

# Ibraheem & Imaan

Perfecting the Pillars: Al-Asmaa' Ul-Husnaa

## Part II

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## Lesson 21

### Al-Qaabidh, The Straightener

“...it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.” (2:245)

الْقَابِضُ

The bakery smelled delicious. Warm, fresh baked bread sat steaming in baskets. Delicate pastries were piled on colorful plates along the counter like pyramids. Customers filled the small shop from wall to wall calling out their orders over one another.

Ibraheem loved the hustle and bustle of Middle Eastern markets. He also loved their sweets. It would be impossible to leave without buying something. *But it's almost time for class*, he thought.

He needed to hurry up and choose something for breakfast then get going to the university, but he could not decide what to get.

There was the flaky **baklava** filled with nuts and soaked in glistening syrup, or the creamy, orange **khunaafah** with ground pistachios on top. *I guess I will have to get both*, he thought with a satisfied smile.

The young man behind the counter placed the sweets in a small paper box and handed it to Ibraheem. Ibraheem paid, and then headed outside. As he started down the crowded street, he heard a familiar voice.

“Asalamualaikum **Shaykh** Ibraheem! Where are you off to in such a rush?” it was Ibraheem's closest friend, Ayman.

Ibraheem let him catch up, and they shared a hearty hug. He handed Ayman some sweets, which Ayman happily accepted, as they walked together and discussed their plans for the day.

Ibraheem was now a grown man, twenty-two years old, studying to be an Imaam at the University of Madinah, in Saudi Arabia. He was an excellent student, and his professors hoped he would one day be a great scholar.

But for now, Ibraheem wanted to get to class. His calligraphy teacher, Shaykh Saalih, was always on time and he appreciated his students being on time as well.

Ayman and Ibraheem parted in the courtyard of the university with a promise to meet again for dinner in the cafeteria that evening.

As Ibraheem turned to go into class, a young boy ran up and put out his hand asking for change. He looked dirty and hungry. He was one of the many children Ibraheem saw begging in front of the university each day.

Ibraheem smiled at the young boy and handed him the box of sweets that was still half full. Then he gave salaams and rushed off.

When he looked back, he saw the other young children, gathered around the boy as he divided the sweets up and between them.

*May Allah grant them money, food, and good health,* he thought to himself. *I wish I could do more to help them.*

When he got to the classroom, the door was open. So he knocked first before entering to let Shaykh Saalih know he was there. Shaykh Saalih was busy at his desk, but he waved for Ibraheem to come in.

Ibraheem started working on right away. He put on a smock and set up his paints on the table next to the easel. Today, he was planning to work on the name of Allah, Al-Qaabidh (Al-Qaa-bidh), The Straightener.<sup>1</sup>

Ibraheem loved all of his subjects, but calligraphy was the one that he enjoyed the most. It reminded him of

Grandma Imaan and Great Grandfather Abdul-Azeez, and most importantly, it reminded him of Allah.

When he was painting, he did not feel homesick anymore. He was transported in his imagination back to their cozy little living room, where he would gaze at the paintings on the wall and learn so much about Allah with Grandma Imaan.

He had practiced for years to paint in the same style as his great grandfather. Now that he was grown, he had decided to finish the work that Abdul-Azeez had started so many years ago. With the help of his teacher, he was making progress on completing the paintings of all the Asmaa' Ul-Husnaa.

"Asalamoo-alaikoom!," said Shaykh Saalih as he came over to greet Ibraheem and look at his painting. Shaykh Saalih was in his eighties and walked with a cane. His eye sight was excellent, but his hearing was not very good. That is why he often yelled at his students thinking that they could not hear him.

He hugged Ibraheem and then sat on a stool nearby as he suggested some highlights of pale blue and green. The combination was almost the color of the sea, Ibraheem was very pleased with the results.

"Shaykh Saalih, I had a question for you if you do not mind," asked Ibraheem.

Shaykh Saalih nodded for Ibraheem to go ahead.

"I know that Allah is the one who gives us everything we have, and that is why He is called Ar-Razzaaq, the Provider. Is Al-Qaabidh related to the same meaning?"

"In a way, they are related," said Shaykh Saalih, "but, like many of the names of Allah, each one has a special meaning that makes it just a little different than all of the other names.

<sup>1</sup> This name of Allah appears in the Qur'aan in the following ayah (2:245).

"Allah is Ar-Razzaaq, because He provides, but sometimes He gives more and sometimes He gives less. It is when Allah gives less or takes something from us that we had before, that He is called Al-Qaabidh, the Straightener.

"'Straightener' means that Allah may take some of His blessings back sometimes. As Allah says in Suratul-Baqarah...

وَلَنَبْلُوَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ  
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْعَمَلِ ۚ وَبَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

(wa-la-nab-loo-wan-na-koom be-shay-im-me-nal-khaw-fe wal-joow-'e  
wa naq-sim-me-nal am-waa-lee wal-an-foo-see wath-tha-ma-raa-tee  
wa bash-she-ris-saw-be-reen)

"And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient." (Qur'aan 2:155)

"Why would Allah want to take things from us if He had blessed us with it already?" asked Ibraheem.

"This is a test," answered Shaykh Saalih, "a test to see what we will do when things are hard for us. It is also a test for those who have been given more, to see if they will share their blessings with others."

*Like the poor children in the street, thought Ibraheem to himself. That was a test for them, to see if they will be patient and a test for me to see if I would share with those who have less than me, Subhan-Allah.*

Shaykh Saalih words brought Ibraheem out of his thoughts.

"Just think of all the benefits that mankind gets out of the tests that Allah gives us...

- 1.They make us better people, more humble and compassionate.
- 2.They help us to learn and grow.
- 3.They give others a chance to show kindness.
- 4.They remove our sins.
- 5.They bring us closer to Allah, as long as we are patient.

"Being tested by Allah is something we see a lot of in the **Seerah** of Rasulullah ﷺ. And believe it or not, being tested is actually a good thing because it gives us a chance to show how good we can be.

"When Rasulullah ﷺ started teaching Islam to the people of Makkah, they got angry and threw him and his family out of the city. They refused to sell or buy anything from them, so Rasulullah's family<sup>2</sup> became very poor. They did not even have food to eat or houses to live in. They stayed in that condition for several years.

"But that was not the end of the test. Soon after this time Rasulullah's beloved wife, Khadijah رضي الله عنها, died, as well as his uncle, Abu Taalib. This time was so difficult for Rasulullah that it later became known as "The Year of Sorrow."<sup>3</sup>

"Yet no matter how poor Rasulullah ﷺ was, or what Allah took from him, he was always grateful for what he had and never complained. He knew that when Allah tests you, it does not mean Allah does not love you.

"Actually, when Allah tests you by taking things away from you, it means that Allah wants you to show how good you can be. So remember Al-Qaabidh means....

<sup>2</sup> This was not just his wife and his children, but extended family as well.

<sup>3</sup> The Year of Sorrow, the 10<sup>th</sup> year of prophethood.

Allah takes from us to test us and see if we will still be grateful for what we have.

"So when Allah decided that my parents would die when I was a child, it was a test to see if I would still grow up to love Him and do what He tells me to do?" asked Ibraheem.

"Exactly," said Shaykh Saalih.

Ibraheem smiled to himself and thought, **Wallaaheee**, *I love Allah very much, and I pray that He loves me too.*

### Lesson Questions:

1. Why does Allah make some people poor? (Because Allah is testing people to see if they will be grateful for what they have.)
2. What did Rasulullah ﷺ do whether he was rich or poor? (He was grateful to Allah.)
3. When Allah takes something away, does that mean that Allah does not love you? (No, it just means that Allah wants you to show how good you can be.)
4. When Allah takes from a person, is the test just for them? (No, Allah is also testing those He has given more blessings as well. He wants to see if they will share.)
5. Why do we have to be tested in this life with difficulty? (It makes us better people, more humble and compassionate, helps us learn and grow, gives others a chance to show kindness, removes our sins, and makes us get closer to Allah if we are patient.)
6. What are some of the test you have had in your life? (Answers will vary.)
7. Were you patient when Allah tested you? (Answer will vary.)



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## Lesson 22

### Al-Baasit, The Enlarger

“Do they not see that Allah extends provision for whom He wills and restricts [it]? Indeed, in that are signs for a people who believe.” (30:37)

الْبَاسِطُ

It was late in the afternoon, and Ibraheem was sitting on the couch in his dorm room reading a book about the names of Allah.

He wanted to know what each of the names meant before he started painting it. He had already completed painting the name Al-Qaabidh, and now he was getting ready to start the next name, Al-Baasit (Al-Baasit), The Enlarger.<sup>4</sup>

From what he had read, it seemed that Al-Baasit was the opposite of Al-Qaabidh. In other words, Al-Qaabidh meant that Allah takes from us to test us and see if we will be grateful, whereas Al-Baasit means that Allah gives to us to test us and see if we will share with others.

Ayman had come over to study with Ibraheem but had gotten distracted from his tafseer book by the cage of doves on the balcony.

Ibraheem's classmate, Musa, had gone to Bangladesh to visit his family and had asked Ibraheem to watch his pet doves while he was gone.

The birds were as white as fallen snow, and when they flapped their wings, the sunlight glowed through their delicate feathers. They chirped and pecked around the cage happily, as they gazed out at the city below.

<sup>4</sup> This name of Allah appears in the Qur'aan in the following ayah (2:245).



"What are you reading Ibraheem?" asked Ayman, gingerly taking a dove out of the cage and stroking its silky feathers as it nestled into the palm of his hand.

"It must be very interesting because you haven't moved from that spot for over an hour," he mumbled absentmindedly.

"I am learning about the names of Allah," replied Ibraheem, finally looking up from his book and smiling. "The one I was reading about right now is Al-Baasit, The Enlarger."

"What does Enlarger mean?" asked Ayman, sitting down beside Ibraheem on the couch with the dove still resting in his hands.

"Enlarger means that Allah gives us things to test us and see if we will share with others.

"For example, after Rasulullah ﷺ made the Hijrah to Madinah, there were many times when Rasulullah ﷺ got lots of jewels, money, camels, or other things that he could have kept for himself and his family, but he did not. Rather he would give everything away without even taking time to go home and think about what he would like to keep.

"In fact, I was just reading this hadith in the book in which Rasulullah ﷺ said...

*"The rich are in fact the poor on the Day of Resurrection except him whom Allah gives wealth which he gives (in charity) to his right, left, front and back, and does good deeds with it..." (Sahih Bukhari)*

"So, if Allah gives us a lot of money, food, clothes, or anything that we like, we should show thanks to Allah by sharing with our family, poor people, orphans and even travelers who are away from home and may not have everything they need. Allah tells us this in the Qur'aan...

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ  
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ  
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا

(Wa'-boo-dool-laa-ha wa-laa toosh-ree-koo be-he shay-ow-wa bil-wa-lee-day-nee ih-saa-now wa be-thil-qoor-ba wal-ya-taa-maa wal-ma-saa-kee-nee wal-jaa-re thil-qoor-baa wal-jaa-ris-saa-he-be bil-jan-be wab-nis-sa-bee-lee wa maa ma-la-kut ay-maa-noo-koom in-nal-laa-ha laa yoo-hib-boo mun kaa-na mookh-taa-lun fa-khoo-raa)

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful." (Qur'aan 4:36)

"Wow!" said Ayman, impressed, "You really are spending a lot of time learning about the names of Allah. What got you so interested in them? Do you have a test or something?"

"No!" laughed Ibraheem. "I don't have any test coming up. I have always loved learning about the names of Allah, ever since my grandmother starting showing me the paintings of Allah's names that my great grandfather made.

"At first, I just enjoyed the stories she would tell me from the Qur'aan and Sunnah that helped me understand each name. But as I have gotten older, and started studying on my own, I realize that there is so much about Allah that I need to learn."

"What more do we need to learn about Allah?" asked Ayman, letting the dove hop from his hand onto his lap where it inspected the white fabric of his thobe curiously.

"I mean we know Allah is One, and that He created everything, that we should worship Him, and that we will go back to Him to be judged. It all seems pretty simple and straightforward."

"Those are the basics that every Muslim knows, Al-Hamdulillah," said Ibraheem. "But Allah is so important to our lives that we need to understand more about how He helps us, how much we really need Him, and what He wants us to do."

"Since we do not know anything about Allah except what He tells us, we can use the names of Allah, which Allah has used to describe Himself, in order to learn more about Him."

"When we know more about Allah, we will love Him more. When we love Him more, it will be easier to follow the rules He has sent for us through Rasulullahﷺ. And when we follow that guidance, Allah will love us more and be pleased with us."

"For example, with this name of Allah, Al-Baasit, we know that Allah gives us the money we have, but not many people think about the responsibility we have to share that wealth with others."

"If we are just thinking of ourselves, we will not share much because we need money and are happy when we get it."

"But by knowing that Allah is Al-Baasit, The Enlarger, it changes how we look at money. We no longer will see it as something to get, but rather as something to give."

"This name of Allah reminds us that Allah gives us things for a reason, and we will have to go back to Him and answer to Him for what we did with it.<sup>5</sup>

"I get it now!" said Ayman, "I like what you are doing. Can I study the names with you, too?"

"Of course," replied Ibraheem. "I would love to have someone to talk with about the names of Allah."

"So let me see if I got this one right," said Ayman. "Al-Baasit means The Enlarger, and Enlarger means that...."

Allah gives things to us to test us  
and see if we will share with others.

"You got it!" said Ibraheem with a grin.

"That's one down and ninety-eight to go!" said Ayman with a chuckle.

"Ow!" yelled Ayman. The dove was hungrily pecking at his finger.

"Yeah," Ibraheem laughed, "Now let's feed the doves. It's past their dinner time."

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<sup>5</sup> "Of the bounties of thy Lord We bestow freely on all- These as well as those: The bounties of thy Lord are not closed (to anyone). See how We have bestowed more on some than on others; but verily the Hereafter is more in rank and gradation and more in excellence." (Qur'aan, 17:20-21)



### Lesson Questions:

1. Is having a lot of money a test from Allah? (Yes, because Allah wants to see what we will do with the money. Will we keep it to ourselves or be grateful and share with others.)
2. Why did Rasulullah ﷺ want to give his money away? (Because he wanted to share with others and he wanted to have many good deeds on the Day of Judgment.)
3. What should we do when Allah gives us more of something than we need? (We should share with others who have less.)
4. Who are some of the people that Allah tells us to share with? (Our family, the poor, orphans, and travelers.)
5. Why is it important to study the names of Allah? (So we can love Allah more, know more about Allah, and do more of the things that Allah likes.)