

Blessed Seerah of رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ
Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal

20-February-2020



Thought-provoking speech of weekly
sunnah-inspiring ijtima

(For Islamic Sisters)

Muballighah must read the Bayan at least 3 times before delivering speech.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Blessed Seerah of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى آلِكَ وَأَصْحَابِكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللَّهِ
الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَى آلِكَ وَأَصْحَابِكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ

Please note that this speech was originally written for Islamic brothers, we have done necessary changes for Islamic sisters. It may be possible that some words could have been remained unchanged! If so, Muballighah should change the wordings accordingly at the time of delivering this speech. (Majlis-e-Tarajim)

Excellence of reciting Durood

The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا أَبْهَأَ مَلَكٌ مُوَكَّلٌ بِهَا حَتَّى يُبَلِّغَنِيهَا

‘Whoever recites Durood upon me once, Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ sends 10 mercies upon him and there is an angel appointed to bring that Durood to me.’

(Mu’jam Kabeer, vol. 8, pp. 134, Raqm 7611)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! Before listening to the speech let’s, first of all, make good intentions to please Allah Almighty and earn reward. The Beloved Rasool صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has said, ‘نِيَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ’ *The intention of a Muslim is better than his deed.* (Al-Mu’jam-ul-Kabeer, vol. 6, pp. 185, Hadees 5942)

Important point

The more righteous intentions one makes the greater reward she will attain.

Note: *The intentions mentioned below can be modified as per situation*

Intentions of listening to the Bayan

1. Lowering my eyes, I will listen to the Bayan attentively.
2. Instead of resting against a wall etc., I will sit in reverential posture like that in Tashahhud as long as possible with the intention of paying respect to religious discourse.
3. I will make room for other Islamic sisters by folding my hands and limbs and by moving slightly.
4. If someone pushes me, I will remain patient and calm and avoid staring, snapping, and arguing with them.
5. When I hear **تُؤَيَّبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ، اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ، صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ**, etc., I will reply in low voice with the intention of gaining reward and encouraging others to also recite.
6. After Ijtima', I will take the lead to say Salam and shake hands and make individual effort.
7. During the speech, I will avoid the unnecessary use of mobile phone.
8. Neither will I record the speech, nor any kind of voice as it is not permitted.
9. Whatever I listen I will act upon it and later on convey it to others. In this way, I will be privileged to propagate the call towards righteousness.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

إِنَّ شَاءَ اللَّهُ today, in the weekly Sunnah-inspired Ijtima, we will listen to some faith-enlightening aspects of the blessed biography of a saint (Wali) of Allah, a great scholar and Muhaddis (scholar of Hadees), Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal

رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ. If only we could listen to the entire speech with good intentions. Let's listen to a very interesting parable of his blessed life:

Yearning to behold the Imam of his time

The grandson of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, Sayyiduna Zuhayr Bin Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states: I heard my father (Sayyiduna Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) say: 'Once, when I came home, I found that my father, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was waiting for me intensely. I immediately went to him and asked: 'O my beloved father! Were you waiting for me?' He replied: 'Yes! In your absence, a person came to meet me. I wanted you to meet him as well but now he's gone. No worries! I'll tell you something about him.

Today afternoon, I was at home when I heard someone say Salaam at the door. I opened the door and saw a traveller in front of me who was wearing a patched jubbah. He was wearing a shirt under the jubbah. He neither had any travel bag nor any utensil to drink water from. His face was scorched from the heat of the sun.

(After replying to his salaam), I called him inside instantly and asked: 'Where are you from and what brings you here?'

He replied: 'Huzoor! I am from the eastern valleys. My heartfelt wish was to visit this area. If your house was not here, then I would not have come here. I have just come to behold you.'

I then asked him: 'You've travelled alone, in the scorching heat, in poverty and tolerated the difficulties of travelling just so you could meet me?'

He replied: 'Yes Huzoor! My longing desire to behold you has brought me here. There is no other purpose for me to come here.'

I was very surprised to hear the traveller's conversation and said in my heart: I neither have dirhams nor dinar that I could help this poor traveller. At that time, I only had 4 Rotis with me. Whilst giving them to him, I said: 'O bondman of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ! I do not have dirhams or dinar (i.e. worldly wealth), otherwise I would have definitely given it to you. I only have these 4 Rotis that I kept to eat. Please accept them.'

The traveller said: ‘Huzoor! I have quenched my thirst by beholding you. Now, I am not worried about dirhams or dinar (worldly wealth). But with regards to the Rotis, if your happiness lies in me taking the Rotis, then I will take them with the intention of gaining blessing.’

I said to him: ‘If you accept these Rotis, I will be very happy.’

The traveller accepted the Rotis and said: ‘Huzoor! I am hopeful that your given Rotis will suffice me until I reach my city. May Allah ﷺ protect you.’

He then kissed my hands and sought permission to leave. I allowed him to leave and said: ‘Go! I leave you in the care of Allah ﷺ!’

He then left. I stood outside looking at him until he disappeared from my sight. Sayyiduna Saalih رحمته اللہ علیہ states: ‘My father would often speak about that traveller.’ (*‘Uyoon-ul-Hikayaat, pp. 314*)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Attributes of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمته اللہ علیہ

Dear Islamic sisters! Many admirable attributes of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمته اللہ علیہ, the guide of millions of Hanbalis, are mentioned in the above-mentioned narration. For example:

- He is that great personality whose children, rather grandchildren, would also respect and revere him so much.
- He loved his children very much.
- He would relate good things to his children for their persuasion.
- He was a support to those who had no support.
- Despite being a very big saint (Wali) and a famous Muhaddis of his time, he would still give poor people great importance without even knowing them and without considering them inferior.
- He would ask about the well-being of those people who travelled from far and wide rather than asking them strange questions.

- He is amongst those great Awliya رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ whose fame and greatness became acclaimed all over within their lifetime.
- The people of his era would truly appreciate scholars and would have true devotion and love for the noble Awliya رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ.
- Those who loved him also loved his city.
- In his blessed era, people would travel from far and wide to visit his blessed court even in extreme heat and scorching sunlight just to behold him.
- His blessed heart was filled with the passion of the well-being of the Ummah of the Beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.
- He would always want the benefit of others.
- He would become sad upon not being able to financially help the poor people.
- He was never stingy in spending in the way of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.
- Reliance and contentment was embedded within his nature.
- The people of his time were also enriched with these qualities.
- He would give away his own Rotis to the poor people as charity.
- Whenever a needy person came to his court, he never returned empty-handed.
- He would make happiness enter the hearts of poor and needy people and would also please them.
- He would give so much to the needy people that they would not have to worry until they reached their home town.
- People would deem him, rather the things that he gave them, as a means of blessing for themselves.
- He would make special Du'as for those who came to his court before allowing them to depart.

- He would always remember those people who gained his company even for a short while and those who loved him.

In short, his personality was a combination of innumerable good qualities. May Allah ﷻ also grant us the true devotion and love for the noble Awliya ﷺ, especially Sayyiduna Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal ﷺ and enrich us with the wealth of having pain for the Ummah, reliance and contentment.

أَمِينٌ بِجَاةِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِينِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! We just heard a faith-enlightening parable from the life of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal ﷺ and listened to his blessed attributes. We will listen to more events and points regarding the life of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal ﷺ, but let's first listen to his introduction:

Introduction to Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal ﷺ

His Kunyah [patronymic name] is Abu Abdullah and name is Ahmad Bin Hanbal. He was born in Rabi'-ul-Awwal, 164 AH in Baghdad. He was purely an Arab. His father passed away in his childhood. His mother raised and brought him up. He gained his initial education in Baghdad. At the age of 15, he became inclined towards the knowledge of Hadees. He stayed in the company and service of the Muhaddis of Baghdad, Imam Hushaym ﷺ for 4 years.

After his demise, he travelled to other cities, such as Kufa, Basra, Yemen, Syria, Makkah and Madinah. He had such passion to gain the knowledge of Islam that he himself said: 'When I would leave to gain the knowledge of Hadees at the break of dawn, my mother would stop me grabbing my clothes and say: 'Leave when Azan is called out or leave when it is morning.'

He had such passion for gaining the knowledge of Islam that besides the affairs of marriage and gaining sustenance, he especially concentrated on gaining the knowledge of Islam, to the extent that he married after the age of 40. (*Tahzeeb Manaqib-ul-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, pp. 33; summarised*)

He performed 5 Hajj whilst he was a student and 3 of them were on foot. *(Tahzeeb-ul-Tahzeeb, Raqm 106, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 1, pp. 98; summarised)*

He passed away on 12 Rabi'ul-Awwal in 241 AH. *(Tahzeeb Manaqib-ul-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal, pp. 262; summarised)*

230 years later, when a grave was dug next to the grave of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, a part of his grave was opened. Not just the body, but even his shroud was safe and sound. *(Tahzeeb-ul-Tahzeeb, Raqm 106, Ahmad Bin Muhammad Hanbal, vol. 1, pp. 100)*

At the time of his funeral, 20,000 non-Muslims accepted Islam. *(Siyar A'laam-un-Nubala, Raqm 1876, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 9, pp. 538)*

He is the author of '**Musnad-e-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal**', a compilation of 40,000 Ahadees. *(Al-Bidayah Wan-Nihayah, vol. 7, pp. 340; summarised)*

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! One of the blessings that Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ grants His people with is '**strong memory**' i.e. the ability to remember things, due to which, a person is able to preserve knowledge from all over the world in his brain easily and takes full benefit from it.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ is also from those fortunate people whom Allah Almighty, alongside making him His Wali, blessed him with a strong memory as well. Through this magnificent blessing and unique memory granted to him by Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ memorised thousands of Ahadees and preserved them in his mind. The glorious proof of this is the compilation of thousands of Ahadees, **Musnad-e-Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal**. Let's hear some events in relation to the impressive strong memory of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ:

Preserved everything his teacher said in his mind

Sayyiduna Hushaym رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal's رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ first teacher. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ stayed in his blessed company for a long period and gained the knowledge of Islam. When Sayyiduna Hushaym

رحمته اللہ علیہ passed away, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمته اللہ علیہ was 20 years old at that time, and whatever he had heard from his teacher, he had retained all of it in his mind.

He himself said: ‘When I was 20 years old, Sayyiduna Hushaym رحمته اللہ علیہ passed away. I retained everything I heard from him in my mind.’ (*Siyar A’laam-un-Nubala, Raqm 1876, Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 9, pp. 439*)

He would memorise whatever he heard

Sayyiduna Sa’eed Bin ‘Amr رحمته اللہ علیہ asked Imam Abu Zur’ah رحمه اللہ علیہ: ‘O Abu Zur’ah! Is your memory stronger or Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal’s رحمه اللہ علیہ?’

He replied: ‘Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal’s رحمه اللہ علیہ memory is stronger than mine.’

Sayyiduna Sa’eed رحمه اللہ علیہ then asked: ‘How do you know?’

He replied: ‘I have seen his books. The Ahadees that he has mentioned at the start of his books have no mention of the names of narrators in them. The reason for this is that whichever portion of Hadees he would hear, he would remember it, and this is beyond me.’ (*Siyar A’laam-un-Nubala, Raqm 1876; Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 9, pp. 440*)

Would remember thousands of Ahadees

Imam Abu Zur’ah رحمه اللہ علیہ one day told Sayyiduna Abdullah رحمه اللہ علیہ, the son of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمه اللہ علیہ: ‘Your father, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمه اللہ علیہ, would memorise thousands of Ahadees.’ (*Siyar A’laam-un-Nubala, Raqm 1876; Ahmad Bin Hanbal, vol. 9, pp. 440*)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ! You heard how excellent the memory of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رحمه اللہ علیہ was. He رحمه اللہ علیہ memorised thousands of Ahadees at a young age, rather, he even memorised the names of many of the narrators of those Ahadees too. No doubt, this was the special grace and favour of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ and the excellence of the blessing of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ that people would praise his strong memory.

Whereas today, our memory is getting weaker and weaker. We cannot even remember what happened yesterday. We do remember the Gregorian months and dates but alas! We are unaware of the Islamic months and dates. We often struggle to account for our own things. We forget how many Rak'aat (units) of Salah we have offered and how many Rak'aat (units) are left. Despite reading a book or booklet many times, we are unable to remember the topics and rulings mentioned in them.

Nevertheless, if we want to strengthen our memory, remove the illness of forgetting, want to know the methods of strengthening our memory and want to learn about the reasons that weaken our memory, then read the booklet of Maktaba-tul-Madinah titled 'Haafizah Kaysay Mazboot Ho?'

An easy invocation to strengthen memory

Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat عَلَمَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةَ narrates a virtue of Durood: 'If a person has the illness of forgetting, then she should recite this Durood in abundance between Maghrib and 'Isha Salah:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ النَّبِيِّ الْكَامِلِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ كَمَا لَا نَهْيَاةَ لِكَمَالِكَ وَعَدَدِ كَمَالِهِ

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ her memory will strengthen.' (Madani Panj Surah, pp. 169)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! Sacrificing life, wealth, family, etc. and facing difficulties for the sake of Islam has been an old practice. Therefore, when the Prophets عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, noble companions عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّضْوَانُ, pious predecessors رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ and scholars of Islam started the work of propagating Islam according to their status, then they were not greeted with flowers or garlands; rather, in return of this favour, they were subject to cruelty and tyranny, they were severed by saws, they were imprisoned and locked up, their skins were even peeled off from their bodies, their bare backs were whipped, they were made fun of, they were exiled from their own cities, they were thrown into boiling oil, they

were dragged on scorching sand, their bodies were riddled with arrows, swords and spears, and some even attained martyrdom in this path.

In short, these pious people bore so many difficulties for the sake of Islam that when we hear about them, our bodies begin to tremble, every strand of our hair stands on end, our heart becomes saddened and tears begin to flow from our eyes.

The leader of millions of Hanbalis, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ is also included in the list of those noble Awliya رَحْمَةُ اللهِ who gave so many sacrifices for the sake of Islam and also had to endure different types of severe difficulties in the way of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ.

Announcement of forgiveness upon every lash of whip

Once, upon the order of the Abbasid caliph, Mu'tasim Billah, the executioners started to whip the back of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ turn by turn. Due to this, his back was covered in blood and his blessed skin came off. In the meanwhile, his trouser started to fall, so he made Du'a in the court of Allah Almighty: 'O Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ! You know I am right. Save me from unveiling.' اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ the trouser did not fall any further and then he fainted.

As long as he remained conscious, he would say on every lash of whip: 'I forgive the crime of Mu'tasim Billah.' Later on, when people asked him the reason for this, he replied: 'Mu'tasim Billah is a descendant of Sayyiduna 'Abbas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the uncle of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. I feel ashamed in case it is announced on the day of judgement that 'Ahmad Bin Hanbal did not forgive the descendant of the uncle of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.'

Sayyiduna Fudayl Bin 'Iyaad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has stated: 'Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was imprisoned for a consecutive 28 months. During this period, he used to be lashed every night until he fainted. He was wounded with swords and trampled upon. But what can be said about his steadfastness! He remained steadfast despite facing an onslaught of calamities.'

'Allamah Hafiz Bin Jawzi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has narrated from Muhammad Bin Isma'eel رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ: 'Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was lashed with 80 such whips that

would have even made an elephant scream! But what can be said about the patience of the Imam!' (*Faizan-e-Sunnat, vol. 1, pp. 414-415*)

It has been narrated: 'When he was whipped and was subject to cruelty and tyranny, he remained steadfast due to which, he became beloved to the people of the East and West. He always remained respectful in the eyes of people, to the extent that when people would look at him, it was as if they were looking at a lion.' (*Al-Raud-ul-Faa'iq, pp. 221*)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! You heard that the famous Muhaddis and Wali, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was inflicted with so much difficulties but he never cried about it, he never screamed or shouted, he never complained or grieved, he was never impatient and he was never unthankful. Rather, he remained patient and content, and remained happy upon the Will of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. He رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ knew that the calamities and tests befalling a person are not a means of difficulties, but rather, they are a means of mercy and privilege.

Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ intends goodness with a person afflicted with calamities. The sins of the person afflicted with calamities are forgiven. Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ grants without count to the person facing a test. Good news of forgiveness from the court of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ is given to the person who hides her calamities.

Therefore, we should make this mind-set that no matter how many problems come our way, no matter how many tests we may come across, no matter how many calamities we face and no matter how many diseases surround us from all around, still we will not let a word of complain come on our tongues. Rather, we will be patient and become engrossed in the imagination of the reward of patience such that we do not even feel the pain of the difficulties.

We also learn that Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was also a great devotee of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He forgave Mu'tasim Billah just because he was a descendent of the one who was related to the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, i.e. Sayyiduna 'Abbas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the uncle of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Just ponder! The one who respects the descendant of the relative of the Holy

Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ so much, then how much devotion and love will he have for the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ himself?

Therefore, we should also respect the descendants of the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, his companions, his family رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ; rather, we must respect and revere everything related to the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Moreover, we should adopt such an environment where the respect of the Prophet and the love, respect and reverence of these esteemed personalities are instilled within our hearts.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! One enlightened perspective from the blessed life of the famous personality of the Hanbali school of thought, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ, is also that he loved the acts of worshipping Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ, such as Salah, Fasts and recitation of the Holy Quran immensely.

His love and affection for worshipping Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ was such that even after bearing the dangerous and extremely painful punishment of being whipped, his spirit was still high and offering Nawafil [optional prayers] in abundance was a part of his blessed routine. Let's listen to the views of our pious predecessors رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ regarding Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal's رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ passion for worship:

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal's رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ passion for worship

Sayyiduna Idrees Haddad رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ states: 'I always saw Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ offering Salah, reciting the Holy Quran or reading a book, and never saw him busy in any worldly matter. When the severity of these matters would increase, then he would not eat anything for 1, 2 or even 3 days. When he would see any of his family members, he would drink water through which they would consider his stomach to be full.'

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal's رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ son, Sayyiduna 'Abdullah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ states: 'My father would recite one Manzil of the Holy Quran every night and would complete the entire Quran in 7 days, and then he would remain standing in

worship until the morning. He would offer 300 Rak'aat (units) of Salah every day. When he was whipped, he became weak, and then he would offer 150 Rak'aat (units) of Salah every day. He would be at ease 3 times and would scream 3 times. (*Hilyat-ul-Awliya, vol. 9, pp. 192, Raqm 13658*)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! You heard how much worship the famous pious person of his time, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ, would perform. Now, we should reflect upon ourselves as to how much do we love Salah, fasts and reciting the Holy Quran.

Realise the importance of Salah through the fact that the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated: 'The first action of a person to be seen on the day of judgement will be Salah. If this is found to be complete, then his Salah and all of his actions will be accepted, but if there is deficiency in it, then his Salah as well as all of his other actions will be rejected.' (*Muwatta Imam Malik, vol. 1, pp. 169, Hadees 428; Amended*)

The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated in regards to the virtue of Nafil fasts: 'Whoever kept a Nafil fast of one day, Allah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ will keep him as far from hell as is the distance between the earth and the sky.' (*Mu'jam Kabeer, vol. 17, 120, Hadees 295*)

And while mentioning the virtue of reciting the Quran, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated: 'The best form of worship of my Ummah is to recite the Holy Quran.' (*Shu'ab-ul-Iman, vol. 2, pp. 354, Hadees 2022*)

But alas! We are oblivious of these acts of worship. Most of our time is spent with our friends, reading baseless stories and novels and useless discussions.

Azan is called out, the time of Salah passes by, but alas! Islamic sisters are not even ready to offer obligatory Salah with congregation, let alone offering voluntary Salah such as Tahajjud, Awwabeen, Ishraq and Chasht, Salat-ut-Taubah and other nawafil that are offered in the special nights. When invited to offer Salah, they reply: We will start from Friday, we will start after performing Hajj or Umrah, our clothes or body are impure, etc.

Similarly, instead of reciting, learning, understanding or acting upon the Holy Quran, it is stored inside the Masjid. The situation now is such that those who can actually read the Quran, they will not have the opportunity to open this beautiful book and look at it for many years. The Holy Quran has now become a means to convey reward or is limited to only Khatm, etc.

Likewise, the months of Muharram, Rajab, Sha'ban and Shawwal are also a great opportunity to keep Nafl fasts but very less Islamic sisters actually fast in these months. What is even more regretful is the fact that the inclination to keep fasts in the sacred and blessed month of Ramadan is also seen to be dying out at a very rapid pace.

Nevertheless, alongside obligatory worship, if we want to awaken the passion within us to perform Nafl worship as well, if we want laziness in worship to be removed, if we want to be consistent in offering Salah, if we want to start keeping Nafl fasts, if we want to be steadfast in reciting the Holy Quran daily, then join the Madani environment of Dawat-e-Islami, the movement of becoming a Salah offering individual, join the movement of keeping Nafl fasts and join the movement that is blessed with the blessings of the Holy Quran.

Participate in the Sunnah-inspiring Ijtima held by Dawat-e-Islami every week with consistency. Perform the Madani activities of the Zayli Halqah, ponder and reflect daily by acting upon the Madani In'amaat. Become a disciple of Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat رَأْسُ بَرَكَاتِهِمُ الْعَالِيَةِ. Due to the blessings of engaging in these pious actions, you will feel a breath-taking change within yourself إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic sisters! Piety and righteousness are great blessings of Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ. The virtues of piety and pious people have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and Ahadees at various places:

- (1) The honourable one in the court of Allah Almighty is the one who is pious. *(Al-Hujurat, Ayah no. 13)*
- (2) Allah Almighty is with the pious. *(Al-Baqarah, Ayah no. 194)*
- (3) Allah Almighty loves the pious *(Aal-e-'Imran, Ayah no. 76)*
- (4) Paradise has been prepared for the pious. *(Aal-e-'Imran, Ayah no. 133)*
- (5) The pious people will

be presented as guests in the court of Allah Almighty on the day of Judgement. (*Maryam, Ayah no. 85*) (6) There are gardens of bliss for the pious ones with their Lord. (*Al-Qalam, Ayah no. 34*) (7) Allah is the helper of the pious people. (*Al-Jaasiyah, Ayah no. 19*) (8) The pious people will be friends of one another on the day of judgement. (*Az-Zukhruf, Ayah no. 67*) (9) The pious people will be in an abode of peace. (*Ad-Dukhan, Ayah no. 51*) (10) The good outcome in the hereafter is for the pious. (*Hood, Ayah no. 51*) (11) Piety is a means of achieving superiority. (*Mu'jam-e-Awsat, vol. 3, pp. 329, Hadees 4749*) (12) Piety is the best provision to carry. (*Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 2, pp. 41, Hadees 5632*) (13) Whoever has been granted piety, he has been given the best religious and worldly thing. (*Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 2, pp. 41, Hadees 5638*) (14) Piety is the nobility of the hereafter. (*Firdaus-ul-Akhbar, vol. 2, pp. 5, Hadees 3418*) (15) Pious people are the leaders. (*Kanz-ul-'Ummal, vol. 2, pp. 41, Hadees 5650*) (*Siraat-ul-Jinaan, vol. 8, pp. 496*)

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ Piety and righteousness was instilled within the nature of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ in abundance. The state of his piety was such that let alone Haraam and impermissible things, if he even had slightest of doubts regarding something being Haraam or Halaal or permissible or impermissible, then he would remain far away from it. In this relation, let's listen to 2 faith-refreshing events of his blessed life:

1. The great leader of millions of Hanbalis, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal's رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ son, Sayyiduna Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ was the Qadi of Isfahan. Once, the servant of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ made roti from some kneaded flour he found in the kitchen of Sayyiduna Saalih رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ and presented it in the court of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ.

He asked him: 'Why is this so soft?'

The servant described the situation in which he brought the kneaded flour.

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ said: 'My son is the Qadi of Isfahan. Why did you use his leavened dough? Now, I'm not going to eat this Roti. Give it to some poor person, but do let him know that this Roti has Qadi's kneaded flour mixed in it.'

Coincidentally, no poor person came for 40 days and by then, the Roti began to give off a foul-smell. The servant put the Roti in the river Tigris. What can be said about the piety of Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ! After that day, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ never ate the fish of the river Tigris. (*Tazkira-tul-Awliya*, pp. 197)

2. Sayyiduna Idrees Haddaad رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states: Once, Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ travelled to Makkah to perform Hajj. Over there, he رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ ran out of money. He رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ had a bucket with him. He pawned the bucket for something with a greengrocer.

When Allah عَزَّوَجَلَّ removed his poverty, he went back to the greengrocer and asked for his bucket back while paying him the money. The greengrocer stood up, presenting 2 look-alike buckets and said: 'I am not sure as to which one from these two is yours. You may take whichever you want.'

Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ replied: 'This situation has become doubtful to me as to which one is mine. By Allah Almighty! I will not take it at all.'

The greengrocer then said: 'By Allah Almighty! I will not leave it either without giving it away.' Eventually, both of them agreed to sell both buckets and give the money in charity. (*Al-Raud-ul-Faa'iq*, pp. 221)

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ! سُبْحَانَ اللهِ You heard how pious and righteous Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was that he did not take the bucket back simply out of the fear that the bucket might be someone else's, and on the Day of Judgement, he may stand to lose rather than gain.

May Allah ﷺ also grant us a Madani mind-set like his, such fear of Allah ﷻ like his, such caution like his, such piety like his and such contentment like his.

اٰمِيْنَ بِجَاهِ النَّبِيِّ الْاَمِيْنِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ

Sunnahs and etiquette of applying kohl

Let's listen to the Sunnahs and etiquette of applying kohl mentioned in the booklet '101 Madani Pearls', written by Ameer-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat دائمتہ برکاتہم العالیہ:

1. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated: 'The best kohl (Surmah) amongst all is 'Ismid', as it improves the eyesight and grows the eyelashes.' (*Ibn-e-Majah, vol. 4, pp. 115, Hadees 3497*)
2. There is no harm in using kohl made from stones nor black kohl with the intention of beautification. (*Fatawa-e-Hindiyyah, vol. 5, pp. 359*)
3. It is Sunnah to use kohl at the time of sleeping. (*Mirat-ul-Manajih, vol. 6, pp. 180*)
4. Here is a summary of the 3 narrated methods of using kohl: (1) Sometimes, apply it 3 times to each eye. (2) Sometimes, apply it 3 times to the right eye and twice to the left. (3) And sometimes, apply it twice to each eye and then at the end, take the stick, put it into the container so the kohl comes onto it, and then use that stick once on each eye. (*Shu'ab-ul-Iman, vol. 5, pp. 218, Hadees 6428*)

By doing this, all three methods will be acted upon اِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ.

5. The Holy Prophet ﷺ would start every honourable action from the right hand side, so apply kohl to the right eye first and then the left eye.

صَلُّوْا عَلٰى الْحَبِيْبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ