



UNIS

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The Ultimate Success

*“The Believing men and women are protectors one of another: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger (Prophet Muhammad [peace be upon him]). On them will Allah pour His Mercy: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise. Allah has promised to Believers—men and women -- Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of Allah: That is the **supreme success**. Tauba 9: 71-72*

“Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord (Allaah), and Paradise the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allaah and His Messengers” al-Hadeed 57:21

We all want to succeed. Every one of us wants to be a winner. But what is success? Who is a winner? Does success mean amassing wealth, attaining leadership, adopting the profession of one's choice, being popular, consolidating power, enjoying prestige, maximizing happiness, etc.?

Is the winner the one who leads a country, commands huge audiences, gets his way, wins elections, overcomes his adversaries, becomes a Nobel laureate, emerges as a sports icon, or becomes influential? Is it he who is a popular celebrity, rich and famous, adored by countless fans, pictured and interviewed all over the world, viewed as a super hero, well-known for religiosity, respected for Islamic

knowledge, recognized as a community leader, etc.? Or is it he whose children are educated in the best of the educational institutions, excel in their careers and marry the choicest of spouses?

The Holy Quran informs us that: **“Whoever is saved from the Fire and admitted to the Jannah, he indeed is successful.”** Aali-Imraan 3:185

And, *“The real losers will be those who lose themselves and their families on the Day of Judgment. Ah, that is the manifest loss!”* Az-Zumar 39:15

These verses remind us of the reality that none of the aforementioned ‘successes’ are truly successes unless a person is able to avoid Hell and is granted admission into Jannah. If a person and his family cannot attain this ultimate success for themselves, he is an utter loser! Just imagine the most successful person you have ever known or heard of -- the one towards whom you perhaps felt envious. Now, imagine him in the fire of Hell -- in pain, deprived of all wishes or needs, unable to find a way out, totally frustrated and remorseful, but helpless and doomed forever.

He could have ended up in Hell for any number of reasons: Perhaps it was because he worked so hard for his success that he seldom had time for Allah's remembrance or for fulfilling his Islamic obligations; because he was so involved in his worldly mission that he could not pay any attention to the Hereafter; because his intentions were not merely and purely for Allaah;

because he divided his life into Islamic and secular segments; because he followed rituals of Islam faithfully but run his life according to the customs and traditions of his society; because he was careless about little mistakes; or, because he attained his successes at the expense of others.

Whatever the reason, he ended up in the fire. Is he successful? All the success of this life would feel like a fleeting mirage and the real pain would continue for eternity. How stupid is it, that for temporary gain, he is going to suffer permanent pain?

On the other hand, think of a person who seemed to be so disadvantaged that you felt pity for him. Now, see him in Paradise -- enjoying the pleasures and comforts beyond one's imaginations and having every wish and desire fulfilled instantly. He could have been rewarded because he was always remembering Allaah and focusing on doing the right thing in any circumstance -- the way Allaah wanted him to do. He did not care what others thought or whether he succeeded in his goals in this world or not. All he cared about was doing his best in the circumstances according to the ethical, moral and spiritual standard that pleased Allaah.

He was a man of principles and nerves of steel, withstanding any and every difficulty that came his way as a result of living by his principles, par excellence. He suffered deprivation in this world because of his strict lifestyle, but remained honest and dedicated despite adversity. He earnestly cared for

the well being of all -- even his adversaries. He generously shared whatever a little he had with others. He remained cheerful despite adversity of his own circumstances. He endured and remained steadfast. He continued his struggle the way the Prophet would have done whether he was appreciated or not, whether he was recognized or not, whether he was accepted or not, and whether he succeeded or not!

Now, in paradise, he is enjoying the stupendous returns of a great bargain that he had made with Allaah SWT. He took a fleeting pain for eternal gain. He is the one who truly succeeded. The Prophet explained how insignificant, transient, and fleeting the experiences of this world are by sharing the following information:

“The most prosperous person of the world to be thrown in the Fire will be brought on the Day of Judgment and thrown into the fire for just enough time to let the Fire penetrate his body. Then he will be asked, ‘O man, did you ever have good time in your life or enjoyed any bounties?’ He will respond, ‘By God, never, O Lord!’ Similarly, a person to be entered into Jannah(Paradise) who had the most destitute life in the world will be brought. He will be placed into Jannah for a time long enough to be accustomed to its luxuries. Then he will be asked, ‘O man! Have you ever experienced poverty or tough circumstances?’ He will respond, ‘By God, O Lord, I have neither experienced poverty nor tough circumstances ever.’” Reported by Muslim

However, people will not be judged arbitrarily. Our end depends on whether we treat this transitory life as a test and live it as such or whether we live here as if this life itself is the goal. Those who really believe in its being a test, live in obedience to Allaah SWT. On every decision they make or action they undertake, their concern is: Is it right? Will it be marked as a correct answer? Others do not worry about obedience to Allaah but do what they themselves desire or feel should be done. They are

rebellious. Living in His land and not caring for His rules is rebellion.

The eternal rule for success and failure is: *“Thus, whoever rebels and gives preference to the life of this world, Fire will be his destination. And whoever worries about standing before his Lord (for Judgment) and controls his desires, Jannah will be his destination.”* An-Naziat 79:37-41

Those who assume that their claim to be Muslims will guarantee them success are having useless expectations of Allaah. The Prophet said, *“A wise person is he who judges himself and works for the life after death. And the loser is he who follows his desires and then expects to be rewarded by Allaah.”* Reported by Tirmidzi and Mishkaah

Those who know that to obey Allah, and follow His religion, and to fix themselves to faith in Him (to attain paradise) is the only true way to happiness. For them the pleasures and riches of the world are of little consequence. When this happiness penetrates and fills the heart of the believing servant of Allah he does in fact live in the world as if he were in Paradise. These are the people who find true happiness in this world. What kind of happiness could be greater than that of someone who humbles himself to Allah, worships Him and strives for His pleasure and for success on the Day of Resurrection, strives for Paradise and for deliverance from hellfire?

Happiness is not a thing that must slip from our hands, not something totally of this world made to pass away. The believer lives with such sweetness in his heart that if the masters or Kings of the earth knew of it they would fight him to the death to take it from him. Allah says, *“Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will make him live a good life, and We will award them their reward for the best of what they used to do”* (16:97).

Happiness is the good life that even the rich disbelievers can not win despite the

money they have, that is why you are not surprised when you know that many among them commit suicide. People will not be happy until they know why they were created, and then where they are going to after they die. We know much about Mars, moon, stars, and galaxies, thanks to the century of knowledge. But how much do we know about ourselves? We only know but few about ourselves. It is good that we know much about Mars star, but it is not just that we know about more than to know about ourselves. For if we do not know why we were created we will not know why we die.

If a person feels that his body is ill, he will try to find help as quickly as possible, fearing for his health and for his life. But diseases of the spirit, such as doubt in aspect of Islam and jealousy and hypocrisy and arrogance and a clinging dependence upon the world, may not provoke this same response. It is as if a person only feels the danger of material things, and is unaware of the dangers of the heart. The greatest disease of the heart is to associate something else with Allah. This is the greatest cause for people losing all they have in the world and all they could have in the next. The cure for this disease is to know the Oneness of Allah, to be sincere in this knowledge, and to link your heart to it both inwardly and outwardly.

It should surprise no one that the call to the Oneness of Allah lies at the very heart of Islam. This is the word of truth without which there is no Islam. It is the key, the thing which makes a person a Muslim, it is the key to Paradise. No better word could come from the tongue of man. It was the finest word of all the prophets. The Messenger of Allah, upon whom be peace, said *“The finest word that I have said, and that the prophets before me said was, ‘There is no god but Allah.’”* It is the finest thing a person can say when death comes. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, said, *“Whose last word is ‘There is no God but Allah,’ has entered Paradise.”*

This does not mean that Islam is nothing more than tawhid, or that

tawhid is nothing more than acknowledging that Allah is One and that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and everything that is. Tawhid also means that nothing else may be taken as an object of worship except for Allah. The servant of Allah draws near only to Him, and his prayers and his fasting are directed at none other than Him. In fact, those who do not depend upon Allah, and who do not apply the Sharia (Islamic law) to their lives, and who are afraid of others more than they are afraid of Allah, and who love others more than they love Allah are endangering their faith. It does not matter that they say "There is no god but Allah." If they do not fulfill their obligations to Allah, then they have placed themselves in danger.

This world is the place of striving and the Hereafter is the place of reward or punishment, where the believers will be rewarded with Paradise and the disbelievers will be punished with Hell.

Paradise is good and none but those who were good will enter it. Allaah is Good and accepts nothing but that which is good. So the way of Allaah with His slaves is to test them with calamities and tribulations, so that the believer may be known from the kaafir and so that the truthful may be distinguished from the liar, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested. And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allaah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allaah knows all that before putting them to test)" al-Ankaboot 29:2-3

Victory and success cannot be achieved except after tests which will bring the good forth from the evil and tell the believer apart from the kaafir, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Allaah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He distinguishes the wicked from the good. Nor will Allaah disclose to you the

secrets of the Ghayb (Unseen)" Aal 'Imraan 3:179]

Among the trials with which Allaah tests His slaves in order to distinguish the believers from the disbelievers is that which He mentions in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Saabiroon (the patient). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'Truly, to Allaah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.' They are those on whom are the Salawaat (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided ones" al-Baqarah 2:155-157

So Allaah tests His slaves, and He loves those who are patient, and gives them the glad tidings of Paradise. Wealth and children are a trial by means of which Allaah tests His slaves, to know who will give thanks for them, and who will be distracted from Allaah by them: "And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and that surely, with Allaah is a mighty reward" al-Anfaal 8:28 Allaah tests us, sometimes with calamities and sometimes with blessings, to show who will be thankful and who will be ungrateful, and who will obey and who will disobey, then He will reward or punish them on the Day of Resurrection: "and We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good. And to Us you will be returned" al-Anbiya' 21:35 Testing is according to one's faith; the most severely tested among mankind are the Prophets, then the next best and the next best. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When I fall ill, my pain is equivalent to the pain of two men among you." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5648).

Allaah tests His slaves with different kinds of trials.

Sometimes He tests them with calamities and tribulations to distinguish the believer from the

disbeliever, the obedient from the disobedient, the grateful from the ungrateful. Sometimes Allaah tests His slaves with calamities; when they commit sin, He punishes them with calamities so that they might come back to him, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): "And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much" al-Shoora 42:30

Allaah is merciful to His slaves; He sends repeated tribulations upon the ummah so that they may return and repent to Him, and give up that which Allaah has forbidden, and so that Allaah might forgive them. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "See they not that they are put in trial once or twice every year (with different kinds of calamities, disease, famine)? Yet, they turn not in repentance, nor do they learn a lesson (from it)" al-Tawbah 9:126

It is part of the mercy of Allaah that disasters befall sinners in this world, so that their souls might be purified and they might come back to Allaah before they die: "And verily, We will make them taste of the near torment (i.e. the torment in the life of this world, i.e. disasters, calamities) prior to the supreme torment (in the Hereafter), in order that they may (repent and) return (i.e. accept Islam)" al-Sajdah 32:21

Sometimes Allaah tests His slaves with calamities in order to raise them in status and to expiate for their sins, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "No misfortune or disease befalls a Muslim, no worry or grief or harm or distress – not even a thorn that pricks him – but Allaah will expiate for some of his sins because of that." (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 5641).

Certainly the ultimate goal of every Muslim is Paradise. As with all aspects of the unseen, it can only be imagined through analogy, yet its realities are far beyond description in any human language. Allah (Subhanahu wata'ala) has prepared for his servant

“What no eye has seen and no ear has heard and has never occurred to a human heart.” (Narrated by Bukhaari & Muslim) This eternal home is not limited to what is described here of material and spiritual enjoyments, for it includes “all the soul has longed for” and finally, the greatest and most complete pleasure beyond all imagination the presence and nearness of the creator Himself.

The reward of Paradise is too great not to have a price. That price is true faith which is proven by obedience to Allah and His Messenger. This the road to Paradise. The Quran states “ *And whoever desire this Hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while being a believer those are ones whose efforts is appreciated by Allah* (17:19)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “When Allah created Paradise and Hellfire, He send Gabriel to Paradise, saying, ‘Look at it and what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants.’ So Gabriel went and looked at it and at what Allah prepared therein for its inhabitants. Then Gabriel returned to Allah and said, ‘By Your glory, no one hears of it without entering it.’ So Allah ordered that it be encompassed by forms of hardship, and He said, ‘Return to it and look at what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants.’ So Gabriel returned to it and found that it was encompassed by form of hardship. Then he returned to Allah and said, ‘By Your glory, I fear that no one will enter it.’ Allah said, ‘Go to Hellfire and look at it and at what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants.’ Gabriel found that it was in layers, one above the other. Then Gabriel returned to Allah and said, ‘By Your Glory, no one who hears of it will enter it.’ So Allah ordered that it be encompassed by lusts. Then He said, ‘Return to it.’ And Gabriel returned to it and said, ‘By Your glory, I am frightened that no one will escape from entering it.” (Related by At-Tirmidti, Abu Dawood & An-Nassaai).

“Gardens of perpetual bliss- they enter them, as well as the righteous among

their fathers, their spouses and their offsprings. And angles shall enter upon them from every gate.” (Soorah Al-Ra’d, 13:23)

“And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in crowds, until behold, they arrive there. Its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say, ‘Peace be upon you! Well have you done so enter it abiding (in it) eternally.” (Soorah Al-Zumar 39:73)

Sahl bin Sa’d reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “*Paradise has eight gates, and one them is called Ar-Rayyan, through which none will enter but those who observe fasting.*” (Related by Al-Bukhaari)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever spends two things in the way of Allah will be called from the gate of Paradise and will be addressed, ‘Oh slave of Allah, here is prosperity!’ So whoever was among the people who used to offer their prayers will be called from the gate of the prayer; and whoever was among the people who used to participate in struggle for the religion will be called from that gate; and whoever was among those who used to observe fasts will be called from the gate of ar-Rayyaan; and whoever was among those who used to give charity will be called from the gate of charity.” Abu Bakar said, “Let my parents be sacrificed for you, oh Allah’s Apostle! No distress or need will befall him who will be called from those gates. Will there be anyone who will be called from all these gates?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, “Yes and I hope you will be one of them.” (Related by Bukhaari)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “The gates of Paradise will be opened on Mondays and on Thursdays, and every servant (of Allah) who associate nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who has a grudge against his brother. (About them) it will be said, ‘Delay these two until they are reconciled. Delay these two until they are reconciled. Delay

these two until they reconciled.” (Related by Muslim, Maalik & Abu Dawood)

Uqba bin Aamir said: “... *I found Allah’s Messenger (Peace be upon him) stand and address the people. I heard these words of his. ‘If any Muslim performs ablution well, then stands and prays two rak’ahs, setting about them with his heart as well as his face, Paradise will be guaranteed to him.’* Also, “*If anyone among you perform the ablution, completes the ablution well and says, ‘I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger,’ then the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter by whichever of them he wishes.*” (Related by Muslim)

“Be foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord. And a garden (of bliss), the width of the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers- that is the grace of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases, and Allah is the Lord of abounding grace.” (Soorah Al-Hadeed 57:21)

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said that Allah said: “I have prepared for My righteous servants what no eye has seen and no ear has heard, nor has occurred to the human heart. Thus, recite if you wish, ‘**And no soul knows what joy has been kept hidden for them.**’” (Related by Bukhaari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah.) Sahl bin Sa’d narrated that Allah’s Apostle (peace be upon him) said: “A place in Paradise equal to the size of lash is better than the whole world and whatever is in it.” (Related by Al-Bukhaari)

Editorial

Assalamu Alakium

UNIS and its staff wish you a very Happy Eid Mubarak.

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