TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT
(DAWAT-E-ISLAMI)

Weekly Booklet

41 Heart-Changing Matters

(SECOND PART DERIVED FROM MINHAJ AL-'ABIDIN
BY IMAM GHAZALI رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْه)

- The Remedy for Finding Pleasure in Worship and Supplication
- 10 Calamities of Overeating
- The Most Difficult Task
- The Straight Path

دل بدلنے والی 41 باتیں

41 Heart-Changing Matters

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اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى خَاتَمِ النَّبِيّٖنَ

اَمَّا بَعْدُ فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

41 Heart-Changing Matters

Supplication of Attar

O Merciful Lord! Whoever reads or listens to the booklet, '*41 Heart-Changing Matters*', for the sake of Imam al-Ghazālī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْه, fill their hearts with pious deeds, keep them away from sins, and grant them entry into Jannat al-Firdaus without accountability, along with their parents and family.

اٰمِيْن بِجَاہِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيّٖن صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

Excellence of Reciting Ṣalāt

The Final Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم said:

> Indeed, Allah Almighty has appointed an angel at my grave who has been given the power to hear the voices of all creation. Until the Day of Resurrection, whenever someone sends ṣalāt upon me, he presents their name and their father's name to me, saying: 'So-and-so, son of so-and-so, has sent ṣalāt upon you at this moment.'[1]

سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰه! How fortunate is the person who sends ṣalāt upon the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم, as their name, along with their father's name, is presented in the Prophet's merciful court. A faith-inspiring point here is that the angel present at the luminous grave has been granted such great hearing power that he hears even the faintest voices of millions of Muslims throughout the world reciting ṣalāt at the same time. When this is the state of the hearing power of a servant in the Prophet's court, how grand must be the authority of the Greatest Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم! Why would he صلی اللہ علیہ واٰلہٖ وسلم not recognise his humble followers, and why would he صلی اللہ

[1] Musnad al-Bazzar, vol. 4, p. 255, Hadith: 1425

عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم not hear their pleas and, by the permission of Allah Almighty, come to their aid?

صَلُّوْا عَلَی الْحَبِیْب صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلٰی مُحَمَّد

1. Why Is a Pious Person Called a *Muttaqī*?

The Final Prophet صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم said: "Those with piety were named 'muttaqī' (pious) because they gave up what is permissible out of fear of falling into impermissible things." [1]

Explanation of the Hadith: It means that a pious person even gives up certain lawful things so that he does not fall into doubtful matters (i.e. where it is unknown whether something is lawful or unlawful). He avoids doubtful things so that he does not commit unlawful actions. Similarly, out of fear of becoming involved in vulgarity or lies, he gives up certain permissible speech. Also, if the circumstances of a Hadith narrator are unknown, or are known but the narration is not considered reliable, he refrains from narrating that Hadith out of fear that it may be fabricated. [2]

May the mercy of Allah Almighty be upon them, and may we be forgiven without accountability for their sake.

اٰمِیْن بِجَاہِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِیّٖن صَلَّی اللّٰہُ عَلَیْہِ وَاٰلِہٖ وَسَلَّم

2. Protection of the Eyes

[1] Sunan al-Tirmidhi, vol. 4, p. 204, Hadith: 2459; Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 60
[2] Al-Mafatih fi Sharh al-Masabih, vol. 3, p. 399

A person sometimes casts a glance that spoils the heart just as skin becomes spoiled. The great saint, Sayyidunā Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī رَحْمَةُاللهِعَلَيْه, said: "The best barrier against desires is lowering the gaze." [1]

3. The Remedy for Finding Pleasure in Worship and Supplication

Finding sweetness in worship and delight in supplication is a great matter for worshippers. Acting upon the Hadith:

"Looking at the beauty of a woman is one of the poisoned arrows of Iblīs (Satan); so, whoever abandons it, Allah Almighty will grant him such pleasure in worship as will make him happy."[2]

It is a tried-and-tested practice. Whoever acts upon this will become certain of it. Indeed, when he protects his gaze from useless things, he will find such sweetness in worship and purity of heart that he has never experienced before. [3]

4. The Evil Effect of Useless Talk

Sayyidunā Mālik b. Dīnār رَحْمَةُاللهِعَلَيْه said: "When you find hardness in your heart, weakness in your body, and restriction in your sustenance, then know that you have surely uttered something useless from your mouth." [4]

5. The Destruction of Backbiting

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 62
[2] Musnad al-Firdaus, vol. 4, p. 297, Hadith: 6872
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 63
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 65

Backbiting is like lightning that destroys good deeds. It is narrated: "The example of a person who backbites people is like a person who sets up a catapult and uses it to throw his good deeds in all four directions: east, west, north and south." [1]

6. A Famous Saying

There is a famous saying: "Many words say to a person, 'Do not utter us from your mouth.'"[2]

7. Everything Is Manifest to Allah Almighty

It is sufficient to warn and caution people that Allah Almighty knows the state of the hearts. Reflect upon the various thoughts within your hearts that He knows. [3]

8. Unrealistic Hopes and Remembrance of Death

When you have hope for a long life, you will forget death and the grave. [4]

9. How to Soften and Purify the Heart

The heart becomes soft and pure by remembering death, the grave, reward and punishment, and the conditions of the Hereafter. When you have none of these, how will your heart become soft and pure? [5]

10. The World Consists of Three Breaths

Reflect upon this statement of our Shaykh (Imam al-Ghazālī) رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه:

> The world consists of three breaths: one breath that you have already taken and during which you performed whatever deed you had to; one breath that you are currently taking; and one forthcoming breath about which you do not know whether you will be able to take it or not.

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[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 65
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 66
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 68
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 72
[5] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 72

How many people who are taking a breath are seized by death before taking their next breath! Therefore, you have only one breath, not an hour or a day. So hasten towards worship and repentance within this single breath before death arrives. [1]

11. Jealousy Leads to Hell

Jealousy ruins good deeds and leads to sins. It is a disease with which many people are afflicted. Jealousy destroys people and leads them to Hell. [2]

12. Who Deserves the Displeasure of Allah?

Sayyidunā Mūsā Kalīmullāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام humbly asked: "O my Lord! Who among Your creation is most disliked by You?" He replied: "The one whose heart contains arrogance, whose tongue utters vulgarity, who turns his eyes away from good deeds, whose hands are stingy, and who possesses bad character." [3]

13. Who Is the one who has Long Hopes?

If you firmly make up your mind that you will definitely remain alive until the next breath, the next hour, or the next day, then you are one who has long hopes. This is disobedience on your part because it is passing judgment on the unseen. However, if you bind your intention with the knowledge and Will of Allah Almighty and say: "If Allah Almighty wills, I will live," or "If there is still life left for me according to Allah Almighty's knowledge, I will live," then in such a case, you will not be called a person with long hopes, but rather one who has abandoned long hopes. [4]

14. Remembrance of Death

Remember! The fortress of reducing hopes (i.e. the means to avoid long hopes) is the remembrance of death. And the fortress of this fortress (i.e. the method of

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 73
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 74
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 77
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 78

making it even stronger) is to remember sudden death that comes while one is heedless.

Remember this summary of the discourse and act upon it because there is a great need for it. Stop wasting your time in meeting people and engaging in arguments and debates. [1]

15. Method of Developing Humility Within Yourself

Considering one's self (*nafs)* to be inferior and insignificant is called "*tawāḍuʿ*" (humility). To create the characteristic of humility within yourself, remember the end of those who turned away from the truth and persisted in falsehood. [2]

16. The Harm of Unlawful Food and Eating More Than Necessary

It is narrated from Sayyidunā ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās رَضِیَ اللّٰہُ عَنۡہُمَا: "Allah Almighty does not accept the prayer of a person who has unlawful food in his stomach." [3]

Imam al-Ghazālī رَحۡمَۃُ اللّٰہِ عَلَیۡہ states:

As for what is superfluous and lawful beyond what is necessary, its consumption is a calamity for people and an affliction for those who strive hard in worship. Eating too much creates hardness in the heart and removes light. Some pious people have given its example like this: the stomach is like a boiling pot under the heart, so vapours rise from the stomach to the heart, making the heart impure and corrupted.

How excellently Ustādh Abū Jaʿfar رَحۡمَۃُ اللّٰہِ عَلَیۡہ said:

The stomach is an organ that, if it is hungry, the other organs of the body remain full (i.e. peaceful) and do not demand anything. But if the stomach is full, the other organs become hungry (i.e. they turn towards various evils). If unlawful food enters the stomach, it will come out in the form of unlawful actions. If useless and

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 79
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 81
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 82

excessive food enters the stomach, it will come out in the form of useless actions. It is as if food is a seed, and deeds and words are the plants that grow from this seed according to its nature. [1]

17. Solitude and Hunger

Sayyidunā Sufyān al-Thawrī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه said: "Worship is a profession, its shop is solitude, and its instrument is hunger." [2]

18. Lawful Sustenance Comes Only as Needed

The Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم said: "Lawful sustenance will come to you in proportion to your need, while unlawful sustenance will come to you in abundance." [3]

19. Distinction of the Final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

When Allah Almighty presented the world to our Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم, He said: "In return for this, I will not reduce anything from your Hereafter." The Merciful Lord specially granted the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم this distinction. Thus, this indicates that others will face a reduction in their reward in the Hereafter, except those upon whom Allah Almighty bestows His grace. [4]

20. The Harms Suffered in this World and the Hereafter because of Overeating

Due to eating excessively, one will have to stop for accountability in the Hereafter. Consuming more lawful things than required and indulging in desires constitute a neglect of proper etiquette, for which a person will be shamed. This is because there

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, pp. 82-83
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 84
[3] Tafseer Tha'labi, juz 9, Al-A'raf, under verses 163 to 166, vol. 4, p. 296; Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 84
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 85

is accountability for what is lawful in this world, punishment for the unlawful, and loss and harm in the Hereafter on account of its beauty. [1]

21. 10 Calamities of Overeating

1. Hardness of the heart.
2. The limbs become inclined towards evil.
3. Reduction in understanding and insight.
4. Reduction in worship.
5. Loss of sweetness in worship.
6. Risk of committing unlawful acts.
7. Becoming occupied with various activities.
8. Hardships of death.
9. Reduction in reward.
10. Embarrassment in the Hereafter.

These are 10 harms of overeating, but for a person who cares about himself, even one is enough. [2]

22. To Walk on the Path of Piety

The path of piety is very difficult. A condition for the one walking upon it is that he strengthens his *nafs* and heart to endure hardships; otherwise, he will not be able to walk upon this path. [3]

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 85
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, pp. 82-85
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 88

23. Which Food Has No Accountability but Reward?

A person acquires lawful and permissible sustenance in accordance with his need, with the intention of gaining strength to worship Allah Almighty. Since acquiring this amount is included within his need, if he considers it sufficient, this is goodness, piety and good etiquette on his part. There is no accountability or punishment for this; rather, he deserves reward and praise for it. [1]

24. A Moment of Reflection for Those Who Waste Time in Worldly Friendships

Remember that three days after you are placed in the grave, your friends and relatives will leave you and forget you. You will no longer remain in their memory, as though you had never seen them and they had never seen you. In the grave, there will be no one to enquire about your condition except Allah Almighty.

Is it not an obvious deception that you waste your time with these people when their loyalty and friendship will last for a very short time, and your companionship with them will also be for a very short time? Is it not an obvious deception that you abandon the worship of Allah Almighty because of these friendships, even though you ultimately have to return to Him? He alone is the One who will stay with you forever. All needs return to Him, all trust is upon Him, and in every state and at the time of every hardship and difficulty, He alone is the Helper, without any partner. [2]

25. The Wickedness of the Nafs Is Greater Than That of Seventy Devils

A pious elder رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه rightly said:

> You will come to know the ignorance and wickedness of your nafs when it intends to commit a sin or gets ready to pursue a desire, and you implore it in the name of Allah Almighty, all His Prophets and Messengers عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام,

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 90
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 93

all the Heavenly Books and all the pious elders, and present the matters of death, the grave, Paradise and Hell to it. Even then, it will not refrain and will not abandon its desire.[1]

26. Abandoning Sins Is Better Than Performing Good Deeds

Refraining means abstaining from sins and evils, and this is piety. The manner of refraining from both is most correct and superior. This is because those who are at the initial stages among the diligent worshippers make every effort so that their day passes in fasting and their night in worship, and they remain occupied in this. On the other hand, the people of insight who have reached the highest level among the worshippers give preference to "refraining". Their entire effort is that their hearts should not turn towards anyone besides Allah Almighty. These noble personalities protect their stomachs from consuming more lawful food than necessary, their tongues from useless talk, and their eyes from looking at useless things. [2]

27. Refraining Is Not Half the Cure; It Is the Complete Cure

It is narrated that (in former times) the people of India used to treat the sick mostly through self-restraint. According to them, a patient was prevented from eating, drinking and talking for a few days, and then he would recover. [3]

28. The Misfortune Caused by a Single Morsel and an Evil Glance

A single morsel can change the condition of the heart to such an extent that the heart never returns to its original state. Sometimes, one morsel deprives a person of worship during the night. Many times, an evil glance is cast that prevents a person

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 94
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 95
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 96

from reciting even a single Surah. Sometimes a person eats something because of which he may be deprived of the blessing of worship for an entire year. [1]

29. Reforming the Heart Is the Most Difficult

Sayyidunā Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه said: "I spent 10 years reforming my heart, 10 years reforming my tongue, and 10 years reforming my nafs, and I found reforming the heart to be the most difficult of all." [2]

30. The Nafs Is Subordinate to a Person

A person can keep his nafs in whatever state he wishes, and it remains accordingly. If it is fed, it develops desires; otherwise, it remains content. [3]

31. An Oath on Providing Sustenance

The great tābiʿī, Sayyidunā Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه, states: May the curse of Allah be upon those people who do not believe in the oaths of Allah Almighty. When this blessed verse was revealed:

فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ

Translation: So by the Lord of the heavens and the earth! Indeed this is the truth. [4]

The angels said: Destruction be upon the children of Adam! They have displeased their Lord to the extent that He swore an oath regarding providing them with sustenance. [5]

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[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 97
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 98
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 102
[4] Al-Quran, Surah Al-Dhāriyāt, verse 23; translation from Kanz al-ʿIrfān
[5] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 106

32. I Have Entrusted my Affairs to Allah

Imam al-Ghazālī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه writes: Our Shaykh رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه would often say in his gatherings:

دَعِ التَّدْبِيْرَ اِلٰى مَنْ خَلَقَكَ تَسْتَرِحْ

"Leave planning to the One who created you, and you will become peaceful." [1]

33. Firm Determination Is Required

I (i.e. Imam al-Ghazālī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه) heard Sayyidunā Imam al-Ḥaramayn Abū al-Maʿālī Juwaynī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه say regarding this issue: “Whatever Allah Almighty has made obligatory upon a person, such as prayer, fasting and Hajj, there is certainly goodness for a person in all of it.” [2]

34. The Most Difficult Task

Encouragement is given for worship due to the effort and hardship involved in it, and reward is promised for it. This is because a person can worship only by suppressing their desires and forcing his nafs, as the nafs and desires prevent one from good deeds and righteousness, and opposing them is the most difficult task for a human being. [3]

35. The Greater the Person, the Greater the Trials

The closer a person is to Allah Almighty, the greater the trials and troubles he faces in the world.[4] Have you not heard this statement of Allah Almighty’s beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم: "Among people, the most severe trials are faced by the

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 113
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 116
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 120
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 121

Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام, then the martyrs, and then others according to their ranks." [1]

36. There Is Ease After Every Hardship

Translation of Arabic couplets: Never lose hope, even if a long time has passed since your request was made. If you seek help through patience, you will see ease. Be like a patient person who attains his need, and be like the person who continually knocks on doors to enter. [2]

37. O You Who Exhaust Yourself Only in Worrying About Sustenance!

Among the obstacles faced in the worship of Allah Almighty, the biggest and most difficult obstacle is the matter of sustenance. The worry of this is the biggest calamity for creation. Creation has exhausted itself over it, their hearts have become trapped in worries, their grief has increased, they have wasted their lives, and they have taken upon themselves the burden of major sins because of it.

This worry about sustenance has taken creation away from Allah Almighty and His worship and engaged them in the service of the world and creation. Therefore, in the world, they spent their lives in darkness, heedlessness, loss, and humiliation, and proceeded towards the Hereafter empty-handed. If Allah Almighty does not show mercy out of His grace, they will face accountability and punishment there. [3]

38. Allah Almighty Knows Better What Is Good for me Than I Do

A pious elder رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه received an indication from Allah Almighty: "Ask, and it will be given to you." He was blessed with guidance, so he humbly said in the Merciful Court of Allah Almighty: "The One who knows every matter in every way says to a servant who is unaware in every respect: 'Ask, and it will be given to you.' How do I know what is better for me that I should ask for it? Therefore, You choose for me." [4]

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[1] Sunan al-Tirmidhi, vol. 4, p. 179, Hadith: 2406
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 122
[3] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 124
[4] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 131

39. The Whole World is Yours, so Devote Yourselves to Allah Almighty

If someone says to you, "I will do all your work and make the best plans for all your needs; entrust all your matters to me and become worry-free," and that person is the greatest scholar of his time according to you, the most intelligent, trustworthy, truthful, and most loyal, would you not consider his words a great favour and tremendous blessing for yourself? Would you not be grateful to him?

Then, if he chooses something for you in which you see no goodness, even then you will not be worried; rather, you will be content with that person's planning, and you will be certain that this person will choose what is better for you and have your best interests at heart, even if the eventual outcome turns out to be different. Will you not have complete trust in him?

When this is the state of your trust in a person, what has happened to you that you do not entrust your affairs to the Lord of all the worlds, even though He is the One who manages the affairs of the heavens and the earth, is the Most Knowledgeable, the Most Powerful, the Most Merciful, and the One who is absolutely free from all need.[1]

40. The Straight Path

To distance the heart from things it likes through sincere reliance upon Allah Almighty, restraining the nafs from its deeply rooted (bad) habits, to entrust affairs to Allah Almighty without knowing their outcome, rather than managing them oneself, to restrain the nafs from becoming displeased and raising an outcry over Allah Almighty's commands (even though the nafs hurries towards it), holding the nafs with the reins of Allah Almighty's pleasure despite disliking it, and being patient—all these things, although difficult and very harsh forms of treatment and heavy burdens, are the straight path, and their outcome is good and their conditions consist of good fortune. [2]

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, pp. 131-132
[2] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 134

41. Method of Exercising Patience When Facing Difficulty

When a calamity befalls you and you dislike it, monitor your nafs immediately at that time and control your heart so it does not become restless or complain. This is because this is the occasion when patience and endurance are required, and at that time, the nafs quickly inclines towards impatience.

Say to your nafs: "O self! This calamity has arrived; now there is no way to remove it, and Allah Almighty has removed even greater calamities than this. Indeed, calamities are of many types and numerous. Soon this calamity will also pass; it is merely a cloud that will disperse. Therefore, O self! You cannot remove the calamity that has already befallen you, nor is there any benefit in impatience. So hold onto patience for a short while; in return, you will gain lasting happiness and abundant reward."

The reality is that with patience and tolerance, a calamity no longer remains a calamity. So engage your tongue in saying "اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّا اِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ" and engage your heart in the remembrance of that through which you will receive reward from Allah Almighty. Remember how the resolute Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام and great saints رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِم exercised patience in the face of huge calamities. [1]

[1] Minhaj-ul-'Abideen, p. 137

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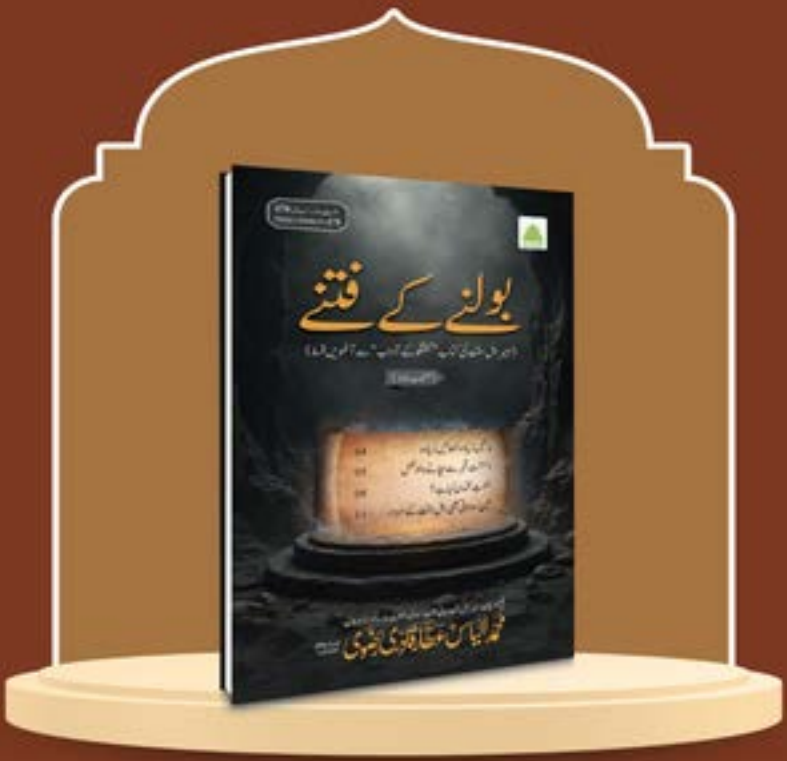

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