

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

LOWER
YOUR
WING

Children





In the Name of Allah,
The Compassionate, The Merciful



LOWER
YOUR
WING

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LOWER
YOUR
WING



صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ



Birds, soaring and diving, must end their flight slowly. Landing and lowering their wings is harder than taking off and stretching their wings.

Like a bird coming down from sky to earth that slows its wing beats and lowers them to gently touch land so was the Command of **ALLAH** (Glorified be He) to His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding believers:

(And lower your wing to those of the believers who follow you)⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of Ash-Shu'ara' 26: 215.



Lower your wing
Lay down your pride
Let go of your own life
Adopt patience
Give and care for people
Relieve their burdens
Remove their ignorance
Let not your eyes overlook them
Man or woman, young or old, rich or poor,
strong or weak, enslaved or free
Humble yourself to them, O Muhammad
(peace and blessings be upon him)
And turn the darkness into light



LOWER
YOUR
WING



Children



رَسُولُ اللَّهِ



Upon seeing some women and children returning from a wedding ceremony, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), hastily and happily, got up and said, **“O Allah (bear witness), you are among the most beloved of all people to me.”**

⁽¹⁾ He (peace and blessings be upon him) used to line up children, stretch out his welcoming arms, and say, **“Whoever comes to me first shall have such-and-such (a reward).”** Children used to race one another to him, fall on his back and chest, and he (peace and blessings be upon him) would kiss them and keep company with them. ⁽¹⁾

“I have never seen anyone more merciful towards children than the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him),” recollected

⁽¹⁾ Anas bin Malik, *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of An-Nikah (Marriage), Hadith no. 4782.*

⁽²⁾ ‘Abdullah bin Al-Harith, *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Banu Hashim, Hadith no. 1739.*



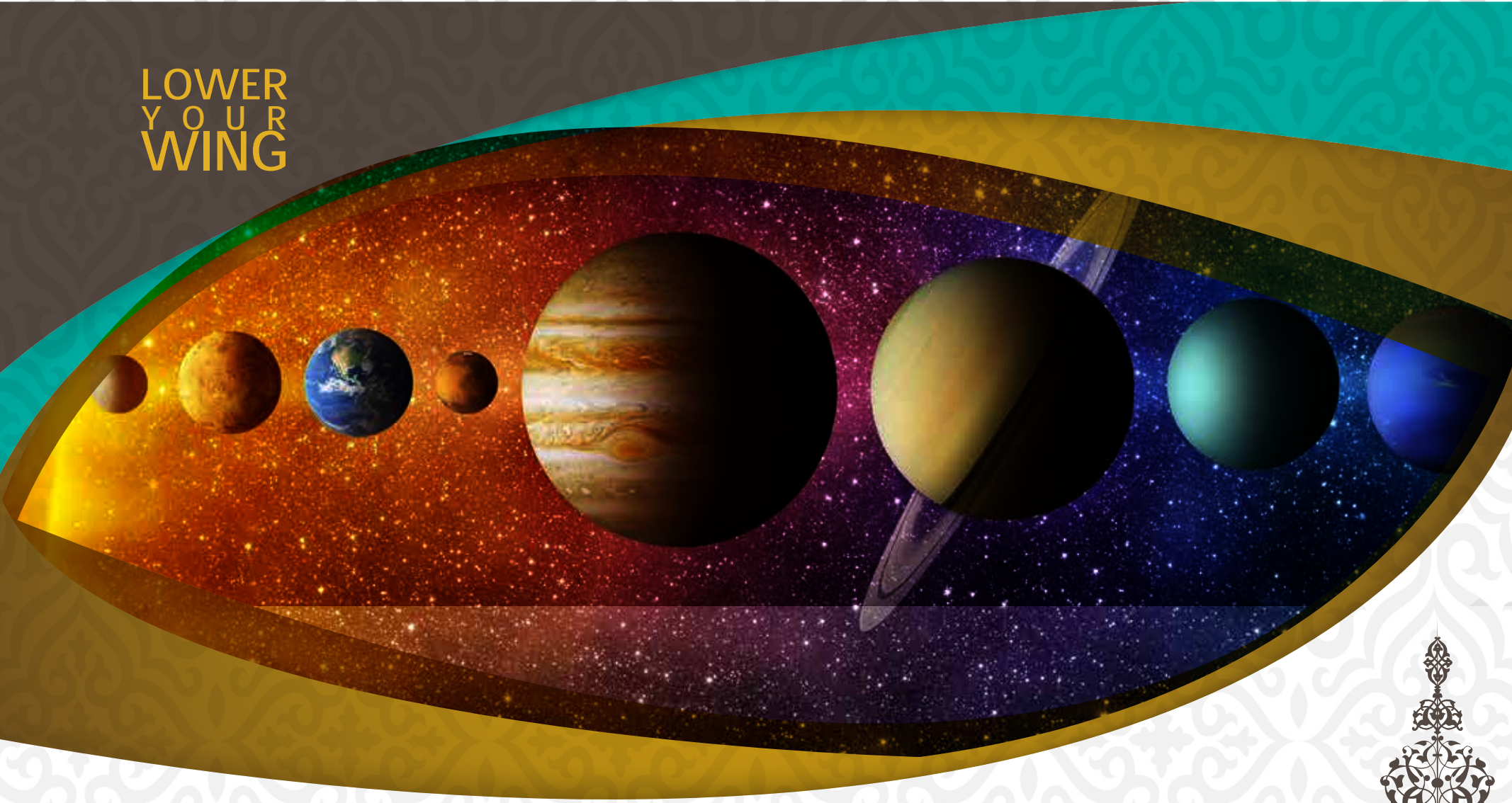


Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet's servant. "His son Ibrahim was in the care of a wet nurse in the hills around Al-Madinah. He (peace and blessings be upon him) used to go there, and we accompanied him. Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) would enter the house filled with smoke – for the wet nurse's husband was a blacksmith. He (peace and blessings be upon him) would pick up his son, kiss him, and then return." ⁽¹⁾

Upon coming back from journeys, he (peace and blessings be upon him) was welcomed back by children. He (peace and blessings be upon him) used to give them lifts on his mount and kindly amuse them.

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Fada'il (Virtues), Hadith no. 4280.





‘Abdullah bin Ja’far (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “Once he (peace and blessings be upon him) came back from a journey, and I was taken to him first. He (peace and blessings be upon him) made me mount in front of him. Then one of the two sons of Fatimah (the Prophet’s daughter) was brought. He (peace and blessings be upon him) made him mount behind him, and thus we entered Al-Madinah, three on one riding animal.”⁽¹⁾

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) arrived at Makkah, the children of Banu ‘Abdul-Muttalib would receive him. He

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Muslim, Book of Fada’il As-Shabah (Merits of the Companions), Hadith no. 4455.





(peace and blessings be upon him) would then take up one of them in front of him and another behind him.” ⁽¹⁾

Jabir bin Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “I offered Zhuhr (Noon) Prayer led by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). He (peace and blessings be upon him) then went out to his family, and I went along with him when some children met him (on the way). He (peace and blessings be upon him) started to wipe both cheeks of each one of them, one by one. He (peace and blessings be upon him) wiped mine too. I felt a coolness or fragrance in his hand, as if he (peace and blessings be upon him) had just brought it out of

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage), Hadith no. 1671.





the scent casket of a perfumer.”⁽¹⁾

Usamah bin Zaid, the beloved adopted son of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to take me and place me on his thigh and place Al-Hasan bin ‘Ali (his grandson) on his other thigh, and then embrace us and say, ‘O Allah, please be merciful to them, for I am merciful to them.’”⁽²⁾

According to another narration, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “O Allah, please love them, for I love them.”⁽³⁾

Those children lived to remember the Prophet’s kindness towards them in their childhood; memories they narrate which reveal a unique

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Fada’il, Hadith no. 4297.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adab (Good Manners), Hadith no. 5544.

⁽³⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Manaqib (Merits), Hadith no. 3455.

⁽³⁾



relationship between people and the Prophet of Allah, in a way unprecedented in the history of mankind.

The Prophet, the Grandfather

The tenderness of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) towards children was spontaneous and natural, almost involuntary.

Although on the pulpit delivering a sermon, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) could not bear to see his two grandsons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husain, walking and stumbling. He (peace and blessings be upon him) interrupted his sermon, came down from the pulpit, lifted them up and said, **“Truthful are the Words of Allah Who says: Your wealth and your children are only a trial. ⁽¹⁾ I saw these two walking and stumbling in their**

⁽¹⁾ *ranslated meanings of At-Taghabun 64: 15.*





shirts and I could not have patience until I descended and carried them.”⁽¹⁾ About them he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “They are my two sweet basils in this world.”⁽²⁾

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “I went along with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) at a time during the day; neither he (peace and blessings be upon him) talked to me nor I to him until he (peace and blessings be upon him) reached the market of Banu Qainuqa’. There he (peace and blessings be upon him) went away to the house of Fatimah and asked, ‘Is the little chap (meaning Al-Hasan) here? Is the little

⁽¹⁾ Buraidah bin Al-Hasib, Sunan An-Nasa’iy, Book of Salat Al-Idin, Hadith no. 1567.

⁽²⁾ ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Manaqib, Hadith no. 3470.





chap here?’ We felt that his mother had kept him in order to bathe, dress, and adorn him. It did not take long before he (Al-Hasan) came running until each of them embraced his companion. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘O Allah, I love him. Please love him and whoever loves him.’”(1)

There was a special place in his heart for the young that embraced all children, showing them all the same care and gentleness. Lady ‘Aishah said, “Newborns were brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), who used to supplicate Allah’s blessings on them and rub a chewed date in their mouths.” (2)

(1) *Sahih Muslim, Book of Fada’il Al-Shabah, Hadith no. 4446.*

(2) *Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Taharah (Purification), Hadith no. 430.*





Lady ‘Aishah further said, “The first child born into Islam (i.e. in Al-Madinah after emigration) was ‘Abdullah bin Az-Zubair. They brought him to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who took a date and, after chewing it, put it into the child’s mouth. Thus the first thing that went into the child’s stomach was the saliva of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).” (1)

As-Sa’ib bin Yazid (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “My aunt took me to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, my nephew is sick.’ He



(1) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Manaqib, Hadith no. 3620.*



(peace and blessings be upon him) caressed my head and supplicated Allah to bless me. Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) performed ablution. I drank from the water of his ablution, and then I stood behind him and looked at the seal of prophethood between his shoulders, (its size was) like the egg of a partridge.” ⁽¹⁾

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “The first fruits used to be brought to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), who used to say, ‘O Allah, give us blessings in our city and in our fruits, and in our Mudd and Sa’ (measures of food), blessings upon blessings.’ Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) gave them to the youngest among the children present with him.” ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Ad-Da‘wat (Supplications), Hadith no. 5875.





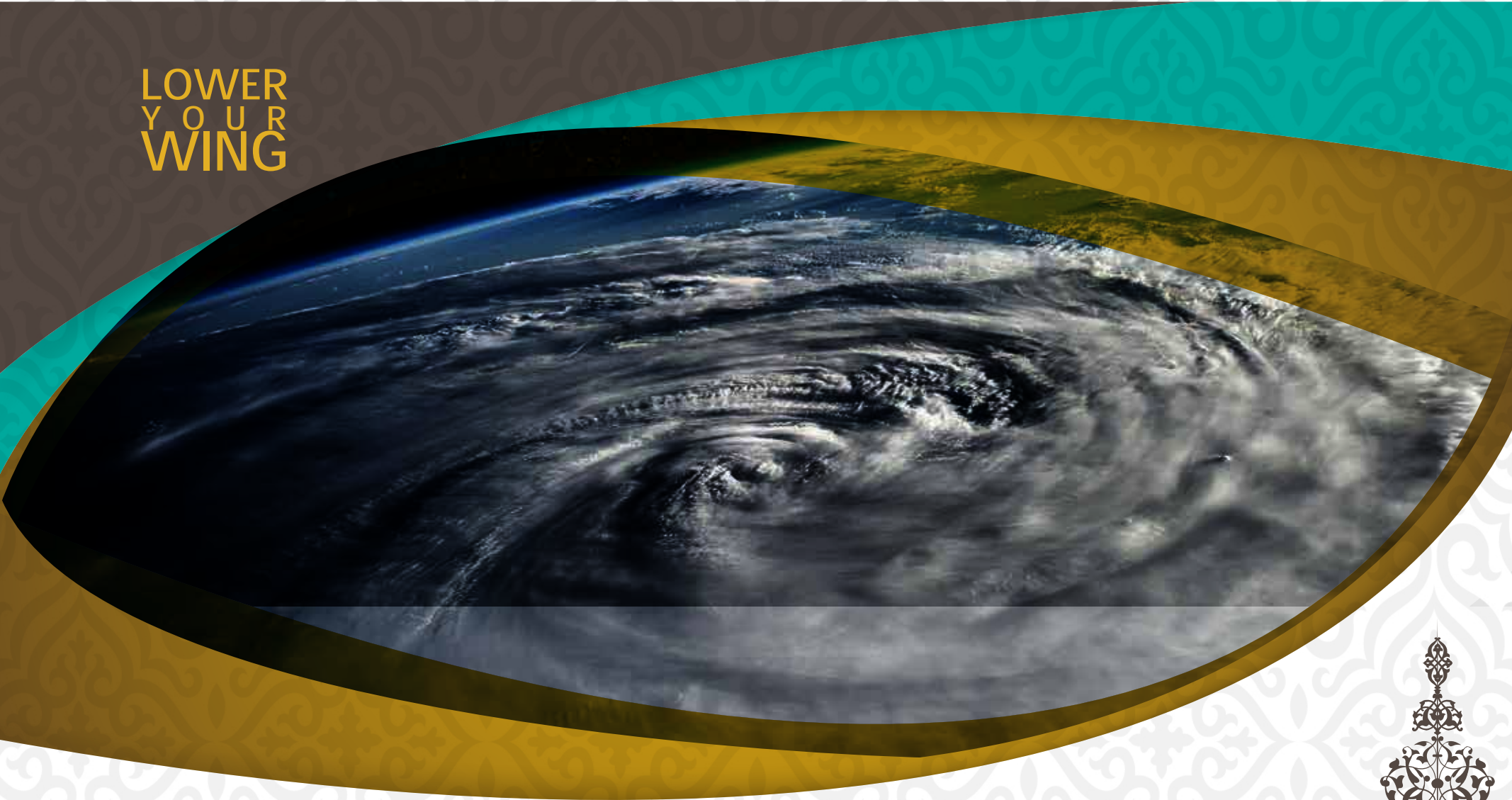
Mercy at Play

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was merciful with children at play too, even if the place where they played was on his back while he (peace and blessings be upon him) was offering Salah ⁽²⁾. The worshippers in a congregational prayer led by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once exclaimed, “O Messenger of Allah, you offered during your Salah a prostration which you so prolonged that we thought either something had happened or that you were receiving revelation!” He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Nothing of this has happened, but my grandson made me his



(1) *Sahih Muslim, Book of Hajj (Pilgrimage), Hadith no. 2438.*

(2) *Salah (Prayer), the second Pillar of Islam, is a fixed obligatory form of worship performed five times a day at prescribed times. Salah consists of Rak'ahs (singular: Rak'ah). Rak'ah represents a unit of Salah and consists of one standing while reciting the Qur'an (Surat Al-Fatihah in every Rak'ah and a portion of the Qur'an), one bowing, and two prostrations with a sitting in between for testifying to the Oneness of Allah and supplication.*



mount. I hated to hurry him until he had satisfied his wish.”⁽¹⁾

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “We were offering Isha’ (Evening) Prayer led by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). When he (peace and blessings be upon him) prostrated, (his two grandsons) Al-Hasan and Al-Husain would leap over his back. Upon raising his head, he (peace and blessings be upon him) would take them gently off his back with his hand and place them on the ground. When he returned (to prostration), they returned (to leaping over his back), until he (peace and blessings be upon

⁽¹⁾ Shaddad bin Al-Had, Sunan An-Nasa’iy, Book of At-Tatbiq (Application), Hadith no. 1129.



him) seated them on his thighs at the completion of his Salah.”⁽¹⁾

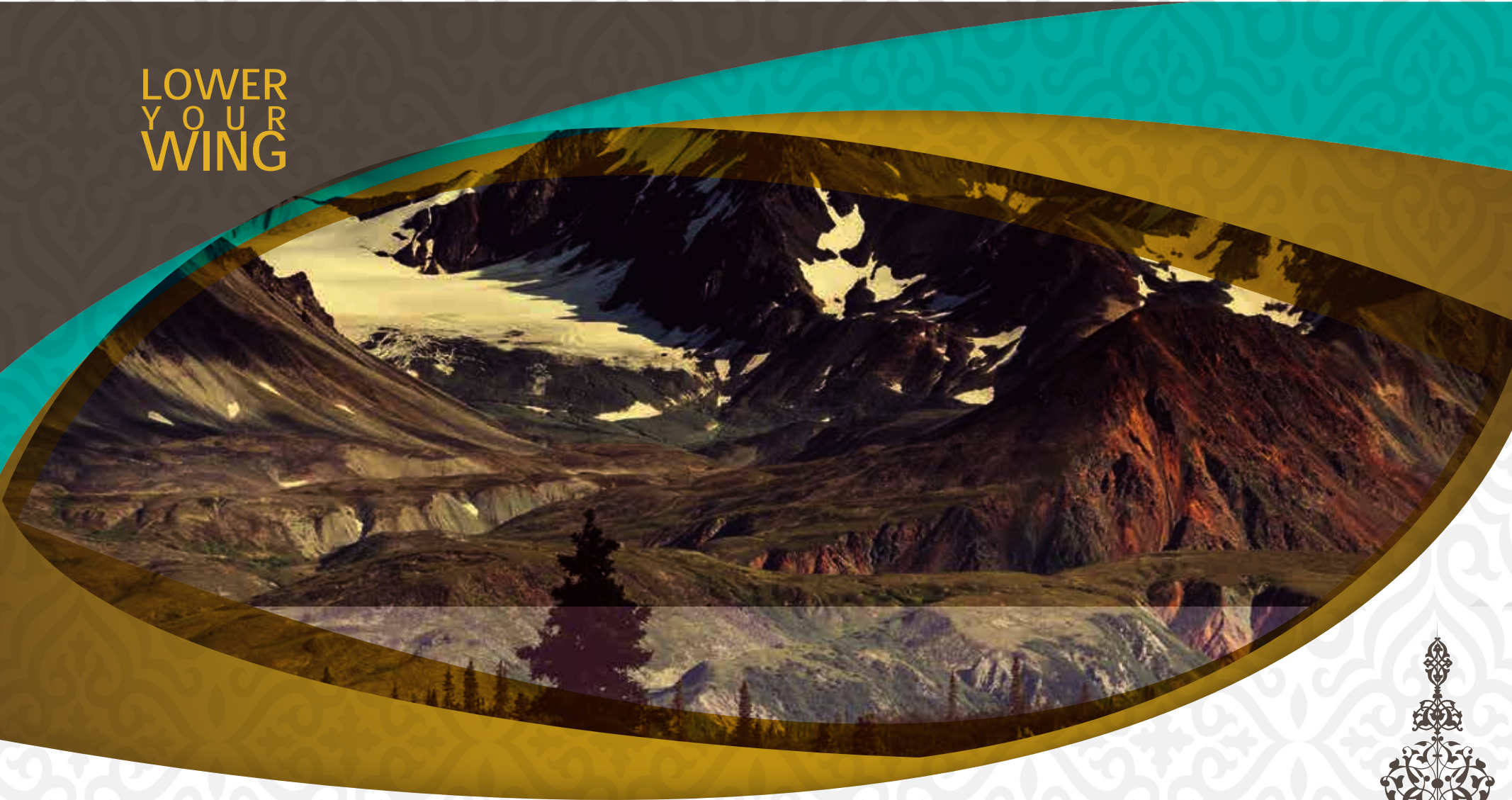
Boy or girl, there was no discrimination, as was made by the people of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic Days of Ignorance). Abu Qatadah Al-Ansary narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to pray while carrying Umamah, the daughter of his daughter Zainab. When he (peace and blessings be upon him) prostrated, he (peace and blessings be upon him) put her down, and carried her when he (peace and blessings be upon him) stood up.⁽²⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would play with the children who came back from Abyssinia and try to speak in Abyssinian with

⁽¹⁾ *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin (The Companions who narrated many Hadiths), Hadith no. 10246.*

⁽²⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of As-Salah (Prayer), Hadith no. 486.*





them, as Umm Khalid, the daughter of Khalid bin Sa'id, narrated, "Some clothes were presented to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) as a gift. Among them was a black Khamisah (a silk or woolen striped garment). He (peace and blessings be upon him) asked (his Companions), 'Whom do you suggest we should clothe with this Khamisah?' The people kept silent. Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'Bring me Umm Khalid.' I was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), who dressed me in it with his own hands, and then he (peace and blessings be upon him) said twice, 'May you wear your dress out and tatter it (i.e. a supplication for a long life).'





He then started looking at the embroidery of that Khamisah, beckoning with his hand to me, while saying, ‘O Umm Khalid! This is Sana (beautiful in the Abyssinian language)! O Umm Khalid! This is Sana!’” (1)

The happiness of those merry little companions was happiness to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He (peace and blessings be upon him) disliked seeing them anything other than joyful and playful. Anas narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) used to visit us. I had a little brother who had a Nughair (a little nightingale) he used to play with, but his Nughair died. One day the



(1) Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Libas (Clothes), Hadith no. 5397.



Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) came and saw him (Anas's little brother) looking sad. He (peace and blessings be upon him) asked him, 'Why is Abu 'Umair sad?' They told him, 'His Nughair with which he used to play died, O Messenger of Allah.' He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'Abu 'Umair, what did Nughair do?'" (1)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) kindly tried to cheer the little child using the merry rhythm between the boy's name and that of the little nightingale.

(1) *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 13557.*





My Boy, I Am Teaching You Words

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) kept himself close to children and their world, and addressed his Message to them the same as adults.

Whenever he (peace and blessings be upon him) passed by children who were playing, he (peace and blessings be upon him) greeted them. ⁽¹⁾ Anas narrated, “**The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) passed by us while we were playing and said: Peace be upon you, O boys.**” ⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Anas bin Malik narrated that the Prophet ﷺ passed by a group of boys and greeted them. He said, “The Prophet used to do so.” Reported by Al-Bukhary, *Book of Al-Ista’dhan (Asking Permission)*, Hadith no. 5778. Abu Dawud also reported in *Book of Al-Adab*, Hadith no. 4526 that Anas bin Malik said, “The Messenger of Allah came to some children who were playing and greeted them with Salam.”

⁽²⁾ Musnad Ahmad, *Book of Al-Mukthrin*, Hadith no. 12429.





By greetings of peace the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was implanting a sublime Islamic moral in early childhood. **“The young should greet the old, the passerby should greet the one sitting, and the small group of people should greet the large group of people.”** ⁽¹⁾

Simply greeting one another with the salutation of Islam, “Peace be upon you”, and returning the salutation with “Peace be upon you too and Allah’s Mercy and Blessings” is the way to love, faith, and ultimately Paradise in his eyes, **“You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another. Shall I guide you to a thing which if you do it, you shall**

⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Ista’dhan, Hadith no. 5763.





love one another? Spread Salam (the greeting of peace: peace be upon you) among you.”⁽¹⁾

He (peace and blessings be upon him) thus taught them the ethics of a Muslim in a practical way, and sowed in them from a tender age the seeds of firm belief in the Oneness of Allah and absolute reliance on Him Alone, for them to grow up balanced on psychological, intellectual, and moral levels.

Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) was riding behind the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) (on the same mount) one day when he (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him, “O my boy, I am teaching you words. Guard (the Commands and Prohibitions of) Allah,



⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Muslim, Book of Iman, Hadith no. 81.

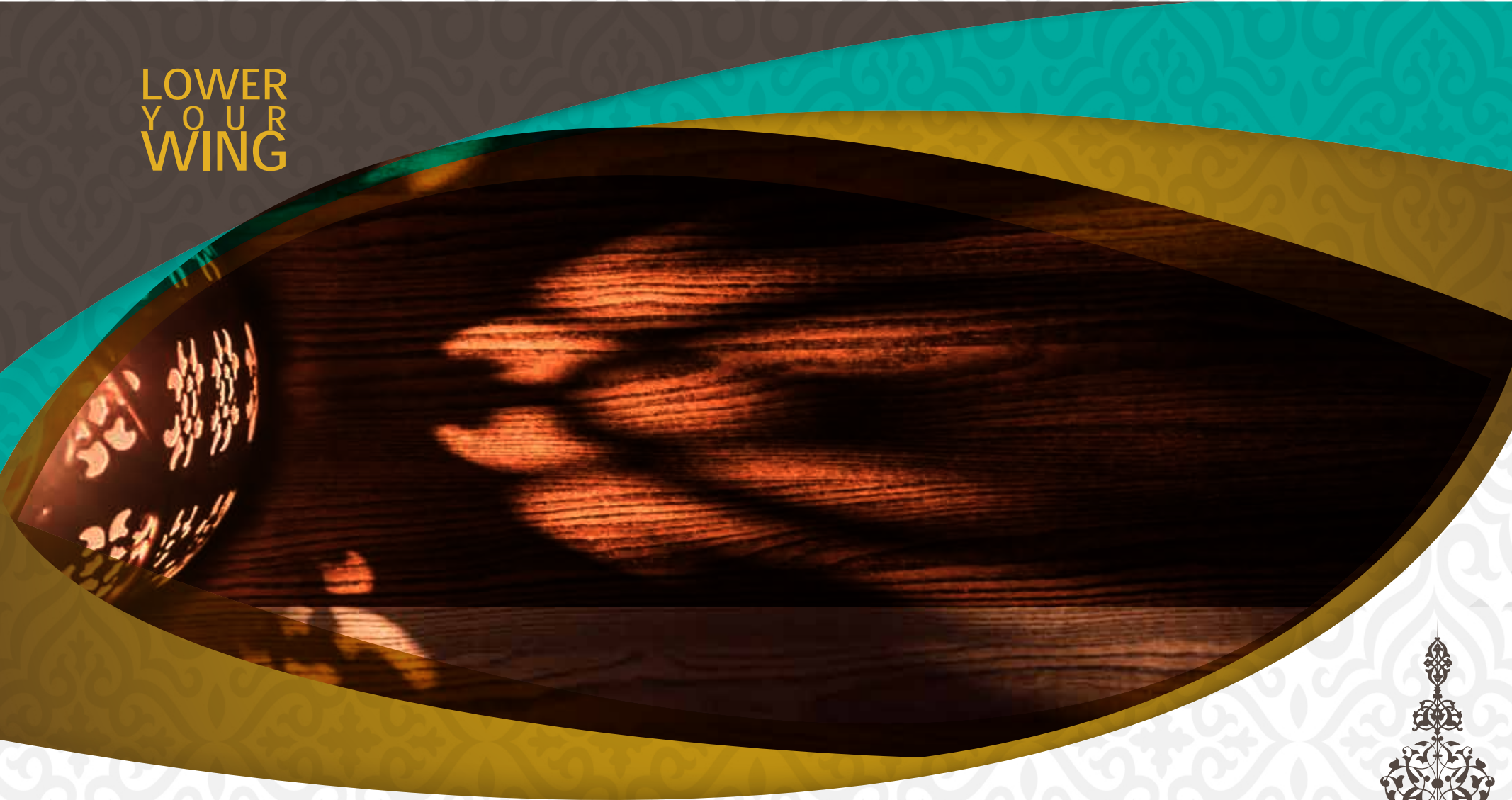


He will guard you. Guard (the Rights of) Allah, you will find Him before you. When you ask, ask Allah. When you seek help, seek it from Allah. Know that if people gather together to benefit you with something, they will not benefit you except with something that Allah has decreed for you. And if they gather together to harm you with something, they will not harm you except with something that Allah has decreed for you. The pens have been raised and the pages have dried.” (1)

That is, the pens inscribing fate have ceased writing. All destinies are already inscribed and decided.

(1) Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Sifat Al-Qiyamah wa Al-Raqa'iq wa Al-Wara' (Description of The Day of Resurrection, Softening of Hearts and Piety), Hadith no. 2440.





Children responded to their Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and became eager to learn from him not only the obligatory acts of worship, but also the supererogatory ones through which a servant can approach Allah more closely. Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “Once I stayed overnight at the house of my aunt Maymunah (the Prophet’s wife) to see how the (supererogatory) Salah was offered by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) during the night. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) talked with his wife for an hour and then lay down. When it was the last third of the night, or part of it, he (peace and blessings be upon him) sat and looked towards





heaven, then recited (Allah's Saying): Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding. ⁽¹⁾ Then he (peace and blessings be upon him) got up, performed ablution, cleaned his teeth with Siwak (teeth-cleansing twig), and offered eleven Rak'ahs (units of prayer). Then Bilal pronounced the Adhan (call to prayer), so the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) offered two Rak'ahs and went out to lead the people in Subh (Dawn congregational) Prayer."⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Translated meanings of Al-'Imran 3: 190.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Tawhid (Monotheism), Hadith no. 6898.





Although younger than ten years of age at that time ⁽¹⁾, Ibn ‘Abbas did not miss the chance of joining the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in voluntary night prayer. He said, “I rose and performed ablution just as he (peace and blessings be upon him) did, then I came and stood on his left side. But he (peace and blessings be upon him) took me by his right hand and turned me from behind him, and made me stand on his right, and I prayed with him.” ⁽²⁾

Another Companion, As-Sa’ib bin Yazid (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I was taken to Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) in the company of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) when I was seven years old.” ⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ibn ‘Abbas said, “The Messenger of Allah died when I was a ten-year-old boy.” Reported in Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Fada’il

⁽²⁾ Al-Qur’an (Virtues of the Qur’an), Hadith no. 4647.

⁽³⁾ Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of As-Salah, Hadith no. 516.



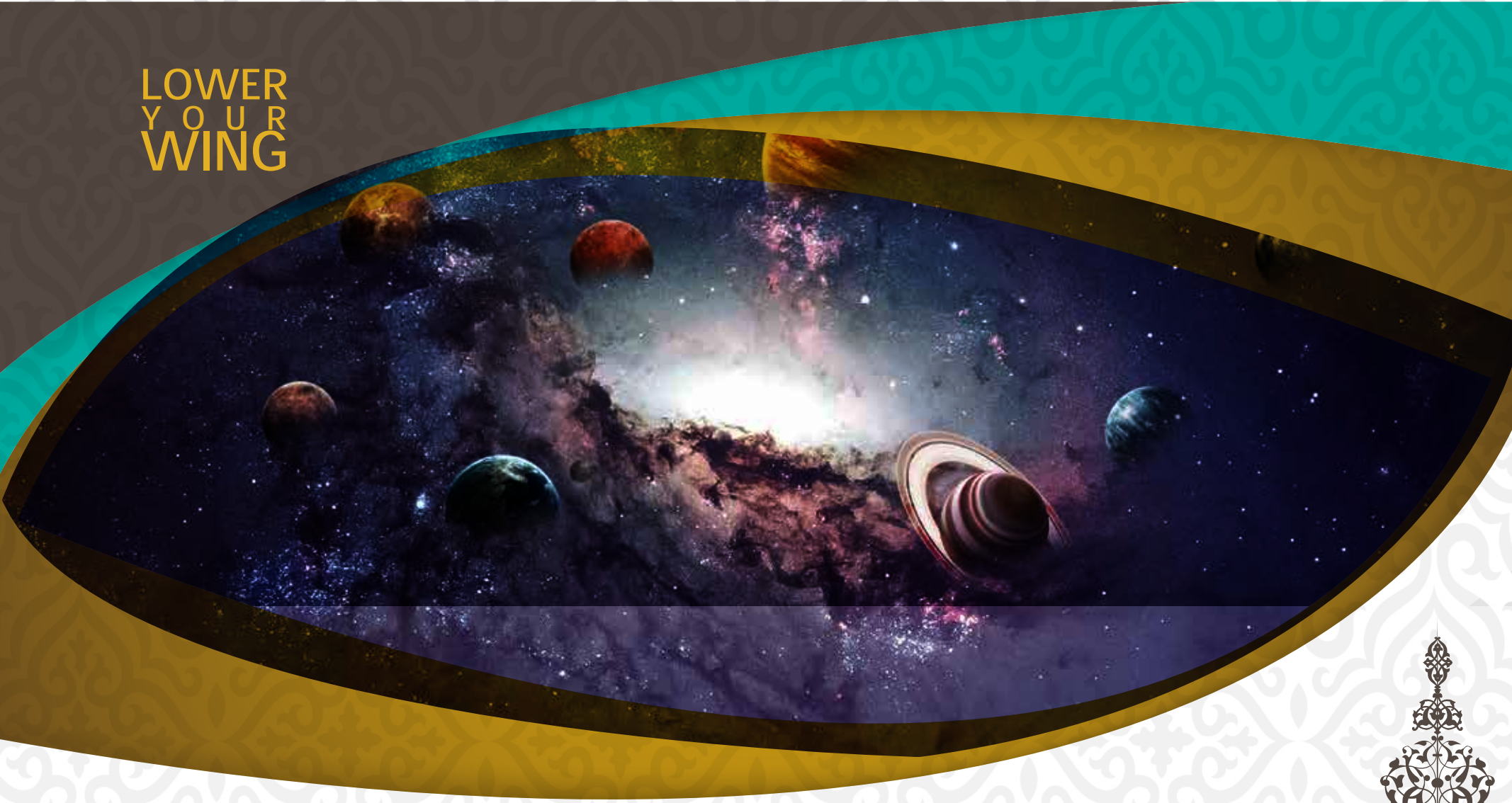


Therefore, it matched the spontaneity and originality of his preaching the Message that the first among men to pray with the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was not one of the chiefs or sages of the Arabs, but simply an eight-year-old boy, standing side by side with him, unmindful of people's mockery of the little believer in his Message, to paint with his modesty an image certainly sincere, certainly penetrating.

'Afif (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, "I was a merchant. I set out to Hajj. I went to Al-'Abbas bin 'Abdul-Muttalib, who was a merchant, to buy from him some merchandise. By Allah, I was at his place in Mina when a man



(1) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Hajj (Pilgrimage), Hadith no. 1725.*



came out of a tent close to him, looked at the sun, and when he saw that it had declined he rose to pray. Then a woman came out of the same tent from which that man had come out, and she stood behind him offering prayer. Then a boy, who had yet to attain puberty, came out of that tent and he stood with him offering prayer. I asked Al-'Abbas, 'Who is this man, O 'Abbas?' He said, 'This is Muhammad bin 'Abdullah bin 'Abdul-Muttalib, my nephew.' I said, 'Who is this woman?' He said, 'This is his wife, Khadijah bint Khuwailid.' I said, 'Who is this boy?' He said, 'This is 'Ali bin Abu Talib, his cousin.' I said, 'And what is he doing?' He said, 'He is



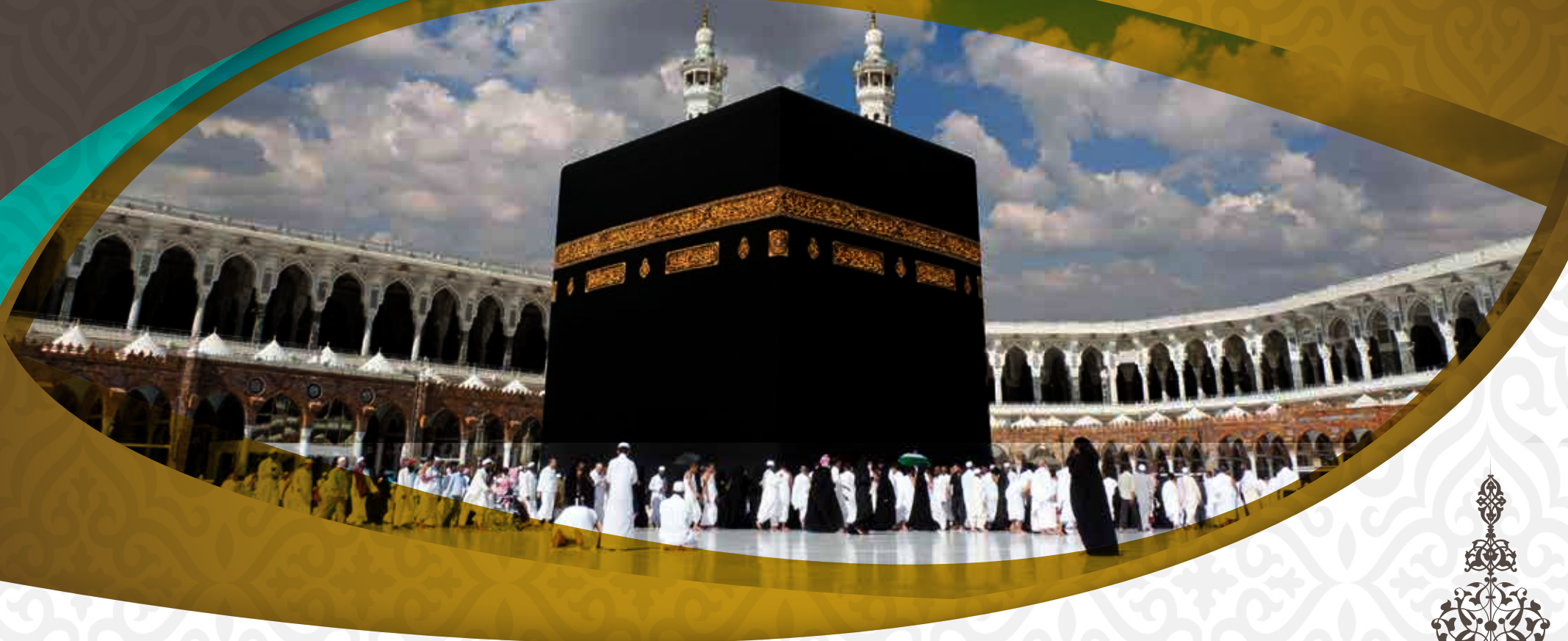


offering prayer and he claims to be a prophet. But none has followed him in his matter except his wife and his cousin, that boy.” ‘Afif added, “Would that Allah blessed me with Islam on that day to be the third after ‘Ali bin Abu Talib (to pray with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him).” ⁽¹⁾

Thus children, in the echelon of the first forerunners in faith in Islam, came in their natural third place in the hierarchy of life and family, thereby shaping the first Muslim seed of the Ummah: a woman, a man, and a child. The woman was Lady Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her), the first believer in Allah and His Messenger



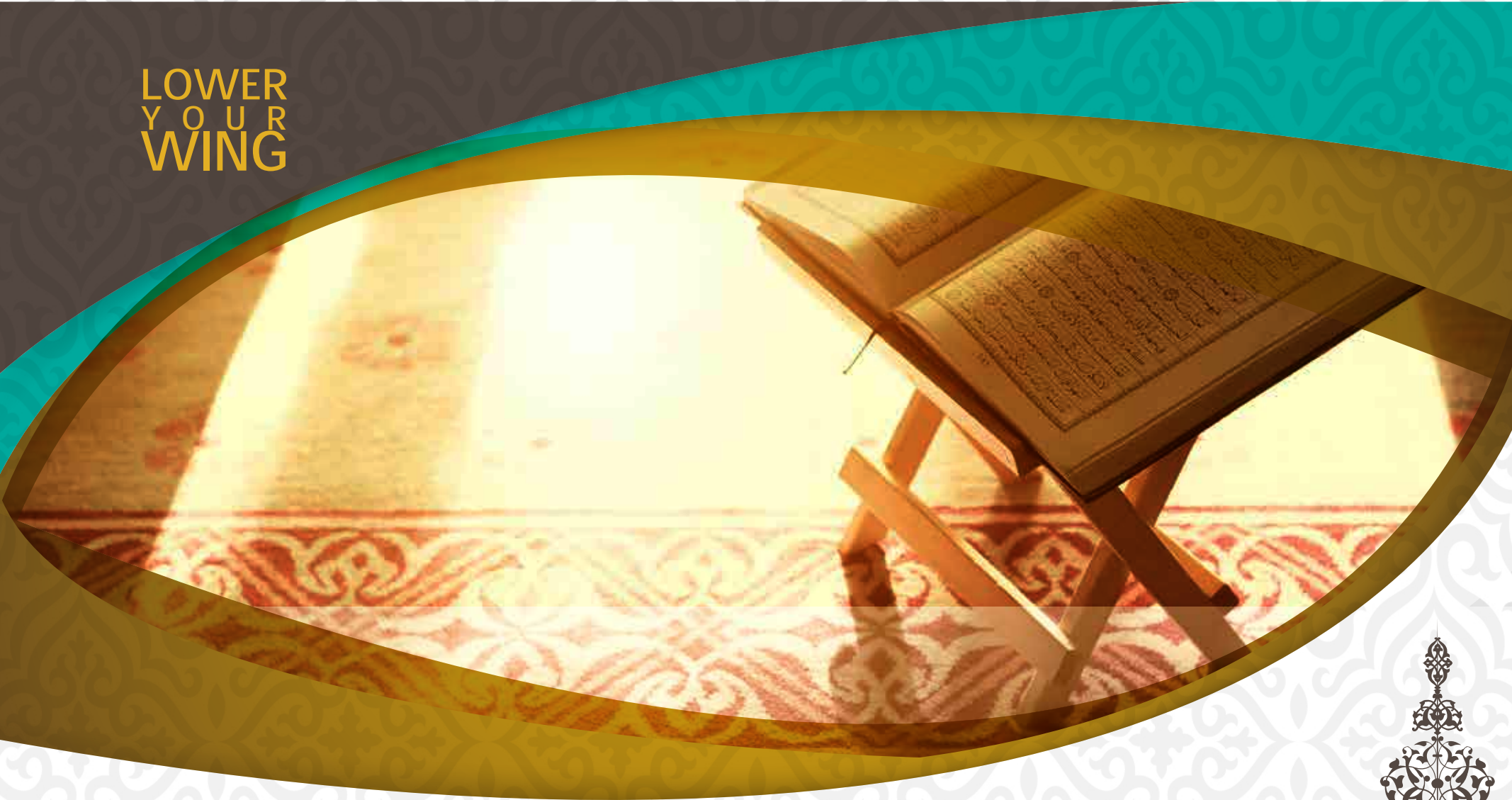
⁽¹⁾ *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Banu Hashim, Hadith no. 1691.*



(peace and blessings be upon him). The man was Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the second believer in Islam and the first believer among men. Then came 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), who embraced Islam at the age of eight to be the first boy to accept Islam, the third believer in Islam, and the first to pray with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) after Lady Khadijah.

Young age was no limitation during that beautiful era in which children lived close to their Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). It did not prevent them even from Imamate (leading the people in congregational prayer), if they were worthier of it than grownups.





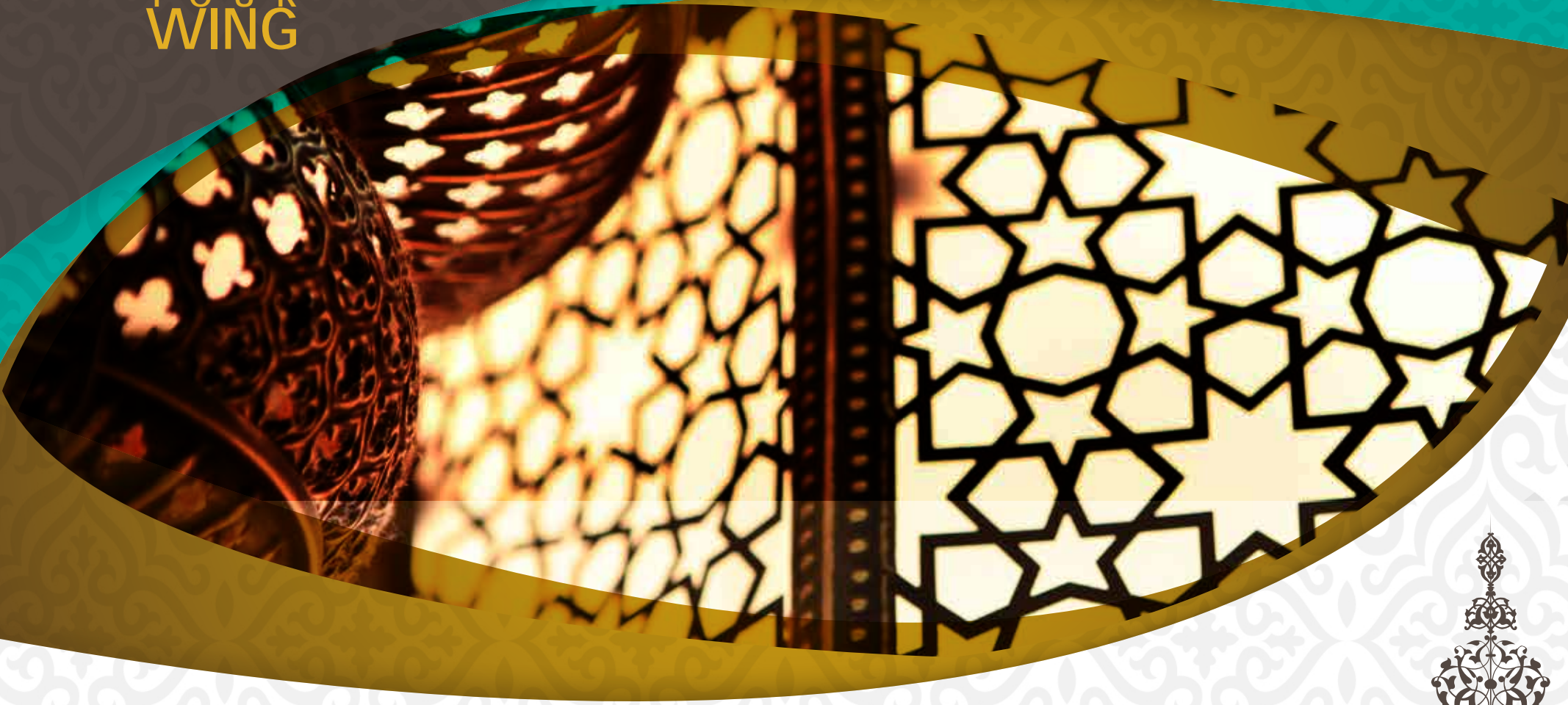
‘Amr bin Salamah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “We lived in an urban region which people would pass by whenever they went to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). They would visit us on their way back and inform us that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said such-and-such. I was a memorizing boy. I memorized a great part of this Qur’an. My father set out to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) accompanied by a group of his people. He (peace and blessings be upon him) taught them Salah and said, ‘Let the one who leads you in Salah be the one who reads the





Qur'an the most among you.' I was the one who read the Qur'an the most among them owing to what I memorized of it. So they made me their Imam (leader of congregational prayer). I used to lead them in Salah while wearing a small yellow garment of mine; but when I prostrated myself, I was uncovered. When one of the women complained, saying, 'Hide from us the private parts of your reciter,' they bought me an Omani shirt. Truly, I was never happy with anything after Islam the way I was happy with it. I used to lead them in Salah when I was only a seven-or eight-year-old child. ” (1)

(1) Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of As-Salah, Hadith no. 495



Yet, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) cared not to overburden the children with obligations beyond their capacity. ‘Abdullah bin Hisham (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that his mother, Zainab bint Humaid (may Allah be pleased with her), took him to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, **“O Messenger of Allah, take the pledge of allegiance from him.”** The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“He is young.”** He (peace and blessings be upon him) then caressed his head and supplicated Allah for him.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Ahkam (Judgments), Hadith no. 6670.*





Upbringing of Children

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) never missed an opportunity to inculcate in the young a strong sense of morality and propriety. ‘Umar bin Abu Salamah (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “I was a boy under the care of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and my hand used to go around the dish (while I was eating). The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to me, ‘O my boy, mention the Name of Allah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is nearer to you.’ This has been my manner of eating ever since.”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-At'imah (Foods), Hadith no. 4957.





The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) helped children feel self-confident through appreciation of their individuality. Sahl bin Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "A cup (full of milk or water) was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) from which he (peace and blessings be upon him) drank. On his right side there was sitting a boy who was the youngest of those present, while on his left side there were the elderly men. ⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'O my boy, would you allow me to give it (the cup) to the elderly men (first)?' The boy replied, 'I will never give preference to anyone over me as

⁽¹⁾ *The drinking etiquette taught by Prophet Muhammad dictates that in an assembly of people, water or milk should be circulated from the right-hand side of the one serving it.*





regards my share from you, O Messenger of Allah.’ So the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave it to him.”⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) shared his secrets with children, who enjoyed his confidence in them. It helped them feel trustworthy. Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) confided a secret to me which I did not disclose to anybody after him. Even Umm Sulaim (my mother) asked me about it, but I did not tell her.”⁽²⁾ ‘Abdullah bin Ja’far (may Allah be pleased with him) said, “One day the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Musaqah (Distribution of water), Hadiths no. 2180, 2193.

⁽²⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Ista’dhan, Hadith, 5815.





made me ride behind him and confided a secret to me, which I would never tell to anybody among people.”⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) socialized children into the world of grown-ups and engaged them in instructional conversations through a question-and-answer game. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Tell me of a tree which resembles a Muslim, giving its fruit at all times by the Permission of its Lord, and the leaves of which do not fall.’ I (‘Abdullah bin ‘Umar) thought of the palm, but I was



⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Muslim, Book of Fada'il Al-Shabah, Hadith no. 4457.*



reluctant to speak because ‘Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were present. When they did not speak, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘It is the palm.’ When I came out with my father, I said, ‘O my father, it came to my mind that it is the palm.’ He (‘Umar) said, ‘What prevented you from saying it? Had you said it, it would have been more pleasing to me than such-and-such (a fortune).’ I said, ‘Nothing prevented me except that neither you nor Abu Bakr spoke, so I felt reluctant (to speak in your presence).’”⁽¹⁾

Children might be timid at first, but with practice they will definitely gain self-confidence.

⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 5678.*





The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also encouraged the youth to incorporate physical activity into their lives, urging them to follow the example of righteous great men like their father, Prophet Isma'il (Ishmael, peace and blessings be upon him). Salamah bin Al-Akwa' (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) passed by a group from the tribe of Aslam competing with one another in throwing arrows. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Throw, Banu Isma'il, your father was an archer. Throw, and I am with Banu so-and-so.”** Whereupon, one of the two teams ceased throwing. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, **“Why do you not throw?”** They replied,





“How can we throw when you are with them (i.e. on their side)?” The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Throw, and I am with you all.”⁽¹⁾

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) watched over children’s pure nature of truth-telling, warning against any lying or false promises that might distort these pure souls, even in jest. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “My mother called me one day while the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) was sitting in our house. She said, ‘Come here and I shall give you something.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked her, ‘What do you

⁽¹⁾ Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Jihad wa Al-Siyar, Hadith no. 2684.



intend to give him?’ She replied, ‘I intend to give him some dates.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘If you do not give him something, it will be recorded as a lie against you.’⁽¹⁾

As to the anchor of psychological stability of children, it is equality of treatment between them, even in kisses and smiles. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) exhorted, saying, **“Treat your children equally! Treat your children equally! Treat your children equally!”**⁽²⁾

The mother of An-Nu‘man bin Bashir (may Allah be pleased with him) asked his father to make some gift of his property to him. He procrastinated for a

⁽¹⁾ Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 4339.

⁽²⁾ Musnad Ahmad, Book of Kuffans (Kufis), Hadith no. 17724.





year then he decided to do it, but she said, “I shall not be pleased unless you make the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) a witness to what you have conferred as a gift upon my son.” An-Nu‘man said, “I was a boy at that time, so my father took hold of my hand, and he came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, ‘The mother of this (son of mine), Bint Rawahah, wishes that I should make you bear witness to what I have conferred as a gift upon her son.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, ‘O Bashir, have you any other children besides this (son of yours)?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ He (peace and blessings be upon him)



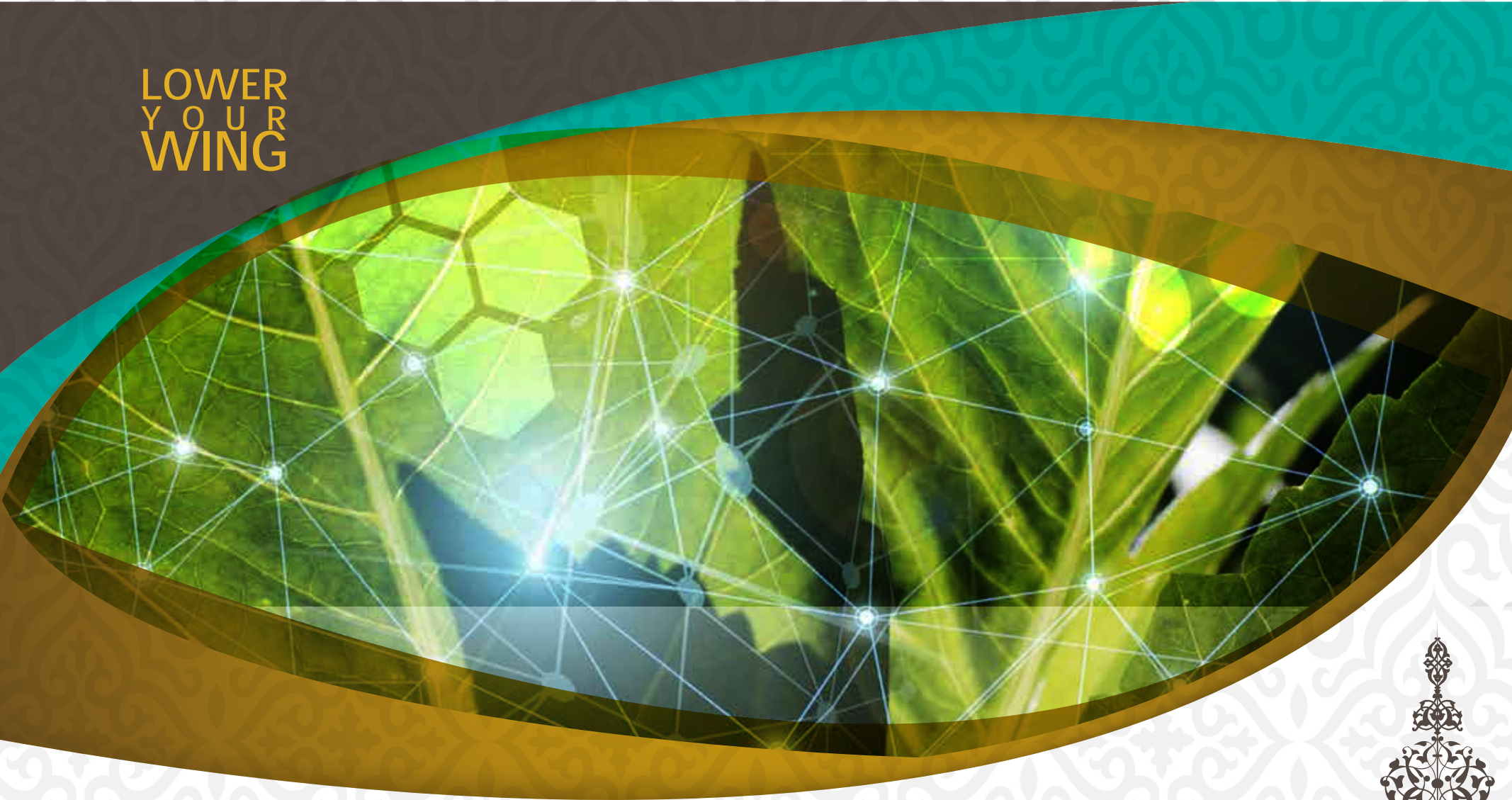


asked, ‘Have you given them all the like of this?’ He said, ‘No.’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Then make me not a witness. I cannot be a witness to injustice.’”(1)

Childhood Mistakes

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not follow the old recipe of scolding and blame in dealing with children’s mistakes. Rather, he (peace and blessings be upon him) first asked for the reason, listened attentively, showed compassion, gave remedy, and then turned to Allah with a special supplication for the child.

(1) *Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Hibat (Gifts), Hadith no. 3056.*

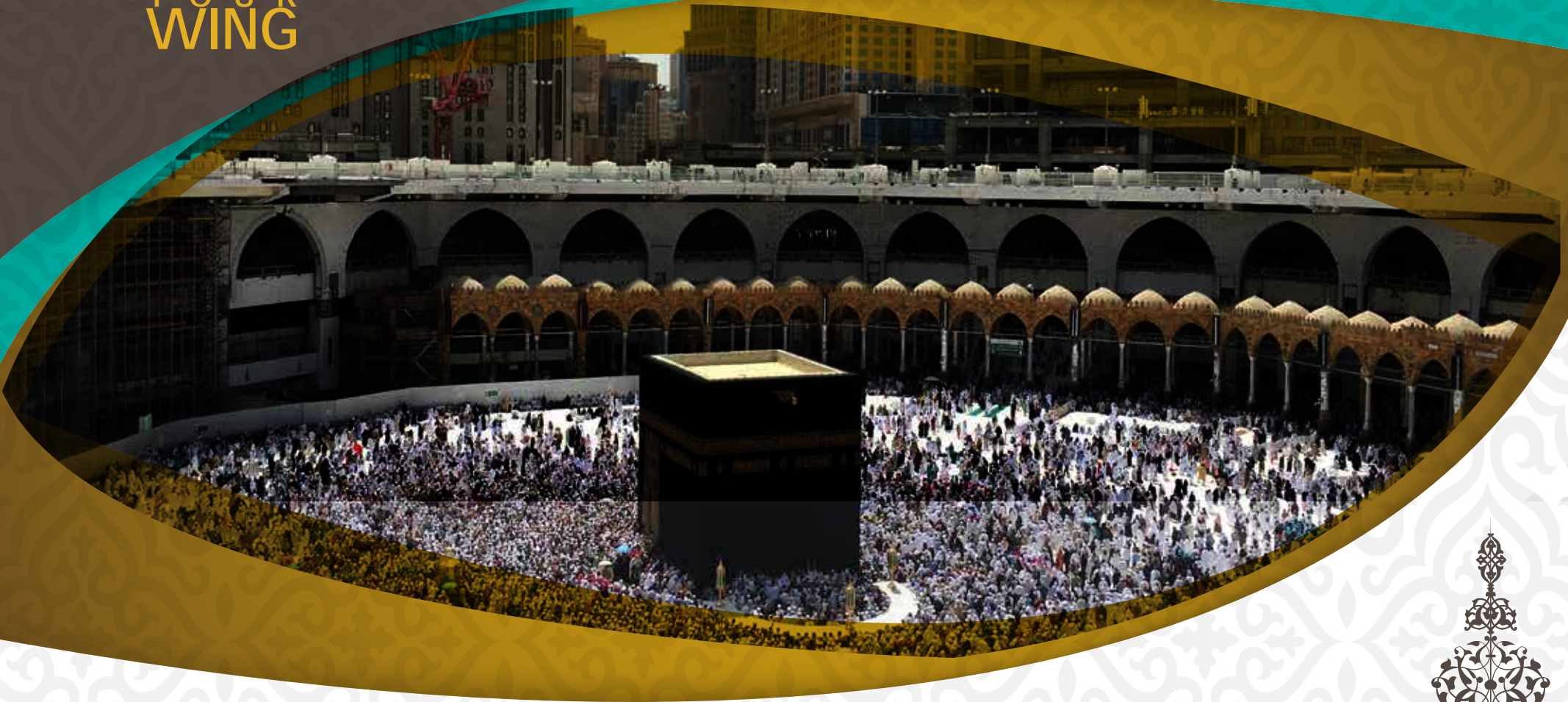


Rafi' bin Amr Al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “I was a boy who used to fell dates by throwing stones at the date palms of the Ansar. I was brought to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) who asked, ‘O my boy, why do you throw stones at date palms?’ I said, ‘To eat.’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Do not throw stones at date palms, but eat from what falls beneath them.’ He then caressed my head and said, ‘O Allah, satisfy his belly (hunger).’” ⁽¹⁾

However little the child was, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) showed that his mistake must be clarified and corrected. Al-Hasan



⁽¹⁾ Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Jihad, Hadith no. 2253.



bin ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) once took a date from the dates given in charity and put it in his mouth. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) interjected, **“Kakh! Kakh!”** to make him expel it, and then said, **“Do you not know that we (the family of Muhammad) do not eat charity?”** ⁽¹⁾ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) thus taught his grandson not to abuse the privilege of being part of the family of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

In return, whenever children did something nice the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) warmly thanked them for it. Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) placed for the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) water for his

⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Zakah (Obligatory Charity), Hadith no. 1396.





ablution, so he (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, **“Who placed this?”** On being told, he (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“O Allah, grant him comprehension of the religion.”** ⁽¹⁾

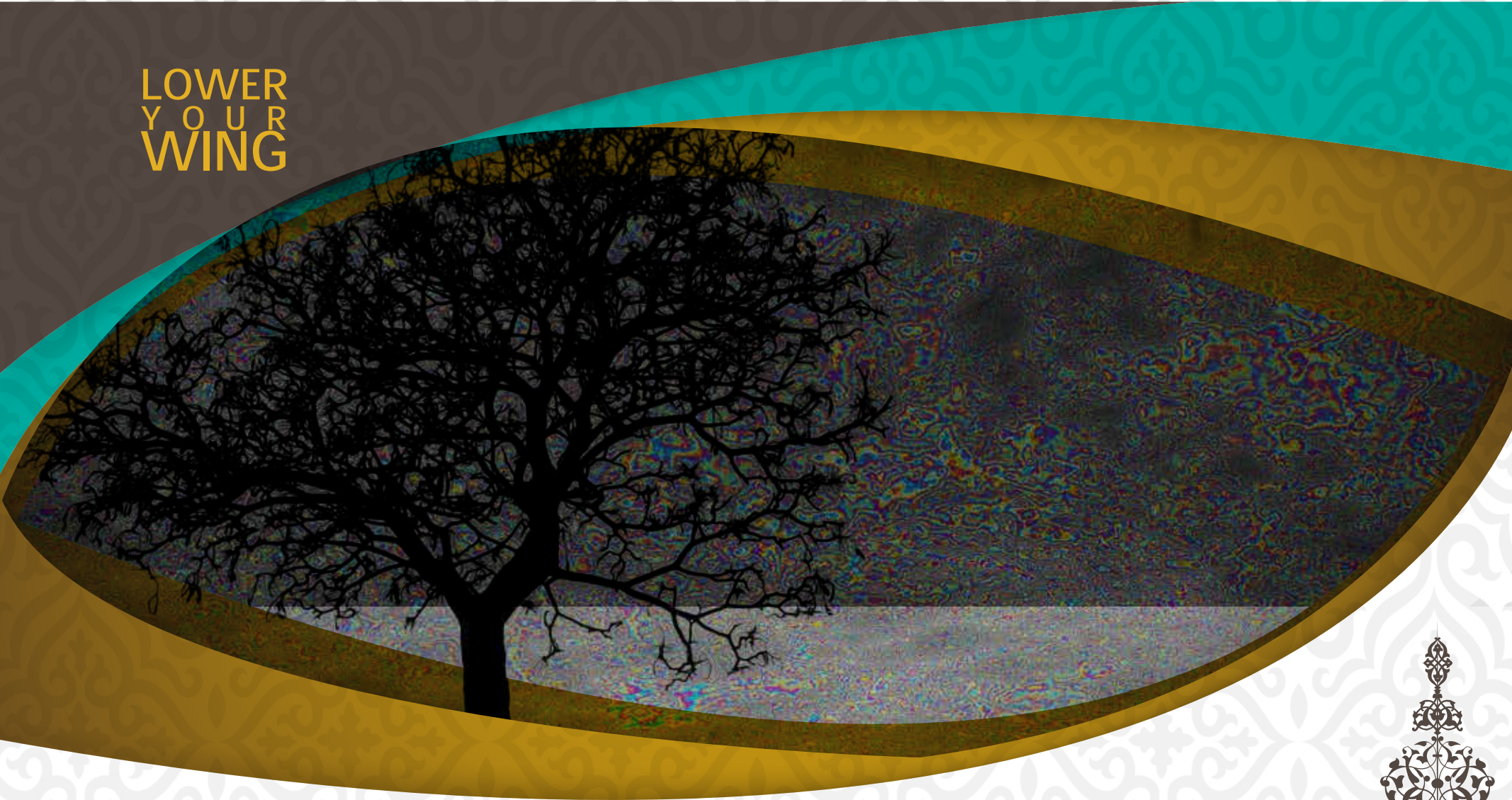
In another Hadith, Ibn ‘Abbas narrated, **“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) embraced me and said, ‘O Allah, teach him the Book (the knowledge of the Qur’an).’”** ⁽²⁾

And as a repayment for the services Anas rendered to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), he (peace and blessings

⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Wudu’ (Ablution), Hadith no. 140.*

⁽²⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-‘Alim (Knowledge), Hadith no. 73.*





be upon him) supplicated Allah for him, saying, “**O Allah, increase his wealth and children; and whatever You give him, bless it for him.**”⁽¹⁾

Yet discipline should be used with children when required, starting from the age of seven, to correct negligence of serious duties in life, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) taught, saying, “**Command your children to offer Salah at the age of seven, and chastise them for (abandoning) it (Salah) at the age of ten, and separate between them in beds.**”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Da'wat (Supplications), Hadith no. 5859.*

⁽²⁾ *'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin Al-'As, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of As-Salah, Hadith no. 418.*



Where Mercy Begins

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) kissed Al-Hasan bin ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) while sitting with the chief Al-Aqra’ bin Habis At-Tamimy, who remarked, **“I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them.”** The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) looked at him and said, **“The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.”⁽¹⁾**

Mercy to be had must first be given. Merciful gestures such as a kiss, a hug, a pat, or a smile do not go against the dignity of fatherhood, but they



⁽¹⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 5538.



establish secret ties of mutual love, mercy, and understanding between a father and his children never to be had without these tender expressions of affection. Their blessed influence is beyond human understanding; their absence hardens the hearts.

Lady ‘Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, “Some Bedouins came to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and asked, ‘Do you kiss your children?’ He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Yes.’ They said, ‘But, by Allah, we do not kiss them.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Do I have any power if Allah has removed mercy from you?’” (1)

(1) *Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Fada'il, Hadith no 4281.*





Upon seeing the eyes of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) overflowing with tears when his dying grandson was placed on his lap, Sa'd exclaimed, 'What is this (tears), O Messenger of Allah?' He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **'This is mercy which Allah places in the hearts of whomever He wishes of His servants. Allah shows mercy only to those among His servants who are merciful.'**"

(1)

(1) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Aiman wa Al-Nudhur, Hadith no. 6163.*



From there mercy begins, grows, and ultimately elevates the soul to its noblest attributes. The Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) taught this, saying:

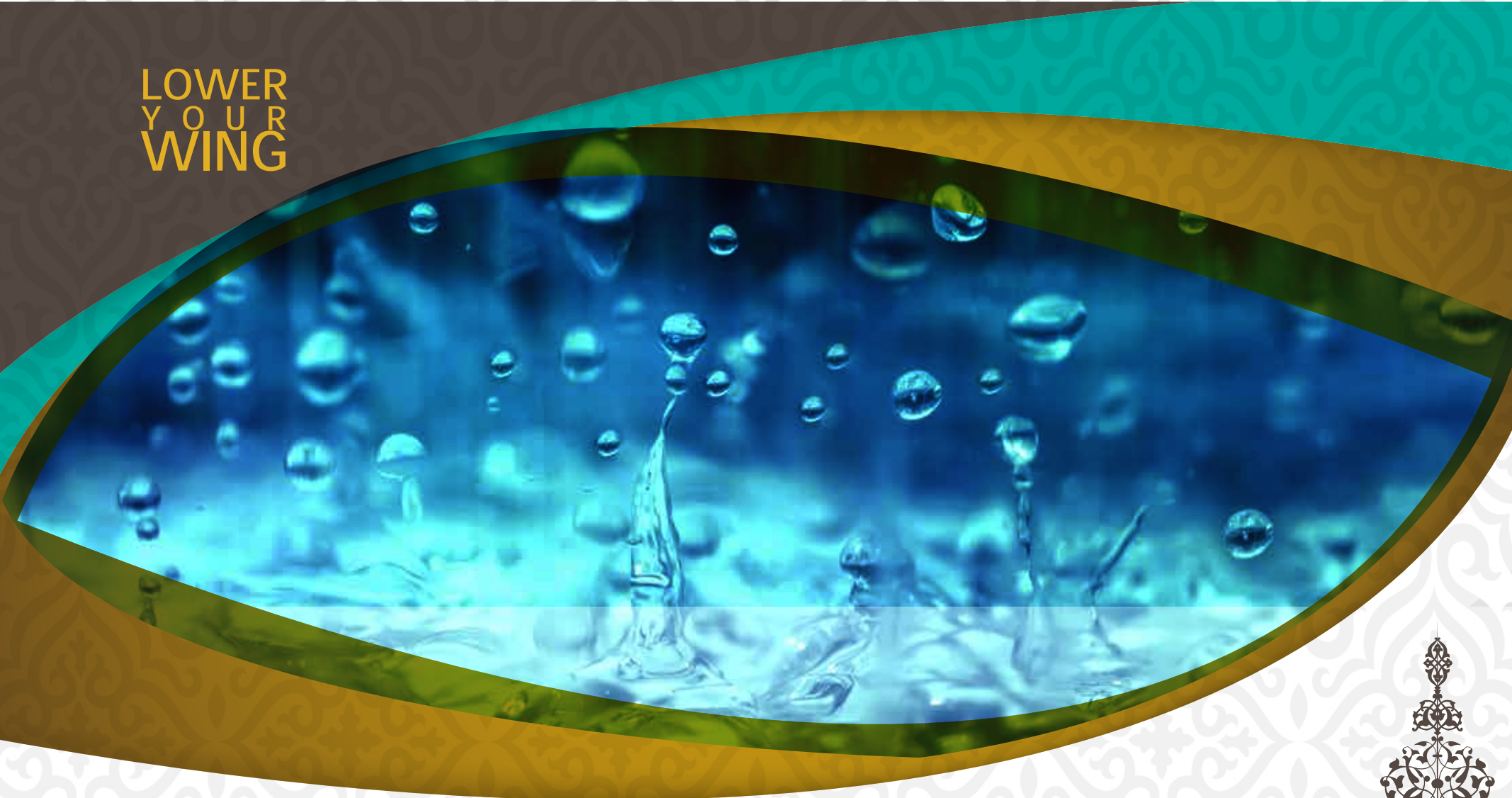
- “They are not of us, those who do not show mercy to our young ones and do not revere our elders.”⁽¹⁾
- “The one who does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.”⁽²⁾
- “Show mercy, and mercy will be shown to you. Forgive, and Allah will forgive you.”⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ Ibn ‘Abbas, *Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Al-Birr Waslah (Benevolence and Upholding the Ties of Kinship)*, Hadith no. 1844.

⁽²⁾ Jarir bin ‘Abdullah, *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adab*, Hadith no. 5554.

⁽³⁾ ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘As, *Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin min As-Sahabh*, Hadith no. 6255.





- “The All-Merciful One has mercy on those who are merciful. Show mercy to those on the earth, and He Who is in heaven will show mercy to you.”⁽¹⁾
- “Mercy is only plucked from one who is wretched.”⁽²⁾
- “Verily, Allah is kind and loves kindness in all affairs.”⁽³⁾
- “Verily, kindness whenever it exists in a thing graces it, and whenever taken away from a thing disgraces it.”⁽⁴⁾

⁽¹⁾ ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘As, Sunan At-Tirmidhy, Book of Al-Birr Waslah, Hadith no. 1847.

⁽²⁾ Abu Hurairah, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 4291.

⁽³⁾ Lady ‘Aishah, Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Ashtitabht Al-Murtadin (Dealing with Apostates), Hadith no. 6415.

⁽⁴⁾ Lady ‘Aishah, Sahih Muslim, Book of Al-Birr Waslah Waladab (Benevolence, Upholding the Ties of Kinship and Good Manners), Hadith no. 4698.





- “The one deprived of kindness is deprived of all good.”⁽¹⁾

Mother and Child

The image of motherly tenderness, of a mother nursing her child, was the image which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) chose to illustrate to his Companions the generosity of Allah’s Mercifulness towards his servants, asking them, “Do you think that this woman would ever throw her child in the fire?”

They replied, “No, by Allah, so far as it lies in her power not to do so.”

⁽¹⁾ Jarir bin ‘Abdullah, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of Al-Adab, Hadith no. 4175.





The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **“Verily, Allah is more merciful to His servants than this woman is to her child.”**⁽¹⁾

Motherhood with its love, warmth, and protection was holy in the eyes of Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Although used to long night prayers alone until his feet would crack, this great Imam (peace and blessings be upon him), when leading people in congregational prayer, was heard saying, **“I start the prayer intending to prolong it, but on hearing the cries of a child I shorten my prayer because of the intense sadness I know his crying causes his mother.”**⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ 1 ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab, *Sahih Muslim, Book of At-Tawbah (Repentance)*, Hadith no. 4947.

⁽²⁾ *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adhan (Call to Prayer)*, Hadith no. 668.





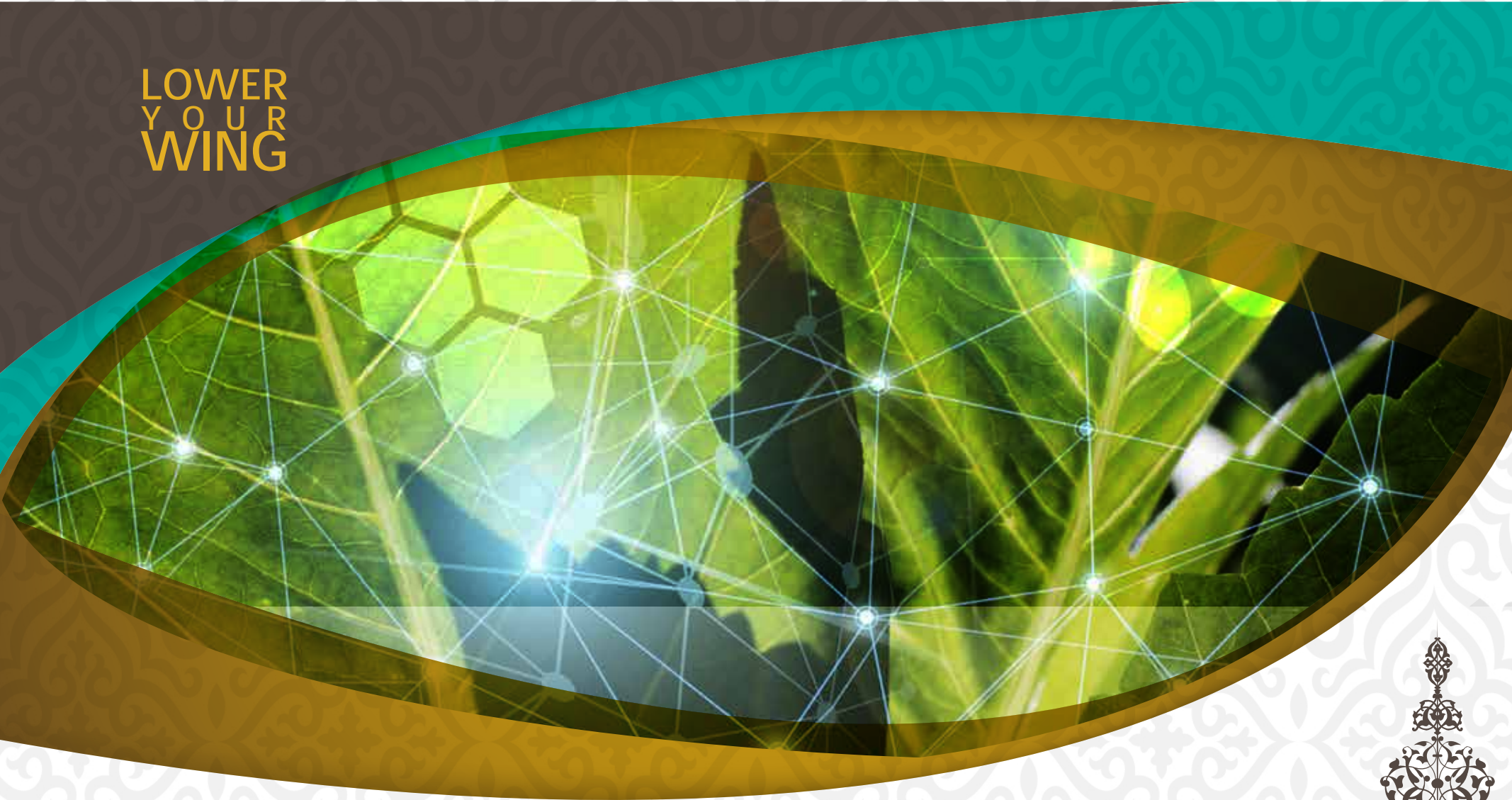
In his eyes, in sympathy with the mother's solicitude and her child's continuous need of her, the short moments of praying were too long to separate the two. Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) said, **"I never prayed behind any Imam a prayer lighter and more perfect than that behind the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). He (peace and blessings be upon him) used to cut short the prayer whenever he heard the cries of a child, lest he should put the child's mother to trial."**

(1)

This irreplaceable motherly love and care was enough to entitle the mother, in the case of divorce, to the custody of her child as the Prophet



(1) *Sahih Al-Bukhary, Book of Al-Adhan, Hadith no. 667.*



(peace and blessings be upon him) judged for the mother who complained to him, saying, “O Messenger of Allah, this son of mine, my womb for him was a vessel, my breasts for him a water skin, and my lap for him a haven, yet his father has divorced me and wants to take him away from me.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said to her, “You are more deserving of him as long as you do not remarry.”⁽¹⁾

The same fear of tearing away a mother from her child was shown by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) towards other creatures.

⁽¹⁾ ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-‘As, Sunan Abu Dawud, Book of At-Talaq (Divorce), Hadith no. 1938.





‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) settled at a place (during a journey), when a person went to a thicket and took out of it some eggs of a bird, which came fluttering its wings over the head of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions. He (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, ‘Who aggrieved this?’ A man among the people said, ‘I got some of its eggs.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, ‘Return them out of mercy for it.’” (1)

(1) Musnad Ahmad, Book of Al-Mukthrin, Hadith no. 3643.

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