

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، أَمَرَ بِإِجْلَالِ رُسُلِهِ، وَتَعْظِيمِ شَعَائِرِهِ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ  
فَاللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ،  
وَعَلَى مَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ.

All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds. He ordered to venerate His Messengers and show respect to His rituals. I bear witness that there is no deity but Him, having no associates.

I also testify that our Master and Prophet Muhammad is Allah's Servant and Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family, his companions, and all those who will follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

## A New Beginning – With 3 M's

Rabi al-Awwal brings us the joyous month of the Mawlid – a new beginning, a commemoration of the birth of our beloved Messenger ﷺ and January commences the new year 2016. As we reflect on these momentous occasions, we must ask ourselves,

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ **“Where, then, are you going?”** (81:26)

- The Mawlid is a celebration of the greatest human being, for the Lord of the heavens and earth singles him out for special praise and celebration. **“For, behold, you (O Messenger) are upon a most sublime plane of character”** (68:4)
- To praise and love the Messenger ﷺ means to strive to follow in his blessed way and footsteps. Allah ﷻ says, **“Verily, in the Messenger of Allah you have a most beautiful role model for anyone who longs for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah abundantly”** (33:21)
- And Allah ﷻ tells us that the door to loving Allah and receiving divine love is none other than the door of the Sunnah: **“Say (O Messenger), “If you love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins for Allah is oft-Forgiving, most Merciful”** (3:31)

**As such**, this moment of commemoration begs the introspective question of where we are in our relationship with Allah and Messenger ﷺ? In asking this question we come to our New Year's resolution – to be more like the Messenger ﷺ

## A New Beginning – With 3 M's

- **Muhasaba (Self-examination)** begins with honestly taking a survey of our deeds and character, and figuring out what are the biggest changes that need to be made. Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه would remind the people, **“Take yourself to account before you are taken to account.”** Every night take a moment to evaluate your day - the good of it and the bad. When you find good, praise Allah and ask for acceptance; and when you find bad, ask Allah’s forgiveness and seek refuge.

وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ - فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسِبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا

“Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it.” – “He will be judged with an easy account” (2:284) - (84:8)

- **Mujahadah (Self-transformation)** converting ugly, wrong, and unhealthy patterns of behaviour into beautiful, righteous, and healthy ways of being in the world

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

“...Except (*illa*), for those who repent (*tabaa*) and attain to faith (*amana*) and do righteous deeds (*amila amalan salihan*), for them Allah will turn their wrongdoings into beautiful deeds -- truly, Allah is ever-forgiving, most merciful” (25:70).

Self-transformation leads remorsefulness (**Tawbah**) over our wrongs and a commitment to return to Allah and instep with the Prophet صلوات الله عليه

# A New Beginning – With 3 M's

**Tawbah** consists of:

- (1) Feeling sincere remorse and begging Allah for forgiveness;
  - (2) Making a firm resolve to never going back to old ways and doing everything possible and necessary to actualise that resolve;
  - (3) Seeking the forgiveness of those we have wronged along the way and asking them to ask forgiveness for us.
- **Muraqabah – (Maintaining discipline)** over your heart, thoughts and actions. Maintaining a strong connection with the Qur'an and Sunnah, sitting with good friends and strengthening family and communal ties.
  - It has been a harsh year; our community attacked from the outside and in, dehumanised by the ignorant and arrogant and further assailed by those who feign our best interest, seeking to reassemble our faith in their foolish hands
  - We find ourselves in this winter – cold, dejected, overwhelmed, and frustrated – but we take comfort in the spring of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
  - We warm ourselves in his remembrance, his example and his teachings. As long as there is light, there is guidance, there is hope
  - We learn from him ﷺ the meaning of struggle - to give pause, context and consideration to our struggles - the inevitability of false prophets/claims - to overcome a deep-seated cynicism and to have hope even in the darkest hour.