40 DAYS
TOWARDS CHANGE



By
ELZAHRAA HASSANE
Sakeena Press

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About the Sources

This book brings together the Quran, the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, and contemporary psychology. Quranic verses follow the Hafs recitation, and their English meanings are adapted mainly from Saheeh International. Hadith are drawn from the established Sunni collections, including Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, the Sunan collections and the Musnad of Imam Ahmad. Where scholars differ on a narration's grading, this is noted where it is cited. The reflections are the author's own and are offered to support personal and spiritual growth.

About This Book

This book takes its guidance from the Book of Allah ﷻ and the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ. Every practice in it rests on a Quranic verse or an authentic hadith from the established Sunni collections, and where scholars differ on the grading of a narration, this is noted beside it.

ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah."

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:2

What Guidance Means

Guidance, hidayah in Arabic, is more than information. It is to be shown the right path and then to be helped to walk it. That is why every Muslim asks for it in every unit of prayer: "Guide us to the straight path." [Surah Al-Fatihah 1:6]

To be guided is to see your life as it truly is: where you stand with Allah ﷻ, what is holding you back, and which step comes next. A person can know a great deal and still feel lost. Guidance turns that knowledge into direction, and direction is what carries you through hardship and past the obstacles in front of you.

Allah ﷻ promises it to those who make the effort: "As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We will surely guide them to Our paths." [Surah Al-Ankabut 29:69]. These forty days are that effort, made one day at a time.

The Quran describes itself as guidance for those who are mindful of their Lord, and that is the purpose of these forty days: a daily routine that returns you to the Book of Allah and to the way of His Messenger, one small practice at a time. The reflections that accompany the verses and hadith are the author's own.

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Before We Begin

This isn't a book to read and set aside. It is a conversation between you and these pages, between you and the parts of yourself you have been quietly avoiding, and most importantly: Between you and Allah ﷻ.

You picked this up for a reason. Maybe someone shared it with you. Maybe it found its way to you at exactly the right moment. Or maybe, if you are being honest with yourself, you already knew something needed to change.

Something in life has been feeling heavy. The kind of heaviness that sleep doesn't lift, that distraction can't touch, and that staying busy only delays. You've tried to explain it and couldn't. You've prayed and wondered why things still feel stuck. You've looked at your own life and felt a quiet, unsettling sense that something is off.

That feeling has a name and a purpose you haven't fully understood yet.

These 40 days are an invitation inward. To look honestly at where you are, understand why your life looks the way it does right now, and to slowly begin sincerely changing it.

You are capable of far more than where you find yourself today.

Here is how the journey works. Read each chapter, then begin its practice. Each practice starts on a set day and stays with you until Day 40. You never drop an earlier practice. You add the new one to it.

Day 1 to Day 8: Practice 1.
Day 9 to Day 16: Practice 1 and Practice 2.
Day 17 to Day 24: Practices 1, 2 and 3.
Day 25 to Day 32: Practices 1, 2, 3 and 4.
Day 33 to Day 40: all five practices together, every day, until the last day.

Do not rush to finish. If a page stops you, stay with it. Keep a notebook beside you and write down what you notice about your heart, your habits and your prayers. If you miss a day, return the next day without blaming yourself. Coming back is the whole lesson of this book.

Let us begin.





Chapter 01

Nothing in Your Life Is an Accident



Why 40 Days

You are probably asking the same thing everyone asks when they first hear this.

Why 40? Why not 30 days or 21 days or just start today and see what happens?

It is a fair question. The answer lies in a pattern that returns again and again in the Quran and the Sunnah, whenever Allah ﷻ was preparing someone for something great.

Musa and the Forty Nights

Think about Prophet Musa عليه السلام One of the greatest Prophets who ever walked this earth. A man who spoke to Allah ﷻ directly. Before he received the Torah, before he was handed that enormous responsibility, Allah ﷻ called him away for forty nights. Thirty nights first, then Allah ﷻ completed them with ten.

Those nights were spent away from his people, alone with his Lord. The Tablets were not placed in his hands the moment his people were safe across the sea. Forty nights of worship came first, far from the noise of the camp, and only then was he given the Law he would carry back to them.





وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتْمَمْنَاهَا بِعَشْرٍ

And We appointed for Moses thirty nights, and completed them with ten.

Surah Al-Araf 7:142

The Age of Forty

The Quran names forty as the age at which a person reaches full maturity. In the verse below, it is at forty that the believer turns to his Lord in gratitude and asks to be made righteous.

The Prophet ﷺ was forty years old when the first revelation came to him [Sahih al-Bukhari 3902]. His people had called him the truthful and the trustworthy for years before that, and still the Prophet ﷺ received revelation at forty, when the soul had been shaped enough to carry what was coming.

Wisdom often arrives late because the heart needs time. A weekend cannot do for you what steady days do.

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُۥ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً

Until, when he reached his full strength and reached forty years.

Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:15

You Were Built This Way

Here is something that will stay with you if you let it.

Before you entered this world, before you took your first breath, your own creation followed a forty day process. The Prophet ﷺ told us that each one of us was gathered in the womb as a drop for forty days, then as a clot for forty days, then as a piece of flesh for forty days, and only then was the soul breathed in. From nothing to a living soul. That took forty days. Three times over.

Allah ﷻ did not rush your creation. He did not take a shortcut. He built you layer by layer, stage by stage, until you were ready to receive the thing that makes you human. Your soul.

If He was that deliberate about making you in the first place, why would He be in a hurry when it comes to remaking you?

إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يُجْمَعُ خَلْقُهُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمِّهِ أَرْبَعِينَ يَوْمًا نُطْفَةً، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ عَلَقَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَكُونُ مُضْغَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ

Each one of you is gathered in his mother's womb for forty days as a drop of seed, then as a clot for a similar period, then as a piece of flesh for a similar period.

Prophet ﷺ Sahih al-Bukhari 3208, Sahih Muslim 2643

Why a Daily Routine

This book asks you to keep a few small acts going every day. The Prophet ﷺ was asked which deeds Allah ﷻ loves most, and he said: "The most regular and constant, even if they are few." [Sahih al-Bukhari 6465, Sahih Muslim 783]

The number forty carries no reward of its own, and no text makes a forty-day programme an act of worship. Every practice here is established in the Quran or the authentic Sunnah and stands for life. Forty days, on the pattern above, is long enough for each one to become yours.



That is what these forty days are for. Discipline matters, but the deeper work is preparing your heart. When the heart becomes sincere and ready, the rest of your life starts to follow. Doors that felt locked begin to open, and blessings that seemed out of reach find their way to you.This will not happen all at once. Some days you will feel close to Allah ﷻ and some days you will feel nothing at all. Keep going on both kinds of days. What matters is that you keep turning back to Him, one day at a time.





The Pain You Cannot Explain

Have you ever been in a situation where everything looks fine on paper, yet something inside you is not fine at all? You have food and a roof over your head, but a heaviness stays with you and you cannot explain where it comes from. Or maybe it is more specific than that. A door that will not open no matter how hard you push. A relationship that is not healing. A financial situation that will not move despite real effort. A goal you have worked toward for years with nothing to show for it.

And somewhere in your quietest moments, you have asked: Why? What is going on? What am I missing? You may have blamed yourself or your circumstances, and still found no answer that settled your heart.

Allah ﷻ tells us that this heaviness is part of the road every believer walks: "Do people think that they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and will not be tested?" [Surah Al-Ankabut 29:2]. Your pain has a place in a much larger story.

What you are about to read may be the answer you have been searching for.

Trials Are Not Random

In Islam, nothing that reaches you is an accident, whether it is good or difficult. The Arabic word for trial is ibtila', and it is one of the most misunderstood parts of a believer's life.

Most people hear the word trial and their shoulders drop. They picture punishment, or bad luck dressed up in religious language, something to endure until it is over.

But ibtilaa is neither of those things.

Allah ﷻ tests the people He loves most. The Prophet said: "When Allah loves a people, He tests them." [Tirmidhi 2396, hasan]



The most tested people in Islamic history were never the ones Allah had abandoned. They were the Prophets, and after them the Companions, the people closest to Him ﷻ. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The people most severely tested are the Prophets, then those most like them, then those most like them." [Tirmidhi 2398, hasan sahih]. The most tested were the most loved. That is not a coincidence. It is a pattern.

Three Kinds of Trial

Not everyone is being tested for the same reason. Most people never realize this, and it changes everything once they do.

The first kind of person has accumulated a lot of sin. Maybe they know it. Maybe they have stopped thinking about it. But the distance between them and Allah ﷻ has been quietly growing. For this person, the trial arrives as mercy. Allah ﷻ is washing away what has built up, sending just enough pain to wake the heart before the distance becomes too great. Every difficulty at this level is a call to come back, and a sign that the door is still open.

The second kind of person is genuinely trying. They hold on to their faith and are not living in open sin, but there are smaller things they have not yet addressed, weaknesses they are aware of. For this person, the trial is a means of elevation. Through it, Allah ﷻ purifies them and raises them to a higher station than the one they are at now.

The third kind of person is the most devoted, and their trials are the most severe. This is a sign of Allah's care for them, and has nothing to do with anger. Al-Firdaws, the highest level of Paradise, is for those who have been prepared for it, and Allah ﷻ refines them the way a blacksmith refines metal. The harder the process, the purer the result.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet made evident those of you who strive in His cause and made evident those who are patient? Surah Al-Imran 3:142

These three are not fixed boxes. A person can move from one to the next as the heart changes. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The greatness of the reward comes with the greatness of the trial." [Tirmidhi 2396, hasan]



When you look at your own life honestly right now, without excuses and without self-pity, which of these feels closest to true? That honest answer is the beginning of your way out.

What Your Hands Have Earned

This is the part most people want to skip. It is true, but it is uncomfortable in a very specific way. It is the discomfort you feel when someone names out loud the thing you have been quietly avoiding. Some of the hardship in our lives is connected to our own choices, and what we do today shapes what reaches us tomorrow.

What is happening in your life is often a reflection of what is happening in your heart.

Allah ﷻ says in the Quran:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُم مِّن مُّصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَن كَثِيرٍ

And whatever misfortune befalls you is because of what your hands have earned, and He pardons much.

Surah Ash-Shura 42:30

Stop at the last part. He pardons much.

What reached you, the hardship you are carrying right now, arrived only after Allah ﷻ had already forgiven most of what you did. What you are experiencing is the small portion that remains after His enormous divine mercy has already absorbed the rest. Even that remaining portion is not cruelty. It is redirection.

Sins leave traces on the conscience and in the circumstances of life. When we drift from our prayers, when we become careless with what Allah ﷻ has commanded, when we set aside the guidance He sent us in His Book, which explains clearly how to live, those choices do not disappear. They plant seeds. And seeds grow.

Think of it like your home. If you keep throwing trash on the floor and never clear it away, it does not disappear. It piles up until the whole house is affected. Sins work in the same way. Repentance and remembrance are how we clean our hearts regularly. When we neglect that cleaning, Allah ﷻ, out of His care for us, may send it in another form, through trials and hardships that shake us awake. Each one removes something that should not be there.

This is not punishment for its own sake. Allah ﷻ wants you to meet Him on the Day of Judgement with a clean record and a heavy scale of good deeds. The trial clears the way for that.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Follow up a bad deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out." [Tirmidhi 1987, hasan]. Every sincere return leaves the heart lighter than it was before.

Clean your heart regularly through repentance, so the cleaning does not have to come through hardship.

The Provision That Could Not Reach You

There is a verse that stops many people when they first read it.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

And if only the people of the towns had believed and been mindful of Allah, We would have opened upon them blessings from the heaven and the earth.

Surah Al-A'raf 7:96

Look at what the verse promises. The blessings were ready, from above and from below. What held them back was the state of the people themselves. Nothing was taken away. It was held back, waiting for the wall to come down. The moment you turn back to Allah ﷻ, you begin taking that wall down, one sincere step at a time.





Perhaps you have seen this in your own life. The job that fell through at the last minute. The project that should have worked and did not. The financial relief that stays just out of reach despite real effort. The blessing that everyone around you seems to receive while it keeps passing you by. When this keeps happening, it is natural to look outward for the reason. We blame other people, or we simply call it bad luck.

This verse points somewhere else. Sometimes the explanation is not outside you at all. It is inside, in your spiritual state and in the distance that has grown between you and Allah ﷻ. A prayer delayed until it is missed. A wrong we keep repeating because it has become familiar. A right we owe someone that we have never returned. Small things, quietly stacking up, until they stand between us and what was meant for us.

This is not meant to crush you. It is meant to free you. If sin built the wall, then repentance can take it down, and repentance is always available. Allah ﷻ does not close His door on anyone who knocks sincerely. It is open at this very moment, as it always has been.

Start with what you can see. Seek forgiveness for what you know, and ask Allah ﷻ to show you what you have missed. Return what you owe to others, and make your prayers the first thing you protect. Each sincere step removes a stone from the wall.



Not Even the Prick of a Thorn

The Prophet ﷺ said something that changed how the companions understood every single moment of their lives.

مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلاَ وَصَبٍ وَلاَ هَمٍّ وَلاَ حُزْنٍ وَلاَ أَذًى وَلاَ غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلاَّ كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ

No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, not even the prick of a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins because of it.

Sahih al-Bukhari 5641, Sahih Muslim 2573

The headache that disrupted your morning. The long commute where everything went wrong. The difficult conversation that left you drained. The anxious night where sleep refused to come. Every single one of those moments was doing something invisible. Removing something. Cleaning something. Lightening the weight you will carry when you meet Allah ﷻ.The tired mother who has not slept properly in months. The student drowning in pressure. The worker who comes home so empty they can barely make wudu. Each one of them is being purified in ways they cannot see. Each one of them is being prepared.

Nothing in the life of a believer is wasted. Not one difficult day. Not one sleepless night. Not one moment of sincere pain.

Two Stories You Need to Hear

Before we talk about moving forward, I want you to sit with two people. They were real people who made real choices, and their stories still matter today because they show us what hardship is actually for.

The Woman Who Chose Paradise

She walked to the Prophet ﷺ carrying something she had probably been holding alone for a long time.

She had epilepsy, and during her seizures her body would become uncovered. For a woman with her faith and deep sense of dignity, this was more than a medical condition. It was a source of ongoing grief, a quiet shame that followed her every day.

She came to the most beloved person on earth and asked for one thing: "Make dua for me. Ask Allah ﷻ to heal me."

The Prophet ﷺ gave her something she did not expect. He gave her a choice: "If you wish, be patient, and you will have Paradise. But if you wish, I will supplicate to Allah ﷻ to cure you." [Sahih al-Bukhari 5652, Sahih Muslim 2576]

Healing in this world, or Paradise in the next. The choice was hers.



He was not dismissing her pain. He was showing her the full picture. He was saying, I see exactly what you are carrying. And I want you to see what it is worth.

- She did not hesitate.
- She chose patience and Paradise.

She said: "I will be patient. But I become uncovered, so pray to Allah that I do not become uncovered." And the Prophet ﷺ prayed for her. She let go of the cure and asked only to keep her dignity while she carried her trial. She weighed a few years of comfort against a reward that never ends, and she chose what lasts.

That is what happens when a person truly understands what their suffering is for.

The Three Who Were Left Behind

During the expedition of Tabuk, three men stayed behind. They were not hypocrites. They kept delaying until the army had gone, and unlike everyone else who made excuses, they told the truth.

Ka'b ibn Malik, Murarah ibn al-Rabi, and Hilal ibn Umayyah stood before the Prophet ﷺ and said what most people spend their entire lives avoiding: they had no excuse, and they had made a mistake.

Then the consequence came.

Even so, Ka'b kept going to the mosque. He would greet the Prophet ﷺ with salam, then quietly watch his lips, unsure whether he had returned the greeting.

Around that time, a messenger brought Ka'b a letter from the king of Ghassan, a Christian Arab ruler to the north. It said: "We have heard that your companion has treated you harshly. Come to us, and we will honour you." It was an easy way out. Ka'b saw it as one more test of his faith and threw the letter into the fire.

Ka'b ibn Malik described how the earth, vast as it was, felt as though it was closing in on him.

The Quran captures that moment with words that have stayed in the hearts of believers for fourteen centuries.

حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوٓا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّآ إِلَيْهِ

Until the earth closed in on them despite its vastness, and their souls became constricted, and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him.

Surah At-Tawbah 9:118

No refuge except in Him.

That is the moment, when every door is shut, every person has turned away, and there is nowhere left to look except up. It is not the lowest point.

That is the turning point.

When they reached that place of total surrender, Allah ﷻ revealed their forgiveness in the Quran, to be preserved and read by every Muslim until the Day of Judgment.

Their honesty and patience through fifty days of crushing isolation earned them a place in the words of Allah ﷻ Himself.

When the news reached Ka'b, he fell into prostration. He later said that Allah ﷻ had saved him because he told the truth, and he promised never to speak anything but the truth for the rest of his life. [Sahih al-Bukhari 4418]

Hardship that brings you back to Allah ﷻ is not punishment. It is rescue.

Allah ﷻ does not close these doors because He wants you to suffer. He closes them because He wants to be the One you turn to. And when you finally turn to Him, what opens on the other side is beyond anything you thought possible.

The Way Back

So we arrive at the only question that actually matters.

Now what?

- You understand that your trials have purpose.
- You understand the connection between your spiritual state and the conditions of your life.
- You understand that what feels like a closed door is often an invitation to look inward.

But understanding is not the same as changing, and right now you need a direction. You do not have to search for it alone. It was shown to us long ago, through the words of a Prophet who never stopped calling his people back to Allah ﷻ.



What Nuh Told His People

Prophet Nuh عليه السلام called his people for nine hundred and fifty years. He preached, and almost no one listened. He even watched his own son drown after refusing to board the Ark. Yet this is what he told them about how to change their circumstances.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُم مِّدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾
وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾

Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Indeed, He is ever Forgiving. He will send rain upon you in abundance, increase you in wealth and children, and provide you gardens and rivers.

Surah Nuh 71:10-12

Look at what Allah ﷻ attaches to istighfar in these verses: rain, wealth, children, gardens and rivers. These are real, material blessings, tied directly to seeking forgiveness.

No hardship comes down without a cause, and it does not lift without a return. What sin brings down, only repentance can raise, and every sincere step back to Allah ﷻ loosens a burden that nothing else could move.

مَا نَزَلَ بَلَاءٌ إِلَّا بِذَنْبٍ، وَمَا رُفِعَ إِلَّا بِتَوْبَةٍ

No calamity is sent down except due to sin, and it is not lifted except by repentance.

Saying of Ali ibn Abi Talib, recorded by Ibn al-Qayyim in Al-Jawab al-Kafi

Two sides of one reality. The wall goes up through sin. The wall comes down through tawbah.

What Istighfar Actually Does

Most people think of istighfar as words you say when you feel guilty, a quick verbal habit before moving on.

But sincere istighfar is not a formula. It is a movement of the heart back to its proper place.

When you say "Astaghfirullah" from a place of genuine awareness, you are acknowledging that you have been living with distance between you and Allah ﷻ, and you are choosing to close it. You are saying: I see what I did. I know where I drifted. I want to come back.

And Allah ﷻ, who created you and has been watching the whole time, responds to that.

The channels of provision that were blocked begin to clear. The doors that were stuck begin to move. The heaviness that had no explanation begins to lift. It may not happen in an immediate or dramatic way, but it does begin.

Taqwa and the Unexpected Exit

Allah ﷻ says in Surah At-Talaq something that will change how you walk through every difficult period of your life, if you sit with it properly.

وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّهُ مَخْرَجًا ۝ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

Whoever fears Allah, He will make a way out for him and provide for him from where he does not expect.

Surah At-Talaq 65:2-3

From where he does not expect.

The way out may not come through the plan you have been following, or from the direction you keep staring at. It may come from somewhere you have not yet thought of, through a door that does not exist in your imagination today.

Taqwa is more than the fear of sin. It is a deep awareness that Allah ﷻ is present, that He sees and that He is near. Built consistently over forty days, and then over a lifetime, that awareness creates something around you that no strategy or effort can create alone.

When the heart is close to Allah ﷻ, provision flows and confusion begins to clear. Solutions arrive from directions that make no logical sense, and things start to shift.

When the heart is far, you feel it, even if you cannot name it. Something feels blocked, and something is missing.

Before Day One

Everything in this chapter points to one truth.

Your life is not happening to you randomly. Your trials are not accidents, and your pain is not pointless. The closed doors, the delayed blessings and the heaviness you cannot fully explain all have a spiritual dimension that most people never look at honestly.

And the fact that you are here, reading to the end of this chapter, is not random either.



Something is stirring. Some part of you that has been patient and tired and quietly hopeful is ready to try something real this time.

These forty days are not a programme or checklist. They are a sincere, daily, consistent return to Allah ﷻ , one day at a time, until something in you begins to change. You will notice it first in how you feel, and then in who you are becoming.

Early scholars used to say that whoever purifies himself sincerely for Allah ﷻ for forty days, springs of wisdom will flow from his heart to his tongue.

This is the kind of wisdom that changes how you see your own life, how you understand your pain, and how you carry your days. It does not come from reading more or knowing more. It comes from a heart that has been cleaned, day after day, until it can finally see clearly.

That is what is waiting for you on the other side of these forty days.

You do not need to be ready. You do not need to feel strong. You only need to take the first step and trust Allah ﷻ with the rest. Begin now.

Allah ﷻ is already waiting for you to start.



