremes in regard to them, and maintain a condition of balance and moderation.

Human perfection has many levels. The greater the amount of self-discipline and effort on the part of the individual, the higher the level of perfection that one can attain. In other words, we each stand between two extreme points, the lowest of which is below the level of animals, and the highest of which surpasses even the high station of angels. It is the goal of the path to raise and to guide man from the lowest animal state to that exalted position.

To do this, it is necessary for us to purify our self of evil traits of character; without having cleansed our self of bad habits, it is impossible to nourish and develop truly good character. In this regard, the human soul can be compared to a mirror. If we wish to see something beautiful reflected in a mirror, we must first cleanse the mirror, so that dust and dirt do not disfigure the reflection. The *hadith* of the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), **"My religion is based on cleanliness"** does not refer to outward cleanliness alone; more than that it alludes to the inner purity of the soul.

If we set foot on the path of self-purification, Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) comes to our aid and guide guides us along the path:

Wa-lladheena jaahaduu feenaa lanahdiyannahum subulanaa wa’inna-Llaaha lama^ca-l-muhsineen.

And [as for] those who struggle in Our cause, surely We guide them in Our ways. (29:69)

Proof of Character

Is there any question that among the human community there are higher and lower, more and less noble, more and less refined individuals? And similarly, across cultures there a universal concept of a person of virtue, of noble character, such that, even when one looks throughout the hagiography of the saints of the world religions one finds that this is the cornerstone that defines the best of humanity. It is the expression of the natural goodness/*fitrah* of the heart, as displayed in the best of loving and kind relationships between fellow human beings. It is not only a process of *at taskiyyat* (purification), but it is the greatest of charity/*zakat*. Hence, this *zakat al-fitr* that we give in monetary terms to others is a metaphor to the inner purification. [There is a] humanization through contact with the Divine Attributes during this month of Ramadān. [There are] characteristics that must accompany us throughout the days and year that follows before another renewal (*tajdīd*).

The characteristics of a person of character are constructed from the intention, the genetic predisposition (which is related to *qadr*), the cultural experiences, the familial attitudes, the values, the guidance that affirms those values, and the opportunities one receives to effectuate all of the above in real situations of day to day life. It is a process of integrating human-being-ness with the Divine Presence /Attributes...an awakening of perception and expression with manifestations of values and ethics that, like other less subtle aspects of life (relationships, business, work, and social interactions), demand parameters, training, examples and reinforcement.

This awakening of values and ethics in an individual is manifest in what we call proof of character; usually distinguishable in a person of high or good character. These qualities are touchstones for you and I, tools for measuring our progress as the inner dimension of refinement manifests outwardly. For example, a person of exemplary character is one who is never upset at the fact that he or she is not known by others. It is an individual who has charity in the heart, empathy for all people, someone who associates with others of virtue and who monitors their own

conduct, directing their energy toward the service of others, or uplifting their own knowledge.

Someone of “character” is a person who is cautious in their speech, sincere in the way they conduct their affairs, attends *suhbat*, one who is a lover of learning, not just academic knowledge, but one who loves to apply their virtues, and their knowledge to manifest their *fitrah*.

When we consider that the utmost goal of individuals is to uplift our character, then we must look at ourselves in the light of all our relationships and responsibilities: son or daughter, father and mother, brother / sister, friend / associate, husband / wife, student / teacher, master / servant. Once we learn the pattern, learn to become patient within our self, and clearly see the model in the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and the *shuyukh*, then we can use it as a template in virtually (note virtue) every situation. So it is necessary to understand emulation (*masharb*). The Prophet’s (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) behavior gives us the foundation for our own behavior; his relationships give us the foundation for our relationships; his sense of justice, his love for others, his empathy, his courage, his piety—all are examples for us...for me. Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) described the Prophet’s (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) attitude and character:

Wa’innaka la’alaa khuluqin ‘adheem.

“Verily, you (Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character.
Al Qalam (68:4)

When we look around today, the standard of character that we see is shameful. This is true of what we see in society as a whole, and unfortunately, more and more in Muslim families. This issue is not really about acts of disrespect, or negligence or abuse; it is really about what is in the heart of the individual. While *akhlaq* implies particular duties and attitude, it is not to be limited by the functional; rather, the functional is secondary to the sincerity of the heart. Love cannot be misunderstood easily by its recipient. We all know that the same action done out of habit does not have the same effect or feeling as that done out of love and dutifully.

The person of virtue, of character, is one who acts before speaking and one who professes what he/she possesses; one who is no stranger to sympathy and empathy; who is not biased by jealousy, anger or even preference. A person without charity in their heart or with prejudice, jealousy, and bias cannot see the true nature of things; cannot see the beauty of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) or truly feel the love or advocate justice and fairness.

In some sense we all feel that we are without bias or prejudice. But we do not really know our own character until we are tested. Tests show us where our strengths and weaknesses are, if we care to look. So what are some of the distinguishing characteristics of good character? Here are some examples of simple guidance in this area:

- Simplicity is better than extravagance.
- A true person of good character is not contentious and does not enjoy rivalry.
- Greets all with a good greeting, even one’s opponent.
- Even in loss, one exhibits good behavior.
- Does not stray from the path of virtue, even in times of difficulty and stress
- Is balanced.
- Respects parents and rejoices at their life.

These admonitions are not new ideas for us; many of us struggle to manifest these and other qualities every day. The question is how do we live them? How do we live a life where these qualities define our character and flow from us? There are many steps we can take, beginning with the company we keep and the attitude we have toward our personal journey and our striving.

Suhbat: an Essential Element of Character Development

This journey of life is a great blessing. It is better to find what is good and right in our own life, than just know it from stories or admonitions. It is found easily in good company and people of good character; and it is very painful and difficult to be alone and in the company of those of less character and strong desires.

One of the pillars of assurance of character development, and I shall call it “sustainable development,” is directly related to the company we keep, *suhbat*. It has been said by our predecessors: **“People who are close in *suhbat* are close with their Creator.”** And the Prophet Muhammad (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) once said, **“A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look at whom you befriend.”**

Furthermore, we need to develop relationships with friends who are truthful about their own weakness and shortcomings, asking him or her to assist our efforts and offering to assist them, so that we can share and remind each other of the necessity, indeed urgency, of the purification of the body, heart, mind, and soul. Many of us here today are blessed. We live in, and some even work in, the *khanqaqah*, the community of believers or Sufis. How many of us appreciate this opportunity, the gift of fellowship, the gift of Tariqah, the gift of community? Others seek to establish informal communities of like-minded people, sharing with

them the experiences of life, socializing, discussing the personal challenges of living one’s life with piety and nobility, honor and sincerity. We are seeking the company, here or somewhere else, of those who share the *sair ul suluk*, the journey toward Allah, with Allah, within Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*).

Living in a conducive and good environment, a good community will encourage one to acquire a good character. When we live in a good community, it encourages us to bring forth a good identity and attitude. To do good deeds, help the poor, pray in *jamaah* at the *masjīd*, these are means and affirmations of identity—and last but not least, to be a friend with good people who represent *hudwah hasanah* (a good role model).

Striving To Do Good: Another Essential Element of Character Development

To achieve a noble character, it is necessary to strive to perform acts of goodness, regardless of the consequences, *fī sabīli-Llāh*

Remember that Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) has created for each of us the Jannah wherein one finds the reflection of their character. Just as in Nature we are drawn to that which resembles our character: the person of fire is drawn to the fire, until they learn to deal with that fire, and then is drawn to the water. The person who is drawn to the air is lighthearted and often ‘airy’ in personality, until out of necessity, finds the resoluteness and focus in life and solidifies their relationships and purpose, and then finds joy in the garden/earth.

Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) tells us to seek Peace and Tranquility in every situation:

Wa’iñ janahuu li-s-salmi fa-j^anah lahaa wa tawakkal^c alaa-Llaahi innahu huwa-s-samee^cu-l-^caleem.

If they incline to peace, incline thou to it as well, and place thy trust in God: verily, He alone is All-hearing, All-knowing! (8:61)

For in a state of peace, one strengthens and deepens one’s virtue. This is symbolized by our prostration (*sajdah*) and humility before Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) and in the company of the *shuyukh* and good people. Only when we have absorbed and live humility—the foundation of *adab*—will we have the ability to be in the state of mind from which good conduct is the outcome. This state of mind is one of harmony, self-restraint, inner balance and proportion (*mīzān*). It is a state of consistency and direction; something that all around us we see missing or distorted.

What must we do today? How can we respond with the best character to the confrontational political and ideological attitudes, policies and religious beliefs of

today? To remain balanced, we have to at times remove ourselves from the fray, to retire into a spiritual life. Still, it is incumbent upon us to understand the ethical and moral responsibility we have to our society and communities. For example, in a nation governed on right principles of equity and justice, poverty, unnecessary illness, injustice and bigotry are things to be ashamed of. When we see arrogance and class distinction and manipulation by the rich and powerful, we can be assured that the ‘state’ is ill governed. So too, the metaphor extends to our inner and outer self. Hence, subduing the lower self and embracing the goodness of our essence, obeying and submitting to what is truly Islam, awakening the perceptions through the *latā’if* (subtle centers of perception) result in true good character and virtuous actions. These are acts in themselves of remembrance/*dhikr*.

There is an *adab* for every occasion. But every occasion benefits from contemplation, thoughtfulness and care. Think how hard and how wonderful it would be to completely subdue one’s own selfishness, just for one day. True goodness springs from the well-spring of one’s own heart, it depends on you (and me), not others. It depends on us to have “eyes that see, ears that hear,” hearts that embrace reality and goodness, and faculties that obey the inner commands (*‘ālam al amr*) and embrace self control.

At-askiyat an-Nafs.

The power to accede to a higher level of *akhlaq* begins with the *nafs*. When contemplating this, it is important to understand that as *fiqh* concerns itself with the particular aspects of life worship, social, political, and economic activities, and describes what is right and wrong, little formal attention is given to the subtleties of character development. So it is left to those who have utilized their *kashf*. Their insight and experience give guidance on the more subtle aspects of character development. So, the Sufi must dive deep into as many aspects of study to mine the wealth of knowledge for the signs of those with experience, by studying al-Ghazālī’s “Ihya,” or the teachings of Abul Hasan al-Shadhilī (ra), Ibn Mashish (ra), Ibn At‘allah (ra), or the teachings of the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī [shuyukh]—Ahmed Farouqi Sirhindi (ra), and the predecessors of the Khawājagan.

In the journey toward good character, the importance of the heart cannot be overestimated. **The Prophet** (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) **said: “There is in the body a lump of flesh. When it is wholesome, the whole body is wholesome; and when it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.”**

And in an often cited *hadith qudsi*, Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) says: **“My heaven embraces Me not, nor My earth, but the heart of My faithful, gentle and meek servant does embrace Me.”**

We must see that the heart is the critical meeting place of the *dhāhir* and the *bātin*. The potential within us must be cultivated; and it can be done at the beginning through moral and ethical examples, human familial examples, and heroic figures. Ultimately, we must refine *our* perceptions, open *our latā’if* and see through the eyes of those *latā’if*.

To the Sufi, refining the human character is a primary means to come into resonance with Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) or the Divine Presence. The alignment of the inner and the developed outer human being allows for there to be an open passageway between the *dhāhir* and the *bātin*, between the *‘ālam al amr* and the *‘ālam al khalq*. This doorway is called by some the *‘ālam al mithal*. Really, what we need to grasp is the practical and practicable means that puts the systems or the dimensions in resonance and harmony.

What develops character is balancing the family life, contributing to society, purifying the heart, maintaining physical health, living by ethical standards, remembering Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*), the Creator, turning inward in *muraqabah*, listening to and revising the sacred words of the Qur’an.

Tahdhib al-akhlaq, refinement of the character: *tahdhib* means to prune, to clean, purify, polish, refine. *Akhlaq*, the plural of *khuluq*, denotes the traits of character and implies ethics. From the point of view of the Sufi, it implies transforming the base character to one of refinement, nobility—*makarim-al akhlaq*.

To purify the heart means to address its essence or expression. In essence, the heart is pure and good; but as it functions in this world and relationships, it can be involved in good or evil. So we must strive to ‘see’ and ‘hear’ and ‘understand’ through our senses and refined organs of perception (*latā’if*) in order to ultimately cultivate the body, mind, and soul and return to the original *fitrah*, which is resonant with the Divine Presence or Divine Will.

Ultimately, one reaches the level of the attributes, and experiences the power of the *bāraka* behind this creation and at the root of our love and trust and piety. Eventually, our humanity reunites with an awareness of the Divine Presence. Our character is refined. As I have written and said for decades, the human being becomes the *humane* being. “*Man arafa nafsahu, fa-qad arafa rabbah. He who knows himself, knows his Lord.*”

As we free our hearts from the veils of selfishness, we unveil the Divine Presence and Attributes, perfecting principles complete unto themselves. In that process, our service to this world, our relationships, our community, our family are filled with piety and love, justice and patience, compassion and mercy, tolerance and a

sense of provision. So it is incumbent upon us to divest ourselves of selfishness, and unveil and preserve the Divine Attributes that are now obvious and attracting.

With such an unveiling come new levels of contentment and happiness. If the ultimate aim of this *ataskiyyat fi nafs* (purification of the soul) is the acquiring of a refined moral and ethical character in order to achieve a level of clarity of vision and understanding of the Divine, as this purpose was articulated by the Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), then that happiness will be achieved as she or he embodies and manifests the Divine Attributes, and inwardly achieves the level of *basīra* (insight) to be able to transform the *Fayyāz* of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*), the Prophet, and the *shuyukh* into a profound and lasting state of awareness.

The journey (*sair al-suluk*) through the stages of the refinement of the *nafs* is effectuated by the will (*irāda*) and sincerity (*ikhlas*) of the seeker and his or her ability to absorb and utilize the effulgent light (*fayyāz*) of Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*) and the Holy Prophet (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). The result is, as we have said previously, a content and refined individual, a heart at peace and a tranquil soul (*sakina*). That light is then perceivable on the face and in the presence of the individual. Beauty emanates only from something that is beautiful.

Conclusion

So in conclusion, let me recap the things to strive for and to remember, *inshā’ a-Llāh*. We need to be open to striving with and against our *nafs*, to struggle to achieve our main objective in this life, which is to act in harmony with the Divine Presence, and thereby receive the *bāraka* that is being showered upon us, but is not consciously or fully being received or integrated.

We need to understand what it means to obey Allah (*Subhānahu wa ta’ālā*), thus learning to engage in the dynamic interface between the *dhāhir* and the *bātin* (the hidden and the revealed, the *‘ālam al amr* and *‘ālam al khalq*). We must establish a relationship between our self and the Nūr-i-Muhammad, and take Prophet Muhammad (*salla-Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) as our *qudwah* (good example). We also need to trust in the means, the path and self struggle in order to inherit all good knowledge, manners in ourselves and practice it. We need to find the means to truly feel the *mahabbat’ullah* (love of and for Allah).

Another vital thing that we should do in order to instill good manners in our life is observe good people and associate ourselves with them. Be friends with good people who represent *hudwah hasana* (a good role model).

**Abdullah Ibn Amr ibn Al-As said the Prophet Muhammad used to say:
“The best among you is who has the best *akhlaq*.” (Sahih Bukhari)**

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (sal) was asked about a thing which would cause most of the people to enter into paradise, the Prophet answered: “It is the fear of Allah and a beautiful *akhlaq*.”

Prophet Muhammad (sal) said, “On the day of Judgment, the dearest and the closest to me among my companions will be those who possess the best *akhlaq*.” And also, “The most perfect believer in faith is the one who has the best *akhlaq*.”

May we all practice and be counted among those with the best *akhlaq*.

Closing Du’a

Oh Allah (swt), assist me so that I might do as You say in the Holy Qur’an: **“Strive so that you are present (*hadhirin*) in recollection (*dhikr*), humble (*kasi’in*) in recitation (*qira’a*), submissive (*kadi’in*) in your obedience (*ta’a*) to Him,”** as if you were listening to the Qur’an from God and recollecting Him as if you were sitting in His presence (*hadrah*) ... so that in time I may cease my effort and attain the magna of awareness of Your Divine Presence; that I might by the gift of my own existence that You bestowed upon me, Lord of Light and Darkness, Opener of Hearts and Doors of the soul, attain the essence of the reality of certitude (*haqiqa haqq a –yaqīn*); that I might serve You, Your Creation and Your Creatures without hesitation or fear of loss.

Allahumma salle ‘ala sayeddina Muhammed al fatih oghliq wa-al Hatim limaa-sabaq naser al haqq bil haqq wa-al haadi ila siratiqa-l-mustaqeem, wa ala alehi wa sahbehi haqq qadrihi wa miqdarihi al adheem.

O Allah, shower Your blessings upon our master Muhammad, The opener of what has been closed and the seal of what has passed, the champion of Truth by the Truth, and the guide to Your straight path, and on his family and his companions with the equivalent to the greatness due to his exalted status.

Allahummanfa’nee bi-maa allamtanee wa ‘allimnee maa yanfa’oonee warzooqnee ‘ilmanyayanfa’oonee.

O Allah! Benefit me by that which You have taught me, and teach me that which will benefit me, and provide me with that knowledge which benefits me. Amin