

vol. [24]

REFLECTIONS

EL SHA'RAWY
الشعر اوان

فواطـر

المجلد [24]



*In the Name of God,
the Most Merciful,
the Dispenser of Mercy.*

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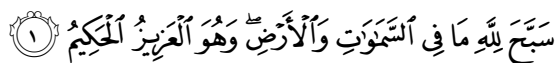
the chapter of

al-Hadid

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Hadid* ⁽¹⁾ (The Iron):

The True Lord *the Most High* says:



**Everything in the heavens and earth
glorifies God⁽²⁾ —He is the Almighty,
the Wise [1] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 1)**

This means that everything that exists in the heavens and the earth literally glorifies Allah in its own language which He created for it, not indicatively as some people say⁽³⁾; the proof of this is that Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...though you do not understand their praise...’ (*al-Isra*: 44). Therefore, when they say that one of Prophet Muhammad’s miracles was that stones glorified Allah while in his hand.⁽⁴⁾ We say that it is more accurate to say that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* heard the glorification of

(1) It was revealed in Medina according to the consensus of the scholars between the chapter of *az-Zalzala* and the chapter of *Muhammad*. It has 29 verses and is chapter 57 in the written order of The Quran.

(2) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.

(3) *Al-Qurtubi* also affirms that it is a literal glorification in his *Tafsir*, quoting *Az-Zajjaj*.

(4) Narrated by Abu Na'im in *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*

the stones which were in his hands because stones always glorify Allah, even if they are in the hand of an evil man like Abu Jahl.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...He is the Almighty, the Wise.' (*al-Hadid*: 1) *Al-'aziz* (the Almighty) is He Who overcomes all and cannot be overcome. The word '*aziz*' also means something precious, rare, and incomparable. The verse combines both meanings. He says elsewhere: '...Who protects, while there is no protection against Him...' (*al-Mu'minun*: 88).

He is also *Al-hakim*, or '...the Wise' (*al-Hadid*: 1); the wise one is he who puts all things in their proper place with wisdom and knowledge. This means that Allah's Mightiness is not governed by tyranny and violence, but is a mightiness governed by wisdom and balance.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

**Control of the heavens and earth belongs to Him;
He gives life and death; He has power over all things[2]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 2)**

We said that the Arabic root letter *m-l-k* form the noun *malk* as in His statement: '*ma akhlafta maw'idaka bimalkina*', '...They said, "We did not break our word to you deliberately..."' (*Ta Ha*: 87); *malk* means 'ability and will'. The root letters also form the noun *milk* which means 'possession'; if you own something, it is your *milk*. They also form the noun *mulk*, as in the case here meaning 'dominion'. *Mulk* means to have ownership over the one who owns: the earth (with that is on it), for example, belongs to mankind; yet, Allah *Glorified is He* has ultimate possession of all these things and also those who own them.

Now the heavens and earth are the containers of the created beings that dwell within them, and therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says elsewhere: 'All that is in the heavens and earth belongs to Him...' (*ash-Shura*: 4). So, He owns the containers and the contents as well; the heavens contain angels, stars, planets, galaxies and other created beings, whereas the earth contains man, jinn and the protective angels.

Usually, as we have said, contents are more valuable than their containers, and the more valuable something is the more valuable is its container. So, if the heavens and the earth, which are full of great signs and marvels, are so magnificent, then their contents must be more wondrous and magnificent still.

Moreover, this dominion over the heavens and earth encompasses unseen things of which we have no knowledge: ‘All that is hidden in the heavens and earth belongs to Allah...’ (*Hud*: 123). These are three stages of Allah’s dominion; He has dominion over the heavens and the earth; He has dominion over all that the heavens and the earth contain, and He has dominion over the unseen things of the heavens and the earth.

Every day a new secret of Allah’s dominion is discovered in the heavens and the earth, and the verses alert us to this fact by saying: ‘Everything in the heavens and on earth, everything between them, everything beneath the soil, belongs to Him.’ (*Ta Ha*: 6)

His Words: ‘...He gives life and causes death...’ (*al-Hadid*: 2) means that He gives us life and then causes us to die; He brought us to life at first when He created us out of nothing, and then He causes us to die. He then will bring us to life again in the Hereafter.

Giving life and dealing death are solely for Allah *the Almighty* and no one else participates in them. The Noble Quran tells us the story of the one who argued with Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* about his Lord, claiming that he could give life and deal death. Our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* debated with him until he had proven that he had spoken falsely: ‘[Prophet], have you not thought about the man who disputed with Ibrahim (Abraham) about his Lord because Allah had given him power to rule? When Ibrahim (Abraham) said, “It is my Lord Who gives life and death,” he said. “I too give life and death...”’ (*al-Baqara*: 258). When our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* felt that the man only wanted to argue, he stopped him from going any further and moved him on to a field where no argument is possible: ‘...So, Ibrahim (Abraham) said, “Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.” The disbeliever was dumbfounded...’ (*al-Baqara*: 258).

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...and He has power over all things.’ (*al-Hadid*: 2) Nothing can prevent Him, and nothing can get in His way. The One Who

created out of nothing is all the more able to bring back: 'So were We incapable of the first creation? No, indeed! Yet they doubt a second creation.' (*Qaf*: 15) He also says: 'He is the One Who originates creation and will do it again—this is even easier for Him. He is above all comparison in the heavens and earth; He is the Almighty, the All Wise.' (*ar-Rum*: 27) Where Allah *Glorified is He* is concerned, there is no concept of 'easy' or 'easier', but He speaks to us in a way we can understand and goes along with the opponent so that He can provide decisive arguments against him. Allah *the Almighty* says: '...The disbeliever was dumbfounded...' (*al-Baqara*: 258). This means that the argument defeated him, and there was nothing more he could say.

The True Lord is the King of kings and has the power to give life and death. He creates from out of nothing and sustains from out of nothing; He is all-sustaining, preserving things as they are. He did not create the universe and then leave it alone; rather, He continues to attend to it with His all-sustaining presence.

Therefore, He says: 'Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease...' (*Fatir*: 41). This is His all-sustaining presence. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...And if they should cease, no one could hold them [in place] after Him. Indeed, He is Forbearing and Forgiving.' (*Fatir*: 41) In the verse under discussion, He says: '...and He has power over all things.' (*al-Hadid*: 2) This means that His Power is such that He may create whatever He wills; He creates from out of nothing in the beginning, and He creates from things that already exist, and with His all-sustaining Power, He preserves His creation just as He created it.

The third person pronoun *huwa* (he or him) can only refer to something which has already been mentioned. You say, '*Zarany zayd fa'akramtuhu*', 'Zayd visited me, and I treated him well', where 'him' refers to 'Zayd'. The antecedent is understood from the words that have gone before as we said about the words, '*hatta tawarat bi al-hijab*', '...until [the sun] was hidden in the veil [of night]' (*Sad*: 32), which refer to the sun.

Likewise, in this verse, the pronoun could not refer to anyone but the True Lord *the Most High* whose dominion is shared by none, nor is His Power to create and to give life and death.

He says about His Oneness: ‘Say, “He is Allah the One.”’ (*al-Ikhlās*: 1) We cannot say that the antecedent of the pronoun ‘He’ in this verse is deferred; rather, its antecedent must have come before it, even if it was not mentioned directly, for it could only be referring to the One Allah *Glorified is He* Who has no second and Who is One in His Essence and not composed of interdependent parts.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

He is the First and the Last; the Outer and the Inner; He has knowledge of all things [3] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 3)

Based on the fact that He is the One Who brought all things into existence, then He must be ‘the First’ (*al-Hadid*: 3) Who existed before all things and ‘the Last’ (*al-Hadid*: 3) Who will remain after all things have passed into nothingness; this is why we say in praise of Allah *Glorified is He* ‘O, You, the First, Who came not before a last; O, You, the Last, Who came not after a first!’ Rather, they are both integrated, and the mind can penetrate the matter any further.

His Words: ‘...the Outer and the Inner...’ (*al-Hadid*: 3) mean that He appears outwardly to us all, yet He is inwardly hidden from us all. He is both Outer and Inner: Outer with His signs and indications in the universe to which none but Him lay claim, and claims are always awarded to their claimants as long as there is no counter-claim: ‘If you [Prophet] ask them who created them they are sure to say, “Allah”, so why are they so deluded?’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 87) He also says: ‘If you ask them who created the heavens and earth, they are sure to say, “Allah.” Say, “Praise belongs to Allah...”’ (*Luqman*: 25).

He is the Inner in His Essence: ‘No vision can take Him in, but He takes in all vision. He is the All Subtle, the All Aware.’ (*al-An‘am*: 103) Human vision can encompass only that which is spatially limited, yet Allah *the Exalted* is limited by neither space nor time because space and time are both creations of His; thus, when it comes to Allah *Glorified is He* there is no ‘when’ or ‘where’ because ‘when’ and ‘where’ belong to Him.

The reality of life tells us that human vision can encompass only that which can be seen; there are many abstract and unseen things which cannot be seen by the eye, and yet they exist.

Take justice, for example, by which the balance of truth and falsehood is known; 'justice is the basis of government', yet has anyone ever seen it, smelt it or touched it? We know it by its effects when we see the victim of oppression treated fairly and the oppressor punished.

We said the same about the spirit; it certainly exists in your body, but do you know where it is exactly? With this in mind, could we ever hope to know where Allah *Glorified is He* is when we are but one of His creation and a manifestation of His Power? His Words '...He has knowledge of all things.' (*al-Hadid: 3*) mean that nothing is beyond His ken; He knows what is inward just as He knows what is outward because He Himself is the Outer and the Inner.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ
يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا
وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

It was He who created the heavens and earth in six Days and then established Himself on the throne. He knows what enters the earth and what comes out of it; what descends from the sky and what ascends to it. He is with you wherever you are; He sees all that you do[4] (The Quran, *al-Hadid: 4*)

He whom all created beings glorify is the One Who created them: 'It was He Who created the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid: 4*). This verse speaks about the time the creation covered, namely *sittati ayyam* (six days); Allah *Glorified is He* does not need any time to do things but creates things simply by saying 'Be!' so that they come to be. However, there is something called the time-span of creation and another thing called the purpose of creation.

We explained this before by giving the example of how a cup of traditional Egyptian yogurt is made. The process takes a few seconds. First,

you take the milk and put some yeast in it. That is how long the action takes, but after this it takes several hours for the milk and yeast to react and give us what we want. So, these six days were not the time in which the Creator laboured or worked. They were six days only for us, humans.

The orientalist have objected to this issue and said, ‘All the verses speaking of the creation of the heavens and the earth say “...in six days...” (*al-Hadid*: 4), yet in the chapter of *Fussilat*, He says: “Say, ‘How can you disregard the One Who created the earth in two days? How can you set up other deities as His equals? He is the Lord of all the worlds!’ He placed solid mountains on it, blessed it, measured out its varied provisions for all who seek them—all in four Days. Then, He turned to the sky, which was smoke. He said to it and the earth, ‘Come into being, willingly or not’, and they said, ‘We come willingly’— and in two Days He formed seven heavens ...” (*Fussilat*: 9-12). This seems to total eight days, not six.’

This understanding is a result of their lack of mastery of the language, for what these words actually mean is ‘in a total of four days’. The earth was created in two days, and then it was completed by the creation of the firm mountains atop it, and the blessing bestowed on it, and the appointing of its means of subsistence, all of which totalled four days in an hour and to Alexandria in two hours’; the total time here is two hours, not three (Tanta is midway between Cairo and Alexandria).

Concerning His Words, ‘...and then established Himself on the throne...’ (*al-Hadid*: 4), scholars differ as to what *istawa*, or ‘established’ means in this verse. Some of them say it literally means ‘established’; Ibn Al-Qayyim⁽¹⁾ said that it means ‘settled, rose above and ascended’. However, we say that it cannot mean ‘rose above’ or ‘ascended’ since the True Lord is not only above the Throne but is above all things.

The most reasonable interpretation is that since He created all creation and then finished it, ‘established’ in this verse means that He completed the creation of this universe and everything went well with Him. In our world, we see that kings only sit on their thrones when all the affairs of their kingdom are in order, and no one bothers them or gives them trouble.

(1) 691-751 AH

The word *istawa* occurs seven times in the Noble Quran and which a poet summarised by saying: Allah's *istiwa* on the throne is mentioned seven times in His Quran, so count: In the chapter of *al-A'raf*, then *Yunus*, then *ar-Ra'd*, then *Ta Ha*, Then *al-Furqan*, then *as-Sajda*, then *al-Hadid*—so perceive with certainty!

The verses then continue to mention the signs in His creation: '...He knows what enters the earth and what comes out of it...' (*al-Hadid*: 4). This means that He knows all that goes into it and all that comes out of it: what goes into the earth is rain which falls from the sky and benefits all created beings; this includes what they do not use flows into springs in the earth, in which fresh water is stored so that people can get it from the depths of the earth in places where there are no rivers. From the earth, there come crops, which are vital for our lives.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...what descends from the sky...' (*al-Hadid*: 4). Rain comes down from the sky: '...We send it down only according to a well-defined measure.' (*al-Hijr*: 21) The angels come down from the heavens, as so do the mercies of Allah *the Almighty* He sends to mankind, and so does the guidance which Allah *the Exalted* gives unto mankind to direct their activities in life.

'...and what ascends to it...' (*al-Hadid*: 4) means all that rises into the sky. *Sama'*, or 'sky', is in the singular; the word in this verse is used to mean the entire genus of sky; there are seven skies, and He refers to them all here by using the name of the genus. *Ya'ruj*, or 'ascends', is originally used with the preposition *ila*; *ya'ruju ilayha* literally means 'ascends in it'. In this verse, He says: '*ya'ruju fiha*' using the preposition *fi* (in). Thus, *fiha* is used here to mean *ila* (to). The reason for this is that *fi* implies a sense of intensity. Another example of this usage is found in Allah's Words, '...Their messengers come to them with clear arguments, but they thrust their hands into their mouths and said...' (*Ibrahim*: 9), which literally says '*fi afwahihim*' (in their mouths) rather than *ila afwahihim* (to their mouths) to impart intensity to their action; it is as though they were saying, 'Bite your tongue or do not move your mouth. I do not want to hear what you have to say.' Another example is '...put their fingers into their ears to keep out the thunderclaps for fear of death...' (*al-Baqara*: 19).

His Words, '...He is with you wherever you are; He sees all that you do' (*al-Hadid*: 4), which follows the words concerning the heavens and the earth,

is an indication that the True Lord wants to say to us, ‘The heavens and the earth were created in a state of obedience, and they always fulfil their roles without veering away from their created purpose, and they will not be held to account. However, as for you, you indeed shall be held to account because you have free will.’

‘...He is with you wherever you are...’ (*al-Hadid*: 4); this means that the outward does not veil Him from the inward, and the inward does not veil Him from the outward.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...He sees all that you do.’ (*al-Hadid*: 4) He is with you and sees you. If His being with us is through His presence, He would not have then said: ‘He sees all that you do.’ (*al-Hadid*: 4) Thus, togetherness is by His seeing. He mentions sight, in this verse, to indicate ‘seeing’, and the reality of these kinds of issues cannot be imagined but must simply be accepted, putting in mind that He is Perfect.

As long as Allah *the Exalted* is with us, and we are and under His sight, we should be aware of this and keep it in mind when we act—why not do so when we keep the presence of other human beings and their being able to see us in mind when we act? These days, people are inventing spying equipment which allow them to know everything that an enemy is planning and doing, capturing it in sound and picture, and by day and by night. Indeed they have done this because they do not have the power to do this intrinsically but must make use of tools, and yet what knowledge do they have compared to Allah’s Knowledge? What eyes do they have compared to Allah’s Eye?

We always say of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘When the eye sees, there is no need to ask “where?”’ Every atom of His universe is under His sight, and nothing escapes it. The Qudsi Hadith says: ‘O My slaves! If you believe that I cannot see you, then the fault is in your faith, and if you believe that I can see you, then why have you made Me the least significant of all who look upon you?’⁽¹⁾

It is as though He is saying to us: ‘Am I less significant to you than My creation since you conceal from them what you do not conceal from Me?’



(1) *Ibn ‘Ajiba mentions this in Al-Bahr Al-Madid, vol. 3, p. 1.*

Allah *the Exalted* says: 'They try to hide themselves from people, but they cannot hide from Allah...' (*an-Nisa'*: 108).

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...He knows what enters the earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 4), He uses the imperfect tense verb, which indicates the present and future tense because He is speaking to us about reality, for otherwise, Allah's Knowledge is pre-eternal; He knows all that enters, and all that has ever entered since He created the heavens and the earth.

So, every drop of rain that has been imbibed by the earth since it was created is known to Allah *Glorified is He* and was indeed recorded in the Preserved Tablet before it was created; furthermore, the fact is that the Pen has dried after having written all that will be until the Day of Resurrection.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, we said that the angels glorify Allah *the Almighty* more and more as they see reality coming to pass just as it is recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

 لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ
 يُؤَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُؤَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

Control of the heavens and earth belongs to Him.
Everything is brought back to God [5] He makes night
merge into day and day into night. He knows what is in
every heart [6] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 5 - 6)

When He says in this verse '*lahu*', or 'His...' (*al-Hadid*: 5), this could not mean anyone but Allah *the Almighty*: 'His is the dominion of the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 5). This is a claim which the True Lord has made, and no one else has made a counter-claim; so, it must be acknowledged for Him. Allah *the Exalted* says: '...And to Allah are returned [all] matters.' (*al-Hadid*: 5) This means that Allah is not only with us in the sense that He sees us and records all that happens with us, and that is all; rather, we will all return to Him in the end so that all the accounts can be reckoned. Allah *Glorified is He*

(1) This was stated by Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him in a Hadith narrated by Ahmad on the authority of Ibn Abbas Allah be pleased with him.

did not create us for no reason, and He has not left us alone; rather, we shall return to Him—so (O, humans) prepare yourselves for this.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘He makes night merge into day and day into night...’ (*al-Hadid*: 6). This means that He makes the night enter into the day and makes the day enter the night; each of them takes the place of the other as He says elsewhere: ‘It is He Who made the night and day follow each other—so anyone who wishes may be mindful or show gratitude.’ (*al-Furqan*: 62) Each of them follows the other. One of the signs inherent in night and day is that summer has long days and short nights, whilst winter has short days and long nights.

He says: ‘...He knows what is in every heart.’ (*al-Hadid*: 6); He also says in a previous verse: ‘...He sees all that you do.’ (*al-Hadid*: 4) This means that His knowledge is not confined only to activities and events; rather, He knows the inner contents of hearts and the secrets of souls and all that we think but do not express by deeds: ‘Allah is aware of the most furtive of glances and of all that hearts conceal.’ (*Ghafir*: 19)

This is one of the special characteristics of His Knowledge. His True Greatness does not lie in knowing what He compels us to do but in knowing what we will and will not do after granting us the ability to choose.

For example, imagine if you were to go out with your spouse on an errand and leave your children at home and say to them, ‘The food is in the fridge, and everyone can eat what they want.’ Then, on the way you were to tell your spouse which children would eat which foods, and then discover upon returning home that your predictions were correct.

The greatness of Allah’s Knowledge is that He knows the bare intentions that hearts contain. Since He has knowledge of intentions, He made them the basis for judging actions. Prophet Muhammad said, ‘Actions are but intentions...’⁽¹⁾. Thus, the heart, as it were, governs the conduct of the rest of the body by its convictions. When you spend, for example, He knows what your intention is in doing so, and He accounts you for the intention, not the deed. It is as though the intention guards the action and the outward motion.

(1) *Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari (1) and Muslim (1882) on the authority of ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him*

So, from ‘...He knows what is in every heart’ (*al-Hadid*: 6), we understand that what is being spoken about here is the content of the heart, namely the intentions. Therefore, the Noble Hadith says: ‘Verily, in the body there is a morsel of flesh. If it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Verily, it is the heart.’⁽¹⁾ Even when it comes to the Resurrection, He says: ‘The Day when neither wealth nor children can help, when the only one who will be saved is the one who comes before Allah with a sound heart.’ (*ash-Shu'ara*: 88-89) This means with a pure intention and a pure purpose, free of flaws.

Outwardly, the heart is the organ that pumps blood, the fluid of life to the whole body. If the heart is filled with faith, it will pump this with the blood to the entire body, and this blood will become pure, and so will the whole body with all its parts. They will take only the lawful path, and will do only what conforms to the heart’s faith, doing what they are commanded to do and abstaining from what they are forbidden to do.

ءَامِنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِۦ ۚ وَاَنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُّسْتَخْلِفِيْنَ
فِيْهِ ۗ فَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَاَنْفَقُوْا لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿٧﴾

Believe in God and His Messenger, and give out of what He has made pass down to you: those of you who believe and give will have a great reward [7] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 7)

There is a strong relation between what is in the heart and ‘Believe in Allah and His Messenger...’ (*al-Hadid*: 7). Faith is relevant to the heart and resides therein, and when it settles therein, it is called ‘*‘aqidah*’ (creed). The literal meaning of ‘*‘aqidah*’ is that which is firmly tied and cannot be untied and something that is confirmed and will not be discussed in the mind. It is settled in the heart and has become a creed because the mind deliberated on it and chose it from all other alternatives.

Do you believe in Allah because of Prophet Muhammad? Or do you believe in Prophet Muhammad because of Allah? ‘Ali Allah be pleased with him

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (50) and Muslim (2996) on the authority of Nu‘man ibn Bashir

said when someone asked him, ‘Did you know about your Lord through Muhammad, or did you know Muhammad through your Lord?’ He answered, ‘I knew my Lord through my Lord, and Muhammad told me what my Lord commands me to do.’

After Allah’s Commands to believe in Him and His Messenger, He enjoins something so that the society’s affairs become righteous, spending for the sake of Allah: ‘...give out of what He has made pass down to you...’ (*al-Hadid*: 7). This verse refers to all that Allah *the Almighty* has entrusted you with, including money or anything else. This is because man cannot fulfil his purpose in life unless he has all the necessary constituents of life, the first of which is nourishment which results in life activities. There are some members of society who are unable to work and earn their living.

Allah will not leave these people to be lost amidst the powerful and competent people, so He has made spending on them and helping them as part of a believer’s faith. A believer must give the poor the right which Allah has entitled to them and is considered a means of thanking Him for granting him bounties, good health, and well-being which have enabled him to work, earn his living, and spend on himself.

Moreover, when a person who is unable to work finds someone that takes care of him and helps him, he becomes happy and free from worry. He also finds that his Muslim society compensates what he has lost. The bounty comes to him and saves him from begging. Despite his inability to work, he has a high status in this believing society. Allah *the Exalted* has honoured the poor person by making *zakat* a condition of a rich man’s faith, while richness is not a condition of a poor man’s faith.

Zakat (obligatory charity) appeases the poor and removes any rancour that may exist in a poor person’s heart against a rich man and makes him content with Allah’s decree. Therefore, the commandment to spend follows the commandment to have faith. Spending in Allah’s sake is a means of preserving life which includes acts of obedience. Therefore, when you provide for the poor, you help him obey Allah *the Almighty*.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...what He has made pass down to you...’ (*al-Hadid*: 7). This means that you have not brought this sustenance, but

Allah has provided you with it and has passed it down to you. In fact, Allah is the Provider because He created the material which you use, the body parts with which you work, the time in which you work, the power, which enables you to work in safety and security and created the mind with which you plan and think.

Thus, you have not brought anything on your own, as Allah *the Most High* is the source of the wealth which He has entrusted to you. Thus, do not withhold Allah's wealth from the poor, whom He created and undertook to provide for them.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...those of you who believe...' (*al-Hadid: 7*) in Allah and His Messenger '...and give...' (*al-Hadid: 7*) of what He has made pass down to them, '...will have a great reward' (*al-Hadid: 7*). This reward will be great because they will attain the reward for belief in Allah and His Messenger and the reward for spending in His cause and fulfilling the requirements of belief, which is only truly attained by doing righteous deeds and practice. Faith is a speculative and doctrinal matter that cannot do without good deeds. Therefore, faith is always associated with righteous deeds: 'By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss, except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience' (*al-'Asr: 1-3*).

Moreover, the reward will be great because the reward that Allah gives you is not equal to what you do for His sake, but it is commensurate with the power of the Giver Who rewards good deeds tenfold up to seven hundredfold or more. He *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah does not bless usury, and He causes charitable deeds to prosper...' (*al-Baqara: 276*). He increases them and makes them prosper for those who do them.

Allah *Glorified is He* illustrates this for us with an example from our ordinary lives: 'The parable of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears (with) a hundred grains in every ear, and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, All Knowing.' (*al-Baqara: 261*) If paradise which Allah *the Exalted* created can give a seven hundredfold increase, then what do you think about the Creator of paradise?

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا
بِرَبِّكُمْ وَقَدْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

**Why should you not believe in God when the
Messenger calls you to believe in your Lord, and He has
already made a pledge with you, if you have faith? [8]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 8)**

The question in this verse is rhetorical and is intended to express incredulity and rebuke. In other words, it means ‘How could you do this?’ It is strange that they did not believe in Allah while Prophet Muhammad was calling them to believe. Notice He does not say ‘believe in Allah’ but ‘...to believe in your Lord...’ (*al-Hadid*: 8). Thus, the One in Whom you must believe is your Lord.

The Lord is the Creator, the Guide, the Provider and the Giver Who gives you bounties and created all things for you before He even created you. Your Lord has provided for you after bringing you into existence, has implanted your love in your mother and father’s hearts so that they become happy to bear the difficulties of raising you until you become old enough to look after yourself. Accordingly, does this Lord not deserve that you believe in Him?

Is it not enough that He lets you live in this universe without asking you anything nor charging you of any responsibilities until you reach adulthood and become able to work? The bounties of your Lord have enveloped you before you were even created, and then Allah’s bounties have come to you in the form of moral responsibility.

Therefore, the bounties of your Lord lay the ground for Divine bounties (legal responsibilities) which are also for your own good since you are the one who benefits from them, and Allah does not receive any benefits. Obedience does not benefit Allah *the Exalted* nor does disobedience harm Him as He created you while possessing the Attributes of Perfection.

Why do you not believe in Him when He has sent a messenger to you to convey His messages and instructions to you? Consider, for example, a worker who works for you in return for a wage, and how he obeys you and

does what you ask him to do, and never deviates from your instructions. Yet, you pay only that which meet his needs. What do you think of Allah Who gives you freely and in abundance and blesses you with all these bounties? You should obey him and abide by His commands.

Thus, your disbelief is an astonishing matter: 'Why should you not believe in Allah...' (*al-Hadid*: 8)? The verse indicates that people's disbelief is unimaginable. In the chapter of *al-Baqara*, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'How can you disbelieve in Allah...' (*al-Baqara*: 28). How could you dare to do so when sound intellect denies and refuses this concept? You must believe Allah especially when a messenger of Allah has come to you to give you evidence and reminders.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and He has already made a pledge with you if you have faith' (*al-Hadid*: 8). This means that Allah made a pledge with you that you would believe. Thus, faith is an ancient covenant to which you agreed and accepted, so why do you deny it now? Allah *the Most High* made this pledge with the children of Adam during the phase of the creation of souls without bodies. It is related that Allah made a pledge with them when they were still in his loins: 'And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them] "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware." Or [lest] you say, "It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers have done?"' (*al-A'raf*: 172-173)

Allah *the Exalted* made this pledge with all children of Adam before they possessed souls which incite evil; once they possessed these souls, this pledge was violated and no longer fulfilled. Since we are all descended from Adam, each one of us has a living cell from him which he took from his father, and his father took it from his father and so on, all the way back to Adam *peace be upon him*.

Natural disposition for faith, the conscience, and the self-rebuking soul come from this cell. Therefore, when a person commits a sin while heedless of his natural disposition for faith, this sense is quickly awakened so that he reforms his behaviour according to inherent faith.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* made another pledge with the prophets: ‘And [recall, O People of the Scripture] when Allah took the covenant of the prophets, [saying] “Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.” [Allah] said, “Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?” They said, “We have acknowledged it.” He said, “Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 81)

Every messenger was required to tell his community and those who believed in him that another messenger will come after him with certain attributes and that they should not oppose him as his mission is to complete previous messages.

This is what Musa (Moses) and ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon them* said to their people and which the Quran mentioned against the Jews: ‘When there came to them a Book from Allah confirming that which was with them—although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved—but [then] when there came to them that which they recognised, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers.’ (*al-Baqara*: 89)

The Jews in Medina used to implore Allah for assistance to achieve victory over the idolaters by the coming of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They used to tell them that the time came for a new prophet whom they would follow him and the idolaters will be killed in the way ‘Ad and Iram were killed.

However, when Prophet Muhammad came to them, they disbelieved in him and opposed his call because it threatened the temporal power which they enjoyed. Had they accepted that it came from Allah and remembered what their prophet told them about him, then they would not have opposed Prophet Muhammad’s call. The status of the disbelievers of Mecca and the idol-worshippers was not as grave as that of the Jews because they were not given any tidings of the coming of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

We can deduce that all Divine religions agree upon the same truth and instructions, which are to worship solely Allah, with no associate. The successive religions are only links in a single chain to the effect of submission to Allah *Glorified is He* as they are parts of the same building, as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The similitude of mine and that of the messengers is like that of a person who built a house and he completed it and made it perfect except for the space of a brick. People were surprised at it and said, “Had there been a brick (it would have been complete in all respects).” Allah’s Messenger, “I am that place where the brick (completing the building is to be placed), and I am the seal of prophets.”’⁽¹⁾

Thus, ‘...He has already made a pledge with you...’ (*al-Hadid: 8*) refers to the pledge made with all mankind before they came to life, and the pledge made with the prophets in order for them to tell people that the religion of Allah is based on accord, not discord.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُزِيلُ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ ءَايَاتِ يَتَنَبَّئُ بِخُرُوجِكُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾

**It is He who has sent down clear revelations to His Servant,
so that He may bring you from the depths of darkness into
light; God is truly kind and merciful to you [9]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid: 9*)**

This means that Allah sends down to His Prophet ‘...clear revelations...’ (*al-Hadid: 9*), which plainly guide towards the Creator. The word *ayat* has three meanings: cosmological signs like the sun, moon, night and day; miracles and wonders which accompanied the missions of messengers in order to prove to the people that they were truly sent by Allah; and finally the verses of the precise and wise message which convey the guidance and laws which govern life motions and lead people to happiness.

Those are the three meanings of the word *ayat*, each of which has its own purpose, and Allah *the Almighty* combines all of them in His saying: ‘...so that He may bring you from the depths of darkness into light...’ (*al-Hadid: 9*). Light and darkness are opposites; light is the means by which we see things and has its entity. As for darkness, it does not have its own entity, but it has only a negative reality in case of the lack of light.

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (2271) on the authority of Abu Hurayra

We said that light allows us to see things so that we can walk safely without bumping against anything. However, when we walk in darkness we stumble, crushing the weak and being crushed by the strong. This is true of physical light as well as the abstract light which is the light of Divine teachings and morals which guide us in life: ‘...there has come to you light and a clear Book from Allah. With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His Will and guides them to the right path.’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 15-16) Thus, it is light upon light.

Allah *the Almighty* says about disbelievers who turn their backs on and oppose His Guidance: ‘Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him. Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see.’ (*al-Baqara*: 17)

Thus, the intended meaning is spiritual as it means taking you out of the darkness of disbelief into the light of faith. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...Allah is truly Kind and Merciful to you.’ (*al-Hadid*: 9) The Arabic word *ra’fah* means removing a person’s pain and suffering and curing his ailment; the word *rahma* means protecting a person after being afflicted with pain or illness.

This meaning is also indicated by Allah’s saying: ‘We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss...’ (*al-Isra’*: 82). The Quran, which includes Allah’s Guidance, contains a cure for the ailments of society, rousing it from heedlessness, keeping it away from the paths of corruption and repairing its faults and flaws. Then, mercy protects and guards the society from error so that these ailments do not afflict it again.

Previously, we likened Allah’s Guidance to handbook, which if followed; we will never fall into sins. The maker of something knows what is best for it and is keener than anyone else to ensure to its safety.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ
 مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَتْلِ أَوْلِيَّكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ
 وَقَتَلُوا أَوْ كَلَّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٠﴾

Why should you not give for God's cause when God alone will inherit what is in the heavens and earth? Those who gave and fought before the triumph are not like others: they are greater in rank than those who gave and fought afterwards. But God has promised a good reward to all of them: God is fully aware of all that you do [10] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 10)

Allah *Glorified is He* says about faith: 'Why should you not believe in Allah...' (*al-Hadid*: 8)? He says in this verse: 'Why should you not give for Allah's Cause...' (*al-Hadid*: 10)? This means: how could they do this when all possessions truly belong to Allah and are only entrusted to them: '...when Allah alone will inherit what is in the heavens and earth? ...' (*al-Hadid*: 10) Thus, this is a general principle for wealth and other things: everything belongs to Allah and must return to Him.

Have you ever seen anyone leave this worldly life taking his wealth with him? Allah *the Almighty* gives you wealth and let you possess it during your lifetime so that you enjoy it. When you die, you will leave it to your heirs. When an intelligent person reflects on his wealth, he finds that he will use some of it, and the rest goes to his heirs. Will he take the money after his death? Is it reasonable to apportion some of it to yourself?

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us this lesson when he said, 'Son of Adam says, "My wealth, my wealth." Do you own of your wealth other than what you eat and consume, and what you wear and wear out, or what you give in *sadaqah* (charity) (to those who deserve it), and that what you will have in stock for yourself?'

You all know the story of the ram which was given as a gift to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. When he came home at the end of the day, he asked about it. Prophet Muhammad loved the meat of the shoulder, and when 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* answered, 'It is all given away in

charity except for the shoulder, which I kept for you, O, Messenger of Allah.’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* corrected her words and said, ‘Nay, all of it remains but the shoulder.’⁽¹⁾

When some said to ‘Ali *Allah be pleased with him* ‘I want to know if I give precedence to the worldly life or the Hereafter?’ He replied, ‘Only you can answer that. If one person came to give you a gift and another to ask for charity, which one would you greet most kindly and smile at his face? If you would greet the first one most kindly and happily, then you give precedence to this worldly life. If you would greet the second one most kindly, then you give precedence to the Hereafter.’

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* wants to encourage us to love spending in His Cause, so the Quran tackles this issue in many verses. This is because spending on others plays a major part in the preservation of life as the life of a poor person cannot be maintained without it. Thus, it is very crucial.

The Quran always reminds us of this fact: ‘...Allah alone will inherit what is in the heavens and earth...’ (*al-Hadid*: 10). Allah says: ‘...and We are the inheritors.’ (*al-Qasas*: 58) He also says: ‘Surely, We inherit the earth and all those who are on it, and to Us they shall be returned.’ (*Maryam*: 40)

If Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* is the true Inheritor of wealth, and if you will inevitably leave this world without taking anything just as you entered it, then why are you so stingy to yourself?

Even when it comes to the issue of inheritance and estate division, Allah *the Almighty* manages this issue and divides the inheritance in His own way, for He is the Inheritor. This is because all wealth belongs to Allah, Who divides it as He wills. Thus, do not interfere in the matter of the division of inheritance: ‘...you know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit...’ (*an-Nisa*: 11).

Allah says: ‘...Those who gave and fought before the triumph are not like others...’ (*al-Hadid*: 10). Some scholars said that that this triumph refers to the conquest of Mecca. However, this conquest did not result from the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, but this treaty was the beginning of the conquest.

(1) Related by Ahmad (6/50), At-Tirmidhi (2470) and Abu Na'im (5/23)

Therefore, our Abu Bakr said, 'Islam never achieved a triumph greater than the Treaty of Hdaybiyya.'⁽¹⁾

This is because the Quraysh were attacking Prophet Muhammad and opposing his *da'wah* (calling to Allah); after the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, the Quraysh began to recognise Muhammad and his *da'wah* (calling to Allah), make pledges and deals with him. This is considered a triumph.

Moreover, the treaty gave Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the time to spread his *da'wah* (calling to Allah) in Medina because it relieved him of the burden of the enmity and threat of Quraysh. Thus, we find that after the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, the area occupied by disbelievers began to shrink and the area occupied by believers began to grow.

Allah does not treat those who spent before the triumph and those who spent after it on equal basis because those who spent before the triumph were a weak minority, few in number and provisions and lacking power at a time when all the power and control was in the hands of their enemies. However, after the triumph, the state changed completely, and the believers became powerful with large numbers and provisions and were reassured that matters became stable.

Therefore, those who spent before the conquest are not equal to those who spent after it: '...they are greater in rank...' (*al-Hadid*: 10). This means that those who gave and fought before the triumph 'are greater in rank than those who gave and fought afterwards...' (*al-Hadid*: 10). However, Allah *the Almighty* did not wrong those who gave and fought after the triumph, as He says: '...But Allah has promised a good reward to all of them...' (*al-Hadid*: 10). Allah *the Exalted* promised to give the two sides' good reward, so they used to say that good reward from Allah is enough for them: '...Allah is fully aware of all that you do.' (*al-Hadid*: 10)

(1) *Al-Waqidi, Al-Maghazi (vol. 1, p. 610)*

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ، وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

Who will make God a good loan? He will double it for him and reward him generously [11]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 11)

Allah has made *zakat* (obligatory charity) obligatory and one of the pillars of Islam in order to look after the poor, along with preserving the life of those who are unable to work. If you reflect on life and the manner in which fortunes and resources are distributed, you will find that the Creator *the Glorified and Exalted* has provided His created beings with enough sustenance to suffice their needs. The wealth of rich people contains enough sustenance to provide for the poor and let them live happily no less than rich people's happiness.

Accordingly, if matters go on in a different way, you should know that there is something wrong: either the rich person is stingy, or the poor person is a trickster as the Creator *Glorified is He* directs the affairs of the universe in such a way which lets His servants live in happiness.

You may see, for example, a wealthy man with large estates in Tanta who desires to live in Alexandria, so he goes and acquires properties there. This movement is not meaningless, but it occurs by the Will of God, the Lord of all. This man's wealth has sufficed the needs of the poor people in Tanta, so Allah wants to spread it to a new area in Alexandria. You might perhaps be astonished that he moved to another place although he is rich, but this is managed by the Creator and Provider Who controls everything.

Because of the importance of spending on others and society's need for it, the Lawgiver has not limited the *zakat* (obligatory charity), but He has given the wealthy the opportunity to give more than what he is obligated to give, going beyond 2.5% to 5 or 10%.

Therefore, the Quran says about *zakat*: 'And those within whose wealth is a known right for the petitioner and the deprived' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24-25). Allah says about giving to the poor outside *zakat*: 'And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19) Notice that in this latter verse, the word 'known' is not used.

The 'known' spending is *zakat* (obligatory charity), and the unrestricted one is *sadaqah* (voluntary charity) which belongs to the category of benevolence as Allah says in the chapter of *adh-Dhariyat*: 'Indeed, the righteous will be within gardens and springs, accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that, doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night. And in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness. And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15-19)

The one who wishes to be benevolent and does more than what the Sacred Law obligates will find a reward which is commensurate with his benevolence; he will receive a special reward just as he gave in a special manner.

Therefore, the Quran calls this virtue benevolence and this extra charitable spending as a loan: 'Who will make Allah a good loan?' (*al-Hadid*: 11) The good loan is the one which you give happily and contentedly and should be from lawful wealth and earnings because Allah *the Almighty* accepts only that which is good: '...Indeed, Allah only accepts from the righteous [who fear Him].' (*al-Ma'ida*: 27) This loan must not be given from the worst of the things you possess: '...and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend [in alms] of it...' (*al-Baqara*: 267). You must also give it in a voluntarily and while loving to do so: 'And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan and the captive.' (*al-Insan*: 8)

In addition, you must not proudly remind others of the charity you give them: '...and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury...' (*al-Baqara*: 262). You must give others charity secretly so that you do not embarrass the one who receives it, as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings of Allah be upon him* made clear, '...his left hand does not know what his right hand has given.'⁽¹⁾ Moreover, secret charity is far from dissemblance; giving charity ostentatiously benefits the recipient, but the giver is deprived of the reward for giving charity, and his good deed becomes useless to him.

When you give a loan, you protect the needy person, along with sparing him the humility of begging for charity. There are many people who experience

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (620) and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra

hard times after being wealthy and comfortable; such people should be given loans to preserve their dignity as it is said, ‘Have mercy on the lowly man who used to be mighty.’

When you give such a person a loan, you facilitate his circumstances. Afterwards, he may be able to pay it back; if he is not able, you will have two options, as Allah says: ‘And if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease. But if you give [from your right as] charity, then it is better for you if you only knew.’ (*al-Baqara*: 280) You may give him some time until he is able to pay it back, or you cede the loan and consider it to as charity.

Allah *Glorified is He* has given us different stages of giving charity, the first of which is the *zakat* (obligatory charity) and spending more than that, which is due, then lending, then refusing to take the loan back and considering it as charity.

As long as Allah is the One Who enjoins charity and says these words, the reality of life could never prove them untrue. A wealthy person must maintain the proper norms required of him, while a needy person must maintain the proper practices of asking others for charity, so that we can all do what Allah wants us to do. However, the situation at the moment is that most rich people are stingy, and most poor people beg with importunity and scheme.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us this lesson when he said, ‘Whoever takes the money of the people with the intention of repaying it, Allah will repay it on his behalf, and whoever takes it in order to spoil it, then Allah will spoil him.’⁽¹⁾ Therefore, when a man died and Prophet Muhammad was asked to lead his funeral prayer, he asked, ‘Does he have any debts?’ When they said that he did, he declined to lead his funeral prayer.⁽²⁾

The question that comes to mind is ‘What was his sin when he had died?’ The previous Hadith explains that the debtor who takes a loan with the intention of repaying it will be helped by Allah to repay it. Rather, Allah will

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (2212) and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra

(2) Related by Abu Dawud (2902), Ahmad (14009) and Ibn Hibban (3129) on the authority of Jabir... The full story is that Abu Qatada Al-Ansari then offered to assume the man’s debt, so Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* prayed for him.

repay it for him. The fact that this person died without repaying his debt indicates that he did not really intend to repay it when he took it; otherwise, Allah *the Almighty* would have repaid it for him and would have helped him.

There is another reason for Prophet Muhammad's refusal of leading the funeral prayer for the man which is to encourage people to repay the man's debt for him before his burial, as an act of mercy towards him. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* also did so in order to give the people a lesson and to show the gravity of debt, as it is the people's right that cannot be excused. This is in order for people not to treat debts lightly and take them coercively. Therefore, 'Ali and Qatada *Allah be pleased with them* offered to settle the dead man's debt.

Furthermore, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* refrained from praying the funeral prayer for the man, he did not forbid others from doing so, but he said to them, 'Pray for your companion.'⁽¹⁾ This means that the man had a defect in his faith and in following Prophet Muhammad which prevented him from receiving the great honour of having him lead his funeral prayer. If this man had truly followed the commands of Prophet Muhammad, he would not have died, while owing debts.

Once when we were in San Francisco, we met with an orientalist who was studying Islam. He said, 'I am neither Christian nor Muslim.' The man was inclined to Islam, but he had some doubts and had expressed to the others his desire to meet me and discuss some issues with me.

One of the doubts he had was concerning the issue of charity and lending. He asked me about Allah's saying: 'Who will make Allah a good loan? He will double it for him and reward him generously.' (*al-Hadid*: 11) This means that He will repay with double the original loan, and since good deeds are rewarded tenfold, this means the repayment will be twenty times the original loan. A Hadith says, 'There is written on the door of paradise: "Charity brings a tenfold reward and a loan brings an eighteen fold reward."'”(2) However, this is less than twenty.

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (2127)

(2) Related by At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat (6907) on the authority of Anas

Allah *the Most High* inspired us to reply to him, ‘When you give a dollar in charity, for example, how much does our Lord repay you?’ He said, ‘Ten’ and showed ten fingers. I said, ‘Was your first dollar returned to you?’ He said, ‘No.’ I said, ‘You received nine. When it is doubled, it becomes eighteen. Thus, there is no contradiction between the two texts.

When the following verse was revealed, ‘Who will make Allah a good loan?...’ (*al-Hadid*: 11), a Jew named Fanhas said,⁽¹⁾ ‘Muhammad’s Lord is poor and needs a loan from us!’ Upon hearing this, Abu Bakr struck him on the face. Prophet Muhammad said to him, ‘Why did you do that?’ He replied, ‘O, Messenger of Allah, the enemy of Allah said a terrible thing. He claimed that Allah is poor, and they are rich. When he said this, I became angry for Allah’s sake and struck him on the face.’ Fanhas denied this by saying, ‘I never said such a thing.’ Then Allah *the Almighty* revealed a saying refuting what Fanhas said and showing the truthfulness of Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him*: ‘Allah has certainly heard the statement of those [Jews] who said, “Indeed, Allah is poor, while we are rich.” We will record what they said and their killing of the prophets without right and will say, “Taste the punishment of the Burning Fire.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 181)

Allah says: ‘...reward him generously.’ (*al-Hadid*: 11) After doubling the reward and all good deeds are rewarded tenfold, Allah *the Most High* also rewards this person generously. The generous reward is an additional bounty, and the fact that He describes the reward as being generous indicates its magnificence. If a gift itself is generous, then what will the giver be like?

Concerning loans, Allah *Glorified is He* preserves the outcomes of a believer’s labour, appreciates his efforts in life and does not withhold from him what is rightfully his. Therefore, He calls charitable spending on the poor a loan. Although all wealth belongs to Allah, He borrows it from you not for Himself, but from one person to another.

This principle exists in our ordinary life: a father does it with his children, for example. When he gives his children their pocket-money, some of them save it in their moneyboxes, If a father later needs money for an operation for

(1) *This story is related by At-Tabari in his Tafsir.*

one of the children, he says to the other children, 'Give me what you have, and I will give it back to you later when I can.' Thus, he takes a loan from them, even though it is really his money.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَانُكُمْ الْيَوْمَ
جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

On the Day when you [Prophet] see the believers, both men and women, with their light streaming out ahead of them and to their right, [they will be told], 'The good news for you today is that there are Gardens graced with flowing streams where you will stay: that is truly the supreme triumph!' [12]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 12)

The verb *tara* (see) in this verse refers to vision of the eye since it is relevant to something physical which can be seen. When the verb *tara* is used concerning something which is not physical, it means 'know' as in Allah's saying to Prophet Muhammad: 'Have you not known [O, Muhammad] how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?' (*al-Fil*: 1) This is because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was born in the year in which the events of the elephant took place, and he did not see them. '*Alam tara*' (have you not known), which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse, indicates that what the Prophet learned from his Lord is more certain than what he might have seen with his eyes.

The following verse tackles one of the events of the Day of Resurrection: 'On the Day when you [Prophet] see the believers, both men and women, with their light streaming out ahead of them and to their right...' (*al-Hadid*: 12). This light of faith and righteous deeds will stream out ahead of them and to their right bearing them to paradise.

'Their light' indicates that this light belongs to them. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'the good news for you today...' (*al-Hadid*: 12). The light will be a glad tiding; when they see it, they will rejoice and know that it will guide them to paradise.

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...’The good news for you today is that there are Gardens graced with flowing streams where you will stay.” This is truly the supreme triumph.’ (*al-Hadid*: 12) It is supreme triumph because it is an eternal triumph which will never end or be disturbed. A person may enjoy gardens, orchards and all kinds of delight in the worldly life, but since these pleasures will not last forever, this spoils his delight. Either this person will leave these pleasures, or they will leave him. However, delight of paradise is eternal and everlasting that will never change.

While believers are watching their light going ahead of them and guiding them, causing them to rejoice, disbelievers and hypocrites will be in darkness which will envelop them and lead them astray. Allah *the Exalted* will command His angels to cast them into hell (we seek refuge with Allah from it): ‘[The angels will be ordered], “Gather those who committed wrong, their kinds, and what they used to worship other than Allah, and guide them to the path of Hellfire.’ (*as-Saffat*: 22-23).

This means the angels will lead them to hell and will place them at the beginning of the way to hell. The word ‘guide’ in this verse is used ironically.

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ ﴿١٣﴾

On the same Day, the hypocrites, both men and women, will say to the believers, ‘Wait for us! Let us have some of your light!’ They will be told, ‘Go back and look for a light.’ A wall with a door will be erected between them: inside it lies mercy, outside lies torment [13] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 13)

‘On the same Day...’ (*al-Hadid*: 13) means the Day of Resurrection when believers will see their light spreading before them and to their right sides to bear them to paradise. Allah says that on the same day ‘...the hypocrites, both men and women, will say to the believers, “Wait for us! Let us have some of your light!” ...’ (*al-Hadid*: 13) However, it will be said to them: ‘...“Go back and look for a light.”...’ (*al-Hadid*: 13)

These believers will tell the hypocrites to go to the worldly life and seek light which could guide them now as the light which believers will follow

was sent in the form of the righteous deeds they did in the worldly life when they believed in Allah and obeyed His Messenger. They are now reaping the fruits of their good deeds. The hypocrites need to start a new life of responsibility and action, and the Day of Resurrection will be for requital, not action.

Reflect here on the greatness of the Quran discourse. This dialogue takes place between believers and hypocrites, yet the verb is stated in the passive voice 'they will be told', not 'The believers will tell the hypocrites'. This indicates that the believers will gloat over the misfortune of the hypocrites. The believers do not want to take this stance with the hypocrites as though the voice comes to them from an unknown direction.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...A wall with a door will be erected between them...' (*al-Hadid*: 13). This means that a wall will be erected between the believers and the hypocrites. Accordingly, Allah *Glorified is He* brings this dialogue to an end and separates the believers from the hypocrites with a wall which has a gate so that they cannot see or hear them. This is because a believer is tenderhearted, and so his Lord protects him from hearing and seeing the suffering which hypocrites will encounter in hell (we seek refuge with Allah). 'A wall with a door will be erected between them; inside it lies mercy...' (*al-Hadid*: 13) on the believers' side, while '...outside lies torment' (*al-Hadid*: 13) on the hypocrites' side.

يَنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ
وَعَرَّيْتُمْ الْأُمَانِي حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَعَرَّيْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورَ

The hypocrites will call out to the believers, 'Were we not with you?' They will reply, 'Yes. But you allowed yourselves to be tempted, you were hesitant, doubtful, deceived by false hopes until God's command came – the Deceiver tricked you about God [14] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 14)

The dialogue still continues, and the hypocrites call the believers and say to them: '...Were we not with you?' (*al-Hadid*: 14) This means that in the worldly life, they prayed as the believers did and stood in the first rows of the prayer. So, why will believers go to paradise, and hypocrites go to hell

although their deeds are the same? The believers will respond to the hypocrites: ‘...Yes...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14). Believers were with hypocrites in the worldly life, and they did the same deeds and even the hypocrites did more deeds. ‘...But you allowed yourselves to be tempted...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14). The hypocrites did the good deeds with their bodies only but with absent hearts; they did good deeds out of hypocrisy and dissemblance saying things that are not felt by their hearts. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...but you allowed yourselves to be tempted...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14); this means that they subjected themselves to temptation.

Therefore, a hypocrite is even worse than a disbeliever is and deserves to be in the lowest level of hell. A disbeliever is true to himself and to the people and declares plainly that he is a disbeliever so that we treat him accordingly, and his true state is not ambiguous to us.

On the other hand, a hypocrite seems to be one of the believers, but we do not know his true intentions and inward thoughts. His enmity towards us is hidden, so it is very difficult to deal with him.

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...You were hesitant...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14). Hypocrites waited for misfortunes and calamities to befall believers, for this religion to collapse and for Prophet Muhammad to die, thinking that his mission would die with him.

In other verses, Allah *Glorified is He* explains this attitude by saying: ‘Say, “Do you await for us except one of the two best things while we await for you that Allah will afflict you with punishment from Himself or at our hands? So wait. Indeed, we, along with you, are waiting.”’ (*at-Tawba*: 52)

The verse means that the believers ask the hypocrites, ‘What do you think that will happen to us? It will be one of two good things: either victory or martyrdom. As for you, there is nothing awaiting you but torment: either Allah will torment you by our hands, or He will torment you in hell in the Hereafter.’

While they were waiting for Islam to disappear and vanish, it was spreading and growing: ‘Have they not seen that We set upon the land, reducing it from its borders? ...’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 41) This means that the area dwelled by disbelievers is shrinking, while the area dwelled by believers is increasing.

The word *irtabtum* which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse, means that hypocrites doubted in the call to faith and in the veracity of

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in what he conveyed from Allah. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...deceived by false hopes...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14). They were deceived by your vain hopes that this religion would disappear upon the death of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that his call would come to an end.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...until Allah’s command came...’ (*al-Hadid*: 14). This command decrees either their defeat or death. It also means Allah’s Command for the Resurrection to begin. He says: ‘...the Deceiver tricked you about Allah.’ (*al-Hadid*: 14) Satan deceives people and draws them away from Allah; yet in the end, he exposes and disavows them: ‘And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, “Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you, but I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves...”’ (*Ibrahim*: 22).

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوِيَّتُكُمُ
النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا الْمَصِيرُ

**Today no ransom will be accepted from you or from
the disbelievers: your home is the Fire – that is where
you belong — a miserable destination!’ [15]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 15)**

This dispels all their hopes to be saved, for there is no escape from the fate that awaits them, and no ransom will be accepted from any of them if he wishes to ransom himself from Allah’s torment. Someone might think that this is true only of the hypocrites who have been subject of discussion because Allah says: ‘Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire, and never will you find for them a helper.’ (*an-Nisa*: 145) Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* clarifies that this is true of the disbelievers as well: ‘...or from disbelievers...’ (*al-Hadid*: 15); it needs to be pointed out because open disbelievers are not as bad as hypocrites, Thus, He affirms that no ransom will be accepted from either one of them and that they must face this fate.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...Your home is the Fire. That is where you belong—a miserable destination!’ (*al-Hadid*: 15) Their destination is hellfire,

where they belong, as a person needs in this situation a protector to help him and give him refuge. Whoever does not have Allah as refuge on this day shall have the hellfire as their refuge instead (we seek refuge with Allah).

Therefore, Allah says in the chapter of *an-Nisa'*: '...never will you find for them a helper.' (*an-Nisa'*: 145) He also says: '...And the wrongdoers have not any protector or helper.' (*ash-Shura*: 8) Anyone for whom hellfire is his refuge has a wretched refuge indeed, and his fate is evil.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of God and the Truth that has been revealed, and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them, whose time was extended but whose hearts hardened and many of whom were lawbreakers? [16]

(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 16)

The question in this verse is rhetorical, for it is meant to express astonishment and to encourage hastening. The verse means 'Is it not time for their hearts to feel humble?' This implies that they were tardy in submitting their hearts. This is similar to what we may say to an old man who continues to live a sinful life despite his old age: 'Is it not the time for you to repent and turn back to Allah?' This means that his repentance is delayed.

The verse tackles believers whose faith is incomplete, for their good deeds are scant, or they perform them with inattentive hearts and without the humility and piety which Allah expects of them. Allah says: '...to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah...' (*al-Hadid*: 16); this means when Allah is mentioned and the verses of the Quran are recited, a believer should be deeply stirred, especially when hearing the verses which convey warnings, along with threading and tackling hellfire and reckoning.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and the Truth that has been revealed...' (*al-Hadid*: 16); this refers to the verses of the Quran. Allah *the Exalted* says:

‘...and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them...’ (*al-Hadid*: 16); the verse refers to the Jews and Christians ‘...Whose time was extended’ (*al-Hadid*: 16); it means the time was extended so that they were overcome with heedlessness, and their hearts became too hard to be softened by the remembrance of Allah. Also, Allah says: ‘...many of whom were lawbreakers.’ (*al-Hadid*: 16) This means that they were disobedient to Allah.

There is a story concerning the meaning of this verse. It was said that Fudayl ibn ‘Ayyad,⁽¹⁾ a great Sufi and ‘*Arif* (a Sufi who has reached a high station of worship), was a highwayman when he was a young man. One day, as he was scaling a wall to engage in robbery, he heard a voice reading the verse: ‘Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah...’ (*al-Hadid*: 16)? Upon hearing this, he said, ‘Indeed it is time, Lord’ and climbed down. This was the moment when his life changed.⁽²⁾

Someone asked Fudayl about this amazing story and how he turned from a highwayman and robber into a righteous person. He said to him, ‘Had you ever done a good deed before Allah guided you to repentance?’ He replied, ‘By Allah, I do not remember any good deeds, except one. Once as I was walking along the road I saw a page from Allah’s Book on the ground, upon which the people were trampling, so I picked it up and kept it. I only had a single dirham with me, so I bought some perfume with it and perfumed the page. Upon doing this, I heard a voice saying, “By Allah, I shall brighten your name as you have brightened mine.”’

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

Remember that God revives the earth after it dies; We have made Our revelation clear to you so that you may use your reason [17] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 17)

Notice the appropriate juxtaposition between the hardening of hearts and the revival of the earth after its death. Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* wants to

(1) Sheikh of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca who was born in Samarqand (105-187 A.H.)

(2) This story was related by Ibn Asl-Shajari in *Al-Amali Asl-Shajariyya*.

say to us that if our hearts have died and hardened and we have lost the teachings of religion, we should not despair, for the One Who revives the earth after it dies can also revive our dead hearts.

This was a glad tidings to them that they would return to faith in a state better than they had been before. Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...We have made Our signs clear to you so that you may use your reason.’ (*al-Hadid*: 17) One of signs is that Allah revives hearts with His remembrance just as He revives the earth with rain; each of them is a sign which should make us think, reflect, and meditate.

إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفْ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

**Charitable men and women who make a good
loan to God will have it doubled and have a
generous reward [18] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 18)**

The verse tackles again the subject of charity and spending in Allah’s Cause because of the great effect and importance it has in society. Allah affirms and emphasises these things because spending money charitably after working hard to earn it is difficult to do and requires much effort.

As this subject has been tackled in previous verses, they are reaffirmed in this verse, just as the wonders and signs of the cosmos are constantly reaffirmed in the chapter of *ar-Rahman* in Allah’s saying, ‘Which, then, of your Lord’s blessings do you both deny?’ (*ar-Rahman*: 13) And that was repeated after each sign.

Likewise, He reaffirms in this verse the importance of charitable spending and emphasises the noble reward which awaits those who give charity. It is a well-known fact that people love money, especially when it has been earned after hard work and effort.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّٰدِقُونَ وَالشَّٰهَدَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

Those who believe in God and His messengers are the truthful ones who will bear witness before their Lord: they will have their reward and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations are the inhabitants of Hell [19] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 19)

Allah says: ‘Those who believe in Allah and His messengers...’ (*al-Hadid*: 19); He says this because belief in one messenger entails belief in the other messengers since the Divine Message is one. Therefore, belief in all of messengers is an essential pillar of faith.

Then, He describes the believers as *siddiqun*, the plural of *siddiq* which means someone who has absolute belief in the Messenger and the Message he conveyed.

Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* was called *As-Siddiq* because he believed everything that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said. Allah *the Almighty* also described Maryam (Mary) *Allah be pleased with her* with the same description: ‘...his [‘Isa (Jesus)] mother was truthful...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 75); Allah says this about her because she believed her Lord *the Glorified and Exalted* concerning the miraculous conception she experienced which went against all norms of conception.

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...who will bear witness before their Lord. They will have their reward and their light ...’ (*al-Hadid*: 19). Allah says in another verse: ‘Never think of those who have been killed in the Cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 169) They are alive with their Lord because after a martyr is killed you see him shrouded and buried; we consider him as dead, and if you open his grave, you will find him dead.

Thus, they are alive with Allah, and ‘...They will have their reward and their light...’ (*al-Hadid*: 19); their light also spreads out in front of them and on their right sides, guiding them and showing them their places in paradise.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the opposite party: ‘...But those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations are the inhabitants of Hell’ (*al-Hadid*: 19). This means that they will dwell in hell and keep suffering from its blaze as though they are in intimacy with it.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ
كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ بَنَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَنَرْتُهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَمًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿٢٠﴾

Bear in mind that the present life is just a game, a diversion, an attraction, a cause of boasting among you, of rivalry in wealth and children. It is like plants that spring up after the rain: their growth at first delights the sowers, but then you see them wither away, turn yellow, and become stubble.

There is terrible punishment in the next life as well as forgiveness and approval from God; the life of this world is only an illusory pleasure [20] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 20)

This verse reveals the reality of this world and exposes its false adornment. Some people seek the pleasure of the worldly life as though it is the ultimate goal when in fact this is not the case. Allah *Glorified is He* describes the worldly life with several attributes, employing the Arabic rhetorical style of restriction (*Al-qasr*) using the word *Innama* (just), which implies that this world is nothing other than what He describes in the verse.

In the Quranic verse, ‘...a game, a diversion, an attraction’ (*al-Hadid*: 20), the word *la’ib* (game) signifies a human action with no good purpose, such as dangerous games children play at home for fun. Playing games is only a kind of amusement and a way to pass the time and release their energy. The word *la’ib* denotes playing before one reaches the age of legal responsibility; once one passes this age, it becomes *lahw* (diversion) because it distracts one from performing righteous deeds.

The word *zeena* (attraction) refers to things which are an addition to life’s essentials and basic needs. There is a minimum level of food, drink, and clothing,

with which hunger can be satiated and nakedness covered. When man is granted the means of subsistence in abundance, he attains to greater comfort in his food, drink, clothing, and mode of transport.

This is clear in the Quranic verse: 'O Children of Adam! Indeed, We have bestowed upon you from on high [the knowledge of making] garments to cover your nakedness, and as a thing of beauty (*Rishan*)...' (*al-A'raf*: 26). The word *Rishan* implies having plentiful luxurious clothes, which do more than merely cover his nakedness.

However luxurious and prosperous one's life may be, one should not forget that it is only the lower world (*dunya*), and the Creator is the One Who describes it as such. The world in which we live, being the lower one, indicates that there must be a higher world, which is the Hereafter.

To perceive this world's lowly nature, it is enough to realise that its delights are flawed and its life span is short. For one, this world extends only to one's life span, and it does not matter how long everyone else, from the time of Adam *peace be upon him* until the Day of Resurrection, lives. When a person dies, his reckoning starts.⁽¹⁾

Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* gives us a parable of the life of this world by saying: 'And propound to them the parable of the life of this world: [it is] like the water which We send down from the skies and which is absorbed by the plants of the earth, but [in time] they turn into dry stubble which the winds blow freely about. And it is Allah [alone] Who determines all things.' (*al-Kahf*: 45)

Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah *the Almighty* explains the meaning of *zeena* (attraction) by saying: 'Alluring (*zuyyina*) to man is the enjoyment of worldly desires through women, children, heaped-up treasures of gold and silver, horses of high mark, cattle and land. All this may be enjoyed in the life of this world, but the most beautiful of all goals is with Allah.' (*Al- 'Imran*: 14)

In the verse under discussion, the word *tafakhur* (boasting) means to feel proud and superior to someone else because of something inherently possessed, such as health or beauty, or due to something outside of oneself like wealth,

(1) This is the saying of 'Alqama, narrated by At-Tabari in *Tahdhib Al-Athar* (240) on the authority of Abu Qays.

children, fame, or power. The word *takathur* (rivalry) suggests seeking pride in amassing more and more of the things one possesses, such as children and wealth.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* gives a parable to illustrate the overall picture: ‘...It is like plants that spring up after the rain; their growth at first delights the sowers (*kuffar*)...’ (*al-Hadid*: 20). The word *kuffar* here refers to ‘farmers’ rather than ‘disbelievers’, unlike how it is commonly used.

At the end of the chapter of *al-Fath*, Allah *Glorified is He* gives a parable of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his community by saying: ‘...This is their parable in the Torah as well as their parable in the Gospel: [they are] like a seed that brings forth its shoot, and then He strengthens it, so that it grows stout and [in the end] stands firm upon its stem, delighting the sowers (*zurra*). [Thus will Allah cause the believers to grow in strength] so that through them He might confound the deniers of the truth (*kuffar*). [But] unto such of them as may [yet] attain to faith and do righteous deeds, Allah has promised forgiveness and a reward supreme.’ (*al-Fath*: 29) In this verse, the word *zurra* (sowers) is used to be distinguished from the word *kuffar* (disbelievers), which also occurs in the verse.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...but then you see them wither away, turn yellow, and become stubble...’ (*al-Hadid*: 20); this means that it blooms and blossoms, and then quickly withers and turns yellow and decays into dust. In the same way, the life of this world allures people with false joy and temporal pleasures, which then come to nothing in the end, leaving behind inevitable consequences.

‘...There is terrible punishment in the next life...’ (*al-Hadid*: 20) for those who are deluded by the life of this world and who regard it as a game and a passing delight, as well as a cause for boasting and bragging; ‘...as well as forgiveness and approval from Allah...’ (*al-Hadid*: 20) is for those who are not deluded by the life of this world and who do not turn away from Allah’s Guidance.

The verse then emphasises this concept: ‘...the life of this world is only an illusory pleasure’ (*al-Hadid*: 20); what this means is a false enjoyment that does not endure. The word *ghurur* means (illusion), whilst the word *gharur* alludes to ‘Satan’ and all other things that delude you, such as wealth and the like, as inferred from the verse: ‘...let not, then, the life of this world

delude you, and let not [your own] deceptive thoughts (*gharur*) about Allah delude you!' (*Fatir*: 5)

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ
 ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢١﴾

So race for your Lord's forgiveness and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for those who believe in God and His messengers: that is God's bounty, which He bestows on whoever He pleases. God's bounty is infinite [21]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 21)

After exposing the reality of the worldly life and depicting it as a game, a diversion, an attraction and a cause of boasting and rivalry, Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'So, race for your Lord's Forgiveness...' (*al-Hadid*: 21). It is as if to say, 'Leave this worldly life and its delusions, for it is a useless mirage and instead, vie for what shall be more lasting for you.'

The Quranic verse 'So, race for your Lord's Forgiveness...' (*al-Hadid*: 21) implies that forgiveness is the goal, the aim and the destination, just as you would say 'I travelled from Cairo to Alexandria.' This goal can only be achieved by vying and striving with the utmost earnestness. Forgiveness is not to be granted to those who are careless or lazy in seeking it. Racing, as mentioned in the verse, refers to competing with one another to perform righteous deeds and acts of obedience and to adhere to Allah's Commands.

Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah *the Exalted* says: 'and hasten (*sari'u*) with one another to attain to your Lord's Forgiveness...' (*Al-Imran*: 133). Both words *sari'u* (to hasten) and *sabiqu* (to race) imply a sense of mutual participation and competition between believers who adhere to Allah's Guidance; each of whom wants to surpass others and hasten to reach the goal which they all share, namely forgiveness: '...for your Lord's Forgiveness...' (*al-Hadid*: 21).

In another verse, however, Allah *the Almighty* says about prophets *Zakaryya* (Zechariah), and *Yahya* (John) *peace be upon them*: '...surely, they would hasten with one another in doing good deeds...' (*al-Anbiya*: 90). The preposition *ila*

(to), which implies reaching an end, is not used in this verse because good deeds are not an end in themselves. They are rather a means to the ultimate goal, which is forgiveness.

Furthermore, the phrase ‘good deeds’ is used in the plural form in order to accommodate all spiritual ambitions, which each believer hastens to perform to the extent of his ability and readiness. Accordingly, good deeds have different levels: the more you do and hasten earnestly to do them, the higher the level you reach.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...in that’, i.e. in doing good deeds, ‘then, let all such aspire as [are willing to] aspire to things of high account.’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 26)

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* clarified this concept by saying, ‘There should be no envy except in two cases: a man to whom Allah gives wealth and thus allows him to spend it in the cause of the truth and a man to whom Allah gives knowledge, by which he judges amongst the people.’⁽¹⁾

The word *hasad* (envy) mentioned in the Hadith, refers to noble rivalry and competition. The stem verb from which the word *munafasa* (competition) is derived signifies competition in holding one’s breath. Once⁽²⁾ ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him said to ‘Abbas Allah be pleased with him ‘Let us compete (*natanafas*)’ which means ‘Let us go underwater and see which of us can hold his breath the longest.’⁽³⁾ It is obvious that the healthier and copious one’s lungs are, the longer he will be able to remain under water. Thus, let us compete in doing good deeds to see which of us shall win and which of us will reach the goal first.

Therefore, it is narrated that Hatim Al-Asamm⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾ was asked by his teacher Al-Balkhi⁽⁶⁾, ‘What have you spent your life doing?’ He said, ‘Certain

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (71) and Muslim (1352) on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud Allah be pleased with him.

(2) The story of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be pleased with him, and Al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd Al-Muttalib Allah be pleased with him diving under water

(3) The story is narrated by Al-Bayhaqi.

(4) D. 237 A.H.

(5) The story of Al-Balkhi asking his disciple Hatim Al-Asamm about what he spent his life doing

(6) D. 194 A.H.

things. I learnt that there is never a moment when Allah is not looking at me, so I was ashamed to disobey Him. I learnt that I had provision appointed for me by Allah that would not miss me, so I felt content with it. I learnt that I had a debt which none, but I could pay, so I engaged myself with it. Furthermore, I learnt that my death time hastens to me, so I hasten to meet it.' This is the meaning of 'competition'; he knew his death hastens to him, so he hastened to meet it by doing righteous deeds.⁽¹⁾

In the Quranic verse: '...and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 21), Garden is mentioned after forgiveness. This is because Allah *Glorified is He* first forgives their sins, and then admits them into paradise. As it is known, there is the principle that warding off harm precedes seeking benefit, and as previously stated, detachment precedes beautification.

For instance, if a person throws a stone at you, and another throws an apple at the same time, you will certainly defend yourself against the stone first. This concept is clear in the Quranic verse: '...he who shall be drawn away from the fire and brought into Paradise will indeed have gained a triumph...' (*Al-Imran*: 185). Forgiveness is either preceded committing a sin or effacing it, or it conceals a sin from you so that you do not commit it in the first place.

In the verse under discussion, Allah *the Exalted* gives us a clarifying similitude of paradise because it is unseen and unknown to us. He brings it closer to our comprehension by comparing it to something we know and see, for we can see the sky and the earth and how vast they are.

Describing paradise, Allah says: '...as wide as the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 21). The Arabic letter *kaf* (as) is employed in the verse to indicate resemblance; its vastness is akin to the vastness of the heavens and the earth. Looking at the heavens and the earth, one finds that they are stretched out without limits. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* gives the example of the vastest things we are familiar, the sky, and the earth, to depict something which we do not know, namely paradise.

In the Quranic verse, '...and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 21), the '*ard* (width) is mentioned instead of length, for it

(1) *Ibn Hamdun, Al-Tadhkira Al-Hamduniyya*

is known that width is always less than length. If paradise's width is as vast as the heavens and the earth, then what do you think its length must be? This is a symbol of its vastness.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...prepared for those who believe in Allah and His messengers...' (*al-Hadid*: 21). This implies that it has already been prepared to entertain those who believe in Allah and His messengers. It is already in readiness, not in the process of being made. Therefore, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asked Harith ibn Malik *Allah be pleased with him* 'How are you this morning, Harith?' He answered, 'I awoke this morning as a true believer in Allah.' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Every claim has a reality (proof). What, then, is the reality of your faith?' He said, 'I have distanced myself from the affairs of this worldly life, so that its gold and its clay are equal to me. It is as if I were looking at the dwellers of paradise enjoying its bliss and the inmates of Hell being tormented therein.' He *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him, 'You have come to know, so remain firm!'⁽¹⁾

Hence, the past form of the verb 'prepared' implies that it exists now. Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said of his Night Journey and Ascension, 'Paradise was shown to me', namely the 'maquette' of paradise. Before building an apartment block, for example, a model or maquette is designed to map out all its details, even the furnishings. Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* has an exalted 'maquette' of paradise.

Therefore, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked 'What busies your Sustainer now when the pen has dried?' He *peace and blessings be upon him* replied, 'He brings certain things to light, which He does not begin. He raises some people and lowers others.'⁽²⁾ The meaning of 'He brings certain things to light' is that He presents them to the world; they already exist in the realm of the unseen, waiting for the command to show themselves.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...This is Allah's Bounty, which He bestows on whomever He pleases. Allah's Bounty is infinite' (*al-Hadid*: 21). All those who enter paradise are only admitted into it by virtue of His Bounty. The

(1) Narrated by Ibn Abu Shayba

(2) *Al-Bahr Al-Madid*

word *fadl* (bounty) alludes to things which are extraneous to the essentials of life. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Whosoever has an extra (*fadl*) mount, let him offer it to one who has no mount, and whosoever has surplus (*fadl*) provisions, let him offer them to one who has no provisions.'⁽¹⁾ This regards the human bounty. As for Divine Bounty, all that exists in the universe, both now and in the Hereafter, are bounties of Allah because they are extraneous to one's needs. Allah *the Almighty* does not need His creation, or any of His favours, whether past or future.

Therefore, He *the Most High* says: '...Allah's Bounty is infinite' (*al-Hadid*: 21); this means possessed of immense bounty beyond one's need, and the true bounty is that which is granted by Allah.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* is limitless in His great Bounty because He is above any need of His creation or His universe since He existed before anything else did, and He will continue to exist after everything else is gone. This is what is called 'great Bounty'.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

**No misfortune can happen, either in the earth or in
yourselves, that was not set down in writing before We
brought it into being – that is easy for God [22]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 22)**

The word *musiba* (misfortune) denotes something that befalls a person and displeases him or disturbs his peace and security. Thus, the meaning of the designation for the word *musiba* implies occurrence, in essence, since it cannot be called as such unless it actually occurs. It is said, 'Death is an arrow which has been let loose against you, and you live as long as it takes to reach you.' The arrow has already been fired, but when it hits, *musiba* (misfortune) occurs. It refers to that which will inevitably come to pass.

(1) Narrated by Muslim (3257) and others on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri

Allah *Glorified is He* draws our attention to consider the misfortunes which happen ‘in the earth’, such as droughts, famines, fires, floods, earthquakes and the like, as well as those which occur ‘... in yourselves...’ (*al-Hadid*: 22). Misfortunes of the self are those which befall individual people, such as sickness, death, as well as the loss of family or possessions.

Misfortunes in the earth are collective, whereas that of the self are personal; yet, personal misfortunes may also affect people collectively, striking them with famines and floods. This is because when a person commits sins, a calamity befalls him personally; however, when many people indulge in sin, misfortune befalls them all collectively, just as they all sinned collectively.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Now whatever misfortune may befall you [on Judgment Day] will be an outcome of what your own hands have earned, although He pardons much.’ (*ash-Shura*: 30) This is one of the aspects of Allah’s Mercy shown to His servants. It is further explained in another verse: ‘Now if Allah were to take men [at once] to task for whatever [wrong] they commit [on earth], He would not leave a single living creature upon its surface...’ (*Fatir*: 45).

Mercy is one of Allah’s Attributes, and of His Names are *Ar-Rahman* (the Most Merciful) and *Ar-Rahim* (the Bestower of Mercy). Therefore, He *the Most High* has appointed for us seasons of Mercy, from one Friday Prayer to the next, from one daily prayer to the next and from one *Ramadan* to the next; each is an expiation for the sins committed in the intervals between them as long as grave sins are avoided.⁽¹⁾

Accordingly, Allah *Glorified is He* wants to grant us mercy and forgiveness and does not intend to make us suffer. Furthermore, calamities do not occur unless people bring them on by their own misdeeds. Elsewhere, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Corruption has appeared on land and in the sea as an outcome of what men’s hands have earned...’ (*ar-Rum*: 41).

Consider, for example, how much we suffer today from pollution of water, air and everything else in our lives. This is a natural consequence of

(1) This is the import of two Hadiths, one narrated by Muslim (342), and the other by Ahmad (8830).

people's sinful conduct. Allah *Glorified is He* brought this entire universe and every atom in it into being in a completely sound and perfect state, and then told us to preserve this state by saying: 'Hence, do not spread corruption on earth after it has been so well ordered...' (*al-A'raf*: 56).

The Quranic verse, '...He would not leave a single living creature upon its surface...' (*Fatir*: 45) indicates the vastness of Allah's Mercy. Were it not for this Mercy, every living being on the earth would be destroyed because of man's sin. This is further explained in the Qudsi Hadith 'Were it not for babies suckling, old men bowing and animals grazing, I would rain down chastisement upon you.'⁽¹⁾ We are therefore given mercy because of the weak amongst us as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'By reason of the weak amongst you, you are provided for.'⁽²⁾

The Quranic phrase, '...that was not set down in writing...' (*al-Hadid*: 22) means that it is recorded with Him, predestined and ordained. The difference between what is destined (*maqdur*) and what is Divinely decreed (*maqdi*) is that Divinely decreed matters are completely out of one's control, whilst in regard to destined matters one has a free choice, though they are known to Allah in pre-eternity, as well as being recorded beforehand.

For example, the Minister of Agriculture may say, 'We predict that the cotton harvest this year will be such-and-such', but then blight befalls the cotton fields so that the yield is not as predicted by the minister. This is because his prediction is based only on his knowledge of the outward appearance of things, and it has no control over the unseen things. Hence, his prediction could turn out to be wrong.

On the other hand, when Allah *the Almighty* decrees a matter, it inevitably comes to pass as decreed. The word *qadar* (predestination), then, signifies what Allah decrees for one wherein he has a free choice, and the result of which is known and recorded by Allah before it occurs.

To make it clearer, consider the example of the teacher who predicts that a specific student will be top of the class in the final exam. His judgement is

(1) Narrated by Al-Bazzar on the authority of Abu Hurayra

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2681) on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas.

based on the cleverness and diligence of the student. All the preliminary indications support this judgment, but at the exam time, the student may suffer from nerves or some other ailment, thereby falling short of his teacher's expectations.

Thus, the result contradicts the teacher's prediction because of a defect in his knowledge, yet Allah *Glorified is He* has the Attributes of Perfection, and His Knowledge is completely free of defects.

This issue has already been explained when shedding light on the meaning of the verse: 'Doomed are the hands of him of the glowing countenance, and doomed is he! What will his wealth avail him and all that he has gained? [In the life to come] he shall have to endure a fire fiercely glowing, together with his wife, that carrier of evil tales [who bears] around her neck a rope of twisted strands!' (*al-Masad*: 1-5) Hearing these verses, Abu Lahab could have become a believer, just like his contemporaries 'Umar, Khalid, 'Amr and 'Ikrima all did. However, it was Allah's decree from pre-eternity, and His predestination that was known to Him beforehand that Abu Lahab would never believe and would choose disbelief. Allah *the Almighty* did not compel him to be a disbeliever, but he left it up to him to choose.

The Quranic phrase, '...before We brought it into being...' (*al-Hadid*: 22) means 'Before Allah creates it and brings it out into the outward world.' Allah further says: '...This is easy for Allah' (*al-Hadid*: 22).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

**So you need not grieve for what you miss or gloat
over what you gain [23] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 23)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* teaches us not to despair and grieve over what we have missed. As long as this was destined and decreed by Allah, it is only fitting that one accepts it contentedly, for grieving will not change reality, nor bring back what was lost. Hence is the saying, which is common in the countryside, 'Only would the foolish cry for what has gone.'

A woman, losing her husband or someone dear to her and excessively grieving for him in mourning attire, should be told that this grief will not bring back what is gone. She is also to be advised not to get used to grief nor come to love it, lest Allah makes it permanent for her. For Allah *the Almighty* helps His servants to get what they want and what they love, and thus, He seals the heart of a disbeliever so that faith cannot enter and disbelief cannot exit. Satisfaction with Allah's Decree is better for a believer.

The same is true of exultation: '...or gloat over what you gain...' (*al-Hadid*: 23). This is because one does not know what the final outcome of blessings Allah *the Exalted* gives him will be; for example, will they bring him good fortune, or not? Will they help him to obey Allah, or open the door to sin? Accordingly, in reality, they are only a test.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all things...' (*al-An'am*: 44). A blessing is not necessarily an indication of Allah's pleasure. Many sinful people, who are too far away from Allah, have comfortable lives, and everything they touch seems to turn to gold. Why is this?

It is because they forget what they are reminded of, and consequently, Allah *Glorified is He* wants to punish them. How does He punish them? He raises them to the highest status so that when He finally takes them to task, it is all the more painful. As previously stated, if you want to throw someone down, do not throw him off a mat, rather take him to a high place, and the higher you take him, the more painful the fall will be.

Furthermore, scholars of linguistics maintain that the Arabic phrases *fataha lahu* (to open for him) and *fataha 'alayhi* (to open to him) are not the same. Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Surely, [O Muhammad] We have laid before you [*fatahna lak* (literally 'opened for you')] a manifest victory' (*al-Fath*: 1); this means that it is for Prophet Muhammad's benefit, whereas He says: '...We threw open to them (*fatahna 'alayhim*) the gates of all things...' (*al-An'am*: 44); this means against them and to their detriment: '...until—even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted—We suddenly took them to task...' (*al-An'am*: 44).

Therefore, do not '...gloat over what you gain...' (*al-Hadid*: 23) because it might be a test and a trial for you, and those who do not have it may be better

off than you are. Allah *the Almighty* directs us not to grieve or exult in order to protect believers from that which may harm them or threaten their security.

In this regard, psychologists state that one should not let grief or happiness affect him in such a way that causes him to stray from nature and balance, for incidents go by, and one encounters grief and joy throughout his life.

To be affected and influenced by grief or joy causes one to undergo a dramatic change; grief makes one contract, whereas joy makes one expand. Yet, every organ has a particular size and state, and it is not preferable to be contracted or expanded, so one should avoid both and always try to be balanced so that you maintain a state of soundness in both soul and body. Depicting this idea, a poet once said:

Be a man like a tooth, which stays in its place to chew,

And is not affected by sweetness, nor by sourness.

It is blameworthy exultation, which is prohibited in the verse; it means that the joy which causes one to be boastful or deluded makes one proud and arrogant, along with inspiring hubris and conceit. Allah *Glorified is He* says about this kind of joy: ‘Those [hypocrites] who were left behind rejoiced in their staying away [from war] after [the departure of] Allah’s prophet...’ (*at-Tawba*: 81).

On the other hand, the praiseworthy exultation is that which causes one to be humble and grateful to Allah, the Bestower of Blessings, for He instructs righteous people to rejoice in their good deeds: ‘In Allah’s grace and mercy let them rejoice; these are better than all they accumulate.’ (*Yunus*: 58)

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Allah does not love the conceited, the boastful’ (*al-Hadid*: 23); this means those who are always exulting and whose exultation draws them into conceit and boasting.

The upshot of all this is that as long as all things are destined and set down in writing before Allah *the Almighty* brings them into being, and as long as one has no power to bring back what has gone nor to guarantee what is coming, it is wise to maintain an attitude of contentment, acceptance and balance. It is permissible to rejoice, but only when it does not lead to pride and conceit.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٤﴾

God does not love the conceited, the boastful, those who are miserly, and who tell other people to be miserly. If anyone turns away, remember that God is Self-Sufficient and worthy of praise[24] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 24)

This verse takes us to another concept, namely spending in Allah's Cause. Allah *Glorified is He* wants a believer to share what he has with his fellow believers. Hence, He *the Most High* divides the command to spend into three stages: first, He commands the rich to spend on the poor, who are forbidden from holding back the rich and dissuading them from giving.

A person might be stingy himself and disinclined towards giving to others. His stinginess may reach such a level that he tries to dissuade others from giving, too. On the other hand, he himself may be poor and have nothing to withhold, so he urges others not to spend in order to keep something for their children. A rural saying goes 'Neither does He have mercy, nor lets others have mercy!'

At the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the hypocrites, persuading others to be stingy, said about *Ahl Al-Suffa* (the People of the Porch)⁽¹⁾: '...Do not spend anything on those who are with Allah's Prophet, so that they [may be forced to] leave...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7).

The Quranic phrase 'Those who are miserly...' (*al-Hadid*: 24) indicates that these misers were wealthy and had the financial ability to spend for Allah's Cause, but were too stingy to do so. Furthermore, their stinginess went so far that they tried to pass it on to others: '...and who tell others to be miserly...' (*al-Hadid*: 24). These people are responsible for the sin not only of their own miserliness, but also the miserliness they inspire in others by dissuading them from spending.

Then, a basic truth is established in the verse: '...if anyone turns away...' (*al-Hadid*: 24), namely from spending, '...remember that Allah is Self-Sufficient and Worthy of Praise.' (*al-Hadid*: 24) The verse implies that one's stinginess does not affect Allah *the Exalted* for in reality one is only being stingy

(1) *Poor people of the Emigrants who used to live in the shade of the mosque in Medina*

towards himself; all wealth belongs to Allah, and all dominion is His, and it is He Who is truly Self-Sufficient, and it is He Who provides for His servants.

He only directs people to give away so that all of them bond together and cooperate in the journey of life and in order to put an end to the feelings of rancour and envy the poor may harbour towards the rich. On finding those who give and lend him a helping hand in society, a poor person praises Allah and feels content with His Decree. Similarly, when an orphan finds compassion and sympathy, he trusts those who take just as much as he trusts those who give, and so he lives contentedly.

Hence, giving charity is made obligatory because it helps a believer to uphold his faith and causes people to feel love for Allah's Law and content with His Decree. If those who are financially able act stingy, then a believer knows with certainty that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And there is no living created being on earth but depends for its sustenance on Allah...' (*Hud*: 6).

A distinction should be made between *bukhl* (miserliness) and *shuhh* (covetousness). The word *bukhl* denotes that a person is stingy to others, but generous to himself; the word *shuhh*, on the other hand, implies that a person is stingy even with himself, and hence Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...for such as from their own covetousness are saved; it is they who shall attain to a happy state!' (*at-Taghabun*: 16)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* speaking of the succession of Messengers whom He sent says:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ
لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنْفَعُ
لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مِنْ يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

We sent Our messengers with clear signs, the Scripture and the Balance, so that people could uphold justice: We also sent iron, with its mighty strength and many uses for mankind, so that God could mark out those who would help Him and His messengers though they cannot see Him. Truly God is powerful, almighty [25] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 25)

As previously explained, the word *rasul* (messenger) signifies one who receives a revelation, which he must follow himself and convey to his people.

The word *nabi* (prophet), on the other hand, refers to one who receives a revelation, which he must follow himself, without being required to convey it to others. On this basis, prophets do not have Scriptures or miracles; rather, their miracles belonged ultimately to the messenger whose religion they followed.

Adam *peace be upon him* was both the first prophet and messenger, but how could it be the case when he sinned by eating from the forbidden tree? It is argued that he sinned before being a prophet. Furthermore, the purpose of his sin was to teach him the vital importance of adhering to Allah's Guidance and that straying away from which exposes his nakedness. Consequently, Adam *peace be upon him* learnt this lesson and taught it to his subsequent progeny who came after him.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* forgave him and elected him as prophet and messenger, as stated in the verse: '...And [thus] did Adam disobey his Sustainer, and thus did he fall into grievous error. Thereafter, [however] his Sustainer elected him [for His grace], accepted his repentance, and bestowed His guidance upon him.' (*Ta Ha*: 121-122)

Thus, the election occurred after his disobedience, and this marks the beginning of the message and the call, but whom did he call when he was still alone? Scholars deem it as akin to the Quranic verses: 'The Most Merciful has imparted this Quran [unto man]. He has created man.' (*ar-Rahman*: 1-3)

First, Adam *peace be upon him* learnt the Guidance for himself, and then when his progeny came along he conveyed the Message to them and taught them morals and ethics. However, as time passed, heedlessness overcame people as their numbers grew, so they needed a new Message to remind them.

The Noble Quran summarises the lesson that Adam *peace be upon him* learnt from his misdeed by stating: 'He said: "Down with you all from this [state of innocence and be henceforth] enemies unto one another! Nonetheless, there shall most certainly come unto you Guidance from Me, and he who follows My Guidance will not go astray, and neither will he be unhappy. But as for him who shall turn away from remembering Me, his shall be a life of narrow scope, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him up blind.'" (*Ta Ha*: 123-124)

Subsequently, following Allah's Guidance is what preserves man's safety and security and makes him happy in this life and at peace in the Hereafter. As for he who turns away, he will lead a straitened life.

The meaning of the word *dank* (narrow scope) is not restricted to straitened circumstances and poverty as some people think; it has a rather broader meaning that covers all the aspects of depressed life. Statistics show that the wealthiest nation on earth is Sweden, and yet, it has the highest suicide and insanity rates.

Accordingly, it is not a matter of provision, food, and drink. Many poor people, in spite of having but very little, are thankful to Allah and feel content and happy with what they are given, despite witnessing the prosperous life of the rich.

The word *dank* does not signify poverty, then, but refers to a psychological and emotional state wherein the heart, not the provision, is constricted. One afflicted with this condition can find no way out of it, and it continues to build up upon him forcing him to eventually end his life in an attempt to find peace. As a poet eloquently puts it:

A burden is not what weighs down the back;

A burden is what the heart must bear.

Adam *peace be upon him* came with a Message and Guidance, which he taught and conveyed to his progeny. Nonetheless, as the population increased, heedlessness arose, distances grew between communities, and the ailments afflicting each community became numerous, so the need for a plurality of messengers was imperative.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We sent Our messengers with clear signs...' (*al-Hadid*: 25). Such clear signs alert mankind to the existence of Allah *the Almighty* and support messengers sent to guide mankind. These signs can be cosmological, miracles supporting messengers, or verses of the Wise Book which bears Allah's Guidance and Laws to mankind. The word *Al-Kitab* (the Scripture) alludes to the scriptures revealed from Allah and literally denotes something that is written down.

The word *Al-Mizan* (the Balance) refers to the balance of truth that weighs, measures, and clarifies things. This balance is not only concerned with

material things that can be weighed; it is a scale that weighs all things, both material and spiritual, according to truth. In regard to material matters, Allah *the Exalted* says: '...And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight, with equity...' (*al-An'am*: 152). He *the Most High* commands us to uphold this measure with all things: '...And whenever you judge between people, to judge with justice...' (*an-Nisa'*: 58). Even in courts today, the balance is used as a symbol of justice and is taken as emblem with two equal scales to represent a just ruling. The balance, which messengers brought, is that which distinguishes truth from falsehood. As long as there are messengers, clear signs and a way of Guidance that benefits mankind and manages their lives, then the motions of life will surely be sound and upright.

Hudhayfa⁽¹⁾ *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'There was a time when I cared not with whom of you I made a pledge. If he were a Muslim, his religion would keep him faithful to me, and if he were a Jew or Christian, his inspector (the person charged with inspecting people's affairs and dealings) would keep him faithful to me. As for today, I will only make a pledge with so-and-so and so-and-so amongst all of you.'⁽²⁾

Consequently, things cannot be sound and upright unless they are governed by this Guidance, without which people cannot find happiness. Should it be obliterated, the balance will be upset, and truth will be exchanged for falsehood.

In our courtrooms today, lawyers play their games; some of whom rely on their rhetorical skill to make arguments seem true although they are false. They ignore the words of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'I am but a human being. You bring your disputes to me, and perhaps one of you is more eloquent and convincing in presenting his argument than the other.' (A saying goes 'A slick lie beats a clumsy truth.') 'Should I happen to allot the right of someone to his brother because of his words, I am but giving him a piece of the hellfire. Let him not take it.'⁽³⁾

As such, Prophet Muhammad, *peace and blessings be upon him*, referred the balance to the religion, to the Sacred Law, and to the Book and its clear signs.

(1) A Companion, d. 36 A.H.

(2) *Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6016)*

(3) *Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2278) and Muslim (3232)*

Those who cleave to the Book and the clear signs will not mix truth with falsehood, nor will they have but one clear truth. When people differ over the clear signs, falsehood surely arises, and there comes the balance to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* then says: ‘...We sent Our messengers with clear signs, the Scripture and the Balance so that people could uphold justice...’ (*al-Hadid*: 25). Revelation is for legislation and the implementation of laws, and the balance is for heedlessness or sin when they occur, distinguishing truth from falsehood.

As long as people behave with equity and justice, the whole world can feel comfortable. This justice comes either from individual conscience or from the judiciary which judges amongst them. Therefore, it is better in legal affairs, as previously stated, that trials do not last too long because the longer they last, the more the victims are wronged, and the more the guilty are encouraged to continue with their wrongdoing.

As trials get longer, the crime seems less grave and the victim is forgotten, and thereby the retribution is perceived from the murderer’s point of view as if he were wronged or as if another crime were committed by executing him. Thus, emotions arise inspiring mercy for the killer, and the balance gets lost.

For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* warns us not to take these rights lightly by saying: ‘...let not compassion with them keep you from [carrying out] this law of Allah...’ (*an-Nur*: 2). Pity on criminals leads to an increase in crime and corruption on earth.

Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* decrees that legal punishments be carried out publicly: ‘...and let a group of the believers witness their chastisement.’ (*an-Nur*: 2) In this way, everyone will act equitably after seeing the just verdict being applied at the proper time, inflicting the required deterrent.

If, on the other hand, lawyers go astray and judges take bribes, the nation will be ruined. It is reported that during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mahdi ⁽¹⁾, a man named Qamih, ⁽²⁾ who was known to be spotlessly

(1) 127-169 A.H.

(2) The judge Qamih with the Abbasi caliph Al-Mahdi

honest, was appointed as judge. However, one day, he went to see the caliph and said, 'Commander of the Faithful, remove me from my post in the judiciary!' The caliph said, 'And who else could be as just after you are gone?' He said, 'Commander of the faithful, I no longer trust myself to judge. As you trusted me when you appointed me, trust me now when I ask you to remove me. I am either lying or telling the truth. If I am lying, I am not fit to be a judge, and if I am telling the truth, then accept what I say.' The caliph said to him, 'Tell me, then, what the reason for this is.' He said, 'Two rivals were brought before me, each of them having such convincing arguments that I could not judge between them, and I delayed my verdict out of fear that I would be unjust. One day my servant brought me a plate of dates, and when I asked about the one who sent it, he described the giver to me, and I realised that it was one of these two rivals, so I returned the plate to him. It is well known that I love dates. The next day, the two rivals stood before me, but they were no longer equal in my sight, and I found myself inclining towards the one who sent me the dates, even though I had sent them back to him.'

Hence, Allah *the Exalted* clarifies that He sent His messengers with '...the Scripture...' (*al-Hadid: 25*) to those who adhere to it and with '...the Balance...' (*al-Hadid: 25*), which distinguishes truth from falsehood for those who do not adhere to it, '...so that people could uphold justice...' (*al-Hadid: 25*). If a murderer is executed and the thief's hand amputated, no one will dare to murder or steal. It is worth noting that Allah *Glorified is He* does not restrict upholding justice to believers, but He says 'people', to encompass all humanity.

The Quranic verse, '...We also sent iron with its mighty strength and many uses for mankind...' (*al-Hadid: 25*) indicates that just as Allah *the Almighty* sent down the Scripture and the Balance, He also sent down iron. Although iron is now on earth, it originated from on high. Iron is a symbol of power; those who are not deterred by the Quran, let them be deterred by iron. Therefore, 'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'Allah removes by authority that which He does not remove by the Quran.'⁽¹⁾ A wise person is to be deterred by clear proofs, whereas an ignorant one can only be deterred by power and force.

(1) *Kanz Al-'Ummal*, no. 14284.

Allah *the Almighty* tells Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that in addition to the Quran, He also gives him iron as well as the sword, which he may use as he sees fit to restrain the disbelievers and sinners who are not deterred by the Scripture. A poet⁽¹⁾ depicts this idea by saying:

Patience and forbearance, followed by a warning;

And if this does not work, then one's firm resolve will.

Another⁽²⁾ puts it:

There is naught but forbearance or a sharpened blade

Whose edge can stymie the pride of the rebel;

The first is the way to treat the wise,

And the second is how you deal with the ignorant.

The Quranic phrase '...with its mighty strength...' (*al-Hadid*: 25) indicates that iron is the most powerful tool in life. This is practically proven, for it is from iron that axes, ploughs, and all other powerful tools used for digging and carrying are made. Despite its power, it has '...many uses for mankind...' (*al-Hadid*: 25) such as using it to make knives, spoons and other utensils.

Iron has another role as well: '...so that Allah could mark out those who would help Him and His messengers though they cannot see Him...' (*al-Hadid*: 25). This is an allusion to the sword, by which succour is attained; the sword is for those to whom the Scripture and clear signs are of no avail.

In the Quranic verse, '...so that Allah could mark out those who would help Him and His messengers though they cannot see Him...' (*al-Hadid*: 25), the verb '*yaa'lam*' (know), translated in the verse as (mark out) refers to knowledge as manifested in reality, for Allah *Glorified is He* knows everything from pre-eternity, and nothing is beyond His ken. It is not that Allah seeks to know of such people but that He wants to manifest His knowledge in reality.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...those who would help Him and His messengers...' (*al-Hadid*: 25) because helping Allah is regarded as equal to

(1) It was Ibrahim ibn Al-'Abbas As-Sawli (d. 243 AH).

(2) It was Abu Tamam At-Taai.

Helping His messengers, and vice versa. Therefore, Allah *the Exalted* says: 'Hence, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 92); He also says: 'Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah...' (*an-Nisa*': 80). This is because the rulings given in the preceding verses are intertwined.

There are rulings stated by Allah *Glorified is He* and others stated by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as well as rulings that are specific to Allah and others specific to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Therefore, the command to obey both is repeated, for obedience to Allah is mentioned distinctly from obedience to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. It is clear that the *Sunnah* explains in detail what the Quran states concisely.

The Quranic phrase '...though they cannot see him...' (*al-Hadid*: 25) refers to faith in the unseen and to the visible reality of the sword. This is designed to defend an unseen reality, the inevitability of the coming of the Resurrection. Allah *Glorified is He* Who cannot be seen, emphasises this matter of the unseen. However, when He supports new religions, He does so either by Revelation or by the sword.

Accordingly, when the disbelievers stubbornly held to their disbelief, Allah *the Almighty* said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Avoid, therefore, those who turn away from all remembrance of Us...' (*an-Najm*: 29). The command to 'avoid' means to leave them and cease to no further call them with clear signs and firm proofs.

Furthermore, the meaning of 'helping Allah' (*nusrat Allah*) is clear in the verse: '...If you help [the Cause of] Allah, He will help you...' (*Muhammad*: 7). If you help Allah's Cause with your power, He will help you with His Power. Thus, one is only required to follow the means to the end, then: '...and it was not you who cast [terror into them, O, Prophet] when you did cast it, but it was Allah Who cast it...' (*al-Anfal*: 17).

Undoubtedly, Allah *the Exalted* is well able to wipe all of these disbelievers out in the blink of an eye, so why was war needed? Scholars say that if Allah destroyed them by means of an unseen command, without the military intervention of the Muslims, they would have deemed it as a natural

phenomenon. Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Fight against them! Allah will chastise them by your hands...’ (*at-Tawba*: 14). When defeat is inflicted upon them by Muslims’ own hands, it is even worse for them.

Ending the verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Truly, Allah is Powerful, Almighty!’ (*al-Hadid*: 25) This emphasises that Allah *the Most High* possesses all Power and Might, lest we understand from the preceding phrase, ‘...so that Allah could mark out those who would help Him and His messengers though they cannot see Him...’ (*al-Hadid*: 25), that Allah is in need of help from His created beings.

Allah *the Almighty* possesses overwhelming Power and unconquerable Might. However, He orders you only to help His cause so that you stand by the side of the Imam and for His succour to come about by your own hands, thereby giving you honour and glory. When the enemy is vanquished and conquered, it should be caused by your own hands.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ
وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

**We sent Noah and Abraham, and gave
prophethood and scripture to their offspring:
among them there were some who were rightly
guided, but many were lawbreakers [26]
(The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 26)**

Allah *Glorified is He* singles out Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* by mentioning him since his Message was naturally a universal one—not universal in time and place, but universal in the sense that it was directed at all of those who were borne by the Ark with him. However, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* is mentioned because he was the Father of the prophets, and he fulfilled Allah’s commandments.

The Quranic phrase ‘...and gave prophet hood and Scripture to their offspring...’ (*al-Hadid*: 26) indicates that all messengers descended from this

origin. When prophet hood and Revelation came to them, and the Message reached them ‘...amongst them there were some who were rightly guided...’ (*al-Hadid*: 26) such as 'Abdullah ibn Salam who was a Jewish scholar. When the call of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* reached him, he believed in it and said, ‘By Allah, I knew Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when I saw him, just as I know my own son. I even know Muhammad better.’⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...but many were lawbreakers.’ (*al-Hadid*: 26) This suggests that the minority of them were on the right way, while the majority were iniquitous. Therefore, when 'Abdullah ibn Salam *Allah be pleased with him* wanted to announce his conversion to Islam, he went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, ‘O, Messenger of Allah, the Jews are liars, and my heart has been filled with Islam, but I fear that if I become Muslim, they will tell lies about me. Ask them about me.’

When his Jewish people came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he said to them, ‘What say you about Ibn Salam?’ They said, ‘He is our master and the son of our master, and our rabbi and the son of our rabbi.’ Ibn Salam then said, ‘Now that they have said this, I declare that there is no deity but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah.’ Upon hearing this, they said, ‘Nay, you are a fool and the son of a fool.’ Ibn Salam then said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ‘Did I not tell you that they are liars?’⁽²⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...but many were lawbreakers’ (*al-Hadid*: 26), i.e. they were far from obedience.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) Narrated by Al-Baghawi in his *Tafsir*

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (3645) and Ahmad (11615) on the authority of Anas ibn Malik *Allah be pleased with him*

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ
الْإِنْجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهَابَانِيَّةً
أَتَّبَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ
رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

We sent other messengers to follow in their footsteps. After those We sent Jesus, son of Mary: We gave him the Gospel and put compassion and mercy into the hearts of his followers. But monasticism was something they invented – We did not ordain it for them – only to seek God’s pleasure, and even so, they did not observe it properly. So We gave a reward to those of them who believed, but many of them were lawbreakers[27] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 27)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We sent other Messengers to follow in their footsteps...’ (*al-Hadid*: 26); this means that Allah caused other prophets to come after them, succeeding one another. Allah says, ‘...After those We sent ‘Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)...’ (*al-Hadid*: 27), namely Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon them* was sent after those messengers.

Hence, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* represent one stage, while the messengers who came after Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* represent another stage. Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* the last of the Messengers to come before Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* yet represents another stage. ‘...We gave him the Gospel...’ (*al-Hadid*: 27) which is the Scripture of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*.

Describing his followers, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and put compassion and mercy into the hearts of his followers...’ (*al-Hadid*: 27). The word *ra’afa* (compassion) signifies what removes pain and suffering, and the word *rahma* (mercy) denotes a further increase of kindness.

In the verse, ‘But monasticism was something they invented...’ (*al-Hadid*: 27), the word *rahbaniyyah* (monasticism) means excessive worshipful devotion. The followers of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) engaged in this practice, isolating

themselves in monasteries and taking vows of celibacy. It is stated in a book written in 1935 called *Wadi An-Natrun wa Ruhbanuh* (*Natron Valley and Its Monks*) that monasticism began one hundred and fifty years after Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*.⁽¹⁾

The Quranic phrase '...something they invented...' (*al-Hadid: 27*) implies that they made it up themselves and enjoined it upon themselves: '...We did not ordain it for them...' (*al-Hadid: 27*); Allah *the Exalted* did not enjoin it upon them, but they obligated it upon themselves in order to lead ascetic lives and devote themselves solely to worship.

Although such practices are good in themselves, they were not ordained for them because they are in conflict with the nature of ordinary people, whose lives cannot be balanced unless they engage in both sides: the worldly life and the spiritual life. As for celibacy, it conflicts with the process of procreation and populating the world, which Allah *the Almighty* enjoin upon us.

Although they invented the practice of monasticism '...only to seek Allah's pleasure...' (*al-Hadid: 27*), they did not stick to this intention: '...and even so, they did not observe it properly...' (*al-Hadid: 27*). They did not keep to it and went beyond its limits until they became bad role models.

The one who decides to rise to the level of *ihsan* (spiritual excellence) must be careful to keep within its bounds and to free his deeds from shortcomings, which otherwise will corrupt his doctrine. Therefore, Allah *the Exalted* encourages us to perform supererogatory acts of worship to reach this level. He *the Most High* says in a Qudsi Hadith, 'My servant draws not near to Me with anything more beloved to me than the duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing wherewith he hears, and his sight wherewith he sees, and his hand wherewith he grasps, and his foot whereupon he walks. Were he to ask of Me I would surely give him, and were he to seek My aid I would surely aid him. I hesitate not about anything I do as I hesitate about taking a believer's soul. He hates to die, and I hate to offend him.'⁽²⁾

(1) 'Umar Tusun, *Wadi Natrun wa Ruhbanuh*, p. 22

(2) *Narrated by Al-Bukhari (6021) and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him*

Drawing nearer to Allah *the Almighty* with supererogatory acts is evidence of love and nearness to Him. Love takes one to the level of nearness, thereby distinguishing him from ordinary people. For instance, one may have many acquaintances, of whom only some are close friends, while others are merely ordinary ones, and each has his own status. In case I fall ill and some of my friends do not come to visit me, I will not blame all of those who did not give me a visit. However, if one of my closest friends does not visit me, then I do blame him for this.

As for blame, I direct it at my beloved ones;
And love is proven true by means of blame.⁽¹⁾

Likewise, the one who gets to the level of love and closeness to Allah *the Most High* should never then turn back. Furthermore, it is not befitting that he should break this vow or even fall short of fulfilling it, for if he does, it will be as if he were saying to his Lord *Glorified is He* ‘We tried being near to You, but we did not find You worthy’, or ‘We tried being near to You, but we did not find it useful, so we turned away.’

If we do not accept it ourselves, then do we think that Allah *the Almighty* will accept it?

Therefore, I say that you must beware of getting into this level; no one forces you to do so. Before you enjoin it upon yourself, take the time to learn its limits and conditions so that you do not put yourself into difficulty.

So, monasticism is not in itself a bad thing, but it becomes a bad thing when it is not duly observed. For example, remains of bodies of babies were found buried in courtyards of some monasteries; this means that the inhabitants of these monasteries had been committing adultery.

The more a servant draws nearer to his Lord, the more lights Allah flows over him. When it comes to worldly matters, there are things that everyone knows about you, things that are only known to your acquaintances, and things that only known to your nearest family members. Likewise, as you draw nearer to the True Lord *the Most High* He grants you certain graces of His; otherwise, people would have done only the obligatory things, and no one would bother to do any supererogatory acts.

(1) This is a line of Ahmad Shawqi (d. 1932).

Therefore, you find that people occupy different levels and ranks in which they compete with one another; as one of us rises to a higher rank; another one beats him to a rank even higher. We told the story before about Al-Balkhi (a scholar and an ascetic), whom people once asked, 'Do you yearn for your Lord?' 'No,' he said, 'only absent things are yearned for. Has He left me so that I might yearn for Him?'

His Words, '...only to seek Allah's pleasure...' (*al-Hadid: 27*) indicate an exception (in Arabic, the phrase is preceded by the word *illa* which literally means 'except') from: '...But monasticism was something they invented...' (*al-Hadid: 27*); in other words, this means 'We did not enjoin it upon them lest they would be remiss. We wanted Our goodly acceptance to be preserved for them by means of their fulfilment of their obligations.' Also, His Words, '...and even so, they did not observe it properly...' (*al-Hadid: 27*) are an instance of the principle: 'The good deeds of the pious (*abrar*) are like sins for those who are nearest (*muqarraboon*) to Allah.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says; '...So, We gave a reward to those of them who believed...' (*al-Hadid: 27*). They took their reward because they had faith, and as soon as the Messenger came, they believed in him; '...but many of them were lawbreakers' (*al-Hadid: 27*); what this means is that they went outside the bounds of obedience and were mindlessly loyal to their old religion.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَءَامِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كَهْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

**Believers, be mindful of God and have faith in His Messenger:
He will give you a double share of His mercy; He will provide a
light to help you walk; He will forgive you – God is most
forgiving, most merciful [28] (The Quran, *al-Hadid: 28*)**

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'O, you who have attained to faith!...' (*al-Hadid: 28*) He describes them as having faith; then, why does He say to them: '...Remain

(1) *Al-Qurtubi mentions this in his Tafsir as a saying of Al-Junayd.*

conscious of Allah and believe in His Prophet...' (*al-Hadid*: 28)? Scholars say that this means: 'O, you who have faith in Allah connect your faith in Allah to your faith in His Messenger who conveys His Message. The Messenger whom you followed is followed by another messenger'; they should have showed this fact to other people, so that they did not blindly cling to their old religion.

'...Remain conscious of Allah and believe...' (*al-Hadid*: 28); this is a command for them to maintain God-consciousness which is preceded by a description of having faith and followed by a command to have faith. This is because faith is only beneficial if you obey the commandments in which you have faith.

'...He will grant you doubly of His Grace...' (*al-Hadid*: 28); 'doubly' is the translation for the Arabic word *kiflayn* which means 'two shares' or 'two rewards' of Allah's Mercy: one share and reward for faith in 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* and another share and reward for faith in Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him*.

So, the meaning of '...and believe in His Prophet...' (*al-Hadid*: 28) is the new and final prophet, Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...And [He] will light for you a light wherein you shall walk...' (*al-Hadid*: 28); this refers to the light of insight. Allah says: '...and will forgive you...' (*al-Hadid*: 28) which means that He will forgive you for any misgivings you may have had about believing; Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...for Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace.' (*al-Hadid*: 28)

لَا يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّن فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ
الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

The People of the Book should know that they have no power over any of God's grace and that grace is in the hand of God alone: He gives it to whoever He will. God's grace is truly immense [29] (The Quran, *al-Hadid*: 29)

This is lest you might say, 'We believe in 'Isa (Jesus) but not in Muhammad', envying him because of the Divine Message with which Allah blessed him, such as the disbelievers of Mecca said, '...Why was not this Quran bestowed

from on high on some great man of the two cities?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) to which Allah replied: 'But is it they who distribute thy Lord's Grace? [Nay, as] it is We Who distribute their means of livelihood among them in the life of this world...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32).

Then, if they cannot even dispose of the simple matters of this worldly life, can they hope to distribute higher matters? In addition, this bounty is distributed by Allah, and no one can restrict Allah's bounty: '...seeing that all bounty is in Allah's hand...' (*al-Hadid*: 29); this means that He is alone without having any other partner, and '...He grants it unto whomever He wills...' (*al-Hadid*: 29). Therefore, the True Lord *the Most High* says: '...[Nay, as] it is We Who distribute their means of livelihood amongst them in the life of this world and raise some of them by degrees above others...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32).

How, then, could you lay exclusive claim to Allah's bounty and envy Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* for the Message Allah has given him? You do not have power over even the affairs of this world, or any control of them, so how can you presume to have control over the affairs of the Hereafter?

Then, the chapter is ended by His holy saying: '...for Allah is limitless in His great bounty.' (*al-Hadid*: 29) Indeed, Allah's bounty is great, for He created us, sustains us, has undertaken to provide our livelihood, and subdued the whole universe to our service; as well, He gave us a system of guidance to protect us from harm and sent messengers to us to remind us when we became heedless. He opened for us the door of repentance, giving mercy to those who sin, not to mention the other manifold effects of His Mercy towards His created beings.

the chapter of

al-Mujadala

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Mujadala* ⁽²⁾ :

قَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّتِي تُجَادِلُكَ فِي زَوْجِهَا وَتَشْتَكِي إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَاللَّهُ يَسْمَعُ تَحَاوُرَكُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

**God has heard the words of the woman who
disputed with you [Prophet] about her husband
and complained to God: God has heard what you
both had to say. He is all hearing, all-seeing [1]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 1)**

This verse was revealed in connection with a female Companion Khawla bint Tha'labah, when her husband, the Companion Aws ibn As-Samit ⁽³⁾ (the brother of 'Ubada ibn As-Samit) declared her to be 'as his mother's back' ⁽⁴⁾. The story was that Aws saw her praying and felt desire for her, and when she finished her prayer, he called her over so he could have his way with her, but

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- (1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.
- (2) The chapter is no. 58 in the written order of the Quran. It was revealed in Medina according to Ibn 'Abbas; Al-Baydawi says in his *Tafsir* that some say that the first ten verses were revealed in Mecca, and the rest in Medina. It has 22 verses in all.
- (3) The story of Aws ibn As-Samit and his swearing not to touch his wife
- (4) The pagan Arabs would pronounce divorce on their wives by using this expression; Islam forbade this practice and prescribed expiation for those who did it thereafter.

she refused because she had not yet finished praying; so, he said to her, 'You are to me as my mother's back!'

For Arabs, these words were worse than pronouncing divorce since in saying them the husband likens his wife to his mother. When Aws said this, Khawla said, 'By Allah, you shall not come near me until I have put the matter to the Messenger of Allah.' She went to Prophet Muhammad and said, 'O, Messenger of Allah, Aws has declared me akin to his mother's back! When he married me, I was beautiful, but now I have grown old and have bore him children who will go hungry if I have to raise them alone, and if I give them to his care, he will ruin them!'

This is the meaning of Allah's Words: '...her who pleads with you concerning her husband and complains unto Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 1). Whenever she raised the subject, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* would say, 'All I can see is that you have become forbidden unto him.'

She was complaining to Muhammad about this so that he would take pity on her, yet he *peace and blessings be upon him* could not help but to say 'All I can see is that you have become forbidden unto him' ⁽¹⁾, and he was awaiting and hoping for a decision to be revealed to him from Allah on this unprecedented issue in the Muslim society.

Indeed, Khawla was under Allah's sight and hearing, and no sooner had she finished presenting her complaint to Prophet Muhammad, than the angel Gabriel came to him with these verses which gave the ruling on this practice, showing mercy not only to Khawla, but to all the Muslims: 'Allah has indeed heard the words of her who pleads with you concerning her husband and complains unto Allah. And Allah does hear what you both have to say. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.' (*al-Mujadala*: 1)

The whole chapter is named after this pleading woman (*mujadila*) Khawla to honour her and restore her esteem. The chapter was revealed to forbid this vile phrase and to make it clear that it is neither appropriate nor valid.

Your mother is the woman who gave birth to you, and indeed, the greatest favour made to a person is that made their mother to them. Therefore, it is not

(1) *This is narrated by At-Tabariin his Tafsir.*

right that you liken your wife to your mother; the word 'back' here evokes an image of a sexual nature, which is not appropriate for a man to say in connection with his mother, for she is forbidden to him, and it is vile to say such a thing about one's own mother.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Allah has indeed heard the words of her who pleads with you concerning her husband...' (*al-Mujadala*: 1). In this verse, the word 'indeed' is used, implying affirmation and emphasis, and the word 'words' indicates that He really did hear it, and that 'heard' is not a metaphor for 'answered', as we say in our daily interaction: 'So-and-so has heard you', meaning that he will meet your request.

We should have the proper norm when dealing with those Attributes of Allah's which resemble human attributes, and we must understand them in the light of the verse: '...there is nothing like unto Him, and He alone is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.' (*ash-Shura*: 11). How can we hope to know the reality of Allah's hearing and sight, when we do not even know the reality of our own senses?

For example, when you are awake, you hear with your ears and see with your eyes; however, when you are asleep, how do you see and how do you hear? When you are asleep, you can see people and colours and distinguish between green and red, and hear sounds; what are the senses that allow you to perceive these things?

So, you have senses which are unseen and unknown to you; then, what do you think of the Absolutely Unseen, whom no eyesight can encompass, though He encompasses all eyesight?

It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad was with 'Aisha when the pleading woman came to see him, and that woman spoke so quietly and secretly to the Messenger of Allah that 'Aisha could not hear anything even though the woman was near to her; yet Allah heard what the woman said from beyond the seven heavens.⁽¹⁾

Concerning His Words: '...her who pleads with you concerning her husband...' (*al-Mujadala*: 1), the verb *tujadil* (pleads) is from the noun *jidal*

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari* (2406)

which means argument and debate; the woman was speaking, and Prophet Muhammad replied to her. Thus, she was debating with him concerning what had happened.

As for the complaint, it was put to Allah: '...and complains unto Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 1); this is because it is Allah Who relieved her and sent down a ruling to please her and grant mercy upon her weakness and the weakness of all believing women. Whenever a man wants to leave his wife, he can do so by means of divorce; as for declaring of one's wife to be sexually forbidden to them as their mother (*zihar*), it does not befit believers.

'...Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.' (*al-Mujadala*: 1); Allah *the Almighty* hears and sees from pre-eternity; this means before He had yet created the created beings who would do things He would see and say things He would hear. The True Lord *the Most High* hears all that is said and sees all that is done; hearing is connected with sounds and sight with actions. He is All-Seeing and All-Hearing, and nothing escapes His ken.

الَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ نَسَاهُمْ مَّا هُمْ بِأُمَّهَاتِهِمْ إِنَّمَا هُنَّ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا الَّتِي
وَلَدَتْهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَقُولُونَ مُنْكَرًا مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَزُورًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُوفٌ غَفُورٌ ﴿٢﴾

Even if any of you say to their wives, 'You are to me like my mother's back,' they are not their mothers; their only mothers are those who gave birth to them. What they say is certainly blameworthy and false, but God is pardoning and forgiving [2] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 2)

The Quranic discourse now addresses those who practise uttering those forbidden words and that wicked comparison by saying to them: 'Beware of these words and make clear the difference between your mothers and your wives. The mother is the one who bore you, and your wife can never be your mother, and it can never be fitting to call her a "mother".' So, put things in their right places: a mother is a mother, and a wife is the wife, and each of them have their boundaries. He, then, makes it clear to them that this declaration of *zihar* (saying 'You are as unlawful to me as my mother's back') is counter to reason: 'behold, they but utter a saying that runs counter to reason and is [therefore] false...' (*al-Mujadala*: 2).

Something ‘counter to reason’ is something that the mind denies and sound sense rejects; a falsehood is a lie and an untruth. It is both counter to reason and false to liken a wife to a mother, or a mother to a wife. Allah *Glorified is He* has wanted to put an end to this saying so that the Muslims never utter it again, just as He put an end to the practice of adoption in the story of Zayd ibn Haritha which you all know.⁽¹⁾

The verse ends with the Words: ‘...But, behold, Allah is indeed an Absolver of Sins, Much-Forgiving.’ (*al-Mujadala*: 2); this means He is forgiving of all that you have done in the past and all the transgressions you may have committed.

After this, He *the Most High* speaks to us about the ruling pertaining to the practice of *zihar* by saying:

وَالَّذِينَ يُظَاهِرُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا قَالُوا فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا
ذَلِكَ تَوْعِظُونَ بِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامَ شَهْرَيْنِ
مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَتَمَاسَا ۖ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَاِطْعَامَ سِتِّينَ مِسْكِينًا ذَلِكَ لِتُؤْمِنُوا
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

Those of you who say such a thing to their wives, then go back on what they have said, must free a slave before the couple may touch one another again — this is what you are commanded to do, and God is fully aware of what you do [3] but anyone who does not have the means should fast continuously for two months before they touch each other, and anyone unable to do this should feed sixty needy people. This is so that you may [truly] have faith in God and His Messenger. These are the bounds set by God: grievous torment awaits those who ignore them [4] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 3 - 4)

The meaning of ‘...and thereafter would go back on what they have said...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 3) is that they change their mind about their declaration

(1) The Prophet *peace and blessing be upon him* had adopted him and called him his son, but the Quran instructed him to call him by his father’s name. He died in the year 8 AH.

of *zhihar*, and want to take back their wives, just as a husband might take back his wife after divorcing her. The penalty for such is '...the freeing of a human being from bondage...' (*al-Mujadala*: 3); this refers to the manumission of a slave '...before the couple may touch one another again...' (*al-Mujadala*: 3). The word 'touch' in this verse is a metonymy for conjugal relations, or sex.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'However, he who does not have the wherewithal...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4); this means if he does not have a slave to free, he '...shall fast [instead] for two consecutive months...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4). This means two months, one after the next without a gap in between them, unless he is forced to stop fasting for a religious excuse, in which case it is not considered to be interrupted.⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, He says: '...and he who is unable to do it...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4), namely fast for two consecutive months, he '...shall feed sixty needy ones...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4). So, Allah made the penalty severe so that it would be a deterrent, and this evil practice would be pulled up by the roots.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...Now these are the bounds set by Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4). Allah's bounds are His commandments and prohibitions; of His commandments, He says: '...do not, then, transgress them...' (*al-Baqara*: 229); and of His prohibitions, He says: '...do not, then, offend against them...' (*al-Baqara*: 187).

A bound (*hadd*) means a separation between two things; Allah's bounds separate between the lawful and the unlawful. This allows us to understand His Words: '...those who contend against Allah and His Prophet...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5); the phrase 'contend against' is the translation for the Arabic verb *yuhaddun*, which is taken from the noun *hadd* (bound). Thus, this part of verse refers to those who place their caprice on one side, and Allah's Commandments on another.

Then, Allah heard the words of the pleading woman and responded to her by revealing a passage of Quran about her situation which would thereafter be

(1) Many scholars, including Ash-Shafi'i and Malik, say this; others, including Abu Hanifa, say that even if there is a lawful reason for breaking the fast, the two months still must be started anew. (*Al-Shawkani, Fath Al-Qadir*)

recited until the Day of Resurrection; as well, He pronounced a binding ruling on the practice of *zihar* and a stern expiation to deter it. Thus, this was not mere hearing. When we rise from bowing in the prayer, we say ‘Allah hears the one who praises Him’, meaning that He hears them and responds to them, for He says: ‘...If you are grateful [to Me], I shall most certainly give you more and more...’ (*Ibrahim*: 7).

Strangely enough is that scholars disagree as to the identity of the woman who pleaded with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; there are four different opinions ⁽¹⁾; there is no benefit in finding out her identity and knowing her name because to specify the personality is to restrict the ruling to her, yet Allah wanted this to be a universal rule.

The jurisprudential principle is consideration is given for the general proper meaning of a provision, not for the specificity of the cause. If this ruling was specific to Khawla, it would have applied only to her, yet in fact, it is a universal ruling which applies to all Muslims. This means it is a universal gift, and it does not especially matter which woman it was originally revealed about, for she was only the immediate cause of its revelation.

We also see this principle in the case of the young men of the cave, for example. The Quran does not tell us the time when they lived, nor their place nor their names; rather, the Quran speaks of them in general terms so that the benefit of their story would be general for all times and places. Had Allah *the Almighty* told us their identities, we would have said that this was a special circumstance for them and not for anyone else. Rather, He wanted them to be mentioned as generic youths, so that they could be role models for all young people who believe in their Lord.

In this way, the story is more influential and is as a good word which gives its fruits, like a good tree, at all times by its Lord’s leave.

If it is necessary to identify a person, the Quran always mentions them by name as is the case in the story of Lady Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon her* wherein Allah says: ‘And [We have propounded yet another parable of

(1) *Ibn Al-Jawzi says the four opinions as to her identity: Khawla bint Tha’laba, Khawla bint Khuwaylid, Khawla bint As-Samit and Khawla bint Ad-Daliu. (Zad Al-Masir)*

God-consciousness in the story of] Maryam (Mary), the daughter of 'Imran...' (*at-Tahrim*: 12). He mentions her name and the name of her father so that there can be no ambiguity or ignorance. This is because a special circumstance applied to her which would never be repeated for anyone else in the world. The identity is important in this instance because the circumstance was peculiar to her alone.

In the Pre-Islamic era, the act of *zihar* was the severest method of separation between a man and his wife, wherein he would say to her, 'You are unlawful to me as my mother's back', for one's mother is the foremost forbidden of all women to a man, for Allah says: 'Forbidden to you are your mothers...' (*an-Nisa'*: 23). There is nothing viler than a woman who gives birth to a son, and then has intimate relations with that son when he is an adult.

Therefore, it is preferable to avoid having marital relations with a near kin. This has always been the case since man first came into being. However, how did the children of Adam achieve this? Scholars say that, out of Allah's Wisdom, Hawwa' (Eve) always gave birth to a set of male and female twins, and then the male of one set of twins would marry the female of another set so that there was some kind of distance between spouses at a time when no other option was possible.

Prophet Muhammad has encouraged keeping this distance in marriage; he said, 'Marry from a non-kin woman, so that you may avoid weak offspring'⁽¹⁾; this means to avoid marrying those who are related to you, so that your children are not weak and feeble. Science has now proven this and has proven that marrying close relatives can cause children to contract certain illnesses.

Therefore, we see that many historical heroes were the offspring of marriages between Arabs and non-Arabs since they inherited the characteristics of both races. Poets have spoken about this with one of them saying⁽²⁾:

A boy who was born not of his father's cousin,

For the children of kin-marriages are often weak.

(1) Ibrahim Al-Harbi narrates this as a saying of 'Umar, rather than a Hadith.

(2) It was Ziyad Adh-Dhabyani, a pre-Islamic poet (d. 18 before the *Hijra*).

Another said:

I passed over my cousin, though I loved her,

In fear that my progeny would be weak

So, do not say to your wife, ‘You are unlawful to me as my mother’s back’, for Allah has deemed your mother far above having a conjugal relation with you, and she is indeed furthest in this regard. Therefore, Arabs considered these words to be far severer than the simple words of divorce.

Here, we must reflect on the part of the verse on the expiation for *zihar*: ‘...the freeing of a human being from bondage...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 3). Some say that we no longer have slaves because the law forbids this. However, this is a matter of civil law; if there were a war, it would be possible for us to find captives who could be freed.

So, there is a difference between a matter of Sacred Law and a matter of civil law upon which they have agreed.

In Saudi Arabia, King Faisal⁽¹⁾ wanted to bring an end to slavery once and for all, so he bought all the remaining slaves and freed them.⁽²⁾ What then happened is that the slaves all went back and knocked on the doors of their former masters, wanting to go back to the lives they had had as slaves. This was because the slaves had been eating from the food of their masters, and the slave-women had been wearing from the clothes of their mistresses, and their male owners might have cohabited with them.

The wisdom of freeing slaves is that the slave was confined and threatened with death after having taken part in a war against Muslims and been captured. He could have been killed, but Allah had mercy upon him, for He shows mercy to all mankind, even disbelievers and He said to you as a Muslim, ‘Do not kill him, for he shall serve you and be a benefit to you.’

It is as though Allah protected the life of a disbeliever by making him a slave. So, do not make a comparison between slavery and freedom but between slavery and death. Slavery is more merciful since it spares a disbeliever’s life.

(1) 1906-1975; reigned 1964-1975

(2) This happened in 1962 when Faisal was Crown Prince.

The Creator *Glorified is He* spares the life of His created being, which He gave to him, and then after that, He makes it possible for this slavery to be brought to an end.

When Islam came, slavery was already established in society. A man would buy land along with the slaves who lived therein, and there were more than twenty ways of enslaving someone in those days. When Islam came, it reduced these ways so that there was only one way a man might become a slave: by being taken prisoner during a lawful war.

After reducing the ways that slavery could occur, Islam then expanded the ways that it could be ended so that it could be completely abolished. So, Islam did not establish slavery; rather, it established manumission. Look at how many cases there are where Allah *the Almighty* established the freeing of a slave as the expiation for an offence, doing so for any kind of slave, whether believer or non-believer.

When we examine the Quran, we find that there is only one verse which stipulates that the freed slave must be a believer, namely: 'And it is not conceivable that a believer should slay another believer, unless it be by mistake. And upon him who has slain a believer by mistake there is the duty of freeing a believing soul from bondage and paying an indemnity to the victim's relations, unless they forgo it by way of charity. Now if the slain, while himself a believer, belonged to a people who are at war with you, [the penance shall be confined to] the freeing of a believing soul from bondage, whereas, if he belonged to a people to whom you are bound by a covenant, [it shall consist of] an indemnity to be paid to his relations...' (*an-Nisa'*: 92).

Concerning the verse pertaining to oaths and their expiation, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah will not take you to task for oaths which you may have uttered without thought, but He will take you to task for oaths which you have sworn in earnest. Thus, the breaking of an oath must be atoned for by feeding ten needy persons with more or less the same food as you are wont to give to your own families, or by clothing them, or by freeing a human being from bondage...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 89); He did not say that this slave has to be a believer.

Abu Hanifa commented on this by saying that the fact that Allah *the Exalted* specifies a believing slave in the former verse and does not in the latter

implies that it could even be a disbelieving slave. In many issues, Islam does not make a difference between believers and disbelievers, for it is a universal religion meant to rectify the whole world.

You all remember the story⁽¹⁾ of the shield which the Companion Ta'ma ibn Ubayriq stole and hid at the house of Zayd ibn As-Samin who was a Jew. They accused the Jew of the theft and wanted to acquit the Muslim, and they tried to convince Prophet Muhammad of this so that a Muslim would not be exposed as a thief.⁽²⁾

However, the Revelation passed judgment on the matter, and it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad: 'Behold, We have bestowed upon you from on high this Divine Writ, setting forth the truth, so that you may judge between people...' (*an-Nisa'*: 105); this means making no distinction between believers and disbelievers; '...in accordance with what Allah has taught you. Hence, do not contend for those who are false to their trust.' (*an-Nisa'*: 105) What this means is not to defend a traitor, even if he is a Muslim since Divine Justice does not make any distinction between Allah's servants.

Therefore, when the Jew was acquitted and the Muslim convicted without any bias or indulgence, the people rushed to embrace Islam. This is part of the greatness of this religion: it does not protect falsehood or cover up corruption even if it is committed by its own followers.

Notice that the expiations for *zihar* are given here in order: first freeing a slave, then fasting, then feeding the poor. This is so that each one can do what is most appropriate for him and also so that the jurists have an opportunity to make this expiation a proper deterrent. There is a story⁽³⁾ about Mundhir ibn Sa'id⁽⁴⁾, an Andalusian jurist which illustrates this.

When the caliph 'Abd Ar-Rahman An-Nasir⁽⁵⁾ made a vow and wanted to expiate it, scholars told him to feed ten poor people. When Mundhir ibn Sa'id

(1) *The story of Ta'ma ibn Ubayriq's stealing the shield and accusing Zayd ibn As-Samin for its theft*

(2) *Related by Ibn Al-Jawziin Al-Muntazhim (Vol. 1, p. 337)*

(3) *The story of the vow of 'Abd Ar-Rahman An-Naser and the judgment of Al-Mundhir ibn Sa'id*

(4) 275-355 A.H.

(5) 277-350 A. H.; reigned 300-350

heard of this ruling, he said, 'Will it deter the Commander of the Faithful to feed ten poor people, while he already feeds so many every day? Only fasting will deter him.' He based his judgment in the spirit of the Divine Ruling, not its mere letters.

After making clear the ruling regarding *zihar* and its expiation, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Now these...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4); this means that these laws which have just been mentioned '...are the bounds set by Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 4), namely His commandments and prohibitions, As we said, a bound is a separator between two things; if a bound is between you and Allah, it must be rejected.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Do they not know that for him who sets himself against Allah and His Prophet there is in store the fire of hell, therein to abide—that most awesome disgrace?' (*at-Tawba*: 63) A human being is required to not separate himself from his Lord *the Almighty*. Rather, they should always be connected to Him at all times. He must not place himself on one side and his Lord on another; this is contrary concerning the accompaniment of faith. Your Lord wants you to be with Him, not separate from Him.

This is clear in the verses of the chapter of *al-Jumu'a*: 'O, you who have attained to faith! When the call to prayer is sounded on the day of congregation, hasten to the remembrance of Allah and leave all worldly commerce...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). Then, Allah says after the prayer: "and when the prayer is ended, disperse freely on earth and seek to obtain [something] of Allah's bounty, but remember Allah often, so that you might attain to a happy state!" (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) So you are with Allah in the prayer, and you are with Allah after the prayer; you should be instantly preoccupied by Him.

The True Lord *the Most High* then says: '...and grievous suffering [in the life to come] awaits all who deny the truth.' (*al-Mujadala*: 4) This refers to those who do not keep within Allah's bounds and do not adhere to what He has decreed for His servants; they shall be subjected to the grievous suffering of hellfire; this deed of theirs is called 'denying the truth' to express harsh rebuke and severe condemnation to it.

When it comes to those who do not believe and do not adhere to the rulings of this Sacred Law or keep within Allah's bounds, do not think that they will

escape Allah's reckoning and His punishment, for it will not be as they imagine, and they will undergo grievous suffering in this life and the next.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ كَيْتُوا كَمَا كَيْتَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
وَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٥﴾

Those who oppose God and His Messenger will be brought low, like those before them: We have revealed clear messages, and humiliating torment awaits those who ignore them [5] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 5)

We said that '...contend against Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5) means 'place their caprice on one side of the bound (*hadd*), and Allah's Commandments on the other side'. The words, '...and His Prophet...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5) indicate that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has his own right to legislate because Allah has given him the freedom to do so: '...Hence, accept [willingly] whatever the Prophet gives you and refrain from anything that he withholds from you...' (*al-Hashr*: 7); this is so because a commandment may come from Allah and from Messenger Muhammad, or it may come solely from Allah or solely from Messenger Muhammad. This is due to commandments coming from Allah in a general way, and then they are detailed by Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, certain verses came to explain this such as Allah's Words: '...And pay heed unto Allah and pay heed unto the Prophet...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 92) and '...pay heed unto Allah and the Prophet...' (*Al-Imran*: 132) and '...and pay heed unto the Prophet...' (*at-Taghabun*: 12).

These verses allow us to challenge those who claim that the Quran alone must be considered and followed, while the *Sunna* of Prophet Muhammad is rejected. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* indeed told us that such people would come one day when he said: 'Verily, a man may be told of my words as he sits back on his couch, and he may say, "You and we have the Book of Allah. What we find to be lawful therein we shall call lawful, and what we find to be forbidden therein we shall call forbidden." Yet in fact, what the Messenger of Allah forbids is like what Allah forbids.'⁽¹⁾

(1) Narrated by At-Tirmidhi (2588), Ibn Majah (12), and Ahmad (16564) on the authority of Al-Miqdam Allah be pleased with him

This is one of the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Now, to respond to these people, we say, 'By Allah, tell us how you pray the afternoon or sunset prayer. How do you know that the afternoon prayer has four cycles and the sunset prayer three? Is this in the Quran? Does the Quran tell you how to do all the rites of the pilgrimage, or how much the poor-due should be?'

Prophet Muhammad also said, 'Pray as you see me pray'⁽¹⁾ and: 'Take your rites from me'⁽²⁾; this means that Messenger Muhammad was distinguished amongst the messengers in that Allah gave him the right to legislate for his community. Before Muhammad, the messengers' function was only to convey Allah's Laws; as for Prophet Muhammad, he was both conveyer and legislator.

So, believers are ordered to obey Allah when receiving Divine Rulings in general and to obey Prophet Muhammad concerning the particulars of such rulings. If this was not the case, the True Lord *the Most High* would not have said: 'Whoever pays heed unto the Prophet pays heed unto Allah thereby...' (*an-Nisa'*: 80).

The meaning of '...shall be brought low (*kubitu*)...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5) is that they shall be humbled and humiliated or shocked with a sudden calamity which leaves them speechless because of its horror; this is akin to Allah's Words: '...he who was bent on denying the truth remained dumbfounded...' (*al-Baqara*: 258); this means that he was stunned.

The one who is stunned by a sudden shock finds himself tongue-tied and unable to speak or vent or alleviate his soul. A poet⁽³⁾ expressed this by saying:

You must make complaint to an honourable man,

Who can advise you, console you, or have pity on you.

When a person beset by calamity finds someone to complain to and the latter listens to him, the complainer feels relieved, and his soul is calmed since he finds someone to lighten his burden and empathise with him. As for

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bayhaqiin Al-Kubra* (2/245) and others on the authority of *Malik ibn Al-Huwayrith*

(2) Narrated by *Al-Bayhaqiin Al-Kubra* (5/125) on the authority of *Jabir*

(3) It was *Bashar Al-Aqili* (95-167 A.H.).

these people, they will be brought low in a way that silences them and ties their tongues; thus, Allah will subject them to the utmost humiliation and degradation and show them the most terrible wrath.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Even as those [evildoers] who lived before them were brought low...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5); what this means is that they will not be the first ones to be brought low, but the deniers who came before them were also brought low such as the people of 'Ad, Thamud, Lut (Lot), the people of Pharaoh and others.

The first way in which the disbelieving Arabs who stood in the way of the Islamic message were brought low is that they were defeated before the message of truth, and their unbelief disappeared, whilst Islam spread over the world; Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Nay, We have allowed these [sinners]—as [We allowed] their forebears to enjoy the good things of life for a great length of time, but then have they never yet seen how We visit the earth, gradually removing from it all that is upon it? Can they, then, [hope to] be the winners?' (*al-Anbiya*': 44)

Every day, the numbers of disbelievers were getting less and less, and their lands shrunk, while the numbers of Muslims grew higher and higher, and their lands broadened. This made Khalid ibn Al-Walid say to 'Amr ibn Al-'As, 'Muhammad has clearly proved himself, 'Amr. We should believe in him.'⁽¹⁾ This means that Muhammad has the upper hand and things are going his way, and we no longer have the power to resist him.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...After We had bestowed [on them] clear messages from on high...' (*al-Mujadala*: 5); this means clear signs which the mind can easily believe and sound instinct can easily accept. He says: '...And [so] for those who deny the truth there will be shameful suffering in store.' (*al-Mujadala*: 5) What this means is that those who belie these signs and refuse to believe in them despite their clarity and conformity to sound natural instinct, shall be subjected to shameful suffering, which will shame and debase them.

(1) Narrated by *Al-Hakim* (1033)

This is because the truth of Faith in Allah is clear, and no one can rebut it; even these disbelievers do not deny it. The first part of faith is the existence of an All-Powerful Lord who created them and created the world in which they live.

They have even acknowledged that Allah created them: 'And thus it is [with most people]. If you ask them, "Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely answer, "Allah"...' (*Luqman*: 25); furthermore, He says: 'Now if you ask those [who worship any being other than Allah] as to who it is that has created them, they are sure to answer, "Allah"...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 87). Could any of them dare to say otherwise? Yet despite this, they belie and disbelieve in the truth and the clear signs of which no one could be ignorant. They should have reflected upon them.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا أَحْصَاهُ
 اللَّهُ وَنَسُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

On the Day when God will raise everyone and make them aware of what they have done. God has taken account of it all, though they may have forgotten: He witnesses everything [6] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 6)

Allah *the Almighty* reminds them of the Day of Resurrection and Reckoning when He will reckon them for everything they have done, whether great or small; they may have forgotten it, but He took it into account and recorded it against them, and His recording angels wrote it down. If you were to ask a man of sixty or seventy years, for example, if he remembered all his sins, he would tell you he could not; this is because forgetfulness is part of man's nature so that he does not have too low an opinion of himself. It is as though the human soul appreciates the attributes of perfection intrinsically, and not only relatively.

For example, the cognisance of false testimony is intrinsic, not only relative. How is that so? Suppose that you are guilty of transgression against someone and deriding them, and your friend witnesses it, but when the other person asked your friend to corroborate his story, your friend does you a

favour and says, 'That never happened.' Indeed, this helps you, and your friend puts himself at risk for your benefit, yet at the same time, he degraded himself before you, and you consider him thereafter to be a liar, even though his testimony helped you. This indicates that disgraceful conduct is recognisably disgraceful, even to those whom it helps.

We have also given this example before. Suppose that there is a band of thieves, and one of them repents. The others call him a 'rat' and a 'traitor', but suppose that one of these thieves was looking for a husband for his daughter. Would this one choose one of the thieves, or would he choose this 'rat' that repented and went straight? He will choose the one who repented and went straight. Even though he himself is a crook, he does not want a crook for his daughter.

This is why we see that the disbelievers of Mecca, who waged war against Muhammad and disbelieved in his message, nevertheless, would trust him to look after their belongings,⁽¹⁾ for they knew that he was 'the honest, trustworthy one'.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Allah will have taken [all of] it into account, even though they [themselves] may have forgotten it...' (*al-Mujadala*: 6); He will have taken it into account because Allah takes all things into account, and they will have forgotten it because they are forgetful by nature. He says: '...for Allah is witness unto everything' (*al-Mujadala*: 6) because He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Therefore, the Sacred Hadith says: 'O, My servants! If you think that I cannot see you, then the fault is in your faith, and if you think that I can see you, then why have you made Me the most trifling of all who see you?'⁽²⁾

'...Allah is witness unto everything.' (*al-Mujadala*: 6) 'Everything' implies universality; there is nothing in existence to which Allah is not witness, and faith in One Allah is a 'thing', so He *the Most High* is witness to it.

(1) *After the Messenger of God peace and blessings be upon him emigrated to Medina, 'Ali Allah be pleased with him stayed behind in Mecca for three days to return to the people the things they had entrusted to the Messenger of God. (Subul Al-Huda wa Ar-Rashad, Vol. 3, p. 267)*

(2) *Related by Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali as a saying of a wise man*

Therefore, He says: 'Allah bears witness that there is no deity save Him...' (*Al-'Imran*: 18). Before He asks people to bear witness to this, He bears witness to it Himself; likewise, before Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asked people to bear witness to his prophethood, he bore witness to it himself. It is essential that he bears witness to it and believe in it.

It is related ⁽¹⁾ that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'I bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah.' This was in the story of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah when he owed a debt to a Jew, and it was due, but Jabir was unable to settle it because his date-palm grove had not yielded enough fruit to pay back the loan. Jabir told Prophet Muhammad about this and asked him to speak to the Jew in order to ask him to give him more time to pay him back, but the Jew refused, seeing a chance to humiliate the Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* then asked Jabir to take him to his orchard. Prophet Muhammad walked about the palms, and then asked Jabir to take him to his hut. Jabir did so, and Prophet Muhammad napped for a while. When he woke, he said, 'Jabir! Harvest and repay!' Jabir picked his date palms and found there was enough to repay the Jew and still leave for him more than he had ever harvested before. When Prophet Muhammad was told of this, he smiled and said, 'I testify that I am the Messenger of Allah.'⁽²⁾

Then, Allah says: '...Allah is witness unto everything' (*al-Mujadala*: 6); He *the Most High* bears witness to Himself, which testimony is given from Himself to Himself; the angels, as well, bear witness based on direct vision, and those who are endowed with knowledge bear witness based on rational proof: 'Allah bears witness—and [so do] the angels and all who are endowed with knowledge—that there is no deity save Him...' (*Al-'Imran*: 18).

(1) *The story of the debt of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah and his cutting of the dates and the Jewish man*

(2) *Narrated by Al-Bukhari (5023) on the authority of Jabir*

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ
رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آدَنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا
كَانُوا ثُمَّ يُنشئهم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

Do you not see [Prophet] that God knows everything in the heavens and earth? There is no secret conversation between three people where He is not the fourth, nor between five where He is not the sixth, nor between less or more than that without Him being with them, wherever they may be. On the Day of Resurrection, He will show them what they have done: God truly has full knowledge of everything [7]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 7)

Scholars say that although the Arabic for 'Are you not aware (*alam tara*)...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7) literally means 'did you not see?'; it actually means 'do you not know' because He says it about things that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not see, such as in the chapter of *al-Fil*: 'Are you not aware (*alam tara*) of how the Lord dealt with the Army of the Elephant?' (*al-Fil*: 1) The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, did not see this incident, so the meaning of *alam tara* must be 'do you not know?' In fact, the meaning is 'did you not see?' because Allah could easily have said *alam ta'lam*, 'do you not know', had He wanted so. The reason the verb 'to see' is used in this verse is to confirm that any information given from Allah to His Messenger is more certain than the vision of his own eyes; if Allah tells him it, it is as though he has seen it with his eyes.

Allah's Words, 'Are you not aware that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7) imply that Allah's Knowledge encompasses all things, for He says elsewhere: '...for not even an atom's weight [of whatever there is] on earth or in heaven escapes your Lord's Knowledge, and neither is there anything smaller than that or larger, but it is recorded in [His] clear decree.' (*Yunus*: 61)

Allah knows the heavens and earth as containers, and He knows all that they contain. The earth in itself is a marvel of creation and design, and the created beings it contains are more marvellous still; we said before that the

content is always more valuable than the container. Allah's Knowledge is not restricted to visible things; rather, Allah *Glorified is He* also has knowledge of all that we cannot see within the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth: 'And Allah alone comprehends the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth...' (*Hud*: 123). Another aspect of His comprehensive Knowledge is that '...Never can there be a secret confabulation between three persons without Him being the fourth of them...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7). Allah *the Almighty* knows all the created beings in the heavens and the earth. Someone might say, 'He knows them only because they are His creations and His handiwork', then He corrected himself by saying, 'No, He also knows all the new things which are constantly happening in His universe', for He says: '...Never can there be a secret confabulation between three persons without Him being the fourth of them...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7).

'Secret confabulation' is when people speak to one another about a secret; it is always a matter of something secret which we conceal from others. Therefore, He begins with the number three, which is the smallest number of people who can be involved in secret confabulation.

A Noble Hadith says: 'Let no two people hold secret confabulation, whilst excluding a third person, for to do so hurts him.'⁽¹⁾ The secret conversation of two people makes the third person in their presence feel uneasy. As for the True Lord *the Most High* He knows everything, and therefore says to them: 'Conduct secret conversations as much as you like. I can see you, and I know what you say. I am the fourth of every three and the sixth of every five people.' Allah says: '...and neither between less than that, or more, without His being with them wherever they may be...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7); thus, this verse included all chances.

Allah *the Exalted* says: '...But in the end, on Resurrection Day, He will make them truly understand what they did...' (*al-Mujadala*: 7); this is because the attendant angels write down their actions, and on the Day of Resurrection, each person will be given his record to read what is in it and be a witness to it:

(1) Narrated by Muslim (4045), Abu Dawud (4211), At-Timridhi (4211), Ibn Majah (2751) and Ahmad (3379), on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud Allah be pleased with him

'Read this your record! Sufficient is your own self today to make out your account!' (*al-Isra*': 14)

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نُهُوا عَنِ النَّجْوَى ثُمَّ يَعُودُونَ لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَيَتَنَجَّوْنَ بِالْإِثْمِ
وَالْعُدْوَنِ وَمَعَصِيَةِ الرَّسُولِ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكَ حَيَّوْكَ بِمَا لَمْ يُحَيِّكَ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَيَقُولُونَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلَا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ حَسْبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ يَصْلَوْنَهَا فَيَنْسُوْنَ الْمَصِيرَ ﴿٨﴾

Have you not seen how those who have been forbidden to hold secret conversations go back afterwards and hold them, and conspire with one another in what is sinful, hostile, and disobedient to the Messenger? When they come to you they greet you with words God has never used to greet you, and say inwardly, 'Why does God not punish us for what we say?'

Hell will be punishment enough for them: they will burn there – an evil destination [8] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 8)

Those who were forbidden to engage in secret confabulation were a group of Jews and hypocrites; '...and yet [always] revert to that which they have been forbidden...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8), which is 'secret confabulations'. Allah says: '...and conspire with one another with a view to sinful doings, aggressive conduct, and disobedience to the Prophet...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8); this implies that secret confabulation itself is not forbidden, but what is forbidden is to conspire with a view to sinful doings, aggressive conduct and disobedience to the Prophet. As for planning secretly to do good things, there is nothing wrong with this such as the one who conceals his charity so that his left hand does not know what his right hand gives.⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Now whenever such [people] approach you [O, Muhammad] they salute you with a greeting which Allah has never countenanced...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8).

The True Lord *the Most High* exposes their hypocrisy and tells His Messenger of their evil intentions. The way they greeted Prophet Muhammad was evidence

(1) This is from a Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari (620), At-Tirmidhi (2313), An-Nasa'i (5285) and Ahmad (1712), and by Muslim (1712) with a slightly different wording.

of their hypocrisy; 'they salute you' and '...with a greeting which Allah has never countenanced...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8) indicates their disobedience as they used a greeting other than Allah's greeting, which is 'peace be upon you' (*as-salam 'alaykum*). Instead, they were saying to Prophet Muhammad, '*As-sam 'alaykum*', which means 'death be upon you'; they used the word *sam* (death), which sounds like the word *salam* (peace).

Lady 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* was aware of their intention in doing this, and she replied to them with the same evil greeting by saying: 'Nay, but may death and curses be upon you!'⁽¹⁾ Therefore, Allah will place the hypocrites in the lowest level of hell, for they are even worse than disbelievers are. This is because a disbeliever, as we said, says what is in his heart, whilst the hypocrite acts like a believer when really he is a disbeliever.

The way the hypocrites said '*as-sam 'alaykum*' to Prophet Muhammad is similar to how their consorts, the Jews, said *hinta* in place of *hitta* when Allah told them: '...say, "Remove You from us the burden of our sins", [whereupon] We shall forgive you your sins...' (*al-Baqara*: 58); they said *hinta* which means 'wheat' instead of *hitta* which means 'remove the burdens of our sins' by way of sarcasm and mockery.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...And they say to themselves, "Why does not Allah chastise us for what we are saying?"...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8) They said this to themselves inwardly, not publicly. Yet, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* informed them of it. They should have taken admonition from this, reflected on it, and asked themselves, 'Who told Muhammad of this when we said it to ourselves?' This situation should have led them to guidance and faith in Prophet Muhammad.

The meaning of '...Why does Allah not chastise us for what we are saying...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8) is 'Is Allah not going to punish us?' It is as though they wanted to be punished. However, punishment will not come to them now; '...Hell shall be their allotted portion; they shall [indeed] enter it...' (*al-Mujadala*: 8) on the Day of Resurrection '...and how vile a journey's end'

(1) *The Messenger of God peace and blessing be upon him then told her to calm down and to simply reply, 'And upon you.'* Narrated by Al-Bukhari (5565) and Muslim (4027)

(*al-Mujadala*: 8). How vile shall be their fate and their end. Their ' allotted portion' means it will be enough for them, and 'they shall [indeed] enter it' means that they will be cast into it and feel its heat.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* addresses believers and teaches them how secret discourse should be conducted:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَنَجَّيْتُمْ فَلَا تَنَجَّوْا بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَمَعْصِيَتِ
الرَّسُولِ وَتَنَجَّوْا بِالْبِرِّ وَالنَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

**[You who believe, when you converse in secret, do not do so
in a way that is sinful, hostile, and disobedient to the
Messenger, but in a way that is good and mindful [of God].
Be mindful of God, to whom you will all be gathered [9]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 9)]**

In this verse, the True Lord *the Most High* combines a prohibition of and a warning against the blameworthy kind of secret confabulation, along with enjoining of the praiseworthy kind of secret confabulation. The blameworthy kind of secret confabulation is that which involves sinful doings, aggressive conduct, and disobedience to the Messenger. He says: '...do not conspire with one another with a view to sinful doings, aggressive conduct...' (*al-Mujadala*: 9). Sin (*ithm*) means something foul which people are ashamed of, while aggressive conduct (*'udwan*) means the wickedness of aggression, plotting and evil planning.

As long as they lower their speech and conceal it, something about it must be contrary to sound natural instinct, for if it were purely the truth, they would say it aloud. Secret confabulation indicates that they feel guilt in their minds, their hearts, and every part of their being.

At the same time, the verse enjoins the praiseworthy kind of secret confabulation: '...but hold counsel in the cause of virtue and God-consciousness...' (*al-Mujadala*: 9). We said before that mentioning opposites side by side serves to clarify their meaning. There is nothing wrong, then, with secret discourse when it is in the cause of virtue and God-consciousness and in the cause of aiding the religion and upholding the dignity of Muslims. Military leaders, for example, hold secret meetings to discuss strategies of war, and it

is right for them to make sure no one else knows about it, lest the enemy get wind of their plans.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and [always] remain conscious of Allah, unto Whom you all shall be gathered.' (*al-Mujadala*: 9) This means be conscious of Allah by obeying His commandments and avoiding all that He prohibits, for it is Allah *Glorified is He* '...Whom you all shall be gathered' (*al-Mujadala*: 9). This implies exclusivity which means that solely to Him will you be gathered and brought forth to be reckoned on the Day of Resurrection.

إِنَّمَا النَّجْوَى مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَحْزُنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ
شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

[Any other kind of] secret conversation is the work of Satan, designed to cause trouble to the believers, though it cannot harm them in the least unless God permits it. Let the believers put their trust in God [10] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 10)

This refers to secret confabulations with a view to sinful doings, aggressive conduct and disobedience to the Messenger are essentially from Satan because this has been his role since he pledged a vow to Allah by saying: 'Then [I swear] by Your Might, I shall most certainly beguile them all into grievous error,[all] save such of them as are truly Your servants!' (*Sad*: 82-83) In addition, he exposed himself when he announced his plan to tempt the sons of Adam by saying: '...I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight way.' (*al-A'raf*: 16)

Therefore, we said that Satan does not go to bars but goes to mosques in order to spoil the righteousness of obedient people. The intelligent person does not announce his plan to his enemy. This is why people often complain of having forgetfulness when praying, and this is natural since Allah's enemy (Satan) does not simply leave you to obey your Lord.

Our religion permits us, when we encounter these misgivings which distract us from our presence of mind with Allah, to pause our recitation and seek refuge in Allah from them, for when Satan hears you seeking refuge with Allah, he becomes like a thief who lurks around a house: when he finds that

you are aware of his presence, he leaves. He is, as the True Lord *the Most High* calls him, the whispering, sneaky tempter; he whispers misgivings to you, and when you seek refuge with Allah, he sneaks away and flees: 'Hence, if it should happen that a prompting from Satan stirs you up [to blind anger], seek refuge with Allah. Behold, He alone is All-Hearing, All Knowing!' (*Fussilat*: 36)

The commandment in His Words '...but hold counsel in the cause of virtue and God-consciousness...' (*al-Mujadala*: 9) gives an opportunity to those who wish to plan to succour Allah's religion, allowing them to hold secret talks so that no one can know the details of their plan, even other Muslims, for a Muslim might be weak and reveal his army's secrets to the enemy.

You know the story⁽¹⁾ of Hatib ibn Abu Balta'a.⁽²⁾ He was a Companion of the Messenger of Allah, yet he weakened and told Quraysh that Prophet Muhammad was preparing to conquer Mecca, sending them a letter with a woman in the caravan. However, Allah informed His Prophet about what Hatib had done and sent for 'Ali, instructing him to follow a certain road to find the woman in whose braids the letter was hidden. 'Ali went and followed her tracks and brought the letter to Prophet Muhammad. It was from Hatib, so he sent for him and said to him, 'Hatib, what made you do what you did?' Hatib replied, 'O, Messenger of Allah, I am a man of no status, and I want to have influence with Quraysh, for I know that in any case that Allah will give you victory over them.' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Leave him be, for it may be that Allah has looked upon those who fought at Badr and said, "Do as you please, for I have forgiven you."' ⁽³⁾

Prophet Muhammad taught us this lesson by saying, 'Make it easier to get things done by employing discretion.'⁽⁴⁾ This is allowed as long as it is in the cause of virtue and God-consciousness.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...so that he might cause grief to those who have attained to faith...' (*al-Mujadala*: 10); he wants to do this, but he cannot: '...yet he

(1) *The story of Hatib ibn Abi Balta'a and his blowing the whistle on Prophet Muhammad to Quraysh*

(2) *D. 65 A.H.*

(3) *Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2785) and Muslim (4550)*

(4) *Narrated by Al-Khara'it in I'tilal Al-Qulub (665)*

cannot harm them in the least, unless it be by Allah's Leave...' (*al-Mujadala*: 10). This is like a man who may have all the means to do evil; Allah has given him power and money, and he may have a gun and be a good shooter, but when he points the gun at his enemy's heart, he might jerk and miss, or something might get in the way and deflect the bullet.

Thus, he wants to do it, but Allah does not want it to happen; he wills it, but Allah does not will it. Every motion in the universe, whether great or small, from the atom to the galaxy, takes place by Allah's Power and Will. Satan wants evil to befall the believers, but it can never happen unless Allah wills it.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'and when everything will have been decided, Satan will say, "Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you, but I deceived you. Yet, I had no power at all over you, I but called you and you responded unto me..."' (*Ibrahim*: 22).

We said before that power is either force which compels you to act or an argument which convinces you. Satan does not possess either one of these; all he can do is whisper to you and make a deed seem alluring to you. It is as though he wants to say to them, 'You were willing captives to my suggestions. I only suggested evil things to you, and then you went and did them on your own.'

Moreover, some sinful acts do not involve Satan at all. There are sins which are made alluring by the passionate soul which enjoins evil and by caprice. Therefore, it is an established fact that Satan is chained up in *Ramadan*,⁽¹⁾ yet we still commit many sins in that month. A poet expressed this by saying:

The devil, the world, the soul, and caprice:

What can I do when they are all my enemies?

Likewise, it is in the case of sorcery; many people own the paraphernalia of sorcery and practise it, but they cannot harm anyone save by Allah's Leave: 'And [they] follow [instead] that which the evil ones used to practise during Sulaiman's (Solomon's) reign, for it was not Sulaiman (Solomon) who

(1) This was stated by the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him in a Hadith narrated by Al-Bayhaqi (3448) on the authority of Abu-Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

denied the truth, but those evil ones denied it by teaching people sorcery and [they follow] that which has come down through the two angels in Babylon, Harut and Marut, although these two never taught it to anyone without first declaring, "We are but a temptation to evil. Do not, then, deny [Allah's] truth!" And they learn from these two how to create discord between a man and his wife, but whereas they can harm none thereby save by Allah's Leave. They acquire knowledge that only harms themselves and does not benefit them although they know, indeed, that he who acquires this [knowledge] shall have no share in the good of the life to come. For vile indeed is that [art] for which they have sold their own selves. Had they but known it!' (*al-Baqara*: 102)

And on ('*ala*) Allah, then, "let the believers place their trust..." (*al-Mujadala*: 10) In the verse, the word '*ala*', which literally means 'on' implies that trust in Allah is like a vehicle which leads you to your goal. This word, here and elsewhere in the Quran, is often used to refer to those who are illuminated by Allah's Guidance, and it refutes the claim of those who say that religious responsibilities are difficult for the soul and that this is indicated even by their name *takalif* which can also mean 'burdens'.

In fact, even the most strenuous of religious responsibilities is easy and within the ability of all; the only ones who find them difficult are those who care more about the short term than the long term. How difficult can religious responsibilities really be when they are compared with the reward that is given for them? Thus, if a Muslim considers the punishment for sin, he will not dare to commit it, and if he considers the reward for obedience, everything he needs to do to attain it will seem easy.

In Allah '...then, let believers place their trust' (*al-Mujadala*: 10). This is like the expression 'leave it to me'. If you are powerless, then know that Allah has power over everything in the earth and in the heavens. Yet, it is clear that reliance on Allah *the Exalted* has certain conditions, one of which is that it must be preceded by an effort to utilise the means at one's disposal.

The True Lord addresses believers by saying:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا
 يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَإِذَا قِيلَ انشُزُوا فَانْشُزُوا يَرَفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
 مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

You who believe, if you are told to make room for one another in your assemblies, then do so, and God will make room for you, and if you are told to rise up, do so: God will raise up, by many degrees, those of you who believe and those who have been given knowledge: He is fully aware of what you do [11] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 11)

This verse was revealed when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had come to have many companions and people who loved him and wished to keep his company until it got to the point that they were so crowded around him that they could find nowhere to sit. Allah, therefore, commanded them to make room for one another by saying: ‘O, you who have attained to faith! When you are told, "Make room for one another in your collective life", do make room...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 11). What this means is to spread out and make space for those who have no space: ‘...[And in return] Allah will make room for you [by His Grace]...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 11). So, you must utilise the means to spread out, and Allah will make the room for you in your gatherings.

When an action is ascribed to Allah *the Almighty* it is carried out by His Omnipotent Power. You make as much room as you are able, and Allah *the Exalted* will make as much room for you as He is able. This is akin to the words of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* 'Allah comes to His servant's aid as long as the servant comes to his brother's aid.'⁽¹⁾

This is clearly a relative agreement; you aid your brother with your limited power and your limited strength, and Allah aids you with His unlimited Power and infinite strength. Who benefits the most from this?

This concept is universal when it comes to making room: make room for your brother, and Allah will make room for you in a way you cannot perceive.

(1) Narrated by Muslim (4867), Abu-Dawud (4295), At-Tirmidhi (1345) and Ibn Majah (221) on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him

This 'making room' from Allah *the Most High* takes the form of blessed increase in space, blessed increase in provision and blessed increase in all things.

We must all act on this direction from Allah and from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for otherwise we will be sinful. You all know the story of the debtor who died while still owing debts, and so the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* declined to pray his funeral prayer; but he allowed the Muslims to pray for him by saying, 'Pray for your companion.'⁽¹⁾ What was the sin of this debtor? Why did Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* decline to lead his funeral prayer? They say it is because he disobeyed an instruction of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* 'Whosoever takes people's money while intending to repay it, Allah will repay it for him, and whosoever takes it intending to waste it, Allah will lay him to waste.'⁽²⁾

The fact that this debtor died while having not repaid his debt shows that he did not intend to repay it, so that he was not aided in doing so. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* wanted to teach his community this lesson; the debtor was denied the honour of having the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* lead his funeral prayer because he disobeyed his commandment, but he was not denied the honour of having Muslims offer his funeral prayer.

This story also shows us how concerned the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was that the man's debt be paid so he could be cleansed of it before going to meet his Lord. Therefore, he encouraged companions to donate so that the debt could be paid, and the people were quick to do so.⁽³⁾

The True Lord *Glorified is He* gives us a model of this 'making room' in the mother's womb, which receives the foetus as an infinitesimal speck which then grows, and as it grows, the womb enlarges after having been narrow. The same is the case with Muslim gatherings; Allah *the Exalted* makes more room for them as long as they make room for each other. If you only move a little

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2133) and Muslim (3040)

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (22) and Ahmad (83) on the authority of Abu-Hurayra Allah be pleased with him

(3) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (2127)

from your place, He causes everyone else to make room for you so that a small space can accommodate a large number of people.

Thus, if you want Allah to make room for you, make room for your brethren. Therefore, the Sacred Law allows, for when a prayer space is very crowded that one may bow and prostrate on his brother's back.

Also, Allah *the Exalted* says: '...And whenever you are told, "Rise up [for a good deed]", do rise up...' (*al-Mujadala*: 11); this means that one should get up and stand to make room; '...[And] Allah will exalt by [many] degrees those of you who have attained to faith and [above all] such as have been vouchsafed [true] knowledge...' (*al-Mujadala*: 11). This means that those who obey these commands and implement them as Allah enjoins them will be exalted many degrees by Him.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...for Allah is fully aware of all that you do.' (*al-Mujadala*: 11) The True Lord *the Most High* wants to strengthen the faith of believers and bolster their trust in Allah and in the reward He has in store. Allah *the Almighty* wants some of us to be martyrs who enter battle with the certitude that what we will find with Him is better than what they are leaving behind. Likewise at the same time, He wants there to be others who bear the message and call the people to it—people who learn the religion, study it and teach it to others.

Islam provides for both these directions and has them run parallel courses: one course for the defence and protection of the religion, while another course for calling to Allah's religion and spreading it. Otherwise, if we all went out to war, who would stay behind to teach the people and give them a sound understanding of their religion?

Therefore He *the Most High* says: '...From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going forth to war and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the faith, and [thus be able to] teach their homecoming brethren so that these [too] might guard themselves against evil.' (*at-Tawba*: 122)

The True Lord *the Most High* says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَجَّيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ جَبُونَكُمْ
 صَدَقَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

**You who believe, when you come to speak privately with the
 Messenger, offer something in charity before your
 conversation: that is better for you and purer. If you do not
 have the means, God is most forgiving and merciful [12]
 (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 12)**

After speaking about the kind of secret discourse which is blameworthy and forbidden, along with the kind which is permitted, the verses now turn to another form of discourse, namely discourse with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and there are special norms for this: The first of these is found in Allah's Words: 'Do not regard the Prophet's summons to you [in the same light] as a summons of one of you to another...' (*an-Nur*: 63). This means not to call Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as you call one another; do not say, 'O, Muhammad!' Secondly: if we want to speak privately with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* we should give charity before doing so. Scholars say that there were people who sat with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and spoke with him apart from the other attendants, doing so in order to gain a reputation as the Prophet's secret confidants, with whom he shared things he did not with others.

However, Allah *Glorified is He* wanted to put an end to this phenomenon. How did He do so? He did so by instituting this charity which was a kind of duty for private discourse with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* did not take this charity for himself, but it was given to the poor. When this verse was revealed, those who used to go to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* with this intention were put off from continuing to do so and did not come back.

Thus, the intention of this charity was simply to curb the large number of people who would crowd around Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. It is like a famous doctor who is forced to raise the price of consultations, for no reason other than to reduce the number of patients who come to him.

The meaning of ‘...offer up something in charity on the occasion of your consultation...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 12) is before the consultation, not during it. This is akin to Allah’s Words: ‘O, you who have attained to faith! When you are about to pray, wash your face...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 6). We do not make ablutions as we are about to pray; we do so before we pray.

Those who were too stingy to give charity to the poor were so because money was more important to them than to gain the honour of speaking privately to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*; thus, Allah *Glorified is He* exposed what was in their souls with His Words ‘...Whenever you [intend to] consult the Prophet, offer up something in charity on the occasion of your consultation...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 12). This is because the Messenger of Allah’s time was divided among many areas, and he would sit with everyone, and he did not want anyone to monopolise the time he had to talk privately because he did not have enough time for this; indeed, this matter weighed heavily on him, for much was required of him. He devoted time to his Lord, to his family, to certain individuals and to the general public.

Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘This...’, namely this charity you give before consultation, ‘...will be for your own good and more conducive to your [inner] purity...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 12); this means the purity of your hearts. Furthermore, His Words ‘...Yet, if you are unable to do so, [know that] verily, Allah is Much Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace’ (*al-Mujadala*: 12) indicate that this was not obligatory.

ءَأَسْفَقْتُمْ أَن تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقْتُمْ ۖ فَإِذَا لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
فَأَقِمْوُا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

**Were you afraid to give charity before consulting the Prophet?
Since you did not give charity, and God has relented towards
you, you should [at least] observe your prayers, pay the
prescribed alms, and obey God and His Messenger: God is well
aware of your actions [13] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 13)**

When they did not give this charity and abstained from it, Allah *the Almighty* exposed them to His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* by saying: ‘Do

you, perchance, fear...' (*al-Mujadala*: 13) meaning: do you fear poverty so that you have not offered charity before your consultations? '...But if you fail to do it...' (*al-Mujadala*: 13) and do not go to consult the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* it is as though He were saying to them, 'You have relieved Us of yourselves and of your going to the Messenger of Allah.'

Yet 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him* was an exception to this when the verse was revealed commanding that this charity be given. He later said, 'I did something that no one before or after me did. I had a *dinar*, so I exchanged it for some *dirhams*, and every time I wanted to go to see the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* I gave a dirham in charity.'

Therefore, after the verse was revealed, 'Do you, perchance, fear lest [you may be sinning if] you cannot offer up anything in charity on the occasion of your consultation...' (*al-Mujadala*: 13) and this matter was annulled, 'Ali, *Allah be pleased him*, continued to give this charity ever after; this is why he said, 'I did something that no one before or after me did.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *the Exalted* says: '...And Allah turns unto you in His Mercy...' (*al-Mujadala*: 13); this means that He excuses you from giving this charity. He also says: '...remain but constant in prayer and render [no more than] the purifying dues, and [thus] pay heed unto Allah and His Prophet...' (*al-Mujadala*: 13). In other words, it is as He is saying, 'All you have to do is what Allah has made compulsory for you, obeying His commandments and the commandments of His Messenger. That is enough.'

Allah *the Exalted* says: '...for Allah is fully aware of all that you do.' (*al-Mujadala*: 13) This means that He knows the inner reality of things, and nothing is beyond His ken. It is as though He were saying to us, 'As long as you are only responsible for doing what is obligatory, then do it thoroughly and sincerely.' This thoroughness and sincerity in worship is like a 'deposit' for the consultation with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and a substitute for the charity which Allah has excused you from giving.

Do not forget, then, that Allah, Who gave these responsibilities to you, is fully aware of your deeds. Therefore the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*

(1) Narrated by *Al-Hakim* (3753)

advised Abu Dharr *Allah be pleased with him* by saying, '...And be sincere in your deeds, for He Who will judge you sees you well.'⁽¹⁾

Allah Glorified is He says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا هُمْ مِنْكُمْ
وَلَا مِنْهُمْ وَيَخْلِفُونَ عَلَى الْكَذِبِ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

**Have you not seen [Prophet] those who give their loyalty to people with whom God is angry? They are neither with you nor with them, and knowingly swear to lies [14]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 14)**

This verse speaks of the alliance that existed between the hypocrites and the Jews. He *the Most High* says: 'Are you not aware [O, Muhammad] of those who would be friends with people whom Allah has condemned...' (*al-Mujadala*: 14); this refers to the hypocrites would be friends with those whom Allah condemned, namely the Jews. This means that they took them as allies and offered them succour.

Allah says: '...They are neither of you'; this refers to the believers. He also says: 'nor of those [who utterly reject the truth]...' (*al-Mujadala*: 14); this refers to the Jews. In the chapter of *al-Fatiha*, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...not of those who have been condemned...' (*al-Fatiha*: 7); scholars say this means the Jews.

We explained before that hypocrisy did not emerge in Mecca but did so in Medina, and this was ultimately a good thing which shows the strength of the religion, for people only seek to infiltrate and falsely ally themselves to those who are strong. Islam was weak in Mecca, and no one had any reason to pretend to be Muslim there.

As for Medina, Islam had become strong by that time and had a high place in society, and this is why hypocrisy emerged there. 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy was the forerunner of the hypocrites in the Prophet's city; this was because before Islam came, they were preparing to crown him as their king.⁽²⁾

(1) Related by Al-Haytami in *Al-Zawajir* (Vol. 1, p. 51)

(2) Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Dala'il* (1403)

Thus, when the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* came to Medina, 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy lost his social status, and the people left him. Ibn Ubayy did not forget this and eventually started pretending to be Muslim so that he could enjoy Islam's benefits, all the while keeping his disbelief and hypocrisy hidden. His son 'Abdullah, on the other hand, embraced Islam and remained a true Muslim and was sorely grieved at his father's hypocrisy.

It is related that 'Abdullah (the son) went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, 'Messenger of Allah, give me your leftover drinking water so I can give it to my father to drink so that perhaps Allah might cleanse his heart of this hypocrisy by means of it.' He took the leftover water to his father and told him to drink it. He asked what it was, and he told him it was the Prophet's leftover drinking water. His father replied, 'Bring me your mother's urine instead!'⁽¹⁾

'Abdullah grew angry at this and went to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, 'O, Messenger of Allah, you and I both know what my father is, and I fear that one of the believers will kill him in his rancour. If this must happen, command me, then and I shall kill him myself so that I feel no resentment towards my father's killer.' The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him, 'Be kind to him.'⁽²⁾ From that day forth, Ibn Ubayy was always treated well for the sake of his son 'Abdullah.

Thus, the strength of Islam and the strength of the faith emerged in the souls of Muhammad's followers in Medina in a way which was unprecedented. Reflect on how 'Abdullah told the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* he would be willing to kill his own father. Reflect also on the brotherhood that existed among the Emigrants and Helpers, to the point where a Helper would say to an Emigrant, 'I have many wives, so see which one pleases you, and I will divorce her and you can marry her.'

It is common knowledge that a man might happily give away anything he has, except his wife. This kind of generosity was unprecedented in history,

(1) Narrated in a slightly different form by 'Abd ibn-Hamid and ibn Al-Mundhir; also related by At-Tabari in his *Tafsir*

(2) Narrated by As-Suhayli in *Ar-Rawd Al-Unuf* (Vol. 4, p. 350)

and therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says of them: ‘And those who, before them, had their abode in this realm and in faith—[those] who love all that come to them in search of refuge and who harbour in their hearts no grudge for whatever the others may have been given; rather, they give them preference over themselves, even though poverty be their own lot...’ (*al-Hashr*: 9).

Thus, the friendship that existed between the hypocrites and Jews was problematic for the Muslims since the hypocrites would mix with the Muslims and even perhaps pray in the front row at the mosque, and then go and pass information about them on to the Jews.

This was the danger posed by hypocrisy and the hypocrites. They were more dangerous than the disbelievers of Mecca or the Jews because a disbeliever and Jew were open in their enmity, whilst a hypocrite concealed his enmity. This is why Allah places them in the lowest level of hell. Allah says: ‘...and so they swear to a falsehood while they know [it to be false].’ (*al-Mujadala*: 14) They know that they are lying, and they know that Allah will reveal to His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* what is in their souls and their minds, and had they any insight, they would realise that the Prophet had a connection to Heaven and would thus believe in him and follow him.

What is incredible is that they swear to their falsehoods in this word and lie to one another, and even in the Hereafter they will swear to falsehoods. Allah *the Almighty* tells us that they will say: ‘...By Allah, our Lord, we did not [mean to] ascribe divinity to aught beside Him!’ (*al-An‘am*: 23) Also, He says: ‘and would persist in heinous sinning [*hinth*, which also means ‘lying’].’ (*al-Waqi‘a*: 46) So they will even try to lie to Allah in the Hereafter.

Allah tells us what their fate will be:

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

**God has prepared a severe torment for them: what they
do is truly evil [15] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 15)**

Indeed, Allah has prepared for them—the hypocrites—a severe chastisement, more heinous and severe than that of disbelievers: ‘Verily, the hypocrites

shall be in the lowest depth of the fire, and you will find none who could succour them.’ (*an-Nisa*: 145)

Allah says: ‘Behold, evil’; this means vile ‘...indeed is what they are wont to do’ (*al-Mujadala*: 15); they pretended to be believers when their hearts harbour disbelief.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٦﴾

**They have used their oaths to cover up [their false deeds],
and barred others from the path of God. A humiliating
torment awaits them [16] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 16)**

The True Lord *the Most High* wants to expose them and reveal their games. Before, He said that they ‘...swear to a falsehood while they know [it to be false]’ (*al-Mujadala*: 14); this means that they swear they are not hypocrites. In this verse, He says: ‘They have made their oaths (*aymaan*) a cover...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 16). The word *aymaan* is the plural of *yameen*, which means ‘oath’. Swearing and oath making are methods of deception in which they are adept and behind which they hide.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...a cover...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 16); *junna* means a shield; they would use their oaths as shields to hide behind, just as a warrior protects himself with a shield or armour.

The root verb *janna* means to cover and conceal; it is used to describe how the night covers the land with darkness. *Junna* when used for a person means ‘to go insane’; *junayna* means a covered garden that gives shade to those who walk in it; the *mijann* is the shield a soldier carries to protect his breast. A poet⁽¹⁾ said:

My shield (*mijann*), to protect me from those I feared,
Was three people: two buxom girls and teenage lass!

(1) It was ‘Umar Al-Makhzumi (23-93 A.H.).

Therefore, our master 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him* used the door of the fort of Khaybar as his shield at the Battle of Khaybar; now the shield only protects the front, not the back, and he said of this, 'By Allah, may I not survive if I show them my back!'⁽¹⁾

This was the state of the hypocrites, for they took their false oaths as a cover to shield them and conceal their disbelief so that they could live amongst the Muslims and take advantage of their benefits and share in their agreements, enjoying their protection over their persons and their possessions. They sought only to deceive the believers when they proclaimed their Islam whilst concealing their disbelief.

However, 'Behold, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah—the while it is He Who causes them to be deceived [by themselves]...' (*an-Nisa'*: 142). Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Thus, have they [always] schemed, but Allah brought their scheming to nought, for Allah is above all schemers.' (*al-Anfal*: 30) This means 'Though you may benefit from your hypocrisy in the life of this world and make an ephemeral gain from it, you shall find the consequences for it in the Hereafter.'

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and thus, they have turned others away from the Path of Allah...' (*al-Mujadala*: 16). They turn other's away from the Path of Allah, so they are responsible for the consequent sins of others as well as their own sins: '...hence, shameful suffering awaits them.' (*al-Mujadala*: 16) The shameful suffering is that which will abuse and humiliate them.

In this way, Allah *the Almighty* will punish them with all kinds of suffering; sometimes He says 'grievous', sometimes 'mighty', sometimes 'painful' and sometimes 'shameful'. All this will be a just requital for the harm they have inflicted on the call of Islam and the way they have hurt Muslims and infiltrated them hypocritically.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) This is related by Al-Assami in *Samt An-Nujum Al-'Awali* (p.821).

لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

**Neither their wealth nor their children will be of
any use to them against God – they will be the
inhabitants of Hell, where they will remain [17]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 17)**

This means that neither the worldly possessions which their hypocrisy was meant to preserve, nor their children which their hypocrisy was meant to protect and save, will benefit them or keep from them the manifold punishments which await them.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...It is they who are destined (*ashab*) for the fire...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 17). They and the fire are like companions (*ashab*) or friends because they have chosen to accompany those things which lead to hell; they love the sins which send them there, and thus, there is a kind of companionship between them and hell therein ‘to abide!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 17); they will remain therein forever, neither leaving it nor having it leave them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَوْمَ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَحْلِفُونَ لَهُ كَمَا يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

**On the Day God raises them all from the dead,
they will swear before Him as they swear before you now,
thinking that it will help them. What liars they are! [18]
(The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 18)**

What this means is that their tongues have become so accustomed to lying that they do not know anything else. Just as they used to lie to you in the life of this world and swear to you that they were not hypocrites, so too in the Hereafter they will swear to Allah saying as He *the Most High* tells us: ‘...By Allah, our Lord, we did not [mean to] ascribe divinity to aught beside Him!’ (*al-An‘am*: 23) This is such an incredible thing; even in the Hereafter and after they have seen with their own eyes the truth they once denied and come to know that Allah is real, they will still lie to Him!

The Words ‘...them all...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 18) mean that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will bring forth the Jews and hypocrites who made alliances with them; He will bring them all forth together, for they will share the same fate. In the life of this world, they used to be allies with them and aid them, and he who loves a people shall be raised alongside them.⁽¹⁾

It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* was consoling His Messenger and setting him at ease by saying to him: ‘On the Day when Allah will raise them all from the dead...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 18); it is like Allah is saying: ‘O, Muhammad, wait this Day, and you shall see how Allah will requite them as they deserve.’

He then says: ‘...they will swear before Him as they [now] swear before you, thinking that they are on firm ground [in their assumptions]. Oh, verily, it is they who are the [greatest] liars!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 18) This means that they imagine that they are in the right, yet ‘...Oh, verily, it is they who are the [greatest] liars!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 18) They think this, but you should be aware that they are, in fact, nothing but liars. The word ‘Oh’ in this verse is meant to alert us to the statement which follows. This means do not let it escape your attention that these people are treacherous liars.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

اَسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَانْسَاهُمْ ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ اُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ
الشَّيْطَانِ اَلَا اِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**Satan has gained control over them and made them
forget God. They are on Satan’s side, and Satan’s side
will be the losers [19] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 19)**

This means that they did all this and became hypocrites because ‘Satan has gained mastery over them...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19); Satan overcame their minds and their thoughts, and thus ‘...caused them to remain oblivious of the remembrance of Allah...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19). This is his mission, which he swore to undertake when he said, ‘Then, [I swear] by Your Might, I shall most certainly beguile them all into grievous error. [All] save such of them as are truly Your servants!’



(1) *The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said, 'A man shall be (resurrected) with those he loves.'* Narrated by Al-Bukhari (5703) and Muslim (4779)

(*Sad*: 82-83). He said: ‘...I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Your straight way.’ (*al-A ‘raf*: 16) What this means is that he shall lie in wait for them on the road of obedience so that he might ruin it for them. This is why we said he does not go to bars but to mosques in order to spoil the obedience of the obedient. So when a misgiving from Satan comes to you as you pray, all you have to do is say the words Allah taught you: ‘Hence, if it should happen that a prompting from Satan stirs you up [to blind anger], seek refuge with Allah...’ (*Fussilat*: 36).

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Such as these...’; this means hypocrites ‘...are Satan’s partisans...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19). The word ‘Oh’ comes again to command our full attention: ‘...Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Satan, who will truly be the losers!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19) The word *hizb* (partisans) comes from the verb *hazaba* which means ‘to cause concern’ such as a thought which occupies you so that you cannot stop thinking about it.

Thus, *hizb* is a word used for every group that ascribes to one opinion, serves this opinion, and propagates it. Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* calls believers ‘Allah’s partisans’, and disbelievers and hypocrites ‘Satan’s partisans’. Furthermore, He passes judgment on Allah’s partisans by saying: ‘...behold, it is they, the partisans of Allah, who shall be victorious’ (*al-Ma ‘ida*: 56), while saying of Satan’s partisans: ‘...Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Satan, who will truly be the losers!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19)

Allah *Glorified is He* says:


 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحَادُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْأَذَلِّينَ
 كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَأَغْلِبَنَّ أَنَا وَرُسُلِي ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ
 

**Those who oppose God and His Messenger will be among
the most humiliated [20] God has written, ‘I shall most
certainly win, I and My messengers.’ God is powerful and
almighty [21] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 20 - 21)**

We said that ‘...contend (*yuhaddun*) against Allah and His Prophet...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 20) means that they put themselves on one side, and Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* on the other side, separating

themselves from Allah. A *hadd* is a boundary which separates two things for two different claimants.

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘...It is they who [on Judgment Day] shall find themselves among the most abject.’ (*al-Mujadala*: 20) As long as a servant separates himself from his Lord, he will inevitably end up abject and humiliated because a man only attains dignity through his Lord, even if he is a disbeliever, for Allah provides for believer and disbeliever alike because they are all His servants, and He called them all into this life, and therefore undertook to provide for all of them.

You all remember you story⁽¹⁾ of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* when a guest came to his door one night. He asked him about his religion, and the man said he was a Zoroastrian, so Ibrahim (Abraham) closed the door in his face, and the man went away. Allah *the Almighty* rebuked His prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* for treating the visitor this way and said to him: ‘Ibrahim (Abraham), I allow him to exist in My dominion though he disbelieves in Me, yet you want him to change his religion in return for a single night’s hospitality!’

So, our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* rushed after the man, found him, and then invited him to be his guest. He said to him, ‘I came to you, but you turned me away.’ Ibrahim (Abraham) said, ‘My Lord rebuked me for treating you so.’ The man said, ‘He rebuked you on my account? What a fine Lord Who rebukes His loved ones on account of His enemies.’ He then testified that there is no deity but Allah.

‘[For] Allah has thus ordained (*kataba*): "I shall most certainly prevail, I and My prophets!’ Verily, Allah is Powerful, Almighty!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 21) The word *kataba* ‘to ordain’ or ‘decree’ literally means ‘to write’; writing implies recording something so that it is preserved. That Allah and His prophets will prevail is a fate which He has decreed and recorded, and so nothing can prevent it or change it. None can come between Allah *the Exalted* and the fulfilment of His Decrees, or the fruition of His ordainments.

(1) *The story of our master Ibrahim (Abraham) peace be upon him and his guest, the fire worshipper*

Therefore, He calls the Noble Quran a 'Book' (*Kitab*) because it is inscribed and written down to remain forever, written on pages, and He called it Quran because it is recited *yuqra* ' and memorised in hearts.

Allah is destined to prevail because He is Powerful in His Essence *Glorified is He* and His prophets are destined to prevail because He lends to them His Power, Grace, and Might. They are His servants and His emissaries to his created beings, so how could He abandon or forsake them?

Therefore, He *the Most High* says: 'For, long ago has Our Word gone forth unto Our servants, the message-bearers, that, verily, they—they indeed—would be succoured and that, verily, Our hosts—they indeed—would [in the end] be victorious!' (*as-Saffat*: 171-173) Could it be imagined that Allah would send a messenger with His Message of guidance and the religion which He has approved, and then leave him to be defeated by the forces of falsehood? How could this be when He only sends messengers to establish His Guidance and put an end to the falsehood which has overcome their communities?: 'They aim to extinguish Allah's Light with their utterances, but Allah has willed to spread His Light in all its fullness, however hateful this may be to all who deny the truth.' (*as-Saff*: 8)

Thus, the victory of truth over falsehood is one of the ways of Allah in His creation. Why is it that it now seems to us that falsehood is triumphing over truth? As we said before, when you see the supporters of truth being defeated by the supporters of falsehood, know that the fault is their own because they have failed to live up to the necessary conditions of being forces of truth which would have guaranteed victory for them.

We saw this principle manifested at the Battle of Uhud when the archers disobeyed the command of their leader, thus ensuring that their enemies would gain the upper hand over them.⁽¹⁾ We also see it manifested in many present-day situations.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* wants to affirm this fact and ingrain it in the souls of believers, that they become ever more certain that Allah will succour them. Therefore, Allah says: '...I shall most certainly prevail...' (*al-Mujadala*: 21); He is emphasising this with the words 'most certainly', as though He were

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (3737), Abu-Dawud (2288) and Ahmad (17853)

swearing by it and saying: 'By My Might and My Majesty, I shall most certainly prevail as shall My prophets.'

He then adds further affirmation by repeating the pronoun 'I' again; He also uses words of emphasis more than once when He says: 'For, long ago has Our Word gone forth unto Our servants, the message-bearers, that, verily, they—they indeed—would be succoured and that, verily, Our hosts—they indeed—would [in the end] be victorious!' (*as-Saffat*: 171-173)

Allah *the Almighty* says: '... Verily, Allah is Powerful, Almighty!' (*al-Mujadala*: 21) This is why He will always prevail: He is the All-Powerful Who prevails by means of His intrinsic Power, and He is the Almighty Who cannot be defeated. If He willed it, He would prevail over them directly, along with taking them to task as only the Almighty Determiner can; however, what He wants is you, believer, to have the honour of prevailing over them: 'Fight against them! Allah will chastise them by your hands, will bring disgrace upon them and will succour you against them, and He will soothe the bosoms of those who believe.' (*at-Tawba*: 14) Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
 آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ
 وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ
 اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[Prophet], you will not find people who truly believe in God and the Last Day giving their loyalty to those who oppose God and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers, sons, brothers, or other relations: these are the people in whose hearts God has inscribed faith, and whom He has strengthened with His spirit. He will let them enter Gardens graced with flowing streams, where they will stay: God is well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are on God's side, and God's side will be the one to prosper [22] (The Quran, *al-Mujadala*: 22)

The word 'not' in this verse is a negation, meaning that you will never find any people of faith loving and making alliances with the people of disbelief and hypocrisy who contend against Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings*

be upon him because these attributes are opposites, which can never meet. The meaning of ‘love’ in this verse is the affection of the heart.

We said that ‘...contends against Allah and His Prophet...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22) means to put oneself on one side, and Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* on the other side, thus denying oneself any connection with Allah and any nearness to Him. This is what disbelievers and hypocrites do.

This is one of those verses which those orientalists who search for ‘mistakes’ in the Quran have objected to. They ask how this verse can stand alongside Allah’s Words: ‘[Revere your parents] yet should they endeavour to make you ascribe divinity, side by side with Me, to something which your mind cannot accept [as divine], obey them not, but [even then] bear them company in this world’s life with kindness...’ (*Luqman*: 15).

The first one commands us not to love them, and the second commands us to keep their company with kindness.

Now this confusion is a result of their lack of understanding of the meaning of the Quran, along with their unsound knowledge of Arabic. There is a clear difference between love and kind companionship; love is an emotion of the heart and can only exist between a believer and his fellow believer; as for kindness, it means the goodness you offer to all people, believers and disbelievers alike, and the favour you extend to your parents, even if they are disbelievers, since they were the direct cause of your existence in this world, and to respect them is to respect the higher cause of your existence: the True Lord *Glorified is He*.

Therefore He *the Most High* says: ‘And worship Allah [alone], and do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him. And do good unto your parents...’ (*an-Nisa*: 36). Yet, they do not have any right to your deeper affection or love because the divergence in belief and their decision to contend against Allah denies them this filial love. Relations are not only a matter of blood and kinship, then, but also a matter of religion and faith.

Therefore, this verdict is universal. Examine any relationship, and you will never find people who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, and yet despite this faith, love those who contend against Allah and His Messenger. This does not exist, even if those who contend against Allah and His Messenger are ‘...their

fathers, their sons, their brothers or [others of] their kindred...' (*al-Mujadala*: 22). He lists all the levels of relations in this verse, and 'kindred' ('*ashira*') means all those who live alongside one aside from the others mentioned here.

Allah *the Exalted* then describes the people of faith who base their relationships on faith in Allah and never put anyone else before it by saying: '...[As for the true believers] it is they in whose hearts He has inscribed faith...' (*al-Mujadala*: 22); this means that He has strengthened it in their hearts so that it will not leave them and more besides: '...and whom He has strengthened with inspiration (*ruh*) from Himself...' (*al-Mujadala*: 22). This does not mean the primary spirit (*ruh*) of life; it means that He aids their faith with another spirit of inspiration from Himself and special inspiration of His Light and Grace. An example of this is what He says about His righteous servant: '...on whom We had bestowed Grace from Ourselves and unto whom We had imparted knowledge [issuing] from Ourselves' (*al-Kahf*: 65); this is in addition to the content of the message. Furthermore, He *the Most High* says: 'O, you who have attained to faith! If you remain conscious of Allah, He will endow you with a standard by which to discern the true from the false...' (*al-Anfal*: 29). This means that if you are conscious of Allah by doing what He commands and staying away from what He forbids, as has been conveyed to you by the Quran, He will give you another criterion as well, namely a light from Himself and a special illumination by which you will be able to discern truth from falsehood. These are special graces from Allah to those who have faith, and therefore, the righteous servant said: '...And I did not do [any of] this of my own accord...' (*al-Kahf*: 82).

Thus, there is a spirit for the material by means of which bodies live; this is the spirit which Allah blew into Adam *peace be upon him* when he was still in the clay stage, and there is another spirit for moral values and psychic matters, a spirit of inspiration which gives life to the heart. This is the spirit of which Allah says: 'And thus, too, [O, Muhammad] have We revealed unto you a life-giving message (*ruh*), [coming] at Our behest...' (*ash-Shura*: 52).

Therefore, orientalist also raise an objection to Allah's Words: 'O, you who have attained to faith! Respond to the call of Allah and the Prophet whenever he calls you unto that which will give you the life...' (*al-Anfal*: 24). They say,

‘How can He say this to them when they are already alive?’ We answer this by saying that what is meant here is the life of the heart and the life of moral values, and therefore He *the Most High* says: ‘...Light upon light!’ (*an-Nur*: 35).

He then tells us how these people will be rewarded: ‘...He will admit [them] into gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide. Well-pleased is Allah with them, and well-pleased are they with Him...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22). He will admit them into these gardens because He is well pleased with all their deeds, and when Allah is well pleased with someone, He showers them with His goodly favour and is never displeased with them thereafter. This goodly favour will be a grace from Allah and an addition to the delights of paradise which they will have already attained.

The Sacred Hadith says that after He admits them into paradise, and they see all the delights therein which are beyond their wildest dreams; the True Lord *Glorified is He* will speak to them by saying: ‘Today I shower you with My goodly favour so that I shall never be displeased with you again.’⁽¹⁾

His Words ‘...and well-pleased are they with Him...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22) mean that they will be pleased with His gifts and graces or that they were always pleased with them and He with them—this is from a perspective which is beyond the confines of time.

The word ‘gardens’, a plural, means that each believer in the Hereafter will have more than one garden; this is further indicated by His Words in the chapter of *ar-Rahman*: ‘But for those who of their Lord’s Presence stand in fear, two gardens [of paradise are readied].’ (*ar-Rahman*: 46) They say that there will be multiple gardens because He is addressing a plurality of people, each of which will have one garden, or alternatively because He is addressing the ‘two nations’ of men and jinns, each of which will have their own garden.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...They are Allah’s partisans...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22). Earlier, He said of disbelievers and hypocrites: ‘...Such as these are Satan’s partisans...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19); thus, Allah passed judgment on them: ‘...Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Satan, who will truly be the losers!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19) In this verse, He says of the faithful: ‘...They

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari* (6067) and *Muslim* (5057)

are Allah's partisans...' (*al-Mujadala*: 22); thus, He passes judgment on them: '...Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Allah, who shall attain to a happy state!' (*al-Mujadala*: 22)

Compare the two partisans and see the difference between the two groups: those shall be the losers, and these shall be the successful. Allah's partisans are those who chose to have allegiance to His Guidance, coming together in its name, supporting it, carrying its banner, and defending it.

He again uses the word 'Oh' in this verse to draw our attention, meaning: 'Pay attention to this verdict, and do not forget it or become oblivious of it.': '...Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Allah, who shall attain to a happy state (*muflihin*)!' (*al-Mujadala*: 22) This word is derived from *falah* which means literally to farm the earth by ploughing it and readying it for sowing. That *falah* preserves material life, whilst this *falah* preserves the bliss of the life to come.

the chapter of

al-Hashr

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Hashr* ⁽¹⁾ :

 سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies
God; He is the Almighty, the Wise [1]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 1)**

First of all, notice the connection between the end of the chapter of *al-Mujadila* and the chapter of *al-Hashr*. The last verses of the chapter of *al-Mujadila* tell us of the partisans of Satan by saying, ‘...Such as these are Satan’s partisans. Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Satan, who will truly be the losers’ (*al-Mujadala*: 19) and then of the partisans of Allah by saying: ‘...They are Allah’s partisans. Oh, verily, it is they, the partisans of Allah, who shall attain to a happy state!’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22)

In this verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* wanted to give us a practical example of each partisan and a working demonstration of these theoretical principles by telling us what some of Satan’s partisans did, and what some of Allah’s partisans did.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extol Allah’s limitless Glory...’ (*al-Hashr*: 1) There are similar verses to this one in the Quran. In the chapter of *al-Hadid*, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘All that is in the heavens and on earth extols Allah’s limitless Glory...’ (*al-Hadid*: 1); He says this without repeating ‘all that is’; the

(1) This chapter is number 59 in the written order of the Quran, revealed in Medina. It contains 24 verses and was revealed in between the chapter of *al-Bayyina* and the chapter of *an-Nasr*.

difference between them is that the repetition of 'all that is' means that Allah has forces that dwell in the heavens alone, and others that dwell on earth alone. There are also forces of Allah *the Almighty* that dwell both in the heavens and on earth.

Thus, His Words 'All that is in the heavens and on earth extols Allah's limitless Glory...' (*al-Hadid*: 1) refer to those forces which serve both the heavens and the earth, and when He says: 'All that is in the heavens and on earth extols Allah's limitless Glory, for He alone is Almighty, Truly Wise!' (*al-Hashr*: 1); this means the angels of the heavens alone and the angels of earth alone.

This means that everything in the universe extols Allah's Glory. He *the Most High* says: '...and there is not a single thing but extols His limitless Glory and Praise...' (*al-Isra*': 44); this means that everything in the universe extols Allah's Glory: '...but you [O, men] fail to grasp the manner of their glorifying Him!...' (*al-Isra*': 44)

This means that the glorification of all things is real glorification, not merely an allusion to how they are evidences of Allah's existence, as some exegetes say.⁽¹⁾ Were this true, Allah *Glorified is He* would not have then said: '...but you [O, men] fail to grasp the manner of their glorifying Him!...' (*al-Isra*': 44)

So everything in the universe glorifies Allah with its own language, and we do not understand these languages, for every kind of being has its own special language with which it communicates. Did the ant not say: '..."O, you ants! Get into your dwellings, lest Sulaiman (Solomon) and his hosts crush you without [even] being aware [of you]"' (*an-Naml*: 18)? Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* heard this and understood it because of the understanding Allah vouchsafed to him.

The hoopoe said: '...I have encompassed [with my knowledge] something that you have never yet encompassed [with yours] for I have come to you from Sheba with a tiding sure!' (*an-Naml*: 22) Therefore, it showed a sound understanding of Allah's Oneness, for it said: 'Behold, I found there a woman ruling over them, and she has been given [abundance] of all [good] things,

(1) *Az-Zamakhshari was one of those who said this.*

and hers is a mighty throne. And I found her and her people adoring the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made these doings of theirs seem goodly to them, and [thus] has barred them from the path [of Allah] so that they cannot find the right way.’ (*an-Naml*: 23-24)

Allah *Glorified is He* says about inanimate objects: ‘...And We caused the mountains to join Dawud (David) in extolling Our limitless Glory and likewise the birds, for We are able to do [all things].’ (*al-Anbiya*: 79) Thus, it is a real glorification with a spoken language, which can be understood by those to whom Allah vouchsafes this understanding.

By meaning of ‘extolling glory’ is to ascribe total uniqueness to Allah in His Essence, for His Essence is not like other essences and in His Attributes, for His Attributes are not like the attributes of others, and in His Acts, for His Acts are not like the acts of others.

Furthermore, we must understand all this in the light of ‘...there is nothing like unto Him...’ (*ash-Shura*: 11) and with the knowledge that He *the Exalted* alone possesses absolute perfection. If we should read, for example, ‘...and [He] is established on the throne of His Almightyness...’ (*al-Hadid*: 4), we should not say that He ‘sits’ or ‘settles’ as we do; rather, He is established in a way that suits His Majesty *Glorified is He*.

When you read ‘Limitless in His Glory is He Who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship [at Mecca] to the Remote House of Worship...’ (*al-Isra*: 1), do not say that this is beyond human power and ability, for Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not transport himself by his own human power, but he was taken, and Allah’s act is not like the act of mankind, nor is His Power like their power.

The root word *s-b-h* (from which *sabbaha*, ‘to extol the glory of’ comes) occurs in the Quran with its different derivations more than 179 times. Sometimes it occurs as *subhan* added to the Name of Allah, meaning ‘glory be to’ and sometimes added to the pronoun as in ‘glory be to Him’ or ‘glory be to You’; sometimes it is given as a verb meaning ‘to extol the glory of’, whether perfect (*sabbah*), imperfect (*yusabbih*) or imperative (*sabbih*).

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extol (*sabbah*) Allah’s limitless Glory...’ (*al-Hashr*: 1). The perfect tense is

used here, referring to the time before Allah created man to extol Him; furthermore, once He created him, he extolled Him. Thus, He says: 'All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth extol Allah's limitless Glory...' (*al-Hashr*: 1); man extols Allah's Glory and will continue to do so until the Day of Resurrection.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...for He alone is Almighty ('*aziz*), Truly Wise.' (*al-Hashr*: 1) The word '*aziz*' literally means something rare and unique as is the case when Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'nor is this difficult ('*aziz*) for Allah.' (*Fatir*: 17) Another of its meanings is one who overcomes all and cannot be overcome.

The 'truly wise' one is he who puts all things in their proper places with precision and wisdom. Allah is Wise in His creation, in His Will, in His Decree and in His Measure. Consider the hair on the human body, for example; you will find that some of it is shaven, some trimmed, and some not cut at all, like the hair of the eyebrows and the eyelashes. This is because it was created for a wise purpose, which it cannot fulfil if we cut it. The wisdom behind it is the protection of the eyes from dust, so it is not trimmed or shaved.

Consider as well the temperature of the human body; you will find that its average is 37°C. The body keeps itself at this temperature: whether he lives at the equator or the North Pole; a man stays at this temperature. Thus, there is wisdom in the human body itself: 'Just as [there are signs thereof] within your own selves. Can you not then see?' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 21)

In the same body, you find that one organ (the liver) is 40°C, whilst another is 9°C (the eyes); yet neither one disturbs the temperature of the other: the temperature of the liver does not spread to the eye, for example. This and many other examples like it show the wisdom of the Creator *Glorified is He*.

The discourse then moves us on to a practical example of Allah's partisans and Satan's partisans:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ مَا
ظَنَّكُمْ أَن يَخْرُجُوا وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَأَنَّهُمْ
أَلَّهِ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

It was He who drove those of the People of the Book who broke faith out from their homes at the first gathering of forces — you [believers] never thought they would go, and they themselves thought their fortifications would protect them against God. God came up on them from where they least expected and put panic into their hearts: their homes were destroyed by their own hands, and the hands of the believers. Learn from this, all of you with insight! [2]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 2)

The pronoun ‘He’ refers to the True Lord *the Most High* Whose Glory is extolled by all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth and Who is Almighty and truly Wise. ‘He it is Who turned out of their homes, at the time of [their] first gathering [for war] such of the followers of earlier revelation as were bent on denying the truth...’ (*al-Hashr*: 2). This refers to the Jews of Banu Nadir,⁽¹⁾ who lived on the outskirts of Medina until the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* exiled them to Khaybar; this was ‘the first gathering’.

In this verse, the word *li* (which usually means ‘for’) means ‘at’ when He says: ‘...at (*li*) the time of [their] first gathering...’ (*al-Hashr*: 2); this usage is also found in His words ‘Be constant in [your] prayer from (*li*) the time when the sun has passed its zenith...’ (*al-Isra*: 78). The second gathering took place when the Muslims exiled them from Arabia to the Levant during the rule of Caliph ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him*.

The meaning of ‘gathering’ (*hashr*) in this verse is that they were all gathered in one narrow place; the verb *inhashar* means to enter a very narrow

(1) They are a Jewish tribe who lived on the outskirts of Medina. They had a treaty with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* for four years, but they helped the idolaters of Mecca to invade Medina at the Battle of Uhud, so the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* banished them from the city.

place where there is not enough room. In other words, the size of the object is greater than the size of the container.

However, why did Allah turn the Jews out of Medina to Khaybar, and then to the Levant? They say it is because they betrayed the covenant they had made with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and declared war on him, and even aided the idolaters of Mecca against him. It is strange that originally the enmity existed between the Jews and the disbelievers of Mecca because the Jews were people of the Book and followers of a Divinely revealed religion, whilst the disbelievers of Mecca were idolaters.

Due to this, the Jews used to predict their victory over the disbelievers by saying: 'The time is nigh for the coming of a new prophet in whom we will believe and with whom we will slay you as 'Ad and Iram were slain.'⁽¹⁾ Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And whenever there came unto them a [new] revelation from Allah, confirming the truth already in their possession—and [bear in mind that] a foretime they used to pray for victory over those who were bent on denying the truth—whenever there came unto them something which they recognised [as the truth], they would deny it...' (*al-Baqara*: 89).

When the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* immigrated to Medina, they took him as their enemy and helped the disbelievers of Mecca fight against him after they had sworn to him they would never take sides against him: 'We will be neither with you nor against you.' Yet, they broke this covenant and helped the disbelievers of Mecca; they sent Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf to Mecca with forty Jewish knights, where they met with Abu Sufyan and went with him, alongside forty more knights from Mecca, to the *Ka'ba*, upon whose hangings they swore to join together in fighting Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Message.⁽²⁾

However, the True Lord *the Most High* informed His Messenger of what they were plotting against him by saying: 'He it is Who turned out of their homes, at the time of [their] first gathering [for war], such of the followers of

(1) *Suhayli, Ar-Rawd Al-Unuf, Vol. 1, p. 369*

(2) *Al-Baghawi, Tafsir*

earlier revelation as were bent on denying the truth.’ (*al-Hashr*: 2) Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* exiled them to Khaybar.⁽¹⁾

What fuelled the enmity between the two sides was that a tribe had a treaty with Banu An-Nadir, and ‘Amr ibn Umayya Al-Hadrami killed two men from that tribe, with whom the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* also had a treaty. They wanted to pay the blood money jointly, so the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* went to Banu An-Nadir and asked them for help in paying the blood-money that Al-Hadrami had incurred for killing the two men. Upon this, Ka‘b ibn Al-Ashraf (whom we spoke of earlier) said, ‘Muhammad has come and stood needy before us!’

They were the ones who said, ‘Allah’s hand is shackled’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 64) and ‘Behold, Allah is poor while we are rich.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 181)

So, they said, ‘This is a chance for us to humiliate Muhammad!’ Ka‘b ibn Al-Ashraf gestured for a group of them to go onto a rooftop and drop a boulder on Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to get rid of him. However, Allah *the Almighty* told His Messenger what they had plotted, and the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* walked away from them on foot. When he did not come back, they asked about him, and a man said, ‘I saw him enter Medina.’⁽²⁾

The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* went to Muhammad ibn Maslama, Ka‘b’s foster-brother, and told him of Ka‘b’s plot to assassinate him. He instructed him to go and kill Ka‘b with the company of three men whom he trusted. He took three men of the tribe of Banu Al-Harith with him and went to Ka‘b’s fortress and called for him. There was friendliness between them because they were foster-brothers, so Ka‘b answered him. Muhammad said, ‘I need a loan from you.’ Ka‘b replied, ‘You know that I do not give loans without collateral.’ He said, ‘I have it here.’

Thus, Ka‘b came down to him, but it was the first night of his wedding celebration, and his bride prevented him from leaving by saying, ‘I detect the scent of blood on this voice.’ However, he went down anyway, and

(1) *A town north of Medina*

(2) *At-Tabari, Tafsir*

Muhammad took hold of him, took him away, and killed him. This enraged Banu An-Nadir, and so they made their pacts with the disbelievers of Mecca against Prophet Muhammad.⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'You did not think [O, believers] that they would depart [without resistance]' (*al-Hashr*: 2). Allah is speaking to the believers: It did not cross your minds that the Jews would leave Medina, for it seemed very unlikely. Why is this so? This is due to the Jews seeming immune and powerful, backed by large numbers and resources; so, how could they possibly banish them given they were a minority?

The believers thought that it was unlikely they would be able to drive them out, but this was only surmise, not certainty, and they still had some hope that the Jews would be driven out. They experienced this in the Battle of Badr, where they were the smaller force, yet defeated, and routed the much larger disbelievers' forces.

Simultaneously, the Jews '... thought that their strongholds would protect them against Allah.' (*al-Hashr*: 2) They also thought that they had fortresses powerful enough to protect them from defeat against the believers; it was a mere thought not certainty since they too remembered the day of Badr when the Muslims were the victors despite their numerical and material disadvantage.

The cautious thing to do is to act on surmise if it is connected with something good; if you think that something is good, then do it. Allah says: 'But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah."' (*al-Baqara*: 249) So, when it comes to good things, it is better to act on surmise.

There are many examples of this principle in our ordinary lives. For example, if we want to travel somewhere and someone tells us that a certain road is dangerous or slow and that we should take another road, and then another person says, 'Nonsense, I just travelled by that road yesterday and it was fine.' Whose opinion is best to follow?

We will follow the first opinion because it is the most cautious. We will not lose anything if we follow the road recommended by the first man, whilst

(1) Cf. *Ibn Sayyid An-Nas*, 'Uyun Al-Athar, Vol.1, p. 393

the second opinion is not guaranteed, and we might follow the road and find that indeed it is dangerous or slow.

When the poet Abu Al-‘Ala’ Al-Ma‘arri⁽¹⁾ came to have sound doctrine, he opposed the stargazers and those who deny the Resurrection. He said about this issue:

The stargazer and the doctor each suppose

That the bodies will not be resurrected, but I say:

If you are right, then I lose nothing,

Yet, if I am right, you will be the ones to lose!

We have here two opinions which basically said that the Jews would not be driven out: the Muslims thought that the Jews would not go, and the Jews thought that their fortresses would protect them. Furthermore, when good things come to you where you least expected them, you are all the more joyful; so, the joy of the Muslims when the Jews were driven out was all the greater, as was the woe of the Jews.

His Words ‘protect them against Allah’ (*al-Hashr*: 2) imply that they believed in Allah and were certain of the glad tidings their scriptures had given them of Muhammad’s coming. Because they rejected his message, they did not say, ‘against the Messenger of Allah’; rather, they said, ‘against Allah’.

He continues: ‘but Allah came upon them in a manner which they had not expected and cast terror into their hearts’ (*al-Hashr*: 2). Allah *the Almighty* did not literally come upon them, but it was His chastisement and punishment that came upon them, startling, routing and terrifying them ‘which they had not expected’ (*al-Hashr*: 2).

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and [He] cast terror into their hearts...’ (*al-Hashr*: 2). The word ‘cast’ means to throw forcefully, and the ‘heart’ is what pumps blood around the body. When Allah *the Almighty* casts terror and dread into the heart, the heart then pumps it around the rest of the body so that it feels severe dread and panic all over.

(1) 363-449 A.H.

This implies that the object of this 'casting' enters into every corner of the container into which it is thrown, just like how, when building, they cover the wall with cement. Why do they do this? They do so because they cast the cement onto the wall forcefully so that it feeds every fissure in the wall.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[and thus] they destroyed their homes by their own hands as well as the hands of the believers.' (*al-Hashr*: 2) This means that their stronghold homes, which they thought would protect them, were destroyed by their own hands. This may also mean that they did not do so directly, but it was their fault that their homes were destroyed by the Muslims, or it may mean that they really did destroy their own homes so that the Muslims could not benefit from them once they were gone.

There are instances of this in their history when they destroyed houses, cut down trees, and despoiled the land so that they leave rubble behind them. Whenever they left a place, they would destroy it, take with them everything from it and unhinge doors and windows.

Allah *the Exalted* says: 'Learn a lesson, then, O, you who are endowed with insight!' (*al-Hashr*: 2) To 'learn a lesson' means to use what has happened in the past to predict what will happen in the future. Do not rush things, for Allah is with you.

Vision is reflection that begins with sight and then moves on to 'insight'; insight can only develop if the sight is strong and the vision is alert, leading to rational conviction on the part of the one who has this insight. Thus, it is the True Lord *Glorified is He* who causes this insight to develop, by His Grace.

وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبُهُمْ
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٣﴾

**If God had not decreed exile for them, He would have
tormented them [even more severely] in this world.
In the Hereafter they will have the torment
of the Fire [3] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 3)**

Allah *the Almighty* decreed that they and their families leave Medina for Khaybar at first, and then for the region of Dera'a in the Levant. None of

them remained in Arabia except Ibn Abu Al-Haqiq and Huyay ibn Akhtab, the father of Safiyya, the mother of the believers.

Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...punished them in [this] world’ with death, ‘and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire.’ (*al-Hashr*: 3) What this means is that, though, they may escape the suffering of this world, they will not escape the suffering of the Hereafter. Therefore, the True Lord *the Most High* says to His Prophet Muhammad: ‘and whether We show you some of what We have promised them or We take you in death, it is to Us they will be returned.’ (*Ghafir*: 77)

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾

**Because they set themselves against God and His
Messenger: God is stern in punishment towards
anyone who sets himself against Him [4]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 4)**

Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘That’, namely their banishment, ‘because they opposed Allah and His Messenger’ (*al-Hashr*: 4), they cut themselves off from Allah and His Messenger and therefore all of this happened to them. They declared war on Allah and His Messenger and his mission.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And whoever opposes Allah—then indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.’ (*al-Hashr*: 4) Some say that this sentence is coupled with the previous sentence, but in fact, it is a new sentence. After telling us about the Jews, and what they did, Allah *the Exalted* and then begins a new sentence, disconnected to what preceded it, affirming both a principle and a fact of nature.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘whoever opposes Allah’ (*al-Hashr*: 4); this means that whoever shows enmity to Him and waging war on His Guidance, his fate will be severe retribution from Allah, to Whom he showed enmity instead of drawing near to Him and attaching himself to Him. This is a principle of faith of which one must never lose sight.

Notice here that the verse first says, ‘That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger’ (*al-Hashr*: 4), and then in the other sentence says, ‘And whoever opposes Allah’ without mentioning His Messenger Muhammad

peace and blessings be upon him. This means that to obey the Messenger is to obey Allah, and that to cut oneself off from Allah is to cut oneself off from the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* at the same time, for Allah says: 'He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah.' (*an-Nisa'*: 80)

One of the unique distinctions Allah gave to His Messenger apart from all other messengers was that the right to legislate for his community by saying: 'And whatever the Messenger has given you take, and what he has forbidden you refrain from.' (*al-Hashr*: 7)

Some want to connect this verse with the matter of the distribution of the spoils after the Battle of Hunayn alone,⁽¹⁾ but the principle of Sacred Law is that laws are based on the general applicability of the words, not the specificity of the circumstance.

The True Lord *the Most High* says:

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ لَيْسَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَى
أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ

**Whatever you [believers] may have done to
[their] palm trees — cutting them down or
leaving them standing on their roots — was done
by God's leave, so that He might disgrace those
who defied Him [5] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 5)**

After the Jews had done what they did, and the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* had banished them, Allah *the Almighty* commanded him to cut down some of their date palms, to undermine them and to show the power of Islam. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* therefore commanded the companions to do so, and some of them cut the palms, whilst others left them. The Jews responded to this by saying, 'O, Muhammad, were you not forbidden from despoiling the earth?' So, Allah revealed: 'Whatever you have cut down of [their] palm trees or left standing on their trunks—it was by permission of Allah.' (*al-Hashr*: 5) As long as Allah *the Exalted* commanded

(1) *Az-Zamakhshiri was one of those who held this opinion.*

that the trees be cut, no one could say, ‘This is despoiling the earth’ because to cut down a few date-palms was more beneficial than harmful. It corrected unsound beliefs, which far outweighs than the harm done by cutting them.

This verse implies equivalence between cutting the palms and leaving them standing because one companion would cut one down and say, ‘I cut this down for you, O, Messenger of Allah’, and another would leave them and say, ‘I left this one for you, O Messenger of Allah!’ This means that it was right that some be cut and others left. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and so He would disgrace the defiantly disobedient.’ (*al-Hashr*: 5) This means to humiliate them and abase them. The defiantly disobedient are those who are beyond the limits of Allah’s Commandments and His Guidance.

The True Lord *the Most High* says:

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾

You [believers] did not have to spur on your horses or your camels for whatever gains God turned over to His Messenger from them. God gives authority to His messengers over whoever He will: God has power over all things [6] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 6)

The things which believers take from disbelievers by Allah’s consent are of two kinds: *fay*’ and *spoils*. *Fay*’ means what is taken from them without warfare, and *spoils* means what is taken from them when they are defeated on the battlefield, which are distributed amongst believers in a designated manner.

Allah says about the *spoils* of war: ‘And know that anything you obtain of war booty—then indeed, for Allah is one fifth of it and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer.’ (*al-Anfal*: 41) The rest is then distributed amongst those who fought in the battle. As for *fay*’, it is not given to fighters but to Allah, His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the poor.

Here, the True Lord *the Most High* is speaking to us about the *fay*’ which He allowed the Muslims to take: ‘and what Allah restored [of property] to His

Messenger from them...' (*al-Hashr*: 6); this refers to what you take from disbelievers without any armed struggle.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...you did not spur for it [in an expedition] any horses or camels' (*al-Hashr*: 6). What this means is that you did not have to rush to it. This evokes the image of a knight who is keen to fight and yearns to die as a martyr.

As for 'or camels' (*al-Hashr*: 6), what this means is that Allah blessed you by making this provision come right to you lawfully without any fighting and without your having to expend any effort in getting it.

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...but Allah gives His messengers the power over whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.' (*al-Hashr*: 6) This means that this *fay*' came to you as a grace from Allah and a gift to His Messenger; it did not come from your own efforts or your own warfare, but Allah gave his hosts mastery over it. This is akin to what He said before: 'and [He] cast terror into their hearts.' (*al-Hashr*: 2) The meaning of 'His messengers' in this verse is His hosts or His forces. The True Lord *the Most High* says:

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ
وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

Whatever gains God has turned over to His Messenger from the inhabitants of the villages belong to God, the Messenger, kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, the traveller in need – this is so that they do not just circulate among those of you who are rich — so accept whatever the Messenger gives you, and abstain from whatever he forbids you. Be mindful of God: God is severe in punishment [7] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 7)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'It is for Allah and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives, orphans and the wayfarer.' (*al-Hashr*: 7) So, this *fay*' is for Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him*; meaning the treasury of the Muslims and all expenditure in Allah's Cause and for the Messenger to spend from, and then it is for near kin, orphans, the needy and the wayfarers.

No part of the *fay*’ is given to the warriors because it came by way of a treaty without any warfare, so they have no part in it. They only have a share of battle-spoils, which the Muslims take from their defeated enemies in war; the warriors play a part in this, so they have a right to that part of it that Allah has assigned them: ‘And know that anything you obtain of war booty — then indeed, for Allah is one fifth of it and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and the orphans, the needy, and the wayfarer.’ (*al-Anfal*: 41) Warriors receive four-fifths of the battle spoils, whilst the final fifth is distributed to the same people who receive the divisions of the *fay*’. He continues: ‘so that it will not be a perpetual distribution amongst the rich from amongst you.’ (*al-Hashr*: 7) This refers to the money which circulates amongst the rich only without being passed on to the poor and the needy. Therefore, when the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* distributed these possessions, he did not give any of them to the *Ansar* but only to the poor Emigrants. When he noticed that the *Ansar* were somewhat put out by this, he said to them, ‘Are you not content that they return home with (the trifles) of this world, whilst you return home with the Messenger of Allah alongside you?’⁽¹⁾

Moreover, you do not need this wealth; you are so wealthy you are able to share your wealth with your fellow Emigrant brothers. It was about the *Ansar* that Allah said: ‘give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation.’ (*al-Hashr*: 9)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And whatever the Messenger has given you take, and what he has forbidden you refrain from.’ (*al-Hashr*: 7) This verse is a rebuttal to those who say that this principle is restricted to this particular situation alone; yet, Allah made it clear to them that this is a general principle because words are interpreted according to the generality of their content, not the specificity of their circumstances.

From this verse, we can deduce that the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* had the right to legislate and that his Lord gave him free rein in that regard. We can also adduce this verse to rebut those who say we need to follow the Quran only without the need for the *Sunnah*.

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (3992)

The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'There will soon be a time when a man will recline on his couch and be told of my sayings and will say, "We and you have the Book of Allah, so we shall make lawful what we find it says is lawful and forbid what we find it forbids."' ⁽¹⁾

People from time to time emerge who deny the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and say, 'We have the Book of Allah, so we shall make lawful what we find it says is lawful, and forbid what we find it forbids'; they deny the Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and doubt their authenticity as an excuse not to follow them. Ironically, this stance of theirs is itself an affirmation of the Messenger's veracity, for he was not unaware of this eventuality, yet he warned us of it so we can be immune against it. Had they not made this claim, we would have said, 'O, Messenger of Allah, you said there will soon be a time when a man will recline on his couch and be told of my sayings, and will say, "We and you have the Book of Allah", yet how could this be, O, Messenger of Allah, when no one has said such a thing?'

So their foolish words only prove that the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* spoke the truth when he said this. The True Lord *the Most High* humiliates them by allowing them to say this exact thing so that we can use the words of the Prophet's enemies as proof of the truth of the Prophet's words.

Without even knowing it, they affirm that the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was speaking the truth. This Hadith exposes their stupidity. These fools like the idea of using the Noble Quran against the Hadith; one of them might say to you, 'Speak to me about the Quran only.' Glory be to Allah! Do you seek to use the Quran against the Messenger who brought you the Quran when you would not even know the Quran without him?'

We say to those who make such statements: How many *rak'as* are in the dawn prayer, the midday prayer, the afternoon prayer, the sunset prayer and the evening prayer? He will say that they have two, four, four, three, and four *rak'as* respectively. Furthermore, if we ask him where he gets this from, he will say, 'The *Sunnah*!'

(1) Related by Abu Dawud (3988), At-Tirmidhi (2588), Ibn Majah (12) and Ahmad (16546)

So, you must follow the *Sunnah* in order to pray, and you cannot understand the practical application of many laws without recourse to the *Sunnah*. How does he know that the sunset prayer has three *rak'as* (kneeling rounds)? From the Quran, which he is solely loyal, or from the *Sunnah* which he denies? How can he worship according to the words of the Messenger of Allah, and then deny these words?

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah; but those who turn away - We have not sent you over them as a guardian.' (*an-Nisa'*: 80) To obey the Messenger is to obey Allah, and this is only logical since messengers only pass on what they were told to say.

If the obedience of Allah coincides with the obedience of His Messenger, then we obey them both; if Allah gives a general commandment, such as the command to pay the *zakat*, and the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* gives the details of this, then we obey Allah in the general command, and we obey the Messenger in the details.

The Quran is not only a book of laws like some previous scriptures, but it is a miraculous scripture. Because of this, Allah included some principles and laws in it and left the rest for the Messenger to explain and clarify in the Blessed *Sunnah*, giving him the right to legislate with these words: 'And whatever the Messenger has given you take, and what he has forbidden you refrain from.' (*al-Hashr*: 7) Allah *the Almighty* gave His Messenger the general freedom to legislate and to give the details of what the True Lord included in the Quran in a general way. This is a unique matter by which the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* is distinguished apart from all other prophets and messengers.

The Prophet's legislation is thus prescribed and permitted by the Quran itself, and therefore, if anyone comes to you with a ruling and says to you, 'Where does it say this in the Quran, for I cannot find it there?', say to him, 'The proof of this ruling in the Quran is Allah's Words: "And whatever the Messenger has given you take and what he has forbidden you refrain from.'" (*al-Hashr*: 7)

When a ruling is given in the Quran in a general sense, and then the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* explains it in detail and

applies it in practice, this is the end of the matter. An action is the strongest expression of command, for a spoken command might be theoretical, and some people might seek to interpret it in one way or another, but when the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* actually does it himself, the ruling becomes binding because the one who did is the one who legislated it.

Did the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* implement the punishment of stoning, or did he not? The Messenger of Allah did, and his action is a practical proclamation. An action is not like a spoken proclamation which might be explained away. The Messenger of Allah judged that Ma'iz and Al-Ghamidiyya be stoned and also a Jewish man and woman who tried to evade their punishment on the grounds that they were married and free.

The action of the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* is the basis of the ruling, and so their argument is proved to be baseless. What remains is the action of the legislator, the Messenger to whom Allah gave free rein to legislate with word, deed, and tacit approval.

The Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* is an intrinsic part of the Quranic message. An analogy to explain this from our daily lives is that someone might say, 'If an employee is absent from his job for fifteen days, the law states that he will be fired.' Yet, another employee comes with the constitution in his hands and says, 'I have read the constitution and cannot find this law anywhere in it, so what you are saying about the employee being fired is unconstitutional.'

Yet, we respond to him: What the constitution says about this is that the employment authority is empowered to deal with these matters. So, there is an authority which makes the rules for employment conduct and is empowered to do so by the constitution. Every legal clause pertaining to employment is governed by this delegation of power by the constitution to the relevant authorities or committees that deal with secondary legislation.

Likewise, we pray as the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* prayed despite the fact that the method of prayer and the number of *rak'as* in each prayer is not mentioned by Islam's constitution, i.e. the Quran; rather, it came to us through the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and we are commanded to obey him.

Likewise, we give the amount of *zakat* that the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* specified, and we perform the pilgrimage to the House of Allah in the way the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* did. As for the prayer, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Pray as you have seen my pray’⁽¹⁾; and he said about the pilgrimage: ‘Take your rites from me.’⁽²⁾

Another example of this is also found in Allah’s Words: ‘Say, "I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine"' (*al-An‘am*: 145).

Now, if dead animal and blood are forbidden, then it would be logical to say that this applies to fish as well and that we cannot eat such organs as the liver and spleen because of the blood they contain. Yet, although the True Lord *Glorified is He* forbade the dead animal and blood in general, the Messenger of Allah, to whom He gave free rein to legislate said, ‘Two dead animals and two kinds of blood have been made lawful for me: the two dead animals are fish and locusts, and the two kinds of blood are the liver and the spleen.’⁽³⁾

This is a case where the *Sunnah* adds specificity to what the Quran says in general terms. Now if someone says, ‘The Quran forbids dead animals, while fish and locusts are as such, so why do we eat them?’ We answer that fish and locusts are not conventionally considered to be meat; this is why the saying goes ‘When locusts abound, meat is cheaper.’ This indicates that locusts are not really meat.

As for fish, they are not like the dead animals which Allah forbids because the forbidden kind of is all that could be slaughtered so that its blood runs out, whilst fish do not have the same kind of flowing blood; the same is true of locusts.

Thus, the reason they are permitted to eat when found dead is that they do not have the same kind of flowing blood which could be harmful to man if he were to eat it.

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (595)

(2) Related by Al-Bayhaqi in *Al-Kubra* (5/125); Muslim narrates the like of it (2286).

(3) Related by Ahmad (5465) and Ibn Majah (3305) on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him

The same is true of the liver and spleen: they do not really contain blood since blood flows whilst the liver and spleen are solid and coagulated, the remnant of the blood from which they are formed.

Another important example which illustrates the role where Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* explains the rulings of the Quran is the case of the threefold pronouncement of divorce on a woman and how she can then become lawful again for the one who divorced her.

The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Divorce is twice.' (*al-Baqara*: 229) Then: 'And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him. And if the latter husband divorces her [or dies], there is no blame upon the woman and her former husband for returning to each other if they think that they can keep [within] the limits of Allah. These are the limits of Allah, which He makes clear to a people who know.' (*al-Baqara*: 230)

Some people who wish to free themselves from this religion's laws that might cause them some effort have tried to interpret this verse in a certain way. A man might divorce his wife three times, using up all the chances that the *Shari'a* has given him so that he cannot remarry this wife unless she first marries someone else and is divorced by him. There are those who say, based on the literal meaning of the aforementioned verse, that since 'marriage' only means a contract, this means that the woman who has been divorced three times can make herself lawful for her ex-husband again by simply making a marriage contract with another man and then dissolving it.

Now had the *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* not intervened, it would have been possible to understand things in this way, and say that a mere contract of marriage with another would allow the wife to return to her former husband; furthermore, had the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* not stipulated a condition for this, namely she must marry another man with a real marriage, not merely a fake one, people would play around with this ruling and conduct these fake marriages that we hear about were it not for this.⁽¹⁾

(1) *The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him said, 'May Allah curse the man who makes a fake marriage (with a woman to allow her to return to the former husband) and the one (the former husband) he does it for.' Related by Abu Dawud (1778) and Ibn Majah (1925)*

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Not until you taste his sweetness, and he tastes your sweetness.’⁽¹⁾ This means a real marriage involving conjugal relations. This is extremely hard on the husband, and this was the intention of the legislator to whom Allah gave the right to legislate as a punishment for the man who thinks that pronouncing divorce is a trifling matter.

We may observe here that when the *Shari’a* is precise or difficult, this is mostly not because Allah wants to make things hard for people, but that He wants to make them fearful of doing certain things. He wants them to stay clear of the pronouncement of divorce and not resort to it unless it is absolutely necessary.

Now, people who say, ‘We have the Book of Allah with us’ and reject the saying of the Messenger of Allah, have they not read the Word of the True Lord *Glorified is He* in His Book: ‘O, you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority amongst you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day’ (*an-Nisa’*: 59)?

Thus, any dispute that occurs must be about an internal matter within the perimeters of obedience to Allah; and it must be referred to an authority which can bring the dispute to an end. The matter must be referred to Allah *the Exalted* and to the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him*; how, then, could anyone dare to try to ruin Islam by rejecting the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and claiming that the lawful and unlawful can be known through the Book of Allah alone? These people should be cautious that they do not become those of whom Allah says: ‘It is but a just recompense for those who make war on Allah and His Messenger.’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 33) It is waging war on the Prophet to reject any word, deed, or approval of his by way of denying his Hadiths.

These people also say that there are too many Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah. We say to them that the mission of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* lasted twenty-three years, and everything he said was a Hadith. Every word which left his lips was a blessed Hadith, and were we to count his words alone, it would fill countless volumes—never mind his deeds.

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (2445) and Muslim (2587)

Every word he heard spoken by another person, and approved of, is also a Hadith, as well as every deed someone did in his presence without his objecting to it. So how many Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* must there be? They are the second source of Islamic legislation after the Quran, so how could we dispense with it for the sake of some outside minority opinion, which the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* warned us about?

The True Lord *the Most High* then says: ‘And fear Allah’ (*al-Hashr: 7*); this means to be conscious of Allah lest you disobey, for disobedience would nullify your good deeds. Obedience of Allah is no good without obedience of His Messenger: ‘indeed, Allah is severe in penalty’ (*al-Hashr: 7*).

When we hear Allah say ‘indeed, Allah is severe in penalty’ (*al-Hashr: 7*), the mind immediately assumes that there is a sin which deserves punishment, and the retribution here is severe because the sin is grave, namely the disobedience of the Messenger of Allah; for Allah commands us to accept everything the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* brings us and refrain from everything that he forbids us.

Allah’s retribution for a sinner will come at a time when no one will have any prestige, wealth, status, or lineage to protect him from Allah; so, if the weaknesses of society tempt you to commit a sin or cooperate in one, you should fear Allah, for His retribution is severe.

However, how does this punishment come to a sinner? It gradually comes to a sinner in his person such as in the form of a painful illness which does not only cause the sinner to spend his money, but also forces him to ask others to help with his treatment or the treatment of someone he loves. The hosts of Allah’s punishment might not wait until the Hereafter, but might come into the sinner’s life gradually without his realising it, and this is the more severe kind of punishment.

We know that punishment only comes to people in proportion to their sins. To say Allah is severe in punishment does not mean that His severest punishment will afflict those who commit minor sins; rather, each person will be requited according to the measure of his sin—yet, no matter how light this punishment is, it is still severe and painful.

Furthermore, if the True Lord *the Most High* is severe in punishment to those who disobey Him, He is also forgiving and merciful, as He says: ‘Allah is Much Forgiving, a Dispenser of Grace.’ (*al-Baqara*: 218) This means He is forgiving of the sins you may have committed and then asked your Lord for forgiveness for them, and He is ‘a Dispenser of Grace’ (*al-Baqara*: 218) to you, not punishing you immediately for your sins because of His compassion for you and His love that you return to Him.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

The poor emigrants who were driven from their homes and possessions, who seek God’s favour and approval, those who help God and His Messenger – these are the ones who are true – [shall have a share] [8] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 8)

Those who most deserve these *fay*’ are the Emigrants who were driven from their homes, leaving behind all that they owned, ‘seeking’ by their emigration ‘bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure’ (*al-Hashr*: 8). They seek an increase in worldly provision, for favour is related to the things of this life, whilst pleasure is related to the bliss of the Hereafter.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘And Allah has favored some of you over others in provision.’ (*an-Nahl*: 71)

They seek Allah’s pleasure in the Hereafter. A sacred Hadith relates that the True Lord *the Most High* will ask the inhabitants of paradise about their state, and they will say, ‘You have given us more than we deserve’, whereupon He will say, ‘Shall I not give you more?’ They will say, ‘What could be more than this?’ He will further say, ‘Indeed, I will enfold you in My pleasure so that I will never be angry with you again.’⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...and supporting Allah and His Messenger’ (*al-Hashr*: 8). This means that by their emigration and their leaving behind

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (6067) and Muslim (5057)

their possessions and homes, they seek to aid the cause of Allah's religion and the call of the Messenger of Allah: 'those are the truthful.' (*al-Hashr*: 8) They are true in their faith, true in their emigration and true in bearing the consequences.

Were it not for this sincerity in faith, it would not have been easy for them to do anything in the cause of the religion, and they would have never left their homes and their possessions.

After the Emigration, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* looked upon Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, who was dressed in a simple leather garment, and said, 'Look what faith has done to your companion!'⁽¹⁾ Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr had been one of the richest men in Mecca, and they called him 'Quraysh's spoiled boy.' People would even pay to have their clothes washed alongside his clothes so that they would imbibe the fragrance of the perfume on them.⁽²⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ
فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ
خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنَفَ نَفْسِهِ فَاُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Those who were already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who migrated to them for refuge and harbour no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over them- selves, even if they too are poor: those who are saved from their own souls' greed are truly successful [9] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 9)

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And [also for] those who were settled in Medina and [adopted] the faith before them' (*al-Hashr*: 9); this means the abode is for the physical body: a man goes there to have relief from the day's toil and life's motions, and faith is for the heart. Just as the abode is the place where the body returns, faith is the place where the heart returns in all its affairs for management and regulation in all life's motions.

(1) *Ibn Al-Jawzi, Safwat Al-Safwa, and Abu Na'im, Hilyat Al-Awliya'*

(2) *Related by Al-Hakim (4892)*

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘they love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given.’ (*al-Hashr*: 9) What this means is that the *Ansar* are happy about what their brothers from the Emigrants took from the *fay*’ not harbouring any rancour or envy in their souls on account of it, nor boasting to them about what they gave them. None of them said, ‘So-and-so took this from me.’ All the Emigrants took something from the *Ansar* except those of them who abstained such as ‘Abd Ar-Rahman ibn ‘Awf, who said to the Helper assigned to be his brother, Ibn Ar-Rabi‘, ‘Keep your wealth and your family to yourself and show me the marketplace.’ Then, he ended up becoming the richest man in Medina.⁽¹⁾ He ended up owning a thousand slaves, and when they asked them about him after he died, one of them said, ‘By Allah, had you come to us when he was sitting with us, you would not have recognised him.’

Despite this, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* had a vision of him slowing his entrance into paradise, and when he asked him what slowed him down, he answered, ‘They asked me, O, Messenger of Allah, about this and that.’

The *Ansar* did not stop at this generosity; rather, they went as far as preferring the Emigrants to their own selves. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation...’ (*al-Hashr*: 9). Generosity is to give some of what you own; preferring another to yourself, however, is to give everything you have and keep nothing back for yourself. The *Ansar* would prefer their brothers from the Emigrants to their own selves, giving them all that they needed.

‘Privation’ is severe poverty; yet, despite the fact that they suffered from this poverty and need, they preferred their brethren to themselves. As we said before, the *Ansar* gave us such an example of giving that was utterly unprecedented in history.

The verse then asserts this fact: ‘And whoever is protected from the miserliness of his soul—it is those who will be the successful.’ (*al-Hashr*: 9) The one who attains to a happy state is he whom Allah saves from this

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (3496)

blameworthy trait. Some people say that miserliness means stinginess, but actually it is a broader and stronger word than that because stinginess actually arises from it. It signifies something is scant; thus, you will certainly be protective of the little amount that remains so that it does not run out. Miserliness penetrates your very person and all your actions, and we might say that miserliness concerns the heart, whilst stinginess concerns the shell of the body.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

Those who came after them say, ‘Lord, forgive us our sins and the sins of our brothers who believed before us, and leave no malice in our hearts towards those who believe. Lord, You are truly compassionate and merciful’ [10]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 10)

Who are those who would come after the Emigrants and *Ansar*? The Emigrants and *Ansar* were the generation of the Companions, and those who came after them were the Followers. The generation of the Followers were the best generation after the Companions of the Messenger of Allah, and all those who follow their way share in their superiority. The more closely they adhere to the way, the more they share in the superiority.

One of the supplications of these Followers is that they say, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith.’ (*al-Hashr*: 10) They pray for them because the fact that they preceded them (and us) in faith is what preserved for them (and us) the faith in which they (and we) rejoice and are proud. Thus, this generation is owed a debt by every Muslim who came after them because they were either martyrs in Allah’s Cause who gave their lives for the sake of this religion or scholars who devoted their lives to the preservation and dissemination of this religion.

He then says, ‘...and put not in our hearts [any] resentment towards those who have believed...’ (*al-Hashr*: 10), because they attained to a high rank which no other can attain, it is as if they are saying, ‘So remove, Lord, any unworthy thoughts from our hearts so that we neither resent nor envy them.’

The word ‘resentment’ means to have ill feelings against someone for attaining what one cannot possibly attain; it is a negative emotion of the soul.

Allah says: ‘Our Lord, indeed, you are Kind and Merciful.’ (*al-Hashr*: 10) Kindness means to ward off harm and refrain from punishing, and Merciful means to replace punishment with reward. For example, say you have an employee who is lax in his work in a way that deserves a reprimand; you are kind to him by excusing him the reprimand, and then your heart softens further towards him, and you give him a gift.

The discourse now turns once more to a discussion of the hypocrites:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
لَئِنْ أَخْرَجْتُمُ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ
لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ لَئِنْ أَخْرَجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ
قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُوَلُّنَّ الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا يُصْرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Have you [Prophet] considered the hypocrites who say to their fellows, the faithless among the People of the Book, ‘If you are driven out, we shall go with you – we would never listen to anyone who sought to harm you – and if you are attacked, we shall certainly come to your aid’? God bears witness that they are in fact liars. [11] If they are driven out, they will never leave with them; if they are attacked, they will never help them. Even if they did come to their aid, they would soon turn tail and flee – in the end they would have no help [12] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 11-12)

In this verse, the True Lord *the Most High* exposes Jews and hypocrites, reveals their secrets and tells His Messenger of what they said in secret. He says to him: ‘Have you not considered’? (*al-Hashr*: 11) This implies that when Allah tells His Prophet something, it is surer than the vision of his own eyes. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...those who practise hypocrisy’ (*al-Hashr*: 11); these people had three leaders: ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy, ‘Abdullah ibn Al-Akt’a and Rafi ibn Zayd.⁽¹⁾ These people took their chance and said to Banu

(1) *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*

An-Nadir, 'If Muhammad seeks to exile you, do not leave.' When the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* ordered them to leave, they said, 'Give us respite, O, father of Qasim, for death would be easier for us than to do this. Give us ten days to prepare.' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave them this ten-day respite, and when they refused to leave, he besieged them for twenty-one days until they gave up and raised the banner of surrender.

Allah *Glorified is He* reveals the hypocrisy of these dissemblers by saying: 'Have you not considered those who practise hypocrisy, saying to their brothers who have disbelieved amongst the People of the Scripture' (*al-Hashr: 11*)? He describes them as disbelievers in this verse because although they had begun as followers of a Divine religion, when the one they knew was coming and of whom they had tidings in their scriptures, came to them, they disbelieved in him; thus, He calls them disbelievers.

This is why He says about the people of the Book: 'they are not [all] the same; amongst the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night, and prostrating [in prayer].' (*Al- 'Imran: 113*)

One of these was 'Abdullah ibn Salam, the story of whose conversion to Islam you all know; he is the one who said, 'By Allah, I knew Muhammad when I saw him as well as I knew my own son. I knew Muhammad even better!'

What do they say to them? The hypocrites said, 'If you are expelled' (*al-Hashr: 11*); what they meant is that if Muhammad exiles you from Medina and its surrounding areas, 'we will surely leave with you.' (*al-Hashr: 11*) They said this to them privately and kept it secret between them.

Allah *the Exalted* calls them 'brothers' because they were, indeed, united in enmity against the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and the call of truth, or He calls them 'brothers' in the sense that they made a pact of allegiance or brothers in the sense of disbelief in this Message.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'and we will not obey, in regard to you, anyone—ever.' (*al-Hashr: 11*) In other words, it is as if they are saying, 'We shall never obey anyone who tells us to fight you.' Allah continues their

speech: ‘and if you are fought, we will surely aid you.’ (*al-Hashr*: 11) Then Allah testifies and proclaims that these words are a lie: ‘But Allah testifies that they are liars.’ (*al-Hashr*: 11) This is because they are hypocrites, and deceit runs in their blood.

He then exposes their lies and reveals their intentions: ‘If they are expelled, they will not leave with them, and if they are fought, they will not aid them. And [even] if they should aid them, they will surely turn their backs’ (*al-Hashr*: 12); Allah intends that they will flee the battlefield; ‘then [thereafter] they will not be aided.’ (*al-Hashr*: 12) Thus, Allah *the Exalted* spoke the truth about them. This is the way of the hypocrites in every time and place; they lie even to Allah, and then lie about their lying.

The True Lord *the Most High* says:

لَا تَنْتَرُ أَشَدَّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾

**Fear of you [believers] is more intense in their hearts
than fear of God because they are people devoid of
understanding [13] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 13)**

This means that however much they display their pride and seeming strength; they are terrified of the Muslims in their souls and fear them even more than they fear Allah. Allah *the Almighty* expresses this concept when He says: ‘Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them.’ (*at-Tawba*: 14)

Had the True Lord *the Most High* wanted, He would have requited them and taken them to task as only the Almighty Determiner can. In that case, they would have said it was a natural phenomenon. However, the True Lord wanted to humiliate them and punish them by the Muslims’ hands because they were the ones who faced up to them.

Therefore, they fear you more than they fear Allah because they are materialistic people who only believe in material things and things they can see. This is why when you read the Talmud, you find it speaking about material things and contains no mention of the Hereafter.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘That’, which refers to their fear of the Muslims and their lack of fear of Allah; furthermore, He says: ‘because they are a

people who do not understand' (*al-Hashr*: 13). Indeed, they do not grasp the truth because the Muslims fought against them by Allah's direction only.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَى مُحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ بَأْسُهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ
شَدِيدٌ تَحْسَبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّى ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

Even united they would never fight you, except from within fortified strongholds or behind high walls. There is much hostility between them: you think they are united but their hearts are divided because they are people devoid of reason [14] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 14)

Since they fear the Muslims and are terrified of them, they avoid confronting them in open war in the desert. They do not have the courage to face a Muslim soldier, and therefore, 'They will not fight you all except within fortified cities.' (*al-Hashr*: 14)

Strongholds are fortified by digging trenches around settlements so that no one can enter them. The trench must be wide, deep and steeply inclined so that a horse cannot jump across it or ride down into it. Also, a settlement can be fortified by building a wall around it that no one can climb; this is the meaning behind 'or from behind walls.' (*al-Hashr*: 14) They would also fortify their houses by blocking the doors with wooden crossbars, so no one could open them.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Their violence amongst themselves is severe' (*al-Hashr*: 14); this means that they act as though they love one another when really they hate and despise each other. Allah also says: 'You think they are together, but their hearts are diverse.' (*al-Hashr*: 14). You are led to think they are united outwardly, but in truth, their hearts are in dispute. This was the case, for example, with Banu Qurayzha and Banu An-Nadir, and it is natural that such people differ and have hearts at odds, for they have no truth to unite them and to bring together their hearts and bodies.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'That is because they are a people who do not reason.' (*al-Hashr*: 14) This means they do not have the rationality with which to distinguish between truth and falsehood, along with between right and wrong.

The reason, as we said, is the middle stage of the senses; it is what examines things that have been sensed and judges between them; when it is convinced by something, it passes it on to the heart so that it becomes a stable belief. So, what can you expect from people who will not use their reason?

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

**Like those who went just before them, they have
tasted the result of their conduct and a painful
punishment awaits them [15] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 15)**

The True Lord *the Most High* compares the state of the Jews with the state of their brothers, the polytheists of Mecca: ‘those shortly before them; they tasted the bad consequence of their affair’ (*al-Hashr*: 15); what this refers to is the evil consequences of their polytheism and their opposition to the call of truth. This is an allusion to the events of the Battle of Badr.

‘...With [yet more] grievous suffering awaiting them [in the life to come]’, this suffering will cause them pain; and the Noble Quran gives several attributes to the suffering of the Hereafter – may Allah save us all from it – each of which has an aspect that suits the state of those who suffer it. One person’s suffering will be severe, another’s grievous, and another’s shameful.

We said before that there are some people who are not hurt by blows, but are hurt by words. Therefore, a man ⁽¹⁾ once went to Mu`awiya ⁽²⁾ wanting to show him how powerfully he could bear the persecution of his enemies who hated him. He said, quoting the poet Abu Dhu`ayb Al-Hadhli:

I keep patient before my enemies to show them

That I do not cower before the incidents of time

So, Mu`awiya responded to him with another line from the same poem:

Yet when death sinks its claws into you,

No ransom you offer will do you any good.

(1) The story of the man who wanted to show Mu`awiya the strength of his endurance

(2) A Companion and Caliph (d. 60 A.H.)

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَنِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ
 قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

**Like Satan, who says to man, ‘Do not believe!’
 but when man disbelieves, says, ‘I disown you;
 I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds’ [16]
 (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 16)**

That is, what the hypocrites did by making a pact with the Jews that they would go out with them if they were sent out, and fight alongside them if they were fought, and then forsaking them, was akin to what Satan did when he deceived the son of Adam and tempted him into danger, and then said to him when he obeyed him and disbelieved: ‘I am not responsible for you’. He got what he wanted from him, and then moved on to find someone else.

So, this is a comparison, and the True Lord gives us comparisons to explain unknown things with known things, such as when He says, ‘The parable of those who spend their possessions for the sake of Allah is that of a grain out of which grow seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains...’ (*al-Baqara*: 261). The reward of charity is not known, so He explains it to us with something we can see: the plants of the earth, and how the grain is multiplied up to seven hundred times.

‘...Behold, I fear Allah, The Lord of all the worlds!’ Satan fears Allah, the Lord of the worlds because when he was cast out of paradise he said: ‘...Grant me a respite till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead.’ (*al-A'raf*: 14)

Satan’s words here ‘...Behold, I fear Allah, The Lord of all the worlds’ mean that all what Satan does is to lead you into sin and then abandon you; for Satan betrays all who follow him. He throws the rope of hope to you, yet when he is needed, he forsakes you and abandons you. This is what Satan does with his allies.

Allah says, ‘And, lo, Satan made all their doings seem goodly to them, and said, “No one can overcome you this day, for, behold, I shall be your protector...”’ (*al-Anfal*: 48). And elsewhere, Satan says to his followers: ‘...It is not for me to respond to your cries, nor for you to respond to mine...’

(*Ibrahim*: 22). Satan makes it clear here that he will not come to the aid of any of those who followed him; Satan will save no one from Allah's chastisement. They will call upon him so save them after they had followed him and responded to the evil temptations he presented to them, but he will forsake them and say: '...Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you – but I deceived you...' (*Ibrahim*: 22).

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

Both will end up in the Fire, there to remain.

That is the reward of evildoers [17]

(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 17)

That is, this will be the fate of both Satan and those who followed him in disbelieving in Allah, His Messenger and His commandments. The True Lord declares that their fate will be the same: to abide in hell because both rebelled against Allah.

So, those who deny the religion and deny Allah's guidance will be requited with an abode in hell. When something which is opposed to Allah's guidance is presented to you, you must put Allah's guidance above everything else, and know that Satan, who tempts you to contravene Allah's guidance, will enter hell before you and abide therein. You will not be able to bring him out of it, and he will not be able to save you from it.

You do evil to yourself by disbelieving in Allah and belying His Messenger and by rejecting Allah's Commandments; and abiding in hell is the fate of evildoers. Here, the word 'evildoers' means the disbelievers who committed the gravest sin of all, which is to disbelieve in Allah and associate partners with Him. And Allah has said: '...for, behold, such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an awesome wrong!' (*Luqman*: 13) Associating partners with Allah is considered evil or wrong, as you make something which neither created nor provided a partner to Him who created and provided; and you make human beings associates with Allah in lawgiving; thus, you ban what Allah has allowed, and allow what Allah has banned.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمتْ لِغَدٍ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ
نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

You who believe! Be mindful of God, and let every soul consider carefully what it sends ahead for tomorrow; be mindful of God, for God is well aware of everything you do [18] Do not be like those who forget God, so God causes them to forget their own souls: they are the rebellious ones [19] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 18 - 19)

The call of ‘O you who have attained to faith’ is a divine command to which we must listen and see what Allah wants of us. Just as we took the gifts of lordly sustenance from Him, we must also take the gifts of divine ordain, which are the responsibilities of the Sacred Law: ‘...Remain conscious of Allah; and let every human being look to what he sends ahead for the morrow....’

After calling them by the attribute of their faith, He then commands them to be conscious of Him. This means that theoretical faith is not enough on its own; rather, it must be backed up by practical faith and adherence to Allah’s Commandments.

‘...And let every human being look to what he sends ahead for the morrow...’ The command here is phrased in an emphatic way, using the Arabic letter *Lam*; and ‘every human being’ implies universality: every human being is required to look to what he sends ahead for the Day of Resurrection.

He says ‘...for the morrow...’ to indicate its imminence. This means that Allah’s way of guidance which He has chosen for you to adjust the motions of your life and give you happiness in your worldly lives, is not the end of the matter; and those who oppose this way of guidance and stray from it, spreading corruption in land or living off the backs of others, will not come to an end of their affair simply by the ending of their worldly lives. Rather, there will be a ‘morrow’, and there will be a reckoning and requital. So, do not let this fact leave your mind, and let it guide your life’s actions; and beware lest it escape your attention.

Because of the importance of this, He repeats again the command for the Allah-consciousness: ‘...And [once again]: Remain conscious of Allah....’ So, the reference to looking at one’s deeds and observing them comes between two commands for Allah-consciousness; and Allah-consciousness, as we said, is the practical part of faith. It is as though He were saying to you: ‘Beware of knowing your final end but not working for it and striving for it’.

And by this way of guidance, people find happiness and man feels safe about his possessions and dignity. We understand from ‘...and let every human being look...’ that every person must observe his faith, and consider what it is that he wants, and what his goal is, and what his destination is. For others, too, have their goals and desires in life.

You only possess your own self; so beware of comparing yourself to others, for each of us has his goals in life, and one might conflate and admix his goal with other things. Look at yourself in isolation, because others will not be asked about you and you will not be asked about them. That is why the word ‘human being’ (*nafs*) is given here in the singular form.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says to us, ‘...and let every human being look to what he sends ahead for the morrow...’, He is only calling us to reckon ourselves and consider what we have sent ahead so that we may become aware that there are shortcomings in our conduct or that we have strayed from the straight path.

A man’s life is too short for him to squander it and let it slip through his hands without even noticing it. Your Lord created you and left you to enjoy the pleasant things of the life of this world until the age of fifteen, without making you responsible for anything.

He only held you morally responsible once you had become fully formed and fully mentally conscious; and then He made for you a moment of self-reflection at the age of forty, which is the age of full maturity and the age of prophethood: ‘...And so, when he attains to full maturity and reaches forty years, he [that is righteous] prays: “O my Lord! Inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of You with which You has graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right [in a manner] that will meet with Your goodly acceptance; and grant me righteousness in my offspring [as

well]. Verily, unto You have I turned in repentance: for, verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves unto You!’” (*al-Ahqaf*: 15)

He then repeats the reward: ‘It is [such as] these from whom We shall accept the best that they ever did, and bad deeds We shall overlook: [they will find themselves] among those who are destined for paradise, in fulfilment of the true promise which they were given [in this world].’ (*al-Ahqaf*: 16)

Look, then, at this grace Allah gives to His servants – and could there be any more excuses once the age of forty has been reached? And furthermore, who can guarantee to even reach the age of forty? So, the intelligent person races against time with good deeds, snatching as many of them from the passing days as he can; for he might not even reach the age of forty.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks of the Hereafter using the word ‘morrow’ to express how near it is; and indeed, the morrow is even further away than it because it might come to you in the blink of an eye. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘Paradise is nearer to you than the strap of your shoe – and so is Hell.’⁽¹⁾

From the word ‘morrow’, we understand that in the life of this world you live by material means, whilst tomorrow you will live by the Owner of all means: there will be no sun, no moon, no farmland, no work, and no effort.

Therefore, when The True Lord speaks about the Hereafter, He says, ‘And the earth will shine bright with her Lord’s light...’ (*az-Zumar*: 69) because the sun will not be there; the only light there will be the light of the Divine Essence.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, ‘And be not like those who are oblivious of Allah, and whom He therefore causes to be oblivious of [what is good for] their own selves....’ There was a commandment to be conscious of Allah and follow His guidance, and now there is a prohibition against forgetting Allah. This means that when you follow Allah’s guidance, you must keep remembering Allah all the time because He is your Lord and your Allah for whom you are working.

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (6007) and others

Notice here that the noble verse does not say ‘Do not be oblivious of Allah’, but says, ‘And be not like those who are oblivious of Allah....’ It is as though forgetting Allah is not something that those who believe would ever be expected to do.

To forget means to have knowledge of something and then become oblivious of it because of other distractions, or to be so heedless of it that you forget it. This is because the mind contains both the forefront of the consciousness and the margins of the consciousness: a fact enters the forefront of the consciousness, and as long as it remains there you remember it.

If it moves to the margins of the consciousness, however, you forget it and need to be reminded of it so that it returns to the forefront of the consciousness. Otherwise, if everything were to remain in the forefront of the consciousness, you would not be able to notice anything else.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Never has Allah endowed any man with two hearts in one body...’ (*al-Ahzab*: 4). One of the blessings Allah has given you is that you can recall information from the margins of your consciousness to the forefront when you make an effort to remember them.

But how could Allah be known to them, only for them to forget Him? They say that Allah *Glorified is He* has been known to all mankind since they were in the stage of seeds in the loins of their forefather Adam *peace be upon him* and since Allah took from them this pledge: ‘And when your Lord took the seeds of the children of Adam from their loins, He made them bear witness against themselves: ‘Am I not your Lord?’ – to which they answered: “Yea, indeed, we do bear witness thereto!...”’ (*al-A'raf*: 172) The True Lord addresses this atom in you which you took from your father Adam *peace be upon him* for He alone can do this; He speaks to atoms just as He speaks to the earth and to the bees.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* took this pledge from us so that it would be a proof against us if we became heedless of Him or forgot Him: ‘...[Of this We remind you,] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, “Verily, we were unaware of this.” Or lest you say, “Verily, it was but our forefathers who, in times gone by, began to ascribe divinity to other beings beside Allah; and we

were but their late offspring: wilt Thou, then, destroy us for the doings of those inventors of falsehoods?"' (*al-A'raf*: 172-173)

It is as though He were saying to you: 'Beware of saying this – beware of being afflicted by this obliviousness which causes you to forget the remembrance of Allah, for you have no excuse to do so because He took a pledge from us all, and then sent His successive messengers to continually remind us of this pledge'.

So, when a person becomes oblivious, this atom performs its immunising function and reminds him and turns him back to Allah. They say that this atom is the self-reproaching soul in man; and when it weakens, and does not deter one from sinking into sin, society should deter him instead. And if society offers no deterrent because it is also corrupt, we said that this is when Heaven intervenes by sending a new messenger.

This went on until the message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came, and Allah made his community the best of communities ever brought forth for the good of mankind because it took upon itself the role of the prophets in enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: 'You are indeed the best community that has ever been brought forth for [the good of] mankind: you enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong...' (*Al-Imran*: 110). Therefore, Allah made them witnesses over all other communities, '...so that [with your lives] you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind and that the Apostle might bear witness to it before you...' (*al-Baqara*: 143). By this, this community took on the role of the messengers, and we were given an assurance that our society will never be bereft of the constituents of goodness and those who bear the lights of guidance; and however, much truths may be obscured and images darkened, we will always have an exemplar of goodness and guidance to return people to righteousness.

The meaning of '...and whom He therefore causes to be oblivious of [what is good for] their own selves...' is that because of how they forget Allah, and their worldly possessions and offspring distract them from Allah, heedlessness overcomes them to such an extent that they forget even their own selves meaning that they forget what is good for them. When they deny themselves what is good for them, it is as though they forget their own selves.

When a man separates himself from his Lord and Creator, he lives a straitened life, no matter what comforts and delights of this world he attains. Yet the believer, who is connected to his Lord, leads a happy life even if he does not have enough provisions to last him the day. Therefore, despite their riches and prestige, some people go to a poor man and ask for his prayers because they know that he has something they do not have: he has a connection to his Lord.

If a person knows what his goal is, he will feel that the way towards it is easy, and will be able to reach it. People are only different because they have different goals in life. Identifying one's goal is more difficult than actually attaining it; a poet expressed this by saying :⁽¹⁾

Who can show me my destination before my journey:

How, when destinations only determined after journeys?

The true goal is that which is followed by no further desires; and were you to follow the chain of all the goals in the world, you would find that they lead to the Hereafter, where there is success, happiness and bliss forever without end.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* then says, '...[for] it is they, they who are truly depraved (*fasiqun*)!' The verb *fasaqa* means for a fruit to break away from its skin when it is ripe. Before the fruit is ripe, it adheres tightly to its skin and cannot be peeled away from it. Then, when the fruit becomes soft, its skin breaks away from it so that you can peel it easily.

This is the *fasiq*, who strays from Allah's guidance: he breaks away from it easily and is pleased to be rid of it. To break away from Allah's guidance means to cut your connection to His commandments and prohibitions.

This *fisq* is of two kinds: small and great. This raises a problematic question: does *fisq* here mean simply to go beyond the limits of obedience to the Messenger? But this is applied to all sinners. That is, the person who does this may be a believer in the guidance, but separate from it partially.

We can say that every sinner is guilty of *fisq*, in that he believes in the guidance but breaks away from it partially. Yet the *fisq* which the True Lord

(1) Ibn Ar-Rumy (221-283 A.H.)

is speaking about here is the most extreme form of *fisq*, namely to break away from faith entirely.

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

There is no comparison between the inhabitants of the Fire and the inhabitants of Paradise – and the inhabitants of Paradise are the successful ones [20]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 20)

This is something logical and natural. They are not equal in this human world, so how could they be equal in the sight of Allah, the Just Judge? Far be it that this be the case! To hold them equal is nothing but foolishness: how could the one who lives according to his passions be equal to the one who lives according to the guidance of his Lord and Creator?

In the life of this world, these two represent the Paradise and Hell of the Hereafter. Just as Paradise and Hell are not equal, those destined for them are not equal in this world.

We can find evidence here for the existence of Paradise and Hell in the Hereafter. Were those who sin and despoil the land and harm other people to evade punishment, and were it all to end with their deaths, this would mean that they would be the fortunate ones, whilst the people of faith and righteousness would be the losers; and this is something that no mind can accept.

Some of these people seek to justify their evasion of Allah's guidance by saying, 'Even if there is a punishment and requital, we will burn away in the fire of hell and that will be that'. They forget about the reality of the Hereafter, which is that it is an eternal abode whose bliss will never fade, nor its torment ever end: '...every time their skins are burnt off We shall replace them with new skins so that they may taste suffering [in full]...' (*an-Nisa*: 56).

I remember that once we spoke about this verse and repeated it to a group of orientalists, and seven of them embraced Islam in a single sitting. This was because they realised that in these words was manifested one of the scientific miracles of the Quran.

The Quran was the first to say that the skin is the source of sensation and the locus of taste; for before this, they used to say that the brain was responsible for sensation.

The words ‘...those who are destined for (*ashab*) the fire and those who are destined for (*ashab*) paradise...’ suggest the presence of some kind of companionship (*musahaba*); it is as though there is a familiarity and friendship between them. The sinners are the companions of hell and the righteous are the companions of paradise, and each of them is familiar with its companions and content with them; indeed, they each yearn for them. Paradise yearns for its denizens and companions, and awaits them; and likewise, hell burns and rages with desire for its denizens and companions.

‘...Those who are destined for paradise – it is they, they [alone] who shall triumph!’ Indeed, they shall triumph by winning paradise and Allah’s favour, and gaining relief from the toils and suffering of the life of this world. Their thoughts will now run their lives; as soon as they think of something, it will appear there before them without any effort.

لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ
وَبِذَلِكَ الْأَمَثَلِ نُضَرُّهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

If We had sent this Quran down to a mountain, you [Prophet] would have seen it humbled and split apart in its awe of God: We offer people such illustrations so that they may reflect [21] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 21)

Indeed, were this to happen, and were this Quran to be sent down upon a mountain, its state would be ‘...humbling itself, breaking asunder for awe of Allah...’. Despite its firmness and strength, the mountain would humble itself and break asunder, crumbling in fear of Allah. Every atom in it fulfils its purpose and follows its Lord and Creator’s instructions. This would be the case if a mountain were morally responsible, instead of an inanimate object.

So, what would happen if the Quran were sent down upon it? It would crumble just as Mount Sinai (At-Tur) crumbled in the story of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: ‘And when Musa (Moses) came [to Mount Sinai] at the time

set by Us, and his Lord spoke unto him, he said, "O my Lord! Show [Yourself] unto me, so that I might behold you!" Said [Allah], "Never can you see me, however, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then – only then – will you see Me." And as soon as his Lord revealed His Glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Musa (Moses) fell down in a swoon...' (*al-A'raf*: 143).

This means that the mountain broke asunder because of the terror of this event. Of course, mountains are not morally responsible, and they were offered this trust but refused to bear it: 'Verily, We did offer the trust [of reason and volition] to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains: but they refused to bear it because they were afraid of it...' (*al-Ahzab*: 72). But their responsibility is to remain as they are stores of nourishment and growth, to give human beings their provisions.

The linguists say that the Arabic word *law* (which here is translated as '*had*', as in 'Had we...') expresses that the second verb did not occur because the first one did not happen. The Quran was not sent down to the mountain; but had it happened, you would really have seen the mountain humbling itself and breaking asunder, crumbling into dust. As for the story of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* what happened was that the mountain remained in one piece but sank into the ground like a peg: 'And were you like the mountain, this would have happened to you too because you are not ready to see Allah nor receive anything directly from Him'.

If you say: 'So how can we see Allah in the Hereafter?' we answer: Allah will make us in another form and a different creation, which will allow this to happen. He will create us in a form which is able to see Him. Do you not see that in this world, you might have poor eyesight so that you have to go to the optician and have an operation that allows you to see well? It is like this. Therefore, He says: 'some faces will on that Day be bright with happiness, looking up to their Lord.' (*al-Qiyama*: 22-23)

'...And [all] such parables We propound unto men so that they might [learn to] think.' Parables (*amthal*, singular *mathal*) are comparisons which make things easier for us to understand, and impart wisdom unto us; and the parable is a vast field in Arabic literature.

A *mathal* is also a proverb, something that happened in the past and was summed up in a few concise words which people then began to use in all similar situations.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* uses parables in the Noble Quran on many occasions, to make it easier for us to understand the matters of the unseen of which we have neither knowledge nor experience. Therefore, He gives us parables to illustrate the pinnacle of doctrine, that is the Oneness of Allah; and He gave us the parable of His light; and He gave us parables of the disbelievers.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* gives us the parable of the mountain here, saying that if the Quran were revealed to it, it would humble itself and break asunder in fear of Allah. Thus, The True Lord expresses a metaphysical concept using physical representations, to make it easier for people to understand and increase its clarity, awe, and power – for you human beings are not stronger than mountains.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, ‘...so that they might [learn to] think’; that is, that they might think with true logic and fear Allah, and keep themselves away from falling into falsehood, and thus protect themselves from Allah’s chastisement and wrath.

So, He inspires them to think, having inspired in them the sense of the greatness and the awesomeness of what would happen to the mountain if the Quran were sent down upon it.

‘...And [all] such parables We propound unto men, so that they might [learn to] think.’ It is a characteristic of the Quran’s rhetorical style that it uses parables to explain things; a parable means to connect something unknown with something very well known. When a poet⁽¹⁾ wanted to describe a hunchback to someone who had never seen one, he said:

The veins of his neck are short, and his nape is bent,
As though he thinks someone is about to strike him.
It is as though his neck was once slapped,
And he fears it is going to happen again, so prepares for it.

(1) Ibn Ar-Rumi

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

**He is God: there is no god other than Him. It is He who
knows what is hidden as well as what is in the open,
He is the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy [22]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 22)**

We said that when the third person pronoun 'He' is used, the mind immediately thinks of Allah because He is always present and never absent, even if we call him with the third-person pronoun [which in Arabic is called *gha'ib*, meaning literally 'absent']. In another verse, He says, '...Say, Allah! – and then leave them to play at their vain talk.' (*al-An'am*: 91) That is, respond to them by saying 'Allah!', for this word alone is enough, and indicates that there is no other Allah besides Him.

The Messenger of Allah *peace be upon him* said: 'The best thing the prophets before me said was "There is no deity but Allah."' ⁽¹⁾ The fact that the Messenger of Allah said only 'Allah!' implies that Allah absolved him of the need to pronounce the negation and affirmation of '...save whom there is no deity...' (*al-Hashr*: 22). That is, perhaps if I say 'there is no deity...', I might die before completing the phrase; so He said: No, your Lord knows that you will say it, so He will not take your spirit before you finish it.

The words 'He is Allah...' (*al-Hashr*: 22). *Huwa Allah*, the pronoun 'He' refers to the (absent) third person because in this created world you do not see the Creator, but only to infer His presence using your mind. So, the one you cannot see, and who appears to be absent from you, is Allah, your Lord and Creator. The same is the case with 'Say, "He is Allah, The One God"' (*al-Ikhlās*: 1): the 'absent' third-person pronoun comes first, before being specified by name. This is because a nominal sentence sometimes contains both the reference and its referent.

For example, when He says 'Muhammad is Allah's Apostle...' (*al-Fath*: 29), 'Muhammad' is the name of a person known to them, and the unknown thing that needs to be stated is that he is Allah's Apostle; so how can you present

(1) Narrated by At-Tirmidhi (3585)

something unknown as information about something known? The scholars say that it is as though He were saying to them: ‘Muhammad, whom you know, and whose life story you know, and whose trustworthiness you know, is the one I have chosen as an apostle to you.’ It is as though the subject here is the proof of the predicate; Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is himself made the proof of the truth of his message.

Now ‘Allah’ is the name of The Exalted Being, the Name which indicates His Essence; all His other Names indicate His Attributes, such as ‘The Living, The Sustaining, the All-Powerful, The Giver of Life’ and so on. Therefore, The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us to begin everything by mentioning Allah’s Name because it is the Name to which all things respond, and by its means your body obeys you and reacts to your will.

Then His words ‘...save whom there is no deity...’ negate the existence of any deity other than Allah, and affirm Godhood for Allah alone without any partner. The first one to testify to this fact, that there is no deity but Allah, is Allah Himself: He testifies it to Himself, and then the angels testify to it, and then those endowed with knowledge: ‘Allah bears witness– and [so do] the angels and all who are endowed with knowledge – that there is no deity save Him...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 18). This is a testimony of the Essence for the Essence; and then the angels gave a testimony of witnessing, and then those endowed with knowledge gave a testimony of reasoning, proof and evidence.

As long as Allah made this testimony for Himself, and no one made any objection or counter-claim, the claim must be given to the claimant if no objection can be made: ‘Say, “If there were – as some people assert – [other] deities side by side with Him, surely [even] they would have to strive to find a way unto Him who is enthroned on His Almightyness”’ (*al-Isra*: 42). He is ‘...The One who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind...’ (*al-Hashr*: 22). We said that claims are given to their claimants as long as there is no objection, and thus His words ‘...The One who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind...’ mean that there has never been any objection to this, and there never will be; for Allah, who knows all

that is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature's senses or mind, has informed us of this.

The word *ghaib* means all that which is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, and this is of two types: first, there is that which can be ascertained by following the preliminary clues which lead to it, such as an algebra exercise which gives you certain information to allow you to deduce the solution; this is beyond your perception now, but you have the preliminary clues which can lead you to it later. This is the case with new inventions like television and radio: they were *ghaib* (unperceived) for a time, and then became apparent for all to see.

Something might be imperceptible for you but not for someone else: when something is stolen from you, it becomes imperceptible to you, but not to the one who stole it.

As for that which is beyond the reach of a created being's perception and known only to the True Lord *Glorified is He* and no one else, this is the absolutely imperceptible which only Allah knows, and for which there are no preliminary clues that might allow it to be discovered. Therefore, He says, 'He [alone] knows that which is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, and to none does He disclose aught of the mysteries of His Own unfathomable knowledge, unless it be to an apostle whom He has been pleased to elect [therefor]...' (*al-Jinn*: 26-27).

As for '...all that can be witnessed by a creature's senses or mind...' (*al-Hashr*: 22); *Al-shahada* means all that is visible (*mashhud*). So, what is special about Allah's Knowledge of visible things, since even human beings have this knowledge? We examined this issue when we were explaining Allah's words 'Verily, He knows all that is said openly, just as He [alone] knows all that you would conceal.' (*al-Anbiya*: 110) The True Lord *Glorified is He* invites us to marvel at His Knowledge of what people conceal; but what is special about His Knowledge of what is said openly, when everyone has this knowledge? They say that this means communal loud speech.

We explained this by saying: imagine we are attending a protest rally against someone or other. Indeed, this involves loud speech, and we can hear it; but can you identify which voice belongs to which person? No one can do

this but Allah who knows what is said out loud in every time and place. He knows what is said loudly in every moment, in every place in the world – and who can do this but Allah?

‘...He, The Most Merciful, The Dispenser of...’ What is the relationship between The Most Merciful, The Dispenser of Mercy, and the One who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature’s senses or mind? The meaning of this is that the One who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception is the Most Merciful in that He conceals the secrets of every person from the rest of mankind so that the motions of life can proceed safely; it is in His mercy that Allah keeps our secrets and private matters hidden.

Therefore, the noble Sacred Law allows you to poke the eye of the one who spies on you and invades your house without your knowledge. When a man spied on the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* through a hole in the door, he said: ‘By Allah, had I seen him I would have poked his eye!’⁽¹⁾

This is because houses are built for keeping privacy, and Islam preserves the Muslim’s privacy in his own home, in his private room and in his bedroom. Therefore, the True Lord commands us to ask permission before entering and to teach this to our young children so that they imbibe this etiquette; and He warned us not to spy and seek out other people’s private matters.

The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘If someone seeks out the Muslims’ private affairs, Allah will seek out his private affairs and expose him in his own home.’⁽²⁾

This is because seeking out other people’s private matters is one of the worst ways in which society can be corrupted and relations spoiled. You might see a man whose piety and good conduct pleases you, yet if you try to discover his secrets and private matters, you end up becoming displeased with him, and your opinion of his plummets.

(1) *At-Tabarani, Al-Awsat (213)*

(2) *Narrated by Al-Mawsuli (7423)*

Concealment is better for the preservation of relations; and it is an evil thing to think badly of those who do the Good and enjoin it. A poet expressed this by saying:

Act on my knowledge, and depend not on my actions:

Take the fruit, and leave the wood for the fire!

So Allah is Merciful and Compassionate in His Knowledge of all that is beyond the reach of a created being's perception. We begin our actions by invoking this, saying: 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, and the Dispenser of Mercy'; and by this, we are aided and given grace; and by it, things react for us and bend to our will. You cannot act on your own power, but things only respond to you because Allah bends them to your will. Even if you are a sinner and neglected His guidance, He does not deny you the gifts of the Most Merciful and the Dispenser of Mercy. He does not take you to task for your own foolishness because you are His servant and His creation, and He is your Lord and Creator who called you into this existence.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ
الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

**He is God: there is no god other than Him, the Controller,
the Holy One, Source of Peace, Granter of Security,
Guardian over all, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Truly
Great; God is far above anything they consider to be His
partner [23] (The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 23)**

The repetition of 'Allah is He save whom there is no deity...' serves to emphasise that He alone possesses the attributes which now follow: Allah alone, save whom there is no deity, is The One who knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature's senses or mind, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy, the Sovereign Supreme, the Holy, the One with whom all salvation rests, the Giver of Faith, the One who determines what is true and false *the Almighty* the One who subdues wrong and restores right, and the One to whom all greatness belongs.

‘The Sovereign Supreme’ (*al-Malik*) is one of His Names; the root *m-l-k* gives us *maalik*, which means ‘one who owns something’, however small and trifling it may be. Even the one who owns a piece of clothing to wear is called the *maalik* (owner) of it. It means, therefore, anyone who owns anything. The root also gives us the word *malik*, (king) which means the one who owns (or has dominion over) the one who owns. The True Lord then is *Al-Malik*, ‘The Sovereign Supreme’, who owns all things and their owners as well (*maalik*), for they are His servants and His handiwork. The True Lord *Glorified is He* describes Himself as being the owner (*maalik*) of the Day of Resurrection: ‘Owner of the Day of Judgment!’ (*al-Fatiha*: 4) On that day, He will be the true Owner, since there will be no owner besides Him; for on that day, all possessions will be wrested from their owners, and no one will own anything.

The meaning of ‘The Holy’ (*Al-Quddus*) is He who is absolutely free of all flaws, and utterly pure and able to purify all things. Therefore, the angels say in glorifying Allah: ‘Glorified, Holy, Lord of the angels and the Spirit!’⁽¹⁾ Our Lord, You are glorified by all creatures, and holy; that is, completely pure of any flaw or defect.

This is one of those words which can only be attributed to Him; that is why we say, by way of calling unto Allah: ‘Glory be to You – and this cannot be said to anyone but You’! And indeed, we find this is true in this world, for there are many people who are obeyed in all they command and prohibit, and praised with all kinds of expressions of laud and honour; yet we have never heard anyone say to another human being, ‘Glory be to you (*subhanak*)’!

We also said this about the word ‘Allah’. Despite the existence of disbelief and disbelievers and atheists who deny the existence of Allah, we have never heard of anyone naming his son ‘Allah’. Why not? Because no one would dare to do such a thing for they fear lest they be taken to task at once by the Almighty Determiner.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says, by way of lauding Himself: ‘...Do you know any whose name is worthy to be mentioned side by side with His?’

(1) *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (12/717)

(*Maryam*: 65) Those who ascribe to the concept of divine prevention ⁽¹⁾ say: 'It was Allah Himself who turned them away from doing so'.

To this, we say: even had He not turned them away, they would not have dared to do it. People of this school of thought also say, about the issue of the miraculous nature of the Quran, that Allah turned the Arabs away from coming up with speech that is equal to the Quran, and had Allah not turning them away, they would have done so. This assertion is wide of the mark; in reality, they would still have not been able to come up with the likes of it even if He had not turned them away.

The meaning of '...The One with whom all salvation rests...' (*As-Salam*) is He who is Peace in His Essence. *Salam* (peace) comes from *salaama* (safety and soundness), which means the soundness of the body parts from any kind of mutual conflict: they all exist in harmony with one another.

Therefore, when it was said to Khadija *Allah be pleased with her* that her Lord greeted her with peace, she replied 'Allah is Peace'⁽²⁾, not 'upon Allah be peace', because He is Peace itself. That is why the greeting of the Muslims is 'Peace be upon you'; for when someone comes to you, you do not know whether he means you good or harm. When he says, 'Peace by upon you', we feel safe and secure about him, because he has come in peace; so we reply to him, 'And upon you be peace'; that is, we are also people of peace, and we will show you nothing but peace.

Thus, Allah made it the greeting of the angels in paradise: '...Peace be upon you! Well have you done: enter, then, this [paradise], herein to abide' (*az-Zumar*: 73). And this greeting rises even higher, for it is the greeting the True Lord will extend to those of His servants who enter paradise: 'Peace and fulfilment through the word of a Lord who dispenses all grace.' (*Ya Sin*: 58)

The word '...The Giver of Faith...' (*al-Mu'min*) is also one of His Names and Attributes. The root letters *a-m-n* form the transitive verb *aamana* (meaning 'to make safe'), as in Allah's words: '...and made them safe (*aamana*) from

(1) *That is, who say that Allah prevented mankind from opposing the Quran, for otherwise, the Arabs would have been able to oppose it. This was the opinion of the Mu'tazilite sect, though the Sunnis refuted it.*

(2) *At-Tabarani, Al-Kabir (18559)*

danger.’ (*Quraysh*: 4). He also says, ‘...Why – have We not established for them a sanctuary secure? (*amin*)...’ (*al-Qasas*: 57), that is, We have made them safe so that nothing can frighten them.

The verb *aamana* can also be intransitive with the preposition *bi*, as in: ‘They believe in (*yu`minun bi*) Allah...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 114), where it means ‘to believe in’; it can also be used with the particle *li*, as in: ‘...But [we know that] you would not believe us...’ (*Yusuf*: 17) in which case it means ‘to trust’us or ‘to affirm the truth of’ us.

So, *Al-Mu`min* means the One Who keeps His servants safe from what threatens them; or it means ‘The Believer’, for He is the foremost of those who believe in Him, and as we said, He testifies this to Himself when He says: ‘Allah bears witness...that there is no deity save Him...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 18). And if it means ‘to affirm the truth’, then He affirms the truth of His messengers by giving them miracles.

‘...The One who determines what is true and false...’ (*Al-Muhaymin*) means the One Who looks after things and has power over them. Allah says, ‘And unto you [O Prophet] have We vouchsafed this divine writ, setting forth the truth, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains of earlier revelations and determining what is true (*muhaymin*) therein...’ (*al-Ma`ida*: 48). So, the Quran is *muhaymin* over all the scriptures that came before it, and Allah is *Muhaymin* over His creatures in that He looks after them and has power over them.

In ‘The Almighty (*Al-‘Aziz*)’ (*al-Hashr*: 23), the word *`aziz* means something precious and unique; and the Almighty is He who overcomes all and cannot be overcome. *Al-Jabbar* is one of the True Lord’s Majestic Attributes: it means that He overcomes those who oppose His guidance. A human being can also be *jabbar*; Allah says, ‘And will you [always], whenever you lay hand [on others], lay hand [on them] cruelly, without any restraint (*jabbarin*)?’ (*ash-Shu`ara*: 130) And He says, ‘...and you can by no means force (*tujbir*) them [to believe in it]...’ (*Qaf*: 45). That is, you do not have power over them so that you could force them to believe.

Allah is also *Jabbar* in the sense that He heals (the verb *jabara* also means ‘to heal’); we say, ‘O You who heals those who are injured!’ He mends the

ailment of the poor by enriching them, and mends the ailments of the ignorant by teaching them, and mends the ailment of the weak by strengthening them.

And the one who sets broken bones is called in Arabic *mujabbir*: he sets the bones in their proper place and then wraps them with bandages (*jabeera*).

Yet the attributes of the True Lord are not like those of created beings; for the attributes of the True Lord *Glorified is He* are intrinsic to Him, whilst the attributes of created beings are given to them and may be taken from them. The attribute of *jabarut* is evil and unjust in the case of human beings (where it means tyranny), whilst for Allah it involves forbearance, wisdom and justice.

‘...The One to whom all greatness belongs...(*Al-Mutakabbir*)’ comes from *kibr*, which for human beings means ‘arrogance’ and is blameworthy; yet in the Creator, it means ‘greatness’, and is praiseworthy. For human beings it is a flaw, whilst for The Creator it is perfection.

Greatness is an intrinsic attribute of Allah, yet an affected attribute of human beings because they are proud of something that has only been given to them and is not intrinsic. Some people are proud of their wealth, or their health, or their fame; yet these are all mere passing delights and fleeting accidents.

Therefore, Allah alone is the One Who can truly lay claim to greatness, and all other claims to greatness are false. Allah is the One to Whom all greatness belongs because He is free of need for His creation; He lacks nothing, and He is the giver of all things. Therefore, it is a great blessing of His upon us that He is the One to Whom all greatness belongs, because His greatness means that He does not wrong us: ‘...and never does Allah do the least wrong to His creatures.’ (*Fussilat*: 46)

This is an aspect of His Greatness; for wrongdoing means to take what is not yours to increase what you have; and Allah’s greatness is utterly beyond this, for He owns everything in reality, and is not in need of anything.

But if the servant acts with tyranny (*jabbariyya*), does this take him outside the overwhelming power (*jabbariyya*) of his Creator? No, he remains under the overwhelming power of his Creator from which he cannot escape. How could he? Even though his Creator has given him free will to obey or

disobey, to believe or disbelieve, and to act or not act, he is still compelled in other areas and has no free will in them.

This is the overwhelming power of his Creator over him, from which he cannot escape. Therefore, I like the popular saying: ‘If your power allows you to wrong others, remember the power that Allah has over you’.⁽¹⁾

It is good for mankind that greatness belongs to the Creator alone; for every one of us has an equal share in this greatness. That all greatness belongs to Allah means that no one of us can claim to be greater than any other is because we are all equal before Allah’s greatness. He who knows that all greatness belongs to Allah alone would be ashamed to hold himself greater than any of His creatures.

‘...Utterly remote is Allah, in His Limitless Glory, from anything to which men may ascribe a share in His divinity!’ That is, He is utterly free of all that they associate with Him.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ
مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**He is God: the Creator, the Originator, the Shaper.
The best names belong to Him. Everything in the heavens
and earth glorifies Him: He is the Almighty, the Wise [24]
(The Quran, *al-Hashr*: 24)**

Again here He repeats ‘He is Allah...’ for the third time because these verses are a continuing mention of Allah’s Names and Attributes, which include: ‘...the Creator, the Maker, He who shapes all forms and appearances...’ (*al-Hashr*: 24). These are all listed together because these three concepts are all really successive stages of the same thing.

Allah is the Creator (*Al-Khaliq*), and to create means to bring into being out of nothing; and He is the Maker (*Al-Bari*’), i.e. the One who sets this creation in a form that allows it to fulfil the purpose for which it was made,

(1) This is a saying of the Caliph ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Aziz.

just as you sharpen (*bara*) a pencil to write with it, or sharpen an arrow so it will hit the target.

Things cannot fulfil their purpose unless they have a specific form. An example to illustrate this: a boy goes with his father, a blacksmith, to the workshop, where his father takes a straight length of iron and bends it. The boy finds this strange: why is his father bending something that is straight? So, the father explains to him that he wants to make a hook, and a hook can only do its job if it is bent like this.

Then He is: ‘...He who shapes all forms and appearances...’ (*Al-Musawwir*), who shapes this creation as He wills, and makes it into a form which has no precedent, He said about man: ‘[He] has created you, and formed you in accordance with what you are meant to be, and shaped your nature in just proportions’ (*al-Infitar*: 7), and: ‘having put you together in whatever form He willed [you to have]’ (*al-Infitar*: 8). This is omnipotent power: first, the power to bring something into being from out of nothing, and bring something into existence which was not there before; and this is preceded by a will that selects this outcome. And after this, He who shapes all forms and appearances comes and gives it its proper form.

Reflect on the miracle of man’s creation and forming, and how this omnipotent power is manifested in there being so many people, yet no two who are identical. We see the engineer, for example, who makes a single product like a cup: he makes a mould for it to act as a prototype and a model for all the others. The Creator, on the other hand, has constant ingenuity in His creations so that every person is unique and never identical to any other.

You know now about how every person has unique fingerprints and a unique voice; and every day they are finding out new ways in which every person is unique and distinguished from everyone else. Were it not for these distinctions, people would resemble one another and their identities would be confused, and there would be so much confusion that human life would not be able to function at all without these distinctions. Otherwise, when a crime was committed, how would we tell the perpetrator from everyone else?

‘...His [alone] are the attributes of perfection [*al-asma’ al-husna*] (literally ‘the names of perfection’)...’ We said before that the name ‘Allah’ is the

Name of *the Glorified* Being, the true Name, whilst all His other names are in fact attributes. ‘the Creator’, ‘the Maker’ and ‘He who shapes all forms and appearances’ are attributes of the True Lord, and because of how well known they are, they have gone from being attributes to being names.

The proof that they are attributes is that Allah calls them *husna*, which is a feminine plural in Arabic (*sifa*, meaning attribute, is also feminine), whereas *ism* (name) is masculine and would yield the plural *hissan* (*feminine*). So, they are attributes, but they have become so well known of Him, and applied to Him alone, that they have become names for Him. When you say ‘...the Maker...’, you do not mean anyone but Allah. ‘He who shapes all forms and appearances’ is also only said of Him *the Glorified and Exalted*.

So, these words are attributes and since they are only attributes to Allah they have become names for Him. An attribute can become so famous that it sticks to the one it is given to so that the mind thinks only of him when it hears it. When we say: ‘The Prince of Poets’, you think of none but Ahmad Shawqi. (In English, when we say, ‘The Bard’, you think only of Shakespeare.)

The meaning of ‘...of perfection...’ is that which indicates the Attributes of Absolute Perfection. The name ‘Allah’ indicates His Being, all things respond when you begin them in the Name of Allah; this is like when the judge begins a hearing by saying ‘in the name of the people’ since the people are the ones who have given him this duty.

Likewise, when you want to do anything involving power, wisdom, knowledge, or mercy, you say ‘O Allah’ because this name combines all these attributes, and all the manifestations of these names.

‘...All that is in the heavens and on earth extols His Limitless Glory....’ We have already observed that the root verb *sabbaha*, ‘to extol the glory of’ is used in the Quran in all its tenses: past, present and Imperative. He says here: ‘...All that is in the heavens and on earth extols (*yusabbih*, in the present tense) His Limitless Glory...’, and elsewhere He says: ‘All that is in the heavens and on earth extolled (*sabbaha*, in the past tense) Allah’s Limitless Glory...’ (*al-Hadid*: 1). And He says: ‘Extol (*sabbih*, the imperative) the Limitless Glory of your Lord’s name: [the Glory of] the All-Highest.’ (*al-A’la*: 1)

So, Allah is glorified in all times: ‘...and there is not a single thing but extols His limitless glory and praise: but you [O men] fail to grasp the manner of their glorifying Him...’ (*al-Isra’*: 44). And indeed, He was already glorified before He created anything to glorify Him.

He says here ‘...extols His Limitless Glory...’ using the third person pronoun which refers to Him because the previous few verses have all begun with ‘Allah is He...’. So Allah Who has these attributes: the Sovereign Supreme, the Holy, the One with Whom all salvation rests, the Giver of Faith, the One Who determines what is true and false *the Almighty* the One Who subdues wrong and restores right, and the One to Whom all greatness belongs – He it is whom all that is in the heavens and the earth glorify.

Sometimes He says, ‘All that is in the heavens and all that is on Earth...’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 1); we said that this is because the heavens and the earth are marvels of Allah’s creation in themselves: ‘Greater indeed than the creation of man is the creation of the heavens and the earth...’ (*Ghafir*: 57). So the heavens and the earth were glorifying Allah before man was created to glorify Him.

‘...For He Alone is Almighty (‘*Aziz*), Truly Wise!’ We said that ‘*Aziz*’ means something rare and unique or a power which overcomes and cannot be overcome; and this vanquishing power is free of any tyranny or despotism because it is tempered by wisdom.

‘...He is the Almighty, the Wise.’ (*al-Hashr*: 24) He is the Wise Who puts everything in its proper place as its purpose requires. Power alone is blameworthy when there is no wisdom to direct it.

the chapter of

al-Mumtahana

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Mumtahana* ⁽¹⁾:

Note

In our verification and compilation of these volumes of the Commentary of Imam *Mohammad Mutawalli Ash-Sha'rawi* on the Glorious Quran, we have adhered to the standards of academic honesty. This necessitates that we make the following note:

The sheikh *Allah have mercy on him* passed away when he was near the end of the chapter of *al-Mumtahana*, but we resolved to complete his reflections on the rest of the chapters of the Glorious Quran, following the same approach he used throughout his commentary. He combined his scholarly reflections with linguistic, literary, and stylistic remarks that all show the miraculous glory of the Quran.

In our completion of his commentary, we sought assistance of the heritage he left, his audio and video recordings and what he completed of his reflection on the Glorious Quran. We made our best efforts to phrase it in an easily comprehensible style for which the sheikh was known *Allah rest his soul*. We have not strayed even a little from the approach, style, and tone of his reflections, nor have we spared any effort in consulting numerous commentaries on the Quran of exegetes who followed various approaches. Some of them were based on explaining verses of the Quran guided by other

(1) This is the 60th chapter in the written order of the Glorious Quran. It is comprised of 13 verses and was revealed in Medina between the chapter of *al-Bayyina* and the chapter of *an-Nasr*. Thus, it was the fifth chapter of the Quran to be revealed in Medina.

verses of it. Some undertook to explain the Quran based on the *Sunnah* (Hadiths) of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. We also consulted commentaries which dealt with the Quran from a linguistic approach such as that of Al-Baghawi, or an intellectual approach such as the commentaries of Ar-Razi and Al-Alusi.

We have done this work hoping for Allah's goodly reward and seeking to make the treasure left by the sheikh complete and perfect, for generations to come to remember it and benefit from it. This work was accomplished under the supervision, and with the assistance of Sheikh Sami Mutawalli Ash-Sha`rawi.

Prof `Adel Abu Al-Ma`ati

Sheikh Rajab Fathi Mohammad

Allah says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا عَدُوِّيْ وَعَدُوْكُمْ اَوْلِيَاءَ تَلْقَوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمُودَةِ وَقَدْ
كَفَرُوْا بِمَا جَآءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُوْنَ الرَّسُوْلَ وَاِيَّاكُمْ اَنْ تُوْمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ رَبِّكُمْ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ خَرَجْتُمْ جِهَادًا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ وَاَبْنِغَاءَ مَرْضًى اَنْ تَسِرُوْنَ اِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمُودَةِ وَاَنَا اَعْلَمُ
بِمَا اَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا اَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيْلِ ﴿١﴾

You who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as your allies, showing them friendship when they have rejected the truth you have received, and have driven you and the Messenger out simply because you believe in God, your Lord — not if you truly emigrated in order to strive for My cause and seek My good pleasure. You secretly show them friendship — I know all you conceal and all you reveal — but any of you who do this are straying from the right path[1]

(The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 1)

This is a command from Allah to those who believe in Him as the One God, the Creator, and Provider of all. He calls them to adhere to His guidance which His Messenger has delivered to them. In this guidance lies their deliverance and happiness in this life and the next. In the verse is a warning to the believers not to forsake this guidance or turn away from it,

for life cannot be set to rights unless governed by the ordinance of the Creator of life and all that is in it. Whoever strays from His path would not prosper unless he returns to it once again. This is the cure of all our ailments and solution of all our problems, for Allah does not change the condition of a people unless they change themselves.

Our obedience to Allah does not add anything to His dominion, nor does He benefit from our compliance with His commands. Allah has forever existed with no beginning and no end, and to Him have the Attributes of Perfection forever belonged. Allah has sent down His religion and made it obligatory for us only for our own good. Every maker would love to see what he has made prosperous. To Allah belongs the Highest Example. He has made humankind and He wants us to prosper; that is why He revealed to us His Straight Path. Based on that, Allah commands His believing servants: ‘...do not take My enemies and yours as your allies...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). They are enemies, so do not take them as friends, for they can never be friends.

The word *`aduw* (enemy) is always singular even when used to modify a dual or a plural noun. It can mean one enemy, two enemies, or many enemies. In the following verses, the word is used in the singular form though its referent is a plural noun: ‘Ibrahim (Abraham) said, “Those idols you have worshipped, you and your forefathers, are my *`aduw* (enemies)...”’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 76-77).

In the verse we are considering, it is noticeable that Allah underlines the disbelievers’ enmity towards Him first; He says: ‘...My enemies...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1), then He says, referring to the believers: ‘...and yours...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). Anyone who is an enemy to Allah must therefore be an enemy to the believers. If you- O believers- make friends or allies out of Allah’s enemies, they will work against you, for they reject Allah’s guidance, and therefore no good can come out of their friendship. Allah explains to us this meaning in another verse: ‘The believers should not make the disbelievers their allies rather than other believers— anyone who does such a thing will isolate himself completely from Allah— except when you need to protect yourselves from them...’ (*Al-Imran*: 28). The exception in the aforesaid verse means the ruling is not rigid, for it might sometimes be the case that enemies are stronger than the believers, so the believers may

pretend to ally with them until they prepare enough power to confront them.⁽¹⁾ This is a specific case, but what we should beware of is taking Allah's enemies truly as allies, and Allah knows fully our intentions; He concludes the aforesaid verse by saying: '...Allah warns you to beware of Him: the Final Return is to Allah.' (*Al- 'Imran*: 28)

Critical as the matter is, Allah explains much about it in several verses of the Quran; He says, 'You who believe, do not take for your intimates such outsiders as spare no effort to ruin you...' (*Al- 'Imran*: 118). Allah wants the believers to prosper, but those outsiders want to destroy the believers' power and make them suffer. The verse goes on to say: '...their hatred is evident from their mouths, but what their hearts conceal is far worse...' (*Al- 'Imran*: 118). Allah has exposed their intentions by saying: 'This is how it is: here you are, you love them, but they do not love you; you believe in all the Scriptures and when they meet you, they say, "We believe", but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips in rage at you...' (*Al- 'Imran*: 119). After this has been made clear, no one has any excuse for taking them as friends and allies.

Allah says in another verse: 'You who believe, do not take as allies those who ridicule your religion and make fun of it– whether people who were given the Scripture before you, or disbelievers...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 57). Caution against hypocrites is such a crucial issue that a significant portion of the Quran is devoted to dealing with it so that the believers would not fall into their trap.

The translation of the verse says: '...showing them friendship...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 1), yet the original Arabic text of the verse literally translates: '...offering affection to them...'. This includes passing on to them the secrets of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in order to seek their affection. This implies that letting out secrets is a sign of affection.

(1) This principle is only permissible in cases of extreme necessity where a Muslim fears great harm, like killing, so he may resort to such pretence to protect himself. This is quite different from the hypocrisy employed by Shi'ites who claim to be Muslims. It appeared in the fourth century A.H., and it is a form of deception they always practice to conceal their hatred of Islam.

Allah says afterwards: ‘...when they have rejected the truth you have received...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). That is, how can you offer them your friendship, whereas they disbelieve in the truth which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* received from Allah. ‘...And have driven you and the Messenger out simply because you believe in Allah, you Lord...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). So, they rejected the Message and expelled you, believers, and the Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* solely because of your belief in Allah; faith alone is the reason for your expulsion, which is similar to what Allah says in another verse: ‘...How can you kill a man just for saying, “My Lord is Allah?”...’ (*Ghafir*: 28)

The disbelievers of Mecca could not bear the presence of the believers among them, for their presence would change the order of society and take their power. They knew it is a religion that makes masters and slaves all equal in their rights and dignity as human beings.

Allah goes on to address the believers: ‘...not if you truly emigrated in order to strive for My cause and seek My good pleasure...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). If this has been truly the case, if your struggle has been truly for My cause, then do not take My enemies as friends. It is a message to the believers: Complete the journey of faith; just as you have been sincere in your immigration for My cause, be sincere to the end and do not take My enemies as friends.

‘...You secretly show them friendship...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). That refers to harbouring secret affection for them or secretly passing on to them news about The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. ‘...I know all you conceal and all you reveal...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). Beware of Him Whom no secret of yours can elude.

‘...But any of you who do this...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1); that is, who take Allah’s enemies as allies ‘...are straying from the right path’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). Allying the disbelievers is deviation from the way of Allah. The Arabic word used in the original text of the verse to mean ‘the right path’ is *sawa* which means ‘middle’; namely, the middle of the path. The roads of the Arab environment then were either desert tracks or mountain passes. Therefore, Arabs always preferred to travel in the middle of the road so as not to be harmed by avalanches of sand or rocks falling from mountainsides.

Those who did not go down the middle of the road would get lost, because they followed a way which could not lead them to a good end. Thus, the middle of a path was 'the right path', for it was the safest part of it and the one most likely to lead one to the destination

إِنْ يَتَّقَوْكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
وَالسِّنَنَّهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

If they gain the upper hand over you, they will revert to being your enemies and stretch out their hands and tongues to harm you; it is their dearest wish that you may renounce your faith [2] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 2)

Their enmity towards the believers is permanent: if they get any chance, they will exercise that enmity in the meanest way and would use all means to harm the believers.

The expression 'stretch out one's hand' is usually associated with the positive connotation of offering good to others. However, as for the disbelievers, nothing will come your way from them but evil and harm, sometimes with words and other times with deeds. This is a natural result of the hatred and rancour they feel against faith and its adherents.

Moreover, '...it is their dearest wish that you may renounce your faith' (*al-Mumtahana*: 2). What they conceal is no less rancorous than what they revealed. Much as they harm you openly, they have much bitterness against you in their hearts that they would love you to be disbelievers like them so that you would have no power or advantage over them and they would remain in control

لَنْ تَنْفَعَكُمْ أَرْحَامُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣﴾

Neither your kinsfolk nor your children will be any use to you on the Day of Resurrection: He will separate you out. God sees everything you do [3] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 3)

It is of no use to ally with Allah's enemies for fear of your families, for they will avail you nothing before Allah on the Day of Resurrection: 'On a

Day when everyone will [want to] flee from his brother, and from his mother and father, and from his spouse and his children: on that Day, to every one of them will his own state be of sufficient concern' (*Abasa*: 34-37). Allah also says: '...stand in awe of the Day on which no parent will be of any avail to his child, nor a child will in the least avail his parent...' (*Luqman*: 33). Do not befriend of Allah's enemies for anyone's sake, for they will not be able to protect you from His punishment. On the Day of Judgement 'He will separate you out' (*al-Mumtahana*: 3). Some will go to paradise, and some to hell.

It has been narrated that these verses were revealed on occasion of a misdeed Hatib ibn Abu Balta' unintentionally committed. He was a believer and one of those who immigrated to Medina. When he learned that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was preparing to conquer Mecca, he sent a woman with a letter to Mecca, in which he wrote, 'From Hatib ibn Abu Balta' to Quraysh: Muhammad intends to conquer you, so be on your guard.'

Allah revealed this to His Messenger, so he called for 'Ali, 'Ammar, 'Umar, Talha, and Az-Zubayr, who were all skilled knights then. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told them, 'Seek out a woman travelling. You will find her at Rawdat Khakh, carrying a letter to Quraysh. Bring that letter to me.' When they caught up with her, they asked her about the letter and she denied having it, so they searched her and her belongings and found nothing, and wanted to leave. Still, 'Ali said, 'Indeed we have not lied! The Messenger of Allah has not lied! And the Revelation sent by Allah has not lied to the Messenger of Allah!' Then, he drew his sword and said, 'Show me the letter or I will kill you.' Seeing he was serious and decisive, she brought the letter out of her hair, and they returned with it to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The Messenger of Allah sent for Hatib and asked him why he had done that. He said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I am a man of no great family or clan. I have a family in Mecca and I wanted to win some influence with Quraysh so they would protect my family. I knew that would not harm you in any way, for Allah has guaranteed to give you victory.' Prophet Muhammad replied, 'You have spoken the truth.' 'Umar said, 'No, Messenger of Allah! Let me strike his neck!' Prophet Muhammad said, 'No, 'Umar. You do not

know, but it may be that Allah has looked upon the people of Badr and said, "Do as you will, for I have forgiven you." Hatib was one of the believers who fought along with Prophet Muhammad at the Battle of Badr.⁽¹⁾

So, family ties and relations should never cause you to act at variance with Allah's ordinance, for you do not know where good lies. Islam is the highest bond over which no other ties should prevail. It even comes before blood ties.

The history of Islam abides in examples that prove this fundamental truth about the Islamic faith. 'Ubaidullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul asked Prophet Muhammad's permission to kill his own father- who was the leader of the hypocrites- rather than have any other Muslim kill him. The son of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq said to his father, 'I saw you at the Battle of Badr, but I avoided you'; that is, he could have killed him, but left him out of mercy. Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* replied to his son, 'As for me, had I seen you then, I would have killed you!'⁽²⁾ That was quite natural and plausible. The son of Abu Bakr had to choose between his father and his false religious beliefs, so he chose his father. As for Abu Bakr, he had to choose between his Lord, the True God, and one of his sons. A true believer would not prefer any to his Creator and Lord. The companion Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr killed his own brother, 'Ubaid ibn 'Umayr, in a battle. His other brother was taken captive, so he said to Abu Al-Yusr, his captor, 'Bind your captive well, for his mother is rich, and will pay a great ransom for him.' His brother looked at him and said, 'Is this the advice you give for your brother, O Mus'ab?!' He replied, 'He (Abu Al-Yusr) is my brother, not you!' So the tie of Islam was so firm that it prevailed over every other tie and was the foundation upon which the early Muslims based their actions.

Allah concludes the verse by saying: '...Allah sees everything you do' (*al-Mumtahana*: 3). Allah watches over you, so beware of that. His Eye never blinks or sleeps. Know that He sees you and witnesses all your deeds.

(1) *This is part of a long Hadith cited by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (3007, 3983, 4274) and Muslim in his Sahih (6557) - chapter on the merits of the Muslims who fought in Badr. It was also cited by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (2652), At-Tirmidhi (2305) and Ahmad in his Musnad (600) on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb Allah be pleased with him as well as Az-Zubayr and Al-Miqdad.*

(2) *Ibn Qasim Al-Hanbali, Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, p.47*

However cautiously you try to hide your alliance with His enemies, and whatever ruses you employ, He sees you.

Allah says in the following verse:

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَءُوكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ
وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى
تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ إِلَّا قَوْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ لَا سَتَعْفِرَنِّي لَكَ وَمَا أَمْلِكُ لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ أَنَبْنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤﴾

You have a good example in Abraham and his companions, when they said to their people, ‘We disown you and what you worship besides God! We renounce you! Until you believe in God alone, the enmity and hatred that has arisen between us will endure!’ — except when Abraham said to his father, ‘I will pray for forgiveness for you though I cannot protect you from God’ — [they prayed] [4] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 4)

After warning us against taking Allah’s enemies as allies, Allah emphasizes this fundamental aspect about faith by offering an example. He tells us about Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), the Father of Prophets, for he had a relevant experience during the course of his call to his father and his people: ‘Tell them the story of Ibrahim (Abraham), when he asked his father and his people, “What do you worship?” They said, “We worship idols, and are constantly in attendance on them.” He asked, “Do they hear you when you call? Do they help or harm you?” They replied, “No, but this is what we saw our fathers doing.” Ibrahim (Abraham) said, “Those idols you have worshipped, you and your forefathers, are my enemies; not so the Lord of the Worlds”’ (*ash-Shu’ara’*: 69-77). So, take your father Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as a role model in this matter. Take him as an example of righteous conduct which you can emulate. He renounced idolatry and idolaters, even though they included his father, i.e. his uncle who had raised him.

After renouncing them and condemning the idolatry they held fast to, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* and those who believe with

him clarified the nature of the relationship between them and the idolaters which was pure enmity: ‘...the enmity and hatred that has arisen between us will endure...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 4). There cannot be friendship or alliance, for faith and disbelief can never be united and their adherents must forever be opponents. That enmity and hatred would persist ‘...until you believe in Allah alone...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 4). So, the reason for that enmity was that they associated partners with Allah. Had they believed in Him alone, that enmity would have given way to affection and unity

However, there was one exception of that attitude: ‘...except when Ibrahim (Abraham) said to his father, “I will pray for forgiveness for you...”’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 4). This was an exception; that is: you have a good example in Ibrahim (Abraham) except that he promised to implore Allah’s Forgiveness for his uncle, which meant that his heart was still attached to him.

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) did not mean to show friendship or affection to an enemy of Allah. In the Quran, there is mention of the discourse that took place between Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* and his uncle. Allah says, ‘Ibrahim (Abraham) asked forgiveness for his father because he had made a promise to him, but once he realized that his father was an enemy of Allah, he washed his hands of him. Ibrahim (Abraham) was tender-hearted and forbearing’ (*at-Tawba*: 114). Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) kept on praying that his uncle be forgiven, as he had promised him until it was made clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, so he left him and renounced him.

Allah mentions Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) as a good example for all mankind. He was the Father of Prophets and Allah said about him: ‘Verily, Ibrahim (Abraham) was an *ummah*...’ (*an-Nahl*: 120). The word *ummah* means nation. Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was like an entire nation in the sense that in him were all virtues; combined virtues that could only be found in a nation, not a single person. Allah has distributed virtues among His creatures so that each one of us would need the virtues of his fellow humans and people would thus be connected to one another. What was special about Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was that he possessed all virtues. Therefore, his Lord says about him: ‘And of Ibrahim

(Abraham), who fulfilled his duty' (*an-Najm*: 37), and: 'When Ibrahim's (Abraham's) Lord tested him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled...' (*al-Baqara*: 124).

Back to the verse we are reflecting on, Allah says, '...though I cannot protect you from Allah...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 4) means I cannot ward off from you any of Allah's punishment; all I can do is pray that you be forgiven. This was Ibrahim's (Abraham's) attitude.

Allah concludes the verse by the supplication: '...[They prayed] 'Lord, we have put our trust in You; we turn to You; You are our final destination.''" (*al-Mumtahana*: 4) Trusting Allah is an act of worship performed by the heart, not by the body: the body acts, and the heart trusts. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* and those who believed with him thus prayed to Allah: we have taken the means of deliverance and put our trust in you that you will save us. '...We turn to You...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 4). This means: We have turned to You in repentance and awakened from what we were doing before. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) ceased to pray and supplicate that his uncle be forgiven when he realized he was Allah's enemy. They acknowledged: '...You are our final destination.' (*al-Mumtahana*: 4) The journey's end is the Hereafter, the place to which we will inevitably all return to meet Allah and receive our recompense.

Allah then says:

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**Lord, do not expose us to mistreatment [at the hands of] the disbelievers. Forgive us, Lord, for You are the Almighty, the All Wise' [5]
(The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 5)**

This prayer was said by the believers who followed Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). How can the believer be a 'trial' for the disbelievers? This can be in two cases. One of them is when the believers are defeated in battle by the disbelievers. Hence, the disbelievers would say: Were they believers, they would not have been defeated. Allah would have supported them! Had they

a Lord to defend them, they would not have been defeated! That would certainly dissuade the disbelievers from embracing faith, for they see the condition of the believers and their defeat, and that is one case where the believers can be a *fitna* (trial) to the disbelievers.

The other case when the believers may be a *fitna* (trial or test) to the disbelievers is when they stop adhering to Allah's guidance, commit sins and spread corruption, so they cause the disbelievers to be averse to Islam and disinclined to embrace it. Unfortunately, such is the case with Muslims now; people are frightened away from Allah's religion instead of being attracted to it. As one of the renowned scholars of Islam said, the later generations of Muslims cannot be reformed except by that which reformed the earlier generations.⁽¹⁾ The believers bear responsibility for this— for how people are turned away from Allah's religion. We need to pray now as did the followers of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham): 'Our Lord! Do not make us a trial for those who disbelieve...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 5). Make us among those who obey Your commands in a way that attracts other people to Your religion, and do not make us an excuse for them to reject Your religion, O Allah.

When we disobey Allah, we do not only subject ourselves to His punishment, but we may also repel others from His Straight Path.

Allah says in the following verse:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦﴾

**Truly, they are a good example for you [believers] to follow,
a good example for those who fear God and the Last Day. If
anyone turns away, [remember] God is Self-Sufficient and
worthy of all praise [6] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 6)**

The example of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* is one to follow for those are mindful of Allah. He never compromised to offer affection or

(1) This was said by Imam Malik Allah rest his soul in *Sharh Al-'Aqida Al-Tahawiyya* (1/9). What reformed the earliest of the Muslim nation was following Allah's Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger.

friendship to the enemies of Allah, even if they were of his family. Such is an example to follow for those who hope to be worthy of receiving Allah's reward, who aspire to attain righteousness which leads to the best reward of winning Allah's good pleasure as well as His reward in the Hereafter.

Allah says: '...who fear Allah and the Last Day...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 6). That refers to those who fear His requital and hope for His reward. Finally, '...If anyone turns away...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 6) from taking them as example and following the way of Allah, then '...[Remember] Allah is Self-Sufficient and the Praiseworthy.' (*al-Mumtahana*: 6)

Allah then says:

عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَوْدَّةً
وَاللَّهُ قَدِيرٌ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

God may still bring about affection between you and your present enemies – God is all powerful, God is most forgiving and merciful [7] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 7)

The Arabic word *`asa* (may still) denotes hope that something is possible or likely to happen. You may tell someone, 'Come to me tomorrow and *`asa* (I may) help you out with that'. This would give him hope of fruition, yet you may well be prevented from helping him by something out of your hand. Such is a promise giving hope, yet it is expressed by someone who does not have control over all the means and circumstances involved in the matter, so he cannot ensure success. Now, when hope is expressed by Allah, the One Who controls everything, no one, and nothing can prevent it or get in its way.

After forbidding them from showing affection or friendship to the disbelievers, Allah Almighty soothes His believing servants. He knew some of the believers had friends and relations among the disbelievers, and that their thoughts were with their former dear ones who still rejected faith. Allah meant to reassure them: do not grieve because you must be estranged from them, for it may be that Allah would turn that enmity into affection. That was truly the case, for many of those disbelievers embraced faith later and served the religion of Allah.

Some of them were sworn enemies of Islam and leaders of disbelief. They eventually embraced Islam and proved to be firm and true believers. Some of them became leaders of Muslims, such as 'Amr, Khalid, and 'Ikrima. Glory be to Allah! 'Ikrima was one of the most fervent opponents of Islam, who stood alone in the trench on the day of the Conquest of Mecca to repel the Muslim army! After all, Allah guided him to faith, and then he struggled to make up for what he had done in his pagan ignorance. In the Battle of Yarmuk, swords and spears cut into his body and filled him with wounds. Before he breathed his last, he turned to Khalid ibn Al-Walid *Allah be pleased with him* and said, 'O Khalid, is this a death that pleases Allah and His Messenger?' Allah be pleased with 'Ikrima!

After making that reassurance, Allah further alleviates the concerns of the believers by reminding them of this fundamental truth: '...Allah is All-Powerful...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 7). Nothing is beyond the Power of Allah. Nothing is outside the realms of submission to Him. He has the Power to do anything, and He is the Almighty. Everything is under His control including the hearts of people. He is the One Who can draw the hearts and minds of these people to you and create affection between you and them, O believers, after you have been enemies.

This is similar to the meaning expressed in the following verse: '...And remember the blessings which Allah has bestowed upon you: how, when you were enemies, He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brethren...' (*Al-'Imran*: 103).

Allah concludes the verse by saying: '...Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful' (*al-Mumtahana*: 7). He is their Lord and can forgive them what they did before they were Muslims. He can bestow His favours and blessings on them and on you too, for Allah's Bounty is immense.

Allah then makes further clarification of the ruling governing the relationship between the believers and the disbelievers:

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ
 أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

**And He does not forbid you to deal kindly and justly
 with anyone who has not fought you for your faith or
 driven you out of your homes: God loves the just [8]
 (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 8)**

It is narrated that the circumstance behind the revelation of this verse was that a group of Muslims had wondered if they could just do good to their families who did not embrace Islam, so Allah revealed the aforesaid verse.

Allah does not forbid the believers from being kind and good to the disbelievers on condition that those disbelievers do not fight them or drive them out of their homes. So long as they do not harm you in any way, you, O believers, are allowed to be kind to them. Allah refers to this meaning in the following verse: ‘If they [your parents] strive to make you associate with Me anything about which you have no knowledge [scriptural proof], then do not obey them. Yet keep their company in this life according to what is right... (*Luqman*: 15).

We have explained before that the verse we are considering does not contradict Allah’s words: ‘[Prophet], you will not find people who truly believe in Allah and the Last Day giving their loyalty to those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they may be their fathers, sons, brothers or other relations...’ (*al-Mujadala*: 22). We are forbidden from inclining to the disbelievers with our hearts or showing loyalty or alliance to them. This is different from doing good to them or showing them kindness, provided that they do not fight us on the basis of faith. Doing a good act to someone does not mean you love him, but one may do the good even to someone he dislikes. The verse we are considering says: ‘...to deal kindly...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 8). This means: if you are asked to, then be kind to them, but do not be the one to initiate it (not to seem like seeking their affection or alliance).

Not only ‘kindly’ but also ‘...*tuqsitu* (to deal justly)...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 8). So we are asked to deal with them based on justice. The Arabic root *qist* has derivatives that carry a meaning and its opposite as well. The verb *qasata*

means to wrong or transgress. When the prefix 'a' is added, the word becomes *aqsata* which means to remove injustice, for the prefix denotes 'remove' or 'undo'. Allah says: 'But *al-qasitun* (those who go wrong) will be fuel for Hellfire' (*al-Jinn*: 15). In this verse, the word denotes wrongdoing. Allah also says, '...Allah loves *al-muqsitun* (those who act equitably)' (*al-Hujurat*: 9). Here the word denotes 'removing injustice'.

Another connotation of *tuqsitu* (translated in the verse as 'to deal justly') is to offer assistance by *aqsat* which literally means 'instalments'. This is like offering them regular monthly shares of your wealth, for example. So, the word denotes 'justice' and can also mean sparing them the humiliation of begging by offering them what satisfies their needs. Allah says in another verse: 'and do not chide the one who asks for help' (*ad-Duha*: 10). Being unkind to the needy would drive them to object to what Allah has decreed, 'Why has He made me poor and made them wealthy?!' This meaning is further explained in the verse: 'A kind word and forgiveness is better than a charitable deed followed by hurtful [words]...' (*al-Baqara*: 263). Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'You cannot share your wealth with everyone, so share with them instead your good character.'⁽¹⁾ You cannot help everyone with money, but it is easier to help them with a kind word and a positive attitude. That is why Allah says here: '...to deal kindly and justly...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 8). Kindness relieves them of their need, and justice is to spare them the humiliation of begging by helping them even before they ask for help. It has been narrated that once a beggar knocked on a man's door. The man opened it and gave the beggar what he wanted. The man then went back into his home, crying. His wife asked him, surprised, 'Why are you crying while you have given him what he needed?!' He replied, 'I cry because I left him so long that he needed to beg.' People who love goodness should be aware of the condition of those around them, whether family relations, neighbours, or acquaintances. They should reach out to those who are in need but are too dignified to beg or even let anyone know that they need help. Go to them and spare them the shame of having

(1) Cited by Al-Bazzar in his *Musnad* (8544, 9319, 9651), Abu Ya'la Al-Mawsemi in his *Musnad* (6550) and Ibn Abu Shayba (25842) on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

to ask others for help. Behind closed doors, poverty hides in the guise of dignity, so seek them out and help them without hurting them.

It has been narrated that a group of Arabs were sitting at the *Ka'ba* discussing who the most generous of all the Arabs was. They had varied views. One said it was Sa'd ibn 'Ubada, another chose Abdullah ibn Ja'far, and still another said 'Arraba Al-Awsi was the most generous of all. Someone suggested, 'To find out who the most generous of them is, let us send to each of them a man who will pretend to be a traveller in need, and see what each of them will give him.

The first man went to Abdullah ibn Ja'far *Allah be pleased with him* and said, 'O son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, I am a lone traveller in need.' 'Abdullah was setting out for hunting at that moment, just about to mount his horse when he heard this. He took his foot out of the stirrup and said to the petitioner, 'Come and put your foot in the stirrup.' Besides the horse, he gave him a bag containing four thousand *dirhams* and four garments, in addition to something even more valuable: the sword of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb. 'Abdullah returned home walking.

The second man went to Sa'd ibn 'Ubada. He knocked the door of his house and a slave-girl came out and asked what he wanted. He said he wanted to see Ibn 'Ubada. She asked him why. 'I am a lone traveller and have lost all my means.' She replied, 'He is sleeping, and I can see to your need without having to wake him. All he possesses is a bag containing seven hundred *dinars*. Take it, and go to the camel market and get yourself a mount and a servant, and go on your way.' When Sa'd woke up, the slave-girl told him what had happened. He was pleased with her that he set her free from slavery.

As for the third man, he went to 'Arraba Al-Awsi, of whom a poet ⁽¹⁾ once said:

If a banner of honour were ever raised,
'Arraba would bear it in his right hand.

'Arraba had aged by then and had lost his eyesight. He had nothing left of his wealth as well. The man found him leaning on two slaves who were taking him to the mosque. He said to him, 'O 'Arraba, I am a lonely wayfarer

(1) *Ash-Shammakh Adh-Dhibyani* (d. 22 AH)

and have nothing to support myself.' He replied, 'Woe be to `Arraba! The claims of people have left him nothing at all!' He shook himself off the two slaves and said, 'Take these two slaves for your own.' The man said, 'How can I deprive you of your only means of assistance?' `Arraba said, 'If you do not take them, I will set them free.'

The three men went back to their assembly, and each of them told his tale. They agreed that `Arraba was the most generous of all, for he gave the only thing he had, despite his desperate need for it. ⁽¹⁾

If a generous person has nothing at all to give, he can at least give a kind word, which is counted as charity too. A poet ⁽²⁾ said:

If you cannot give money or a horse,
Then give happiness with kind words.

Allah concludes the verse by saying: '...Allah loves *al-muqsitun*' (*al-Mumtahana*: 8). As we have said earlier in our commentary on this word, it has several meanings, one of which is to give shares of your wealth to those in need. The word *qist* means a 'share'. They give regularly without being asked to. About them Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, '*Al-muqsitun* shall be upon pulpits of light on the right side of the Throne (on the Day of Judgement): they are those who are just in their judgements, with their families and whatever is entrusted to them.' ⁽³⁾

إِنَّمَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَأَخْرَجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ وَظَاهَرُوا
عَلَىٰ إِخْرَاجِكُمْ أَن تَوَلَّوْهُمْ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَاُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

**But God forbids you to take as allies those who have fought
against you for your faith, driven you out of your homes, and
helped others to drive you out: any of you who take them as allies
will truly be wrongdoers [9] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 9)**

After speaking about those disbelievers to whom the believers may show kindness, the discourse now turns to the other category of disbelievers, those

(1) *Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya Wa An-Nihaya* (where the name of Qays ibn Sa'd is mentioned, instead of Sa'd ibn `Ubada)

(2) *That was the Shi'ite, Mohammad Kashif Al-Ghita` (1877-1954 CE)*

(3) *It was cited by Al-Bazzar (2340) on the authority of `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As.*

to whom the believers are forbidden from showing any kindness. As the verse tells, the believers are forbidden to take as allies those who fight against you on account of your religion, who drive you out of your homes or aid others in driving you out. Those of the believers who show affection or offer friendship to these disbelievers are wrongdoers, for they wrong themselves by disobeying Allah's Command, and they wrong the believers by taking their enemies as allies.

Allah says in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ مِنْ هَذِهِ جَرَّتِ فَأَمَحْضُوهُنَّ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَاتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَءَاتُوهُنَّ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَا ءَانَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا بِعِصَمِ الْكَوَافِرِ وَسْئَلُوا مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ وَلَيْسَ لَكُمْ أَنْفَقُوا مَا أَنْفَقُوا ذَلِكَ كُمْ حُكْمُ اللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

You who believe, test the believing women when they come to you as emigrants – God knows best about their faith – and if you are sure of their belief, do not send them back to the disbelievers: they are not lawful wives for them, nor are the disbelievers their lawful husbands. Give the disbelievers whatever bride-gifts they have paid – if you choose to marry them, there is no blame on you once you have paid their bride-gifts – and do not yourselves hold on to marriage ties with disbelieving women. Ask for repayment of the bride-gifts you have paid, and let the disbelievers do the same.

This is God's judgement: He judges between you, God is all knowing and wise [10] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 10)

One of the terms of the Truce of Hudaibiyya was that if anyone left Quraysh and went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a believer, he should return them to Quraysh, but if any Muslim apostatised and went to Quraysh, Quraysh would not have to return them to Prophet Muhammad. The Messenger of Allah accepted this term for a reason. It was an acknowledgement that the Muslim nation was starting to gain enough regional weight to the extent of concluding treaties that involved give-and-take with the most dominant power in the region then; namely, Quraysh. When Islam

became strong enough to confront Quraysh directly, this rule was abolished. The Muslim power was rising high enough to reject any such compromises.

The name of this chapter of the Quran we are considering, *al-Mumtahana*, means 'Women Tested'. Women came as Muslim emigrants to Medina. They could not be sent back to the disbelievers, but Allah commanded His Prophet to test their faith, and if they proved to be believing women, Muslims were forbidden from returning them to the disbelievers. They were asked if they testified that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. They were asked to swear that they left their homes solely because of their love for Islam and the Messenger of Islam, and not because they hated their husbands there or desired certain husbands in Medina. Once that was found to be the case, the believer was forbidden to return them to the disbelievers.⁽¹⁾

Allah says, '...Allah knows best about their faith...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10). That means the believers were not responsible for what those women truly harboured in their hearts. They only had to test their faith in the above manner, but only Allah knew their inner intentions. As long as a woman said she was a believer, she was treated as one, and she could by no means be sent back to a disbelieving husband, because a believing woman is not a lawful wife for a disbeliever, nor is he lawful for her as a husband.

It is particularly worthy of notice and admiration that the Wise Lawgiver does not ignore the financial rights of the two spouses, even the disbelieving party. Islam deprives a disbelieving man from his wife because she is a Muslim and is no longer lawful for him, yet it ordains that his money must be paid back to him. This shows the exemplary justice of Islam. Husbands would devote money and possessions to their wives, so when a man loses

(1) *Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him tested immigrant women by asking, 'Swear by Allah that you did not leave out of hatred for your husband and nor out of desire to move from one land for another. Swear by Allah that you did not leave in order to seek worldly things and you left only out of love for Allah and His Messenger.'* That is cited by At-Tabarani in his Tafsir, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas. This proves that Islam gives women the freedom of worship, and does not simply consider her to be a follower of whatever religion her husband or father follows. Islam does not compel a woman to do what is against her will and choice whether in the community of Muslims or the disbelievers.

his wife because her new religion, Islam, she must return what he has devoted to her of his money so the husbands would not be harmed by their wives' conversion to Islam. I believe such justice must move the hearts of whoever experiences it in some way. It is a proof that Islam is the true and just religion that is keen on doing wrong to no one, even those who reject it.

Allah then says, '...if you choose to marry them, there is no blame on you once you have paid their bride-gifts...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10). Those women who embraced Islam did not turn into 'public property' of Muslim men. Any of those believing woman was lawful only to one man whom she gave her consent to marry. Furthermore, whoever proposes to have her as a wife, must give her the rights Islamic Law prescribes. That ruling was first to preserve the dignity and rights of Muslim women. Besides, it was to protect the hearts of Muslim men from thinking of invading any people, seeking only to claim their women so long as there was no ruling in Islam to regulate the destiny those women were to meet when they become part of the Muslim community.

On the other hand, Allah commands Muslim men: '...and do not yourselves hold on to marriage ties with *kawafir*...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10). The word *kawafir* (singular: *kafira*) means women who apostatise from Islam. A Muslim husband of such a woman was not allowed to retain her as his wife and had to divorce her so she would return to the disbelievers in Mecca. He too had the right to ask for a return of the money he had devoted to his wife to marry her.

Just as disbelieving husbands were given the right to ask for what they had paid in relation to their marriage with their formerly disbelieving wives, Muslim men also had the right to ask for what they had paid to their apostate wives: '...Ask for repayment of the bride-gifts you have paid, and let the disbelievers do the same...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10). This is the justice of Islam. Rights must be preserved for all people, even the disbelievers.

We have mentioned before the story of the Jew⁽¹⁾ whom Muslims unjustly accused of theft, but Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*

(1) That was Zayd ibn As-Samin. The story is cited in *Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan* by An-Naysaburi.

removed that injustice. It was on that occasion that these verses were revealed: 'We have sent down the Scripture to you [Prophet] with the truth so that you can judge between people in accordance with what Allah has shown you. Do not be an advocate for those who betray trust. Ask Allah for forgiveness: He is Most Forgiving and Merciful. Do not argue for those who betray their own souls: Allah does not love anyone given to treachery and sin.' (*an-Nisa'*: 105-107)

After making clear those rulings, Allah says, '...This is Allah's judgement: He judges between you...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10). As long as it is Allah's judgement, it cannot be disobeyed. His Judgement is just, for '...Allah is All Knowing and Wise' (*al-Mumtahana*: 10).

وَلِإِنْ فَاتَكُمْ شَيْءٌ مِّنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ فَعَاقِبْتُمْ فَانكِحُوا الَّذِينَ ذَهَبَتْ
أَزْوَاجُهُمْ مِّثْلَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

If any of you have wives who leave you for the disbelievers, and if your community subsequently acquires [gains] from them, then pay those whose wives have deserted them the equivalent of whatever bride-gift they paid. Be mindful of God, in whom you believe [11]

(The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 11)

This verse is related to Muslim men whose disbelieving wives returned to the disbelievers, but did not pay back what they had devoted to them. The way to return the rights of those Muslim men was this: '...and if your community subsequently acquires [gains] from them, then pay those whose wives have deserted them the equivalent of whatever bride-gift they paid...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 11). That means when the community of Muslims defeat the disbelievers at war and take their riches as battle-spoils, a share of these spoils should be dedicated to reimbursing those Muslim men whose former disbelieving wives denied them their rights.

Allah then says:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا
يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا
يَعْصِيَنَّكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايَعَهُنَّ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

Prophet, when believing women come and pledge to you that they will not ascribe any partner to God, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor lie about who has fathered their children, nor disobey you in any righteous thing, then you should accept their pledge of allegiance and pray to God to forgive them: God is most forgiving and merciful [12] (The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 12)

At the Conquest of Mecca, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sat at *as-suffa* (a corner of the Mosque of the Prophet where poor Muslim immigrants to Medina stayed as they had no homes). He took pledges of allegiance from the men and shook hands with them. Then came the turn of the women, so how did they pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah? He took the men's pledges by shaking hands with them, so did he do the same with the women, since he was the Prophet of Allah and all the women of his community- all Muslim women- are like his daughters? Allah says, 'The Prophet has a higher claim on the believers than [they have on] their own selves, [seeing that he is as a father to them]...' (*al-Ahzab*: 6).

It has been narrated that Prophet Muhammad never touched the hand of a woman who was not lawful to him.⁽¹⁾ Even when it came to pledges of allegiance, which usually involve handshakes, he did not shake hand with Muslim women. A pledge of allegiance is like a deal; based on it, the believers declared their acceptance and willingness to abide by Allah's covenant. Allah says: 'Allah has purchased the persons and possessions of the believers in return for the Garden— they fight in Allah's way: they kill and are killed— this is a true promise given by Him...' (*at-Tawba*: 111).

So how did the Muslim women pledge allegiance to Prophet Muhammad? The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* took a pail of water

(1) This is cited by Muslim (4942) on the authority of `Aisha.

and placed his blessed hand in it, so that his hand came into contact with the water; then, each woman who wanted to pledge allegiance to the Messenger of Allah came and dipped her hand into the water so that her hand touched the same particles of water as the Messenger of Allah, and this is how the pledge was made.⁽¹⁾

Reflect on the cautious attitude of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* despite his status among Muslim women. It is astonishing how some Muslim men and women today shake hands and claiming there is nothing wrong with that. That attitude of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* is to teach us that indeed there is something, or many things, wrong with it. It is a matter of what is lawful and what is unlawful. If the Sacred Law forbids a man to look at a woman that is unlawful to him, though eye contact is less direct than handshaking, At least it does not involve close contact with the other person. Would it allow a man to touch her, which is a closer and more direct form of contact and has more effect on both parties?

Some say that it is a custom in society. Indeed, it is, but it is an evil custom which is not allowed in Islam— and is it for society to make laws? Legislation and the determination of what is lawful and what is unlawful is only for our Creator to do. It is society that should commit itself to the guidance of Allah. If a woman refused a man's stretched hand to shake hers, if a man refused a woman's stretched hand to shake his, only once, it would not be repeated. This would be enough to end that tradition.⁽²⁾

Now, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* took the pledge of allegiance from Muslim men, in essence, it was that they would struggle in the cause of Allah to spread His religion. As for the Muslim women, their pledge involved other terms, as the verse we are considering explains: 'Prophet, when believing women come and pledge to you that they will not ascribe any partner to Allah, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill their children, nor lie about who has fathered their children, nor disobey you in any righteous thing, then you should accept their pledge of allegiance...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 12).

(1) *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (14/433)

(2) *Cited by Ahmad in his Musnad* (27051, 27053, 27054) *on the authority of Umayma bint Raqiqa*

Among the Muslim women who pledged allegiance to Prophet Muhammad was Hind bint `Utba⁽¹⁾, the wife of Abu Sufyan, who had-before she embraced Islam- hired Wahshi⁽²⁾ to kill Hamza *Allah be pleased with him* at the Battle of Uhud. She did not only hire his murderer, but cut open his belly after he was killed, took out his liver and bit into it.⁽³⁾ On the day she became a believer, she was the feistiest of women and made the most comments on the terms of the pledge, and Prophet Muhammad bore with her clemently. When she heard ‘...nor steal...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 12), she said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, my husband (Abu Sufyan, who was present) is a miserly man, and I used to take his money without his knowledge.’ Prophet Muhammad said, ‘Are you Hind?’ ‘Yes’, she said, ‘Pardon what I did, may Allah pardon you!’⁽⁴⁾ Abu Sufyan said to her, ‘The money you took from me in the past is yours rightfully.’ The Messenger of Allah then said it was allowed for a woman to take enough of her husband’s money to suffice her and her children’s needs, in case he was miserly and made things hard for her.⁽⁵⁾

When Hind heard ‘...nor kill their children...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 12), she said to Prophet Muhammad, ‘We raised them as infants, and you killed them when they were grown, and Allah knows you and them best.’ She was referring to her son Hanzhala who was killed at the Battle of Badr. All the Messenger of Allah did, while hearing this was smile.⁽⁶⁾

‘...nor lie about who has fathered their children...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 12). The word used in the original text of this sentence is *buhtan* which is not just a ‘lie’, but it means something which is so ugly and astounding to anyone who witnesses it. It is something said or done and causes the mind to marvel at its vileness. The same root word is found in this verse: ‘...The disbeliever was *buhita* (dumbfounded)...’ (*al-Baqara*: 258). That is, he was bewildered and had nothing to say in response.

(1) Died 14 A.H.

(2) Died 25 A.H.

(3) *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya* by Ibn Hisham

(4) This is part of a long story related by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir*

(5) Cited by Muslim (4574)

(6) Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya Wa An-Nihaya* (7/60)

The expression used in the original text of the verse in this part is literally translated as '...lie about what is between their hands and their feet...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 12). The phrase 'what is between their hands' refers to the belly, and 'what is between their feet' refers to the private parts. This is an allusion to a woman's claim that her child is her husband's, deliberately lying about it.

Abu Hurayrah *Allah be pleased with him* narrated that he heard Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* say, when the verses of *mula'ana*⁽¹⁾ were revealed, 'Any woman who brings to her husband a child who is not born of him thereby forgoes her connection to Allah, and Allah will never admit her into paradise. If any man disowns his own child as he looks at him, Allah will prevent him from seeing Him and will expose him among all people, the earliest of them and latest of them.'⁽²⁾ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'A child belongs to the owner of the bed (the husband of his mother) and the fornicator gets nothing but stone (punishment by stoning, or deprivation from his child).'⁽³⁾ This preserves the dignity of the child so that he would not live in disgrace for the rest of his life. He is the child of the man in whose bed he was born. As for the woman, if there is proof that she was unfaithful, she must be punished as prescribed in the Islamic ruling for fornication.

On hearing '...nor disobey you in any righteous thing...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 12), Hind said, 'Indeed we have only come to attain the goodness that would come to us by following you, so how can we disobey you when we have come willingly in obedience to you?' Allah tells His Messenger if they accept that pledge: '...then you should accept their pledge of allegiance and

(1) This refers to the following verses: 'And as for those who accuse their own wives [of adultery], but have no witnesses except themselves, let each of these [accusers] call Allah four times to witness that he is indeed telling the truth, and the fifth time, that Allah's curse be upon him if he is telling a lie. But [as for the wife, all] chastisement shall be averted from her by her calling Allah four times to witness that he is indeed telling a lie, and the fifth [time], that Allah's Wrath be upon her if he is telling the truth' (*an-Nur*: 6-9).

(2) Cited by *An-Nasa'i* (5645), *Al-Bayhaqi* in his *Ma'rifat As-Sunnan* (4798) and *Al-Hakim* (2814)

(3) Cited by *Al-Bukhari* (2053) and *Muslim* (3686) on the authority of 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*

pray to Allah to forgive them...' (*al-Mumtahana*: 12). Allah granted it to the believers that His Messenger implored Allah to forgive their sins, as Allah says in another verse: '...If only [the hypocrites] had come to you [Prophet] when they wronged themselves, and begged Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found that Allah accepts repentance and is Most Merciful' (*an-Nisa*: 64).

Allah *Glorified is He* will grant them His repentance and Mercy only if they approach you, O Muhammad, praying for Allah's forgiveness. After they ask for Allah's forgiveness, you can pray for their forgiveness as well.'

This is a gift from Allah *Glorified is He* and indeed, no one can benefit you besides Him. Any person who tries to approach Allah's door in any other way, will not be allowed to proceed. The believers who lived with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had the opportunity to approach him and acknowledge their sins. They were able to pray for Allah's forgiveness and also asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to pray for their forgiveness. Do the believers living after the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* have a similar opportunity? The scholars say that, indeed, all the believers have the same opportunity to benefit from Prophet Muhammad's prayers, whether they saw him or not. If someone commits a sin, he should imagine that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is with us. When we send our greetings of peace to Him, he will also greet us in return. So, likewise, acknowledging our sins is similar to what the Companions did when they said to him, 'O Messenger of Allah, we have sinned, so ask Allah to forgive us!'

In this way, we are all equal before Allah's Commandments because Prophet Muhammad's message was conveyed to all mankind. In fact, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave all the generations of his community who lived after his time a special status that is not lower than the status of his Companions.

It is related that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to his Companions: 'When shall I meet my beloved ones?' They said, 'Are we not your beloved ones, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'Nay, you are my Companions. My beloved ones are the people who will come after me

and who will not have seen me, but will wish to pay the weight of the earth in gold just to see me. The good deed of a single one of them will be equal to fifty deeds.' The Companions asked, 'Will their good deeds be more valuable than fifty of our deeds, or fifty of their deeds?' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: '(Their good deeds will equal) fifty of your good deeds because you find people who assist you to do good actions, while they will not have people who assist them in doing good actions.'

It was narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said in another Hadith to his Companions: 'If a man in your time leaves only a tenth of his obligations, he shall be in danger of damnation. Indeed, a time shall come when a person doing a tenth of what is required of him shall be saved.'⁽¹⁾

'Indeed, Allah is a much-forgiving (*Ghafoor*) Giver of Mercy (*Raheem*)' (*al-Mumtahana*: 12). The word *Ghafoor* is the intensive form of the word *Ghafir* (forgiving), and therefore indicates the frequency of the forgiveness. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* is 'Forgiving (*Ghafir*) (of) sin and accepting (of) repentance (*Qabil-u-atawba*)' (*Ghafir*: 3). He is described as *Ghafir* when the forgiveness pertains to one sin, and is described as *Ghafoor* regarding the forgiveness of multiple sins. He has mandated that, with each Prayer, He will forgive the time since the preceding prayer, and also provided His forgiveness for the times between the consequent Friday prayers and His forgiveness for the year between the months of *Ramadan*. Therefore, He has made His forgiveness a door that never closes, and any time you ask for His forgiveness, He will grant it to you.

It is in the nature of the servant to sin, and it is in the nature of the Lord to forgive. Therefore, the existence of sinners proves the existence of one of Allah's Attributes of Perfection. It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'By Allah, if you people did not sin, Allah

(1) Narrated by At-Tabarani in *As-Saghir* (1156) and Abu Na'im (7/316) on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. However, only Na'im ibn Hammad narrated this Hadith from Sufyan, and therefore, it was considered as a weak Hadith by Ibn Al-Jawzy in *Al-'Ilal Al-Mutanahiyah* (1425), and he mentioned the opinion of Abu 'Abd Ar-rahman An-Nasa'i, 'This is a Hadith that is munkar, and Na'im ibn Hammad is not a trusted narrator.'

would have replaced you with people who did sin and then asked His forgiveness, and He will forgive them.’⁽¹⁾

Allah then says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ قَدْ يَئِسُوا
مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ كَمَا يَئِسَ الْكُفَّارُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقُبُورِ ﴿١٣﴾

**You who believe, do not take as allies those with whom God
is angry: they despair of the life to come as the disbelievers
despair of those buried in their graves [13]
(The Quran, *al-Mumtahana*: 13)**

Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘O you who have believed,’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 13) and this is a call that Allah *Glorified is He* has directed many times in the Quran to every person who believes in Allah as his Lord, and also believes in His guidance, commands and prohibitions. Allah *Glorified is He* called the believers with the words, ‘O you who have believed’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 13), and thus, we should know that faith is the pre-requisite of religious responsibility. Certainly, Allah *Glorified is He* did not issue responsibilities to those who did not believe in Him, and only gave obligations to those who believed in Him.

Directing the laws of religion to the believers is because faith is an indication of adherence and commitment. Therefore, if you adhere to the belief that He is Wise, it follows that you should take the laws of your religion from Him *Glorified is He*. This religious law is a contract between you and Allah *Glorified is He*. The condition of the contract is having faith in Him. Then, we are obliged to follow the commandments and prohibitions that He has issued.

Indeed, Allah’s Commandments have the attribute of justice. He did not give us these responsibilities against our will, and His obligations did not violate our free choice. He only gave us these responsibilities after we made the choice to have faith in Him. Indeed, faith in Allah *Glorified is He* is the foundation of every Islamic commandment. We obey His commands because it

(1) Narrated by Muslim (7141) and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him

is He Whom we believe in, and we should follow His orders whether or not we understand the wisdom. Indeed, it may be that obeying a commandment of Allah *Glorified is He* without realising its wisdom, is a greater sign of faith than obeying a commandment while knowing the clear wisdom behind it.

Allah *Glorified is He* started the chapter of *al-Mumtahana* with: ‘O you who have believed, do not take My enemies, who are your enemies, for your allies, showing them affection...’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). He ended it with: ‘O you who have believed, be not allies of people with whom Allah has (become angry and) condemned’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). Therefore, the two calls have a common theme and a common prohibition, and the final meaning of the chapter is aligned with its first concept, as if the two meanings complete a circle. This makes it plain to us that the issue these verses are talking about is a very important part of religious responsibility.

To become an ally with a person means to give that person succour (*nusra*), and succour means that one allying party should support its ally when they need help. How, then, can you befriend Allah’s enemies and your own enemies, and expect them to help and succour you in return, when they are opposed to Allah’s guidance and have corrupted their own scriptures, turning them from guidance into error?

Alliance, succour and aid must only be given to those who agree with you on the ultimate aim. As long as people show animosity to Islam regarding its ultimate aim, which is faith, it is not right for the believer to trust them, be an ally for them, succour them or show them affection.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies: they are but allies of one another – and whoever of you allies himself with them becomes, verily, one of them; behold, Allah does not guide such evildoers’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 51). So: ‘they are but allies of one another’ befriending one another and helping one another against the believers. Therefore, you should not assist them if their aims fight the higher aims of Islam.

They might differ over worldly power. However, they often speak with one voice and help one another when it comes to opposing Islam. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘If they could but overcome you, they would (still)

remain your foes, and would stretch forth their hands and tongues against you with evil intent: for they desire that you (too) should deny the truth' (*al-Mumtahana*: 2). So, they are united in their desire to harm you in any way. They can do that with their hands, or through the use of material force, weapons, and arms. If they cannot do so, then they may harm you through the use of their tongues, by insulting you, your Messenger and your Sacred Law, and by separating the believers from each other and spreading mischief among them, until they get the opportunity to harm you with their hands. So how can you consider such people as allies, when their desire is: '...that you (too) should deny the truth' (*al-Mumtahana*: 2)? If this is their aim, then you should not forget Allah's words: 'For never will the Jews be pleased with you, nor yet the Christians, unless you follow their own creeds' (*al-Baqara*: 120). Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...and whoever of you allies himself with them becomes, verily, one of them' (*al-Ma'ida*: 51).

Indeed, the issue of taking them as allies is the central issue of the chapter of *al-Mumtahana*. Allah *Glorified is He* tested the hearts and deeds of the believers with this chapter to determine the strength of their faith in Him. So do not befriend the enemies of Allah *Glorified is He* who are also your enemies.

Allah *Glorified is He* emphasised that those who believe in Him should be distinct from all other people. Indeed, there cannot be any alliance between them and Allah's enemies, as Allah says, 'Are you not aware of those who befriended people with whom Allah has become angry and condemned? They are neither of you (O believers) nor of those (who utterly reject the truth): and so they swear to a falsehood while they know (it to be false)' (*al-Mujadala*: 14).

Those who form alliances with Allah's enemies are hypocrites. They do not belong to you, or to those whom they support, but rather flitter back and forth between the two groups. If you befriend them and bring them into your circle, they will spread mischief among you and sow the seeds of discord and hypocrisy.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'O you who have believed, do not take for your (private) companions people who are not of your kind. They spare no effort to corrupt you and they would love to see you in distress. Vehement hatred

has already been declared by their mouths, but what their hearts conceal is yet worse. We have indeed made the signs (thereof) clear unto you, if you would but use your reason.' (*Al-'Imran*: 118) It is therefore foolish and witless to befriend those who harm you and seek to cause you suffering and pain, and whose hearts conceal a deep hatred for you. Allah has made these verses clear to you and shown you what is in their hearts. So, will you cease befriending them and drawing them close to you, and involving them in your affairs? Protect your faith and your progeny, and do not become involved with the disbelievers in ways that will ruin your religion. Indeed, they will spare no effort in plotting against you and in spoiling your lives.

Allah says, 'Lo! It is you who (are prepared to) love them, but they will not love you' (*Al-'Imran*: 119). Why, then, do you fool yourselves by befriending them, and continuing to be their allies, when they do not love you? Allah *Glorified is He* then says, '...Be not friends with people with whom Allah has (become angry and has) condemned' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). Who are these people whom Allah *Glorified is He* has condemned? Allah *Glorified is He* made their characteristics clear in His Quran, and He revealed these characteristics to the believers so that they will have no excuse or any doubts regarding the identity of those with whom Allah *Glorified is He* has become angry.

The first of these condemned people are the disbelievers, and this includes the atheists as well as the other kinds of disbelievers. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'O you who have believed, do not take the disbelievers (*kafirun*) for your allies instead of the believers' (*an-Nisa*': 144).

The word *kafirun* (disbelievers) is a general term. It includes all those people who do not believe in Allah *Glorified is He* as well as those who do not believe in Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* has reproached the hypocrites for taking the disbelievers as allies instead of Him, and therefore, it is not acceptable for the believers to follow their actions. Instead, they should be aware of the gravity of this sin.

A clear result of this sin is that Allah will send His chastisement upon you in this world, by making you a humiliated follower of other people.

Allah *Glorified is He* may also punish you in the Hereafter because you separated the believers when you formed alliances with other people who oppose them.

Another group of people condemned by Allah were the Jews and Christians, and Allah also forbade us from forming alliances with them. Allah says, ‘O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 51).

The condemned people also include those who mock our religion and make a playful jest out of its commandments, as Allah says, ‘O you who have believed, do not take for your friends those who mock your faith and make a jest of it – be they from among those who have been given revelation before your time, or (from among) those who deny the truth (of revelation as such). Indeed, remain conscious of Allah if you are (truly) believers’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 57).

To mock something means to insult and deride it. These people consider the verses of the Quran and the messages of our religion as an object of derision and scorn, and pay no heed to the warnings it presents to them. This is the usual way of those who stray from Allah’s guidance. They mock pious people and deride those who follow the straight path of righteousness by belittling their views and actions. So, beware of befriending such people and helping them or cooperating with them, or taking them as allies and showing them affection. Indeed, this alliance will continue to detract from your religiosity as long as the alliance continues.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Whenever you meet those who indulge in (blasphemous) talk about Our messages, turn your backs upon them until they begin to talk of other things; and if Satan should ever cause you to forget, remain not, after recollection, in the company of such evildoing folk’ (*al-An‘am*: 68). If they speak about Allah’s messages with scorn, sarcasm and derision, then turn away from them, and do not sit with them as long as they are doing this. Otherwise, you will be counted as their accomplice in this derision, your religion will begin to seem unimportant to you and you will come to resemble them. When the idolaters sat with the believers, they used to speak ill of Prophet Muhammad and the Quran by insulting and belittling them. So, Allah *Glorified is He* commanded the believers

not to sit with them until they spoke of something else. Do not befriend or aid any of these people whom Allah *Glorified is He* has condemned.

Allah *Glorified is He* often spoke about His condemnation of the Jews in particular because of their manifold sins and transgressions. Allah says, '...and they earned the burden of Allah's condemnation' (*al-Baqara*: 61). Allah's condemnation became, as it were, specially mentioned for the Jews due to the manifold acts of disobedience they committed. Allah stated the reason for that in: 'this was because they persisted in denying the truth of Allah's messages and in slaying the prophets against all right: all of this was because they rebelled (against Allah) and persisted in transgressing the bounds of what is right' (*al-Baqara*: 61). That is, they used to show their ingratitude towards Allah's favours and refused to be thankful for them. In addition, they used to formulate lies about Allah's messages and sell them for a worthless price. They did not stop there, but actually went as far as killing the prophets of Allah against all right. Allah *Glorified is He* drew our attention to an important concept in this verse: 'Be not friends with (these) people (*qawm*)' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). A *qawm* (a people) is the singular of the word *aqwam* (peoples). This suggests that Allah is speaking about one group of people in particular. He even mentions these people in the first chapter of His Book: 'Guide us to the straight path: the way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your blessings, not of those people You are angry with, nor of those who go astray' (*al-Fatiha*: 6-7).

Allah was angry with these people and condemned them because they were aware of His commandments, but they chose to disobey His way by committing all that He had been forbidden for them. Therefore, they deserved His condemnation. They altered and replaced Allah's Commandments because these alterations gave them a temporary power in the life of this world and allowed them to falsely seize the possessions of others.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'The Jews were the people who have incited Allah's anger (and condemnation), and the Christians were the people who went astray.'⁽¹⁾

(1) *This Hadith was narrated by 'Uday ibn Hatim. He was a Christian who embraced Islam. Imam Ahmad mentioned this Hadith in his Musnad (19381) and At-Tabarani mentioned in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir (13691).*

It was narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘Anger (*ghadab*) is a firebrand which ignites in the heart. Do you not see how the angry person’s veins swell and his eyes redden?’⁽¹⁾ So how could it be said that Allah *Glorified is He* gets angry (*yaghdab*)? Indeed, when a person gets angry his veins swell up and his face reddens, and his fury continues until his eyes blaze and his hands move with their sudden inclinations. This is an impulsive state that happens to human beings, and indeed has even happened to Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* who was a messenger of firm resolve. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘And when Musa (Moses) returned to his people, full of anger and sorrow, he exclaimed, “Vile is the course which you have followed in my absence! Have you forsaken your Lord’s commandment?” And he threw down the tablets (of the Law), and seized his brother’s head, dragging him towards himself.’ (*al-A’raf*: 150)

We know that the tablets contained Allah’s Message, but yet, despite this, Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* threw them from his hands because of his anger. He then turned to his brother and dragged him by the head. This was an angry reaction to what his people had done because their sin had incurred Allah’s anger as well.

Therefore, the state of anger is a reaction of the soul that causes a change in the chemical state of the body. It causes the veins to swell up, a person’s face to redden, and his appearance to change. However, since these are all temporary states which accompany a chemical reaction, the anger of Allah does not resemble the state of anger in His creatures. Indeed, Allah is not subject to temporary states and emotions. So, if anger is related to the angry being’s ability to punish, then how can we understand Allah’s anger? The anger of Allah *Glorified is He* is the condemnation and the expulsion of the disbelievers from His mercy, and His punishment of the sinners and those who stray from His commandments. Allah’s anger is not a chemical reaction, as the state of anger in human beings, for Allah says, ‘...there is nothing like Him’ (*ash-Shura*: 11).

(1) Narrated by Ahmad (11604), Al-Hakim (8543) and At-Tirmidhi (2350), on the authority of Abu Sa’id Al-Khudari Allah be pleased with him.

For instance, Allah *Glorified is He* exists, and you exist, but your existence is not like His existence. Allah *Glorified is He* is alive, and you are alive, but your life is not like His life. In the same manner, your hearing is not like Allah's hearing and your sight is not like His sight. So, even though we believe that you have attributes that resemble Allah's attributes, however, we understand Allah's attributes in the light of the verse in which He said: '...there is nothing like Him' (*ash-Shura*: 11).

Allah *Glorified is He* describes those people He has condemned by saying: 'They are indeed bereft of all hope of a life to come – just as those deniers of the truth are bereft of all hope of (ever again seeing) those who are (now) in their graves' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). Their sins made the lack of hope for the Hereafter one of their inherent attributes. Then, Allah condemned them and expelled them from His Mercy due to their sins as well as their lack of hope in the Hereafter. Therefore, their lack of hope for the Hereafter was both a result and a cause of their condemnation.

They despaired of having any share in the goodness of the Hereafter, and so, they resorted to altering Allah's scriptures and corrupting them. They killed Allah's prophets, spread corruption in the land, and invented lies about Allah *Glorified is He*. This was because they felt that the present life of this world was their final abode.

They were untruthful when they said: 'None shall ever enter paradise unless they are a Jew or a Christian' (*al-Baqara*: 111). They also claimed that the Hereafter belonged to them alone, and were lying about that, too. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say (to them, O Muhammad,) "if an afterlife with Allah is to be for you alone, to the exclusion of all other people, then you should long for death – if what you say is true!" But never will they long for it because (they are aware) of what their hands have sent ahead in this world: and Allah has full knowledge of evildoers.' (*al-Baqara*: 94-95) In these verses, Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad: 'If they really believed that Allah made the afterlife for them alone and no one else, they would have hoped for death so that they could go on to an eternal bliss. If the abode of the Hereafter was made for them, and they were sure that they would enter paradise alone, what reason would they have for remaining in this worldly life?'

Indeed, they were liars, as Allah *Glorified is He* used the words: ‘...if what you say is true.’ (*al-Baqara*: 94) Then, He says, ‘But never will they long for it because (they are aware) of what their hands have sent ahead in this world’ (*al-Baqara*: 95). Their sins and acts of disobedience and their defiance of Allah *Glorified is He* prevented them from ever hoping for death. In reality, they had lost all hope of gaining any share in the reward of the Hereafter.

Allah *Glorified is He* also describes the Jews who have incurred Allah’s anger and condemnation. He says, ‘Behold, those who barter away their bond with Allah and their own pledges for a trifling gain – they shall not partake in the blessings of the life to come; and Allah will neither speak to them nor look upon them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He cleanse them of their sins; and grievous suffering awaits them.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 77) So, their hopes for the Hereafter have all been annulled, and their despair started to resemble the disbelievers’ despair of ever again seeing the deceased people in the graves.

The Quran described this despair of the disbelievers when Allah says, ‘And he (the disbeliever) gave an argumentative parable to Us, and is oblivious of how he himself was created! (And so) he (the disbeliever) said, “Who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?”’ (*Ya Sin*: 78) The books of Prophet Muhammad’s biography tell us that Ubay ibn Khalaf Al-Jumahi⁽¹⁾ asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* about a dried bone, and said, ‘Are you telling us, O Muhammad, that when our bones have crumbled into dust, Allah will bring us back again?’ Then he crumbled the bone and scattered the dust in the wind, and said, ‘O Muhammad, who shall bring this back to life?’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* replied: ‘Indeed, Allah will cause you to die, and then bring you back to life, and then send you to Hell!’⁽²⁾

The disbelievers found the idea of resurrection of the dead from the graves and the concept of life after death far-fetched concepts. They said: ‘After we will have become bones and dust (*rufat*), shall we, forsooth, be raised from the dead in a new act of creation?’ (*al-Isra*’: 49)

(1) *A chieftain of Quraysh*

(2) *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*

The word *rufat* refers to the crumbled pieces and wisps of an object when it is transformed into dust or rubble. These people found it far-fetched that there will be a resurrection after death because they were heedless of the beginning of existence and the beginning of man's creation. So, the Jews who were condemned by Allah *Glorified is He* were devoid of hope in the Hereafter, just as the pagan disbelievers were devoid of any hope that the deceased people will ever be resurrected. Therefore, do not befriend such people, nor show them affection so that you do not end up becoming part of either group.

'O you who have believed, be not friends with people with whom Allah (has become angry and has) condemned! They are indeed bereft of all hope of a life to come' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). This means that they have lost the hope of attaining any reward in the Hereafter or being saved from its torment, '...just as those (pagan) disbelievers are bereft of all hope of (ever again seeing) those who are (now) in their graves' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). Similarly, the disbelievers have no hope that the dead will ever come back to life.

We may observe here that the concept mentioned in the end of the chapter is the same as the concept mentioned in its beginning. This concept revolves around the essential importance of renouncing Allah's enemies and avoiding any alliance with them. At the opening of the chapter, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'O you who have believed, do not take My enemies, who are your enemies, for your allies, showing them affection' (*al-Mumtahana*: 1). Allah mentioned these people in the last verse in which He says, '...people with whom Allah (has become angry and has) condemned' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). These people are the Jews, as well as other disbelievers.

It is as though the opening verse and the final verse constitute two brackets. The verses between the brackets ordered us to renounce the Jews and the disbelievers, and not to befriend Allah's enemies in all their different forms. In the first verse, He called them: 'Allah's enemies' (*al-Mumtahana*: 1), and in the last verse He called them: '...people, with whom Allah (has become angry and has) condemned' (*al-Mumtahana*: 13). How can a believer befriend the enemies who deserved Allah's anger and condemnation? Do you seek protection against Allah, when it is: '(He) who protects, and there is no protection against Him' (*al-Mu'minun*: 88)?

It is more fitting to befriend and aid the people who believe in Allah, His Messenger, and the Resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘And (as for) the believers, both men and women – they are close unto one another: they (all) enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and are constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and pay heed unto Allah and His Apostle. It is they upon whom Allah will bestow His Grace: verily, Allah is Almighty, and All-Wise!’ (*at-Tawba*: 71) The final words of this verse are in harmony with another verse in the chapter of *al-Mumtahana*, in which Allah says, ‘...for You (Allah) alone are Almighty, Truly Wise!’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 5) He also says, ‘...Allah is truly self-sufficient, the One to whom all praise is due’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 6), and then: ‘...for Allah is All-Powerful, and Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Giver of Grace’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 7). Then, Allah says, ‘...for Allah is All Knowing and All-Wise’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 10), and then: ‘...for, behold, Allah is Much-Forgiving, a Giver of Grace’ (*al-Mumtahana*: 12). These attributes are also in harmony with the first verse of the following chapter *as-Saff* which began with a glorification of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth praises Allah’s Limitless Glory: for He Alone is Almighty, Truly Wise!’ (*as-Saff*: 1)

Therefore, you should glorify Allah and declare His absolute transcendence above any flaw, and you should not take His enemies and your enemies as friends instead of Allah *Glorified is He*. You should not befriend those whom Allah *Glorified is He* has condemned, for otherwise, this will taint your faith. Praise Allah’s Limitless Glory to remain in harmony with the entire universe around you!

the chapter of

as-Saff

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *as-Saff*⁽¹⁾ (The row):

Allah *Glorified is He* starts this chapter by stating:

سَبَّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١﴾

**Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies
God — He is the Almighty, the Wise [1]
(The Quran, *as-Saff*: 1)**

The scholars say that the chapter of *as-Saff* is one of the *musabbihat* chapters. The first verse in each of these *musabbihat* chapters started with derivatives of the Arabic root s-b-h. These words included the derivatives: *sabbaha* (praised) *yusabbihu* (praises) and *sabbih* (praise). Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* referred to these chapters as the *musabbihat* chapters and he used to recite them before retiring to bed. This is because their initial verses⁽²⁾ are superior to one thousand verses, as they praise the Limitless

(1) *as-Saff* chapter was revealed in Medina and contains a total of 14 verses. Al-Qurtubi has mentioned that it was revealed in Medina, according to Al-Mawardi. However, relying on the authority of Ibn `Abbas, An-Nahhas suggested that it may have been revealed in Mecca. The chapter is also referred to as Al-Hawariyin and the chapter of `Isa (Jesus). It is the 61st chapter within the arrangement of the Quran. It was revealed after the chapter of *at-Taghabun* and before the chapter of *al-Fath* which means that it was revealed before the Treaty of *Hudaybiyya*.

(2) *It was narrated by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (17200), Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (5059), At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (2921), and An-Nasa'i in his Sunnan (7972). In each of the previously mentioned collections, the Hadith was narrated on the authority of Al-'Irbaḍ ibn Sariya Allah be pleased with him.*

Glory and Exaltedness of Allah *Glorified is He*. These verses praised Allah before He brought creation into existence, and praised Him after originating this creation.

Allah *Glorified is He* states in the chapter of *al-Hadid*: 'All that is in the heavens and the earth praised (*sabbaha*) Allah's Limitless Glory' (*al-Hadid*: 1). He says in the chapter *al-Hashr*: 'All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth praised (*Sabbaha*) Allah's Limitless Glory' (*al-Hashr*: 1), and in *as-Saff*: 'All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth praises (*Sabbaha*) Allah's Limitless Glory: for He alone is Almighty, Truly Wise!' (*as-Saff*: 1)

Does this mean that the beings in the heavens and the earth praised Allah's Limitless Glory in the past, on a single occasion only? Of course not, as indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth praises (*Yusabbih*) the Limitless Glory of Allah, the Sovereign Supreme *the Exalted*' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1). He also states in the chapter of *at-Taghabun*: 'All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth praises (*Yusabbih*) Allah's Limitless Glory: His is all the dominion, and to Him all praise is due; and He has the power to will anything' (*at-Taghabun*: 1).

Thus, the glorification of Allah is absolutely existent. Everything in existence has praised and will continue to praise Allah *Glorified is He*. This includes everything that is in the heavens and in the earth, and everyone on them. They all joined in praising Allah *Glorified is He* except you, O human being! So, glorify Allah, the Most-High!

Firstly, we have to know that absolute Glory innately belongs to Allah *Glorified is He* before any creation. Then, He created the angels which have, since then, glorified Him without interruption. Then, He created the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them has also glorified Him. Therefore, direct your praises to Allah, O believer in Him. Glorify Him as the rest of creation glorifies Him!

This glorification is the defining characteristic of the entire created order. In a sense, these praises of glorification are the language of creation. We are only able to understand some of these praises, and other praises remain inaccessible to us. Allah *Glorified is He* has decreed that everything in creation will glorify and praise Him. Allah says, 'The seven heavens praise His

Limitless Glory, and the earth, and all that they contain; and there is not a single thing but extols His Limitless Glory and praise: but you (O men) fail to grasp the manner of their glorification! Verily, He is Forbearing and Much-Forgiving' (*al-Isra':* 44).

These glorifications are not figurative, but are indeed real, even if we are unable to understand or comprehend their manner. In fact, if Allah *Glorified is He* granted someone access to this hidden language, he will understand the praises and glorifications of creation just as he hears clearly articulated speech. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* taught Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* the speech of the birds.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Everything that (*ma*) is in the heavens and in the Earth praises Allah's Limitless Glory' (*as-Saff:* 1). Allah uses the Arabic word *ma* (a thing that) as a relative pronoun which refers equally to sentient beings and other non-sentient objects. This means that both the living and the non-living things in creation praise and glorify Allah. None of them differs in this regard.

In a different verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Are you not aware that everyone who (*man*) is in the heavens and the earth praises Allah's Limitless Glory?' (*an-Nur:* 41) In this verse, we observe a subtle difference due to the use of another pronoun, *man* (who) which is used exclusively to refer to sentient beings. If we view these verses together, we will realise that everything in creation praises Allah *Glorified is He*. These things include the sentient beings as well as the inanimate objects in creation. Only an obstinate, ungrateful rebel abandons this ritual.

Indeed, the individual constituents of a disbeliever's body have faith in Allah *Glorified is He*! The organs of his body praise and glorify Allah *Glorified is He* but these praises do not occur in accordance with the will of the disbeliever. In this, he is literally subjecting the limbs of his body to pain and torment through his sinful and disobedient conduct. The limbs obey his sinful commands, but they do so unwillingly. Then, these same limbs will testify against him on the Day of Judgment! Therefore, even if they are subject to his command in the life of this world, they will break free from his will in the Hereafter.

For instance, the tongue is subjected to the will of its person. If the person wishes, the tongue will recite the testimony of faith, and if the person wishes, the tongue can utter words of disbelief. This is because the volition and the will of the tongue belong to the person's worldly choice. However, on the Day of Judgment, the only expression of will and volition will belong to Allah *Glorified is He*. Only during sleep can the limbs and the atoms of the sinner's body receive temporary relief from the evil of the person's sinful compulsions in disobeying Allah *Glorified is He*.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* states the seven heavens in the plural form, but He mentions the earth in the singular form. He says, 'All that is in the heavens and in the earth praises Allah's Limitless Glory' (*as-Saff*: 1). However, Allah *Glorified is He* says in a different verse: '(It is) Allah who has created seven heavens, and (a number) like them of the earth' (*at-Talaq*: 12). Just as Allah *Glorified is He* created seven heavens, He created seven earths. So, why did Allah mention the heavens in the plural form while mentioning the earth in the singular form?

In Arabic, the plural word *`ardeen* (earths) is very difficult to pronounce, and as a result, the singular *ard* (earth) was given preference. The word *as-samawat* (heavens), on the other hand, was mentioned in the plural form because it rolls off the tongue with considerable ease.

Where are these seven heavens and seven earths to which the Quran referred? The Quran informed us about the existence of the seven heavens and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told us that he ascended through them during the blessed Night Journey and Ascension. He also described what he saw in each of the heavens. The answer to this question is that the positions of the earths and the heavens are relative. The sky of those who dwell in one heaven is the ground of those in the following heaven, while their ground is the sky for the preceding inhabitants.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...He alone is Almighty, Truly Wise' (*as-Saff*: 1). This means that He is the Almighty One Who is always triumphant! He exerts unlimited power over His dominion. There are no precautionary measures you can take if He decides to exact retribution from you. There is absolutely nothing which can ever pose a threat to him. Glory is

to Allah. The grandeur He possesses is eternal and not dependent upon anything else. If you truly desire to obtain the real power which is free from the vicissitudes of other changing creatures, your only recourse is seeking it from the source of true honour, the Unchanging Allah *Glorified is He*.

The description of Allah's Power after Al-Mumtahana should grab our attention. If you wish to learn the correct way of attaining true strength, then you must alter some of your fundamental ideas about the manner in which it is sought. If you befriend the disbelievers and form alliances with them, you will be asking for the support of a feeble source, as the disbelievers are subjected to the changes of fate.

Indeed, the created beings change daily between moments of fortune and moments of misfortune. Even if the disbelievers are wealthy today, they may not be wealthy permanently. In fact, the process of seeking glory and nobility from another creature who is subjected to the vicissitudes of life will never give you a true standing. Only Allah *Glorified is He* possesses absolute and unchanging Glory. So, seek your power from Allah *Glorified is He* and you will attain that which you seek, as: '...all glory belongs to Allah (alone)' (*an-Nisa*: 139).

In addition to possessing absolute Glory, Allah is also the Most-Wise. Every act which emanates from Him is issued on the basis of wisdom. If Allah *Glorified is He* commands you to cease taking His enemies as advisors and patrons, His command contains a wise purpose. He intends to honour you as believers, through sparing you the indignity of seeking false glory from others.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said :⁽¹⁾

(1) *The events surrounding the revelation of this verse: Al-Hakim compiled this Hadith in his Mustadrak (2799), based on Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. It was narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Salam, who said, 'A group of the Prophet's Companions were sitting one day. We said, "If only we had some way of knowing which action was most pleasing to Allah, we would perform it." Allah then revealed: "All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth praised Allah's Limitless Glory: for He alone is Almighty, Truly Wise! O you who have believed, why do you say one thing and do another? Most loathsome is it in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do!" (as-Saff: 1-3) Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him recited this verse before us.' At-Tabarani included the same narration in his Al-Mu'ajam Al-Kabir (172) and it was narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (3624).*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾
كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

**You who believe, why do you say things and then
do not do them? [2] It is most hateful to God that
you say things and then do not do them [3]
(The Quran, *as-Saff*: 2 - 3)**

This verse is addressed to the believers. In the Quran, when Allah *Glorified is He* summons His servants by the initial statement ‘O you who have believed’ (*as-Saff*: 2) means: ‘O you who have chosen to believe in Me with your own free will! You believed in Me as your Lord, Who Has all the attributes of knowledge, power, wisdom, and self-subsistence’. With this reminder in mind, you are now ready to listen to the commands of your Lord *Glorified is He*. Allah *Glorified is He* is not summoning those who do not possess faith. Indeed, He is only calling on those who have chosen to believe in Him mindfully with their own free choice. Additionally, this statement means that implementing the following commands and abstaining from the following prohibition will contain immense benefit for the believers.

A party of the Prophet’s Companions once asked about the acts of obedience that Allah likes, and Allah revealed that He likes unshakeable faith in Him and military strife in the Way of Allah against the forces of disbelief. When the verses speaking of military struggle were mandated, some of the Companions did not like this mandate as it was a great test for them. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* revealed this verse: ‘O you who have believed, why do you say (*taquloon*) things which you do not act upon (*taf’aloon*)?’ (*as-Saff*: 2)

In the Arabic language, the words *ya`mal* (work), *yaf`al* (act) and *yaqool* (say), have distinct meanings. The (works) *a`maal* we perform are the greatest indication of who we are. Indeed, every *`amal* (work) emanates from the heart and then makes use of all the body parts necessary for its performance. The work of the heart is formulating the intention. The tongue is the organ involved in the work of speech, whereas hearing is the work of the ear and sight is the work of the eye. Therefore, every bodily organ carries out a form of work for which it was created.

In the language of the Arabs, every instance of a bodily organ carrying out its intended purpose is referred to as a work (*`amal*). The work which is performed by the tongue is known as a *qawl* (speech), and the work that is performed with any organ other than the tongue is referred to as a *fi`l* (action). Therefore, *al-aqwaal* (speeches) and *al-af`aal* (actions) are both forms of *al-a`maal* (works).

The activity of the tongue (*qawl*) is never referred to as an action (*fi`l*) in the Arabic language because indeed, people speak often, but they rarely hold themselves accountable to what they have said. This explains why Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘O you who have believed, why do you say (*taquloon*) things which you do not act upon (*taf`aloon*)?’ (*as-Saff*: 2)

In summary, one could say that speech and action are counterparts, but each represents a different type of work. Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...why do you say (*taquloon*) things which you do not act upon (*taf`aloon*)?’ (*as-Saff*: 2) He did not say, ‘...why do you say things which you do not work upon (*ta`maloon*)’ because speech is a type of work (*`amal*), but it is not an action (*fi`l*).

Integrity, or maintaining a consistency between your actions and your speech, is essential for a believer. When actions and speech are not concordant, the integrity of the person is lost. The mention of the truthful people (*al-sadiqun*) which occurs throughout the Quran refers to the people of integrity.

In the same way, Allah *Glorified is He* has chided the individual who commands people to observe piety while forgetting to observe it himself. He fails to act in accordance with the counsel he gives others, and does things against which he cautions them. Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘Do you bid other people to be pious, while you forget your own selves’ (*al-Baqara*: 44)?

In essence, the objective of one who enjoins good and forbids evil, and conveys the way prescribed by Allah unto others, is to pull them out of the misguided movements with which they have become familiar. Indeed, rescuing a disbeliever from a misguided movement is a painstaking affair. After first acknowledging his misguidance, the sinner or disbeliever must distance himself from what formed the intimate habits of his life. It is perhaps for these

reasons that he becomes a close observer of the person who helped him to recognize his misguidance.

Therefore, the disbeliever watches the person who is trying to guide him very closely. Does he actually practise what he calls me to practise? Does he really abstain from the things which have been prohibited? If he finds that the individual actually practises what he preaches, he will recognize that he is truthful in his outreaching effort. On the other hand, if he notices cognitive dissonance on behalf of the believer, it becomes an excuse for the sinner to return to his former state of disbelief.

Indeed, Islam is comprised of words and deeds. A lapse in consistency between these two entities will destroy the efforts of inviting people to Islam. Allah made the gravity of the matter of integrity clear when He used the words: 'O you who have believed' (*as-Saff*: 2). This means that this integrity is one of the demands of faith. Why is that the case? Indeed, if a person engages in the same sins which he is commanding others to avoid, he will be seen as a fraud impostor. Essentially, there is no available way for a person to call people towards things which he has not adopted himself.

This gives us a greater insight into the Quranic declaration: 'Verily, in the Apostle of Allah (Prophet Muhammad) you have a good example, for everyone who looks forward (with hope and awe) to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah unceasingly.' (*al-Ahzab*: 21)

As a system, Islam does not serve us well unless we implement it. For this reason, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not command His companions to carry out an action except after preceding them in performing it. Therefore, the Muslims followed his example in actions as well as in words.

It has been mentioned that when 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* became responsible for the believers, he wanted to introduce a new form of legislation into law. So, he gathered his own family members first and said to them, 'It seems to me that this legislation is beneficial. I swear by Allah, if any of you (my family) disobeys me (by not obeying this new legislation as other people will obey it) I will issue you a speedy and exemplary punishment before the other Muslims.' In this manner, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab

was able to close the door of disharmony and contention. He understood that being accused of nepotism could potentially be a major source of disruption in the community.

The condition of integrity is of a great importance to religious scholars. They must set ideal examples for others. In disciplines other than religious studies, it is enough that specialists be knowledgeable in their respective fields. If an outstanding chemist has an alcohol addiction, people would say that his personal behaviour is irrelevant as they only rely upon his knowledge of chemistry. If he excels in his field, people will still respect him for his specialization and will not be concerned with his conduct. The same thing could be said about geologists or any other group of specialists. Religious scholars are a major exception from this allowance.

If a religious scholar taught you and guided you to live righteously, and then you learned that he drank alcohol or stole possessions from others, would you continue taking guidance from him? Of course you would not because his esteem would fall drastically in your eyes. Regardless of the amount of knowledge he possessed, you would not listen to him nor attend his classes. You would refer to this type of an individual as a cheating imposter. This makes it very clear that a scholar of religious faith must have an exemplary character. He should not be guilty of commanding people to abstain from evil while he, himself, perpetrates it. He should not enjoin people to do good deeds while he, himself, is negligent in their performance. Undoubtedly, people are watching him closely.

Additionally, what good is there in saying that we are Muslims, if our actions are not representative of Islam? The believer is requested to do two things. Firstly, the believer should abstain from committing evil. Secondly, the believer should forbid the perpetuation of evil.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, if someone guides you to do good deeds and cautions you from committing evil deeds, and then, you find that he, himself, engages in them, do not resort to the argument, 'Straighten yourself out first before advising me'! Even if the adviser is a sinner, try to take his advice all the same. You should not be like the one being scolded in the following couplet of poetry:

To the messenger pay no mind, but to the message take heed,
Reap the fruit of the harvest and leave the wood for the fire.

However, we are also saying to the people advising others that they should follow their own advice first before trying to guide others. This is because a believer should avoid being included among those mentioned in the previous two verses!

Before Islam began to spread through verbal scholarly efforts, it actually spread through the exemplary conduct of righteous Muslims. In fact, one could go so far as to say that the vast majority of people who embraced Islam did so as a result of the exemplary character they observed among Muslims. Take those who were responsible for the spread of Islam in China, for instance, as most of them were traders who attracted people to Islam with their uprightness and moral character.

Allah *Glorified is He* provided us with an example of this phenomenon in the story of Prophet Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him*. He was admonishing his people for tampering with their scales and measures, and for their engagement in other fraudulent practises when conducting business transactions. Allah *Glorified is He* narrated to us that Prophet Shu'aib said to them: 'I have no desire to do, out of opposition to you, what I am asking you not to do' (*Hud*: 88). This means that he was only inviting them towards the righteous rules which he personally imposed upon himself because Allah had mandated these rules and prohibited these fraudulent practises.

There is another important point within the two verses we are currently examining. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'O you who have believed, why do you say (*taquloon*) things which you do not act upon (*taf'aloon*)? Most loathsome is it in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do' (*as-Saff*: 2-3). As we said, this verse was revealed after a group of Muslims had gathered to discuss the most beloved action to Allah *Glorified is He*. When they learned that the most beloved action to Allah *Glorified is He* was taking up arms in His way, with firmness and composure, this mandate was not liked by some Muslims. Therefore, Allah says, to them: '...why do you say (*taquloon*) things which you do not act upon (*taf'aloon*)?' 'You were asking about the action most beloved to Allah *Glorified is He*. So, why were you unresponsive to

the mandate of Allah when it was revealed'? This marks a characteristic of the hypocrites, whom Allah described in the verse in which He says, 'Now those who have believed say, "Would a revelation (allowing us to fight) be revealed?"' But now that a revelation clear in and by itself, mentioning war has been revealed, you can see those in whose heart is a disease looking at you, (O Muhammad,) with the look of one about to faint for fear of death' (*Muhammad*: 20).

This verse compared the hypocrites to people in the last throes of death! The metaphor illustrated the anxiety and fear that a dying person has in these moments. The companions were requesting a chapter which would decisively settle this matter for them, but when such a chapter was revealed and made mention of taking up arms, the hypocrites started fretting fearfully like a person experiencing the pains of death. It may be easy for a hypocrite to attend the congregational prayer in the mosque. In fact, he might even pray in the first row! Yet, if faith demands that he take up arms, it is a different story as he will reveal his true colours.

'Woe to them (the way they have chosen). Indeed, far better for them would be obedience (to Allah's call) and a word that could win (His) approval: for since the matter has been resolved (by His revelation), it would be but for their own good (to remain true to Allah's way)' (*Muhammad*: 20-21). Indeed, carrying out that which Allah *Glorified is He* commanded would have been better for them than the hypocrisy they displayed. They will be honoured with the voluntary strife in the Way of Allah *Glorified is He* and they will be spared from the compulsory death which will come later in their lives without an honorable strife.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Most (*kabura*) loathsome it is in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do!' (*as-Saff*: 3) This saying is intended to convey the odiousness of such a trait in the sight of Allah *Glorified is He*.

The Arabic word *kabura* is used in two meanings. The first meaning is in the reference to a person's age and becomes *yakburu* in the present tense. The second meaning refers to something becoming enormous, great, or grave and poses a challenge to people. An example of this can be located in the verse in which Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...dreadful (*kaburat*) is this saying that comes out of

their mouths, (and) nothing but falsehood do they utter' (*al-Kahf*: 5). The verse clarified that the claim that Allah has offspring is a gravely horrendous claim.

Then again, as we mentioned above, the 'enormousness' conveyed by the term *kabura* may be used in a different way, as in the following statement of Allah *Glorified is He*: '...that (monotheism) to which you call them (to embrace) appears difficult (*kabura*) upon the polytheists' (*ash-Shura*: 13). This means that the call to true faith and monotheism was a severe challenge to the idolaters and proved very difficult for them.

In the verse we are currently examining, we find the word *kabura* in the following context: 'Most (*kabura*) loathsome (*maqtan*) it is in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do' (*as-Saff*: 3). This is intended to convey the heinousness of the lack of integrity. The Arabic word *maqt* is actually the strongest type of dislike one can express. This lack of integrity between words and actions is absolutely detestable in the sight of Allah *Glorified is He*.

The following statement of Allah *Glorified is He* is another example of this usage. Allah says, '...those who would pose arguments against Allah's messages, without having any (revealed) evidence to support them: (have committed a sin) exceedingly loathsome in the sight of Allah and the believers' (*Ghafir*: 35).

So, remember that saying things that one does not do is a most heinous crime in the sight of Allah *Glorified is He*.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بُنْيَنٌ مَرْصُورٌ ﴿٤﴾

**God truly loves those who fight in solid lines for
His cause, like a well-compacted wall [4]
(The Quran, *as-Saff*: 4)**

A solid row (*saff*) or rank is achieved when a mass of people coalesces and join tightly so that there are no gaps between the soldiers. Solid ranks do not simply refer to throngs of people, but refer to rows made with formation and discipline. Indeed, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* tells us how he was even straightening the rows of his army while staring down the enemy!

As a matter of fact, he once nudged one of his men in the stomach to get him back into formation. The soldier, who loved Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him: ‘O Messenger of Allah. That hurt me a little!’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* responded, ‘Here is my stomach. You may strike me back if you like.’ The man accepted his offer but then kissed the Prophet instead and said, ‘By Allah, I hope to leave this battle a martyr. Nothing would delight me more than to have my life punctuated by an encounter with you.’⁽¹⁾

Neat, tightly closed ranks are a sign of discipline, order, and preparation in a fighting force. It demonstrates their capacity to effectuate orders. This is how the angels stand in ranks and wait for the orders of Allah *Glorified is He*. Each angel is ready to carry the role they have been assigned to perform.

If you analyse the words that occur in the Quran with the Arabic root *s-f-f*, you will find that the meaning of each relates to ranks. For example, ‘Hence, (O sorcerers of Egypt,) decide upon the scheme which you will pursue, and then come forward in one single body (*saff*)’ (*Ta Ha*: 64). This means, ‘Plan among yourselves and then stand together firmly.’ Indeed, the believers should stand together as if they were one fist. Surely, this makes their appearance more awe-inspiring and intimidating to the enemy. It is interesting that this is the same advice the magicians of Pharaoh gave each other when they attempted to stand against Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*.

(1) *This Hadith was narrated by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (5262) on the authority of Ibn Abu Layla, who said: ‘Usayd ibn Hudayr was a righteous, good-natured man. Once, while Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him was arranging the ranks in preparation for battle, he was creating a disruption by talking and entertaining people, so Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him gave him a slight jab in the waist to get him into position. After being struck, he said, “That hurt a bit”, so Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him offered him the chance to even the score by striking him back. He agreed to take the offer, but first pointed out that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him was wearing a shirt (which would shield him from the blow) while he was bareback. Once Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him removed his shirt, Usayd embraced and kissed him, and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah. May my mother and father be offered as your ransom!’” Concerning the Hadith, Al-Hakim said, ‘Its chain of narrators is sound but neither Al-Bukhari nor Muslim included it within their collections.’*

Even in the Hereafter, the appearance of humanity before Allah *Glorified is He* on the Day of Judgment will take place in rows! Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And they will be lined up before your Lord' (*al-Kahf*: 48). They will be lined up before Allah, as an army is lined up before its commander. He will see all of them as they stand before Him in well-arranged ranks.

The manner in which judgment will be carried out will be similarly well arranged. On that day, no one present will be able to avoid or flee from the orders of Allah *Glorified is He*. They will be arranged in rows, one after another, but each row will be separate and distinct.

Allah *Glorified is He* also said concerning the angels in general: 'And, verily, we too are arranged (before Him in worship)' (*as-Saffat*: 165). This refers to their standing in highly disciplined formations waiting to receive their orders. In addition to the ordered formation, the idea of ranks also conveys a sense of harmony. There is no jockeying for position within the ranks. Lastly, ranked formations are a daunting sight for any enemy that stands before the army and it inspires awe within onlookers.

In a Prophetic Hadith narrated on the authority of Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib⁽¹⁾, it is narrated that: 'When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* arranged the ranks in preparation for a prayer, he would run his hands over our chests and shoulders while saying, 'Gaps in your ranks will lead to dissension among your hearts'. Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon those who pray in the first rows. Stand shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot while reciting your prayers. Allah likes the perfection of the rows for the prayer just as He likes the perfection of the ranks during battle.'⁽²⁾ He then recited the following verse: 'Verily, Allah loves those who fight in His cause

(1) *Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib is Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib ibn Al-Harith Al-Khazraji (Abu 'Umara) was an Ansari. He converted while still a young man and accompanied Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him on 15 military campaigns. The first of them was the Battle of Al-Khandaq. He was appointed Governor of Ar-Ray (in Persia) at the age of twenty-four. Some of the most splendid territories of Western Qazwin were obtained under his command. He lived out the end of his days in Kufa and finally passed away during the time of Mus'ab ibn Az-Zubayr (Al-A`alam 2/46, by Az-Zirikli).*

(2) *This Hadith was narrated by An-Nisa'i in his Sunnan (811) on the authority of Bara' ibn 'Azib.*

in (solid) ranks, as though they were a building firm and compact' (*as-Saff*: 4). In other words, Allah *Glorified is He* loves the ranks within the prayer to be closed and compact, and does not like them to be disorderly and sloppy. As we mentioned above, the same rules of formation apply to the ranks during combat.

In both the battle ranks and the prayer lines, closing the ranks facilitates the process of receiving the orders of the commander, keeping composure and poise before the enemy, as well as effectuating commands. Perhaps this explains what happened on the battle of Uhud, when some soldiers in the Muslim army did not follow the orders of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. This proved to be a critical mistake, as after breaking their ranks, the army was exposed to danger and suffered defeat.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* assembled fifty archers and appointed 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr⁽¹⁾ as their commander. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to them: 'Stand here, at these positions, and watch our backs. Whether you see us appearing victorious or appearing to be routed, hold your positions all the same.' However, they did not carry out their orders, as they could not resist the temptations of war spoils. They disobeyed the orders of their commanding officer to hold their positions, and following the order of commanding officers is the basis of all military operations.

They disobeyed the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*; their defeat was inevitable. In retrospect, it was vital that they experience defeat while in the company of the Prophet. Remember, the first battle saw the Muslims victorious. After their initial success, they began to concern themselves with accumulating war booty.

The archers said, 'all the valuables will be claimed by others and nothing will be left for us.' They abandoned their positions and descended to take their share of the spoils. Khalid ibn Al-Walid — who at the time was following the religion of his people—was able to use this to his advantage; he surrounded the Muslim army and the rest is history.

(1) 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr is 'Abdullah ibn Jubayr ibn An-Nu'man Al-Ansari. He was present for both 'Aqaba and Badr. He was appointed the leader of the archers for the Battle of Uhud and was martyred therein during the year (3 A.H.) (*Al-A'lam* by Az-Zirikli, 4/76).

The absence of the archers from the post they had been assigned by the Prophet at the base of the mountain provided Khalid with the perfect opportunity to attack the vulnerable, unprotected Muslim army. Perhaps gravest of all, the negligence displayed by the archers almost led to the death of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. After the Muslims were left unguarded, the disbelievers of Quraysh unleashed a vicious attack upon them. The companions were made to flee wildly in every direction and the Muslim ranks were disbanded. The army of the idolaters intensified their surge upon the Prophet and even got so close to him that Ibn Qam'a was able to strike the Prophet with a stone and fracture one of his teeth.

The shields of the Prophet were broken and his helmet was smashed into his head so forcefully that it caused blood to flow from his head. During the commotion, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* attempted to reach the summit of the mountain in order to address his troops, but ended up mounting the shoulders of Talha ibn 'Ubaydullah⁽¹⁾ when he was prevented from doing so.⁽²⁾ For this reason the most beloved action to Allah that those struggling in His way can perform is standing together as though they were a fortified structure.

The order to stand together in well-organized ranks is not simply for those conducting prayer or fighting in the way of Allah on the battlefield; by no means, it is also for those calling unto the way of Allah. Those channelling their energies to invite others to Islam as well as scholars studying various aspects of the faith should also stand together in unified ranks—not allowing anything to divide them or their efforts.

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- (1) *Talha ibn 'Ubaydullah ibn Abu Muhammad among the Companions was known for his bravery. He was born in the year 28 B.H. He was one of the ten Companions who were promised paradise and one of the six consulted about the Caliphate after the death of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. Prior to his embracing Islam he was known as one of the most brilliant members of Quraysh and recognized as one of their scholars. He was known as Talha Al-Jood. He was present for the Battle of Uhud, a battle which saw him stand with the Prophet; defending him while sustaining twenty-four wounds. At age sixty-four he was killed (26 A.H.) during the Battle of the Camel as he fought alongside 'Aisha Allah be pleased with her. He was buried in Basra.*
- (2) *Cited in Ar-Rahiq Al-Makhtum (1/245): The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him told Talha: 'You have earned the promise.' He was referring to the fact Talha had earned the promise of Paradise.*

As a matter of fact, some scholars have opined that the statement of Allah: ‘Consider these [messages] ranged in serried ranks’ (*as-Saffat*: 1) contains a wide range of meanings; among them, the ranks of propagating and inviting others to Islam, the ranks of defending Islam, and the ranks of protecting the uninhibited right of others to choose Islam.

In other words, this verse can refer to all manner of propagating the Religion of Allah and defending it before its enemies. Propagating the faith is the responsibility of the scholars, and defending the physical integrity of the community is the responsibility of those striving upon the battlefield. Both the aforementioned groups should concert their efforts and work within closed ranks as though they represent fortified structures. The True Lord *Glorified is He* says: ‘Verily Allah loves [only] those who fight in His cause...’ (*as-Saff*: 4).

Indeed, in order for fighting to be legitimate in Islam, it must be for the sake of Allah, and not for worldly reasons such as claiming land or wealth. In order for fighting to really be for the sake of Allah its motivation must be Allah alone and unmixed with any desire to exult in power, display arrogance or oppress others. The idea of fighting wars in order to bolster one’s status as a superpower or gain wealth by opening new markets is regarded as morally repugnant in Islam. The goal of a just war is to make the way Allah has prescribed for His servants prevail and giving aid to the Religion of Allah. This sheds light on the following statement of Allah *the Exalted*: ‘Hence let them fight in Allah’s cause’ (*an-Nisa*: 74). To be sure, this highlights the fact that fighting can be carried out for other than the sake of Allah; for instance, those who fight as a result of blind partisanship or in order to demonstrate their bravery and valour.

In fact, this has caused some people to question among themselves: Who is the real martyr? The scholars responded: One who fights in order to see the way of his Lord prevail and is killed is a martyr. In the final analysis, we can say that fighting may be engaged for the sake of Allah or for other selfish and perhaps even devilish ends.

Allah encourages the believers to strive in His cause and expend themselves in effort to make His way prevail. Indeed, once an individual has accepted faith it is not conceivable that he would neglect the responsibility of striving

within the ranks of the faithful. As long as his heart finds contentment in faith, is it possible for him to invest his effort into striving with those who are motivated by other than faith?

The statement of Allah ‘...those who fight in His cause in [solid] ranks, as though they were a building firm and compact’ (*as-Saff*: 4) gives special attention to a particular type of fighting. Human beings fight for different reasons; some are motivated by blind partisanship to particular groups, some by defending their nationalities, and some by other affiliations. From the standpoint of the faith, these various affiliations have no value unless they emanate from the way prescribed by Allah and are placed in the service of making His way prevail.

This is the frame of mind the believer assumes before entering battle, and thus he is removed from the zeal which is produced by the motivation of arrogance, wealth, or prestige. Quite the reverse, you fight when fighting is required. You proceed and engage the circumstances as faith demands, taking assurance in the fact that your only aspiration is to be counted among those who truly fear Allah. When you are fighting with the goal of helping the way of Allah prevail you are in the accompaniment of Allah.

Perhaps it should go without saying that in as much as you are fighting for the sake of Allah, that fighting must be engaged according to the law of Allah. To be sure, Allah has prohibited you from using extreme force and transgressing by killing women, children, or the elderly. Killing any of the above-mentioned categories of non-combatants would be transcending the limits set by Allah.⁽¹⁾

(1) *On the authority of Safwan ibn-`Assal Al-Muradi: ‘The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him sent us out as a military detachment and said to us, “Attack in the name of Allah. Do not use excessive force, do not fight dishonourably, do not mutilate the corpses of the dead and do not kill a child.”’ This Hadith was narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad (18122). Also, in Al-Mu`ajam Al-Wasit (4/268) it is cited on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him when sending forth a military detachment would say: ‘Make your approach in the name of Allah, and as soldiers striving in His way. Go forward and fight those who avowedly reject the religion of Allah; however, do not use excessive force or fight dishonourably. Furthermore, you should refrain from mutilating the corpses of the dead, and killing women, children or the elderly.’*

Additionally, because those fighting within the ranks are fighting for the sake of Allah, their formation must be as Allah commanded: ‘...as though they were a building firm and compact.’ (*as-Saff*: 4)

At perhaps a deeper a level, we can say that the verse is demonstrating that faith makes the believers into a fortified structure; one in which all the parts support each other. And while this is true of the believers generally, it is especially true of those fighting in the way of Allah.

The statement of Allah ‘...a building firm and compact’ (*as-Saff*: 4) is a metaphor which shows its merits upon reflection. A building is described as firm and compact when the bricks which make it up are set well enough to avoid the possibility of ever becoming loose. This means that the other bricks surround it in a way that gives it stability and firmness.

Next, The True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَنْقُورِ لِمَ تُوذُونَنِي وَقَدْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

Moses said to his people, ‘My people, why do you hurt me when you know that I am sent to you by God?’ When they went astray, God left their hearts to stray: God does not guide rebellious people [5] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 5)

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* dispatched Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) unto Pharaoh with a verse which demonstrated their truthfulness, their primary objective was delivering the children of Israel and rescuing them from the oppression of Pharaoh. The question of faith, i.e., the misguidance of Pharaoh in matters of faith was of secondary importance. These words of Musa’s (Moses’s) capture the first priority of the mission: ‘...let, then, the children of Israel go with us, and cause them not to suffer...’ (*Ta Ha*: 47).

In other words, Musa (Moses) was saying, ‘we have come for our children, we have come to rescue them this torment and suffering’. Indeed, he came to Pharaoh with miracles which should have served as proof of his truthfulness. Nevertheless, Musa (Moses) was not spared of the evil of Pharaoh. Pharaoh said of him: ‘...a spellbinder is he, a liar!’ (*Ghafir*: 24)

Allah say, '[Pharaoh] exclaimed: "Behold, [this] your 'apostle' who [claims that he] has been sent unto you is mad indeed"' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 27), and '...am I not better than this contemptible man who can hardly make his meaning clear?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 52)

Naturally, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was exposed to the evil of Pharaoh; indeed, he had come to challenge his claim to divinity. How was Musa (Moses) subjected to harm by the children of Israel? Was it not Musa (Moses) who had come to rescue them from the oppressive grip of Pharaoh and enslavement?

This explains why Musa (Moses) scolded his people so harshly. The True Lord says, 'Now when Musa (Moses) spoke to his people, [it was this same truth that he had in mind:] "O my people! Why do you cause me grief, the while you know that I am an apostle of Allah sent unto you?"...' (*as-Saff*: 5)

The scholars have said: in causing Musa (Moses) grief, the children of Israel were causing grief to one who had been sent unto them from Allah *Glorified is He!* They said to him: '...Make us see Allah face to face...' (*an-Nisa'*: 153). With comments like these they extended their transgression from doubts about the actions of Allah to doubts about His essence. They were so submerged in materialism that they even requested to observe Allah within the physical world! They did not understand the idea of the unseen and hence, their souls were not contented with it.

For this reason, the True Lord *Glorified is He* addresses Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* thusly: 'The People of the Scripture demand of you [O Prophet] that you cause a revelation to be sent down to them from heaven. And an even greater thing than this did they demand of Musa (Moses) when they said, "Make us see Allah face to face" – whereupon the thunderbolt of punishment overtook them for this wickedness. After that, they took to worshipping the [golden] calf – and this, after all evidence of the truth had come unto them! None the less, We effaced this [sin of theirs], and vouchsafed unto Musa (Moses) a clear proof [of the truth].' (*an-Nisa'*: 153)

Another example of their causing Musa (Moses) grief is when they rejected the provision of manna and quail that Allah had given them; they said: '...indeed, we cannot endure but one kind of food; pray, then to your Lord

that He bring forth for us aught of what grows from the earth—of its herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, its onions. Musa (Moses) said, “Would you take a lesser thing in exchange for what is [so much] better? Go into [any] settlement, and then you can have what you are asking for...” (*al-Baqara*: 61).

Afterward, their actions were again injurious to Musa (Moses) when they worshipped the calf instead of Allah. This took place right after they had been delivered safely from the sea. Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had taken the elect from among them and had set off to be with his Lord. He left his brother Harun (Aaron) in charge of the children of Israel.

They fashioned the calf out of jewellery they had stolen from Egypt with their own hands. As a matter of fact, much of the jewellery used for making the calf had been pieces that they were entrusted with while in Egypt but failed to return upon their departure. In retrospect, perhaps this is why that jewellery ended up containing bad consequences for them in the long run. Their leader in their madness was referred to as As-Samiri: ‘...the effigy of a calf, which made a lowing sound; and thereupon they said [to one another], “This is your deity, and the deity of Musa (Moses)—but he has forgotten [his past]!”’ (*Ta Ha*: 88)

The pain this caused Musa (Moses) is indescribable. He had gone to receive the guidance of Allah and His rulings and laws while his people were engaged in idolatrous worship. They were worshipping other than Allah while he, himself, was experiencing untold nearness to the presence of Allah. Lest they forget, Allah had just rescued them from many long years of bondage and oppression at the hands of Pharaoh in Egypt.

This explains the intensity of Musa’s (Moses’s) anger at his people. Concerning this occasion, The True Lord says, ‘Thereupon Musa (Moses) returned to his people full of wrath and sorrow, [and] exclaimed: “O my people! Did your Lord not hold out [many] a goodly promise to you? Did, then, [the fulfilment of] this promise seem to you too long in coming? Or are you, perchance, determined to see your Lord’s condemnation fall upon you, and so you broke your promise to me?”’ (*Ta Ha*: 86)

To be sure, Musa (Moses) was deeply pained and saddened at what had taken place among his people. Indeed, he even said to them: ‘and when

Musa (Moses) said unto his people: "O my people! Verily you have sinned against yourselves by worshipping the calf; turn, then in repentance to your Maker..." (*al-Baqara*: 54).

As for the act of atonement that had been specified for them by their prophet and messenger Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* it was: '...mortify yourselves; this will be best for you in your Maker's Sight...' (*al-Baqara*: 54); it has been said they executed some seventy-thousand members of their people.

Furthermore, they annoyed and vexed Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* personally when they accused him of murdering his own brother, Harun (Aaron) while they were scaling a mountain and the latter died. They said, 'indeed, Musa (Moses) harboured animosity and rancour toward his brother so he killed him.' Allah ordered the angels to carry the body of Harun (Aaron) and pass through the procession of the children of Israel so that they could see that his body was unscathed. This occasion is what is intended by the statement of Allah *the Exalted*: '...Allah showed him to be innocent of whatever they alleged...' (*al-Ahzab*: 69).

In relation to this verse, others⁽¹⁾ have mentioned that they abused Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* by claiming that he had some sort of bodily ailment. They only arrived at this silly conclusion due to his extreme modesty. When dressed he would cover his entire body; even when he bathed or relieved himself!

It is bad enough that some of them claimed that he had leprosy, but even worse, some of them went so far as to claim that he had some type of condition which afflicted his genitals. Allah wanted to clear him of these outrageous charges. One day⁽²⁾ Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* came out and laid down his garments in order to bathe. After he finished, he set off to grab his clothes, but found that the stone upon which he had laid them had dashed away! Musa (Moses) promptly scurried after the stone, grabbing his staff, and screaming 'O stone, my clothes!' repeatedly as he ran behind the stone. At last, the chase ended with him running into a party of the children of Israel. When they saw him without clothes they realised he was absolutely free of

(1) *On the authority of Abu-Hurayra*

(2) The story of the taking stone and the stealing of the clothes of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*.

the condition with which they claimed he was afflicted. This is what has been transmitted from the Prophet, who said, ‘At last, the chase ended with him running into a party of the children of Israel. When they saw him naked they realised that Allah had created him in a beautiful body.’ In this manner, Allah cleared him of the silly accusations his people had made about him. Finally, the stone stood still so Musa (Moses) could take his clothes; he dressed and eventually set off but not before giving the stone a few blows with his staff!

The True Lord *Glorified is He* referred to the fact that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was not afflicted with leprosy or any other physical ailment in His statement: ‘[and now] put your hand into your bosom: it will come forth [shining] white, without blemish...’ (*al-Qasas*: 32).

The word (white), as it appears here, means that his hand was shining and without any trace of ailment or skin condition. Bear in mind that Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was of swarthy complexion which made his hand shining forth with white light even more extraordinary. For this reason, Allah added ‘...without blemish...’ (*al-Qasas*: 32). This was in order to pre-empt their speculation that he might be afflicted with leprosy or something similar. By no means, his hand was miraculously shining with natural light.

Musa (Moses) was subjected to much abuse; when he began to challenge the authorities, Qarun⁽¹⁾ did the unthinkable. He hired a prostitute to publicly accuse Musa (Moses) of sleeping with her. However, Allah decreed that after the people had assembled she came forward and told the truth about Qarun’s plot. Indeed, Allah cleared the name of His Messenger, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. On this occasion, Qarun persuaded the prostitute to perform this insidious task by giving her a large metal tin filled with gold. His goal was simply to discredit Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* so when he appeared before the people and attempted to explain the law of Allah by saying: The one guilty of theft shall have his hand amputated, the one guilty of fornication shall be subjected to the lash, the one guilty of adultery shall be executed by stoning, etc. Qarun challenged him. Qarun screamed out, ‘and what if it is you, O Musa (Moses)? Musa (Moses) responded with integrity, ‘Yes, even if

(1) *The story of Qarun's spite to Musa (Moses) peace be upon him, and his investigation of a whore to frequent him.*

it is me.' This is when the prostitute stood and blurted out: 'He (Musa (Moses) seduced me! Obviously shocked at the utter falsehood of her statement, Musa (Moses) said to the woman, 'By the One Who separated the sea, speak the truth! Just then, the woman trembled and plainly acknowledged—in front of all the on-lookers—Qarun's plan to assassinate *Musa's* (Moses's) character. Needless to say, the plan Qarun had hatched became exposed and this marked the beginning of a long period of contention between he and Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*.⁽¹⁾

This explains why Allah mentions: '...O my people! Why do you cause me grief, the while you know that I am an apostle of Allah sent unto you?...' (*as-Saff*: 5)

Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was saying: First, you acknowledge the truth of my prophetic mission. The word *qad* appears here in order to convey emphasis. In other words, they were absolutely certain that he was a prophet. Imagine a perplexed Musa (Moses) questioning, 'You clearly seem to acknowledge that I am sent unto you by Allah, why then, do you insist on causing me such harm? In and of itself, what you have charged me with is odious, but when looked at through the lens of prophethood and conveying the message of Allah, it is even worse'. Allah *the Exalted* not only declared him innocent of these baseless charges, but also positively asserted his uprightness by saying: '...for of great honour was he in the sight of Allah.' (*al-Ahzab*: 69)

The great honour mentioned in the previously cited verse refers to the fact that his requests and supplications will find reception with Allah. Wrongfully charging him with misconduct is something from which one with at least a shred of intelligence would shrink. Being honourable entails respect, dignity, and esteem.

These characteristics aren't gained haphazardly; absolutely not, they are usually preceded by actions which earn them for their possessor. If truth be told, people normally respect individuals who excel them in qualities they esteem.

(1) This was cited in a collection of Hadiths attributed to Ibn `Abbas Allah be pleased with him. Narrated by At-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (20/116), Ibn Abu Hatim in his *Tafsir* (9/2006) and by Ibn `Asakir in *Tarikh Dimashq* (61/97-98)

The source of one's honour among people can be as varied as knowledge, strength, compassion, and concern for the vulnerable, using experience to benefit others, or just simply being helpful.

When the children of Israel looked at Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* they did not see a prophet—this despite the fact that he was primarily responsible for delivering them from Pharaoh and his oppression and tyranny. They countenanced the favour of Musa (Moses) by swerving from the truth and surrendering to rebelliousness.

To be sure, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...and so when they swerved from the right way, Allah let their hearts swerve...’ (*as-Saff*: 5). The verb *zaygh* (swerve) indicates deviation from a straight course. It is derived from the phrase *tazayugh al-asnan* which describes teeth which are growing from different positions within the mouth: Some along the gum line, others behind teeth etc. Swerving—as it is used in the last verse—is something which involuntarily occurs within a sick heart. Primordial goodness—with which all people are born—does not naturally incline toward deviation. It is rather the capricious whims; these are the source the heart's deviation. A person might know of the correct position within the law of Allah on a particular matter, but at some point, his undisciplined passions will intervene and he may deviate from the correct way.

Take the children of Israel for instance; they were absolutely positive that Musa (Moses) was a messenger from Allah. Nevertheless, they swerved from that which they knew. The urge to deviate was first found among their hearts. Next, the thoughts became subservient to the hearts' deviation. Then they began to articulate their thoughts. And thus, you observe the source and progression of their deviance.

Indeed, we should observe the manner in which the Quran describes this process when it proclaims: ‘...and so when they swerved from the right way, Allah let their hearts swerve...’ (*as-Saff*: 5), it is as if Allah is saying, in so much as the original desire to deviate from the right course starts with you, I will facilitate and even further that which you, yourselves, desire.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* doesn't begin by making a person incline toward something which contravenes His orders. The desire to rebel always

begins with the individual and his whims. Once this occurs, Allah leaves the person to his own desires and then furthers the inclination toward deviance.

The phenomenon we are discussing is starkly similar to that being described in the following verse: ‘and whenever a chapter is bestowed from on high, they look at one another [and say, as it were], “is there anyone who can see you?” – and then they turn away. Allah has turned their hearts away [from the truth] – for they are people who will not grasp it.’ (*at-Tawba*: 127)

This establishes that the deviance began with them: Only after they turned away did Allah make their hearts turn away from faith. Thus, no one can say, ‘it was Allah who made them disincline from faith, so how can they be blamed for turning away?’ Quite the reverse, they turned away of their own choosing because they lacked understanding and comprehension.

For this reason, the believers call upon their Lord while saying: ‘O our Lord! Let not our hearts swerve from the truth after you have guided us...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 8). The True Lord *Glorified is He* has not left the issue of guidance and misguidance without clarification. He has made the characteristics of those who are guided and those who are not, sufficiently clear. What guidance can there be for a man or a woman after they have rejected Allah, deviated from His way, and spread corruption?

Then, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...for Allah does not bestow His guidance upon iniquitous folk.’ (*as-Saff*: 5) When the True Lord restricts guidance from an individual it does not mean that he is justified in saying, ‘Allah didn’t grant me guidance, what can I do?’, in this way he attempts to absolve himself of blame by making Allah wholly responsible for the outcome. On the contrary, we must question the deviant individual: Why did Allah restrict his guidance from you? He only did so because you expressed an inclination toward deviance.

Therefore, we can say that a lack of guidance from Allah is the result of taking the path of misguidance and distancing oneself from the way of Allah. With this as a premise we clearly recognize that the usage of guidance within this verse does not correspond with the general definition of ‘leading someone on the path to good’. Allah leads both believers and disbelievers to the path

of good. The way of Allah, which has been clearly detailed for all people demonstrates the path of good and shows men and women the way to it. The concept of guidance these verses endeavour to convey is the special phenomenon that occurs for people who enter the domain of faith and thereafter perform acts of righteousness. This latter form of guidance is what we often refer to as 'facilitated guidance'.

Each individual who treads the path of faith is aided by Allah so that he can remain upon the path. It is inconceivable that we could ever exculpate a group of deviant persons on the grounds that Allah did not grant them guidance. This is absolutely preposterous. Allah *Glorified is He* has shown all people the path of goodness. However, the onus of their misguidance should be placed squarely upon their own shoulders. They, of their own will and volition, chose to follow the path of disbelief, oppression, and deviance.

Speaking of deviance, perhaps we should mention a precise definition for the term: it is leaving the obedience of Allah and failing to conform to His way. When we analyse the term etymologically we find that its original usage occurs in the saying, '*fasaqat ar-rutabah*' which was said to express the idea of a fruit being deeply submerged underneath its peel. Thus, red dates and other fruits grow naturally with peels which, before they ripen, are almost inextricably linked to them. However, when the red date or other fruits ripen and become moist, the peel darkens and the fruit begins to separate from them. As this natural process nears completion it becomes easy to remove the peel off the fruit.

This is exactly the manner in which a deviant is removed from beneath the protective canopy that is the way of Allah. This 'peel', if you will, sloughs off the deviant until he is no longer connected with it. Disconnection from the way of Allah occurs when the servant no longer has a practical relationship with His commandments and prohibitions.

Deviance is at the seat of all moral corruption. To be sure, moral corruption only appears when the way of Allah has been abandoned, on a particular occasion in which case it is to be classified as caprice, or repeatedly in which case it is referred to as obstinacy. Allah *Glorified is He* does not guide a disbelieving people; nor does He bestow His guidance to a deviant or iniquitous people.

Whoever wants to boldly flaunt his restriction from the guidance of Allah only needs to perform actions of disbelief, deviance, or iniquity. Nonetheless, in all of the abovementioned cases, it will be the individual who chose his own path and thereby made the punishment of Allah his rightful recompense. Perhaps this sheds light on the statement of the disbelievers from among the children of Israel who were restricted from the guidance of Allah when He sealed their hearts. Yet, it was the same scenario: They, themselves, had chosen to follow the path of deviance and disbelief. In other words, they wilfully chose to be misguided!

Afterward, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَحْيَىٰ إِسْرَءِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُّصَدِّقًا
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدٌ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦﴾

Jesus, son of Mary, said, ‘Children of Israel, I am sent to you by God, confirming the Torah that came before me and bringing good news of a messenger to follow me whose name will be Ahmad.’ Yet when he came to them with clear signs, they said, ‘This is obviously sorcery’ [6] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 6)

Most of the personalities of the Quran occur without attention to their lineages. There are, however, two noted exceptions to this general rule: ‘Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary) and Maryam (Mary) the daughter of ‘Imran. Why is this so; one might ask? Indeed, their story involves a miracle which will not ever be duplicated. This is the reason Allah presents them in the Quran by using their full names; lest a woman dare come along and claim that she, like Maryam (Mary), experienced Immaculate Conception!

The miracle of Maryam (Mary) will never occur again. Indeed, this is the reason Allah mentioned her specifically by name. Conversely, He never details the lineages of Pharaoh, Musa (Moses) or the Sleepers of Ephesus. Similarly, we find no mention as to the exact person of the Two-Horned One, or the man who owned the two gardens. Again, this can be said of the overwhelming majority of personalities which occur throughout the Quran because the focal point of these stories is not personalities.

`Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* was sent exclusively to the children of Israel. Indeed, he addressed them: ‘...O children of Israel! Behold, I am an apostle of Allah unto you...’ (*as-Saff*: 6), and Allah spoke of him *peace be upon him* in the following terms: ‘...an apostle unto the children of Israel...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 49).

`Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* was sent as a messenger to a specific group of people, the children of Israel; his message was not intended for all humanity. This is what differentiates the message of `Isa (Jesus) and his ministry from that of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

In fact, we find a similar construction introducing the message of Hud *peace be upon him*. Allah says, ‘and unto [the tribe of] `Ad [we sent] their brother Hud...’ (*al-A`raf*: 65), and concerning the people of Midyan:⁽¹⁾ ‘and unto [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu`aib (Jethro)...’ (*al-A`raf*: 85).

The True Lord *Glorified is He* made the mission and message of every prophet who preceded Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* specific to particular times and places. To put it more succinctly, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was given the distinct honour of being sent to all people. The message that was given to him is relevant to all times and places. The True Lord highlights this distinction with the following statement: ‘Say [O Muhammad]: “O mankind! Verily, I am an apostle of Allah to all of you...”’ (*al-A`raf*: 158).

One of the common characteristics of the messengers is that each of them confirms the truth of the messenger which preceded him and heralds the messenger who will come after him. As we stated above, this characteristic is shared among all the messengers with the exception of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. He confirmed the truth of that which preceded him, but he did not announce the advent of a messenger who would come after him. Indeed, he is the Final Messenger. Focusing our attention on `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* he confirmed the message of the Torah—which was still the most

(1) Midyan: the name is derived from a tribe and ruling family. It was a city in the north-western region of the Arabian Peninsula. Currently, it is located in the area known as Al-Bada`a in north-western Saudi Arabia, a region whose major city is Tabuk and its major source of commercial activity is trade. Although they are separated by some large hills, it actually faces the Egyptian city of Dahab which is located on the Red Sea.

current revelation at the onset of his prophetic ministry. The phrase '...confirm the truth...' (*as-Saff: 6*) which occurs within the verse means that the message brought by `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* was in conformity with the Torah.

With the phrase (whatever still remains) `Isa (Jesus) is making a reference to the Torah and highlighting that he was sent to fulfil and uphold it, To be sure, this does give one occasion to question: in so much as the Torah was present, and `Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary) came to confirm the message of the Torah as it existed in his time, what was the purpose of his being sent to proclaim a new, distinct message? The answer lies in recognizing that one can introduce new rulings while confirming that which preceded you. The two are not mutually exclusive. In another place, Allah *the Exalted* says concerning `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*: 'and [I have come] to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah and to make lawful unto you some of the things which [a foretime] were forbidden to you...' (*Al-`Imran: 50*). As such, his mission is not limited to confirmation. `Isa (Jesus) also came to make some of the things that were prohibited in the Torah lawful unto the children of Israel. Of course, it goes without saying that the core beliefs which define the way of Allah and the rulings which emanate from them do not change or alternate. Likewise, the stories and parables of the people of the past that have been included in the various revelations do not change. Change only occurs in a few rulings.

Revelation occurs in a progression. Nevertheless, there is congruency, harmony, and reinforcement among the various instalments within the progression. None of the messengers ever propagated a message which contradicted that which preceded them or that which came after them. Therefore, `Isa (Jesus) came to confirm what remained of the Torah in his time.

Torah is a Hebrew term which became the name assigned to the book that was revealed to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. The inclusion of this term in the Quran, a purely Arabic scripture does not mean it is somehow less authentic. The Quran was revealed to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. This was a common word among the Arabs; when said, its meaning was readily understood.

Within a contemporary context, a good example of the same phenomenon would be our adoption of the word (bank). This has become an Arabic word:

it is written in Arabic script and regularly used by Arabic speakers. The Quran being purely an Arabic scripture means that when Allah addressed the Arabs He did so with words and terms that they understood and were in use among them; even if some of them originated in languages other than Arabic.

Therefore, the effort that some scholars have expended to prove that these words actually have Arabic origins is totally unnecessary. They are often at pains to find original Arabic linguistic patterns to which these words conform and to uncover etymological roots for them.

Thus, we can observe the dual function of `Isa (Jesus) the son of Maryam (Mary): He came to confirm that which was conveyed by Musa (Moses). He also came to herald the advent of a messenger who would come after him. He said to his people: ‘and [this happened, too,] when `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), said: “O children of Israel! Behold, I am an apostle of Allah unto you, [sent] to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah, and to give [you] the glad tiding of an apostle who shall come after me, whose name is Ahmad.” But when he [whose coming `Isa (Jesus) had foretold] came unto them with all evidence of the truth, they said: “This [alleged message of his] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence!”’ (*as-Saff*: 6)

In the Gospel, Prophet Muhammad is referred to by the name Ahmad.⁽¹⁾ In the Quran he is referred to be the name Ahmad only once but referred to by the name Muhammad in four places: Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘and Muhammad is only an apostle; all the [other] apostles have passed away before him...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 144). He also says, ‘[and know, O believers, that] Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but is Allah’s apostle and the Seal of all Prophets. And Allah indeed has Full Knowledge of everything.’ (*al-Ahzab*: 40),

(1) In the Hebrew Torah, in third book of Exodus we find: ‘The land will be filled with the praise of Ahmad. He will seize the nations by their necks with his right hand.’ We have also located older copies; the first printed in London in the year 1848 and another printed in Beirut in 1884. In the older printings, you find that the mention within the Book of Exodus occurs with stark clarity: ‘indeed, the skies will be illumined by the splendour of the Praised One (Muhammad). The earth will be filled with his praise... Your call to reform is echoed by the rivers. Even in the depth of the seas your burning voice is not extinguished. O Muhammad! The mountains were put to pasture after witnessing you.’

and Allah *the Exalted* says, ‘whereas those who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds, and have come to believe in what has been bestowed from on high on Muhammad – for it is the truth from their Lord – [shall attain to Allah’s Grace:] He will efface their [past] bad deeds, and will set their hearts at rest.’ (*Muhammad*: 2)

Allah *the Exalted* proclaims: ‘Muhammad is Allah’s apostle; and those who are [truly] with him are firm and unyielding towards all deniers of the truth, [yet] full of mercy towards one another. You can see them bowing down, prostrating themselves [in prayer], seeking favour with Allah and [His] goodly acceptance...’ (*al-Fath*: 29).

The words Muhammad and Ahmad are derived from the same tri-lateral root h-m-d. All of the words derived from the root involve the concept of praise; however, the words Ahmad and Muhammad have different connotations.

Upon analysis, we find that Muhammad refers to an entity which is praised by others. The word *mukarram* — which appears on the same linguistic pattern but is derived from the tri-lateral root k-r-m whose derivatives all involves honour—provides an example of the same phenomenon. When we say, ‘so and so is *mukarram*’ we are saying that he has been honoured by others. The word Ahmad on the other hand, refers to an entity which engages in the act of praising something other than itself.

Additionally, the word Ahmad corresponds with the linguistic pattern *afʿal* which connotes superlative expression. For example, we say, ‘so and so is generous (*karim*) and so and so is more generous (*akram*).’ Therefore, we can conclude that the word Ahmad refers to someone who praises abundantly. Looking in further detail, we find that the word *hamid*, derived from the same root, is used to refer to one whose level of praise is appropriate for that which he is praising.

If you look at the names of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* referred to by most frequently, Ahmad and Muhammad, you find that both express qualities about him in the superlative. Ahmad is a superlative expression of one who praises, while Muhammad is a superlative expression of one who receives praise.

Allah granted the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* two beautiful qualities: He is praised by Allah and he engages in abundant praise of Allah. This is quintessence of the prophetic personality: He is at once the Chosen and the Elect, and one striving to earn the favour of Allah.

The names Muhammad and Mahmoud highlight the election of the Prophet while Hamid and Ahmad express his striving to be near to Allah. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* is the embodiment of these two essential qualities; as he said once, ‘I am Muhammad. I am Ahmad. I am *Al-Muqaffi* and *Al-Hashir*,⁽¹⁾ the Prophet of Repentance, and the Prophet of Mercy.’⁽²⁾

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘and there shall not be one of the People of the Book, but shall believe in him [‘Isa (Jesus)] before his death and on the Day of Judgement he shall be a witness against them.’ (*an-Nisa*: 159)

This verse is making it clear that every member of the people of the Book will believe that ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* as a servant, a messenger and perhaps most important of all, a human being, before he passes away. However, this will not happen until he comes in the flesh and proclaims to them: ‘You were mistaken when you rejected my foretelling of the coming of Muhammad, the Seal. Also, you were mistaken when you accused my mother of impropriety. To be sure, evidence of your mistake is contained in the messenger whose coming I foretold: Muhammad, the messenger who has been sent to all mankind. Right here, before you all, I pledge my allegiance to Muhammad by offering prayer behind one of the members of his community’.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘those who shall follow the [last] apostle, the unlettered Prophet whom they shall find described in the Torah that is with them, and [later on] in the Gospel...’ (*al-A‘raf*: 157).

Notice the detail in the exposition of the Quran. It did not say mention the last apostle whose description is written in their scriptures; on the contrary, it

(1) *Al-Muqaffi*: some say that the source of this name is the fact that ‘the affair’ ended with him. That is to say: He is the last of the Prophets. There will be no prophet after him. The name could also refer to his being a follower of the Prophets who came before him. *Tahdhib Al-Lugha*... This was the opinion offered by Shamr

(2) This Hadith was narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (3532) and by Muslim in his *Sahih* (6251). In the Hadith which was narrated on the authority of Jubayr ibn Matam.

said: '...whom they shall find described in the Torah that is with them, and [later on] in the Gospel...' (*al-A'raf*: 157). Indeed, the verse affirms that one who reads the Torah or the Gospel can find a detailed depiction of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. Both the Torah and the Gospel grant us ample, comprehensive accounts of the last Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*.

If truth be told, the people of the Book had come to Yathrib to witness the fulfilment of prophecy: They wanted to identify and follow this prophet whose arrival had been mentioned in the Torah.

Reflect upon the covenant Allah took from the prophets: '...you must believe in him and succour him...' (*Al-Imran*: 81). The messengers conveyed the message to the various communities to which they were sent, and told the people of faith of the coming generation that they would encounter a messenger who would teach them the consummate expression of the way of Allah. This was the fulfilment of the covenant.

Those who truly know the Torah and the Gospel can recognize the descriptions of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* within them: 'They unto whom We have vouchsafed revelation a foretime know him as they know their own children: but behold, some of them knowingly suppress the truth' (*al-Baqara*: 146).

Vividly underscoring this point, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab⁽¹⁾ *Allah be pleased with him* once asked 'Abdullah ibn Salam: 'How did you know him, O ibn-Salam?' What 'Umar intended to convey by his question was how 'Abdullah ibn Salam recognize Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by the content of his message or by his physical characteristics. Ibn Salam, who we must remember was a Jewish rabbi, responded by saying, 'I knew him as I knew my own son. In fact, I knew him better than I knew my own son! Indeed, regarding my son there is a chance—no matter how slight—that his mother could have deceived me; with Muhammad however, his description occurs in the Torah with such detail as would make it nearly impossible to misidentify him.'⁽²⁾ As such, the

(1) The story of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him*, asking 'Abdullah ibn Salam about the mention of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the Torah.

(2) Ath Tha'alabi mentioned the following narration from As-Suda As-Saghir who mentioned it on the authority Al-Kalbi who transmitted it from ibn 'Abbas. Also, this Hadith was cited by As- Suyuti in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (2/32)

people of the Book know the Prophet: they know the time of the advent of his prophecy, his message, and his physical characteristics with great certainty. Before the arrival of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* the Jews of Yathrib would say to the idolaters, ‘We have been awaiting the arrival of our prophet for quite some time. However, once he arrives, we will believe in him and proceed to vanquish you as the peoples of `Ad and Iram were vanquished.’⁽¹⁾

Nevertheless, when the Prophet arrived in Medina they were the first to disbelieve, oppose him, and dispute the legitimacy of his prophethood. Read the verse of Allah *the Exalted*: ‘and whenever there came unto a [new] revelation from Allah, confirming the truth already in their possession—and [bear in mind that] a foretime they used to pray for victory over those who were bent on denying the truth—: whenever there came unto them something which they recognized [as the truth], they would deny it. And Allah’s rejection is the due of all who deny the truth.’ (*al-Baqara*: 89)

Therefore, the advent of Muhammad’s prophecy did not come as a surprise to the people of the Book; quite the reverse, they were awaiting his arrival and preparing to believe in him as their scriptures had commanded. Yet, when he arrived they rejected faith and denied the message.

For this reason, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘...But when he [whose coming `Isa (Jesus) had foretold] came unto them with all evidence of the truth, they said: “This [alleged message of his] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence!”’ (*as-Saff*: 6)

The pronoun ‘he’ which occurs in the verse refers to the messenger whose coming was prophesied by `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*. Of course, this is Ahmad. Thus, one may read the verse, ‘But when Ahmad came unto them, and his prophethood became clear to them, they said, “This [alleged message of his] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence.”’ (*as-Saff*: 6)

Racked with doubt, these people did not find any reasonable grounds to oppose the Quran. They claimed that he was sorcerer; but then again, does

(1) In *Dala`il An-Nubuwwa* (2/76), *Al-Bayhaqi* cited the following Hadith on the authority of `Asim ibn `Umar ibn Qatada. A similar citation occurs in *Ibn-Ishaq’s* (2/63) work on the *Prophetic Biography*.

someone under a spell have a will independent of the sorcerer. If he was a sorcerer compelling people to embrace Islam by force of magic, why did he spare you? Why did he fail to cast a spell on you?

The True Lord *Glorified is He* primed His Messenger for the contumacy of the haughty and the arrogance of the prideful. He says, 'But even if We had sent down unto you [O Prophet] a writing on paper, and they had touched it with their own hands – those who are bent on denying the truth would indeed have said, 'This is clearly nothing but a deception!' (*al-An'am*: 7)

Despite their being able to touch the parchment with their hands, they would still say, '...This is clearly nothing but a deception.' (*al-An'am*: 7) The like of this speech would never come from a wise, thinking and reflective person.

Indeed, sorcery can only change the way people see reality. So how can they deem this magic when they are able to touch it with their hands and verify that it is truth! Again, the argument stands: if the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* is such a powerful sorcerer, why did he not cast a spell on them? Why have they proven so difficult to bewitch?

In terms of the portion of the verse which reads '...But when he [whose coming `Isa (Jesus) had foretold] came unto them with all evidence of the truth, they said: "this [alleged message of his] is [nothing but] spellbinding eloquence"' (*as-Saff*: 6), it could possibly refer to `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*; he came to them with 'evidence of the truth' in the form of the various miracles he performed. 'Lo! Allah will say, "O `Isa (Jesus), Son of Maryam (Mary)! Remember the blessings which I bestowed upon you and your mother—how I strengthened you with holy inspiration so that you could speak unto men in your cradle, and as a grown man; and how I imparted unto you revelation and wisdom, including the Torah and the Gospel; and how by My leave you did create out of clay, as it were, the likeness of a bird, and then did breathe into it so that it might become, by My leave, a bird and how you did heal the blind and the leper by My leave, and how you did raise the dead by My leave; and how I prevented the children of Israel from harming you when you came unto them with all evidence of truth, and [when] those of them who were bent on denying the truth were saying, 'This is clearly nothing but deception.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 110)

Allah enabled `Isa (Jesus) to make, out of clay, the shape of a bird, and by the permission of Allah, he was able to bring it to life by breathing into it. Likewise, the True Lord *Glorified is He* gave him the ability to give sight to the blind and cure the leper by renewing his skin. In fact, Allah even completed the process of giving life to the dead at the hands of `Isa (Jesus).

Nonetheless, they disbelieved in that which was brought by `Isa (Jesus) and considered it no more than sorcery. They were singularly focused on the natural world, and the miracles of `Isa (Jesus) involved defying the laws of nature.

Perhaps this is the reason they found it difficult to grasp the idea that Allah had allowed some members of creation to perform actions which theretofore had only been performed by Allah, Himself. Actions such as reviving the dead, breathing life into the clay figure of a bird, curing the blind, lepers, and others are not natural occurrences. These miracles were so impressive that some who were with `Isa (Jesus) erroneously believed he was Allah! Indeed, conjecture never avails the truth of anything!

Afterward, The True Lord says:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُوَ يُدْعَىٰ
إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

**Who could be more wrong than someone who
invents lies against God when called to submit to
Him? God does not guide the wrong-doers [7]
(The Quran, *as-Saff*: 7)**

To answer this rhetorical question, no one is more wicked than someone who invents a lie about Allah. First, such an individual is wronging himself by limiting his concern to the fleeting life of this world and neglecting the Hereafter. Next, he is wronging his community. In fact, he will share in the consequences of the disobedient actions that were committed as a result of the lie he told concerning Allah.

As for the portion of the verse which reads, ‘...and who could be more wicked...’ (*as-Saff*: 7), it is actually a positive assertion that there is no one more wicked than the one who invents a lie about a message from Allah. In

the context of the verse, wickedness consists of misplacing legitimate rights. In scale, wickedness can be grave and egregious; like wickedness in belief, concerning which Allah *Glorified is He* said, '...for, behold, such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an awesome wrong!' (*Luqman*: 13) On the other hand, wickedness can be slight and negligible.

The individual who invents a lie about Allah is the most wicked of people. If truth be told, inventing a lie about one of his peers might be regarded as inconsequential; but in this case, who has he invented a lie against? Without doubt, the thing which makes his lie so egregious is that it is about Allah. Put succinctly, it is utter foolishness to invent a lie against Allah. Allah is Omnipotent. He is capable of furnishing proof to combat your lies and refuting you. Furthermore, Allah can completely disable your attempt to concoct this lie! As such, anyone foolhardy enough to even approach this act of wrongdoing is really, only wronging himself.

The word *iftira`* (inventing a lie) is used to indicate purposefulness. It is quite possible for someone to speak on the basis of what he deems true, while reality happens to be unaligned with his statement.

That is why scholars made a point of developing precise definitions for truth and falsity. They have mentioned: When something that is said is in accordance with reality it is the truth. Conversely, if what is being said is not in accordance with reality it is considered false. Thus, if someone makes a comment—on the basis of their knowledge—which is not supported by reality the statement becomes false. However, it does not necessarily mean the one who issued the statement is a liar.

The statement of Allah, 'and who could be more wicked than one who invents [such] a lie about [a message from] Allah...' (*as-Saff*: 7) is a clear warning against asserting anything about Allah that has not been revealed to a messenger or within scripture. Inventing a lie about Allah is only a means to harming oneself.

In the final analysis, we have explained that you will not find anyone more wicked than one who conjures up a lie about Allah. However, we have yet to examine how someone invents a lie about Allah. One way a person conjures up a lie about Allah is to falsely claim prophethood. This is a grave

lie about Allah; it is not simply an act of deceiving the people as some wrongly believe. A person who falsely claims to have been sent by Allah is engaged in a heinous crime against Him.

This would definitely apply to the false claims to prophethood we have observed throughout history, such as that of Musaylamah Al-Kaddhab, Sajah, Tulayha Al-Asadi, Al-Aswad Al-'Ansi etc.⁽¹⁾ all of these people claimed to be prophets.

One of them even claimed that he was capable of producing something like the Quran, he offered: 'The grinders and the intensity of their grinding; the kneaders and their kneading; the bakers and the passion of their baking!' At that rate, it would have been better to start from the beginning of the process! He should have also included: The planters and the intensity of their planting; the harvesters and their harvesting!' In conclusion, I suppose he could have just said, 'the food and its being food; the antacids and their not being acidic!

I think it goes without saying that this is just a bunch of poppycock. To be sure, The True Lord revealed His revelatory speech not only in measured, metered tones but also with meanings that contain value as information.

The only purpose their lies serve is misguiding people and barring them from the path of Allah, as is confirmed by the following verse: '...and who

(1) *Musaylamah ibn-Habib Al-Hanafi of the tribe of Banu Al-Hanafiya from the region of Al-Yamama... He embraced Islam in the year 9 A.H. Afterward, he returned to Al-Yamama and made his false claim to prophet hood. He claimed that prophet hood was divided among him and Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him. At the Battle of Al-Yamama, he finally met his demise at the hands of Wahshi ibn-Harb during the reign of Abu-Bakr. As for Sajah bint Al-Harith ibn-Suwayd, she claimed prophet hood after the death of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him. She was a woman of Christian faith. There were actually a few people who responded to her claim to prophethood like Malik ibn Nuwayra. Musaylama married her and after the marriage was consummated she received half the produce of his land as a dowry. Tulayha Al-Asadi ibn-Khuwaylid was a commander during the apostasy wars; however, his false claim to prophethood occurred after the death of the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him in the year 11 A.H. He met defeat at the hands of Khalid ibn Al-Walid and subsequently repented and returned to Islam. In the end, he was martyred at the Battle of Nahawand in the year 21 A.H. 'Abhala ibn-Ka'b Al-'Ansi from Madhjah. He was given the sobriquet Dhu Al-Khimar. He was a magician and used to show the people many wondrous tricks. When the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage infirm, he began to announce his false claim to prophethood.*

could be more wicked than he who, without any [real] knowledge, attributes his own lying inventions to Allah, and thus leads people astray? Behold, Allah does not grace [such] evildoing folk with His guidance.' (*al-An'am*: 144) This means that their expressed reason for conjuring up lies about Allah is to mislead people.

If one thinks about it, a liar is only capable of lying to an individual who is 'green'. Does anyone waste their time lying to someone who is aware that they are lying? No one is capable of making someone who knows the truth believe his lie. Indeed, the individual who lies about his peers among women and men is wronging them. However, it is infinitely more wrong to lie about Allah *Glorified is He*.

There is no action more shameful or despicable than lying about Allah. Indeed, as long as they are concocting lies about their Lord, they are removed from His Mercy.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Musa (Moses) told them: "Woe unto you! Do not invent lies against Allah, lest He afflict you with most grievous suffering: for He who contrives [such] a lie is already undone!"' (*Ta Ha*: 61) Whoever invents a lie against Allah is defeated from the beginning; his punishment will be immediate. In other words, Allah will issue them a brutal punishment in the life of this world before they are punished in the Hereafter.

For this reason, the True Lord *Glorified is He*—in His Omniscience—poses the following question, 'But what do they think—they who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah—[what do they think will happen to them] on the Day of Resurrection...' (*Yunus*: 60). What do they think will become of them on the Day of Reckoning? Do they not know that Allah is far above ever being heedless? On the other hand, if they think the Hereafter does not exist, and that there is not any reckoning, they have indeed erred in their judgment.

If they actually took a moment to reflect upon the exemplary punishment Allah has prepared for them on the Day of Judgment they would restrain from their foolish behaviour. The only plausible explanation for their actions is that they do not really believe in Allah that will take them to account for inventing lies about Him. Allah says, 'it is but they who will not believe in Allah's messages that invent this falsehood; and it is they, they who are lying!' (*an-Nahl*: 105)

The sincere believer is never described as a liar. Indeed, the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was once asked, ‘Does a believer steal?’ He responded, ‘Yes.’ ‘Does a believer engage in illicit intercourse?’ He was questioned. ‘Yes,’ he responded. When he was asked, ‘Can a believer be a coward?’, he responded, ‘Yes.’ ‘Can a believer be a miser?’, the next question followed, and again he responded, ‘Yes.’ However, when he was questioned, ‘Can a believer be a liar?’, he responded, ‘No.’⁽¹⁾

For a believer, truthfulness is an indispensable quality. To be sure, setting aside truthfulness would entail setting aside his faith. In one way or another, all good can be subsumed under the category of truthfulness. Furthermore, a commitment to truthfulness benefits all of creation. Conversely, dishonesty is the source of the world’s corruption. Dishonesty hampers development within many areas within our lives.

Dishonesty is the last characteristic you would expect to find in a believer. Why? Indeed, many have mentioned that dishonesty prevents one from knowing reality because it distorts the truth. As such, a believer never fans the fire of dishonesty. Without doubt, this is inconsistent with his being one who proclaims the oneness and transcendence of Allah. If he is dishonest about less significant things, what should convince me that he is sincere in his commitment to Allah? In this light, dishonesty destroys faith from its foundations; its being an element of the believer’s character is inconceivable.

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘Beware of dishonesty. Indeed, dishonesty leads to indecency, and indecency leads to hellfire. A man will lie habitually until Allah records him as a liar.’⁽²⁾

If the previous Prophetic Hadith was addressed to people who spread lies about other men and women, what do you think is the state of someone who lies about Allah? The next question we could pose is: Who are those inventing lies about Allah? As a matter of fact, those who take on the task of judging

(1) *Imam Malik Allah rest his soul narrated this Hadith in his Muwatta` with an interrupted chain (1795) on the authority of Safwan ibn-Salim. This Hadith was narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in Shu`ab Al-Iman (4472) by way of Malik.*

(2) *Narrated by Imam Ahmad Allah rest his soul in his Musnad (4108), Abu-Dawud in his Sunnan (4991), and Ibn Abu Shayba in his Musannaf (26112) from a Hadith that was narrated on the authority of `Abdullah ibn-Mas`ud.*

things (within the law of Allah) to be lawful or unlawful without proper recourse to Allah, can be said to be involved in inventing lies about Allah.

Allah *the Exalted* says, 'hence, do not utter falsehoods by letting your tongues determine [at your own discretion], "This is lawful and that is forbidden", thus attributing your own lying inventions to Allah: for, behold, they who attribute their own lying inventions to Allah will never attain to a happy state! A brief enjoyment [may be theirs in this world] – but grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come]!' (*an-Nahl*: 116-117)

The right to legislate the lawful and unlawful among His servants is the unique preserve of the True Lord *Glorified is He*. Beware of declaring something lawful or unlawful on the basis of your own caprice and without Allah's endorsement. Doing this would properly be considered inventing lies against Allah. The right to determine the lawful and unlawful belongs to Allah alone; no creature of His has any share in the matter.

Determining the lawful and unlawful is an expression of Allah's unique authority. This explains what happened to 'Adi ibn Hatim.⁽¹⁾ He entered upon the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* who, upon finding someone wearing a crucifix, said to the man, 'Rid yourself of this idol!'⁽²⁾ The fact that the man immediately removed the crucifix is an expression of his manners with the Prophet. Indeed, the Prophet said to him: 'Indeed, you have taken your rabbis and monks as lords beside Allah.' The man responded, 'We do not worship them.' The Messenger then proceeded to explain, 'Do you not obey them in their determinations about the lawful and the unlawful?' When the man responded in the affirmative, the Prophet said: 'That is precisely the manner in which you worship them.'⁽³⁾

(1) 'Adi ibn Hatim ibn 'Abdullah At-Ta'i, Abu Wahb, was a leader among the Companions and his generosity and intelligence were well-known among them. Both during the age of Pre-Islamic ignorance and after the dawn of Islam he was leader of the region of Tayy. He converted to Islam in the year 9 A.H. And he witnessed the conquest of Iraq. He was also present at the Battles of the Camel, Siffin and Nahrwan with 'Ali Allah be pleased with him. He lived to be more than one hundred years and died in the year 68 A.H. *Al-A`lam* (4/220), *Az-Zirikli*

(2) Narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* (3095), At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu`ajam Al-Kabir* (13673) from the Hadith of 'Adi ibn Hatim Allah be pleased with him.

(3) Narrated by At-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (16632)... The Hadith was also cited by Al-Qurtubi in his *Tafsir* (in which he attributed it to At-Tirmidhi).

Allah *the Exalted* states: ‘Say, “Have you ever considered all the means of sustenance which Allah has bestowed upon you from on high – and which you thereupon divide into ‘things forbidden’ and ‘things lawful?’” Say, “Has Allah given you leave [to do this] – or do you, perchance, attribute your own guesswork to Allah?’” (*Yunus*: 59)

In as much as the True Lord *Glorified is He* causes sustenance to descend from the skies, and clarifies what of it is lawful for consumption and what of it is unlawful, why have you taken it upon yourselves to declare the lawfulness and unlawfulness of different things? In the process, you have made some unlawful things permissible and some lawful things impermissible. Why could you not allow this function to remain the distinct preserve of Allah, The One Who created all things and provides you with sustenance? Does it not stand to reason that He is more knowledgeable than you about where benefit lies?

‘Say, “Has Allah given you leave [to do this]...”’? (*Yunus*: 59) In other words, has Allah *the Exalted* consigned to you the matter of clarifying the lawful and the unlawful? ‘...or do you, perchance, attribute your own guesswork to Allah?’ (*Yunus*: 59) Stated differently, the last portion of the verse reads ‘Or do you intentionally lie about Allah’?

From among those who invent lies about Allah are those concerning whom He has mentioned, ‘Are you not aware of those who consider themselves pure? Nay, but it is Allah who causes whomever He wills to grow in purity; and none shall be wronged by as much as a hair’s breadth. Behold how they attribute their own lying inventions to Allah—than which there is no sin more obvious.’ (*an-Nisa*: 49-50)

So, they vainly praise themselves and declare themselves free of faults. Some of them claim that they are the children of Allah and His beloved; however, in reality they are nothing of the sort. Allah *the Almighty* states their saying: ‘The Jews and the Christians say, “We are the children of Allah and His beloved ones.” Say, “Then why does He punish you for your sins? You are merely human beings, part of His creation”...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 18). Yet, if they, presumably, are His children and beloved ones, so why does He let them suffer for the sins they have committed? In essence, their engaged superciliousness was nothing but vain self-flattery; they gave themselves an

undeserved rank. Indeed, it is foolish enough that the man proclaims his own purity in matters that do not require this straightforwardness.

Their absurd lies about Allah are clearly observed in Allah's saying: '...“We are the children of Allah and His beloved ones”...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 18). Allah also mentions their claim: 'they also say, “No one will enter Paradise unless he is a Jew or a Christian”...' (*al-Baqara*: 111).

Another clear instance of their falsity is Allah's saying: 'The disbelievers say, “The Lord of Mercy has offspring”' (*Maryam*: 88). Concerning this, Allah says, 'How terrible is this thing you assert: it almost causes the heavens to be torn apart, the earth to split asunder, the mountains to crumble to pieces, that they attribute offspring to the Lord of Mercy. It does not befit the Lord of Mercy [to have offspring]' (*Maryam*: 89-92). Their saying was utterly a pure lie about divinity, in addition to being despicable, disgusting, and abominable. Conceivably, Allah is exalted above having a son. Only the one who needs others, desires to have progeny to be remembered and to derive physical strength from them to be supported in his work or profession, whereas, Allah *the Exalted* possesses incomparable Limitless Power; He is far removed from such considerations.

Another example of inventing lies against Allah is apostasy and returning to disbelief. There can be no doubt that apostasy is tantamount to claiming that Islam (as a belief) and that the Quran (as a scripture revealed from Allah to the Messenger) are false. Apostasy is a clear challenge and grave lie against the truth revealed by Allah *the Almighty*.

In the story of Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* Allah says, 'His people's arrogant leaders said, “Shu'aib (Jethro), we will expel you and your fellow believers from our town unless you return to our religion”...' (*al-A'raf*: 88). Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* thus, responded to them: '...He said, “What! Even if we detest it? If we were to return to your religion after Allah has saved us from it, we would be inventing lies about Him”...' (*al-A'raf*: 88-89).

The disbelievers know that returning to their disbelief would be a clear instance of lying against Allah. Anybody knows the truth but speaks otherwise, thus, his action is definitely considered lying, dishonesty and mendacity.

Furthermore, the believers of Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* acknowledged that their previous creed was malicious; especially after having experienced the sweetness of faith with Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him*. Consistent with the stance they had adopted, they rejected the enticements of the disbelievers to persistently lie against Allah.

Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* has mentioned this blatant lying against Him in many instances throughout the Quran. However, in this verse, Allah appends this with an additional comment about their actions: 'Who could be more wrong than someone who invents lies against Allah when called to submit to Him?...' (*as-Saff*: 7) This verse should be examined within the context; it occurs in the chapter of *as-Saf*, where the most notable prophets (Musa (Moses), 'Isa (Jesus) and then Muhammad *peace be upon them*) are being mentioned. Thus, this verse draws the attention to the people inventing lies against Allah that they are either among the Jewish followers of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* or among the followers of 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* who were being requested to have faith in Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in order to validate their belief in Allah. Hence, Allah says, '...When called to submit to Him...' (*as-Saff*: 7). But rather, they responded to the call to Islam and invented lies about Allah, claiming that the Quran is not revealed from Allah, but that it was produced by Muhammad. Such lie was mentioned and refuted in the Quran, as Allah says, 'The disbelievers say, "This can only be a lie he has forged with the help of others"—they themselves have done great wrong and told lies.' (*al-Furqan*: 4)

If Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*—who is a human being like others—was capable of fabricating this Quran himself, why did they not produce a similar creation? What prevented them from coming with a 'Quran' of their own? Allah says, 'Or do they say, "He has devised it?" Say, "Then produce a chapter like it, and call on anyone you can beside Allah if you are telling the truth."' (*Yunus*: 38) Additionally, He *the Exalted* says, 'If they say, "He has invented it himself" say, "Then produce ten invented chapters like it, and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful."' (*Hud*: 13)

Since inventing similar product of the Quran is easy, what prevents them from producing the like; even if it is only a ten-chapter piece of art? As they

have lived with Muhammad since his childhood, he has neither composed poetry nor prose, he has not functioned as a public speaker nor does he have a history of embellishing his speech with language arts; as well he has never participated in the annual poetry recitals which were held at the famous marketplace of `Ukaz. Therefore, it should be easier for them, given their background and inherent gifts in these fields, to produce at least a similar piece of art, as they are the people of oratorical brilliance and language arts. Yet, they were not able to fabricate a similar piece of work. Once their lie, that Allah had neither revealed the Quran nor sent Muhammad as a Messenger, had failed, they began to take aim at certain verses of the Quran; they falsely claim that some verses were self-contradictory. Allah says, 'Will they not think about this Quran? If it had been from anyone other than Allah, they would have found much inconsistency in it' (*an-Nisa'*: 82).

Afterwards, Allah says, '...Allah does not guide the wrongdoers' (*as-Saff*: 7). Indeed, they wronged themselves as they wronged Allah by inventing lies against Him, in addition to misguiding people to be wrongdoers as a result of their lies and attempts to block the path of Allah. Not only did they reject Allah's Call to faith, but they also lied against Him. Hence, they do not deserve Allah's guidance which does not refer here to clarify and distinguish between right and wrong. Certainly, Allah has taken it upon Himself to definitely make them clear for everyone. Allah says, 'We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not' (*al-Insan*: 3). He also says, 'And point out to him the two clear ways [of good and evil]' (*al-Balad*: 10). Allah has shown His servants the path of goodness, and also that of evil.

However, Allah *Glorified is He* has also guided the believers to the path of goodness by facilitating their adherence to it. To put it more succinctly, Allah not only shows them the path of goodness, but He also helps them to meet the criteria of the path. In this regard, Allah says, 'Allah has increased the guidance of those who follow the right path, and given them their awareness [of Him]' (*Muhammad*: 17). Thus, Allah does not guide the dissolute people tending to evil but the obedient committed to justice.

Afterwards, Allah says:

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

**They wish to put His light out with their mouths.
But He will perfect His light, even though the
disbelievers hate it [8] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 8)**

Allah refers to His light and to the disbelievers who thought that they had the power to extinguish it. They either had allowed themselves to forget or were feigning ignorance of the fact that the light of Allah is All Encompassing and Omnipresent.

In the physical realm, it has long been established that the sun is the primary source of natural light. When the daylight breaks and the sunrays penetrate the darkness, people put out their lamps. The same scenario is applied to the light of guidance; when Allah issues the light of guidance, all other lights should be extinguished.

Indeed, Allah's Path is incandescent; it illuminates the way to morals and values. In the presence of Allah's light of guidance, there is no need for other lights of ideas based on whims. However, all the earthly light is derived from Allah's Straight Path, which is perfect for all times and places.

As there is no one capable of extinguishing the shining sunlight, the light of Allah is impervious in the same manner; no one is capable of putting it out!

Nevertheless, extinguishing the light of Allah was nothing short of their ardent desire. The desire is said to be ardent when it blindly fills the heart only to satisfy the whims. The disbelievers were desirous of suppressing the promotion of truth; however, Allah decrees that their twisted ambitions would ultimately be frustrated. The reason was their hope of retaining their shot-caller status as leaders through disempowering the weak. Furthermore, they wanted to suppress the promotion of truth so that their whims are not challenged by Allah's light. Allah says, 'They use their wealth to bar people from the path of Allah, and they will go on doing so. In the end this will be a source of intense regret for them: they will be overcome and herded towards Hell' (*al-Anfal*: 36).

Not only were these disbelievers guilty of rejecting faith in Allah, but they also spent their money with the intention of impeding Allah's Path. Yet, their desire would remain unfulfilled; they were not allowed to even come close to

their goals. Thus, Allah *the Exalted* entices the disbelievers to expend their resources in suppressing the truth to waste their wealth and to bear the brunt of their woes. In the end, Allah sets His decree over them, no matter how much they spend, or how strenuous efforts they put forth, but they will ultimately be seized and routed. In this concern, Allah *Glorified is He* says, '[Prophet], say to the disbelievers, "You will be defeated and driven together into Hell, a foul resting place"' (*Al-Imran*: 12). Not only will they foolishly waste their resources in a futile attempt to extinguish the light of Allah, but they will also be utterly disappointed, defeated and eye-witnessed Allah's light spreading to achieve perfection. Undoubtedly, this will cause them a great deal of pain and sorrow. Afterwards, in the Hereafter, they will be punished; resurrected, gathered, driven to the place of reckoning and ultimately cast into the hellfire.

As a matter of fact, this is the second instance where Allah mentions those disbelievers seeking to extinguish His Light. He mentions them also in the chapter of *at-Tawba*: 'They try to extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths, but Allah insists on bringing His Light to its fullness, even if the disbelievers hate it' (*at-Tawba*: 32). In this verse, Allah mentions another means by which they desire to suppress the propagation of truth with their mouths. Thereby, He means that their attempts, by sending forth their own callers to falsehood, are directed to counter the call of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The disbelievers of Quraysh expended tremendous efforts to counteract the invitation to Islam by spreading falsehood. They accused the Messenger with many false charges. On one occasion, he was called a magician: '...They say, "He is just a lying sorcerer"' (*Sad*: 4). On another occasion, he was called an insane: 'They say, "O Receiver of this Quran! You are definitely mad"' (*al-Hijr*: 6). On a third occasion, he was said to be a poet: 'And said, "Are we to forsake our gods for a mad poet?"' (*as-Saffat*: 36) They made several unwarranted attempts to assassinate him and tried to distract people from listening to his Message. As a result, Allah responded (within the Quran) and chided them so vigorously, for the lies they had invented. In the end, they could not come up with anything other than alleging that Muhammad is a magician whose Message is to break up families.⁽¹⁾

(1) *It has been narrated by Abu Na'im in Dala'il An-Nubuwwa (178) on the authority of Sa'id ibn Jubair.*

Moreover, they said: ‘...Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities?’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) In this verse, they were attempting to belittle Prophet Muhammad. They alleged that any person from either the people in Mecca or in Ta’if, was of greater stature and was worthier of having the Quran revealed to him than Muhammad.⁽¹⁾

Additionally, the Quran itself was also attacked spared, in their vain attempts to extinguish the light of Allah. They tried to impugn the revelation despite their readiness to accept its divine origins, in case that it had been revealed to an elevated person among them. Allah quotes their saying: ‘...It is just ancient fables, which he has had written down: They are dictated to him morning and evening’ (*al-Furqan*: 5). Allah also says concerning them: ‘Whenever Our Revelation is recited to them they say, “We have heard all this before— we could say something like this if we wanted— this is nothing but ancient fables”’ (*al-Anfal*: 31).

An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, who had gone to Persia and observed fancy books of fables and myths, was among the sceptics of the prophecy of Muhammad at that time. Standing before Quraysh, he proclaimed, ‘Here it is! Now, I can tell the same as Muhammad’s recital!’ However, his work was devoid of guidance and without a clearly defined objective. The fables told by An-Nadr refer to fanciful tales; most important of them are; Arabian Nights, Kalila and Dimna (the Panchatantra) and The Iliad (an ancient Greek epic poem).

As much as they impugned both Messenger Muhammad and the Quran, as they also ridiculed the believers following the guidance. Their attitude was similar to that of the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* as Allah says, ‘But the prominent disbelievers among his people said, “We can see that you are nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and it is clear to see that only the vilest among us follow you...”’ (*Hud*: 27).

(1) On the authority of ibn ‘Abbas Allah be pleased with him, who was asked the following about the verse, ‘...Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man from either of the two cities?’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) What are the two cities? He responded, ‘Ta’if and Mecca.’ He was also asked, ‘Who are the two men?’ He responded, ‘Urwa ibn Mas‘ud and another person from among the elite of Quraysh.’ This was cited by As-Suyuti in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (12/200), in which he attributed it to ‘Abd ibn Hamid, Ibn Al-Mundhir’ and Ibn Mardaway

This explains the stance of some of the disbelievers who set a condition to believe, thus attempting to take a moderate stance in relation to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They said to him, 'We will come and sit with you (to listen to the Message) on condition that you drive those who are currently sitting with you away. Only when our meeting is adjourned, should they return to their places.'⁽¹⁾

Indeed, when the adversaries of Islam witnessed the incremental spread of the Message, they redoubled their exerted strenuous efforts to halt its growth. Not only did they abuse the newly converted Muslims, but they also aimed their ploy at Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* himself. They sent a delegation to him, proclaiming, 'We have come to a compromise; drive away those riff-raff people and do not keep them in your company; but rather make us the focal point of your call.' Thus, Allah says, 'Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening, seeking His approval...' (*al-Kahf*: 28). When this verse was revealed, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Praise be to Allah Who has put among my people those with whom I have been ordered to stay.'⁽²⁾

In fact, the most startling thing said in an attempt to extinguish Allah's light was their effort to deceive people into believing that they were upon the truth. Allah says: 'They also said, "Allah, if this really is the truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful punishment"' (*al-Anfal*: 32).

The disbelievers deemed the moral teachings and warnings spread by Messenger Muhammad ridiculous. As such, they brazenly and foolishly requested for Allah's punishment to rain down stones upon them or otherwise requite them for their actions. They were attempting to challenge the truth and turn people away from it. This proves their utmost level of compounded heedlessness of Allah and their tribal zeal which affected their ability to think clearly. They wished they would have rather died, or been killed by stones raining from the skies than to follow the path of guidance!

(1) This was narrated by At-Tabari in his *Tafsir* (13255) on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud.

(2) This was cited by As-Suyuti in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (9/522) in which he attributed it to Abu Ash-Sheikh who narrated it on the authority of Salman Al-Farisi.

Had they use their minds, they would have carefully considered the matter and then concluded, ‘if indeed this is the truth, O Lord! Guide us unto it.’ Yet, they allowed disbelief, envy and rancour to blind them from the truth with which Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent. This demonstrates the extent to which their misguidance had grown. Furthermore, this shows the absurdity and the incoherence of the thoughts of the disbelievers. Had Allah answered their request of His wrath, they would have met their decisive end just as they have requested and then they would have entered the blazing inferno. However, Allah sets His Decree to give them a chance so that those who choose belief will be allowed to believe. Whereas, those who choose disbelief, will bear the burden of the deviance they caused by urging the people to apostate.

Allah says, ‘They wish to put His Light out with their mouths. But He will perfect His Light, even though the disbelievers hate it’ (*as-Saff*: 8). It has been asked how the Quran says that Allah will perfect His light, while there are other religions than Islam. In fact, some of these religions have more influence and adherents. It is apparent that those who pose this question have misunderstood Allah’s saying: ‘...He will perfect His Light...’ that all people would convert to Islam. However, if this were the case, Allah would not have concluded the verse by saying: ‘...Even though the disbelievers hate it’ (*as-Saff*: 8), and nor would He have also said: ‘...Even though the idolaters hate it’ (*as-Saff*: 9).

Therefore, Allah affirms the continued existence of disbelief and polytheism along with Islam. The meaning of Allah spreading His Light in all its fullness is that His Light will spread despite the presence of disbelief and polytheism. Indeed, those who oppose faith will never be able to extinguish the light of Allah, which will continue to glow until it overcomes them by the sheer practice of teachings. Indeed, viable solutions will only come from Islam to certain issues. Allah’s Light is a conclusive matter, as explained by the following verse in *at-Tawba*: ‘...But Allah insists on bringing His Light to its fullness, even if the disbelievers hate it’ (*at-Tawba*: 32). In another verse, Allah says, ‘...Today the disbelievers have lost all hope that you will give up your religion. Do not fear them: fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen as your religion Islam:

[total devotion to Allah]...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 3). Definitely, Islam has been completed and people have entered it in crowds. It is by Allah’s Light that the Quran has been preserved. No one has attempted to conceal the contents of the Quran, nor has anyone been able to distort the meanings of the Quran. In fact, the Quran has been saved from the distortion that happened to previous scriptures.

The disbelievers had given up any hope of overpowering Islam; contrariwise, its rise to pre-eminence. It can be incontrovertibly asserted that Allah has perfected this religion. Allah says, ‘The word of your Lord is complete in its truth and justice. No one can change His words: He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing’ (*al-An’am*: 115) The word ‘complete’ indicates that Allah’s Word has a beginning and an end. However, what is meant by the completion of Allah’s word? Does it mean the ultimate promise of Allah that Islam will be victorious because He, Himself, will grant it success? Or is it the promise that Allah made before His message to humanity is completed? Or does it refer to the Quran itself?

It is thought that the word ‘complete’ refers collectively to all different affairs which have been taking place until the coming of the Final Hour. This means that no one is permitted to ‘correct’ any of the rulings mentioned in the Quran, for they cover all aspects of life. The rulings needed to ensure upright and dignified lives have been explicated in the Quran.

Allah says, ‘...Even though the disbelievers hate it’ (*as-Saff*: 8). This refers to those who despise the Path of Allah. Allah stresses this fact in another verse: ‘It is because they hate what Allah has sent down that He has caused their deeds to go to waste’ (*Muhammad*: 9). They harboured intense disdain for the Path of Allah because it would pull the ‘rug’ of unchallenged dominance from beneath them. They knew that it would establish for equality between them and their servants. This is very difficult for them as they were accustomed to prominence, status, and power. Actually, this is the real reason for their intense hatred for the light with which Messenger Muhammad had been sent.

Subsequently, Allah says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩﴾

It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to show that it is above all [other] religions, even though the idolaters hate it [9] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 9)

Allah proves that He will spread His Light in all its fullness, in spite of being hateful to those who deny the truth, and in spite of sparing no mental or material efforts to prevent its propagation. The Light of Allah has three aspects; it refers to guidance in the first place. Secondly, it refers to the religion of truth and thirdly, that it is sent upon Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, how can a sacred light comprising of these three aspects be extinguished?

As for the aspect of guidance, they are signs granted by Allah, the Creator, to human beings to find their Right Path. Certainly, if Allah leaves His servants to their own devices in this regard, they would be lost on account of their undisciplined passions. Moreover, it is undoubtedly known that Allah is absolutely free of any need of His creatures; however, human beings, on the other hand, are in need of the guidance, thus they could not control it or rather, they would use it for their benefit.

This is broadly applicable to the world's economic and social systems such as communism and capitalism. As for the individuals who desire to forcibly seize the assets of the wealthy people, they, thereby, fly the flag of Communism, whereas, the individuals who suck the blood of the working class, wave the banner of Capitalism!

On the other hand, guidance is a right ensured to everyone, so it must be devoid of any desires. Furthermore, the individual granting guidance should intimately be acquainted with all future details that may happen. Thus, there is no one but Allah, the Ever-Wise and the Omniscient, Who offers guidance. Therefore, Allah says: '...Say, "Allah's guidance is the only true guidance"...' (*al-Baqara*: 120). The guidance of Allah leads to a single straight path of Truth; however, the presumably guidance proffered by human beings would emanate from caprice. As such, they offer myriad paths, which, for all their diversity, still lead to a single destination; i.e. misguidance! Allah draws the attention of His creatures to an indubitable fact that if they desire guidance or

the Path free from pitfalls leading to the firm goal, they should adhere to Allah's Path of guidance.

Allah's Light is the religion of truth, which offers practical guidance for human beings indistinctively. In as much as Islam is the religion of truth, it does not seek to mislead or deceive anyone; but rather, it convinces people with strong mental evidences which will be victorious whether people believe in it or not. However, Allah shows His servants the Path so that they could secure happiness and goodness. The religion of truth comes in accordance with Allah's drawn Path. The truth, by its very nature, should be firm, unchanging, and eternal.

The Message has been revealed by Allah unto His messengers in truth, Allah is the Truth, and He created the heavens, earth and everything else with truth. He revealed His Book, in its entirety, in truth and has kept His established patterns within creation uninterruptedly in truth. Thus, Allah always supports the truth.

As such, Allah revealed the Quran in truth; it is an expounder of truth and impervious to falsehood. However, there are times when it seems that truth is being obscured and falsehood is gaining the upper hand. Yet, the appearance of corruption only forces people to be more resolute in pursuit of the truth. The spread of corruption and moral dissolution is directly related to the eagerness of human beings to demand the truth. Indeed, falsehood, by its very nature, wears on people until they request its removal and replacement with the truth; to which they subsequently adhere with renewed zeal.

The Quran was revealed with the true knowledge of Allah. Additionally, it explicates matters with indubitable truth related to the angels, the Prophets and their miracles and the ordinances and commands of Allah. The Angel Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* was Allah's chosen carrier to reveal the Quran, the unchanging truth, upon the heart of the chosen Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

As for the third aspect of Allah's Light, He sent Muhammad to demonstrate His Path. In fact, the Messenger, himself, is also a light for mankind. Allah says, 'He it is who has sent forth His Apostle with [the task of] spreading guidance and the religion of truth...' (*as-Saff*: 9). Allah sent His Messenger

with the task of refining the human instinct. As Allah has sent His Messenger with faith and moral methodologies, as He has certainly chosen the most faithful person for conveying the Message for humanity.

This makes Islam prevail over all other religions; this does not mean to eradicate Jews, Christians, disbelievers or polytheists. On the contrary, as previously mentioned, the pre-eminence of Islam would prevail through its distinct commandments, the erectness of Allah's Path and the adherence to faith through logical methodology rather than through oppression or obligation. Undoubtedly, Islam will prevail; they will be overtaken by its practical usefulness. They will tend to rely on Islam and Islamic law to solve the problems facing their communities. Indeed, they adopt many laws borrowed from the Islamic teachings. Definitely, all Muslims should overwhelmingly be confident that those disbelievers would discover the truthfulness of Islam its law on one day.

The sheer impracticality of their man-made laws forced the Vatican ⁽¹⁾ to authorise Islam-permitted divorce. In their view, this gives preference to man-made laws over their distorted sacred law. However, practical life had only forced them to unintentionally implement the teachings of Islam. Such examples provide an increased appreciation and confidence in practical application of Islamic teachings, which are the only resort to solve the problems facing the disbelievers. Even if they refused to convert to Islam as a religion, but they are forced to adopt it as a life-arranging principle to foster peace and stability in their communities

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

(1) The Protestant denominations also permitted divorce, but only for reasons they deemed legitimate, such as: Insanity, terminal illness or any other condition which frustrates conjugal relations. Indeed, the cold realities of life forced them to make this transition. They were forced to implement Islamic law. As a matter of fact, even the Orthodox Church, after taking a long time to come to terms with reality, was forced to enact the statute of 1938 which gave Copts the right to seek legal divorces for nine stated reasons. This position differs with the stance taken by the hardliners among them who forbid people from enjoying Allah's Grace and, in a certain sense, compel them to commit adultery.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَذِلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تَحَرُّفٍ تُنَجِّكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ ٱلْإِلْمِ ﴿١٠﴾ تَوَكَّلُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ
وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

**You who believe, shall I show you a bargain that will save you
from painful torment? [10] Have faith in God and His
Messenger and struggle for His cause with your possessions and
your persons — that is better for you, if only you knew [11]
(The Quran, *as-Saff*: 10-11)**

Allah's saying: 'You who believe...' (*as-Saff*: 10) refers to the believers who entered the covenant of faith with Allah. The verse calls upon the believers to follow, by their own free will, the Commands of Allah, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Wise, the Self-Sufficient and the Creator. Therefore, the commands are only directed to those believers who have chosen to accept faith willingly by consulting their own consciences. Considering this, there is no way the believer should ever ask about the underlying purpose behind a certain ruling. As long as he has already submitted to Allah, he should accept His commandments and prohibitions without argument as an extension of that belief. For example, Satan firstly, believed in Allah; however, his downfall referred to his insane refusal to Allah's ruling. He insolently asked Allah to explain the reason behind His command, with which he, ultimately, declined to comply.

As for Allah's words, '...Shall I show you...' (*as-Saff*: 10), after His saying: 'You who believe...' (*as-Saff*: 10), convey a profound meaning that Allah calls upon the believers to draw their full attention to clarify something for them. Inconceivably, the believers could not refuse Allah's offer to guide them. Allah guides people to the Straight Path leading to the right destination such as the pathfinder who guides people for their way across the desert; surely, to Allah belongs the utmost example of perfection. Of course, when people guide others, they will misdirect and lead them away from the right destination. Yet, Allah only guides people towards their benefits and directs them away from any harm.

When Allah tackles the matter of faith, He uses the analogy of business transactions; i.e. the language of commerce (buying and selling), As Allah says, 'Allah has purchased the persons and possessions of the believers in

return for the Garden...' (*at-Tawba*: 111). In the verse under examination, Allah says, 'You who believe, shall I show you a bargain that will save you from painful torment? Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and struggle for His cause with your possessions and your persons...' (*as-Saff*: 10-11). It is known that business is the medium of exchange between producers and consumers. The producer target to sell his product and the consumer is in need to buy the product. Profit margins within business vary a lot, depending on how the product is received within the market and whether sales are brisk or stagnate

Allah uses analogies related to business to demonstrate the most expedient path to achieve benefit. Business is the process of buying and selling products among people. Similarly, the believer, who is involved in the transaction with Allah, needs to voluntarily relinquish (sell) some of his personal freedom in exchange for (to buy) Allah's everlasting bliss. Thus, the pious men who are intimately familiar with the favour of Allah say, 'When giving, choose someone who values your generosity'. Certainly, when someone is given a gift, his appreciation will be shown in accordance with his ability to express gratitude. Perhaps he expresses this gratitude with a kind word or some other means. However, how does Allah evaluate things in return? It goes without saying that He will assign tremendous value for the product.

Therefore, the intelligent person looks at the giver of the blessing; such as 'Uthman ibn 'Affan *Allah be pleased with him*. When the merchants knew that he had some products that came to him with the intention of purchasing some inventory; they offered him to pay for them. He said, 'Indeed, I have been presented with better offers than what you intend to pay. I gave the items in the cause of Allah.' 'Uthman *Allah be pleased with him* decided to trade with Allah to receive the greatest value for his products. Certainly, as long as Allah is the Purchaser, the product will always be appreciated in value! Hence, the person who ostentatiously performs acts of worship is really the major loser. If he does not perceive the concept of trading with Allah; thus, he does not know anything about business!

Everyone wishes to be engaged in profitable transactions; i.e. to receive more than he pays on making the deal. As Allah says, '...(It is they who) may hope for a trade that will never decline' (*Fatir*: 29). Before being engaged in

the transaction, the person should compare what he gives to what he gains and observe whether the difference is worth the sacrifice. Allah deals with people on the basis of the theory of personal benefits; intelligent trader should seek out the most beneficial transactions that will ultimately prove profitable by giving him more than they take. Sacrificing a small amount of worldly transactions to trade with Allah reaps immeasurable favour and honour from Him. Indeed, it is undeniable that Allah is so generous that the single good deed shall be rewarded up to seven-hundred times!⁽¹⁾

Going into business with Allah is always profitable, as Allah says, 'You who believe, shall I show you a bargain that will save you from painful torment?' (*as-Saff*: 10) He also says, '...(It is they who) may hope for a trade that will never decline' (*Fatir*: 29). Definitely, the trader who is engaged in business with Allah should be sagacious and intelligent; he identifies his goals and objectives before he pursues them. The most pervasive malady among people in this world is that they live without having any idea of their ultimate goals. Actually, most of them have a myopic focus on minor worldly objectives, serving as a distraction from achieving more significant goals. Indeed, the life span of people hugely varies; someone may live for fifty years, his counterpart for sixty and a third for merely a single one!

Therefore, people should direct their focus towards the goal to which they are proceeding. Furthermore, what plagues contemporary societies is that people are totally busy by working to support their worldly status. In fact, their worldly acquisitions represent the lowest level of short-term gratification. Undoubtedly, life, no matter how long it lasts, is fleeting, but the pleasures of the Hereafter are eternal. Additionally, the acquisition of the worldly pleasures is directly related to the means available at everyone's disposal. Conversely, the pleasures of the Hereafter are abundant because they are at the disposal of Allah; He Who brought them into existence and controls them.

(1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him: The Messenger peace and blessings be upon him said: 'Every time the son of Adam performs a good deed, its reward is multiplied by ten to seven hundred times as Allah wills.'* Allah says in a *Qudsi Hadith*: 'Except for the act of fasting; it is for Me, and I reward it. The servant gives up his carnal desires for My sake. The one who fasts reaps two pleasures: The pleasure he experiences upon breaking his fast and the pleasure he experiences upon meeting his Lord.' It is narrated by Ibn Majah in his *Sunnan* (1638).

Considering this, the failure of the disbelievers to ‘trade’ with Allah can only be considered a humiliating and devastating loss. As Allah says, ‘Lost indeed are those who deny the meeting with their Lord until, when the Hour suddenly arrives, they say, “Alas for us that we disregarded this’ (*al-An‘am*: 31). Therefore, ‘doing business’ with Allah is a means of securing everlasting benefits for the people; the greatest of which has been expressed in Allah’s saying: ‘...That will save you from painful torment’ (*as-Saff*: 10). Allah also says, ‘But Allah will deliver those who took heed of Him to their place of safety: no harm will touch them, nor will they grieve’ (*az-Zumar*: 61). Indeed, Allah will save the believers from the despicable torment which awaits the disbelievers. The biggest victory for people is that being saved from the punishment of the blazing inferno. As Allah says, ‘...Whoever is kept away from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have triumphed...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 185). It is noticed that Allah does not merely connect the eternal triumph to entering into paradise; but rather to simply being kept away from the hellfire. This is the primary victory to be pulled back from the fire, even if the person is left on the heights with those whom judgment has been suspended. On that Day, simply being able to traverse the Bridge outstretched above the hellfire⁽¹⁾ will represent the major triumph!

As previously mentioned traversing the Bridge safely is a tremendous blessing, whereas, the disbeliever wishes that he could become dust in order to avoid being punished in the hellfire. As the believer traverses the Bridge and views the hellfire beneath, as he feels the blessing because this gives him the chance to witness first-hand what he was saved from: ‘...Painful torment’

(1) *On the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him: The Messenger peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘There will be a bridge outstretched between two plains. I will be the first messenger, along with the members of his ummah, are allowed to cross it. On that Day, the only people allowed to speak will be the messengers, and their speech will be: “Allahumma Sallim, Sallim (Oh Allah! Save us, save us!)” Below, in the hellfire, there will be hooks which resemble the thorns of As-Sa‘adan (a thorny tree); have you ever seen the thorns of As-Sa‘adan?’ After they responded that they had in fact seen them, the Messenger continued, “These tenterhooks are like the thorns of As-Sa‘adan except for the fact that their size is so immense that none but Allah could even attempt to grasp them.”’ It is narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in Al-Asma‘ Wa As-Sifat (2/184), Ibn Al-Mundhir in Kitab Al-Iman (2/418) and Ibn Abu ‘Asim in As-Sunna (387)*

(*as-Saff*: 10), by virtue of his faith and the overflowing Mercy of Allah, the Most Beneficent, The word torment refers to the physical suffering which is experienced by the living being through the sensation of pain, whereas, death takes life and senses away from the living organism. Death and suffering are two distinct states; suffering, as opposed to death, necessitates that the individual remains alive to experience agony. Allah's saying: '...Painful torment' (*as-Saff*: 10), draws the attention to the meaning of the verse: 'We shall send those who reject Our revelations to the Fire. When their skins have been burned away, We shall replace them with new ones so that they may continue to feel the pain: Allah is Mighty and Wise' (*an-Nisa*': 56).

The torment is painful and unbearable because its intensity is derived from the Power of Allah, Who creates pain itself. The punishment of hellfire incomparably and unrestrictedly expresses His Might and Ability. Sometimes, the torment of Allah is described as being great; another time, it is described as being humiliating; and a third time, it is described as being painful. Interestingly enough, the description used is changed according to those being mentioned in connection with it. Each disobedient, evildoer and disbeliever will be punished with the appropriate penalty. Some people might bear the pain of the punishment rather than humiliation; whereas, others might be vice versa. Each person will face the unbearable kind of punishment that cannot be endured. Accordingly, Allah addresses the believers: 'You who believe, shall I show you a bargain that will save you from painful torment?' (*as-Saff*: 10) Allah desires that the believers be saved from suffering, as He *the Exalted* says: 'Why should Allah make you suffer torment if you are thankful and believe in Him? Allah always rewards gratitude and He knows everything' (*an-Nisa*': 147). Thus, if the believers show gratitude to Allah and believe in Him, He will never cause them to suffer His wrath.

After Allah invites the believers to 'trade' with Him, He *the Almighty* clarifies the elements to be saved from punishment; He says, 'Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and struggle for His cause with your possessions and your persons; that is better for you, if only you knew' (*as-Saff*: 11). Thus, the first element is that they should believe in Allah *Glorified is He* and in His Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Indeed, this poses a new question;

how someone being summoned by being a believer is further commanded to have faith? In as much as these verses are addressed to the believers generally, the command to have faith should be understood as a command to increase in faith.

Allah addresses the believers by highlighting their relationship with faith; He desires that they receive His address as people of faith and that they would also fulfil His commands as people of faith. There is no lapse or breakage in the chain of faith; Allah ensures its continuation. Indeed, it is of critical importance that the believer is keen on keeping up with this honour. If someone summons another by a virtuous quality and then request him to apply it; thus, it is really being requested to be consistently kept up.

Allah, within these verses, addresses all believers; including the Jewish and Christian communities, represented in *as-Saf*, by the mention of Musa (Moses) and `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon them*. If someone simply believes in Allah, this belief will necessitate that he should follow His commands expressed by the Messenger. Thus, having faith in Allah necessitates believing in His Messenger. In as much as the human being has been given an active intellect, the least he can do is to arrive at the conclusion that there is a Lord behind this universe. However, what are the Commands of the Lord? The people can only gain access to this knowledge by way of the Messenger expressing Allah's revelation. In a certain sense, revelation and the dispatch of the Messenger can be considered the reward of the believers for their good faith.

Therefore, as long as the believer has professed his belief in Allah and in His Messenger, as he would naturally believe in the scripture revealed on the Messenger. These scriptures inform him of a set of invisible creatures who inhabit the world, called angels. In fact, angels are the means by which revelation reaches the Messenger. Despite that, they are invisible, yet the believers have faith in their existence. In essence, faith is to mainly believe in Allah, which necessitates believing in the Messenger and the scripture revealed to him. Furthermore, in as much as the people of the Book—who believe in their respective messengers—are also included in this command to have faith, it should be understood as a command for them to similarly believe in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and in the Quran revealed to him.

As a general rule, strict compliance to Allah's Commands simply maintains the strongly entrenched beliefs. In the current verse, the request to have faith is a command to consistently display the defining characteristics of faith day in and day out. In this way, belief becomes deeply rooted in the heart, without being liable to be shaken by the insinuations assailing the mind. These well-established beliefs are referred to as creed, to which the heart is bound.

Allah commands the believers to have firm and unshakable faith that prepares them to be engaged in 'commerce' with Allah; namely, striving in the path of Allah with their lives and material resources. As Allah says, 'Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and struggle for His cause with your possessions and your persons...' (*as-Saff*: 11). This verse connects having faith in Allah to *jihad* (striving in His cause). By striving in the cause of Allah, the believer ensures that faith, to which he has pledged his life, will remain intact until the coming of the Final Hour. The maintenance of the faith entails its widespread propagation. As the believer has resolved to strive in the cause of Allah, he means that he has given preference, within his soul, to faith (over the life of this world and its pleasures) and found goodness in faith which has made him desirous of conveying it to others. Thus, it is not sufficient for him to simply experience the sweetness of faith without sharing this with his contemporaries outside the lands of Islam, who are deprived from it. However, he ardently desires to give opportunity to the whole world to experience faith.

Upon analysis, this represents a profound insight concerning the idea of communal life. Thus, good and evil are communicable; if people are good, the society, being affected, and benefits from goodness and vice versa. Indeed, life, in its entirety, represents the concept of *jihad* (striving for the sake of Allah). By no means, should the Muslim restrict striving for the cause of Allah to the battlefield. Thus, Allah's saying: '...And struggle for His cause...' (*as-Saff*: 11) should be understood as striving for propagating the Message of Allah. Muslims should devote themselves to studying and understanding the Message of Islam to strive for it by tooth and nail; through open discussions, books, pamphlets, etc.

A thoroughgoing implementation of Allah's saying: '...And struggle for His cause...' (*as-Saff*: 11) provides the basis for a Muslim community ready

to lead the world. The word *jihad*, as related to the idea of martial engagement, is simply the form of striving in the cause of Allah. People fight for different reasons; they could fight for nationalism or any other affiliation. In the view of Islam, none of those affiliations are of any substantive value unless they emanate from being committed to propagate and make Allah's Message triumphant.

Allah does not legislate *jihad* so that the Islamic Ummah would forcefully impose its religion on others. However, it has been only legislated to grant the people the right to freely choose whatsoever religion under the mercy of Islam. Therefore, it targeted to remove oppression and impediments blocking the way of the others to freely choose faith.

Yet, we are aware that this is a major area of contention. People often question: If that is what fighting in Islam is all about; what purpose did the various battles that were fought throughout the history of Islam serve? Those wars were for the purpose of opposing and resisting the attempts of others to impose their beliefs on the Muslims. Islam came in order to say to these people: Remove your false constraints from people and allow them to choose the religion best suited for them.

Even when one looks at the *jizyah* that Muslims levy on non-Muslim minorities living in Muslim lands, it is not simply taxation. Quite the reverse, this institution actually demonstrates the freedom promoted by Islam. Think about it: If the goal of Islam was to compel people to become Muslims, why would there be any tax levied against those who lived amongst the Muslims while electing to maintain their own religious traditions.

Redirecting out attention to an earlier point, in order for military engagement for the cause of Allah to be legitimate in Islam, there must be a clear intention to fight solely for the cause of Allah. This fighting cannot be for the purpose of domination, control or the subjugation of others. Similarly, the fighting cannot be carried out for the purpose of gaining access to the resources of others or securing emerging markets in new lands. As we stated, struggling to make the Word of Allah triumphant is the only legitimate reason for fighting.⁽¹⁾

(1) *On the authority of Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari Allah be pleased with him, who narrated: 'The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him was once questioned about a man =*

Fighting in the way of Allah can be performed by sacrificing one's material resources or life in His path. If truth be told, giving up either represents a grave test; especially for those who have yet to fully realize faith and taste its sweetness. This explains why Allah begins His address, 'O you who believe' (*as-Saff*: 10) and immediately follows by saying, 'You are to believe in Allah and His Prophet.' (*as-Saff*: 11)

Next, Allah introduces the substance of the test and its requirements, 'and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives.' (*as-Saff*: 11) Actually, your money does not really belong to you; you are merely a trustee that has been allowed to benefit from the money in his possession. Indeed, the same could even be said of our souls! Our souls are gifts that we have been given by Allah so we have no justifiable reason for being stingy with them in the path of the True Lord *Glorified is He*!

This explains the following statement of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So, rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the supreme triumph' (*at-Tawba*: 111).

The word 'purchased' creates the impression that there is a transaction of some sort taking place, i.e. buying and selling commercial activity. Nonetheless, in essence, in as much as Allah owns everything, He is the buyer and the seller.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, 'Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties' one should understand from this that life goes to waste otherwise and possessions are ill-spent. Indeed, life will inevitably end in death and wealth and possessions are subject to loss. Naturally, upon hearing this—and reflecting upon its meaning—a person should be moved with fear.

= who fights bravely for the sake of tribal zeal or merely for ostentation. He peace and blessings be upon him responded by stating, "The individual who fights for the sake of making the Word of Allah triumphant is in His path." Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (2810, 3127, 7458), and also by Muslim in his *Sahih*. (5029, 5031)

Nonetheless, as soon as The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘Indeed, Allah has purchased’, you will recognize that it contains a glad tiding for the believer. He should be overflowing with happiness and delight whose traces can be seen upon his face. Amazingly, the believer experiences this although this implies that his life is going to be taken. True, his life will be taken, but he knows that Allah *Glorified is He* is going to give him an eternal life in exchange for his temporal life.

Indeed, all the matters of faith follow this pattern; we do not have to countenance them in fear. Quite the reverse, we should countenance them in high spirits and anticipation (of impending good). This explains why the True Lord *Glorified is He* says ‘Rejoice.’ Besides being pleased, you should also know, with conviction, that, ‘That is best for you, if you should know’. Indeed, faith in Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and struggling for His sake with your lives and possessions is more advantageous for you than the temporal world and all that it contains. Put differently, all that you can amass in this life is of no comparison with the reward of those who struggle in the way of Allah.

The word ‘best’—as it is used here—encompasses the good of this world and that of the Hereafter. Allah grants the believers manifold good so that their state remains good perpetually; first in this life then in the Hereafter.

The portion of Allah’s statement, ‘if you should know’ means: If you are absolutely positive about the reward of sacrificing in the way of Allah, you will be guided to proof concerning it. Indeed, this creates the impression that there are introductory steps which precede the acquisition of knowledge. If they do not know (about spiritual affairs), Allah will teach them.

To be sure, someone who strives in the path of Allah sacrificing his material resources and life for His sake is convinced and assured that his striving will be the source of attaining what is superior to what he is giving up.

Afterward, the True Lord says:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

**And He will forgive your sins, admit you into Gardens
graced with flowing streams, into pleasant dwellings
in the Gardens of Eternity. That is the supreme
triumph [12] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 12)**

The first thing a martyr is rewarded with is the forgiveness of his sins. With the first drop of his blood he becomes as though he had never committed any sins.

When someone is killed in the path of Allah, he transitions into a life better than that which he is leaving behind. The martyr is given this distinct honour. This explains why the True Lord *Glorified is He* at the instant of martyrdom, shows them their destinations. At this point, they make utterances that those near them, while they are in their final moments can hear.

During this critical moment some have mentioned, ‘The winds of paradise are blowing over me.’⁽¹⁾ This statement was issued to make it clear to those in his presence that he was gazing at paradise.

This explains what happened during the Battle of *Badr*, when one of the Companions heard the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* speaking of the reward of the martyr while he (the Companion) was chewing some dates he had. He said, ‘O Prophet Muhammad is there anything which stands between me and paradise but being killed for the sake of Allah?’ After the Prophet answered, ‘Yes’, the Companion tossed the rest of the dates he was eating and entered the battle. He responded so decisively because he had total conviction that the reward he would receive as a martyr far excelled that which he was leaving behind.⁽²⁾

(1) This statement was related by several Companions of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. *Al-Kashf Al-Bayan* 8/23, *An-Naysaburi*)

(2) This Hadith was narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (143) in *Kitab Al-Jihad* in a section entitled, *Thawab Al-Janna Li-Shahid*. It was also narrated by *Al-Bukhari* in his *Sahih* (4046) on the authority of *Jabir ibn `Abdullah* Allah be pleased with him.

He was absolutely certain that the only thing between him and paradise was being killed for the sake of Allah. At the time, there were some dates in his hand—that he had been eating—in his eagerness to enter battle, he threw them! Indeed, he even saw the time that he would spend chewing the dates as unnecessary procrastination! At that point, the dates were preventing him from attaining his goal. Hence, he decided to toss them aside and rush into battle seeking martyrdom without delay.

Again, faced with a story of such an extraordinary act of faith, we must ask: why? His actions reflected the outcome of a comparison of the pleasures and comforts of this life with those of the Hereafter. If an intelligent person compares the comforts and delights of this world with those of the Hereafter, he or she will always give preference to those of the Hereafter.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘And how many a prophet [fought and] with him fought many religious scholars. But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or submit. And Allah loves the steadfast. And their words were not but that they said, “Our Lord, forgive us our sins and the excess [committed] in our affairs and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.” So, Allah gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allah loves the doers of good.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 146-148)

All the respective peoples referenced above who fought with their prophets encountered hardship, but they did not weaken or become faint of heart. On the contrary, they persevered and continued to seek the truth so that their sins might be forgiven. Equally impressive was the fact that they recognized the source of their weaknesses and sincerely sought the help of Allah to overcome them. So, what did Allah do with them?

Allah *Glorified is He* supported them by giving them the reward of this world and that of the Hereafter. Indeed, Allah loves the doers of good. All of this is an expression of conduct that is guided by faith; conduct which protects against defeat and the stratagems of the enemy. This is one of the outcomes of sincere Allah-consciousness. It helps the believers to remain in the accompaniment of Allah. While in Allah’s accompaniment the Muslim

is impervious to attacks from others, there are none among creation who would dare transgress him—while in this state.

Essentially, the believer willingly sacrifices his life, soul, and material resources for Allah *Glorified is He*. Put another way, the Muslim is ready to sacrifice everything he loves in this life for the sake of Allah, and the journey to Him. Allah is unfailingly generous to those who seek Him.

The first expression of His generosity is that He forgives them of their sins, relieves them of their burdens, and completely diverts from them the punishment that would have befallen them on account of the sins they had committed.

Allah *Glorified is He* only forgives them of the sins they have committed in relation to Him. As for the sins, they have committed against others, forgiveness for these sins is contingent upon being forgiven by those whom they have wronged. The True Lord will request that they pardon one another on the Day of Judgment.⁽¹⁾

The only other thing Allah does not forgive is debt. Abu Qatada narrated that a man said: 'O Prophet Muhammad, if I killed for the sake of Allah, all of my past misdeeds are forgiven, correct?' The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* answered him: 'Yes, if you are killed for the sake of Allah and you endure it patiently, seeking a reward in the Hereafter, advancing toward the enemy as opposed to fleeing, all of your past misdeeds will be forgiven.' Then, the Prophet Muhammad said: 'On second thought, what exactly are you asking?' 'If I am killed in the path of Allah' the man repeated, 'are all of my past misdeeds forgiven, correct?' Prophet Muhammad said, 'Yes, all of your past misdeeds will be forgiven; provided that you patiently endure, seeking a reward in the Hereafter, and are advancing toward the enemy, not retreating. However, there is one exception: You will not be exempted from making good on your debts. I was informed of this by Jibril (Gabriel).'⁽²⁾

(1) *On the authority of Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him, Al-Matalib Al-'Aliyya, Ibn Hajar 5/46)*

(2) *This was narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (117) (3/1501). It was also narrated by An-Nisa'i in As-Sunnan Al-Kubra (4365) and by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (1712). The latter said concerning the Hadith, 'Its text is sound and its chain is rigorously authenticated.' Ahmad also narrated the Hadith in his Musnad (22638) on the authority of Abu Qatada.*

Debts are the rights of those to whom they are due. As a rule, Allah does not force people to relinquish what legitimately belongs to them. As such, the questioner had to be informed of the limitation of the forgiveness of his sins—even as a martyr! Indeed, even if Allah is pleased with someone who is killed in His path, what offense did the creditor commit that would warrant having his right waived?

Allah is Wise and Just. He does not oppress anyone, and He has made consuming wealth by way of corruption and falsehood impermissible—even if it means by way of martyrdom in His path!

Afterward, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow.’ The True Lord *Glorified is He* is issuing glad tidings to all those who struggle in His way and particularly those among them who are martyred for His cause. He will admit them into gardens through which running waters flow. You will notice that the word ‘gardens’ appears here in the plural. This is an indication of the abundance and variation that exist among the gardens of paradise. Indeed, each garden is comprised of levels, the variety of which exceed the gardens on earth.

In fact, there are many different gardens of paradise such as *Jannat Al-Firdaws*, *Jannat Al-`Adn*, *Jannat An-Na`im*, *Dar Al-Khuld*, *Dar As-Salam*, *Jannat Al-Ma`wa* and finally *‘Illiyun*, the highest and most exalted of the gardens of paradise. To be sure, *‘Illiyun* has earned this status because of its ultimate form of blessing which is seeing Allah.

Indeed, Allah has prepared for the believers who exert themselves in His path, giving aid to His religion, striving to make His word triumphant, gardens through which running waters flow. This represents the highest achievement. As a point of clarification, when the word garden is used in this context it refers to tree-lined orchards enjoying the choicest of fruits and all that in which the soul finds contentment.

Linguistically, the word *jannah* refers to something which covers or conceals. It was most likely glossed this way on account of the way it covers those within it behind the dense foliage of its trees.

Someone walking inside a dense garden is not visible to those outside because the trees have concealed him. The same can be said of someone relaxing

inside of a garden; they cannot be seen by people outside the garden, and in fact, might be tempted to remain in the garden, removed from people on account of all of the pleasing things within the garden!

In fact, thinking about the garden—and before proceeding we remind ourselves that none of our analogies or similitudes can come close to the indescribable Glory of Allah—it is like a humongous park; its expansiveness extends as far as the eye can see (no matter where you are standing within it).

In terms of looking at the rivers of this world and those of the Hereafter, we find that the rivers of this world are bodies of water that fill clefts within the surface of the earth and are surrounded by banks and shores. Conversely, the rivers of the Hereafter flow across the surface of the garden of paradise without being enclosed by borders.

In the Hereafter, we also find rivers of wine and milk. These rivers are independent and do not mix with the rivers of water. All of this is an expression of the creative power of a Wise and Omnipotent Lord.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* describes the rivers of paradise: ‘The description of Paradise, which the righteous are promised, wherein are rivers of water unaltered, rivers of milk the taste of which never changes, rivers of wine delicious to those who drink, and rivers of purified honey, in which they will have from all [kinds of] fruits and forgiveness from their Lord.’ (*Muhammad*: 15)

The reward of those who strive in the way of Allah is not limited to having their sins forgiven or being admitted to a garden underneath which rivers flow. Even more, Allah has prepared for them, ‘goodly dwellings’ (*at-Tawba*: 72). This means that the garden is not the actual place in which one lives. No, as a matter of fact, one lives in mansions that are located in the garden. This is clearly mentioned in the following statement of the True Lord *Glorified is He* ‘goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence’ (*at-Tawba*: 72).

The gardens—being referenced in the verse above—are verdant pastures filled with vegetation. The mansions referred to as goodly dwellings are located on the pastures. Within our lived experience, we have seen villas situated in open fields—and have observed their beauty. So, what do we think about what Allah has prepared in terms of placing sumptuous dwellings (for the believers) in the middle of the verdant gardens?

Allah has placed these luxuriant dwellings in gardens of perpetual bliss. These have termed ‘gardens of perpetual bliss’ because the beauty and comforts they contain are everlasting. This quality of the Garden of Paradise is highlighted to show how much it differs from the temporal world—in which we currently reside and will eventually fade away.

Your ability to enjoy every comfort and enjoyment that exists in this life can end with a change in your condition, and if it does not end with a change in your condition, it will certainly end with death. The gardens of perpetual bliss, on the other hand, which paradise contain, are everlasting and its dwellers will enjoy its comforts eternally. In short, these gardens will contain everything a soul could ever desire; there is absolutely no need to look outside the garden for anything!

Imagine that you entered one of the most splendid gardens in the world, Hyde Park, for instance. The most you would be able to do is take a casual stroll about the park, enjoying its scenery before finally becoming tired and worn out. Phrased differently, even if you were touring one of the most beautiful parks in the world you would still be forced by your human limitations to take a momentary rest. The Garden of Paradise, on the other hand, is a garden of perpetual bliss; it is all the more delightful because you can enjoy it without pause or ending.

‘[Therein are] gardens of perpetual residence which the Most Merciful has promised His servants in the unseen.’ (*Maryam*: 61) The appellation The Most Gracious was chosen by the True Lord *Glorified is He* here in order to give hope to those who have transgressed against themselves through sin. They should know that their Lord is Gracious and Merciful; if they turn to Him in sincere repentance, He will accept it from them. Allah always fulfils His promise!

To be sure, this is what is being conveyed by the following statement: ‘It is that which is the supreme triumph.’ (*Maryam*: 61) As long as the Most Gracious is the One making a promise, its fulfilment can be assured. It will definitely be realized; Allah *Glorified is He* never reneges on His promise.

‘That is the supreme triumph.’ When Allah refers to the Last Day as a ‘supreme triumph’ this is only a reference to what this day will mean for the believers—for them it will indeed be a day of great vindication. Our acceptance

of this enables us to patiently preserve in the face of the challenges we encounter—in striving for Allah—and press forward, seeking martyrdom for His sake.

To be sure, Allah has prepared gardens interspersed with rivers for those who believe in Him and fight for His cause, striving to make His word triumphant, and lend their support to the victory of His religion. We have learned that this is the supreme triumph; however, in effort to better understand it we should take a closer look. What exactly is this supreme triumph? It is success and felicity; it is triumph and accomplishment at the highest level imaginable!

Our worldly success is normally accompanied by rewards in which we find delight. In fact, the delight we experience in attaining success pleases us so thoroughly that it seems as though it can last a lifetime. If this is the case, what are we to think about the success which comes in the Hereafter? Indeed, it is an everlasting success which will be enjoyed in a garden decorated by our Lord. Is this not the greatest success?

Moreover, our worldly achievements only represent success in minor matters. The success of the Hereafter, on the other hand, is granted by the True Lord—who is unlimited in His power—and is issued on a scale which reflects His grandeur. If we compared the success of this world with that of the Hereafter, we would discover that success in the Hereafter is unadulterated splendour.

Whatever sacrifice a believer does in order to attain felicity in the Hereafter, he will be awarded that which will fully account for his sacrifice and make up for it. Put differently, the supreme triumph is the highest attainment. It does not restrict anybody from what they desire and it will remain forever. Next, The True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَأُخْرَىٰ تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

And He will give you something else that will really please you: His help and an imminent breakthrough. [Prophet], give the faithful the good news [13] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 13)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* has already made a promise to those who believe in Him and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and strive in

His cause with their lives and material resources. Concerning their ‘trading’ with Him, Allah has promised to forgive them of their sins, admit them to gardens with rivers flowing beneath them, and place them in sumptuous mansions. This is the way in which they will live for eternity.

Notice the provisions of the verse we are currently examining. To be sure, it is the outcome of an aspect of the True Lord’s divinity: He is Omniscient; He knows what His servants want and the desires of their hearts. As such, Allah *Glorified is He* makes them an additional promise to give them other things from which they derive pleasure and contentment—in addition to the rewards that were mentioned in the previous verse.

According to the scholars, the verse means: As a precursor to the reward you will receive in the Hereafter, you will also be rewarded in this life. Of course, Allah knows the inner-workings of the human soul: Men and women like to see the fruit of their labours within their lives. Victory over their enemies and triumph would be the most obvious signs that their efforts to support the religion of Allah had been accepted.

The following statement of Allah *Glorified is He* provides us with a good example of this divine mercy—out of which Allah considers the feelings and emotions of His servants— ‘Would you not fight a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time? Do you fear them? But Allah has more right that you should fear Him, if you are [truly] believers. Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts of a believing people. And remove the fury in the believers' hearts. And Allah turns in forgiveness to whom He wills; and Allah is Knowing and Wise.’ (*at-Tawba*: 13-15)

The victory—in battle—the believers gain, with the help of Allah *Glorified is He* over the disbelievers brings consolation to their hearts. Lest we forget, the disbelievers had sought to subjugate and transgress them. It is as if the triumph of the believers cures a disease that has been festering in their hearts and removes rancour from them.

Simply stated, rancour and rage are removed from the hearts of the believers. In this sense, the believers fighting the disbelievers not only results

in the punishment and debasement of the disbelievers and victory of the believers; even more, it also consoles the believers after having experienced transgression and harm from the disbelievers.

The word 'another' in the verse under discussion is referring to another reward—other than that of the Hereafter. This verse refers to an additional compensation the believers will receive for their devotion—besides being admitted to paradise. In other words, this verse is talking about a reward the believers will receive in this life.

This means that Allah *Glorified is He* is the Facilitator of the believers. However, by no means should you think that the facilitation and help of Allah come on the basis of other than wisdom: Allah's aid of the believers always contains wisdom.

Customarily, when people think about victory, they think about the acquisition of territory and establishment upon that territory. However, in Islam there is an alternative measure by which victory is judged. Victory is not truly considered victory unless it provides a firm foundation for the subsequent growth of good and prosperity. When good and prosperity have been given fertile soil, the believer has truly succeeded.

The victory comes exclusively from Allah. Allah says, 'no victory can come from any save Allah, The Almighty, The Truly Wise' (*Al-Imran*: 126). He also says, 'no victory can come from any save Allah: verily, Allah is Almighty, Wise!' (*al-Anfal*: 10)

You do not attain victory through your numbers, preparation, or weaponry. Rather, the believers are merely instruments that Allah uses in order to place victory where He chooses. Ultimately, the victory comes from Allah *Glorified is He* alone, and is granted to the individuals who prepare for it.

Allah's name refers to the fact that He is never overcome while His identification as the Truly Wise implies that He gives victory to those who prepare for it and fulfil the conditions of truly being soldiers of Allah. When entering into battle with an opposing force, the believers can use the outcome of the battle to identify the state of their hearts.

If the battle draws to a close and the believers are victorious, they know that they were truly fighting for the cause of Allah. Conversely, if the conclusion

of the battle finds the believers on the losing end, they must look to themselves and their own inadequacies as the source of their defeat. Indeed, Allah speaks of faith as the determining factor of battles. This is what we find in the book He has promised to preserve. He says, ‘and that, verily, Our hosts – they indeed – would (in the end) be victorious!’ (*as-Saffat*: 173)

Accordingly, if we fail to attain victory, we must look to ourselves. What condition of truly being a fighting force striving for the sake of Allah were we lacking?

For example, in the Battle of Uhud, when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* commanded the archers to hold their positions, and they failed heed his command.⁽¹⁾ In this instance a fundamental condition of being true soldiers fighting for the cause of Allah was unfulfilled; obeying the Prophet Muhammad. What would have happened if the believers would have still been victorious despite the gross disregard of these archers for the orders of the Prophet Muhammad? The believers might not have understood the gravity of obeying the orders of Allah’s Messenger.

(1) *On the authority of Bara ibn `Azib, who narrated: ‘The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him was marshalling his troops on the day of Uhud. That day, some fifty men were under the direct command of `Abdullah ibn Jubayr, who said to them at the battle’s onset: “Wherever you see us, protect our flanks. Hold your positions and do not move until you are given my signal. Even if we appear to be laying waste to the enemy and routing them, hold your positions and do not move until you are given my signal, then you may join in the combat.” By Allah, I saw women in frenzy, shaking their bangles and anklets, and raising their garments (but he continued to hold his position). Those in the company of `Abdullah ibn Jubayr said, “The spoils of war, our companions are getting all of the spoils of war! What are we waiting for?” ‘Abdullah chided them by saying “Have you forgotten the orders of the Messenger of Allah?” They responded, “By Allah we must get down there and get our share of the spoils!” As they abandoned their positions and neglected their responsibility to defend their comrades, the tide of the battle turned and the believers started suffering some casualties. As this was taking place, The Messenger was calling them from the rear, but only approximately twelve of them remained with the Messenger of Allah. In the aftermath of this critical blunder, seventy believers were killed. On the day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah and his Companions took one hundred and forty disbelievers: Seventy were killed in battle and another seventy were taken as prisoners.’ This Hadith was narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (3039, 3986, 4067).*

During the Battle of Hunayn, the believers were sure that they would triumph because they turned out for the battle in tremendous numbers. They were not relying on their faith. As the battle commenced, the believers found themselves on the losing end.⁽¹⁾ This was a critical lesson in faith for them. Accordingly, if you observe unfaith gaining the upper hand on belief, you can be sure that one of the conditions of being a true soldier fighting for the sake of Allah has been left unfulfilled.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* has not only promised to aid them, He has also promised them an impending victory. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And [you will obtain] another [favour] that you love - victory from Allah and an imminent conquest.' The pinnacle of being given divine aid is being granted victory. To be sure, it entails empowerment. In fact, from an Islamic perspective, victory is termed 'a conquest,' and is always governed by the guidelines of the sacred law. Such guidelines include the prohibition of plunder and the wanton killing of non-combatants, women, elderly people, monks, and hermits in their cloisters. The proscription of environmental degradation and deforestation is also included within these guidelines.

In terms of the specific victory being referenced within the verse we are currently examining, the scholars have offered many opinions. Some maintain that it is a reference to the Conquest of Mecca, while others opine that it prophesies the conquests of the Persian and Byzantine empires. All these explanations are plausible.

(1) *On the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud who narrated: 'I was with the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him on the day of Hunayn. It was a battle in which many people fled and abandoned the Messenger of Allah but eighty men—comprised of both the Muhajirun (the emigrants) and the Ansar (the helpers)—stood firmly with him. We turned on our heels and fled; however, there were about eighty infantrymen who stood their ground and refused to flee. These were the individuals Allah gave tranquillity.'* 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud continued: 'The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him was circling the ranks so vigorously that he was thrown from the saddle when his mule turned a sharp corner. I said to him: "Rise O Messenger of Allah, and may Allah elevate you!" After requesting a handful of dirt, which he threw in their faces and which filled their eyes, he asked, "Where are the Ansar and Muhajirun?" After I informed him that they had fled, he told me to call them back. Returning with swords in hand, they were a frightening sight which startled the disbelievers and caused them to flee.' This Hadith was narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad (4336) and by At-Tabarani in Al-Mu'ajam Al-Kabir. (10351).

Here, the word ‘conquest’ is mentioned but no specific event is mentioned in connection with it. As such, we can conclude that this victory could be granted—at any time—to those who believe in Allah and His Messenger; just so long as they strive earnestly for the sake of Allah with their lives and material resources, and fulfil the conditions required for receiving divine aid and being empowered by Allah.

Considering this, we opine that the address contained within the verse we are currently examining is not directed strictly to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as is the case in of the chapter of *al-Fath* or of the chapter of *an-Nasr*. Quite the reverse, this verse is addressing the generality of the believers. Listen to the following statement of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment?’ (*as-Saff*: 10)

Accordingly, the opinion that some have expressed about the conquest mentioned in the verse before us referring to the later conquests of the Byzantines and the Persians is a sound opinion. Obviously, these represent two conquests that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not witness. But this is not even limited to these two conquests; the conquests of Egypt or Constantinople might also be included.

Afterward, the True Lord *Glorified is He* says, ‘and gives good tidings to the believers.’ This is in order that they realize that Allah will never abandon them or leave them without guidance as long as they adhere to His way. Allah commanded the Prophet to give the believers glad tidings. First, Allah promises the believers a victory; this will occur in this life. Then, in the Hereafter He gives them glad tidings of gardens of perpetual bliss in which they will dwell in mansions; living gracefully.

Next, The True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا أَنصَارَ اللَّهِ كَمَا قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ لِّلْحَوَارِثِ مَنْ
 أَنصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِثُونَ نَحْنُ أَنصَارُ اللَّهِ فَتَأَمَّنَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ بَنِي
 إِسْرَءِيلَ وَكَفَرَتْ طَائِفَةٌ فَأَيَّدْنَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَىٰ عَدُوِّهِمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا ظَاهِرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

You who believe, be God's helpers. As Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples, 'Who will come with me to help God?' The disciples said, 'We shall be God's helpers.' Some of the Children of Israel believed and some disbelieved: We supported the believers against their enemy and they were the ones who came out on top [14] (The Quran, *as-Saff*: 14)

The address, 'O you who have believed' occurs three times in this chapter. In the first time, the True Lord *Glorified is He* addresses the believers by bringing some of their faults to attention. This particular behaviour (of saying one thing and doing another) was characteristic of some members of the believing community. They would speak and they would act, but their actions were not consistent with their speech. When the situation demanded both speech and action they were nowhere to be found.

There were some members of the community who would talk incessantly (about their devotion and commitment) but were never present in the ranks. They were absent from the ranks of inviting others to Islam as well as from the ranks of defending the physical integrity of the community. They also failed to be among the doers of righteous deeds and the devout in worship. Perhaps most lamentably, many of them even failed to be counted among those who restrict their evil to themselves and refrain from harming others. This was the context of Allah's statement: 'O you who have believed, why do you say what you do not do? Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do.' (*as-Saff*: 2-3)

As for the second calling, 'O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment?' (*as-Saff*: 10) In this, Allah is directing the attention of the believers to another important element of personal conduct: Not simply refraining from vain talk, nonsense, and that which is not corroborated by actions; on the contrary, He demands that their speech contain the most praiseworthy things and that their integrity

remain intact by matching their speech with their action. Pursuant with that objective, He points out to them the most desirable course for them to follow in their actions if they are truly among the sincere.

The course of action, ‘the trade’ with Allah that He points out to them is: ‘[It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives.’

Finally, this verse places the believers upon the path that will deliver them to the pinnacle of servanthood to Allah: To be Helpers in the cause of Allah.

To be sure, someone might be prompted to ask: does Allah really need anyone to help Him? When the True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks of helping the faith, He says, ‘O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.’ (*Muhammad: 7*)

In essence, our ‘help’ of Allah is expressed in implementing the religion that He has given us; this is the meaning Allah intends. This explains why sometimes the help is mentioned as coming from the believer to his Lord while at other times it is mentioned as coming from the Lord to the servant. It is a reciprocal relationship: by being on Allah’s side you ensure that He will be on your side.

Then again, how do we know if we are really being helpers to Allah? We know that we are, in fact, serving as helpers to Allah when the desired outcome accrues as a result of our help. To be sure, when Allah *Glorified is He* mentions one of the laws which regulate creation, He does not allow reality to contravene that law. If Allah proclaimed a law of creation which was subsequently contravened by reality, it would force us to deem the law false or inapplicable.

Receiving the help of Allah is predicated upon entering the battle with the sincere desire to aid Him. Nevertheless, with what exactly will you aid Him? You aid Him with your desire to see His word actualized and made triumphant. Naturally, if one desires to see the prominence of the word of Allah, this entails undermining the word of the disbelievers until it becomes a thing of absolutely no consequence.

As such, if you fail to help Allah, you have only yourself to blame if you are not granted the help of Allah. And if the help of Allah has been restricted

from you, there is no one else that can possibly help you. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'but if He should forsake you, who is there that can aid you after Him?' (*Al- 'Imran*: 160)

If you see the believers suffer defeat after entering battle, you must search for the source of their deviation from way of truth. Indeed, as long as you are firm upon the way of Allah, you can be sure that Allah will aid you. This is an indubitable law, established by the Quran, and uncontested.

Allah says, 'and Allah will most certainly support him who supports His cause.' (*al-Hajj*: 40) The True Lord *Glorified is He* wants us to know that He has placed the keys of paradise in this world. Each of us holds the key to a path which leads to paradise or to the hellfire.

This explains why Allah says, 'and fulfil your promise unto Me, (whereupon), I shall fulfil my promise unto you.' (*al-Baqara*: 40) In another verse, He said: 'so remember Me, and I shall remember you.' (*al-Baqara*: 152)

In a Qudsi Hadith that the Prophet narrates from his Lord, we find the following: 'If he draws near Me by a hand span, I draw near to him an arm length. If he approaches Me an arm length, I approach him a cubit length. And if he comes to me walking, I go to him with speed!'⁽¹⁾ In this way, the True Lord *Glorified is He* makes us aware that the key is our own hands. If we begin with His obedience, He will give us from His bounty without measure. In the same way, if we draw near to Allah, He draws near to us. The inverse is also true: If we distance ourselves from Allah, He distances Himself from us. This basic principle corresponds with the natural understanding of faith.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'be supporters of Allah, as when `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), asked the disciples, "Who are my supporters for Allah?" `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon them* came to know the core principles of the prophetic missions, he said: 'Verily, Allah is

(1) *It was narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (7405) and by Muslim in his Sahih (7008). The Hadith was transmitted by Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. The Hadith begins as follows: 'I am to My servant as he thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me within himself, I remember him to Myself. And if he mentions Me in a gathering, I mention him in a gathering which is superior to his gathering.'*

my Lord as well as your Lord: so worship Him (alone): this is a straight way.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 51) This statement warns the followers of ‘Isa (Jesus) against saying anything about other than that he was a submissive servant of Allah who was ordered to establish prayer and obey Allah.

‘But when ‘Isa (Jesus) felt [persistence in] disbelief from them, he asked, “Who are my supporters for [the cause of] Allah?”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 52) The hidden lesson in this is that everyone advancing an idea, practicing a trade, or pursuing a certain goal must be acutely aware of the details involved in his pursuit.

Allah commands the caller unto Him to have this heightened sense of awareness because for every group of people that will find guidance and contentment in his words, there will certainly be another group which is angered by his words. As such, the caller unto Allah must have an acute awareness of the impact of his activity. In other words, he must pay attention to those deeply ensconced characteristics and motivations which affect the receptivity of his message among people.

When ‘Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary) began to go public with the message of truth, he found promoters of indecency, oppression, and spiritual darkness opposed to his teaching; indeed, his was a message which illuminated a clear path to Allah. This resistance toward faith is what the Quran terms as ‘disbelief’. Nonetheless, for our purposes here, the bottom line is that ‘Isa (Jesus) was uncannily aware of what was taking place around him.

To be sure, he realized that he had been sent with a message from Allah to deliver people from moral corruption to moral excellence, and once he sensed their unwillingness to believe, he needed a group of people to come forth and assist him in inviting people to the truth. So, he questioned, ‘Who are my supporters for Allah?’ Inviting to the path of Allah entails struggle, and struggle entails sacrifice. Moreover, sacrifice is only real when it involves giving up one’s life and valuables. As such, whoever finds within himself the desire to aid the cause of Allah must be prepared to work assiduously.

Another interesting insight we glean from the statement of ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* mentioned in the chapter of *Al-‘Imran*, is that his appeal for help in propagating the message was not directed toward specific individuals. On the contrary, he directed his appeal toward any and all who found within

themselves the willingness and ability to bear the standard of Allah's message. In this way, all their sacrifice was voluntary and none of it was forced upon them.

`Isa (Jesus) did not request the help of those who wanted to work propagating the message because it was profitable or lead to positions of public esteem. He did not request this kind of help. He requested the help of the truly determined so that each of them would be prepared to strive to the height of his ability to aid the cause of Allah.

The appeal that `Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* made in *Al-`Imran* is general. In the chapter of *as-Saf*, however, the appeal is directed to the 'the disciples' in exclusion to others that were also present at the time of `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary). To be sure, some have opined that the verse which appears in *as-Saff* clarifies who was being addressed in the verse which appears in *Al-`Imran*. That is to say: The disciples of `Isa (Jesus) were being addressed in each of the verses. Nonetheless, this begs the question: was it in fact the disciples from whom `Isa (Jesus) detected disbelief despite the fact that we know that they ended up being his most sincere and devoted followers?

The correct view about the statement of `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), 'Who are my supporters for Allah' which appears in the chapter of *Al-`Imran* is that it was addressed to everyone. The disciples volunteered to help `Isa (Jesus), and support him in his efforts. 'The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allah.' It almost seems as though he wanted to make sure of their dedication; which does not necessarily mean that he doubted them or that there was someone among them dishonestly claiming sincerity but not truly one of them.

'The disciples said, "We are supporters of Allah."' (*as-Saff*: 14) They wanted to help the cause of Allah so each of them wholeheartedly dedicated himself to His way. Faith, which in the deepest sense is the heart's being content with something, is the most important element of giving help to the cause of Allah.

Allah demanded that the disciples have faith in Him and His Messenger, `Isa (Jesus). He said: 'And [remember] when I inspired to the disciples, "Believe in Me and in My messenger `Isa (Jesus)."' They said, "We have

believed, so bear witness that indeed we are Muslims [in submission to Allah].” (*al-Ma‘ida*: 111)

The meaning of ‘inspired’ in the previous verse is generic. That is, it simply refers to the process of making someone aware of something previously unknown. As such, the True Lord inspired them to believe in the message of ‘Isa (Jesus), who was conveying His message. Put differently, Allah inspired the thoughts which occurred to their minds in the same manner He inspired the mother of Moses to throw her newborn into the sea so that it could deliver him safely to the shore.

Accordingly, this does not refer to the inspiration given to the Messenger. The inspiration given to the Messenger contains practical rules and injunctions (concerning how we should live our lives), and is always issued via the medium of Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* the archangel and trusted emissary of Allah. The inspiration Allah sent the mother of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* or the Disciples of ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* conversely, was expressed in allowing the motivation of belief to take root in the heart. After which, the inspired party follows what is in the heart and finds that reality reinforces it.

The revelation and thoughts which were inspired by Allah are what caused them to believe in Allah and His Messenger, ‘Isa (Jesus). Thus, when they were requested to aid the cause of Allah by being His helpers, they responded by articulating that which had been placed in their hearts; they said: ‘We are supporters of Allah.’

When faith was requested of them, they responded accordingly; they said, ‘Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the messenger ‘Isa (Jesus), so register us among the witnesses [to truth].’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 53)

The intended belief within this verse is belief in that which ‘Isa (Jesus) received from Allah and subsequently taught them. The proclamation of the Disciples is a declaration of their faith in what came before ‘Isa (Jesus) in terms of the fundamentals of belief as well as a declaration of their adherence to what he brought by way of laws and ethics. The people were then separated into two camps: One representing faith and the other representing disbelief. This explains the following statement of Allah: ‘And a faction of the children of Israel believed and a faction disbelieved.’

The word *faction* is a group of people united for a specific purpose and working toward one end. Therefore, some faction from among the children of Israel believed in that which was introduced by `Isa (Jesus), while some disbelieved in his message.

Yet, why did Allah make a point of saying, ‘of the children of Israel’? In addressing this question, we would point to the fact that `Isa (Jesus) was only sent as a messenger to the children of Israel. His message was not intended for all men and women. The main objective of his prophetic mission might have been strengthening their hearts and removing their overwhelming preoccupation with material concerns. In a certain sense, `Isa (Jesus) came to complete the Torah and restore unto it that which the Jewish nation had removed.

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions here: ‘And [mention] when `Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), said, “O children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you.”’ This statement makes it unequivocally clear that he was only sent to the children of Israel as a reformer and someone sent to guide them to redemption.

The problem with the children of Israel was that they consistently rebelled against the way of the Messengers because it did not conform to their desires. As a matter of fact, their rebelliousness reached such levels that they began to plot and conspire against the Prophets, striving to frustrate their missions; even if this meant killing them.

For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘and when I restrained the children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, “This is not but obvious magic.”’ (*al-Ma`ida*: 110)

Indeed, just as the Disciples were determined and resolute in their faith in `Isa (Jesus), others were determined and resolute in their disbelief, and their desire to harm him. Thus, Allah restrained the evil of the children of Israel when they desired to harm or even potentially kill `Isa (Jesus). Nonetheless, even after witnessing all of that, there were still some who believed in him and others who did not. Heinously, those who did not believe alleged that he was a magician.

Put succinctly, this group among the children of Israel disbelieved in 'Isa (Jesus) and vehemently opposed him and went even further in inventing an insidious lie against Maryam (Mary).

Then, Allah says, 'So We supported those who believed against their enemy, and they became dominant.' Allah was on the side of His Messenger and those that believed and were prepared to aid His Messenger in his mission. These were the people unto whom the divine aid of Allah was given. Their foes were none other than those who had disbelieved in 'Isa (Jesus), the Messenger sent by Allah.

For a time, it appeared that the party of disbelief had been victorious—after the ascension of 'Isa (Jesus) into the heavens. This was until the advent of Muhammad's prophecy. Allah made the message given to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* a support and reinforcement for those with true faith. This will stand until the coming of the Final Hour. To be sure, Allah has described some members of the people of the Book thusly, that '...is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant. And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, "Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses."' (*al-Ma'ida*: 82-83)

Therefore, falsehood, no matter how much it seems to be dominating publicly, it will eventually be overcome by the pure truth. Truth will affect them in the depth of their souls and their eyes will overflow with tears because they recognize it when they hear it.

'And they became dominant.' In other words, they shall become victorious. In the end, the truth will always triumph and it will never be overcome. This is clear from the statement of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in which he said, 'There will always remain a band of believers upon the truth and triumphant. They will not be affected by those who forsake them, and they will persevere in that state until their affair is settled by Allah.'⁽¹⁾


(1) On the authority of Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan, who said: 'I heard The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* say, "There will remain a party from amongst my nation who stand for the cause of Allah. The people that forsake them will not be able to harm them or oppose them. In the end, their affair will be decisively settled by Allah, and will find them victorious." This Hadith was narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (16974)

the chapter of

al-Jumu'a

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Jumu'a* ⁽¹⁾:

 يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies God, the
Controller, the Holy One, the Almighty, the Wise [1]
(The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 1)**

If one were to examine the expressions of glorification in the Noble Quran, one would find that glorification is established for Allah *Glorified is He* before He created those who glorify Him, such as in His statement 'Exalted is He who took His Servant.' (*al-Isra'*: 1) Then, after Allah had created the creation: 'Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth exalts Allah.' (*al-Hashr*: 1)

The creation still glorifies Him in the present: 'Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah, the Sovereign, the Pure the Exalted

(1) *Al-Jumu'a* is the 62nd chapter in the order of the Noble Quran and it consists of eleven verses. It was revealed in Medina. As-Suyuti said in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (8/151): 'Ibn Ad-Daris, An-Nahas, Ibn Mardawayh have all related, along with Al-Bayhaqi in *Ad-Dala'il*, that Ibn 'Abbas said: 'The chapter of *al-Jumu'a* was sent down in Medina. It was sent down after the chapter of *at-Tahrim* and before *at-Taghabun*. The verse that mentions the Friday Prayer was sent down after its ruling, i.e. the verse that mentions *Al-Jumu'a* was sent down in Medina even though the Friday Prayer was made obligatory in Mecca. This is supported by what Ibn Majah has narrated from 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Ka'b ibn Malik that As'ad ibn Zarara was the first person to lead the Friday Prayer before the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* arrived from Mecca. *Al-Itqan fi 'Ulum Al-Quran* 1/108)

in Might, the Wise.’ Therefore, glorifying Allah has always been and shall remain until the Hour is established. This is why the True Lord Glorified is He commands Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him along with his *ummah*, to continue glorifying Him: ‘Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most-High.’ (*al-A’la*: 1)

The command to remember Allah came after the command to glorify Him, as if He is telling you whenever you remember Him: ‘He is transcendent in His Essence, His attributes and His actions, and it is for your benefit, throughout life, that Allah has no equal, no parallel, no peer and no rival because everyone will be under His justice.’ Thus, Allah is transcendent for your benefit. Allah is transcendent and sanctified above being compared to anything in creation. His Name is exalted; His essence is exalted and so are His attributes and actions. Limitless is He in His Glory above any attribute that men may ascribe to Him that does not befit His Essence.

Tasbih (Glorification) and *taqdis* (sanctification) were established for Allah before the act of creation. Allah was glorified before He brought into existence those who would glorify Him, just as He was the Creator before He brought the creation into existence. He possessed the attribute of creating before He created anything.

Likewise, we say in the countryside: ‘A person who does not have a guardian should seek one’ because the existence of someone greater and bigger than everything and everyone protects you from anyone being overbearing towards you. Therefore, Allah’s Sublimity and Grandeur are some of His Greatest Blessings on you.

Thus, when you glorify Him and declare Him transcendent, be thankful to Allah because He is Transcendent. Be thankful to Allah that He has no partner and that all of mankind are equal before Him. Be thankful to Allah that His Word and Command are powerful over all. Be thankful to Allah that He has never taken a wife or a son, and there is no kinship between Him and anyone from among His creation.

The True Lord *the Exalted* has made your remembrance of Him and your glorification of Him for your benefit, and it is from His Countless Blessings that the heavens and the earth and all that they contain glorify Allah, declare

Him transcendent, and sanctify Him *Glorified is He*. This glorification by the creation necessitates that they be submissive to Him and obedient to His Commands, not rebelling against His commands.

Therefore, the human should feel assured that the entire universe glorifies Allah and is submissive to Him because if that were not the case humanity would not be able to live on earth. Thus, Allah *the Most High* has decreed, on the basis of Him being glorified by all creatures, that all of them be harnessed to the service of mankind.

Allah *the Exalted* says, 'See you not (O mankind) that Allah has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth...' (*Luqman*: 20). He also says, 'See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and then the earth becomes green? Verily, Allah is the Most Kind and Courteous, Well-Acquainted with all things. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. And verily, Allah He is Rich (Free of all wants), Worthy of all praise. See you not that Allah has subjected to you (mankind) all that is on the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His Command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allah is, for mankind, full of Kindness, Most Merciful.' (*al-Hajj*: 63-65)

The True Lord *the Exalted* is transcendent above every imperfection and is glorified because He is characterized by all the attributes of grace and beauty; He is '...the *Malik* (the King, the Owner of everything), the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1).

In the *witr* (odd-numbered) prayer, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* would recite the chapters of *al-'Ala*, *al-Kafirun* and *al-Ikhlās*; and after finishing the prayer with *taslim* (salutation of peace ending the prayer), he would say three times: '*Subhan Al-Malik Al-Quddus*' (Glory be to the King, the Holy), and he would raise his voice when doing so.⁽¹⁾

(1) Narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (15390) and An-Nasa'i in his *Sunnan* (1698) based on the Hadith of 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Abza. It was also narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunnan* (5057) and Ad-Daraqutni (1679) based on the Hadith of Ibn Abza from 'Ubay ibn Ka'b.

Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* is the *Malik* (the King, the Owner). If every human being is the owner of what he possesses, the owner of his clothes, or the owner of the morsel of food that he eats, or the owner of the house that he sleeps in, then the *Malik* is the True Owner Who owns all things and owns every owner.

Every person has some property, but there is a difference when a human being owns something that he is unable to keep. Allah has given some of us control over the affairs of other people, as there is an owner of food or clothes; but not every owner is truly an owner. The true owner is the one who owns any owner, and this is the standard way of the universe.

In the Hereafter there is One Owner, the Owner of the Day of Judgment. Allah *the Exalted* says, '...His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet will be blown; All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the All-Wise, Well-Aware (of all things).' (*al-An'am*: 73) Has dominion belonged to any but Allah on any day ever?

In the realm of means, our Lord *the Exalted* has given each one of us some dominion. He has given some people dominion over us such they becoming kings, but in the Hereafter, there is none of this. Therefore, He *the Most High* says, '...To whom belongs [all] sovereignty this Day? To Allah, the One, the Prevailing...' (*Ghafir*: 16).

In the life of this world, for example, you may be able to employ me and give me a wage. Or you may be able to cook for me and give me food, or you may be able to sew some clothes for me. However, in the Hereafter no one will have the means to do anything for anyone because in the life of this world we live according to the means that Allah has granted us, and in the Hereafter, we will live according to the Original Causer alone without any means.

That is why we say to every king: 'Indeed, this dominion is not intrinsically yours because if this dominion were intrinsically yours, no one would ever be able to strip you of it. Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* says, 'Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty ...' (*Al-Imran*: 26).

Therefore, no one intrinsically possesses sovereignty or dominion except Allah. Allah has the dominion of the heavens and the earth; therefore, unless

Allah has willed, nothing and no one will harm you, nor will anyone or anything pass by you.

As for the True Lord's Name *Al-Quddus* (the Holy), it means that He is the Pure, as sanctification means to honour Allah as Holy and far above all vicissitudes. Because You, My Lord, are Holy and Pure, it is not befitting that anything should be ascribed to You except that which is Pure, nor is it befitting that anything should come from those whom You have created with Your Own Hands except that which is pure.

It is said: 'Allah is Sanctified', i.e. transcendent because Allah's Essence is not like human essence. He *the Glorious and Exalted* has attributes that are transcendent above being like your attributes. He *the Glorious and Exalted* has actions, but His actions are sanctified, purified, and transcendent above being like your actions.

His Life is also transcendent. His Essence is not like your essence. His Attributes are not like your attributes. You have power, but it is limited. He has Absolute Power. He hears and the human beings hear, but the hearing of human beings is limited while His Hearing is unlimited. Therefore, Allah's Attributes are sanctified, in other words, His Attributes are pure, perfect and far above any imperfection.

The angels said: '...while we declare Your praise and sanctify You...' (*al-Baqara*: 30). *Tasbih* (glorification) means to declare Allah transcendent above that which does not befit Him being transcendent. *Taqdis* (sanctification) means purification, and it is taken from the word *quds* which is the bucket that people would use with which to purify themselves That is why we say: '*Subbuh Quddus*' (Glorified and Holy). 'Glorified' means that He is transcendent above everything that does not befit His Majesty, and 'Holy' means pure.

The term *tasbih* (glorification) means to sanctify Allah and declare Him transcendent in His Essence, His Attributes, and His Actions. This means that no essence is like His Essence: '...there is nothing like unto Him...' (*ash-Shura*: 11), whether in His Person, Attributes or Actions. Therefore, do not say that Allah's Hearing is like your hearing, or that His Seeing is like your seeing, or that His Actions are like your actions.

The meaning is: we glorify You and we sanctify You in a way that befits Your firmly established divinity, and thus we do not add anything from ourselves. Glorification causes the one glorifying to feel pleasure within himself, and obedience causes the obedient person to feel pleasure within himself, just as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'The comfort of my eyes is made in prayer'⁽¹⁾, and whenever anything distressed him, he would pray.⁽²⁾

The True Lord's Name *Al-'Aziz*, (the Almighty) in His words: '...the King, the Holy the Almighty the Wise!' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1) means the One Whose Power is never overcome and no one dare to argue with Him. No one can enter into a dispute with Allah. Allah's creation only enters into arguments and struggles with one another.

However, no one would dare enter into a dispute with Allah because He is Almighty and can never be vanquished. Know that Allah always prevails in whatever is His Will, and even though His Will dominates, He is All-Wise in implementing it.

The True Lord *the Most High* gives us a glimpse of the meaning of His Might along with His Wisdom in His statement: 'Surely! Those who disbelieved in Our *Ayat* (signs, proofs or revelations), We (Allah) shall burn them in Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment. Truly, Allah is All-Mighty, the All-Wise.' (*an-Nisa*': 56)

Allah's Attribute of *Al-'Aziz*, (the Almighty) is the One Who is never overpowered and you will never be able to protect yourself against Him vanquishing you. A disbeliever might say: 'We enjoyed ourselves with a sin committed once for five minutes, and another time for two hours, so how would it harm me for my skin to burn and that would be the end of the matter?'

We would respond to him: 'No. Indeed, the One punishing you is never overcome. He will make the punishment permanent for you by replacing your

(1) Narrated by Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* (12315, 13079, 14069) from the Hadith of Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him. It was also found in the *Musnad of Abu Ya'la Al-Mawsuli* (3482, 3530).

(2) Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (23347) from Hudhayfa Allah be pleased with him... It was also narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* (1319), Al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunnan* (3181, 3182) and Abu Na'im in *Ma'rifat As-Sahabah* (4216, 4217).

skin with another skin. He *the Exalted* is also Wise, so the issue is not a matter of arbitrary power that He is using. No. He is using His Power justly.

The True Lord is described as being Almighty and also an Avenger of Evil. He *the Most High* pardons past sins, but if someone returns and violates Allah's prohibitions in a certain field, the True Lord will punish him, and He will not accept any sacrificial offerings, or feeding of the poor, or fasting from him because by repeating a sin, one is persisting in it. That is why Allah takes revenge from him, and He is the Almighty Who is never vanquished.

The True Lord *the Exalted* has spoken to us about the planning of the celestial bodies in His saying: 'The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation' (*ar-Rahman*: 5), '...and the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All Knowing.' (*Ya Sin*: 38) The word 'the Almighty' indicates dominance and subdual, and thus no one can prevail over Him.

These celestial bodies that you see are stronger than you are, and your hand cannot grasp them. They carry out a function for you without you being close to them. You do not approach the sun to adjust it, as you would do with a watch that has been made by a human like you.

The sun has a strength that Allah, its Creator, has placed in it. There is nothing whatsoever in Allah's handiwork or creation that can challenge or resist Him. This is the planning of the Almighty, the All Knowing. He, the Majestic, gives us reliable means of calculating things, as He *the Most High* is the One Who Created them with wise planning that is never overcome. He is Almighty and has absolute, limitless knowledge of everything.

Know that '...verily, your Lord, He is the All-Strong, the All-Mighty.' (*Hud*: 66) The True Lord is Omnipotent; He seizes every disbeliever and no one overcomes Him and absolutely nothing incapacitates Him. The One Who is absolutely the Almighty is Allah, but we might say about someone that he is the mighty one among his people, i.e. their leader. We say that the One Who is absolutely rich beyond any needs or wants is Allah, but we also say that so-and-so is rich and so-and-so is poor.

Allah's Names are names of His Essence or they are names of His Attributes and Actions. If the name has no opposite, it is a name of essence,

such as *Al-'Aziz* (the Almighty). On the other hand, if it is a name of an attribute or an action, such as The Exalter, it must have an opposite, which in this case is the Al-Abaser.

If He were only able to exalt and were not able to humiliate, He would not be God. If He could only harm and could not benefit anyone, it would not be possible for Him to be God. If He were only able to give and had no power to withhold, it would not be possible for Him to be God.

Each of these attributes has an opposite whose effect manifests itself in other than Allah. So, He, for example, is Almighty in His Nature; He exalts some and humbles others.

Allah *Glorified is He is the Almighty*, the Most Merciful. Allah is Almighty; He overpowers and is never overpowered. An example of this is His statement '...it is He Who feeds and is not fed...' (*al-An'am*: 14), and His statement 'Say, "In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything? And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector."' (*al-Mu'minun*: 88)

Despite His Might, He is full of Mercy; so, He is Merciful when He overcomes and dominates because He is the Lord of the entire creation. He shows mercy to people when they repent, and He accepts them when they turn back to Him.

It is stated in the Noble Hadith: 'Allah is more joyous at the repentance of His slave when he repents than one of you are when he is on his riding beast in some barren land, and it escapes from him while carrying his food and drink, and he despairs of it and decides to recline under the shade of a tree. After having despaired of ever finding his riding beast, he suddenly finds it in front of him and he grabs it by the halter. He then says out of extreme joy: 'O Allah, You are my slave and I am your Lord.' He makes this mistake due to his extreme joy.'⁽¹⁾

Although Allah is Mighty, He is Compassionate towards His slaves. He opens the door of repentance to whoever repents, so no one should think that

(1) Narrated by Imam Muslim in his *Sahih* (7136) from the Hadith of Anas ibn Malik, and Al-Bukhari also narrated it in his *Sahih* (6309) from the Hadith of Anas.

there is any tyranny in the attribute 'the Almighty' because He *the Exalted* is also The Bestower of Mercy.

It is part of the sublimity of the Quranic style that it brings these two attributes together The Almighty and the Most Merciful. It is as if He is teaching us an Islamic principle according to which Islam nurtures its followers, and indeed it is proportion and moderation. Let not a single attribute, quality, disposition, or character dominates you, and always adhere to the middle course because every disposition in the human has a function.

Reflect on the Allah's statement regarding the attributes of the believers: '...humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 54). Thus, a Muslim is not moulded upon humility or pride. Rather, it is the situation that makes him humble or proud, and so the believer is described as being modest and humble towards believers and proud towards disbelievers.

Thus, the might of the Almighty towards an arrogant person is a mercy for the person who is treated arrogantly, and thus both His Might and His Mercy are in your favour. This is not all, because He is also All Knowing. He could be Almighty and Invincible, but devoid of knowledge. Therefore, the True Lord *the Exalted* is Almighty and All Knowing, and He puts might in its proper place and humility in its proper place.

His Might and Domination are sovereign and ascendant, but despite that the True Lord follows their mention with the attribute of mercy in order to bring forth balance in the believer's soul between the attributes of dominance and sovereignty and the attribute of mercy.

If you want true might and glory, seek them from the One Whose Might never changes. He is the True Lord *Glorified is He*: '...to Allah belongs all honour, power, and glory.' (*an-Nisa'*: 139) This statement contains a direction for the one seeking might and glory; so, let everyone who is seeking might and glory do so by having faith in Allah. He is the One Who grants might and Whose might never changes.

'...To Allah belongs all honour, power and glory.' (*an-Nisa'*: 139) The word 'all' indicates that there are different kinds of might: the might of wealth,

the might of authority, the might of dignity. So, if someone wants to know and comprehend might, the True Lord *the Exalted* possesses it all.

Therefore, when the True Lord says, '...to Allah belongs all honour, power and glory' (*an-Nisa'*: 139), the meaning is: 'O human, if you want might that is orderly and superior to all might, go to Allah because it is He Who has made us honourable and powerful for we are His creation'.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...honour, power, and glory belong to Allah, His Messenger (Muhammad), and to the believers, but the hypocrites know not...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8). Might and glory inherently belong to Allah, and you cannot surpass them. Yet He *the Most High* has willed for the might and glory of His Messenger and the believers to emanate from His Might and Glory.

'...To Allah belongs all honour, power and glory' (*an-Nisa'*: 139) means that all types of power and glory belong to Allah *the Exalted*. If might lies in wisdom, He is the Wise. If might lies in seizing matters, He is the Almighty. If might lies in forbearance, He is the Forbearing. And if might lies in anger and retributory vengeance, He is the Lord of Retribution, the All-Compeller.

As for the True Lord's Name *Al-Hakim* (the Wise), it indicates that the Creator governs all created beings so that they do not live without guidance and knowledge.

Wisdom in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) means that an objective is set for every undertaking so that all actions are harmonious with one another, and the universe is governed according to the truth, which no falsehood can approach from before or from behind it.

The Wise and the All Knowing is the One Who lays down a framework and limits for every created being, and wisdom signifies that everything carries out what is required from it with proficiency. Wisdom in *fiqh* means to derive a sound ruling, while wisdom in poetry means to balance the words according to their poetical patterns. Wisdom in medicine means to know the diagnosis of the illness and the medication that will treat it. Wisdom in architecture means to design a hospital in accordance with the needs of the patients, doctors, medical appliances and equipment, medical storage facilities and so forth, or in designing a house that is comfortable for its occupants. And

the wisdom in building a house, for example, is different from the wisdom in building a palace or a workplace.

If the Almighty is the One Who is not overcome due to His Omnipotence, and no one dare question Him, then indeed the Wise is the One from Whom nothing comes except what is profoundly wise.

The word *hikma* (wisdom) derives from the word *hakama* which is placed in a horse's mouth and we call it a bridle. As we know, it is comprised of a piece of leather that is positioned in the horse's mouth and it contains a piece of iron. So, if the horse inclines away from the direction that you want, it is easy to pull it back to the right direction.

Indeed, the presence of the bridle means the presence of something that governs it, and thus it does not deviate to the right or to the left. As long as Allah has testified that there is no god but He, and the angels and those endowed with knowledge have also testified, and after these testimonies the matter has been concluded that there is no god but He and that He is *the Almighty*, the Wise, then every way provided by Him must be submitted to and obeyed.

As long as the person has believed in Allah Who is the Capable, the Wise, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Holy, then he should listen to his Lord with regards to what will rectify his life. He *the Exalted* is Wise and He puts everything wisely in its exact place, so no one should look at the outward gifts of something now and be heedless of the harms that may ensue.

Thus, Allah is the Wise the Almighty. He does not receive commands from any of His creatures. He is not hastened by the impatience of the creatures. He is the Wise Who does not leave anything to no avail, as He is The Planner of every matter such that it matches what is correct. That is why contradictory matters cannot come from the One Wise Lord, but rather, contradiction is the result of someone differing with someone else, or lack of wisdom regarding a certain matter.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيَّةِ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢﴾

**It is He who raised a messenger, among the people who had
no Scripture, to recite His revelations to them, to make them
grow spiritually and teach them the Scripture and wisdom –
before that they were clearly astray [2]
(The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 2)**

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent to unlettered people. He came into an unlettered community that did not have any cultural refinement, and the Quran was sent down to address an unlettered community. It came on the tongue of the unlettered Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* among people who were ignorant about highly complex scientific matters, philosophies, cultures and civilisations.

Accordingly, Allah *the Exalted* did not send the Quran down to someone who was well versed in Hellenistic, Greek or Ancient Egyptian philosophy. Rather, He sent it down to an unlettered prophet who did not read or write, among an unlettered people. This has a profound wisdom for him because the meaning of *ummi* (unlettered) is that he did not acquire knowledge from human beings. Instead, he remained as on the time his mother gave birth to him, and his refinement and knowledge came from the heavens.

Concerning Allah's statement 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom. And verily, they had been before in manifest error. (*al-Jumu'a*: 2) Qatadah ibn Di'amah As-Sadusi⁽¹⁾ said: 'This Arab tribe was illiterate. There was no book that they would read, so Allah sent Muhammad among them as a mercy and a guide, to give them guidance through him.'

(1) He was one of the *tabi'un* (followers). His surname was Abu Al-Khattab Al-Basri. He was a trustworthy scholar and was blind. He died in Wasit when he was fifty-six or fifty-seven years old, seven years after the death of Al-Hasan Al-Basri. He related Hadiths from Anas ibn Malik. He was the sheikh of Shu'bah, Abu 'Awanah and others. He was a reliable authority in Hadith. *'Ajili, Ath-Thaqat*

If the True Lord *the Exalted* has described Himself as being: '...the *Malik* (the King, the Owner of everything), the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1), and that everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Him and declares Him transcendent, here He is giving us the foundations of these magnificent attributes and names. He is the Owner of everything in this world, everything in the heavens and the earth, everything in the Hereafter, such as the Judgment, paradise, the fire the scales. He is the Holy, the Transcendent, the Pure from all defects and imperfections. He is the Almighty and can never be overpowered or subdued. And He is the Wise; He places all matters in their proper place, and He does not use His Might tyrannically or oppressively.

Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* manifests all these attributes to His creatures, so He warns them, admonishes them, gives them glad tidings and sends messengers to mankind with His Books to guide them to the path of the truth.

One of His Blessings is that 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2). He and no one else; for indeed there is no lord besides Him and no god other than Him Who sends prophets and messengers throughout the ages and epochs. Throughout these successive heavenly messages no one has claimed prophethood or messenger ship from another god besides Allah.

Even those who allege that they are messengers, when in fact they are not, say that they are messengers or prophets of Allah. Allah *the Exalted* is the One Who sends and commissions messengers because He is the Creator and no one else. He *the Most High* is the One responsible for His creation, namely all those whom He has created, by providing for them and sustaining their lives on earth, and also by sending messengers and prophets and Books that guide them to the values and manners in the life of this world, and Allah rewards them with paradise in the Hereafter – if they are truly believers.

We notice that the True Lord *the Exalted* uses the Arabic verb *ba'atha*, rather than the verb *arsala* in His saying: '...He it is Who sent (*ba'atha*) among the unlettered ones a Messenger...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2). The meaning of *arsala* is to send someone to people who could be from among them or not, and the same goes for *ba'atha ila* (send to). But in this context Allah says, '*ba'atha fihim* ('...sent among...'), and the meaning of (*ba'atha fihim*)

includes bringing back to life. Here it signifies bringing back to life the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) *peace be upon them* which had been among the Arabs since ancient times. It is known that this land did not contain any vegetation and was not inhabited by people, and Allah favoured this land by bringing Prophet Ismail (Ishmael), the son of Ibrahim (Abraham), there, totally alone and isolated along with his mother, Hajar. Ibrahim (Abraham) left her, by Allah's Command, in this desolate place, far from any source of water, which was why people had not populated it or lived there.

People did not live there until after the well of *zam-zam* had gushed out under the feet of Ismail (Ishmael), and Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) had raised the foundations of the Sacred House and purified it for those who would stay there for worship, and those who would bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer, as was Allah's Command for both.

The True Lord *the Exalted* says, 'and [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Ibrahim a place of prayer, And We charged Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael), [saying], "Purify My House for those who are circumambulating it and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."' (*al-Baqara*: 125)

Therefore, the beginning of residing in this place was based on Allah's Oneness and establishing His House and raising its foundations so that it would be prominent for mankind, and so that it would be secure such that people could reach it quickly, seek refuge in it and live around it.

The rites of the pilgrimage to Allah's House that had survived, such as the circumambulation and running between the mountains of As-Safa and Al-Marwa, were proof of the original religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) in this place; but over the lengthy passage of time the Arabs brought in the worship of idols at the hands of `Amr ibn Luhay⁽¹⁾, even to the extent that idols were placed inside Allah's House.

(1) *His name was Khuza'ah `Amr ibn Luhay ibn Qam'ah ibn Khindif. Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said regarding him: 'I saw `Amr ibn Luhay dragging his intestines in the Fire.' He also said: 'Because he was the first man to change the religion of Ismail (Ishmael). He set up idols and started the custom of releasing animals for the sake of false deities.'*

Therefore, the sending of the Messenger of Allah is called a *ba`tha* because He revived the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) *peace be upon them* cleansed the House of idols and made it purely for Allah alone.

That is why Allah says, 'He it is Who sent among (*ba`atha*) the unlettered ones...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2). The unlettered people are those who do not know of any divine book. The True Lord *Glorified is He* called the Arabs who were contemporary to the Messenger of Allah unlettered, which signify they did not have any sources of knowledge.

This attribute of being unlettered, in the Messenger of Allah and his community, is a testimony of superiority because it is a community that has not taken its knowledge through reading about the civilizations of previous nations. Rather, they have taken it from Allah because the utmost that lettered people can achieve in their knowledge is to share knowledge with one another.

However, knowledge has come to the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings upon him* from Allah, and they ruled the life of this world for more than a thousand years. Thus, this illiteracy is an honour for them so that no one can say: 'They are people who made a civilizational leap from a civilized nation'. This illiteracy was remarkable because what has come out of this community such as its legislations has caused the other nations to stand before it in astonishment and appreciation, right up until this age of ours.

Allah *Glorified is He* sent among these unlettered people someone who was unlettered like them: 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2).

The True Lord *the Exalted* says about him: 'neither did you (O Muhammad) read any book before it (this Quran), nor did you write any book (whatsoever) with your right hand. In that case, indeed, the followers of falsehood might have doubted.' (*al-'Ankabut*: 48) Thus, you did not recite or write any books before the Quran, and there is a difference between reciting and writing. You recite because you have memorised something, and memorising is the result of hearing. As for writing, this is something else.

If the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had had some portion of reading and writing, then they would have had an excuse, and there would

have been uncertainty calling for doubt in the matter. For this reason, his Lord *the Most High* described him as being: '...Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet...' (*al-A'raf*: 157).

Beware of thinking that being unlettered is some sort of shortcoming in the Messenger of Allah; for indeed, if it is a shortcoming in others, it is an honour in him. This is because the meaning of being unlettered is that one maintains his original disposition, as pure and natural as the day his mother gave birth to him, and has not learned anything from anyone.

Likewise, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not learn from the creation. Rather, he learned from the Creator, and thus his rank is above that of the rest of creation. This was the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* as he said: 'Our Lord, send among them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite to them Your verses and instruct them in the Book (this Quran) and wisdom, and sanctify them. Verily! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.' (*al-Baqara*: 129)

Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* supplicated to Allah *the Exalted* to complete His blessings upon his progeny and to increase His Mercy towards His slaves by sending a messenger to them who would convey to them the law of the heavens so that there would not be a period of darkness on earth in which sin, corruption and disbelief would prevail and people fall into worshipping idols, as was the case before Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*.

The meaning of 'Our Lord, send among them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite to them Your verses...' (*al-Baqara*: 129) is to convey to them the verses of the Noble Quran. Then he supplicated: '...and instruct them in the Book (this Quran) and wisdom...' (*al-Baqara*: 129). You must know that there is a difference between reciting and instructing or teaching. Reciting is for reading the Quran, while teaching is to know its meanings, how they are to be practically applied, and to know where they have come from.

If the Book is the Noble Quran, then the wisdom constitutes the Hadith of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* which the True Lord *the Exalted* referred to when addressing the wives of Prophet Muhammad: 'And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom...' (*al-Ahzab*: 34). In another verse, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'Just as We have sent

among you a Messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know.' (*al-Baqara*: 151)

The function of reciting Allah's verses is to grow in purity that is purification, as Allah's verses cleanse the souls and the hearts from the defilement that may cling to them. So, they purify them from the worship of idols and from burying baby girls alive, and from intoxicants, games of chance, gambling, and usury. The meaning of purification also means to clear away harm, so it is as though he has brought benefit to them and removed harm from them.

When he purifies them, and causes them to grow in purity, He is only leading them to the path of goodness and the perfection of belief. This is by teaching them the Book and wisdom. The Book, in absolute terms, refers to the Noble Quran, and wisdom is to put things in their proper place. The Book gives you the commandments; it commands you to do something or it forbids you from something, so it goes between doing and forbearing.

Wisdom means to do the action that will bring about goodness for you and protect you from evil, and it is taken from the word *hakama*, or the piece of iron that is placed in a horse's mouth in order to control its movement while moving and standing still, and thus every movement carries out its purpose.

Allah's statement '...and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know' (*al-Baqara*: 151) refers to you being an unlettered community. So, if the life of this world dazzles you with its civilizations and its achievements, you will dazzle them with the rays of faith that will make you superior to them because everything that comes to you from the heavens is superior to all the civilizations of the earth.

When we look at the objectives behind sending Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* we find that they are mentioned in the noble verse: 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2). Thus, the first of these objectives is the recitation of Allah's verses. He *the Exalted and the Glorious* says: '...reciting to them His verses...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2). The act of reciting is not restricted to just the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. Rather, it is also stated relative to Allah *the Exalted*.

Allah *the Exalted* says, 'These are the verses of Allah, We recite them to you (O Muhammad) in truth, and surely, you are one of the messengers (of Allah).' (*al-Baqara*: 252) He also says, 'These are the verses of Allah. We recite them to you, (O Muhammad), in truth; and Allah wants no injustice to the worlds.' (*Al-Imran*: 108) And He says, 'These are the verses of Allah, which We recite to you (O Muhammad) with truth. Then in which speech after Allah and His verses will they believe?' (*al-Jathiya*: 6) Allah's recitation of His verses to His Messenger Muhammad confirms him as one of the honourable messengers who have been sent to mankind with Allah's verses and Words. It indicates the extent of Allah's Concern for humanity to be guided to the path of the Truth, for Allah wills no injustice to His creatures.

He *the Most High* conveys His Messages and His Words to them by way of His messengers so that there can be no excuse for them on the Day of Resurrection that Allah's Words have not reached them. No indeed, because He recites them to His Messengers so that they can convey them to mankind in truth, as He conveyed them to them. '...Then in which speech after Allah and His verses will they believe?' (*al-Jathiya*: 6)

The True Lord, due to His Absolute Justice and Mercy towards His servants, send His messengers to them with Books and Scriptures, and He does not punish anyone unless His warnings and glad tidings have reached him. He *the Glorious and Exalted* says: 'And never will your Lord destroy the towns (populations) until He sends to their mother town a Messenger reciting to them Our verses. And never would We destroy the towns unless the people thereof are wrongdoers.' (*al-Qasas*: 59)

The meaning of '...mother town (*fi ummiha*)...' (*al-Qasas*: 59) is the Mother of Towns, namely Mecca the Ennobled. This is how Mecca the Ennobled is like a mother and an origin of all towns. Mecca the Ennobled is called *Umm Al-Qurah* because all the towns visit it. The word *qaryah* (town) can only apply to a place that contains all the essentials of life that are adequate enough to accommodate the guests who happen to visit it. If the town is large and abundant provision comes to it from all directions, as if it were a source, we call it *Umm Al-Qura*.

The True Lord *the Exalted* does not punish anyone until after sending a messenger to them who conveys His commandments to them; what to do and what not to do. The True Lord says: '...And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning).' (*al-Isra'*: 15)

Allah *the Glorious and Exalted* only commands His Messenger Muhammad to recite the Quran, saying: 'And recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord...' (*al-Kahf*: 27). He also says in another verse: 'Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 45). So, recite the Quran, O Muhammad, and persist in reciting it, even if people deny it. And perhaps Allah will bring forth from these people a progeny whose hearts will be purified in order to receive what the heavens have sent and thus believe in what these people have rejected, and the command to recite is for the continuation of the miracle.

So, read and do not become weak and do not despair, as the Quran is solace for your soul. And since your people have denied you, return to Me by listening to My Book, which I have sent down to you as a miracle to support you, and wait for the coming of people who will hear Allah's Speech from you. It shall come across pure hearts from among them and thus they shall believe in it.

This is the distinguishing factor of your miracle, O Muhammad; that you can repeat it at any time and you can recite it as you wish, and whoever has heard it can recite it after you and it continues to be repeated until the Day of Resurrection.

The issue is not that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* recites the Quranic verses merely so that people can be amazed by them. No, because The Messenger has a mission of faith that directs anyone who hears the Quran towards the One Who has created this beautiful, splendid universe that contains wondrous signs.

After that, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gives us the way that is suited to the beauty of the universe. So, the Messenger moves the believers towards the way that causes mankind to grow in purity.

Regarding the True Lord's statement: '...purifying them...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2), you know that the expression *yuzakkihim* (causing them to grow in purity)

derives from *zakat*, and the first meanings of *zakat* are purification, cleansing and growth, and, similarly, the verses that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has brought have only come to cause them to grow in purity.

Is this purification for the benefit of the one purifying or the one being purified? Indeed, it is for the benefit of the one being purified. Cleansing and growth are for your benefit. Thus, cleansing is for our benefit, purification is for our benefit, and growth is for our benefit.

Causing to grow in purity (*tazkiyah*) is purification, cleansing, and growth. It causes the human himself, in his own self, to grow in purity. Instead of lying, his tongue is purified of lying. Instead of extending his gaze towards the impermissible, his gaze is purified from looking at the impermissible. Instead of secretly extending his hand and stealing, he does not do it.

The True Lord *the Most High* wants the purity of individual humans as well as their progeny, and to make a noble and virtuous vessel for that purity that is not tarnished by flaws and blemishes, so the heavenly law came to cause them to grow in purity in everything. The movements of their sense and bodily organs are purified so that every movement is directed towards fulfilling that which is sought from it by the One Who created it.

The Creator has made it clear: 'O eye, your boundaries are such and such. O tongue, your boundaries are such and such. O hand, your boundaries are such and such. O leg, your boundaries are such and such. O heart, your boundaries are such and such'. This is how we see that the divine law has come to cause you to grow in purity; that is, it purifies you, cleanses you, and makes you grow in all aspects of life.

Causing to grow in purity must be associated with teaching the Book and the wisdom, so here are three matters: reciting the Quran, causing to grow in purity, and then teaching the Book, that is, teaching them what the Book contains and instructing them and warning them.

The Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* does not just teach them the book, but he also teaches them the wisdom, and it is the Hadith of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Allah *the Exalted* says, 'And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom...' (*al-Ahzab*: 34).

Allah's verses are the verses of the Noble Quran, and the wisdom is the Hadith and *Sunnah* of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Wisdom requires that you know which path to be guided to and to travel along, and the True Lord *the Exalted* says, 'He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and he, to whom wisdom is granted, is indeed granted abundant good...' (*al-Baqara*: 269).

Wisdom means to put things in their proper, beneficial place, so it is as if the True Lord *the Exalted* is saying: 'Everything that I have commanded you to is the essence of wisdom because I want to safeguard your life in this world and safeguard the bliss of the Hereafter for you'. Thus, if the believing slave does what Allah has commanded him, this is putting things in their proper place, and it is adhering to wisdom.

These unlettered people, to whom Allah sent a Messenger from among them to recite His verses, and whom Allah causes to grow in purity and He teaches them the Book and the wisdom, they: '...had been before in manifest error (*dalal*).' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2)

What is *dalal* (deviation, error)? They say that so-and-so lost his way which means that he walked somewhere that did not lead him to his destination, or it led him to the opposite of his destination. So, being lost in the life of this world and in material matters may mean that you do not reach your desired destination, but what does it mean when related to values and moral issues?

It means that it does not take you to your desired destination, which is paradise and nothing else, but it takes you to the opposite, which is the fire. This is what it means to be most obviously lost in error. It is clear, manifest error, and it is obviously wrong to the one who is lost in it.

Thus, being manifestly lost in error is to be completely absent from the truth, and it is obvious; that is, encompassing in such a manner that there is no way to break out of it. It is also intentional error and misguidance which is when someone knows the path of truth but chooses falsehood. And there is also unintentional error such as when someone walks along an unknown path, hoping to get to his destination, and he gets lost.

Ja'far ibn Abu Taleb⁽¹⁾ *Allah be pleased with him* described the stance of the Arabs before the mission of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and that was in his speech in front of the Negus, the King of Abyssinia, at the time of the emigration to Abyssinia.

He said: 'O king, we were a people in a state of ignorance, worshipping idols and eating the flesh of dead animals. We committed all sorts of abominations. We cut off ties of kinship, and we wronged our neighbours. The strong among us exploited the weak. We remained in this state until Allah sent to us a messenger; one of our own people whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity was well known to us. He called us to worship Allah *the Almighty* alone, and to renounce the stones and the idols which we and our ancestors would worship besides Him. He has commanded us to pray, to give in obligatory charity (*zakat*) and to fast. We have affirmed him, believed in him and followed him according to what he has brought from Allah alone, associating nothing with Him. We declare impermissible what He has declared impermissible for us, and we declare permissible what he has declared permissible for us.'⁽²⁾

This is a description of the state of misguidance which the Arabs were in before the sending of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and how his mission affected them morally, in terms of growing in purity and purification.

(1) *Ja'far ibn Abu Taleb ibn 'Abd Al-Muttalib ibn Hashim, one of the Companions. He was called Ja'far At-Tayyar (the Flyer). He was the brother of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb and he was ten years older than 'Ali. He became Muslim before the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him entered Dar Al-Arqam. He emigrated to Abyssinia in the second emigration. In the Battle of Mu'tah he carried the banner and his right hand was cut off, followed by his left, until he died as a martyr. It was said: 'Indeed Allah compensated him for his hands by giving him wings in Paradise.' He died in the year 8 A.H. Az-Zirkili, Al-'Alam, vol. 2, p. 125*

(2) *Narrated by Ibn Athir in his book Al-Kamil (1/266) in the chapter on the Quraysh sending a delegation to the Negus to demand the deportation of emigrants (back to Mecca) in which Quraysh sent 'Amr ibn Al- As and 'Abdullah ibn Abu Umayyah to ask the Negus to return the Muslims who had emigrated to Abyssinia. One of the things they said (against the Muslims) was that the Muslims had brought a newly invented religion that 'we do not know, and you do not know.' The Negus then asked them: 'What is this religion that has caused separation among your people, and you have not adopted my religion or the religion of anyone else?'*

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لِمَا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**To them and others yet to join them. He is the Almighty,
the Wise [3] (The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 3)**

Although the True Lord *Glorified is He* has said in the previous verse: 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting to them His verses...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2) regarding the people of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the state of the Arabs, yet the message of Muhammad is not just for the Arabs, but rather for all of creation.

The message of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was for both the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the people of the Book and other than the people of the Book. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them. And He (Allah) is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3)

Regarding this point, there is the Hadith of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* which has been related to us by Abu Hurayra *Allah be pleased with him* in which he said: 'We were sitting with the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* when the chapter of *al-Jumu'a* was revealed to him, and when he recited: "And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them..." (*al-Jumu'a*: 3), a man said: "Who are these other people, O Messenger of Allah?"' Abu Hurayra said: 'The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* made no reply until the man repeated his question once or twice or three times. At that time, Salman Al-Farisi was with us, so the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* put his hand on Salman and said, 'If faith were at the Pleiades (star cluster), men from among these people (Salman's folk) would attain it.'⁽¹⁾

The Pleiades is a star cluster that people used to guide them on their travels in the deserts and barren lands such that an Arab would say: 'Place the

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (4897) and Muslim in his *Sahih* (6662) from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra *Allah be pleased with him*. It was also narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (9396).

Pleiades on your right', or the Pole Star, or Canopus, or whatever else.' In this regard, the True Lord *the Exalted* says, 'and landmarks and by the stars (during the night), they (mankind) guide themselves.' (*an-Nahl*: 16)

So, if faith was at the Pleiades, or suspended on the Pleiades, it would be reached and attained by men from among these people, i.e. the descendants of the Persians or the non-Arabs in general, and this is because of their lofty ambition and determination to adhere to the truth.

Salman Al-Farisi⁽¹⁾ had an immense role in giving victory to Islam in the Battle of the Trench, and while the Hadith does not mean Salman personally, the meaning of 'men from among these people' is the descendants coming after Salman and others like him *Allah be pleased with them all*.

The True Lord *the Exalted* did not deprive the non-Arabs from this merit. Indeed, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to Salman the Persian: 'Salman is from us, O Household (of the Prophet).'(2) He did not say: 'You are one of the Arabs.' Rather, he attributed him to his own household.

In other words, he attributed him to the legacy of prophethood which entails complete application of the way that this legacy necessitates; as this legacy is not inherited by blood relations but rather by applying the doctrine in letter and spirit.

Many of them strove in search of the Truth, and they included Salman the Persian, who saw Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in Medina. He saw many signs on him that showed his truth and he wanted to

(1) *Salman Al-Farasi: His origin was from the Magians of Isfahan. He lived a long life and he read the books of the Persians, the Romans and the Jews. He was heading for the land of the Arabs when he was met by a caravan from the Banu Kalb tribe. They employed him and then enslaved him and sold him. Muslims helped him to buy his freedom from his owner, and then he became Muslim. He was the one who suggested digging the trench. He died in the year 36 A.H. Az-Zirkili, Al-`Alam, vol. 3, p. 311*

(2) *Narrated by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (6541) and At-Tabarani in Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir (6040).*

Al-Haythami said in Majma` Az-Zawa'id (vol. 6, p. 189) (10137): 'At-Tabarani narrated it. Its chain of narration includes Kathir ibn `Abdullah Al-Muzani who has been declared weak by the majority (of Hadith scholars). However, At-Tirmidhi classed the Hadith transmitted by him as good (hasan); the rest of the narrators in the chain are reliable.'

see a physical sign on him that would identify him as the Prophet of the end of time, and thus he saw the Seal of prophethood on the shoulder of the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Therefore, when Salman the Persian *Allah be pleased with him* learned that there was a new Prophet in Mecca, he went to, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and started contemplating and scrutinizing him. He found two signs on him that had been mentioned in the previous heavenly books, and they were that he *peace and blessings be upon him* would accept gifts but not accept charity.

Salman then started looking here and there in the hope of finding a third sign. By the perspicacity of prophethood that Allah had placed within him, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* discerned what he was aiming at, and he said: 'Perhaps you are looking for this,' and he showed him the Seal of prophethood, which was the third sign.⁽¹⁾

Those whom Allah referred to as 'And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3), also include Suhayb Ar-Rumi⁽²⁾ *Allah be pleased with him* nicknamed Abu Yahya. He was in Mecca and he had come of age and wanted to emigrate, so the disbelievers said to him: 'You came to Mecca as a pauper and we took you in. Now you are a possessor of great wealth, and you want to emigrate with all your wealth!' He responded to them: 'What would you say if I leave you my wealth, would you then leave me alone?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Will you ensure that I have a riding beast and expenses so that I can go to Medina?' They said: 'You can have that.'⁽³⁾

(1) Narrated by Al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (6544), which is part of a long Hadith from Salman Al-Farisi.

(2) Suhayb Ar-Rumi: His name was Suhayb ibn Sinan ibn Malik, from Banu Namir ibn Qasit. He was born twenty-three years before the Hijra. He was a Companion and one of the best archers among the Arabs. He was one of the first to embrace Islam. Suhayb was born in Mosul, and then the Romans invaded their area and took Suhayb prisoner. Thus, he grew up among them and spoke inarticulately. He became Muslim, lived in Mecca, and engaged in trade. He died in Medina in the year 38 A.H. Az-Zirikli, *Al-'Alam*, vol. 3, p. 310

(3) Narrated by Adh-Dhahabi in *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'* (vol. 2, p. 23), Ibn Al-Jawzi in *Safat As-Safwa* (vol. 1, p. 170) and Ibn Sa'd in *At-Tabaqat* (vol. 3, p. 193).

And thus, by doing so, he purchased his own self and used his wealth to safeguard his faith. When he had arrived in Medina, he was met by Abu Bakr and `Umar and they said to him: 'A profitable sale, O Abu Yahya.' He said: 'And may Allah make all your trade profitable.' Abu Bakr and `Umar *Allah be pleased with them* said to him: 'Indeed, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* told us that Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* had informed him of your story.'⁽¹⁾

It was related that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him: 'A profitable sale, O Abu Yahya.'

Accordingly, the call of Islam is universal and not specific to the Arabs, and for this reason Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* wrote letters to Persia and Byzantium and other nations, calling them to Allah *the Exalted* and to follow the message he was sent with.⁽²⁾

Islam is a worldwide call for every time and every place. The Islamic call continued to spread among certain tribes and clans until the capital of disbelief surrendered, and Mecca became Allah's Sacred House as Allah had willed. Then the entire Arabian Peninsula submitted to Allah's Way and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sent letters to the kings and emperors, and they all contained the statement: 'Become Muslim, and you will be safe.'⁽³⁾

(1) Narrated by As-Sa`di in his *Tafsir* (vol. 1, p. 182) based on the statement of Ibn `Abbas and Anas that `Umar ibn Al-Khattab met him close to the outskirts of Medina, Al-Harra', and they said to him: 'The sale has been successful', so he said: 'And you too. May Allah never allow your trade to fail. What do you mean?' Thus, they informed him that Allah has sent down this verse regarding him: 'And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the Pleasure of Allah...' (al-Baqara: 207).

(2) The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* sent these letters to the kings early in the year 4 A.H., along with a delegate, to call them to Allah, and he used a silver seal upon which was engraved 'Muhammad, The Messenger of Allah' to mark his letters.

(3) The text of letters sent by Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was: 'In the Name of Allah, The All-Merciful, The Ever-Merciful. From Muhammad, the slave and Messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the ruler of Byzantium, *peace be upon those who follow guidance*. To proceed; I am inviting you with the call of Islam. Become Muslim and you will be safe. Become Muslim and Allah will grant you a two-fold reward. But if you turn away, you will bear the sin of (misguiding) your subjects.=

These letters prove that the invitation of Islam was extended to all of mankind. This is in fulfilment to Allah's Words to His Messenger, that he is 'a Messenger for all of mankind'.

Allah *the Exalted* says, 'And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind...' (*Saba'*: 28). Hence, in compliance thereto, the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* sent letters to the contemporary rulers of the time, bearing invitations to enter Islam. Then Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* handed down this task to those who would come after him. He *peace and blessings be upon him* invited the Arabian Peninsula to come under the banner of 'There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' after they had been numerous tribes.

This is how the diverse tribes became one community, after Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had gathered them together as one doctrinal unit under the banner and flag of Islam. Regarding this unlettered nation, the True Lord says, 'He it is Who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 2).

After his departure to the Most High, the Companions of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* spread forth with the final message throughout the entire world. Within half a century, Islam came to have two wings: a wing in the east and a wing in the west.

Islam defeated the two greatest empires of the time, and they were the Persian Empire and its civilization, and the Byzantium Empire. These lands adopted Islam as a way of life.

This happened after Islam had waged war against the two empires at the same time, and the people entered Islam to ascertain his miracle, which they had experienced in the character of those who had heard the Quran and

= 'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims." (*Al-'Imran*: 64).' Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (4707) and *Al-Bukhari* in his *Sahih* (4553)

carried its Message. Then they discovered the justice of the Quran in administering life's activities.

This is how they discovered that the miracle of Islam is mental and that His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* is the Final Messenger who has not come to them with a material miracle. If the Quran was a linguistic miracle for the people whom it was sent down to, for those who do not know the language of the Quran, its Glory lies in the justice and values that originate from it.

People rushed towards Islam through the force of encouragement on behalf of the believers in it and the force of attraction that non-believers felt when they saw that there was no difference between a leader and the least of men under its banner, and when they experienced its justice and equality between human beings.

Islam has not only been a miracle for its own people but also for the entire world, and the True Lord's statement is always ascertained: 'We (Allah) will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Quran) is the truth.' (*Fussilat*: 53)

We find a great thinker from the contemporary west declaring his Islam, even though he has never read the Quran. Rather, he only looked at the principles that Islam has established and how they contain solutions for that which successive civilizations and legal scholars have been incapable of in every country on earth.

In the field of science, the Germans studied the process of sensory perception and how the human feels pain. Why is it that when someone touches something soft, he is pleased, but feels the opposite when he touches something rough?

The Germans continued studying this for years in order to know the location of sensation in the human body; is it in the brain or somewhere else? This continued until they concluded that for every person, sensation is anchored in the skin, and that it is spread out in cells directly under the skin. The proof is that when we inject a needle into someone, they only feel pain at the point of entry, and no more. This caught the attention of one of the scientists, and he

said: 'The Quran spoke about this issue when it said: 'Surely! Those who disbelieved in Our *ayat* (verses, signs, revelations) We shall burn them in Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for other skins that they may taste the punishment.' (*an-Nisa'*: 56)

Another contemporary example can be found in criminology. A young Muslim from Sohag travelled to Germany to do his doctorate in law, and he found them looking at the issue of 'abuse of rights.'⁽¹⁾, and they considered it one of the most important legal achievements of the twentieth century. This young man explained that Islam had preceded them in dealing with this matter, and had laid down an appropriate ruling regarding it fourteen centuries ago. He related to them how a man had come to the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: 'So-and-so has date palms in the courtyard of my house, and he enters my house every hour under the pretence of taking care of these date palms, sometimes on the pretext of pollinating them, other times on the pretext of gathering their fruits, and still other times on the pretext of making sure of them such that they have become his foremost concern.

The man complained to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that he and his household were harmed by this man's intrusion into their private life, so he *peace and blessings be upon him* summoned the owner of the date palms and said to him: 'You have three choices: either you give him the date palms – and that would be the peak of generosity – or you sell them to him, or we cut them down.'⁽²⁾

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- (1) *In Islamic Law, it means: 'Using a right to achieve a benefit that is not intended by the Islamic Law, or to inflict harm on others by abusing the legislative objective and intent of the Lawgiver behind the enactment of such a right.' This is a pure, Islamic principle that is stated in the Quran and the Sunnah, and numerous juristic principles have stemmed from it in order to prevent the abuse of rights, including the intent of harm, such as when a husband takes back his wife with the intention of harming her, and not out of desire for her. The same goes for someone who uses his right of hibah (gift), but not out of desire to do so, but rather to harm his inheritors and creditors. It also applies to someone who intends an unlawful purpose such as someone who marries a woman – and this is his right – but with the intention of divorcing her so that her first husband, who had divorced her irrevocably, can remarry her. Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adilatuhu – Dr. Wahba Az-Zuhayli*
- (2) *Samurah ibn Jundub narrated that he had a row of palm-trees in the garden of an Ansari man. The man had his family with him. Samurah used to visit his palm trees,=*

This is how the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* laid down the principles of dealing with what is called 'abuse of rights.' That is why the Quran is a miracle the impact of which influences the faith of non-Arabs and leads to their embracing Islam due to the beneficial effects of its implementation not because they are Arabs or have read the Quran. Therefore, the True Lord *the Most High* says, 'And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3).

The scholars have said that the people being referred to are the non-Arabs, while others have said that it means anyone who entered Islam after the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* whoever they may be, until the Day of Resurrection. Even At-Tabari⁽¹⁾ said: 'The more correct of the two statements, in my opinion, is the one saying that this means everyone who joins the Muslim Companions of the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* from any race, without specifying any specific type. Thus, everyone who joins them will be counted among the later and succeeding generations, and not the early Muslim generation to whom the Messenger of Allah recited Allah's verses.'⁽²⁾

This verse is one of the miracles of the Quran because it informs us that Islam will spread and its expansion will not stop at the borders of the Arabs. Rather, it will comprise everyone, and the terrain of Islam will expand east

= and the man was harmed and distressed by that. So, he asked him (Samurah) to sell them to him, but he refused. He then asked him to take something else in exchange, but he refused. So, he came to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and mentioned it to him. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* asked him to sell them to him, but he refused. He asked him to take something else in exchange, but he refused. He then said, 'Give them to him and you can have such and such,' mentioning something with which he tried to please him, but he still refused. He then said, 'You are a nuisance.' The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessing be upon him* then said to the Ansari man, 'Go and uproot his palm-trees.' Narrated by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (3638)

(1) At-Tabari: His name was Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid At-Tabari, surnamed Abu Ja'far, a historian, mufasssir (Quranic commentator) and imam. He was born in Amol, Tabaristan, in the year 224 A.H., settled in Baghdad, and died in the 310 A.H., at the age of 86. He refused to be a judge and resolve grievances. He wrote *Akhbar Ar-Rusul Al-Wal-Muluk* and *Jami' Al-Bayan fi Tafsir Al-Quran*. He is a reliable historian. He had a brown complexion, large eyes, and a slim build, and he was eloquent. Az-Zirikli, *Al-'Alam*, vol. 6, p. 96

(2) Stated by At-Tabari in his commentary on the chapter of *al-Jumu'a* (62:3) [vol. 22, p. 631], Cairo: Dar Hajr Press

and west. Therefore, Allah's statement: 'And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3) means the believers who have not come yet, but they will come.

This is similar to Allah's saying: 'Rather, they have denied that which they encompass not in knowledge and whose interpretation has not yet come to them...' (*Yunus*: 39). That is, they did not comprehend the aims of the Quran and as soon as they heard of his Message, they suddenly accused him of lying. We seek refuge in Allah. These are the people who denied the message before its meanings and interpretations had come clear to them. Likewise, 'and [to] others of them' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3), that is, from those who become believers and Muslims 'who have not yet joined them...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 3); that is, they have not yet come, but they will come.

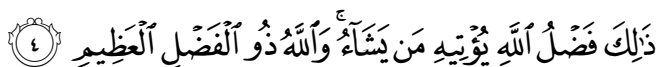
One of the tools of negation in Arabic is the particle *lam* such as us saying 'so-and-so has not (*lam*) come.' We also say: 'So and so has not (*lamma*) come'. The negation in the first example is definitive and not connected to the present tense, as if this person did not come yesterday. However, using the particle *lamma* for negation means that the act of joining is negated until the time of speaking but would happen after that because that particle indicates both negation and the expectation of occurrence. Similarly, Allah *Glorified is He* says about the Bedouin: 'the dwellers of the desert say: "We believe." Say, "You do not believe but say, we submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts."' (*al-Hujurat*: 14) They have not attained to faith at the time of speaking, but when they heard Allah's saying on them, they praised Him *the Almighty* because the verse denotes that faith will enter their hearts.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'Do you think that you will enter the garden while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and [He has not] known the patient.' (*Al-'Imran*: 142) When the believers heard that verse, they said that they were confident that Allah would know of them their striving and patience, thus, we know that *lamma* denotes that the thing that is negated is expected to occur.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse saying that He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. These two Attributes are appropriate to be mentioned here because Might is about dominance and the verse is telling us about Islam being

victorious and prevailed over all other religions as well as the expansion of its terrain and dominance. This all fits saying that Allah is Almighty Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Most surely, We help Our Messengers, and those who believe, in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall stand.' (*Ghafir*: 51) He, despite His Might, Dominance, Power, and giving victory to those who believe in Him, is also the All-Wise. Wisdom means to put something in its proper place so that it can carry out its function, so He makes everything in accordance with wisdom.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Such is God's favour that He grants it to whoever He will;
God's favour is immense [4] (The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 4)**

The Arabic word for 'such' is comprised of a demonstrative pronoun; the letter *lam* that indicates distance and a *kaf* for addressing someone. The demonstrative pronoun here refers to what has been mentioned in the previous verse concerning sending unto the unlettered people an apostle from among themselves. It refers to the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as a favour that Allah has generously bestowed upon Muhammad himself, and then upon his *ummah*.

A favour is something extra than your necessary needs as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'He who has a spare riding beast should give it to him who has no riding beast; and he who has surplus equipment should give it to who has no equipment. We thought that none of us had a right in surplus property.'⁽¹⁾ Favour is what is extra to man's needs. However, the favour of Allah is everything in the universe now and in the Hereafter, as He *the Almighty* needs nothing at all from His creation. Allah has no need for His creation or any blessing that has come or is yet to come.

The favour referred to here is the prophethood of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, the disbelievers objected that the Quran being sent

(1) Narrated by Abu Dawud, Ibn Hibban and Abu Ya'la

down to Muhammad and thus said: 'And they say: "Why was not this Quran revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?"' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) That is why Allah *Glorified is He* responded to them saying: 'Will they distribute the Mercy of your Lord? We distribute among them their livelihood in the life of this world, and We have exalted some of them above others in degrees, that some of them may take others in subjection; and the mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32)

Although, the disbelievers acknowledged the greatness of the Quran, they tried to find faults with it, but they did not find any, even though they were masters of eloquence and rhetoric. Therefore, the matter that was stuck in their throats was that the Quran being sent down to Messenger Muhammad. Thus, it was a matter of envy. That is why Allah says, 'Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His Grace?' (*an-Nisa'*: 54)

The word 'people' in the previous verse refers to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. In Arabic, this word can refer to one person who possesses numerous characteristics and thereby Allah *Glorified is He* describes Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with it to inform that he is better than all mankind. Another example of this matter is the man who went to the believers to inform them that the idol-worshippers were preparing to fight them. Allah revealed concerning him saying: 'Those to whom the people said: "Surely men have gathered against you, therefore fear them."' (*Al- 'Imran*: 173) Despite he was one man; Allah described him with the word 'people', as if by alerting the Muslims he was gathering all the attributes of goodness that people possess.

They envy Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* because Allah *Glorified is He* chose and selected him for the Message. They envy him because the Quran was sent down to him. Envy only arises from a malevolent heart that rebels against the distribution of Allah's Favours amongst His slaves. To envy someone is to wish that he loses the blessing bestowed upon him. This means that you hate seeing someone else having a blessing. One does not do that except that he is rebelling against the One Who gives all blessings.

Indeed, they envied Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for taking this favour and blessing. Even the Jews and the people of the Book

envied him for being a prophet and forgot that Allah had given prophethood to Ibrahim (Abraham), Dawud (David), Sulaiman (Solomon) and Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon them* before him. Therefore, why do they feel jealous when Allah wants to honour Ibrahim's (Abraham's) second branch, that is, that of Ismail (Ishmael) *peace be upon him*?

Allah had already honoured the first branch through Ishaq (Isaac) *peace be upon him* from whom came Ya'qub (Jacob) *peace be upon him* from whom came Yusuf (Joseph) and the rest of the prophets and messengers of the children of Israel including Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David) and Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon them*. All of them were honoured. However, when Allah honours Ibrahim's (Abraham's) second branch, which is the progeny of Ismail (Ishmael) *peace be upon him* and sends a messenger from amongst them, they are upset and adopt a position of hatred. They forgot that it is not for anyone to choose the Messenger because he is only selected by Allah.

Allah *Glorified is He* did not make it up to the hands of the idol-worshippers or anyone else to distribute and plan affairs. Rather, He is the One Who distributes His Gifts amongst humanity so that every individual relies on others for things that he himself is incapable of and others rely on him for things that they are incapable of.

The issue of prophethood is one of Divine Selection and it is greater and exalted above all stations in the life of this world. Allah *Glorified is He* expressed this in His statement: 'and the Mercy of your Lord.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32) Mercy is a Divine Gift.

If Allah has distributed their provision in the least of matters, which is their livelihood, how can they want to administer freely when it comes to the greatest of matters? They must have tact with Allah because He did not require them to choose to whom His Mercy and Message should be sent down. Rather, He is the One Who chooses, as the Message is a Mercy from Him with which He favours whomever He wills from His slaves.

Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Allah best knows where He places His Message.' (*al-An'am*: 124) The Message only comes in order to spread goodness for everybody. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came to spread his goodness among others and he himself does not obtain any reward from

people for conveying it. Before his death, he commanded his family not to receive *zakat* and what he left was charity for people. This means that he did not benefit from it in the life of this world as he is only trustworthy with the Message. In addition, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not want to take any of the delights of the life of this world so that his family could inherit it after him, and this also shows how Allah wanted his goodness to be for all of mankind.

The Message is a responsibility and the reward for prophethood is not in this worldly life. Rather, the greatest reward is in the Hereafter. Thus, no one should ask why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* specifically was sent. Indeed, this is the planning of Allah Who says, 'Is it a wonder to the people that We revealed to a man from among themselves?' (*Yunus*: 2) How can they deem it strange that We brought a Messenger to them from among themselves? It is not a strange matter because it is actually logical and natural. That is why Allah gives His Favour to whomever He wills, as He says, 'Surely grace is in the Hand of Allah, He gives it to whom He pleases; and Allah is Ample-Giving, All Knowing.' (*Al-Imran*: 73)

As long as grace is in Allah's Hands, then you, who are plotting against Muslims, will never be able to mislead people away from their religion, Messenger and Quran. When Allah gives His Favour to those who believe, then no one will take it from them except He *Glorified is He*. Thus, when He *Glorified is He* says, 'Say, "Are you better knowing or Allah?"' (*al-Baqara*: 140), there is only one response because they will never be able to say that they know more than Allah. Allah undoubtedly knows more, which is an undeniable fact.

The one whom Allah selected to carry His Message to mankind is only being selected for a mission that is difficult. He selects him so that his selection can spread amongst people. It is as if Allah specifically selected him for the sake of mankind and their benefit, whether this selection is for a place or a person or a time so that his selection would spread among those who were selected over.

Selection being made by Allah *Glorified is He* frees the person selected from anything that could possibly happen from his counterpart. Allah *Glorified is He* wants him to be a model from which only goodness comes. The perfect example of this is Allah choosing His Messenger Muhammad from the beginning

and making him only have good conduct from the beginning. This was up until He gave us The Messenger, the exemplar of faith, over twenty-three years, which was the period of the Message of Muhammad. Allah *Glorified is He* knows best about whom He chooses. The will to select and choose is only consummated according to the specifications of Allah as He says, 'Allah best knows where He places His message.' (*al-An'am*: 124)

In addition, the favour of Allah of sending Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has affected all the creation including the Arabs and the non-Arabs, as he, is a mercy to all of creation. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds...' (*al-Anbiya'*: 107). He *Glorified is He* showed them mercy through Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and gave them the favour of being the addressees with this final Message. The Mercy of Allah is not confined to the Arabs only. Rather, it is a general mercy for all of creation which is a great rank.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Indeed Allah has sent me as a mercy to all of creation.'⁽¹⁾ He, was sent to be happy and to make those with him happy; his people and all of mankind should not to be wretched. The peak of the Mercy of Allah and His Favour upon the creation is clear in the fact that He sent Muhammad as the Final Messenger. He will not be emended by another messenger after him. That is why his final Message comprises all matters of life, those which are contemporary to you and those which will fit those after you, until the Day of Resurrection.

Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the verse saying that His Favour is great. This means that He is the Most Generous. Someone may have some favour but retains it because he will need it in the future. True favour is that which is with Allah. That is why Allah is the Possessor of immense favour because He does not need anything from His creation or His universe. This is because He *the Almighty* existed before all creatures came into existence and will exist after the end of life.

When favour is described as being immense, it means that there is favour that is less than immense, just as there is a favour that is greater than it in

(1) Narrated by At-Tabarani, Ahmad and At-Tayalisi

distinction. We know that disparity exists amongst humanity. This person has been favoured in terms of food, clothes, drink, or place of residence. This means that there are numerous kinds of favours, but they are not described as immense because immense favour is only from Allah since every favour from other than Him will be attributed to Him *Glorified is He*.

Allah is the source of all favours. This is the most sublime favour. We also find that the one who has favour over someone else inevitably seeks to attain something beyond this favour such as perfection of one's essence, being praised, or seeking comfort for his soul. The one who has been favoured only wants something which is either abundance of wealth, or praise, or laudation or comfort for his soul from the painful sights that he sees. This is a proof that one suffers from some kind of deficiency which is why he wants to perfect it. If Allah is the possessor of favour, does He have any deficiency in perfection?! No, He does not.

Therefore, this is the immense favour which He grants to His slaves as a favour from Him, without desire for perfection or praise. Also, every favour from other than Allah contains showing off, but Allah's Favour is not like that, nor does it contain humiliation for anyone because life itself, all of it, is a gift from Him.

If you were to trace every aspect of your existence in life, every aspect of your remaining alive and every aspect of your blessings, you would eventually arrive at Allah. If you were to interlink everything in your life, so you would find that Allah is the source of all favours and bounties. Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...so were it not for the Grace of Allah and His Mercy on you, you would certainly have been among the losers.' (*al-Baqara*: 64)

Among the favours of Allah bestowed to the *ummah* of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is His statement 'It is made lawful to you to go into your wives on the night of the fast; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them; Allah knew that you acted unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you [mercifully] and removed from you [this burden]; so now be in contact with them and seek what Allah has ordained for you.' (*al-Baqara*: 187)

This is because Allah knows that man does not have the strength to constantly refrain from desires. You used to deprive yourselves and then Allah

sent down this concession for you and here you can experience Allah's Favour towards you. From Allah's Favour towards you is that He respects your work, to the extent that He attributes it to you; lending money to your fellow Muslim is a case in point; He *the Almighty* says, 'Who is it that will offer of Allah a goodly gift, so He will multiply it to him manifold, and Allah straitens and amplifies, and you shall be returned to Him.' (*al-Baqara*: 245) Thus, Allah made the goodly gift for Himself. It is from Allah's Favour towards man that when He asks man for some of his wealth, He asks for it as a loan meaning that He will return it afterwards with manifold increase.

It is from Allah's Favour that He turns evil deeds into good deeds, and that He Himself has made the Way of Guidance for all of mankind so that no man has to follow another man's personal desires or caprice. Allah *Glorified is He* does not have any personal desires. Further, it is from Allah's Favour that He hides what people conceal from each other; He *the Almighty* says, 'Nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen.' (*Al-Imran*: 179) This is because everyone might be agitated and a period of time could come in which he is weak in something, and thus if there were people around him who knew his secrets, they could take advantage of what they know of his weakness.

Beware of thinking that your action is what gives you reward. Rather, it is Allah's Favour that gives you reward. Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Say: In the Grace of Allah and in His Mercy- in that they should rejoice.' (*Yunus*: 58) It is favour that makes the believers' hearts rejoice.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَثْقَارًا بَيْنَ
مَثَلِ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾

Those who have been charged to obey the Torah, but do not do so, are like asses carrying books: how base such people are who disobey God's revelations! God does not guide people who do wrong [5] (The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 5)

Allah *Glorified is He* gives us an example of those who were graced with the burden of the Torah (the Jews). There is a category of people who carried the Torah, yet they did not know anything about it; they were graced with the burden

of the Torah, but they did not view it as a Divine Way of Guidance, and thus they were like donkeys. A donkey is not worthy of blame because it does not understand the load of books that it is carrying on its back because it is not its task to understand and comprehend what is in the load of books. Rather, its task is merely to carry them and transport them from one place to another without understanding what they contain or acting in accordance with the content.

It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* warns us not to be like donkeys which are only good enough in carrying items. Rather, I want you to act upon the Way of Guidance and to benefit from the legislation that these donkeys carry upon their backs. He says: 'O Yahya (John)! Take hold of the Book with strength...' (*Maryam*: 12). Prophet Yahya (John) *peace be upon him* is one of the prophets of the children of Israel. The Book here refers to the Torah that contains Allah's Way which will regulate their daily activities for them. Allah orders him to take it with strength, that is, with sincerity in preserving it and keenness to act in accordance with it.

Thus, the heavenly knowledge and the divine way that came to you in the Torah are not just for you to know but also to act in accordance with it. Allah graced them with the burden of the Torah, yet they did not carry it, nor did they act in accordance with it. They were graced with the burden of the Torah and they carried it in the sense of knowing it and preserving it in their books and in their hearts, but they did not carry it in the sense of giving it its full right and acting in accordance with it.

As for the word 'Torah', some scholars, when turning their attention to some term, try to find its Arabic origin and try to find a pattern for it from amongst the patterns of Arabic and give it one of the qualities of the Arabic language. However, I say to them that they have looked at these terms as if they are Arabic terms, but Torah is a Hebrew term and injil is either a Syriac or a Greek word. Those words became proper nouns to refer to those books and they came into our language.

Do not think that just because the Quran came down in Arabic that all its terms are Arabic. No, it is not. It is true that the Quran is Arabic and it is also true that it has been revealed while these words were circulating on the tongues of Arabs; and when they were uttered, their meanings were understood.

An example of this in our modern age is that we have inserted the word 'bank' into our common language; we normally use it in our speech to the extent that it has become an Arabic word because it circulates on the tongues of the Arabs. The meaning of the Quran being Arabic is that when Allah addressed the Arabs with it, He addressed them with terms that they understood and that circulated on their tongues even if they are not Arabic in origin.

The Torah is the Book of the Jews. Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* along with the leaders of his people went to the place defined for them by Allah, to receive the Way and the Torah; and when Musa (Moses) returned with the Torah and the Tablets, they found the instructions therein hard for them, which why they said that they would not apply this legal responsibility and decided not to adhere to it or accept it. The legal responsibility is from Allah Who has burdened them with it, yet they were unable to carry it out, even though He *the Almighty* does not burden any human being more than he can bear. The Jews had the Torah with them and despite that, they did not follow their Book.

An example of them not following what came in their Book and trying to get away from Allah's Command to follow the Torah is that they came across a command or a ruling they would ask Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to judge therein. That is why Allah says, 'And how do they make you a judge and they have the Torah wherein is Allah's Judgment?' (*al-Ma'ida*: 43)

Allah *Glorified is He* makes it clear: 'How is it that they come to you, asking for a ruling and they have the Torah and they do not believe that you, O Muhammad, are a Messenger from Allah? How can they feel pleased to give a ruling when they do not believe in you? There must be a benefit in that which contradicts what is in the Torah, otherwise, they would have implemented the ruling that they have in their Book. They only came to you, O Prophet Muhammad out of desire that you give them a ruling that is somewhat easier, mistakenly thinking that you would allow them to consume ill-gotten property or that he would listen to lies'.

It is an amazing issue that must be understood because they have the Torah which contains Allah's Injunctions and if they were to ask you for a ruling regarding a matter that is not in the Torah, then that would be acceptable. However, they are asking you for a ruling regarding a matter that

is in their Book, the Torah and this means that they were desiring to cheat and not to adhere to what Allah has sent down to them in the Torah. Allah entrusted the Torah with the early men of Allah and the rabbis, i.e. He asked them to preserve it and this command was one of legal responsibility. A matter of legal responsibility is liable to be obeyed and liable to be disobeyed. Further, Allah entrusted them with the Torah and the Gospel. However, 'They neglected a portion of what they were reminded of...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 14). The matter of the Divine Way became forgotten and was not much on their minds, because if it constantly came to mind and was always in the depths of one's emotions, it would top their thoughts. However, forgetfulness comes when the matter is far from one's mind.

Allah *Glorified is He* asked them to preserve the Divine Way, but they, apart from the Prophets, did not do so. Every matter of legal responsibility is within the sphere of choice and that is why we find that the rabbis and the early men of Allah had forgotten; even what they did not forget, they concealed it. The first stage of not preserving was that they forgot; the second stage was that they concealed what they did not forget. The third stage was yet that they distorted what they did not conceal, even with their own tongues.

If only they had restricted themselves to just those phases, but instead, they brought things forward and claimed that it was from Allah, while it was actually not. Allah says, 'Woe, then, to those who write the book with their hands and then say, "This is from Allah."' (*al-Baqara*: 79) Therefore, the preservation on their behalf was not fulfilled and this is why Allah did not call for the preservation of the Quran to be by way of legal responsibility because He had tested humanity before and because He wanted the Quran to be a permanent miracle. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* did not entrust the creation with preserving it. Rather, He took it upon Himself to preserve it: 'Surely, We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian.' (*al-Hijr*: 9)

Allah *Glorified is He* gives us an example so that it is easier for us to understand something that is abstract; He gives us the example of something that is tangible, that is, we can see and touch with our own hands. The carrying of the Torah does not actually mean carrying it in a literal sense. Otherwise,

every Jew would have had to carry the Book of the Torah in his hand or some other way. Rather, the meaning is carrying it in an abstract sense, i.e. acting in accordance with its teachings and following Allah's Way of Guidance. They were asked to adhere to the Torah and its rulings but they did not adhere to it. Instead, they tried to get away from its rulings on the pretext that they were difficult. They did not adhere until after Mount Sinai had been raised over their heads; Allah *Glorified is He* relates this to us when He says: 'And when We shook the mountain over them as if it were a covering overhead, and they thought that it was going to fall down upon them: Take hold of what We have given you with firmness, and be mindful of what is in it so that you may guard [against evil]' (*al-A'raf*: 171).

That verse orders them to hold fast to what has come to them in the Book with seriousness and diligence in terms of actions and values; it prohibits them from taking on legal responsibility with negligence. Man usually holds fast, with all his strength to that which benefits him and that is why it is the nature of Allah's Ways that they be adopted with strength and certainty so that you can be given much good with strength and certainty. When you adopt Allah's Divine Way with strength, then you have placed your trust in Him, and your heart has been opened so that you want to take more.

They did not respond to Allah's Command even after He had raised the mountain over their heads, although they only submitted to material signs. That is why He *Glorified is He* raised the mountain over them because either they would hold fast to what Allah had given them with strength, thus implemented what was sought from them, or the mountain would collapse on them. Even the Quran censured them for how they carried out His Command to sacrifice a cow. Allah says, 'And when Musa (Moses) said to his people: Surely Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow; they said, "Do you ridicule us?"' (*al-Baqara*: 67)

Thus, Allah gave them the command first to test the strength of their faith and the extent to which they carry out legal responsibility without hesitation or deliberateness. However, instead of doing that, they took to haggling and slowness. If a man were to be endowed with the lowest of intellect and then he was asked to slaughter a cow, would this need clarification? If they had

slaughtered a cow, any cow, then everything would have been completed without any trouble, so as long as Allah has asked them to slaughter a cow, then all they have to do was to carry out the slaughtering.

However, look at the stupidity, even in the question. They willed to do anything to nullify their legal responsibility. They were commanded to carry out an act of legal responsibility, but they were not pleased with carrying it out because it did not agree with their caprice.

For them, the teachings of Allah and His Divine way are nothing but a load of books as He *the Almighty* says, 'And they do not assign to Allah the attributes due to Him when they say: Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal. Say, "Who revealed the Book which Musa (Moses) brought, a light and guidance to men, which you make into scattered writings which you show while you conceal much?"' (*al-An'am*: 91)

The book referred to here is the Book that Allah sent down to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* which is the Torah. They made it in scattered writings, i.e. detached sheets of paper from which they manifest what they wanted and concealed what they did not want. Their distortion to the legal ruling of stoning to death is a case in point.

Two of the Jews of Khaybar, a man and a woman, committed adultery. They were both noble Jews, which is why the people did not want to bring out Allah's Ruling from the Torah which was stoning to death. So, they resorted to a trick which was to go to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The mere fact of them going to him, gives us an idea about them. They wanted a mitigated ruling other than stoning. They wanted to save these two adulterers from the ruling of stoning because they were from the noble Jews of Khaybar, so they, along with their rabbis went to him.

When they entered upon Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he told them: 'Which of you is the most knowledgeable of the Torah?' They pointed to 'Abdullah ibn Suraya who was with them; they gave him the Torah and told him to: 'Read'. So, the man sat and began reading. When he came across the verse regarding stoning, he put his hand over it to hide it and kept reading. 'Abdullah ibn Salam was present at that moment, so he said: 'O Messenger of Allah, did you not see that he covered the verse with his hand

and kept on reading?’ Ibn Salam moved the man’s hand and read himself and it was the verse regarding stoning.

When Allah *Glorified is He* gives us an example of a donkey or a dog, this is not to degrade donkeys or dogs. When Allah *Glorified is He* makes an example of those who were graced with the burden of the Torah but did not carry it and did not adhere to it, not in terms of Allah’s legal responsibilities or His Way which is something evil; this is not to mean to degrade donkeys.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘And recite to them the narrative of him to whom We give Our communications, but he withdraws himself from them, so Satan overtakes him, so he is of those who go astray. And if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire so his parable is as the parable of the dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject Our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect. Evil is the likeness of the people who reject Our communications and are unjust to their own souls.’ (*al-A’raf*: 175-177)

When a dog approaches you, you chase it away and scold it; otherwise it pants with its tongue lolling. If you leave the dog alone without chasing it away or scolding it, it will also pant with its tongue lolling because its nature is that it always pants with its tongue lolling. This is something exclusive to dogs since they always breathe quickly with their tongues sticking out. Animals do not do anything like this unless they are hungry or tired or attacking, while it is only dogs that do it when they are hungry and full, thirsty and not thirsty, scolded or not scolded, because they always pant with their tongues lolling.

But why does Allah liken this person to a panting dog with its tongue lolling? It is because he discards Allah’s signs; notice that this person resembles those who were graced with the burden of carrying Allah’s Book yet did not carry it, nor did they carry out what they had to therein because the one who is portrayed in this way will be seen as permanently despised, due to the fact that he is following his caprice and being controlled by his desires.

Once his desires have been satisfied, it is asked; will he do the same thing tomorrow? His desires are in control all the time and that is why he lives in

continuous apprehension because he fears that blessings will escape him or he himself will escape those blessings. His state thus becomes like that of a panting dog, panting whether it is safe or not safe, hungry or not hungry and thirsty or not thirsty.

Just as Allah *Glorified is He* says about those who were graced with the Torah and then did not do according to it that they are those who disobey Allah's revelations, He also said the same about he who withdraws himself from Allah's communications.

Those who have denied Allah's communications are the disbelievers, the idol-worshippers, and those who reject Islam and try to fight against the religion. Allah has determined for us the final outcome of all these people. Those who have denied Allah's communications are either those who have denied the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* in terms of the signs that prove his veracity and he is the one who conveys from Allah and these people have fallen under the category of disbelief, or they are those who have denied the signs of the way and thus they have not used the way according to its foundations and they have deviated from the straight path and the correct path. Therefore, they have denied Allah's signs and they have denied the Last Day and they have not acted in accordance with the way of faith and so have recompense and punishment from Allah *Glorified is He* who sent down this way, but they turned away from it and denied it.

Regarding those who denied the signs, it is either because they do not believe in a deity, or they believe in a deity but do not believe in a Messenger, or they believe in a deity and a Messenger, but they do not believe in what has been sent down to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

At the end, Allah *Glorified is He* says that He does not guide people who do wrong. Those who have been banished from Allah's Guidance in assisting them towards faith are the evildoing folk. He has withheld his guidance from three kinds of people; disbelievers, oppressors and the iniquitous.

However, has He withheld his guidance from the beginning, or is it they who have committed error that has made them unworthy of Allah's guidance? They are the ones who rejected the burden of Allah's trust with regards to the

Book that was sent down to them and they refused to adhere to Allah's way and what their prophets had brought to them from Allah. They were like a donkey carrying loads of books and not understanding anything of what they contain and this is how the hearts of these people have become locked from understanding that to which Allah is demanding them to adhere. Therefore, they did not deserve Allah's guidance, His enabling success, His assisting them towards faith, and perfected faith in Allah and His Message, holding fast to the Book that was sent down to them with all their strength as well as with perfect devotion.

Allah *Glorified is He* thereby concludes the verse saying that He does not guide them towards any proof or evidence because their patron is Satan. We know that oppression means to take someone's right and give it to someone else and the highest degree of oppression is to associate partners with Allah. It is the most immense oppression and the cause of them not being guided is their oppression.

Thus, it is their oppression that denies them guidance and Allah *Glorified is He* has left it to the slave to choose guidance or to choose misguidance and whatever the slave does and chooses is not done under compulsion from Allah because if He had not created all of us with the ability to choose, man would not be able to go against what Allah wants. However, he created man with the ability to choose and whenever you choose guidance or misguidance, this is what Allah has granted you and He has made it clear that those who do evil and are iniquitous are worthy of being assisted by Allah in their misguidance, just as much as He assists those who choose guidance because they are worthy of being assisted by Allah in their guidance.

Thus, the lack of goodness begins on their part and therefore they proceeded in their disbelief and Allah did not guide them. They proceeded in their oppression and thus Allah did not guide them. They preceded in iniquity and thus Allah did not guide them.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوا اِنْ رَّعَمْتُمْ اَنْكُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ
لِلّٰهِ مِنْ دُوْنِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنُّوْا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾

**Say [Prophet], ‘You who follow the Jewish faith, if you truly claim that out of all people you alone are friends of God, then you should be hoping for death’ [6]
(The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 6)**

The vocative is one kind of speaking style and the rhetoricians divide speech into ‘Information’ which means that you inform of something by way of speech and it can be true or false and ‘bringing about’ which is to request something by way of speech and it can not be true or false. The vocative is from bringing about because you want to bring about something for your part. When you say, ‘O Muhammad’, you want him to turn towards you. Therefore, the vocative is requesting that someone turn towards you.

There is a great variation of vocative forms in the Noble Quran. They include the vocative from Allah to fifteen categories of people, inanimate objects, and other things. They include the vocative from the messengers to their peoples, the vocative of the nations and peoples to their messengers, the vocative between angels, and several other examples of the vocative. The most frequent vocative in the Noble Quran is from Allah to the believers, as the vocative ‘O you who believe!’ which is found in more than eighty verses. It addresses those who believe in Allah and His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, all the vocatives for them come and request legal responsibilities and they address everyone who believes in the way.

Allah addresses and calls on the believers directly without addressing Muhammad to say something. There is no verse in which the believers are being addressed that begins with ‘Say.’ For example, Allah says: ‘O you who believe! Seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient.’ (*al-Baqara*: 153) He also says, ‘O you who believe! If you obey a party from among those who have been given the Book, they will turn you back as unbelievers after you have believed.’ (*Al-Imran*: 100) Another verse reads: ‘O you who believe! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a

friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 51) There are several other examples. It is a direct vocative from Allah to the believers. However, when Allah *Glorified is He* addresses those who follow the Jewish faith, he says: 'Say, "O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful."' (*al-Jumu'a*: 6)

This is the only vocative which contains this form for those who follow the Jewish faith and despite that it begins with the order to say O Muhammad. This gives us a gleaming that Allah is angry with them and that He is distancing them from being those who are near to Allah, as opposed to being Allah's children or His beloveds. When you are angry with someone after you had been close to them and you had been good to them and generous to them and you had stood at their side through their hardships and saved them from their enemy, but they denied and were ungrateful for everything, you would not talk to them and when you did talk to them, you would put a barrier between you and them and speak to them through an intermediary.

Allah *Glorified is He* has generously bestowed bounties upon the Jews and given them several blessings. He says, 'O children of Israel! call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and be faithful to [your] covenant with Me, I will fulfil [My] covenant with you; and of Me, Me alone, should you be afraid.' (*al-Baqara*: 40) He also says, 'O children of Israel! Indeed, We delivered you from your enemy, and We made a covenant with you on the blessed side of the mountain, and We sent to you the manna and the quails. Eat of the good things We have given you for sustenance, and be not inordinate with respect to them, lest My Wrath should be due to you, and to whomsoever My wrath is due be shall perish indeed.' (*Ta Ha*: 80-81)

However, the children of Israel did not respect Allah's right regarding that with which He had blessed them. Instead, they invented lies about Allah and killed their prophets. When Allah *Glorified is He* calls those followers of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* who were given the name *hadu* because they said that they have returned to Allah. *So hadu* are the Jews. The verb *had* means to return and *hudna ilayka* means that we returned to Allah as Musa (Moses), on behalf of himself, his brother, and the people who worshipped the calf and then repented.

Their repentance was a difficult event for the children of Israel. Allah says, 'And when Musa (Moses) said to his people: O my people! you have surely been unjust to yourselves by taking the calf [for a god], therefore turn to your Creator [penitently], so kill your people, that is best for you with your Creator: so He turned to you [mercifully], for surely He is the Oft-Returning [to mercy], the Merciful.' (*al-Baqara*: 54) They worshipped other than Allah and what was worse was that they worshipped a calf that was made for them by As-Samiri with the gold that they had taken with them from Egypt after the people of Egypt had entrusted them with it.

When Allah sent down the ruling that they should kill themselves as atonement for their associating partners with Allah, the children of Israel stood in rows and He said to them: 'Those who did not worship the calf shall kill those who did worship it.' However, when they stood for the execution, some of them found themselves facing their cousins and brothers and other relatives, so Allah had mercy on them by sending a fog to cover them so that it would not be difficult for them to carry out the killing and it was said that they killed seventy thousands of themselves.

Allah ordered them to kill themselves because these selves, with their desires and disobedience, made them rebel against the way. Indeed, the legislation here to kill is expiation for their sins because those who worshipped the calf took it as a deity besides Allah and then presented themselves in order to be killed so that they could acknowledge that what they had worshipped was a false deity. With this they return their selves, which rebelled against Allah's way to correct worship and this is the most difficult kind of expiation, which is to kill one's self in order to affirm one's faith that there is no deity but Allah, showing remorse for what one has done and declaring as such. It is as if killing here was an honest testimony of returning to faith.

That is why they said they have turned in repentance and become proof that they fell into the greatest idolatry which necessitated that they kill one another. The Arabic name for the Jews has become proof of the crime that was erased by them killing themselves, but still, they did not desist from killing the prophets and being insolent towards them, and indeed, being insolent towards Allah.

An example of their insolence towards Allah is that they said what Allah narrates: ‘Allah has certainly heard the saying of those who said, “Surely Allah is poor and we are rich.” I will record what they say, and their killing the prophets unjustly, and I will say, “Taste the chastisement of burning.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 181)

The Prophetic Biography relates to us that Abu Bakr As-Siddiq *Allah be pleased with him* entered the Beth Midrash and found many of the Jews gathering around a man called Finhas, who was one of their scholars and rabbis and he had a rabbi with him called Ashya`. Abu Bakr said: ‘Woe to you, O Finhas, fear Allah and become Muslim, for by Allah, you know that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah from Allah and he has brought the truth from Him which you have written with you in the Torah and the Evangel.’ Finhas replied: ‘By Allah, O Abu Bakr, we are not poor or in need of Allah, but rather, He is poor and in need of us. We do not humiliate ourselves before Him the way He humiliates Himself before us. Indeed, we are rich and independent of Him and if He were rich and independent of us, He would not ask us for loans, as your companion claims. He forbids you from usury and gives it to us and if He were rich and independent, He would not give us usury.’ Abu Bakr became angry and struck him on the face with a severe blow and then he said: ‘By The One in Whose Hand is my soul, if it were not for the treaty between us and you I would smite your neck, O enemy of Allah, so lie to us as much as you are able to, if indeed you are telling the truth.’ Finhas then went to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said: ‘O Muhammad, look at what your Companion has done to me.’ So, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘What made you do this, O Abu Bakr?’ He said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, indeed the enemy of Allah said immense blasphemy. He claimed that Allah was poor and needy and that they were rich and independent. When he had said that, I became angry for Allah, so I struck him on the face.’ Finhas denied it and said ‘I did not say that.’ Thus, Allah revealed that verse.

Despite this, they claimed and alleged that they were Allah’s children and His beloved sons; Allah *Glorified is He* says, ‘...and the Jews and the Christians say, “We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones.”’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 18) Yet,

Allah *Glorified is He* nullifies their false claim by saying: 'Say, "Why does He then chastise you for your faults? Nay, you are mortals from among those whom He has created, He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases."' (*al-Ma'ida*: 18) If you are truly Allah's children and His beloveds, you would have been saved from the punishment for the sins that you have committed, or the truth is that you are human beings of His creating and if He wills He will forgive you and if He wills He will punish you.

Thus, they imagine that regardless of the sins that they commit, Allah will never punish them on the Day of Resurrection, but Allah's Justice rejects this. How can he punish human beings for their sins and then not punish the Jews for the sins they have committed? All of this is just delusion and fabrication and they even claimed that the fire would only touch them for no more than a few days. They also claimed that Allah: 'and they say, "None shall enter the garden [or paradise] except he who is a Jew or a Christian."' (*al-Baqara*: 111)

The Jews said that only they would enter paradise and the Christians said the same thing, so each group has its own monopoly over paradise. Allah *Glorified is He* responded to these claims by saying: 'These are their vain desires.' (*al-Baqara*: 111) Wishful beliefs are those hopes that you attach to yourself and these hopes do not have any connection to reality such that you can realise these hopes. Wishful beliefs are just foolish aspirations because they will never be realised.

Thus, it is as if Allah is reminding them of what they repented of before and tells them to not persist in their false claims and allegations. Before, when you committed an error, you repented and turned back to Us, so why are you deriving pleasure from fabricating?

Here they are making another claim, so Allah *Glorified is He* says to them: '...if you claim that you are allies of Allah excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful.''' (*al-Jumu'a*: 6)

Those who are friends of Allah are close to him that Allah assists the believing slaves and thus Allah is the assistance of those who believe, i.e. He assists them and gives them strength. Those who are close to Allah are also those who give victory to Allah's cause and Allah gives victory to them. The

word *wali* means the one who assists and sometimes it means the one who is assisted because if you are Allah's *wali* and Allah is your *wali*, then Allah *Glorified is He* assists you and you are assisted. The word *wali* means one who is close to you and when you need something this is the first person to whom you go to seek refuge and help and no one else. If someone needs help, this person helps him and his goodness is abundant towards the one he has befriended. He is the one who is close, who helps, who assists, and who is a friend. Thus, if you were that close to Allah, as you say and He is your friend, He helps you and He gives you abundantly from His favour and his goodness, regardless of the sins that you commit and the fire will only touch you for a number of days and only those who follow the Jewish faith will enter paradise, then why do you not long for death?

Allah *Glorified is He* is asking them this and He knows with absolute knowledge that they will never long for death because they are as He says about them in another verse: 'Say, "If the future abode with Allah is specially for you to the exclusion of the people, then invoke death if you are truthful."' (*al-Baqara*: 94) Thus, if the Hereafter is for them alone and no one else will share it with them, then they must long for death in order to go towards eternal blessings, for as long as they have the Hereafter and as long as they are certain that they alone will enter paradise, then what is making them remain in the life of this world? Do they not long for death in order to enter paradise?

The Messenger of Allah said to them, 'If you are truthful in what you are saying, then say, "O Allah, cause us to die!" For by the One in Whose hand is my soul, not a single man from amongst you would say it without choking on his saliva and dying on the spot.' They refuse to do it and they hated what he had said to them, so He sent down: 'And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent before' (*al-Baqara*: 95). Indeed they will never desire it and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said when the verse had come down: 'By Allah, they will never long for it.' This is because their claim that they are Allah's friends to the exclusion of the rest of mankind is a false claim, as they are not actually certain that they will enter paradise. Rather, their final destination could be the fire. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to them, 'If the Jews were to desire death, they would

die, and they would see their places in the fire.' Indeed it is the greatest loss that they find themselves from the people of the fire and at that time their affair will be revealed and that they made claims that have no foundation and are rather based on their own delusion, as well as their claims that they are Allah's chosen people.

They are not telling the truth and they will never desire death because of the sins and disobedience that they dared to commit before Allah and they know very well that they will be taken to account for them. That is why Allah says that they will never long for it because of what their hands have sent ahead in this world. Further, Allah has full Knowledge of evildoers. The proof that they will never desire death is that they cling to life more eagerly than any other people do. Allah says, 'And you will most certainly find them the greediest of men for life.' (*al-Baqara*: 96)

Their eagerness for life is even greater than that of those who associate partners with Allah, as the one who associates partners with Allah is eager for life because he believes that the life of this world is the ultimate objective and the Jews are more eager for life than those who associate partners with Allah because they fear death due to the evil of their previous actions. That is why whenever they lived long lives they thought that they were far from the torment of the Hereafter. Life does not make them come face to face with punishment and that is why they are happy with it, but why are they more eager for life than those who associate partners with Allah?

Indeed, the one who associates partners with Allah has no Hereafter and thus this world is his entire concern and his entire life and that is why he desires a long life, at any cost and in any form. This is because he believes that after this there is nothing and he does not know that after this there is punishment and the Jews are more eager for life than those who associate partners with Allah. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* describes them by saying: '...every one of them loves that he should be granted a life of a thousand years.' (*al-Baqara*: 96) They would love to live for a thousand years or more and they think that having a long life or one of them reaching a thousand years would save them from the punishment.

However, Allah *the Almighty* dashes their hope regarding this issue by saying: ‘...although the grant of long life could not save him from suffering [in the hereafter]...’ (*al-Baqara*: 96). So, would living thousand years, or even more than that, not save him from the punishment? No. Longevity will not change the outcome.

As long as death is the final destination, then the one who lives a few years and the one who lives thousands of years are the same, and he will never escape the punishment. Greediness is to pin one’s hopes on something, be it beneficial or harmful. It is a kind of clinging that requires one to exert effort.

Allah *the Almighty* has given us an actual example of the Jews’ love to life to the extent that they refused to support Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* or to give victory to Allah and His Religion. Musa (Moses) said to his people: ‘O my people! Enter the holy land which Allah has promised you; but do not turn back [on your faith], for then you will be lost! They answered: “O Musa (Moses)! Behold, ferocious people dwell in that land, and we will surely not enter it unless they depart therefrom; but if they depart therefrom, then, behold, we will enter it.”’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 21-22) However, they replied: ‘... “O Musa (Moses)! Behold, never shall we enter that [land] so long as those others are in it. Go forth, then, you and your Lord, and fight, both of you! We, behold, shall remain here!”’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 24) They said to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: ‘Leave us alone. We will never enter this land as long as these Amalekites are in it. If you are determined to enter this land, then go with your Lord and fight. We will be sitting here, waiting for you.’⁽¹⁾

This is how fear and eagerness for their lives led them to make fun of Musa (Moses) and his Lord. They always disobeyed their Prophet, Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and indeed all their prophets; they even killed some of them. Out of their disobedience to those who came after Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* Allah *the Almighty* says about them: ‘Are you not aware of those elders of the children of Israel, after the time of Musa (Moses), how they said unto a prophet of theirs, ‘Raise up a king for us [and] we shall fight in Allah’s cause.’ He said, “Would you, perchance, refrain from fighting if

(1) For further information on the Amalekites: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amalek>

fighting is ordained for you?" They answered: "And why should we not fight in Allah's Cause when we and our children have been driven from our homelands?" Yet, when fighting was ordained for them, they did turn back, save for a few of them; but Allah had full Knowledge of the evildoers.' (*al-Baqara*: 246) They fear death, even if it is to defend their children and homes. They claim adherence to Allah's way such that they said to a prophet of theirs: 'Raise up a king for us [and] we will fight in Allah's Cause...' (*al-Baqara*: 246).

But upon carrying out, '...they did turn back, save for a few of them...' (*al-Baqara*: 246), and even when Allah sent them Saul as a king to fight Goliath, the Tyrant, they rejected it. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And their prophet said unto those elders: "Behold, now Allah has raised up Saul to be your king." They said: "How can he have dominion over us when we have a better claim to dominion than he, and he has not [even] been endowed with abundant wealth?"' (*al-Baqara*: 247)

They are always interested in the life of this world. Their standard of judging is always based on materialism. As wealth and riches are the basis, and likewise their racism surpasses their reliance on might and authority; they said: '...and he has not [even] been endowed with abundant wealth' (*al-Baqara*: 247).

But, Allah shows that their standard of judging is wrong. Rather, the standard of judging is that he is selected by Allah Who knows best who benefits from that and who gets harm. In addition, Allah *the Almighty* chose him with knowledge and wisdom. Consequently, He is showing us good reasons for authorising Saul. '[The prophet] replied: "Behold, Allah has exalted him above you, and endowed him abundantly with knowledge and bodily perfection..."' (*al-Baqara*: 247). This is because he came for a task that requires him to be strong for war and fighting (endowed with bodily perfection) and to be knowledgeable, learned and wise in order to lead the nation with knowledge and wisdom (endowed him abundantly with knowledge).

But because they do not observe except the life of this world, many of them rebelled against Saul. He tested their obedience to him, and they failed. Allah *the Almighty* tells us: 'And when Saul set out with his forces, he said: "Behold, Allah will now try you by a river: he who shall drink of it will not

belong to me, whereas he who shall refrain from tasting it – he, indeed, will belong to me; but forgiven shall be he who shall scoop up but single handful.”...’ (*al-Baqara*: 249)

The challenge was in preventing them from what they were inclining towards because when they saw what they loved and desired, they rushed towards it and forgot about Allah’s command. Whoever is described like this cannot be trusted to be in Allah’s Army.

As for those who see the water and restrain themselves from it, they are patient and in control of themselves. They will be in Allah’s army because they prefer what Allah had sought to what their stomachs desired. They are worthy because they have been tested.

In the beginning, before this, they turned away from fighting, except for a few of them, and here an even fewer number restrained themselves from drinking, and these are the sieves of selection, or the filters of the challenge.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَلَا يَنْمُونَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

But because of what they have stored up for themselves with their own hands they would never hope for death — God knows the wrongdoers very well [7] (The Quran, *al-Jumu’a*: 7)

The Quran has challenged them to wish death, and they have never wished it and they never will. Logic says that as long as the Hereafter is exclusive for them and Allah has challenged them to wish death if they are indeed truthful, then they should wish it in order to move on to eternal blessings.

However, Allah *the Almighty* decreed beforehand that this would never happen from their part. Why? It is because they are liars and they know that they are liars, and that is why they flee from death and do not desire it.

However, why did Allah *the Almighty* declare that: ‘they would never hope for death’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 7)? Allah clarified the matter by saying: ‘But because of what they have stored up for themselves with their own hands’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 7).

It means that their evil deeds make them afraid of death. As for the person who has righteous actions, he is pleased with death. That is why we hear that when so-and-so died, he had a charming face because he was righteous. At the time of death, a person knows for sure that he is dead.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him.' `Aisha – or some of his wives- then said: 'Indeed we hate death.' He said: 'That is not what I mean. Rather, when death comes to the believer, he is given the glad tidings of Allah's Pleasure and His Munificence, and thus there is nothing more beloved to him than that, which is in front of him, and so he loves to meet Allah and Allah loves to meet him. When death approaches the disbeliever, he is given news of Allah's punishment and torment. Thus, there is nothing more hated to him than his situation at that moment, so he hates to meet Allah and Allah hates to meet him.'⁽¹⁾

Thus, those who are rightly guided are those who have adhered to the path that leads to the objective which, for them, is to be inundated with prayers and mercy from their Lord. Allah *the Almighty* says about these people: 'It is they upon whom their Lord's blessings and grace are bestowed, and it is they, they who are on the right path!' (*al-Baqara*: 157)

These people love to meet Allah and Allah loves to meet them because they preferred to do goodness in the life of this world, and that is why you find the signs of glad tidings on their faces the moment death comes to them.

As for those who submitted to the worldly life and oppressed themselves by rebelling against Allah's way, like these Jews whose historical record is replete – ever since there was a Jewish people – their record is replete with disobeying Allah and bluffing their way out of Allah's Commands.

You find these people hating to meet Allah because the misdeeds they have done in the life of this world, and thus they fear meeting Allah, to the extent that they wish that there would not be any resurrection or reckoning.

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih*, no. (6507); *Ibn Athir, Jami` Al-Usul Fi Ahadith Ar-Rusul*, no. (7367) attributed it to *Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i*. In some of them the text says only: 'Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him' - without adding the saying of `Aisha Allah be pleased with her.

When man is sick, he hopes to get better and that death is away from him. However, at the agony of death, he becomes sure that he is dying and his whole life flashes before his eyes. If his actions were righteous, his face lights up and he rejoices, because he will be blessed in the Hereafter with eternal blessings; it is at this moment – when the spirit is leaving the body – that man knows his final destination, either in paradise or in the fire.

He is received by either the angels of mercy or the angels of torment. The one who obeyed Allah is delighted because he will meet the angels of mercy. The one who disobeyed *the Almighty*, and did that which angered Him, his deeds will flash before his eyes. He will find a record of evil while he is moving towards Allah, so there is no opportunity to repent or change his actions.

When he sees his final destination in the fire, his face contracts and, then, passes away, while in that moment. Then it is said: ‘So-and-so died and his face was black and contracted’. Therefore, the one who does evil in the life of this world never longs for death; unlike the one of righteous actions, he is delighted to meet Allah.

Someone might ask: How can Allah demand that they long for death when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* forbade longing for death: ‘None of you should long for death or call for it before its time unless he is certain of his actions.’⁽¹⁾

We say: ‘Indeed the forbidden type is the longing of despair and protesting against one’s afflictions, meaning that someone longs for death because they cannot bear the afflictions that Allah has decreed upon them...or that they desire it in order to protest against what Allah has decreed upon them in life. This is the longing for death that is forbidden.

As for the person who has righteous actions, it is recommended for him to yearn to Allah’s meeting. Read Allah’s, statement at the end of the chapter of *Yusuf*: ‘O my Lord! You have indeed bestowed upon me something of power, and have imparted unto me some knowledge of the inner meaning of happenings. Originator of the heavens and the earth! You are near unto me in this world and in the life to come...’ (*Yusuf*: 101). Then He says: ‘...let me

(1) See Ahmad, *Musnad*, no. (8592) from the narration of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

die as one who has surrendered himself unto You, and make me one with the righteous!' (*Yusuf*: 101)

The statement of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* means not to long for death because you are unhappy with what Allah has decreed for you. In other words, it means that you should be patient with what Allah has decreed. There is a noble Hadith that instructs us not to long for death when life becomes difficult, but rather to say: 'O Allah, cause me to live as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me.'⁽¹⁾

We have said that longing for death is forbidden if one is objecting to what Allah has decreed and rebelling against what Allah *the Almighty* has willed, as if you hate life and living when it becomes hard for you, and thus you long for death. As for longing for death because you know that you will go on to something better, this is another matter.

The one who disobeys Allah and rebels against His command does not long for death because of what his hands have done. Does that mean that all disobedience comes from just the hands? Indeed, there is the disobedience of the eyes, the disobedience of the tongue, the disobedience of the feet, the disobedience the heart etc.

Therefore, why did Allah *the Almighty* say, 'But because of what they have stored up for themselves with their own hands' (*al-Jumu'a*: 7)? Allah says this because outward actions are usually done by the hands, as it is the limb with which we perform most actions. Based on this, His saying: 'But because of what they have stored up for themselves with their own hands...' indicates that they have stored up with their own hands referring to that which has been done by any limb.

Sins, indeed, are either statements or actions of the body, or deeds of the heart, such as malice, for example, or hypocrisy, and so forth. Most of these activities are done with the hands.

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih*, no. (6351); *Muslim, Sahih*, no. (6990) from the Hadith of Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him said that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'None of you should long for death because of some harm that has befallen him. If he cannot avoid longing for death, let him say: "O Allah, cause me to live as long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me."'

But what have the Jews committed? Because of what their hands have wrought, will they never desire death because they fear their eternal punishment? One of their sins is the worshipping of the calf. Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘And in his absence the people of Musa (Moses) took to worshipping the effigy of a calf [made] of their ornaments, which gave forth a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak unto them nor guide them in any way? [And yet] they took to worshipping it, for they were evildoers’ (*al-A‘raf*: 148).

They deceived the people of Egypt and took their jewellery as a loan on grounds that they would return it afterwards. Then their exodus came and they took the jewellery with them. The people of Pharaoh were drowned and the jewellery remained with the people of Musa (Moses), and then As-Samiri made the calf out of the gold from this jewellery. He made it from gold as if he wanted to get it distinguished from other false gods that are made from stones. He tried to make it a precious god, so he made it with stolen jewellery.

They took to worshipping the calf after Allah had completed His Sublime Favour to them, which is that He saved them from Pharaoh and his armies, and indeed he drowned Pharaoh and his armies and his entourage.

After Allah *the Almighty* had caused the children of Israel to cross the sea, they passed by some people worshipping idols, whereupon they asked Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: ‘...set up for us a deity even as they have gods...’ (*al-A‘raf*: 138).

They said this while they were still inundated in Allah’s Blessings of saving them from their enemy and appointing them as vicegerents in the earth; and despite that, by merely coming onto dry land and seeing a group of people worshipping an idol, they asked Musa (Moses) to make an idol for them to worship. That is why Allah *the Almighty* threatened them by saying: ‘[And to Harun (Aaron) he said:] “Verily, as for those who have taken to worshipping the [golden] calf – their Lord’s Condemnation will overtake them...”’ (*al-A‘raf*: 152), ‘...and ignominy [will be their lot] in the life of this world!’ For thus do We requite all who invent [such] falsehood.’ (*al-A‘raf*: 152)

Their Lord’s condemnation as well as ignominy and shame have overtaken them in the life of this world when Allah commanded them to kill themselves as a true proof for their repentance. Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...and when Musa

(Moses) said unto his people: "O my people! Verily, you have sinned against yourselves by worshipping the calf; turn, then, in repentance to your Maker and mortify yourselves; this will be the best for you in your Maker's Sight." And thereupon He accepted your repentance: for, behold, He alone is the Acceptor of Repentance, the Dispenser of Grace.' (*al-Baqara*: 54) This is a dangerous violation of Allah's way. It is the peak of violation of the due right of worshipping Allah Alone.

Another crime that their hands wrought is that they asked to see Allah, face to face, as they did not truly believe. They only believe in tangible matters that are visible to them. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And [remember] when you said, "O Musa (Moses), indeed we shall not believe thee until we see Allah face to face!" – whereupon the thunderbolt of punishment overtook you before your very eyes. But We raised you again after you had been as dead so that you might have cause to be grateful' (*al-Baqara*: 55-56).

After Allah had accepted the repentance of Musa's (Moses's) people who worshipped the calf, they returned once again to their stubbornness and materialism. They wanted a material god, a god that they could see, but Allah, due to His Sublimity, is unseen and not encompassed by human vision.

They asked to see Him face to face, clearly so that they could perceive Him with their senses. The thunderbolt of punishment overtook them before their very eyes because of this audacity of theirs. When you see something with your eyes, it is demarcated for you within limits, and this is not possible with regards to Allah *the Almighty*.

Their hands wrought four other crimes that they committed and continue to commit. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And so, [We punished them] for the breaking of their pledge, and their refusal to acknowledge Allah's messages, and their slaying of prophets against all right, and their boast, "Our hearts are already full of knowledge" – nay, but Allah has sealed their hearts in result of their denial of the truth, and [now] they believe in but few things.' (*an-Nisa*': 155)

They still continue to commit these four crimes and engage in them, and that is why Allah *the Almighty* mentioned the noun and not the verb in the following verses: '...their breaking of their pledge...' (*an-Nisa*': 155), '...their

refusal...' (*an-Nisa'*: 155), '...their slaying of prophets...' (*an-Nisa'*: 155) and '...their boast, Our hearts are already full of knowledge...' (*an-Nisa'*: 155). The noun indicates permanence and continuation, unlike the verb which expresses a time and is limited in its form.

Thus, they continue to break their covenants and pledges. They continue to disbelieve in Allah's verses whether they were sent down in the Torah giving glad tidings of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* or the verses of the Noble Quran, which they were asked to have faith in, and they refused. They have gone far in their audacity towards Allah as they even killed His prophets.

Another thing they wrought with their hands is that they write the Book with their own hands and then claimed that it is from Allah; Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Woe, then, unto those who write down, with their own hands, [something which they claim to be] divine writ, and then say, "This is from Allah", in order to acquire a trifling gain thereby; woe, then, unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them for all that they may have gained!' (*al-Baqara*: 79)

Here, Allah *the Almighty* shows the extent to which these people deliberately commit sins. It is as if it does not suffice them, for example, to tell someone else to write. Rather, due to their great concern for forging and corrupting Allah's Speech, they did it with their own hands in order to make sure that the matter was done exactly as they wanted it.

Thus, the matter is not a temporary whim or something accidental. Rather, it is done with wilfulness and premeditation, and that is why they deserved Allah's Punishment. The noble verse began with His statement 'Woe, then, unto those who write down, with their own hands, [something which they claim to be] divine writ...' (*al-Baqara*: 79), and is followed then by His statement '...woe, then, unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them for all that they may have gained!' (*al-Baqara*: 79)

Thus, upon writing, they have woe and punishment; upon concluding the sale, they have woe and punishment and that which they gain is woe and punishment. Allah says, '...[for] it is they who have taken error in exchange for guidance; and neither has their bargain brought them gain, nor have they

found guidance [elsewhere]' (*al-Baqara*: 16). An example of their exchanging guidance for error is 'Behold, those who barter away their bond with Allah and their own pledges for a trifling gain...' (*Al-Imran*: 77).

The circumstances⁽¹⁾ in which this verse was sent down is that during a time of drought a group of people entered upon Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf⁽²⁾, the Jew, and they asked him for provision, so he said to them: 'Do you know that this man is Prophet Muhammad?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Indeed I intended to feed you and clothe you, but Allah has denied you much goodness.' Then they asked: 'Why has Allah denied us much goodness?' The answer came to them: 'You have declared your faith in Muhammad.' When they had found themselves in this situation, they said to Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf: 'Leave us for a while because doubt might have overcome us. In that time, we will make up our mind.' After the period of time had passed, they came to prefer food and clothing to faith, and they said to Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf: 'We read in our Book that we have with us and we made a mistake. Muhammad is not a Messenger, so Ka'b gave them food and clothing.'⁽³⁾

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- (1) *The story of the group of people who forfeited their faith in return for some food from Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf*
 - (2) *Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf: a man from Nabahan from the tribe of Tay', and his mother was from Banu Nadir. His agnomen was Abu Na'ila. His father was killed in the Pre-Islamic Period and then he moved to Medina and allied himself with the Jews of Banu An-Nadir. He married 'Uqayla bint Abu Al-Haqiq and she gave birth to Ka'b.*
 - (3) *See Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi, Asbab An-Nuzul, (1/106), from the statement of Al-Kalbi: 'Due to scarcity of foodstuff, some poor Jewish scholars went to seek help from Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf in Medina. Ka'b asked them: 'Is there anything in your Book which indicates that this man is Allah's Messenger?' They said: 'Yes! Do you not find the same?' He said: 'No, I do not!' They said: 'Well, we bear witness that he is Allah's slave and Messenger.' Ka'b said: 'Allah has deprived you of much good, you came to me and I really wanted to be good to you and to clothe your dependents. But Allah has deprived you and deprived your dependents.' They said: 'We are not sure about him. Give us some respite until we meet him.' They went and wrote down a description which was different from that of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him after which they met Prophet Muhammad, and spoke with him and asked him some questions. They went back to Ka'b and said: 'We had thought that he was Allah's Messenger, but when we met him we realized that he does not fit the description that we had and found that his description is different.' They got out the new description which they had written down and showed it to Ka'b. Ka'b was very happy with them. He fed them and spent on them, and because of this Allah the Almighty revealed this verse.'*

So, do you think that it is possible for people like them to wish death? Allah says about them: ‘Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden – [so that now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few of them thou wilt always experience treachery...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 13).

In another verse, Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘Among those of the Jewish faith there are some who distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context and saying [as it were,] “We have heard, but we disobey”, and “Hear without hearkening”, and, “Hearken thou unto us, [O Muhammad]” – thus making a play with their tongues, and implying that the [true] Faith is false...’ (*an-Nisa*: 46). Also, Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...so as to make you think that [what they say] is from the Bible, the while it is not from the Bible; and who say, “This is from Allah”, the while it is not from Allah: and thus, do they tell a lie about Allah, being well aware [that it is a lie].’ (*Al-’Imran*: 78)

They twisted some of the meanings that had been derived from the words in order to deceive the believers that these incorrect meanings are actually correct. Indeed, they claim that the way sent down from the heavens contains what it does not contain actually.

That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...so as to make you think that [what they say] is from the Bible, the while it is not from the Bible...’ (*Al-’Imran*: 78). Indeed, when they distorted the Bible with their tongues, they twisted it out of a desire to deceive and swindle you into thinking that it is from the Book that was sent down from Allah to His Messenger.

It did not suffice them to distort their Book, insert verses into it and conceal its contents; rather, they proceeded to dissuade the believers away from Islam and the Quran; they even wanted to cause Muslims to have doubt concerning the Way. That is why they resorted to tricks, which Allah *the Almighty* mentioned in His statement” ‘And some of the followers of earlier revelation say [to one another]: “Declare your belief in what has been revealed unto those who believe [in Muhammad] at the beginning of the day, and deny the truth of what came later, so that they might go back [on their faith]”’ (*Al-’Imran*: 72).

This is mixing truth with falsehood and deceiving the believers, and some of the Jews, from the people of the Book, tried to deceive the believers by declaring their faith at the beginning of the day and then declaring their conversion back at the end of it. The objective, of course, was to spread doubt and confusion amongst the souls of the believers with regards to this religion.

Some of the members of Quraysh or Arabs could say: 'The people of the Book tested this new religion and they were the people who have knowledge of the ways of the heavens, and they did not find that it conformed to the ways of the heavens.'

When the people of Quraysh asked them about this religion: 'Are we more guided or Muhammad?', the Jews said: 'No, you are upon guidance.' Commenting on this incident, Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Are you not aware of those who, having been granted their share of the divine writ, [now] believe in baseless mysteries and in the powers of evil, and maintain that those who are bent on denying the truth are more surely guided than those who have attained to faith?' (*an-Nisa'*: 51)

Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf⁽¹⁾ asked Abu Sufyan: 'What has Muhammad done to you?' He replied: 'He has left the religion of his ancestors, cut off his ties of kinship and fled to Medina, while we are not like that. We give water to the pilgrims, we receive our guests hospitably, we set prisoners free, we keep our ties of kinship, and we make pilgrimage to the House and circumambulate around it.' Abu Sufyan magnified the deeds of Quraysh, so those who had been given the Book, due to their enmity towards Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to Abu Sufyan and his people: 'You are more guided than Muhammad.'⁽²⁾

That is why Allah *the Almighty* said about them: 'It is they whom Allah has cursed: and he whom Allah rejects shall find none to succour him.' (*an-Nisa'*: 52) That is their reward for dissuading them from His Path and preferring the disbelieving idol-worshippers to the one of whom their Books had given glad tidings. Indeed they lied, as how can those who associate partners with Allah

(1) *The story of the pact between Ka'b ibn Al-Ashraf and Abu Sufyan*

(2) *See Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir, (5/249).*

and worship idols be more guided than Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*? How will Allah *the Almighty* receive these people on the Day of Resurrection? With what face will they stand before Allah? That is why it is impossible for them to long for death or love to meet Allah, as they are infused with loving to disobey Allah and rebelling against His commands. Thus, they cannot imagine themselves dying and being reckoned for what their hands have wrought, that is, what they have done and what they have gained; they cannot leave off their evil which is their worldly nature.

That is why they oppressed themselves before they oppressed those whom they led astray. Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...Allah knows the wrongdoers very well’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 7). Allah has full knowledge of their oppression and their disobedience. This oppression and disobedience is what makes them fear death and not long for it.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلْقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ
إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنْذِرُكُم بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

So say, ‘The death you run away from will come to meet you and you will be returned to the One who knows the unseen as well as the seen: He will tell you everything you have done’ [8] (The Quran, *al-Jumu’a*: 8)

Allah *the Almighty* orders His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to say this to the people of the Book who think that they will never die, or that they will remain forever on earth or that they are able to flee from death. Allah *the Almighty* says to him: ‘So say...’, and Allah *the Almighty* does not want to address them directly due to the magnitude of what they have fabricated regarding Him *the Almighty* and how much Allah has favoured them with throughout their history. Thus, due to His Anger with their deeds and actions, He instructed His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* to address them.

In the past, they were entrusted with Allah’s Revelation and Books and they were asked to preserve them, but they broke their pledges and their covenants

with Allah, so the legacy of prophethood transferred from them to other people, and revelation was transferred to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Indeed, they came to be addressed by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and Allah sends to them what He wants via him *peace and blessings be upon him* 'So say...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8).

Indeed, they want to flee from death because they have not done anything good that could be stored away for them on the Day they will meet Allah, the Day that will inevitably come; they have forgotten that death has been decreed for all people, and that the life of this world is a stage between parentheses.

The first parenthesis is that Allah creates us and brings us into existence and the journey of life lasts until the second parenthesis, which extinguishes our humanity and ends our lives, i.e. death. In other words, we are on the journey of life by the Will of Allah and we will go back to Him. Therefore, the procedure of the life of this world truly starts with Allah and ends in death. No one controls life or death except Allah. If someone owned this, he would prevent someone from dying. Death is the violation of life. Allah *the Almighty* has concealed the time, place and cause of death as well as one's life span from us. He has not concealed it in order to veil it, but rather to make us expect it at any moment.

This is a sweeping notification of death such that it makes people rush towards righteous action and reward because in the life of this world there is no life span that is certain; no child can ascertain how long it will live, no youth can ascertain how long he will live and no middle-aged person can ascertain how long he will live. That is why each and every one of us must rush towards good deeds, so that death does not catch us by surprise and come to us in a state of disobedience.

Those who adhere to the way are reassured about meeting their Lord and they are reassured about His Reward. Those who do not believe in the Hereafter take life from Allah and spend it in that which is of no benefit. Then, after that, they find nothing but the reckoning and the fire.

The blessings that you currently enjoy will eventually come to an end, you leave them when you die or they will leave and abandon you. You will leave

the life of this world carrying only your deeds to your grave. Everything will come to an end while your sins will remain for you to carry into the Hereafter.

Upon facing death and ending life, man becomes coerced and can no longer choose. He cannot do anything for himself and he cannot say that he does not want to die now. His humanity has ended and his control over himself has ended, such that his limbs will testify against him.

Allah *the Almighty* emphasises the matter of meeting death here by using the Arabic particle *inna*. Allah *the Almighty* uses it twice in the same verse by saying: 'So say, "The death you run away from will come to meet you..."' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8). No one thinks that he will escape death and the meeting of Allah *the Almighty* because Allah *the Almighty* says, '...Wherever you may be, Allah will gather you all unto Himself...' (*al-Baqara*: 148). This indicates that there is no place in which you can hide from Allah's Knowledge. Allah *the Almighty* informs us that we cannot flee from His Knowledge or His Decree or His punishment, and that the only path that is open to us is to flee to Him. There is no refuge from Allah except with Him, and that is why neither the disbelievers nor the disobedient think that they will escape from Allah.

A person could be afflicted by death at any moment, and thus no one is able to take precautions against death in terms of time or place. Here, Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Wherever you may be, death will overtake you – even though you be in towers raised high...' (*an-Nisa*': 78). The human intellect that thinks that it is possible to take precautions against death must be made well aware that this cannot happen. The existence of the individual, whatever the circumstance is, cannot avoid or prevent death.

Death has been created with a secret that is extremely precise, and which suits only the precision of the Maker. It is subtle; it comes to man and seizes him at a moment and in a place that are not known to him. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Wherever you may be, death will overtake you...' (*an-Nisa*': 78). His Words: '...overtake you...' (*an-Nisa*': 78) indicate that when the spirit creeps within man, death and the spirit are released at the same time until the former overtakes the latter at the time decreed by Allah.

The Arabic word *yudrik* (overtake) makes it clear to us that death chases the spirit until it overtakes it and snatches it, as he *peace and blessings be upon him*

said about the righteous tradition of death chasing life: 'Until it overtakes it, life runs, and each one of you will be overtaken.' That is why the people of gnosis say: 'Death is an arrow that has been fired at you, and your life span is only measured by how long it takes to reach you'. Death chases the life of man and runs behind his spirit until it overtakes it, as if it is an arrow that has been fired and your life span is only according to how long it takes to reach you.⁽¹⁾ Death is real, no doubt about it.

The proof for this is that Allah *the Almighty* used the term 'fleeing (*tafirruna*)', as they are fleeing from death. They are running and death is running behind them. They are fleeing in order not to meet death and out of fear that it will overtake them and catch them.

But Allah dashes their hopes regarding this. He frustrates their hopes and wishes that they will be able to flee from death and escape from it. Allah *the Almighty* says it, '...will come to meet you' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8).

With its unique style, the Quran is distinguished in how it expresses an event and illustrates it in a way that is tangible and can be witnessed with one's eyes; people fleeing from something, and this thing is pursuing them until it overtakes them. Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...will come to meet (*yudrikkum*) you...' (*an-Nisa*: 78). However, here He gives us another gleaning: '...will come to meet you and you...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8). The word *mulaqi* (meet you) contains the meaning of meeting face to face, which is not the same as (*yudrikkum*) which means to chase and catch up with.

The meaning of *idrak* and *darak* is made clear to us in Allah's statement 'and as soon as the two hosts came in sight of one another, the followers of Musa (Moses) exclaimed: "Behold, we shall certainly be overtaken [and defeated]"' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 61). The situation was that the sea was in front of them and Pharaoh's armies were behind them. There was nowhere to flee or escape to, but Allah *the Almighty* reassured them and reassured Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* when He said: 'And, indeed, [a time came when] We thus

(1) See *Ath-Tha'labi, Al-'Ijaz Wal Al-'Ijaz*; he mentions the statement of 'Abdullah ibn Al-Mu'tazz: (Death is an arrow that has been fired at you and your life span depends on how long it takes to reach you.)

inspired Musa (Moses): “Go forth with My servants by night, and strike out for them a dry path through the sea; [and] fear not of being overtaken, and dread not [the sea].” (*Ta Ha*: 77)

The statement: ‘...fear not of being overtaken...’ (*Ta Ha*: 77) means do not be scared of Pharaoh catching up with you. When Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* wanted to take the children of Israel from Pharaoh and leave with them, before he had arrived with them at the sea, he let them know that the people of Pharaoh were coming with their armies. The people of Pharaoh were behind them and the sea was in front of them. Musa’s (Moses’s) people said, having faith in the means: ‘...Behold, we shall certainly be overtaken [and defeated]!’ (*ash-Shu’ara*: 61) So what did Musa (Moses) say? He did not say what his people said, but rather, he looked to the Original Cause *the Most High*. He said to those around him: ‘...Nay indeed! My Lord is with me, [and] He will guide me!’ (*ash-Shu’ara*: 62) Musa (Moses) being sent by Allah is a sign that Allah will never forsake him because He wants to fulfil the blessing of guidance at his hands, and Musa (Moses) was filled with certainty and confidence.

If death will overtake man, then at the same time, it will meet him, and man will come face to face with that from which he was fleeing. Death is man’s final outcome, as well as his antecedent. It precedes you and it waits for you for the moment that Allah has decreed for it, and in the place that Allah will decide for it. This gives the expression *yudrikkum* the sense of ‘encompassing’. Indeed, death will come after you, but all of a sudden, it will appear in front of you, i.e. you do not know where it will come from, whether from behind you or in front of you.

Meeting death is not an easy matter, especially for those who have spent their lives disobeying Allah because the disobedient, as well as the disbelievers who did not believe in death, or that it was possible to flee from it, will have the realities shown to them when the agonies of death approach them, and they will see what we do not see, as is mentioned in His *the Almighty* statement: ‘...and sharp is thy sight today!’ (*Qaf*: 22)

At that time man wishes to go back to the life of this world and he is still in the agonies of death, why? It is because he has seen the reality that he was

denying and disavowing and which he did not want to face. He has seen with his own eyes what he was fleeing from and now he is meeting it.

Those who witness someone's state as they go through the agonies of death see indications from them that they are seeking things that we do not, and everyone is according to their state and their conclusion.

Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Why, then, when [the last breath] comes up to the throat [of a dying man], the while you are [helplessly] looking on and while We are closer to him than you, although you see [Us] not, why, then, if [you think that] you are not truly dependent [on Us], can you not cause that [ebbing life] to return – if what you claim is true?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 83-87)

When death approaches someone, they see its severity with their own eyes and they see the angels of mercy or the angels of torment, according to their actions. They know for certain that they are undoubtedly leaving the life of this world and the opportunity to do righteous actions or have faith has gone.

When they see what was veiled from them in the life of this world, at the moment their deeds flash before their eyes, and if they see a recording of their life that is pleasant and illuminating, they smile and their face lights up and they are taken in that state. As for those who filled their lives with evil and disobedience, their faces turn black and contract and they are taken in that state. This is what we call the conclusion of one's deeds (*khatima*), for the moment of dying contains the certainty of death, and it is just like the moment an exam starts. You find the failing student turning pale, trembling, or twitching, while the diligent student is smiling, and his face lit up.

During the agonies of death, the mind is emptied of everything but the record of one's deeds, as that is what remains in the seat of one's feelings. At that moment, the dying person does not find any other thought in the seat of his feelings that contradicts or competes with the matter of the Hereafter.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says about the spirit leaving the disbeliever and the hypocrite: '...and [to cause] their souls to depart while they are [still] denying the truth.' (*at-Tawba*: 55) The moment of death is difficult and arduous for the disbeliever and the hypocrite. They leave their wealth and their children, their nice homes and towers that they built, and they head towards torment.

The towers that they have built will never protect them from death befalling them, as it is not prevented by anything, whatever it may be. There is no defence against it. We notice that the thoughts of the Jews from the people of the Book are directed towards establishing fortresses, towers, and walls, thinking that they will protect them from Allah's torment befalling them.

Allah *the Almighty* says about them: 'He it is who turned out of their homes, at the time of [their] first gathering [for war], such of the followers of earlier revelation as were bent on denying the truth. You did not think [O believers] that they would depart [without resistance] – just as they thought that their strongholds would protect them against Allah...' (*al-Hashr*: 2).

In Medina, they had fortresses and citadels, like the fortress of Khaybar. They were from the people of fortresses and the people of agriculture, and they live off of usury. They were heedless of the fact that if they were all sheltered in their fortresses and towers that were surrounded by other towers, like a fortified fortress, that sometimes their construction would be completed and it would be as if they were points surrounding a small circle surrounded by larger circle. This is how you find that the fortress is a point surrounded by several fortresses, and death overtakes human beings even if they are in a tower surrounded by towers, as Allah *the Almighty* has absolute power in executing the matter of death.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says, '...and you will be returned to the One who knows the unseen as well as the seen: He will tell you everything you have done.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8) To be brought back to Allah *the Almighty* is to return to Him *the Almighty* by being restored to life on the Day of Resurrection.

The word '...return...' indicates that they were with Him initially, and after that, they will be returned. They are from Him *the Almighty* because He brought them into existence. They will be brought back to Him to be reckoned, rewarded, and punished. Allah *the Almighty* says, '...and all will be brought back unto Allah, their true Lord Supreme...' (*Yunus*: 30). The words '...be returned to...' do not indicate that they were with the opposite and then they came to Him. Rather, it indicates that they were with Him initially and then they went to the opposite. Then they are brought back to Him a second time.

This is like Allah's statement about Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: 'And thus We restored him to his mother...' (*al-Qasas*: 13). This indicates that Musa (Moses) was with his mother and then he was separated from her. Then he was restored to her.

No one thinks that he will escape returning to Allah and being restored on the Day of Resurrection. Allah *the Almighty* settles this matter by saying: '...and you shall behold the earth void and bare: for [on that Day] We will [resurrect the dead and] gather them all together, leaving out none of them.' (*al-Kahf*: 47) It means that We will gather them for the Day of Reckoning because they have left the life of this world in stages, starting with Adam *peace be upon him* and death harvests the spirits and the day has come in which these people are gathered.

Allah says: '...leaving out none of them.' (*al-Kahf*: 47) In other words, We will not leave any of them, even if they were claiming that they were Allah's children and His beloveds. Everyone will be brought before Allah.

The root of the word *nughadir* (leaving out) leads to the meaning of leaving because the word *ghadr* means a breach of faith, or treachery. There is also the word *ghadir* which is a small stream of water because when the rain falls onto the ground, it flows and leaves behind a little bit of water in its tracks.

If the rain leaves something behind in the streams, then Allah – and He has the highest similitude – will not leave behind anyone such that they will not be brought before him. No one, not even an atom from one's body, will get away from standing before Allah in order to be reckoned. They will be brought back to: '...to the One who knows the unseen as well as the seen...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8). This is a precise expression because as long as Allah *the Almighty* is the Knower of the Unseen, then it is *prima facie* that He knows that which is witnessed. Allah *the Almighty* Knows what is hidden by the veil of the past and that of the future, and everything that is absent from man. He knows what man witnesses. His knowledge is not restricted to the unseen, while leaving that which is witnessed outside His knowledge. No. Rather, He knows the unseen and He knows that which is witnessed.

What is meant by *al-ghayb* (the unseen) is the absolute unseen, meaning that which is absent from you and others. We are witnessed by those who have

attended this gathering of ours. We are only unseen to those who are absent from it. This also includes electricity, gravity and other discoveries made by humanity. These things were unseen to those who came before us, even though they existed. When we had arrived at their preliminaries, they appeared to us and became witnessed.

That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, '...whereas they cannot attain to aught of His Knowledge save that which He wills [them to attain]...' (*al-Baqara*: 255). Therefore, what is known to others and unseen to you is not unseen. Likewise, what is unseen to you but has preliminaries that lead to it is also not unseen. Rather, the unseen is the absolute unseen that is absent from you and others.

Because Allah *the Almighty* is the Knower of the Unseen and that which is witnessed, nothing of the actions or statements of mankind are absent from His knowledge. Allah *the Almighty* knows what is even more hidden than this. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And if you say anything aloud, [He hears it –] since, behold, He knows [even] the secret [thoughts of man] as well as all that is yet more hidden [within him].' (*Ta Ha*: 7)

For Allah, saying something aloud is like keeping it secret, for just as He knows what is stated aloud He knows what is secret. Indeed, He knows what is more hidden than secret. A secret means that you single out someone and tell him something that you do not want to spread amongst people, and you whisper in his ear that you trust him with what you have said. You feel at ease when you tell your secret to someone you can confide in and trust not to disseminate.

But there is something that is more hidden than a secret because if a secret has left your mouth and entered the ear of the one listening to you, then there is another secret that you have kept and not uttered to anyone. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And [know, O men, that] whether you keep your beliefs secret or state them openly, He has full knowledge indeed of all that is in [your] hearts.' (*al-Mulk*: 13)

Allah *the Almighty* has full Knowledge of the hearts' hidden contents before they become speech, but some Gnostics say: 'In Allah's Knowledge, there is that which is more hidden than the most hidden'. What is it? They say: 'Indeed, Allah *the Almighty* knows what will be in the soul before it actually is'. Therefore, we have that which is stated aloud, that which is secret, that

which is more hidden than secret and that which is more hidden than the most hidden; Allah knows all of this. When mankind is brought back to the Knower of the Unseen and that which is witnessed, Allah will inform them of everything that they did. Allah *the Almighty* says: '...He will tell you everything you have done.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 8)

Allah *the Almighty* did not say that He would inform them of what they were doing or making in terms of actions, but rather what they were doing in an absolute sense, as actions are restricted to that which is done with the hands and legs, and the same goes for making. The word *ya'malun* comprises everything that man does, even if it is with his tongue, and a statement that the tongue utters is a deed (*'amal*) and not an action (*'fi'l*).

That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, 'on the Day when their own tongues and hands and feet will bear witness against them by [recalling] all that they did!' (*an-Nur*: 24) He puts tongues together with hands and feet regarding what they used to do. There is also Allah's statement: 'till, when they come close to it, their hearing and their sight and their [very] skins will bear witness against them, speaking of what they were doing [on earth]' (*Fussilat*: 20).

The deeds of hearing and seeing are not like the deeds of hands and feet, but Allah *the Almighty* gathered them altogether in. Thus, the ears heard what Allah had forbidden and the eyes looked at what Allah had forbidden, and these are not actions but rather deeds, meaning that they did not do an affirmative action in response to something. Someone who has heard something, maybe he heard something evil, but he did not harm anyone else because of what he heard, and this is a deed.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* defines for us the most intelligent of mankind and the most precise of them in terms of knowing the reality of the life of this world. The intelligent person therein is the one who knows and is certain that the life of this world is nothing but a crossing point to the life of the Hereafter. The true life is what Allah *the Almighty* has described by saying: '...whereas, behold, the life in the hereafter is indeed the only [true] life: if they but knew this!' (*al-'Ankabut*: 64)

He *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'The intelligent person is the one who takes his soul account and works from what comes after death, while the

feeble-minded person is the one who follows his soul's caprice and hopes for the best from Allah.⁽¹⁾ The intelligent person is the one who takes himself to account and works for what comes after death because death is the barrier between us and the life of the Hereafter. It is inevitable that death will meet us, as every soul is bound to taste death.

No one deceives himself into thinking that he will be able to flee from his destined outcome, otherwise he would have become feeble-minded and have deficiencies in his intellect. Thus, you would find him following his soul's whims and hoping for the best from Allah. How then, can you hope for the best from Allah when you have not worked for what comes after death with deeds that would rank you amongst the honoured ones? Instead, you have ranked yourself amongst the despicable who will be tormented because of what your hands have wrought and because you have not done acts of goodness and increased in acts of righteousness.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا
إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of God and leave off your trading — that is better for you, if only you knew[9]
(The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 9)

Allah *the Almighty* wants his slaves to gather together once every week because you can pray your obligatory prayers in your factory or your farm, or in any other place. However, on Friday you must gather together with others; why? It is because it is possible that you are humbling yourself before Allah, between you and Him, bowing, prostrating, and weeping before Him.

But Allah *the Almighty* wants this matter to be before people so that you can see everyone who has leadership and rank prostrating and humbling himself

(1) See *At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan*, no. (2459), *Ibn Majah, Sunnan*, no. (4260), *Ahmad, Musnad*, no. (17164), *Al-Bazzar, Musnad*, no. (3489) and *Abu Dawud At-Tayalisi, Musnad*, no. (1218) on the authority of *Shadad ibn Aws*.

before Allah along with you. On the Pilgrimage, you can see everyone who has rank and leadership carrying out the rites, just like you, and you say to yourself or to this person: 'We have been made equal in terms of servitude, as no one is raised over anyone else and no one humbles himself to anyone else. Rather, we are all Allah's slaves and we humble ourselves before Him alone'.

There are two days in the week that have been mentioned in the Quran by name, and they are Friday and Saturday, while there are seven days in the week and five have not been mentioned in the Quran by name. They are Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Friday is the festival of the Muslims, on which it has been legislated for them to gather together in the mosques and perform the Friday Prayer. We notice that Friday (*al-jumu'a*) has not derived its name from numbers, as all the days of the week are attributed to numbers apart from Friday and Saturday.

That is why we find that Sunday (*al-ahad*) comes from one (*wahid*), Monday (*al-ithnayn*) comes from two (*ithnayn*), Tuesday (*ath-thulatha*) comes from three (*thalatha*), Wednesday (*al-arbi'a*) comes from four (*arba'a*) and Thursday (*al-khamis*) comes from five (*khamisa*).

It was assumed that Friday would come from six; it does not; why? This is because it is the day on which the system of His Existence gathers together for the universe, so Allah *the Almighty* called it *Al-Jumu'a* and made it a festival.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* tells us about Friday by saying: 'Indeed Friday is the master of the days and the greatest of them in the sight of Allah. In the sight of Allah, it is greater than the Day of the Sacrifice and the Day of Breaking the Fast. It contains five attributes: it is the day on which Allah created Adam, on which Allah sent Adam down to earth and on which Allah caused Adam to die. It contains an hour in which no slave will ask Allah for something except that Allah will grant it to him, as long as it is not impermissible. On it the Last Hour will be established. There is no angel who is near unto Him, no sky, no earth, no wind, no mountain, and no sea except that they are aware of Friday.'⁽¹⁾

(1) See *Ibn Majah*, *Sunnan*, no. (1084), *At-Tabarani*, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir* no. (4387), *Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman*, no. (2712), *Ibn Abi Shayba in Musannaf* no. (815), and *Abu Na'im Al-Asbahani in Ma'rifat As-Sahaba*, no. (2405) on the authority of *Abu Lubaba ibn 'Abd Al-Mundhir*.

The festival is the gathering of the entire universe on this day, a gathering of Allah's blessing in bringing the universe into existence and completing it on that day. Thus, the believers in Allah gather together to honour the completion of the creation of the universe for them, and the completion of the creation was on Friday.

Allah legislated the gathering of Friday for a social reason, which is that a person looks for each of his brothers. What has held him back? Is he in need or ill? Has something happened to him? This means that the person does not have to humiliate himself and ask, and when he does that he has the sagacity of faith.

The children of Israel asked for a day in which they could take a rest from work and be free to worship Allah. Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* proposed Friday to them, as it is the day on which Allah completed the creation of the universe in six days and it is also the day which Allah's close friend, Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* chose, but they rejected Friday and chose Saturday.

They said: 'Indeed Allah created the world in six days, starting on Sunday, finishing on Friday and resting on Saturday, and likewise we want to rest and be free to worship Allah on Saturday.' This was their desire and their choice. As for the Christians, they refused to follow the Jews in Saturday or Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* in Friday, and instead chose Sunday based on it being the very beginning of creation. As for the *ummah* of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* Allah has chosen Friday for them as the day of concluding and completing the blessing.

This commandment to perform the obligatory Friday Prayer is like a congregational prayer, and a congregation is required therein. It is necessary that we turn up for it as a congregation because a congregation is stipulated and the prayer is not valid without it.

Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if only you knew. Then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9-10)

Of these two commands, one is connected to the religion and the other is connected to the life of this world, and they are both from Allah's way, as Allah does not want you to trade and work during the time of the prayer, nor does He want you to leave your work without any reason and remain in the mosque after the prayer. When you are called to the prayer, go to the mosque, and when the prayer is ended go and strive for your provisions.

Allah *the Almighty* addresses those who believe in the way by saying: 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). When the caller to prayer raises his voice with the words 'Allah is the Greatest', this is a call to devote oneself to Allah; to devote oneself at a defined time to stand before Him *the Almighty* and to be in His Presence and Allah will give you support.

When a person comes into his Lord's Presence through prayer and he begins with 'Allah is the Greatest', it is from this moment that he is in Allah's Presence. When the caller to prayer says, 'Allah is the Greatest', you observe that everyone comes, the rich before the poor, the subject along with the ruler. Everyone leaves their rank at the door of the masjid along with their shoes to be equal in prayer. Whoever has a boss who is overbearing over him sees him prostrating towards Allah, just like him, and he is at ease in that moment of equality in servitude. Let us assume that each one of us offers his daily prayers alone, the matter will be different as to the Friday Prayer because Allah *the Almighty* commands us to stop and leave everything to perform it together; the weak see the powerful abasing them standing before Allah, just as they do; and the strong see the weak besides them. When each one of us returns to his work, the masks of power and haughtiness will have been already taken off and removed because we all stand equally before One Creator. The words: 'Allah is the Greatest' draw our attention and remind us that Allah is Greater than anything that may preoccupy you, and we know that it is from the inimitable qualities of the call to prayer: 'Allah is the Greatest' and not 'Allah is Great'; this is out of respect for the many things that do preoccupy us in the life of this world and which we view them great. This is because the life of this world must not be neglected, since it is a passageway leading to the coming reward in the Hereafter. That is why I always say that the life of this world is too important to be forgotten and at the same time it is not important enough to be

one's ultimate objective. In the life of this world, you move about in the earth and strive for your nourishment and the nourishment of your dependents, so that this nourishment can assist you with worship. That is why no one should scorn the life of this world. Rather, he should thank Allah and supplicate to Him to give him enabling success so that he can expend all his effort in being successful in his work, as it is through good work that the slave obtains reward. As soon as the slave hears 'Allah is the Greatest', he must direct himself towards that which is actually greater, the True Lord *the Almighty* to perform the prayer. This is the meaning that is drawn from those who come early for the prayer and those who come late. When you hear the caller to prayer says, 'Allah is the Greatest' for the Friday Prayer, for example, you must leave the means of the life of this world and go to stand before Allah *the Almighty*. As for the soul of the believer, the greatness of the True Lord *the Almighty* is greater than everything is, and greater than everything that is great. That is why the words 'Allah is the Greatest' are the motto of your call to prayer and the prayer itself so you must declare Allah to be the Greatest and make Him greater than all vicissitudes that are besides Him. So, if you are called to prayer, whatever work you are doing, say: 'Allah is Greater than my work'. If you are called and you are in the presence of a powerful person, say: 'Allah is greater than every powerful person'. Declare Him to be the Greatest such that His commands and prohibitions take precedence over all other commands and prohibitions. The True Lord *the Almighty* says, '...and keep up prayer for My Remembrance.' (*Ta Ha*: 14) This means, 'for My Remembrance' because the permanence and monotony of blessings could make you forget about the Granter of Blessings. When you hear the call 'Allah is the Greatest', you see people rushing to mosque, nothing prevents them from it. You will remember if you had already forgotten and your heart awakens if you were heedless. The Arabic word *dhikr* (remembrance) is a gerund, and a gerund is added to a subject. For example, Arabs say, 'I was astonished by the ruler's beating of Zayd'. It can also be added to an object. For example, 'I was astonished by Zayd's beating on behalf of the ruler'. So, when you say, 'Allah's Remembrance', it is correct that the meaning could be remembrance emanating from Allah or even the slave's remembrance of Allah. If you said: 'Remembrance emanating from Allah' to the praying person, then when a person prays and remembers Allah in terms of

His Greatness when he says 'Allah is the Greatest' and declares Him transcendent when He says, 'Glorified is Allah' and prostrates and bows to Him the Almighty then you have indeed done Remembrance of Allah therein, remembrance in word and action, and Allah *the Almighty* recompenses your remembrance of Him by remembering you, as remembrance is remembrance from Allah of whoever remembers Him in their prayer. There is no doubt that Allah's Remembrance of you is greater and more sublime than your remembrance of Him *the Almighty* because you remember Allah from your adolescence until your death. As for Him *the Almighty* because of your remembrance of Him, He will grant you high ranks that have no end on the Day on which no one dies and His Blessings and Benefits will not be withheld from you. Allah's Remembrance of you, by way of reward and mercy, is greater than your remembrance of Him by way of obedience. This is according to the meaning of Allah's Remembrance of the slave. The other meaning or the slave's remembrance of Allah means that remembering Allah outside the prayer is greater than remembering Him in the prayer. How is that so? Some scholars say: 'It is because you are in the presence of your Lord after the opening *takbira* 'Allah is the Greatest', so when you have finished the prayer and gone back to your daily activity, your remembrance of Allah when you are far from His Presence is more immense and greater than your remembrance of Him when you are in His Presence. Do not think that remembrance is restricted to just the prayer. Rather, Allah's Remembrance must never be absent from your mind because your remembrance of your Lord outside the prayer is greater than your remembrance of Him *the Almighty* in the prayer. Your Lord is not waiting for you to come to Him. Rather, He is inviting you to visit Him. He turns to you before you turn to Him. Did He not say in a Qudsi Hadith: 'If someone remembers me within himself, I remember him within Myself, and if someone remembers Me in a gathering I remember him in a better gathering. If someone comes to Me walking, I come to him running, and if someone approaches me by an arm's length I approach him by a fathom's length.'⁽¹⁾

(1) See Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (6981); see also Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith, no. (9340, 10285), Al-Bayhaqi, *Al-Arba'in As-Sughra*, Hadith, no. (43), At-Tabarani, *Ad-Du'a*, Hadith, no. (18, 1865, 1870) and Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, Hadith, no. (811) from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

Therefore the reins are in your hand, what an excellent Lord is He Who treats His slaves in this way and bestows all these excellent favours upon them! Hastening to Allah's remembrance and leaving off trade for that end give a person boundless energy whose effects manifest themselves in man's second activities. That is why the True Lord *the Almighty* says after that: '...then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's Bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) The True Lord *the Almighty* has only called them to get a collective benefit which is that every believer should declare his slavery to Allah in front of the rest of creation. Thus, when Allah *the Almighty* calls you and invites you: He says, 'Allah is the Greatest' because the activities of life and the necessities of livelihood are a great matter in Allah's sight that should not be neglected. But if life's activities and striving therein are a great matter, then Allah is Greater, and your Lord takes you away from your work to pray, and after that He calls you to work. We notice in the term '*Allah Akbar*' that *Akbar* (greater/greatest) is a superlative used for hyperbole, and when something is less than *akbar*, we say *kabir* (great). It is as if the term is an indication that working and striving are not something paltry and insignificant. Rather, it is something great that you should be concerned with because it is the sinew of life and the building up of the earth cannot be done properly without it. The True Lord *the Almighty* draws our attention to the inimitability of the Quranic style in His saying: 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). The preposition *min* (of) defined an intended time for the prayer, and it is the Friday Prayer as a specified prayer to be performed in the time of the noon prayer, and unlike the noon prayer, it is performed as two units instead of four. This is from the Quranic exact style, for indeed Allah's saying: '...prayer is made on the day of congregation...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) does not single out a specific time, but rather, it makes the obligation to gather for prayer generally applicable to all the prayers on Friday, and this contains hardship, and Allah does not want hardship for His slaves. The True Lord *the Almighty* says, '...Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty...' (*al-Baqara*: 185). He *the Almighty* also says, '...and He has not laid upon you a hardship in religion...' (*al-Hajj*: 78). Thus, Allah does not want to bring hardship upon you or constrain you, or make matters difficult for you. Rather,

He wants to make everything easy, and thus His Legislation is laid down according to your ability. He has made concessions for you that make matters lighter for you and He has removed constriction and restraint from you. As for Allah's saying: '...hurry towards the reminder of Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9), 'hurry' here means to direct oneself and go to Allah's mosques. We must accompany this designation of place with a designation of task for which a person will enter mosque and direct himself towards Allah. The mosque is designated for the worship of Allah, and even though you can pray anywhere on the earth, when you come to the mosque, you must be accompanied by the etiquettes of worshipful devotion. The way you are affected, your interactions, your movement and your activity must all be for Allah's sake, and that is why the best thing you can do when you enter the mosque is to intend spiritual retreat (*'itikaf*), and thus stay away from anyone who intends to speak to you about worldly matters. A tradition has been mentioned regarding the prohibition of chatting in the mosque because it causes actions to go to waste and wipes out good deeds.⁽¹⁾ You do many good deeds outside the mosque, but you must enter the mosque with the standard proper practices of the mosque, as being present before Allah *the Almighty* in His mosque and in His House has its norms. Thus, you must not step over people, and this requires organisation, meaning that you do not make the places at the front empty and those at the back crowded, and this is so that everyone who wants to pray can sit without anyone being stepped over. People should sit in the first row and complete it before starting the second, and this is how faithful proper practices can be achieved in the mosques. One day, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to Salman Al-Farisi: 'Do you know what Friday is?' He said: 'Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said it three times and the third time he said: 'It is the day on which your father Adam was brought together.'⁽²⁾ Shall I not tell you about Friday? No man purifies himself and does so with excellence, wears his best clothes, applies perfume from his household if they

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- (1) *This is a statement that is uttered by common people: 'Chatting in the mosque consumes good deeds just as animals eat grass.'* See Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din*, (1/136); commenting on his *Takhrij Al-Hafizh Al-'Iraqi* said: 'I have not found any basis for it.' In his *Tabaqat Ash-Shafi'iyyah*, As-Subki said: 'I have not found a chain of narration for it.'
- (2) See Ibn Jarir At-Tabari and Al-Bayhaqi, *Al-Asma' Wa As-Sifat* and Ibn 'Asakir from Ibn Mas'ud and other Companions. See also As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, (1/254).

have perfume and if not then with water, then comes to the mosque and sits and listens quietly until the imam finishes his prayer except that it is an expiation for what is between two Fridays, as long as major sins have been avoided, and this applies all the time.⁽¹⁾ This day is Friday, and to exalt this day Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Shall I not tell you about Friday?' This means that what this day deserves great concern from us, so we should purify ourselves well and wear the best of our clothes.

The perfection of the Creator's Blessing towards the creation is that a person purifies himself in the way that Allah has laid down for him, and to hasten to Allah's mosque where Allah *the Almighty* is remembered. When the Muslim performs *ghusl* on Friday or makes ablution, two things have happened for him: purification and purity. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told us about the effect of ablution in purifying the Muslim and keeping him pure, as well as cleansing his limbs from filth and sins. He *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'When the Muslim slave, or believer, performs ablution and washes his face, every sin that his eyes looked at falls away with the water or the last drop of water, when he washes his hands, every sin that his hands grasped falls away with the water or the last drop of water. When he washes his feet, every sin that his feet walked in falls away with the water or the last drop of water such that he comes out cleansed of his sins.'⁽²⁾ The Muslim who is hastening to Allah's mosques wherein he will remember Allah must not rush to catch up with the imam and get the sermon or the prayer. This actually should be from the moment he makes ablution and leaves his house for the prayer. Beware of doing things that are incompatible with the prayer. Enter the mosque with tranquillity and dignity to carry out the prayer with the *imam*.⁽³⁾

(1) See Ahmad in his *Musnad*, Hadith no. (23769, 23780). See also Ibn Khuzayma, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (1732); see also Al-Bazzar, *Musnad*, Hadith no. (2526); An-Nzsa'i, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. (1677), 1737; Al-Hakim in *Al-Mustadrak*, Hadith no. (1028) and At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*, Hadith no. (5967) from the Hadith of Salman Al-Farisi.

(2) See Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith, no. (600); see also At-Tirmidhi, *Sunnan*, Hadith, no. (2); he graded it as a good and authentic Hadith. See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith, no. (8007); Ibn Khuzayma, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (4); Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (1040); and Al-Bayhaqi, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. (385, 386); all these narrations are from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra.

(3) It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'When you are called to the prayer,=

The first attribute that the True Lord *the Almighty* gave to those believers who attain to a happy state is: 'Who are humble in their prayers.' (*al-Mu'minun*: 2) He did not say, for example: 'those who perform the prayer' because the issue of the believers performing the prayer is settled. The lesson here is about 'manner and form', the lesson is to have humility and reverence, to have tranquillity and calmness of one's heart and to think in Allah before Whom you are standing. Likewise, you say to your child: 'Sit in front of the teacher, pay attention, and listen quietly'. You do not advise him to go to the school or attend the lesson because that matter is settled. That is why we are concerned with the essence of the subject and the state in which he should be. Humility (*khushu'*) means that the heart is calm and tranquil in this task that it has, and thus it is preoccupied with nothing but the prayer because Allah has only placed one heart in man. As long as one is in the presence of one's Lord *the Almighty* one should not be preoccupied with anything besides Him. In this respect, some pious Muslims said that the meaning of humility entails that if one intentionally knows who is on his right or his left, his prayer is invalid⁽¹⁾. When 'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* entered upon a man who was praying and playing with his beard, he struck him on his hand and said: 'If your heart were in a state of humility, your limbs would be in a state of humility.'⁽²⁾ Indeed, the True Lord *the Almighty* has made these people among the true servants of the Most Gracious. He *the Almighty* says, 'And the servants of the Beneficent Allah are they who walk on the earth in humbleness...' (*al-Furqan*: 63). This means 'with gentleness, tranquillity and tenderness, not with arrogance, pride or haughtiness', why? It is because walking is what exposes you to numerous

= *come to it walking and with tranquillity. Pray whatever you get from the prayer and complete what you have missed.* See Muslim in his *Sahih*, Hadith no. (1391); see also *At-Tirmidhi*, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. (327); *Ahmad*, *Musnad*, Hadith no. (7649 and 8207); *Al-Bazzar*, *Musnad*, Hadith no. (7664); and *Al-Bayhaqi*, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. (3759, 3770 and 3772) from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra.

- (1) In his *Ihya' 'Ulum Ad-Din* (1/160), Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali said: 'On the authority of Mu'adh ibn Jabal: 'Whoever intentionally knows who is on his right and his left while in prayer has no prayer.' In his *Risalat Al-Qushayriyya*, Al-Qushayri said: 'It has been stated that a condition of humility in the prayer is that one does not know who is on one's right and on one's left.' See also As-Saharwardi, 'Awarif Al-Ma'arif, (1/306); he attributed it to Ibn 'Abbas's sayings.
- (2) See *Al-Bayhaqi* in his *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. (3692).

societies, and this divine modesty in walking brings about human equality in society which makes everyone equal. In another place, the True Lord *the Almighty* teaches us the modest way of walking, as He says, 'And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice...' (*Luqman*: 19). Some scholars said: 'What is meant by 'pursue the right course in your going' is that man should walk naturally without feigning pride or arrogance, but at the same time without humiliation and dejection. When 'Umar saw a man walking sluggishly, he hit him and forbid him from walking in such a dejected or sluggish way; and this shows clearly how the walk of the believer should be; it is not arrogant and it is not sluggish and languid. The True Lord *the Almighty* is asking us to hasten to the mosque when He calls us to the prayer, and even though the entire earth is a mosque and all of it is pure, the mosque has been designated for prayer, and thus prayers should be performed there. If someone's house is far from the mosque, he must still come for prayer with tranquillity and dignity, and he should maintain this manner even if it means he will miss the opening *takbira* (*Allah Akbar*). Therefore, let us dedicate our sitting in the mosque to the Granter of Blessings, and He is Allah *the Almighty*. As for when we are outside the mosque, and at all other times, we live with the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon us. When the True Lord commands you to hasten to His Remembrance in His mosques, He is only inviting you to His mosque so that you can have a break and be relieved of your burdens and concerns. He rectifies whatever is wrong with you and opens the doors of comfort for you.

The mosque is a place of worship in which Allah is never disobeyed, unlike homes and other places. Allah has exalted His Houses such that He is not disobeyed therein, and He has exalted their visitors above being preoccupied with the trivialities of the worldly matters while therein, so you must leave the life of this world at the door of the mosque, just as you leave your shoes. That is why Islam has forbidden us from conducting transactions in the mosque, or even looking for something that one has lost because a transaction that is conducted in the mosque will be unsuccessful and unprofitable. How can you spend your entire time engaged in worldly matters, day and night, and then find it troublesome to spend a few minutes carrying out what Allah has obligated you to do, such that you are fully occupied with the life of this world, even into the mosque? Do you not know that the mosques have only

been made for Allah's worship? The believer must leave his worldly life outside the mosque, and he must intend to be in spiritual retreat, worshipping his Lord and remaining constant in His remembrance in His house. It is not befitting of you to be in the mosque and to be preoccupied with other than Him. If you were to adhere to the etiquettes of the mosque, you would receive light upon light from your Lord and you would be relieved of your anxieties and worries. Your problems would be solved from where you would never imagine, so make your moments in the mosque for Allah, as the mosque is a place of worship. That is why I say to anyone who talks to me in the mosque about anything related to life's activities: 'I am informing you that it will not be beneficial because you have entered the mosque solely for worship. Indeed, the moment you entered the mosque was the moment in which you came to draw near to your Lord, be in intimate conversation with him and live under his providence, so why are you bringing the life of this world with you?' Let one of the Companions be a good example for us, as he would say, 'We would leave the affairs of this world with our shoes.' Another Companion added: 'Even more, my brother. We leave our ranks with our shoes.' Look at the subtlety: the second Companion does not just leave his world with his shoes at the door of the mosque. He also leaves his rank in the life of this world. It is possible that the life of this world can take up several hours of your time, while going to the mosque only takes up a small amount of time, so put your rank with your shoes outside the mosque, and enter the mosque with no rank other than the rank of your faith in Allah. Sit in the place that you find empty and do not step over anyone to get to a specific place in the mosque because you are entering as Allah's slave. Someone who serves may end up sitting next to you and a young person may sit next to an old person. We do not notice you that have any rank except your rank with Allah. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would sit at the edge of the gathering,⁽¹⁾ this means that where he found a place for himself, and this is the opposite of our time in which a person uses a prayer mat to reserve a place for

(1) In his *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir* (17868), At-Tabarani narrated from the Hadith of Hind ibn Abu Hala At-Tamimi, describing Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that he *peace and blessings be upon him* would sit at the edge of a gathering when he came upon one and he commanded others to do likewise.' See also *Al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, Hadith no. (1/290).

someone else. A person may also enter and step over people to sit in the first row, and he doesn't know that Allah arranged the rows before he came to the mosque. As long as we will leave aside our ranks, do not say: 'Where will I sit and next to whom?' Rather, sit where you find the edge of the gathering and do not step over people. Intend spiritual retreat and do not talk about any worldly matter, and this is so that you do not come under the supplication of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that Allah does not bless you in that which you are seeking and have been cherishing for a long time.⁽¹⁾ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* forbade a person from setting aside a place for himself in the mosque that he would constantly sit in⁽²⁾ because the basis is that the person prays at the edge of the gathering, and thus people sit on a first come first serve basis according to their place and their hastening to the prayer, and thus one does not step over people or separate between two people. We see some people rushing to the first row, for example, and laying down a prayer mat to reserve a place and then they go and take care of some business. When they come late for the prayer, they step over the necks of people to get to their place. This leads to people being constrained by this behaviour, and they put the prayer mat aside and sit in its place. Indeed this behaviour is not befitting of the mosque, which bring about equality among all of Allah's creation and realise equality of slavery to Allah. Today you are next to so-and-so and tomorrow you will be next to someone else. Everyone is submissive to Allah, bowing and prostrating, and no one is deeming himself above anyone else. One of the most serious things that

(1) *It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'If you see someone selling or buying in the mosque, say: 'Allah will not make your trade profitable.' If you see someone looking for something that they have lost, say: 'Allah will not grant you any return for it.' See At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. (1321); Ibn Khuzayma, Sahih, Hadith no. (1305); and Al-Bazzar, Musnad, Hadith no. (8260).*

(2) *It is narrated on the authority of Salman Al-Farisi that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'A man does not perform ghusl on Friday, purify himself as much as he is able, rub some of his oil on himself or apply some perfume from his house, then leave and not separate between two people, then pray what Allah has prescribed for him, then listen quietly when the imam is speaking, except that he is forgiven for what is between that Friday and the last.' See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. (883, 910); see also Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. (23761) and Ibn Hibban, Sahih, Hadith no. (2776).*

Muslims are afflicted with is that places are now designated in the mosque for a specific class, and their places are left vacant. They are accompanied by bodyguards, even in the mosques. Then the person comes at a later time and sits in the first row, while another person spreads out his prayer mat to reserve a place. All Muslims should reject this behaviour. You must put the prayer mat to the side and sit down because the first to sit are the first to come, and Allah has made this arrangement in the mosque out of concern for it. This evil habit causes the person who does it to fall into many impermissible acts, in that they step over the necks of people and distinguish themselves over others without any right, and there is a lessening of slavery in the mosque. Allah *the Almighty* has distributed the places according to the arrival of people. If you come to the mosque first, you get the reward of the first row, even if you pray in the last row. If places were not reserved, harmony would spread among people, disparities would be removed, and people would become acquainted with each other. In each prayer, you would be next to a new person and you would get to know them and know how they are doing. Once someone is sitting in their place, they must listen quietly to the imam's *sermon* because it includes verses from the Quran. The True Lord *the Almighty* says, 'And when the Quran is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.' (*al-A'raf*: 204) Some scholars have pointed out that listening quietly to the sermon has been established by the proof of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: 'If you say to your Companion, while the *imam* is giving the sermon on Friday, "Be quiet", you have made a mistake.'⁽¹⁾ The Arabic word *khutba* (sermon) is comprised of the letters *kha`*, *ta`* and *ba`*, and they indicate matters that contribute to a number of particularities. These include the word *khutba*, the word *khatb* which is something immense, and there is also the word *khitba* (engagement).

All these particularities indicate that an immense matter is being dealt with, as *khatb* is an immense matter because it separates between two lives: the life of liberty and the life of being restricted by family. These are all meanings that contribute to a matter that is important and significant. The

(1) See Malik, *Al-Muwatta*, Hadith no. (232); see also Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (934); Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith no. (2002); Abu Dawud, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. (1114); and An-Nasa'i, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. (1402 and 1577).

matter of the Friday Prayer requires that you beautify yourself, confirming the True Lord's saying: '...attend to your embellishments at every time of prayer...' (*al-A'raf*: 31). This is what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* means in the Prophetic Hadith: 'Shall I not tell you about Friday? No man purifies himself and does so with excellence, wears his best clothes, applies perfume from his household if they have perfume and if not then with water, then comes to the mosque...' ⁽¹⁾ Regarding His saying: '...attend to your embellishments...' (*al-A'raf*: 31), when you hear of beautification, you turn your attention towards embellishing yourself beyond your normal habit, and this means that the Muslim goes to the mosque wearing the most splendid clothes that he has. We know that the mosque is a place in which Allah's slaves come together. We know that people's ranks and positions are different, yet we should also know that every task in this life has its own apparel and its own attire. The person who sits at a desk to meet people has a certain kind of clothes, and the person who works in metalwork has his particular uniform that suits his work. But when you go to the mosque to gather altogether to pray to Allah, does each person come wearing the clothes of his profession to enter the mosque? No, there should be clothes for the mosque that do not inconvenience others. If one's work clothes are not befitting, so wear clean clothes so that you do not trouble someone who is next to you. This is because we go to the mosque to perform a common deed that governs all of us, which is performing prayer to Allah in the mosque, so you must honour this praying. In another Hadith from Salman Al-Farisi, he *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Whoever performs *ghusl* on Friday, purifies himself as much as he is able, applies some oil or perfume, then leaves and does not separate between two people, then prays what Allah has prescribed for him, then listens quietly

(1) *It is narrated on the authority of Salman Al-Farisi that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'O Salman, do you know what Friday is?' I said: 'It is the day on which your father, or the father of all of you, was gathered.' He said: 'No, but I will tell you about Friday. There is no Muslim who purifies himself and does so with excellence, wears his best clothes, applies perfume from his household if they have perfume and if not then with water, then comes to the mosque and sits and listens quietly until the imam finishes and then prays, except that it is an expiation for what is between two Fridays, as long as enormities have been avoided, and this applies all the time.' See At-Tabarani, Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. (5967).*

when the *imam* has come out, he is forgiven for what is between that Friday and the last.'⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, the True Lord *the Almighty* commands that we hasten to the prayer on Friday. He *the Almighty* commands the believers to leave off trade for the sake of the Friday prayer. He says, 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). The True Lord *the Almighty* did not say 'leave off agriculture', or 'leave off manufacturing', 'leave off teaching'. Rather, He chose, from all the activities of life, the activity of trade specifically because it contains commerce and commerce includes all the activities of life. The True Lord *the Almighty* has taken you from trade to prayer and He has not taken you from idleness. Rather, He has taken you from the activity of trade, and He used the Arabic word *bay'* (trade) because it is a process that brings about immediate profit because when you plant crops you have to wait for a period of time, lengthy or not, before they bear fruit. However, trade bears its fruit immediately. You trade and you take the profit immediately.

Trade permeates all the activities of trade because the meaning of trade is that it is a medium between a producer and a consumer. When you buy a commodity, that commodity has come from a producer, and the producer looks for an intermediary to sell it to the consumer, and you find this consumer to also be a producer and the producer to also be a consumer. Thus, producing and consuming are exchange and activity, and all of life is in buying and selling, and as long as there is buying there is selling, and this is the continuation of life's activity. Allah *the Almighty* makes it clear: Leave off this process that brings immediate profit, and heed the call to the Friday Prayer. When man leaves off buying he obviously leaves off selling because buying and selling are two sides of the same process. The only difference is that the buyer may buy the commodity and be reluctant to buy because he is consuming his money with what he is buying. As for the trader, he wants to obtain the price of the sale immediately, and most of the time one obtains the profit afterwards, and this is the peak of earning. A farmer's earnings, for example, come months after the actual farming. The earnings of the employee come at the beginning

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. (910)*; see also *Ibn Hibban, Sahih, Hadith no. (2776)*; *Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan Al-Kubra, Hadith no. (2103)*; and *Ad-Darami, Sunnan, Hadith no. (1541)*, from the *Hadith of Salman Al-Farisi*.

of the month. As for the trader, he obtains the earnings immediately, and that is why the True Lord commands us to leave off trade when we hear the call to the prayer on Friday. If we were to look at the subtlety of the effectuation of trade we would find that it is the peak of directly taking one's provision, and the True Lord *the Almighty* mentioned trade because it is the peak of instant expediency. The command came to leave off this instant benefit to perform the Friday Prayer, and this command guarantees that all matters that could bring about subsequent profit are left off in order that the prayer be performed.

Indeed the word *bay`* is a subtle expression because the One speaking is Allah, and the True Lord did not speak here, for example, about buying because the buyer may buy something reluctantly. The seller, on the other hand, is more than happy to sell. A man may go to buy some things for his house and hears the call to prayer and thus rushes to the mosque. He says to his family afterwards: 'I went to buy but the call to the Friday Prayer was given'. This is because man does not like to spend money. As for the seller, he benefits absolutely. Man's desires are attached to selling and not buying, as buying requires that we have money, as opposed to selling, which earns money. That is why the seller is sad when he does not sell. As for the buyer, when he can not find something or he finds that the shop is closed, he says, 'Oh well, Allah did not want this transaction to happen'. Know that if you devote yourself to Allah, He gives you abundant blessings that compensate your profits in the life of this world and its commerce. That is why the motto of the call to prayer that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was pleased with is 'Allah is the Greatest', means greater than anything besides Him. If you are sleeping, then Allah is greater than sleep, and if you are engaged in commerce then, Allah is greater than commerce, if you are working, then Allah is greater than work and so on and so forth. It is amazing that we see those who give precedence to work over the prayer on the argument that the time is extended and one can pray after finishing work. This is a flimsy argument because when your Lord calls you with 'Allah is the Greatest', He wants you to respond immediately and not with slackness. Otherwise, how can you call it responding to the call if it is delayed beyond its time? The length of time, especially between dawn and noon and between nightfall and dawn, does not mean that you pray throughout this time, because the call necessitates hastening and response.

Allah's saying: '...that is...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) is a demonstrative referring to that which preceded it which means hastening to Allah's remembrance, and it is the Friday Prayer and its connection to leaving off trade. The particle *dha* is a demonstrative while the letter *kaf* indicates address because the True Lord *the Almighty* is addressing a group. Some of those who do not understand the Arabic language say that *dhalikum* is one word of address or a demonstrative, and you say to them: 'No, rather, it is two words, a demonstrative and an address, and the demonstrative here is for one thing and the address is for a group. In Allah's saying: '...better for you...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9), the Arabic word *khayr* (better) is a comparative and its origin is *akhyar* meaning that it gives you lawful benefit and profit. This is a good thing that brings goodness to man. If this is better, then it has more goodness than it and it is responding to the call to the prayer on Friday, leaving off trade, and hastening to Allah's remembrance wherever you are called to it. In Allah's saying: '...if only you knew' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) knowledge means that you take a matter that you believe in; it has a reality and you are able to prove it, and if one of these conditions is unfulfilled, it is no longer knowledge. I say that Allah's saying: '...if only you knew' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) means that you know for certain a matter that is relative, real, and believed in and you are able to prove it, as there are scales by which we know what is good and what is evil. And when the True Lord *the Almighty* says, '...if only you knew' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9), it is as if there are preliminary steps leading to knowledge, and if they do not know then Allah will teach them.

Then the True Lord *the Almighty* says:

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا
 مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out God's bounty. Remember God often so that you may prosper [10] (The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 10)

When the True Lord *the Almighty* tells us about the prayer from Friday He says, 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading—that is better

for you, if only you knew, then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9-10). This is how the True Lord *the Almighty* takes us from work to prayer, and after the prayer He commands us to work and strive, disperse freely on earth and seek to obtain something of Allah's bounty. Disobey command in Allah's saying: '...hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). The same as disobeying the command in Allah's saying: 'then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10). This is because Islam does not approve of laziness and is not pleased with idleness and sitting around. Whoever wants stillness will not benefit from the activity of someone moving. When `Umar⁽¹⁾ saw a man living in the mosque and never leaving it, he asked: 'Who is providing for him?' Some people said: 'His brother.' He said: 'His brother is more worshipful than him.'⁽²⁾ Why? It is because he partakes in life's activity and he spreads benefit among mankind. Therefore, every beneficial work is worship on the condition that it has the right intention. The disbeliever works and his intention is to provide for himself, and if the believer were to do likewise then what is the difference? Yes, the believer works to feed himself, and to make it easier for his brothers to be nourished and to facilitate their activities in life. If a taxi driver, for example, works and earns enough for the day and then goes home and parks his car, who is going to take the patient who needs to get to the doctor? If the seller were to earn his sustenance and then close his shop, who would sell to the people? Therefore, work for yourself but at the same time think about the benefits and needs of others, and if you do that you will be in a state of worship. Work according to your capacity, not according to your need. Then take what you need from what your capacity has produced. The rest can be given back to people, either in the form of charity or at a price, and it suffices

(1) *The story of `Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be pleased with him with the worshiper in the mosque.*

(2) What Al-Ghazali mentioned in *Al-Ihya`* (2/350) is from the statement of `Isa (Jesus) peace be upon him that he said to a man: 'Your brother is more worshipful than you.' See Abu Bakr Ad-Daniuri, *Al-Mujalasa Wa Jawahir Al-`Ilm*, (753); and Ibn Qutaiba, *Uyun Al-Akhbar*, (1/137). As for what has been mentioned from `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, he said to someone who was not working: 'Indeed the sky does not rain down gold or silver.' Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (2/153) attributed it to `Umar saying: 'None of you should sit around asking for sustenance by saying 'O Allah, grant me sustenance', when you know that the skies do not rain down gold or silver.'

that you facilitate a way for it. Therefore, we say that worship is every activity that carries out a service in the universe and your intention therein is for Allah. Worship is the worshipper's obedience of the object of worship. Therefore, do not think that the only worship we do is prayer, fasting, *zakat* and the Pilgrimage because these are the pillars of Islam. As long as these are the pillars and the foundations upon which Islam is based, it therefore means that Islam is not just comprised of the pillars. Rather, the pillars are the foundations upon which Islam is built. The foundations upon which a house is built are not the entire house, and that is why Islam is a multifarious construction. Those who take from systematic terminology, or technical terminology in science, say that worship is the prayer and whatever is connected to it, along with *zakat*, fasting and the pilgrimage because in the books of jurisprudence, they are referred to as 'worship' (*'ibadat*) I have replied by saying that this is the technical term, but every matter from Allah is worship, and that is why some people say: 'We worship Allah and we do not work.' We respond to them by saying: 'Worship is the worshipper's obedience of the object of worship, so do understand worship on the basis that it is the outward rites only, as the outward rites are a declaration and a perpetuation of allegiance to Allah. The outward rites give you a boost with which you face the events of life, but the outward rites alone are not all of worship, as transactions (*mu'amalaat*) are also worship, and the true understanding of worship is that it comprises the building up of the earth. That is why He *the Almighty* says, 'then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10). Thus, if we have obeyed Allah in the first command: '...hurry towards the reminder of Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9), then the command in Allah's saying: '...disperse in the land...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10), also merits obedience. Thus, every activity in life is worship. Then, does not the prayer need some sustenance of life? Indeed, it provides you with the essentials of life so that you can pray, and what are your life's essentials? Indeed, they are food, drink, a place to live and clothing, and that which is needed to fulfil an obligation is also an obligation.

An example of this is that when a person prays he needs strength, and strength originates in the body as a result of consuming food. Therefore, the process of making food is an obligatory matter, and everything that is a consequence of that is also an obligatory process. That is why, when someone

comes and says, 'I want to dedicate myself to worship and be isolated from life's activity', we say: 'Do that on one condition, which is that you do not benefit from the activity of a single active person in life and that you do not eat any food. That is because the loaf of bread that someone gives you is from the work of many people who have not cut themselves off from life.' I also say: 'Why are you wearing those clothes? Indeed, these are the products of the life activity of many other people, as there are those who grow the cotton, those who gin the cotton, others who turn it into yarn, still others who weave it and last of all, those who add the details to these clothes. 'Look at the tools that are behind each one of these people. So, as long as you have decided to cut yourself off from life's activity, beware of deriving benefit from the activity of a single person who is preoccupied with the means.' Indeed, working with the means is worship because worship cannot be done without it, and whatever is needed to fulfil an obligation is itself obligatory. That is why we learn the beneficial skills of life, and they are a communal obligation. The obligations that are binding upon man fall into two categories. The first is an individual obligation, which is a command for which each individual is legally responsible. A person has to do it himself and is not allowed to have someone else do it for him such as the prayer. The second is a communal obligation without which the obligatory cannot be done, and that is why it is obligatory. Each one of us wants food, and that is why we must divide the work, so this person grows crops and this person manufactures. We need to grow wheat. We need to build mills. We need to build ovens, and we need engineers to design these machines. All these are matters that make it easy for man to acquire the strength to perform prayers. You stand before the True Lord to perform the prayer, but what about after the prayer? Here the True Lord *the Almighty* says, 'then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) Therefore, let no one say that he is dedicating his entire life to prayer, as no one is able to go and pray without having his essentials of life, and the essentials of life require that man go about the earth and man must seek to obtain some of Allah's bounty. The True Lord *the Almighty* has commanded His believing slaves to disperse freely on earth because He has a goal and an objective. The goal is to strive and seek sustenance, and one of the meanings of *intishar* (dispersing freely) is *siyaha* (travel), which is taken

from water flowing, and when it overflows, it occupies a larger area. Dispersing freely, or travelling in the earth, should be organised, just as you sprinkle a drop of water onto a fabric and an ordered circle appears. The same goes for your dispersing freely in the earth to strive and seek sustenance; it must be according to a specific order such that there is no accumulation in a place or crowding, while at the same time, in another place, there is no one to develop it and extract its resources. Allah *the Almighty* wants us to travel in the earth, or disperse freely therein, for two objectives. The first is to go about the earth and seek Allah's sustenance and His bounty, as He *the Almighty* says, '...and others who travel in the land seeking of the bounty of Allah...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). Going about the earth does not just mean dispersing freely therein. Rather, what is meant is work, marriage and extracting its resources because the Creator *the Almighty* has scattered nourishment all over the earth in equal measure, and He has done the same with resources. That is why the earth gives us new blessings from Allah every day. We did not know about the earth's resources apart from agriculture, and as science and discoveries have advanced and their machines and tools have developed, we have come to know about minerals, petrol and other treasures buried in the earth. We would not know about or extract any material treasures in the earth without going about the earth, and we said previously that the original meaning of *darb* (going about) is to attack something with force. We used to be amazed at the people who live in the steppes and the desert and we would feel sorry for them. How could they live in this barrenness and scarcity? Why did they not leave this place for somewhere else? Now, after the discovery of petrol, they have become the wealthiest of people and all the resources of the world have come under their feet; why? It is because they held onto their land and their territory and they were patient with it until the time came and they benefitted from its resources. If they had despaired of it, they would not have obtained this benefit. As for the second objective of travelling in the earth and going about therein, it is travelling to consider and reflect on Allah's signs in His universe, for by travelling and roaming the earth I can see signs that do not exist in my usual surroundings. Regarding this, He *the Almighty* says, 'Say, "Travel in the earth and see how He makes the first creation, then Allah creates the latter creation; surely Allah has power over all things."' (*al-'Ankabut*: 20) In another place, He *the Almighty* says, 'Say, "Travel in the

land, then see...” (*al-An‘am*: 11). The meaning of going all over the earth is to seek sustenance that should be accompanied by beholding and reflecting on Allah’s signs. Beware of thinking that Allah wants you to remember Him for just a while. Rather, you should remember Him always and forever, and if prayer has a circumstance in which it is performed, remembrance of Allah has no set time. That is why Allah has made it easy and simple without any difficulty, not in terms of time or effort. In remembering Allah, it suffices you to reflect on the things you see as you pass by them, and let your eyes behold them so that you can see Allah’s Power therein. It is from His *the Almighty* magnanimity that He rewards the slave for every activity of goodness he does in this world because this activity is required by faith.

For example, if you want to perform the obligation of prayer, you need strength to carry out this obligation and you will only acquire this strength from food and drink. Let us take the simplest kind of food that can be imagined...a loaf of bread...and look at how many hands participated in producing it, from the moment the grain of wheat was placed in the ground until it became a tasty loaf. Indeed, all the people who spun the wheel of this process are carrying out a positive activity in life which is, in and of itself, worship because it assists you with worship. Also, when you want to pray, it is obligatory for you to cover your nakedness. Look at the fabric without which your prayer cannot be done. Everyone who participated in the growing of the cotton, or in the raising of sheep to take the wool and manufacture it so that it could reach you, all these people are performing an act of worship because of their participation in manufacturing this fabric. Therefore, everything that assists you in worshipping Allah is also worship, and every activity in the world that leads to anything from this is worship. When the True Lord *the Almighty* summons the believers to the Friday Prayer, He says, ‘Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading that is better for you, if only you knew.’ (*al-Jumu‘a*: 9) He did not take them from idleness but from work, and when the prayer has ended, He commands them to return to work and strive throughout the earth: ‘then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah’s bounty...’ (*al-Jumu‘a*: 10). Know that the sustenance for which you are dispersing freely to obtain and which you are seeking is only

from Allah's bounty, so beware of letting your dispersing and your seeking of Allah's bounty and your use of the means in the life of this world preoccupy you from your obligation towards Allah. Rather, you must remember Him *the Almighty*. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening and be not of the heedless ones.' (*al-A'raf*: 205) It means, do not be from among those who are heedless of what Allah has required and the bounds that Allah *the Almighty* has made clear, because the meaning of heedlessness is that you are preoccupied from your Creator. If you keep your Creator in mind at all times, then you will not be heedless of His requirements, in the morning and in the evening, and at all times, whether you are performing one of the five prayers or going about the earth, in any of its meanings. The call of your Lord is greater than the activity of life, so you must respond to it, because the call of your Lord is what will grant you strength and energy, and it will give you the boost of faith that will enable you to devote yourself to your work with resolve and sincerity. Let us look at the subtlety in His *the Almighty* saying: '...disperse in the land...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10). Dispersing means that human beings spread out to enter and take part in all the activities of life, and this is how every activity therein develops, as every activity in life is worship. It is as if you go to the mosque to take a boost of faith that will assist you and take control over all your senses, in your activities in commerce, in your production and consumption and in everything that benefits you and augments your life. And when your Lord commands you to free up some time to perform the prayer, He does not want this free time to hamper your activity in life. Rather, it is so that He can give you the necessary fuel so that your activity in life can come to be in accordance with what Allah wants. And how similar is this time that you store up, from the benefits of our life in this world, for worshipping Allah to the charge of an electric battery because when you take the battery to the charger you do not say, 'You killed the battery'. Rather, you increased its efficiency to perform its task and you take the benefit. What is sought from the believer is that he participates in life's activity in a positive way, constructive and beneficial in life and assists with religious devotion. If we were to take the example of covering one's nakedness which is obligatory and the prayer cannot be done without it, to cover your nakedness so that you can

perform the prayer you need a garment to wear. How will you be provided with this garment? It needs a tailor to sew it. It needs a retail merchant from which the fabric is bought. Then it needs a wholesale dealer, followed by a textiles factory, followed by spinning, dyeing and ginning. It also needs a farmer who grows the cotton and gathers it. This entire process needs several machines, tools and working hands and all this activity is for your sake, to serve you and assist you. Therefore, these worldly jobs, without which religion cannot be established, are obligatory and are not to be undervalued. Rather, they should be preserved and sanctified because they hold the rank of obligation. When your Lord takes you from these jobs to the prayer, for example, He is not taking you from an insignificant, trivial job that has no value. Rather, He is taking you from work, which in and of itself is worship, and that is why He has declared it great. As for calling you to the prayer, it is greater than all of that. That is why the True Lord *the Almighty* has only called the believer to the Friday Prayer, when He *the Almighty* says, 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9).

When the prayer has ended, your Lord returns you to the work from which He summoned you, and He takes you back to your life in this world. Therefore, do not undervalue working in the life of this world and do not think that it is far from the religion. Rather, it is a part of it, and that without which an obligation cannot be done is itself an obligation. Thus, He commands us to go back to the activity of life because it is a means to the abode of the Hereafter and a field in which our provisions are prepared to meet Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, the life of this world is too important to be neglected, as it helps us for the Hereafter, but it is not important enough to be an objective in itself. The True Lord *the Almighty* has given you an intellect to think with and He has given you energy with which to act. He has subjugated the world for you with all the sustenance that is buried within it so that you can extract it and live off it. This is how it is made clear to you that everything needs you to be active, and in your activity, you need energy that you take from those higher than you are and you give to those lower than you. When you are called to respond to Allah's call, your energy is boosted, and you go back to your daily life after renewing your allegiance to the One Who created you and created the entire universe. If you stand before Allah with excellence then

your future will come to you based on that excellence. An example of the magnitude of the feelings that the Followers had for Allah's signs is that which has been related from 'Arak ibn Malik⁽¹⁾. When he had completed the Friday Prayer, he would go out and stand at the door of the mosque and say: 'O Allah, I have responded to Your call, I have prayed what You made obligatory and I have dispersed as You commanded me, so grant me sustenance from Your bounty, and You are the best of those who provide sustenance.'⁽²⁾ And You said your saying of truth: 'Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if only you knew, then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9-10) When 'Abdullah ibn Bisr⁽³⁾ had completed the Friday Prayer, he would leave the mosque and go far away from it. Then he would return to the mosque and pray whatever Allah had willed him to pray, so he was asked: 'Why do you do this?' He replied: 'It is because I saw the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* doing likewise.'⁽⁴⁾ Those who want to detach the religion from the activities of life say: 'Indeed the religion is concerned with acts of worship like the prayer, fasting, *zakat* and the pilgrimage.' I say to these people: 'You are talking about what has reached you from a religion that has not come to organise the activities of life. Rather, it has come to give the dose that was lost by the Jews, which is the spiritual dose.' As for the religion of Islam, it has come as a seal of all religions, organising the activity of life, as every matter in life and every activity therein comes within

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- (1) 'Arak ibn Malik was from Banu Ghafar ibn Malil. He died in exile in the time of Yazid ibn 'Abd Al-Malik in the year 104 A.H. in Dahlak. He was a great sheikh, one of the most reliable followers, an abstaining slave, one of the closest companions of 'Umar ibn 'Abd Al-'Aziz against Banu Marwan regarding what they had taken from the spoils of war and the injustice they had committed.
- (2) See *Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir*, (18/109); see also *Ibn Kathir* (8/122); *Fakhr Ad-Din Ar-Razi, Mafatih Al-Ghayb*; and *Ibn Hajar, Fath Al-Bari in Sharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p. 546.
- (3) 'Abdullah ibn Bisr Al-Mazani Abu Safwan is from Banu Mazin ibn Mansur, a Companion from among those who prayed towards both Jerusalem and Mecca. He died in Homs in the Levant in the year 88 A.H. at the age of 90, and he was the last Companion to die in the Levant. *Al-'Alam Az-Zirikli* 4/74]. In his *Siyar A'lam An-Nubala'* (3/430), *Adh-Dhahabi* described him as the blessings of the Levant.
- (4) See *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (chapter of *al-Jumu'a*) and he attributed it to Abu 'Ubayd, *Ibn Al-Mundhir, At-Tabarani* and *Ibn Mardawayh*. See also *Al-Alusi, Ruh Al-Ma'ani*, (14/298).

the bounds of obedience. Islam is broader than the five pillars. The pillars are a boost that your Lord summons you to. So, from meeting Him, take the support that will help you engage in life's activity. This is similar to a battery that you take to be charged. We do not benefit while it is charging. Rather, we give it the necessary charge so that we can use it afterwards. What is amazing about divine mercy is that Allah *the Almighty* has made going to boost one's energy a legal obligation that must be done. You must meet Me five times in the day and night and you must hasten to the prayer from Friday. You are My creation and My making. The maker knows best as to what will benefit his making, so imagine a making that is shown to its maker five times in the day and night. Will it continue to bear any damage? This is the case with a human maker, so what do you think if the maker is the Maker of humanity and their Creator *the Almighty*? The human maker will fix his making with material things, and this is because the engineer and his making are material and they are fixed with that which is material. As for the Creator *the Almighty* He is unseen, and when He fixes whatever is wrong with you He does so with the unseen, and thus you do not feel it and you do not see it. Therefore, we say that we must understand the religion as it truly is, and we must understand that each one of us has a task. If someone is better than you are at something, then know that his superiority is for your benefit and it will come back to you because with his superiority he is carrying out a service for you while at the same time you will not benefit him. One of the things that draw our attention is the True Lord's saying: '...hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) followed by: 'then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10). The address is entirely for men, as it is men who are legally responsible for the Friday Prayer when it is called to. Also, they are the one usually involved in the process of trade. You notice that the True Lord did not mention buying, which can be engaged in more by women. Then comes: '...disperse in the land...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9). For women, spreading freely on earth and striving for sustenance is only done out of some necessity that pushes them towards it, and the society must not put women in situations where they have to manage their necessities as well as their lives.

Men are legally responsible and demanded to be active in this world. As for women, they administer their homes so that they are a place of rest for their

husbands and children, and to produce men for this society. If the circumstances and the necessities of life push her towards it then she can be active to earn a living, but it must be according to what will bring about respect and appreciation for her from the society. The society, in turn, must suffice her needs and preserve her dignity.

Then the True Lord *the Almighty* says, '...Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) When the True Lord *the Almighty* addresses the Muslims, He does not say what He said to the children of Israel: 'Remember Allah's blessings.' Rather, He says, '...remember Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) because the children of Israel are materialistic and worldly. It is as if the True Lord *the Almighty* is saying to them: 'As long as you are materialistic and worldly, then remember Allah's material blessings that He gave you'. But we are Muslims, a nation that is not materialistic, and there is a difference between someone being with the blessing and being with the Granter of Blessings. The materialists love the blessing, while the non-materialists love the Granter of Blessings and live in His company. That is why Allah's address for the Muslims is: '...remember Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) because we, Muslims, worship the Lord of Blessings, while Allah's address for the children of Israel is: '...Remember the blessings which Allah bestowed upon you...' (*Ibrahim*: 6).

Another time, Allah *the Almighty* says, 'O You who have attained to faith! Remember Allah with unceasing remembrance' (*al-Ahzab*: 41), and another time He says, 'And remember your Lord...' (*Al-Imran*: 41).

His statement '...remember Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10) has the name of majesty, *Allah*. Hearing '*Allah*', one becomes aware of the commandments because Allah is the One to be worshipped; consequently, He is obeyed in what He commands and forbids.

As for His statement 'And remember your Lord...' (*Al-Imran*: 41), it reminds you of the favours that He has granted you. He created you, nurtured you and gave you some of His overflowing blessings, which is countless. Remember your Lord because if you do not ardently love His commandment then you, at least, ardently love Him because He has granted you these blessings, and Allah *the Almighty* protects and bestows favours upon all of us.

Remember your Lord in two states. The first is a state of imploring, i.e. humility; one may remember someone with pride. Allah is The Beneficent Creator. You must remember Him with the humility of someone who is a slave to His station of Lordship.

The second is to remember your Lord in a state of dread, i.e. fearful and imploring because whenever you humble yourself before Him, He makes you mighty, and remembrance means remembering Allah always.

Allah *the Almighty* says, 'so remember Me, and I shall remember you...' (*al-Baqara*: 152). It is that remember Me with obedience and I will remember you with goodness and manifestations. If the remembrance is with these meanings, then we can find tranquillity in any of them. Remembrance according to the meaning of the Quran causes tranquillity.

That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gives us a similitude by saying: 'The likeness of someone who remembers his Lord and someone who does not remember His Lord is like that of the living and the dead.'⁽¹⁾

The process of remembrance itself is a spiritual process. In other words, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave us a similitude of the living and the dead. A living person is a living, active being who feels, hears, sees, and speaks, i.e. he contains life. As for a dead person, his feelings have died within him, and indeed he is a motionless body.

The one who remembers Allah has a living heart, conscience, and feelings, which receive Allah's speech with an open heart and understanding intellect. As for the dead person, you do not expect anything good from him because he is simply dead.

Do not think that remembrance is simply restricted to the prayer. Rather: 'Then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10).

Thus, do not give up Allah's remembrance because your remembrance of your Lord outside of the prayer is greater than your remembrance of Him

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih*, no. (6407); *Abu Muhammad 'Abd Al-Haqq Al-Ishbili, Al-Ahkam Ash-Shar'iyya* vol. (3/141); and *Al-Baghawi, Sharh As-Sunna*, no. (1243) on the authority of *Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari* Allah be pleased with him.

the Almighty in the prayer. It has been related⁽¹⁾ from `Ata` ibn As-Sa`ib⁽²⁾ that Ibn `Abbas asked `Abdullah ibn Rabi`a:⁽³⁾ 'What do you say about Allah's statement: "...and remembrance of Allah is indeed the greatest [good]. And Allah knows all that you do" (*al-'Ankabut*: 45)? He replied: 'Reciting the Quran is good. The prayer is good. Glorifying Allah is good. Praising Him is good. Declaring Him the Greatest is good. Declaring that there is no deity but Him, is good. But what is better than all that is for someone to remember Allah just before they are about to commit disobedience, and by remembering their Lord they refrain from disobeying Him.'

So, what did Ibn `Abbas say, even though this statement contradicted what he had said regarding the verse? He said: 'Amazing, by Allah.' He was amazed at the statement of Ibn Rabi`a, and blessed his understanding of the verse. He did not reject his independent reasoning because it is natural for a person to remember Allah in a state of obedience, as he is prepared for remembrance.

As for remembering Him in a state of committing a sin, it is greater. A person, in that case, is more prevented from doing so because it needs more power and intense as Allah *the Almighty* said: '...and remembrance of Allah is indeed the greatest...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 45).

That is why it is mentioned in the Noble Hadith: 'Seven people will be shaded by Allah's shade on the Day when there will be no shade but His – and they include: a man who is invited by a woman of rank and beauty and he says, "Indeed I fear Allah."'⁽⁴⁾

(1) *The story of `Abdullah ibn `Abbas Allah be pleased with him asking `Abdullah ibn Rabi`a Allah be pleased with him.*

(2) *See Adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A`lam An-Nubuwwa: `Ata` ibn As-Sa`ib, a Hadith scholar of Kufa. He was known as Abu As-Sa`ib. He was from amongst the senior scholars, but his memory became a bit weak towards the end of his life. Abu Hatim said: 'He was previously known for his veracity, before he became confused and his memorising changed.'*

(3) *See Siyar A`lam An-Nubuwwa, vol. (3-116/504): `Abdullah ibn Rabi`a ibn Farqad As-Salmi. It is said that he was a Companion, but if he is not, then a Hadith from him would considered as mursal (discontinued at the level of Companion). He settled in Kufa and died after the age of eighty. Ibn Rabi`a said: 'I performed the dawn prayer behind `Umar and he read the chapter of al-Hajj and the chapter of Yusuf slowly.'*

(4) *See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, no. (660); Muslim, Sahih, no. (2427); Ahmad, Musnad, no. (9663); and Malik, Muwatta`, no. (1709), on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.*

This is the remembrance of Allah that is the greatest because the motives are motives of disobedience, and the matter needs great struggle to turn from disobedience into obedience.

Allah says, '...and remembrance of Allah is indeed the greatest...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 45). Do not think that Allah wants you to remember him just when you are praying. Indeed, remember Him continually and forever. While prayer has a fixed time in which it is performed, Allah must be remembered all the time.

That is why Allah has made remembering him easy and simple, timeless or effortless. In remembering Allah, it is enough to reflect on you what you watch around you, so that you can see Allah's power therein.

Remembering Allah does not burden you at all, nor is it difficult for you. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, '...and remembrance of Allah is indeed the greatest...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 45). It is greater than any other act of obedience because it is easy on the tongue and you can do it while doing any of your actions, at any time and in any place.

Remembering Allah is greater than any act of worship because acts of worship, as we have mentioned, need preparation, time, toil, and that one not be preoccupied with anything else. As for Allah's remembrance, it can flow on your tongue at any time, without preparation or toil, and your tongue can be devoted to it at any time and in whatever state in which you are.

Read in that statement of Allah's in the chapter of *al-Jumu'a*: 'Then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah's bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper' (*al-Jumu'a*: 10). As long as remembrance means to have Allah in your thoughts and on your tongue, then striving and working will not prevent you from it because remembrance is the lightest and easiest act of worship for the soul and the heaviest on the scales.

Allah *the Almighty* says, 'O you who have attained to faith! Remember Allah with unceasing remembrance, and extol His limitless glory from morn to evening.' (*al-Ahzab*: 41-42)

Allah *the Almighty* has commanded us to remember Him unceasingly because remembrance is the pillar of the other acts of worship and the easiest of them for the believer. That is why we find our Lord commanding us to it when we have finished acts of worship like the prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage.

Remembering is the preoccupation of the memory which is an area in the brain. Information is received by man in the seat of his feelings, and if he wants to remember something for when he will need it, he keeps it in his memory or in the periphery of his feelings. For example, you might see someone and say: 'I have not seen this man for twenty years', and another time: 'I saw him in such-and-such place.'

Therefore, remembering something is present in the seat of one's feelings. Remembrance means a matter that is present with you in reality and it has a time in which it exists. However, you become heedless of it and it moves to the periphery of your feelings, or memory. After that, we do not want you to forget it in the periphery, or somewhere faraway, such that you will require effort to remember it. Rather, you should always keep it somewhere close so that it will be easier for you to remember it without trouble.

Likewise, your remembrance should be for Allah, as it is a vital matter that you should be remembering constantly, always and forever. How can you forget the remembrance of your Lord when you took the covenant from Him while you were in the atomic world? He took affirmation from you that Allah *the Almighty* is your Lord.

Remembrance is the one act of worship that does not burden you at all and does not hinder any of your limbs. It does not require any time or effort on your behalf and it does not have a fixed time. Whoever remembers Allah standing, or remembers Allah on his side, is considered amongst those who remember. This is according to your situation when remembering. Whoever remembers Allah early in the day, or late in the day, in the morning or in the evening becomes amongst those who remember. This is according to the time of your remembrance.

Whoever says 'Glory be to Allah, Praise be to Allah, There is no deity but Allah, Allah is the Greatest and There is no power and no strength except in Allah, The Sublime, The Most Great' thirty times a day, he will be written down as one of those who remember.⁽¹⁾ Whoever wakes up at night,

(1) See Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, no. (29728) On the authority of Al-Hasan, who said that Prophet Muhammed peace and blessings be upon him said: 'Shall I not inform you of an act of charity that fills up what is between the heavens and the earth: 'Glory be to Allah, Praise be to Allah, There is no deity but Allah, Allah is the Greatest and There is no power and no strength except in Allah, The Sublime, The Most Great, thirty times a day.'

wakes up his family and prays two units of prayer is considered amongst those who remember.⁽¹⁾

Therefore, remembering Allah is an easy matter. You can remember Allah while you are working with an axe or writing with a pen. You can remember Allah while you are eating or drinking, and so forth. Thus, even though remembering Allah is the greatest, it is still easy and light on the believer.

Know that remembering Allah *the Almighty* will make you an imperturbable pillar and you will not be reached by anything evil or unpleasant. Indeed, the remembrance of Allah, the Lord of Blessings, will give you the activity of life in everything. Remembering Allah brings about humility in the hearts, lessens disobedience, everyone benefits from it and it makes the activities of life upright.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would not sit or stand without being in remembrance.⁽²⁾ In a Hadith: 'Prophet Muhammad would do much remembrance.'⁽³⁾ Why? It is because sitting and standing cancel one activity with another activity. If someone is standing and then they sit, they have carried out the activity of sitting. If someone is sitting and then he stands, he has carried out the activity of standing. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would remember Allah in every activity, showing gratitude for the blessings of the Creator *the Almighty*.

The Lord of Might *the Almighty* says in a Qudsi Hadith: 'I am as My slave thinks of Me. I am with him when He remembers Me. If he remembers Me

(1) See *Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan As-Sughra*, no. (609) On the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri and Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with them who said, 'Prophet Muhammad said: 'If someone wakes up at night, wakes up his family and they pray two units of prayer together, on that night they are written down as amongst those who remember Allah much.'

(2) See *Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman*, no. (1362); and *At-Tabarani in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*, no. (17868) On the authority of Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb, who said: 'I asked my uncle Hind ibn Abu Hala, and he was giving a description, part of which was: "I asked him what he was like in gatherings and he said: 'Prophet Muhammed peace and blessings be upon him would only sit or stand after some remembrance. He would not reserve places and he would forbid them from being reserved. When he came across some people sitting he would sit at the edge of the gathering.'"

(3) On the authority of Ibn Abu Awfa, who said: 'Prophet Muhammed peace and blessings be upon him would remember Allah much, he would speak little, lengthen the prayer, shorten the sermon and he would not disdain walking with widows and poor people and then fulfilling their needs.' Narrated by An-Nasa'i in his *Sunnan* (1414), *Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak* (4225) and *At-Tabarani in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir* (1377).

within himself, I remember Him within Myself. If he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a better gathering. If he comes to Me walking, I come to him running, and if he approaches Me by an arm's length I approach him by a fathom's length.'⁽¹⁾

With your faith in Allah, you make yourself mighty and you strong. If you want Allah to remember you, then remember Allah. If you remember Him within yourself then He will remember you within Himself. If you remember Him in a gathering, He will remember you in a better gathering. If you approach Him by an arm's length, He will approach you by a fathom's length.

What more than that do you want, especially if you will never add anything to it? Therefore, the situation is in your hands. If you want Allah to be with you, then travel along His path, and his support will come to you immediately. This is how the situation is with you and it comes under your control, and it is through your faith in Allah, your devotion to being connected to Him and your faith in Him *the Almighty*.

Allah *the Almighty* tells us how remembering Allah affects the heart and the body. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Believers are only they whose hearts tremble with awe whenever Allah is mentioned, and whose faith is strengthened whenever His messages are conveyed unto them, and who in their Lord place their trust.' (*al-Anfal*: 2)

Remembering Allah causes the believers' hearts to tremble and have fear, and trembling; '*wajal*' is the kind of fear that makes the heart shake and beat faster. But if remembering Allah *the Almighty* makes the believers' hearts tremble, does that not contradict this statement of Allah *the Almighty*: 'those who believe, and whose hearts find their rest in the remembrance of Allah – for, verily, in the remembrance of Allah [men's] hearts do find their rest' (*ar-Ra'd*: 28). Actually, there is no contradiction between the two statements because remembering Allah *the Almighty* brings about various states. If a person is extravagant with himself, he will tremble when He remembers Allah, The One Whose way he has contravened.

(1) Agreed upon Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, no. (7405); Muslim, *Sahih*, no. (6981, 7008); At-Tirmidhi, *Sunnan*, no. (3603); and Ibn Majah, *Sunnan*, no. (38822) on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

If a person respects Allah's right in every action, as much as he is able, then his heart will inevitably find rest the moment Allah is remembered because he has followed Allah's way as much as he is able.

Therefore, fear and trembling come about from the awe and authority of the attributes of majesty, and finding rest only comes from the illuminations and tenderness of the attributes of beauty. That is why one verse gathers all of this together, and it is Allah's saying: 'Allah bestows from on high the best of all teachings in the shape of a divine writ fully consistent within itself, repeating each statement [of the truth] in manifold forms – [a divine writ] whereat shiver the skins of all who of their Lord stand in awe: [but] in the end their skins and their hearts do soften at the remembrance of [the grace of] Allah...' (*az-Zumar*: 23).

The skins shiver out of fear, trembling at awe of Allah *the Almighty*. Then they soften, finding rest and desiring the tenderness of the Benefactor *the Almighty* because our Lord says, 'Tell My servants that I – I alone – am truly forgiving, a true dispenser of grace' (*al-Hijr*: 49).

The remembrance of Allah is imperative in man's most difficult moments which is when he is facing his enemy on the battlefield. Allah *the Almighty* says, '[Hence,] O you who have attained to faith, when you meet a host in battle, be firm, and remember Allah often so that you might attain to a happy state!' (*al-Anfal*: 45)

Allah *the Almighty* is the Creator of the human soul, and He is the All Knowing regarding it when it is facing a force that has not been reckoned with. He knows how the soul suffers immense distress, especially if this is happening on the battlefield.

That is why He has asked the believers to always remember that they are not alone in battle, and that Allah *the Almighty* is with them. Let them remember this often so that He can assist their victory over their enemies because as long as they are in a state of remembering Allah *the Almighty* then this remembrance will strengthen their faith and give their hearts the necessary courage to achieve victory.

Allah *the Almighty* has described those who remember Allah often as being endowed with insight. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight' (*Al- 'Imran*: 190).

Then He described them by saying: '[and] who remember Allah when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down to sleep...' (*Al-Imran*: 191). In commenting on this verse, some scholars have said that what is meant by this is the prayer because whoever cannot pray standing can pray sitting down. If someone cannot pray sitting down, then he can pray lying down.⁽¹⁾

We say to these scholars: 'You have singled out this meaning when the purport is actually more general such that no one should think that remembering Allah is only in the five obligatory prayers. Allah *the Almighty* has said: 'And when you have finished your prayer, remember Allah – standing and sitting and lying down; and when you are once again secure, observe your prayers [fully]. Verily, for all believers prayer is indeed a sacred duty linked to particular times [of day]' (*an-Nisa*': 103). Thus, remembering Allah is a continuous obligation, in the prayer and outside of it. The is, have Allah constantly in your thoughts, and the hearts only find rest in Allah's remembrance, as finding rest grasps all the hearts and every person has a corner in which his heart beats. No sooner does he remember Allah that he finds rest and his heart is settled.

Remembering Allah after committing disobedience will inevitably cause the soul to fear and tremble and become troubled out of fear of Allah *the Almighty*. If one remembers Allah after some affliction or hardship, one's soul finds rest and takes comfort from the balance of faith that it contains, and it returns to this balance of faith and relies on it in moments of constraint and tribulation.

As long as the believer has established his heart with Allah's remembrance, faith and the testimony of that faith, then his heart will never deviate and never shake with regards to the truth. But what is remembrance? Remembrance means to preserve something from being forgotten because life's routine makes us forget the Original Cause of blessings. The sun rises every day, and who from amongst us remembers that it only rises with Allah's permission and thus thanks Him?

(1) See *Al-Bayhaqi, Sunnan*, no. (3493), on the authority of *Al-Husain ibn 'Ali* Allah be pleased with them that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'The sick person should pray standing, and if he cannot, then he can pray sitting. If he cannot prostrate, then he can lean forward and make his prostrating lower than his bowing. If he cannot pray sitting then he can pray on his right side, facing the direction of prayer. If he cannot pray on his right side then he can pray lying down with his feet facing the direction of prayer.'

The rainfalls from time to time, and who remembers that Allah sends down the rain and thus thanks Him?

Remembrance is performed with the tongue and the heart, and Allah *the Almighty* is veiled and unseen. It is from His sublimity that He is unseen, but Allah's blessings indicate Him. With remembrance, Allah is always in our thoughts and we are always remembering Him and thanking Him for His blessings.

Allah *the Almighty* wants remembrance from His slaves, and whenever they remember Him *the Almighty* and thank Him, He thanks and increases them. The desire of The Bountiful to give is on the condition that we are worthy of the gift because He wants to give you more and more.

Allah's statement '...remember Me...' (*al-Baqara*: 152) means: remember Allah for all His blessings, His gifts, His veiling, His Mercy, His Acceptance of Repentance and so forth.

Some of the righteous people say, 'I heard from whoever heard from my beloved, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that when you drink you should divide it into three parts: with the first gulp say 'In the Name of Allah' and drink. Then say 'Praise be to Allah'. Start drinking the second gulp by saying 'In the Name of Allah', and after finishing it say 'Praise be to Allah'. Then say 'In the Name of Allah' and drink the third gulp, and finish it by saying 'Praise be to Allah'. As long as this water is inside you, no particle in your body will tell you to disobey Allah.'⁽¹⁾

Practise doing this daily. Say 'In the Name of Allah' and drink and then say 'Praise be to Allah', and repeat three times. Then you will receive the blessing by remembering the Lord of Blessings. You will distance yourself from your strength and your power and you will conclude the blessing by praising Allah.

(1) See *At-Tabarani, Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir*, no. (332); *Al-Mu`jam Al-Awsat*, no. (840) On the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would drink in three breaths. When he brought the vessel to his mouth he would say 'In the Name of Allah' and when he was finished he would praise Allah, and he would do that three times. Also, Abu Ash-Sheikh Al-Asbahani narrated it in 'Akhlāq An-Nabi no. (656) on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, who said: 'When Prophet Muhammed *peace and blessings be upon him* would drink, he would do it in three breaths. He would praise Allah with each breath and thank Him with the last one.'

Dhikr (remembrance) in the absolute sense is the remembrance of Allah; His Blessings, His Sublimity, His Power and His Attributes of Perfection. *Tasbih* (glorification) means to declare Allah transcendent because what Allah does cannot be done by anyone else.

Thus, 'Glory be to Allah' means that Allah is transcendent because He is the One Who is fully Capable of doing what that the means do not do and what no one can make. Indeed, He wants us to thank Allah, who grants sustenance unto whom He wills, beyond all reckoning.

Sometimes, what is meant by remembrance is glorification and praise. Look at Allah's statement: 'In the houses [of worship] which Allah has allowed to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there [are such as] extol His limitless glory at morn and evening, people whom neither [worldly] commerce nor striving after gain can divert from the remembrance of Allah, and from constancy in prayer, and from charity...' (*an-Nur*: 36-37).

It is remembrance because there are those who glorify Him therein in the morning and the evening, and they are described as people who do not let commerce and trade divert them from remembering Allah. *Dhikr* (remembrance) can also refer to Allah's goodness towards His slaves. It can also refer to their acts of worshipping Him in obedience, as Allah *the Almighty* remembers them with goodness and they remember Him with obedience.

His remembrance of them through blessings and favours is a bounty and beneficence, and He is the Great *the Exalted*. Thus, there is a second, lesser remembrance, which is their worship of their Lord in obedience. So 'remember Me, and I shall remember you...' (*al-Baqara*: 152). It is as if Allah is saying, 'Remember Me with obedience, and I will remember you with favours'.

The place for remembering Allah could be the mosque or outside the mosque, indoors or outdoors, at home or at work, while walking or while sleeping, when you wake up from your sleep and at every time and in every place.

However, the most certain remembrance of Allah is in the mosque, Allah's houses. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Hence, who could be more wicked than those who bar the mention of Allah's name from [any of] His houses of worship and strive for their ruin...' (*al-Baqara*: 114).

There is no one more in wickedness than those who prevent Allah's name from being mentioned in His houses. This is tremendous wickedness and it is the peak of wickedness. Allah's statement '...and strive for their ruin...' (*al-Baqara*: 114) means to put an end to them or maintain them in a way that they are no longer fit for worship. Striving to ruin the mosque means to destroy it.

Indeed, I warn every believer against being weak and feeble in the face of those who are trying to prevent Allah's name from being mentioned in Allah's mosques because in that case one is partaking in their sin and maybe even doing worse, and Allah will not leave such a person alone on the Day of Resurrection. Rather, He will throw him in the fire.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says,

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِو وَمِنَ النَّجْرَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ

Yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it, and leave you [Prophet] standing there. Say, 'God's gift is better than any entertainment or trade: God is the best provider'[11] (The Quran, *al-Jumu'a*: 11)

Twelve men remained with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* including Abu Bakr and `Umar, and they did not leave him while he was giving the sermon as the others had done. Rather, they remained with Him *peace and blessings be upon him* because they were the ones who had certainty that goodness was found in keeping the company of the beloved, the chosen one because in his company they became guests of Allah *the Almighty*.

That is why they remained firm with Prophet Muhammad while the others looked at the life of this world and its ceasing pleasures and dispersed from around Him *peace and blessings be upon him*. They went out to receive a caravan that had come from the Levant accompanied by entertainment and drumming.

Allah *the Almighty* did not want to punish them or chastise them because of what they had done because of the presence of Prophet Muhammad, who was a security for them against a punishment befalling them. We must understand

that Medina had become a stopping place and people were coming from all over to learn about the new religion, and there were many people who were new to Islam or were hypocrites.

It has been related from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah *Allah be pleased with him* that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was standing, giving the sermon on Friday when a caravan arrived from the Levant and the people went out to see it until only twelve men remained.⁽¹⁾ Then this verse, which is in *al-Jumu'a*, was sent down: 'Yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it, and leave you [Prophet] standing there say, "Allah's gift is better than any entertainment or trade: Allah is the best provider."' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11)

The Quran has precision in its stylistic and linguistic rendering, and an example of this is that here the Quran says, 'Yet they scatter towards (*ra'aw*)...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11). The verb *ra'a* (to see) can be used to indicate knowledge such as in His statement: 'have you ever seen [the kind of man] who makes his own desires his deity?...' (*al-Furqan*: 43), i.e. have you even known? These people, who were in the mosque of Prophet Muhammad listening to his *peace and blessings be upon him* Friday sermon, did not literally see the caravan that had come. Rather, they knew about it or they heard the commotion and noise of the approaching caravan. Thus, they went outside and left Prophet Muhammad standing, apart from twelve men, and they included Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

Another example of *ra'a* meaning 'to know' is in Allah's statement to His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Are you aware of how your Lord dealt with the Army of the Elephant?' (*al-Fil*: 1) It means: do you not know with certainty? This is because Prophet Muhammad was born in the Year of the Elephant and thus did not see this event. It is as if Allah is informing him of it and saying to Him: 'Do you not know?' It is also as if He is saying to him: 'Know with absolute certainty as if you have seen it, because your Lord is more reliable than your eyes.'

These people saw it literally, or they 'saw' it in terms of hearing and knowledge. They saw the merchandise or the entertainment. They saw the merchandise that they had been waiting for to fulfil their needs, but this

(1) See *At-Tabari, Tafsir, no. (34460)*.

does not permit them to leave Prophet Muhammad while He is giving them the sermon. That is why Allah *the Almighty* censured them, and due to His Forbearance He did not chastise them for what they had done.

For the Arabs in that time, commerce was the most important economic activity. Merchandise and caravans would go out to Yemen in the winter and to the Levant in the summer, and it is something that Allah favoured Quraysh with, as Allah *the Almighty* says, 'So that the Quraysh might remain secure, secure in their winter and summer journeys.' (*Quraysh*: 1-2)

Commerce was the heart of their livelihood, as they brought goods from the north and the south and sold them to those visiting the Sacred House in Mecca in the Age of Ignorance, or they sold the merchandise of the Levant to the people of Yemen and sold the merchandise of Yemen to the people of the Levant.

Quraysh had two journeys every year; a winter journey to Yemen and a summer journey to the Levant. They would travel along various routes and use the stars to guide their way. That is why they were people of power and wealth.

Allah brought about security and assurance for them in their trade because they were in control of Allah's Sacred House, and man only feels assured in a place that is free of disturbances and which contains the essentials of life, as security and assurance are the secret to a life's happiness and its stability.

When Allah *the Almighty* bestowed favours upon Quraysh, He said: 'So that Quraysh might remain secure, secure in their winter and summer journeys. Let them, therefore, worship the Lord of this House, who has given them food against hunger, and made them safe from danger.' (*Quraysh*: 1-4)

Allah *the Almighty* says about Mecca: '...Why – have We not established for them a sanctuary secure, to which, as a provision from Us, shall be gathered the fruits of all [good] things? But most of them are unaware [of this truth].' (*al-Qasas*: 57)

Sustenance would come to this town from every place. As for Medina, it did not have a sacred house and its commerce was only with the Levant. The road to Yemen was surrounded by dangers, because Quraysh would not allow the Muslims' caravans to go to Yemen.

The accounts relate that the owner of the caravan⁽¹⁾ that had entered Medina at that time was 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf, and he is who he is in the world of commerce, such that when he emigrated from Mecca to Medina he turned down the Helper's offer to divide his wealth and family with him and instead said to him: 'Show me where the market is.'

Commerce is buying and selling, and it is an intermediary between the producer and the consumer. The producer wants to sell his produce and the consumer needs this produce. Allah *the Almighty* has used the process of trade to make it clear us that it is the quickest way to acquire benefit.

Commerce gathers together all of life's jobs, as commerce include agricultural production, manufactured production, as well as services. That is why commerce gathers all of this together.

This commerce was done in an outwardly beautiful way, and it took a long time to get back to Medina, where everyone was waiting for it. Its return coincided with the Friday sermon of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and those who remained sitting, listening to Prophet Muhammad, were only twelve men. The rest went out to meet the caravan.

As for *lahw* '...passing delight...', it kills time, causing it to pass by and preoccupying man from his obligations. The meaning of *lahw* is to do something that has no objective and no benefit, and if we look at a life that is stripped of Allah's way, it is *la'ib* and *lahw*. *La'ib* (play) might be *lahw* and it might not. If *la'ib* preoccupies you from something you are supposed to do then it is *lahw* because it has diverted you from an obligation because when you direct your energy towards that which is less important it is *lahw*.

You find the loss due to *lahw* to be heavy because the distracted person leaves off an important matter and does something that is not important. He

(1) See *Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir*, vol. 18/109, (*Dar Al-Kutub Al-Misriyya*) says that the one who brought the caravan was Dihya ibn Khalifa Al-Kalbi. Also, in *At-Tahrir wa At-Tanwir* it has been mentioned on the authority of Mujahid and Muqatil. Muqatil ibn Sulaiman mentioned in his *Tafsir* vol. (3/361) that Dihya was from Banu 'Amir ibn 'Awf and he was involved in bringing merchandise from the Levant before he became Muslim. He arrived on a Friday and the people of Medina received him with drums and clapping.

sits and plays backgammon⁽¹⁾ instead of doing the work that provides him an income that he lives off.

If only this *lahw* were confined to the distracted person, but instead it attracts the glances of those who are not distracted and takes up their time, this time that should be used for beneficial matters. The corruption of entire societies comes about because of some individuals therein using their energy in that which will not bring about any benefit for themselves or their nation.

Therefore, *lahw* is inactive energy. An example of a distracted person who does not achieve anything in life is that student who does not go to school and does not revise. Rather, he spends his time playing and amusing himself and giving himself what he wants, but he only takes limited enjoyment. Afterwards, he lives the rest of his life in misery.

As for the one who limits his activity to revision, he has denied his soul's desire for games and amusement, and the fruit of this is that he achieves a future for himself that is comfortable and admirable.

Both the student who works hard and the student who plays games and amuses himself partake in a kind of enjoyment, but one of them has very limited enjoyment, after which he becomes one of life's paupers. As for the second, he restrained his soul for several years so that he could enjoy a successful future.

Likewise, if you restrict yourself to the commandments of 'Do!' and 'Do not do!' it looks like you have restricted your freedom, even if you do it willingly because Allah gives you comfort, rest and enjoyment for your soul.

As for the beneficial work that man should be preoccupied with, it is that which is imposed upon you by The One Who is higher than you, and He is Wise and Beloved to you. You will only find these specifications in Allah, and that is why everything that distracts from what your Allah has imposed upon you is *lahw* because it preoccupies you from what is more important.

(1) See Muslim, *Sahih*, no. (6033); Abu Dawud, *Sunnan*, no. (4941); Ibn Majah (3763); and Ahmad, *Musnad*, no. (23029, 23075, 23106): on the authority of Burayda that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'If someone plays backgammon it is as if he has dipped his hand in the flesh and blood of a pig.'

An example of the *lahw* that Allah *the Almighty* has mentioned is in the chapter of *Luqman*. Allah says, 'But among men there is many a one that prefers a mere play [*lahw*] with words [to divine guidance]...' (*Luqman*: 6). Scholars have said that mere play with words is everything that distracts one from what Allah requires, even if it is not intrinsically *lahw*, i.e. when it is not outside of what Allah requires. Thus, if someone allows their work such as agriculture, or manufacturing, or something else, to preoccupy them from the prayer or from carrying out some other obligation of Allah *the Almighty* that work is considered *lahw*.

That is why Allah *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *an-Nur*: 'In the houses [of worship] which Allah has allowed to be raised so that His name be remembered in them, there [are such as] extol His limitless glory at morn and evening. People whom neither [worldly] commerce nor striving after gain can divert from the remembrance of Allah, and from constancy in prayer, and from charity: [people] who are filled with fear [at the thought] of the Day on which all hearts and eyes will be convulsed.' (*an-Nur*: 36-37)

Allah *the Almighty* has described these people who fill Allah's houses with remembrance and glorification as: 'people whom neither [worldly] commerce nor striving after gain can divert...' (*an-Nur*: 37).

His saying: 'people whom neither [worldly] commerce nor striving after gain can divert...' (*an-Nur*: 37) does not mean a prohibition against commerce, as the honest person will not let commerce divert him from Allah's remembrance. These people could have waited until Prophet Muhammad had finished his Friday Sermon and until the prayer had ended, and then directed themselves towards the caravan bringing merchandise. At that time, their preoccupation with commerce would not have been considered *lahw*.

Someone might wonder: Allah says, 'Yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11). There are two matters, commerce, and passing delight, so why does He say afterwards: '...they scatter towards trade...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11), and not 'they rush headlong towards them'? Allah *the Almighty* uses the singular for both by saying '...they scatter towards trade...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11) because commerce and a passing delight have the same function which is to preoccupy the believers from worship, remembrance and listening to goodness

Al-Infidad (scattering) means to turn away from what they were gathered upon or gathered for, and Allah *the Almighty* says in another verse: 'It is they who say [to their compatriots], "Do not spend anything on those who are with Allah's Apostle so that they [may be forced to] leave [*yanfadu*]"' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7).

They had a mistaken understanding of those who believed in Prophet Muhammad, as they thought that if they did not spend on them they would apostate from their faith. They forgot that the emigrant believers had left behind their wealth and their native land, and if someone has left behind their wealth to emigrate for Allah's sake, would he disbelieve if he cannot find something? No, because he has already left everything behind for Allah's sake.

When the hypocrites like `Abdullah ibn Ubay said to the Helpers: 'Do not spend on those who are with Prophet Muhammad so that they leave', i.e. apostate and withdraw from Islam, they did not leave. Their intention was to starve those who were with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and make them abandon him.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says, '...and leave you [Prophet] standing there' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11). This standing was during the sermon and Jabir ibn `Abdullah relates: 'In the sermon, I only saw Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* standing.'⁽¹⁾ `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud⁽²⁾ was asked: 'Did Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* give his sermons standing or sitting?', so he recited: '...and leave you standing there...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11).

It is on the authority of Ibn `Umar Allah *be pleased with him* that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would give two sermons and sit between them.⁽³⁾

(1) See Ahmad, *Musnad*, no. (20903, 20927): it is on authority of Jabir ibn Samra and not Jabir ibn `Abdullah: 'In the Friday sermon, I only saw Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* standing, and whoever says that he has seen him give the sermon while sitting is lying.'

(2) See Ibn Majah, *Sunnan*, no. (1108); Abu Ya`la, *Musnad*, no. (5034); and At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir*, no. (9860) on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and in *Al-Anjam Az-Zahirat*.

(3) See Muslim, *Sahih*, no. (2032); Abu Dawud, *Sunnan*, no. (1096); and Ibn Majah, *Sunnan*, no. (1103) on the authority of Ibn `Umar.

Even Ka'b ibn 'Ujra⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ entered the mosque and found 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Umm Al-Hukm⁽³⁾ was giving the sermon while sitting, so he said: 'Look at this wicked person giving the sermon while sitting⁽⁴⁾, when Allah has said: '...and leave you [Prophet] standing there' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11).

Tawus ibn Kisan⁽⁵⁾ considered it a false innovation, as he said: 'Sitting on the pulpit on Friday is a false innovation.'⁽⁶⁾ This is for the person who is able to stand, as it is not permissible for him to sit and give the sermon. Between the schools of jurisprudence, the scholars have many details regarding this.

The priority for these people, who left Prophet Muhammad standing giving the sermon and rushed outside, was to be polite by showing forbearance and patience. Allah *the Almighty* has said: 'Verily, [O Prophet,] as for those who call you from without thy private apartments – most of them do not use their reason, for if they had the patience [to wait] until you come forth to them [of thine own accord], it would be for their own good. Still, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.' (*al-Hujurat*: 4-5)

If Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had not yet appeared, they were supposed to wait for him to come out and not disturb him, as he must have been doing something important. Maybe he was busy in seclusion with Allah *the Almighty* or with his family.

These people called Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as they would call one another. They did not respect the sanctity of Prophet

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- (1) See Az-Zirikli, *Al-'Alam*, vol. (5/227): he is Ka'b ibn 'Ujra ibn Ummaya ibn 'Uday Al-Balwi, an ally of the Helpers and a Companion who was known by the name of Abu Muhammad. He witnessed all the incidents in which people were martyred. He lived in Kufa and died in Medina in the year 51 A.H. at the age of 75.
 - (2) The story of Ka'b ibn 'Ujra with 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Umm Al-Hukm the Jew
 - (3) He is 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Uthman Ath-Thaqafi ibn Umm Al-Hukm.
 - (4) See Muslim, *Sahih*, no. (2038); Al-Bayhaqi, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, no. (5914); and Ibn 'Urwiya, *Kitab Al-Awa'il*, no. (1/156). Ibn 'Urwiya mentioned that the first person to sit while giving the Friday sermon was Mu'awiya, and then he mentioned 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn Umm Al-Hukm.
 - (5) See *Tabaqat Al-Huzhaz*, vol. 1/73: Tawus ibn Kisan Al-Yamani, a client of the children of the Persians. He died in Mecca in 106 A.H. while performing the Pilgrimage. He was a revered jurist.
 - (6) See As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, vol. 14/488, Dar Hajr edition; he attributed it to Ibn Abu Shayba on the authority of Tawus. Ibn Abu Shayba narrated it in his *Musannaf*, no. (5228).

Muhammad and his rank. That is why most of them were described as not using their reason since using reason would produce the opposite of this behaviour.

‘for if they had the patience [to wait] until thou come forth to them [of thine own accord], it would be for their own good...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 5). Indeed, if they had been patient, it would have been better for them, as after they had called him and compelled him to come out, he released half of the prisoners that had come under their ransom, and he said: ‘By Allah, if they had been patient until I had come out, I would have released all the prisoners.’⁽¹⁾

Thus, it is Prophet Muhammad’s right that you have etiquette with him, whether it is calling him, not leaving him while he is speaking or giving a sermon, or in dealing with his *Sunna*.

Here Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘...Say, “Allah’s gift is better than and entertainment or trade: Allah is the best provider.”’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 11) What is with Allah is not to be feared for. Rather, it multiplies and increases. What is with Allah is not to be grieved over because man grieves when he loses out on goodness, but what is with Allah remains and will never lose you, nor will you lose it. There is nothing with Allah *the Almighty* which is grieved over because it has been lost.

‘...Verily, that which is with Allah is by far the best for you...’ (*an-Nahl*: 95). Thus, in actual fact, goodness is not to be found in the enjoyments of the life of this world, regardless of how numerous they may be. Rather, it is found with Allah *the Almighty*. Man’s lot in the life of this world is contingent and transitory. Either you will leave it when you die or it will leave you through some event happening to you. As for what is with Allah, it remains and never comes to an end.

What is with Allah is better than your passing delights and your commerce. It is not appropriate for you to leave Prophet Muhammad to go out for passing delights, or even commerce. You only came to the Friday Prayer because Allah called you to it: ‘Believers! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if only you knew’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 9). When you left your work in the life of this world, you responded to Allah’s call, so after

(1) See *Al-Baghawī* in *Ma`alim At-Tanzil*, vol. 7/333 *Dar Tayyiba*.

you have responded to his call, how can you then disperse from Him when you see commerce or a passing delight?

If you are seeking sustenance by going out for commerce, then where will you seek sustenance? Is it not with Allah *the Almighty*? Is He not the All-Provider? Indeed, Allah *the Almighty* is '...the best of providers!' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11)

Sustenance is not just wealth and it is not just food. Rather, clothes are sustenance, knowledge is sustenance, forbearance is sustenance, and everything that you benefit from is sustenance from Allah. The slave is a means in sustenance because Allah *the Almighty* first, is the Creator of sustenance. Then He gives it to you, you benefit from it and work with it, and then from it you give to others.

Sustenance from you is just handed over from the Original Provider *the Almighty*. In this sense you are a provider, even though it is disliked for a person to be called a provider because no one should think that sustenance comes from people.

That is why we often hear of simple labourers, or lower-ranking employees, or doormen, for example, saying to their employers after being dismissed: 'Sir, sustenance is in Allah's hand'. How can you say that when you took your salary from his hand and from his wealth? They said: 'It is because he was looking at the First One to hand over the sustenance, not the second one to hand it over'.

Some of those who seek to discredit the Quran say that His statement: '...And Allah is the best of providers' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11) means that the attribute of providing is shared, as others besides Him *the Almighty* also provide, but He is The Best of Providers because He provides the creation with the sources of things from which they provide others. If you provide someone else with food, for example, Allah *the Almighty* is the source and origin of that food.

Allah's statement '...best of providers!' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11) is like His other statements '...the Most Merciful of the merciful!' (*Arham Ar-Rahimin*), or '...the best of inheritors...' (*Khayr Al-Warithin*) or '...best of creators' (*Ahsan Al-Khaliqin*). Each plural is an attribute of Allah. He is inviting His creation to be moulded by this character and to be described as such.

Know that Allah did not deny them from being described with these attributes because they have a task therein even if it is limited, that suits their ability and their nature as created beings and slaves, let alone being a gift and

a grant from Him *the Almighty*. As for Allah's attributes, they are unlimited and boundless in their majesty, perfection, and beauty.

If it is Allah's creation and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful (*Arham Ar-Rahimin*), then this means that He will not prevent His creation from showing mercy to one another. If someone is merciful towards his brother then he is called *Rahim* or *Raheem*, but Allah is the Most Merciful of the merciful.

The same goes for '...the best of all forgivers!' (*al-A'raf*: 155) because forgiveness can be from one person towards another, but we know that Allah's forgiveness is superior to the creation's forgiveness because a human being may forgive for the sake of ostentation, or reputation, or because he is scared of the other person. However, Allah *the Almighty* is not scared of anyone, and He is the Best of Forgivers, with no equal.

We notice here that this verse: 'Yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it, and leave you [Prophet] standing there' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11), is a preface and introduction for the chapter that comes afterwards, *al-Munafiqun* which exposes and uncovers their actions. What they did by leaving Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* standing and giving the sermon was nothing other than a reaction to the hypocrisy that was in their souls. That is why they were not able to control their reaction, and thus they rushed headlong without thinking because this is the reality that was in their hearts and minds.

Indeed, they did not truly believe, even though they declared their Islam and they prayed with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and with the Muslims. However, in actual fact, they were concealing disbelief and hypocrisy and their hearts were filled with love for the life of this world, wealth and the adornments of this life. That is why they rushed headlong towards what they loved and what they hoped for from their life in this world, and they will have no share in the Hereafter.

the chapter of

al-Munafiqun

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Munafiqun* ⁽¹⁾ (Hypocrites):

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ
لَرَسُولُهُ. وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١﴾

When the hypocrites come to you [Prophet], they say, ‘We bear witness that you are the Messenger of God.’ God knows that you truly are His Messenger and He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars [1] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 1)

The hypocrites came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to testify to the truthfulness of his Message; meanwhile, Allah *the Almighty* knows that this testimony is true yet insincere on the part of the hypocrites. This is because He *the Almighty* knows that the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is true, but at the same time, He *the Almighty* testifies that the hypocrites are liars. Here, a question arises which is, ‘How could He *the Almighty* affirm the truthfulness of the hypocrites’ testimony and then call them liars?’ To this we reply, ‘This is because the hypocrites said with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Therefore, they only testified with their tongues that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the

(1) In his book, As-Suyuti says, ‘*Al-Munafiqun* is the chapter number 63 in the order of the Noble Quran, with a number of 11 verses.’ According to Al-Qurtubi, it was revealed in Medina, as all the scholars opine that it was revealed with relation to the Battle of *Banu Al-Mustaliq* in 6 A. H. as a result of what ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul said. The chapter of *al-Munafiqun* was revealed after the chapter of *al-Hajj* and prior to the chapter of *al-Mujadala*. See As-Suyuti, *Al-Itqan Fi ‘Ulum Al-Quran*, 1/78.

Messenger of Allah, yet their hearts denied and opposed this fact. Thus, though what the hypocrites said is true, they lied and said with their tongues what is not in their hearts, since truth means that the speech is consistent with what is in the heart. Those hypocrites lied because while testifying to the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad's Message, they were not expressing what is in their hearts which denied what they testified to.'

More often than not, people misunderstand the reality, and, therefore, think that they found contradiction regarding some Quranic ways of expression. Some orientalists' understanding of Allah's saying: 'When the hypocrites come to you [Prophet], they say, "We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah,"' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) is a case in point. Is the statement of the hypocrites consistent with the reality or contradicting it? It is consistent with the reality, for it is confirmed by Allah's saying: '...Allah knows that you truly are His Messenger...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1). So, what did the hypocrites lie about? Did they lie about the fact that: '...Allah knows that you truly are His Messenger...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1)? No, Allah *the Almighty* does not deny their saying: '...Allah knows that you truly are His Messenger...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) since He *the Almighty* approves this truth, saying: '...And Allah knows you are His Messenger...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1).

However, Allah *the Almighty* denies what the orientalist critic missed regarding the hypocrites' saying: 'We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) Here, He *the Almighty* denies their sincerity in that testimony, not what they testify to, namely, that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger sent by Allah. He *the Almighty* knows that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is His Messenger whom He sent as a mercy for the worlds. However, the hypocrites' lie about their sincerity in their testimony.

To recap, Allah *the Almighty* does not deny their saying that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is Allah's Messenger as it is a true fact. Rather, He *the Almighty* denies their utterance, 'We bear witness,' since this suggests that their statement is consistent with what they believe in their hearts, which is not the case. So, they are described as liars because their words contradict what is in their hearts. In the same connection, Allah *the Almighty* says in another

verse: ‘They tell a lie against Allah and they know it...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 75). This means that they consciously lie and say words which are not in line with the reality. Thus, we cannot say they uttered them unconsciously.

The hypocrites lied on purpose as they know they were not speaking the truth. Mainly, we need to differentiate between the truthfulness of the information and the truthfulness of its reporter; the truthfulness of the reporter means that his/her information is consistent with the reality. However, sometimes the reporter is truthful, but his/her information itself is untrue. For instance, when someone says: ‘So and so studies all night,’ because this person saw the light on and found him/her opening a book. In reality, however, this so and so was overwhelmed with reading a novel. Here, the reporter is truthful yet the information is untrue. Therefore, there is a distinction between the truthfulness of the information and the truthfulness of the reporter. If the reporter’s conviction is consistent with the reality, then the information is true and the reporter is truthful. Meanwhile, if the information is consistent with the reality and contradictory to the reporter’s conviction, then the information is true yet the reporter is untruthful.

Thus, only verbally did the hypocrites testify to the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad’s Message. This issue is true though Allah, the All Knowing of hearts, reveals their true stance before Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘...and He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) So, their verbal testimony is in conformity with what Allah *the Almighty* knows, yet their statement contradicts what is in their hearts. Thus, He *the Almighty* bears witness that they are liars about their testimony since the hypocrite among them did not testify a sincere testimony which requires that the statement of the tongue agrees with what is in the heart.

Some idiots who attempt to spot errors in the Quran do not adequately understand its language and its subtleties; therefore, they become confused and unable to purely comprehend the Quran. They said, ‘The Quran has contradictions,’ while they know that the hypocrites did not lie in their saying, ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,’ but rather in their sincerity regarding this testimony. Allah *the Almighty* denies only their saying, ‘We testify,’ since they declared faith only with their tongues, not with their hearts.

Allah *the Almighty* wanted to expose the hypocrites as they testified to Prophet Muhammad's truthfulness only with their tongues while their hearts denied that. So, He *the Almighty* revealed what was inside their hearts and clarified that their tongues did not utter what was in their hearts. The Quran clarifies that the hypocrites: 'Say with their tongues what is not in their hearts.' (*Al-Imran*: 75) The heart is concerned with the inner faith, whereas the person may say something with the tongue and then s/he does not comply with it. So, we said, 'The hypocrite has a fragmented soul with fragmented faculties, saying things with his/her tongue while denying them in his/her heart. As a result, they will be in the deepest level of the hell because they are deceitful with fragmented souls.'

Speech, which is uttered for revealing what is inside people's hearts, is mainly done with the tongue. When the people explain through writing what they have in their inner self, this is considered as speaking in terms of expressing themselves and revealing what is in their heart. Therefore, if someone is embarrassed to say something to someone else, s/he writes it on a piece of paper. The moment s/he writes about something, it is as if s/he had said it. Those hypocrites said their words not by means of writing, but through their tongues and this is an act of boasting, for if they were ashamed, they would whisper their words. Moreover, they were presumptuous enough to say, 'We testify,' given the fact that testimony is the most emphatic kind of speech.

There was a man who used to come to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and say, 'O Prophet! I testify that you brought the truth from Allah,' so Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to be pleased with his words. Then, the man would say, 'By Allah, O Prophet Muhammad, Allah knows that I utter what is in my heart.' In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart...' (*al-Baqara*: 204).

The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'These are the hypocrites,'⁽¹⁾ and recited Allah's saying: 'When the hypocrites come to you [Prophet], they

(1) In his *Tafsir*, At-Tabari narrates that Ibn Zayd said, 'There was a man who used to come to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and say, "O Prophet! I testify that you brought the truth from Allah," until Prophet Muhammad wonders=

say, "We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah." Allah knows that you truly are His Messenger and He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) Allah *the Almighty* warns us against those people, saying: 'And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart...' (*al-Baqara*: 204). This shows that those hypocrites reveal goodness and conceal evil. It is not forbidden to be pleased by speech, yet it is better to be pleased by speech which does not concern the worldly life. In order that Allah *the Almighty* grants us goodness, speech that pleases us should be related to the Hereafter which will last eternally. He *the Almighty* indicates that it is necessary for Muslims to be attentive and smart. So, when one of the caliphs of the Muslims sent for Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq,⁽¹⁾ asking him, 'Why do you not visit us like other people? Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq wrote to him, 'I have nothing in the worldly life to worry about and you have nothing from the Hereafter that I am looking forward to having.'⁽²⁾ It is as if he wanted to tell him, 'Leave me alone. You need someone who flatters you, and you do not know that those who think badly of you are most willing to flatter you.'

Allah *the Almighty* has revealed His saying: 'And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on

= about his words. Then, the man would say, "By Allah, O Prophet Muhammad, Allah knows that I utter what is in my heart." In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says, "...and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart..." (*al-Baqara*: 204) Ibn Zayd said, "These are the hypocrites." See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 3993.

- (1) Ja'far As-Sadiq is Ja'far ibn Mohammed Al-Baqir ibn Ali Zain Al 'Abidin Al-Hashimi Al-Qurashi Abu 'Abdullah. Nicknamed As-Sadiq (The Honest); he was born in Medina in 80 A.H. and, for the Imamiyyah, he was the sixth among the twelve Imams. He was among the major followers with a high position in knowledge influencing both Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik. Further, he was nicknamed As-Sadiq (The Honest) since he was never known to lie and was daring regarding the truth. Ja'far was 68 years old when he died in Medina in 148 A.H. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, 2/126.
- (2) This occurred with Caliph Al-Mansour Al-'Abbasi as he wrote to Ja'far As-Sadiq, 'Why do you not visit us like other people?' Ja'far replied, 'I have nothing in the worldly life to worry about and I can ask you for nothing in the Hereafter. You do not have a blessing to congratulate you on nor do you go through hard times that need consolation. So, what shall we do when we visit you?' Al-Mansour wrote, 'You accompany us to advise us.' Ja'far replied, 'Who wants the worldly life does not advise you and who wants the Hereafter does not accompany you.' See Ibn Hamdun, *At-Tadhkera Al-Hamduniya*, 1/24.

Allah to witness as to what is in his heart...' (*al-Baqara*: 204) with regard to Ubbay, Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq Ath-Thaqafi.⁽¹⁾ He was called Al-Akhnas (The retreater) because he retreated and did not fight the Muslims with Quraysh at the Battle of Badr; he apologised to the people of Quraysh, claiming that his camels survived from the attack of the Muslims and returned to him. Besides, when he met Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he declared his belief in Islam, showed kindness towards him, and claimed his love for him. However, as soon as he had left Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* passing by some crops and donkeys belonging to a group of Muslims, he destroyed the crops and killed the donkeys.⁽²⁾ Though the verse is revealed with regard to Al-Akhnas Ibn Shariq, it concerns every hypocrite.

With regard to Allah's saying: '...and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries,' (*al-Baqara*: 204) he should not have called Allah *the Almighty* to witness for him, but rather, he should have brought his witnesses to testify to the trueness of his words, since his saying, 'Allah testifies' means that he tells the Muslims that Allah *the Almighty* testifies for him. Meanwhile, he is a liar and only wants to validate his lie by involving Allah *the Almighty* in the matter. Therefore, whenever you hear someone saying, 'Allah testifies that I am so and so,' tell him/her, 'this means that you are affirming that He *the Almighty* testifies, but perhaps you are untruthful. I would prefer that two people witness for you than involving Allah *the Almighty* in this testimony.'

Further, the hypocrites are the fiercest of opponents and the most threatening to the believers because they seek sedition and dissension; spread lies among Muslims while claiming that they are Muslims; discourage those who fight in the cause of Allah *the Almighty*; keep them away from Jihad; and

(1) *Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq Ath-Thaqafi is an ally for Banu Zahrah. His name is Ubayy ibn 'Amro ibn Wahb ibn 'Ilaj ibn Abu Salama. He was among those whose hearts need winning over for Islam. He witnessed the Battle of Hunayn and died at the outset of the caliphate of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. Known for his handsome look and speech; he retreated at the Battle of Badr with three hundred allies and did not fight Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him. See Ibn Hajar, Al-Isaba, 1/25.*

(2) In his Tafsir, As-Suyuti mentions this narration and ascribes it to Ibn Jarir At-Tabari, Ibn Al-Mundhir, and Ibn Abu Hatim. See As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur, 2/476.

promise the laggards who refrain from fighting with the Muslims with survival and prosperity. In addition, the hypocrites refute the fundamentals of the society like its virtues and morals; call for anything that destroys the Islamic Law; and desire corruption for the Muslim society and family. The hypocrites practiced this during the time of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, so Allah *the Almighty* warns against them in numerous verses of the Noble Quran, especially in the chapters of *al-Baqara* and *Al-‘Imran* and allocates a chapter titled with their name: *al-Munafiqun* (The hypocrites). Allah *the Almighty* exposes them through their looks and deep secrets, displays their evil deeds and reveals the issues by which they invoke dissension between the Muslims.

People in this worldly life can be divided into three types: A believer, a disbeliever and a hypocrite. Allah *the Almighty* at the outset of the Noble Quran, in the chapter of *al-Baqara*, wants to present a description for all people according to His Way of Guidance showing that they are one of three categories. The first category is the believers; He *the Almighty* describes their qualities in three verses, saying: ‘Those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them. And who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you and they are sure of the Hereafter. These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that shall be successful.’ (*al-Baqara*: 3-5)

The second category is the disbelievers whom Allah *the Almighty* describes their qualities in two verses, saying: ‘Surely those who disbelieve, it being alike to them whether you warn them, or do not warn them, will not believe. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them.’ (*al-Baqara*: 6-7) As for the hypocrites, Allah *the Almighty* identifies their qualities in thirteen successive verses. So, what is the reason for this? The reason is that they pose a threat to the religion of Islam. Indeed, the one who is more likely to destroy the religion is the hypocrite, unlike the disbeliever whom we avoid and beware since s/he declares his/her disbelief.

The hypocrite pretends before you that s/he is faithful yet conceals evil and disbelief. You may think s/he is a believer and start showing him/her your

secrets which s/he uses against the religion of Islam. Allah *the Almighty* has endowed the human beings with many faculties. In order for him/her to live in inner peace, his/her faculties ought to be consistent and compatible. As for the believer, his/her faculties are consistent since s/he has faith in his/her heart and utters with his/her tongue what s/he believes. Thus, there is no contradiction between his/her faculties. Likewise, the disbeliever who claims s/he lives in inner peace rejects belief and denies it in his/her heart and utters this with his/her tongue. The hypocrite, on the other hand, undergoes a contradiction between his/her faculties; s/he conceals disbelief in his/her heart and reveals belief with his/her tongue. This contradiction remains with him/her till the last day of his/her worldly life and then continues with him/her in the Hereafter so as to turn against him/her, leading him/her into the hellfire. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Until when they come to it, their ears and their eyes and their skins shall bear witness against them as to what they did. And they shall say to their skins: Why have you borne witness against us? They shall say: Allah Who makes everything speak has made us speak, and He created you at first, and to Him you shall be brought back.' (*Fussilat*: 20-21) Thus, all their faculties turn against them in the Hereafter. Neither in their worldly life nor in the Hereafter did the hypocrites reach peace. The tongue of the hypocrite, his/her hands, legs and skin will all testify against him/her. So, what is left for him/her?

The hypocrite has contradictions between himself/herself and his/her Lord, society, Hereafter and even the disbelievers. His/her tongue says what is not in his/her heart. Allah *the Almighty* describes the qualities of the hypocrites, saying: 'And there are some people who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day"; and they are not at all believers.' (*al-Baqara*: 8) This is the first characteristic of the hypocrites mentioned in the Quran. They declare faith while concealing disbelief in their heart. So, they just pretend to be believers. If they were to pray, their prayer would not be accepted since they pretend to be praying and do not establish it faithfully. Further, if they were to give the prescribed alms, it would be a source of regret for them since they spend it unwillingly as they claim it decreases their wealth and they will not be rewarded for it in the Hereafter. In addition, if someone of them were killed in a battle, they would be overwhelmed with sadness and grief since they lost

their lives without getting the reward of the one who lost his/her life in the cause of Allah *the Almighty*. Thus, everything they do is a plight for them.

Unlike the believer who prays, gives the prescribed alms or is killed in the cause of Allah while striving for paradise, the hypocrites do all these without expecting any reward. It is as if they were destined by Allah *the Almighty* to lose both the worldly life and the Hereafter. They do not have the pleasure that the believer has when s/he does good deeds in the cause of Allah *the Almighty* nor do they have the reward that the believer seeks in the Hereafter.

The second characteristic of the hypocrites suggests their ignorance and stupidity. They think that they deceive Allah *the Almighty* with their hypocrisy, but how can a human being deceive the Lord of the worlds? Allah, All Knowing, knows what we conceal and what we reveal, and He knows the secret and what is more concealed than the secret. But is there something more concealed than the secret? We say, 'Yes, the secret is what you tell to someone else so it is known by two people: You and that one. Yet, what is more concealed than the secret is what you keep to yourself and do not tell anyone about it; it remains in your heart and no one knows about it.' Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And if you utter the saying aloud, then surely He knows the secret, and what is yet more hidden.' (*Ta Ha*: 7)

No one can deceive his/her Creator *Glorified is He*; yet because the hypocrites are ignorant, they believe they can deceive Allah *the Almighty*. Thus, there is no peace between them and Allah *the Almighty* but rather detest and anger. Meanwhile, they think they deceive the believers when they reveal before them something other than what they conceal. Yet, this deception is a misery for them since they live in constant fear that the believers might find out their true position or listen to them at their private sessions while speaking about their disbelief and mocking the believers.

For this reason, if they spoke, they would make sure first that no one of the believers hear them and then ensure that none of the believers would join them while speaking. Their hearts are overwhelmed with fear even if they are sitting with the believers; everyone fears that s/he might say a word which reveals his/her hypocrisy and disbelief. Thus, there is no peace between them and the believers. In fact, they only deceive themselves, for Allah *the Almighty*

knows their hypocrisy. As for the believers, they may know this hypocrisy; however, if they did not, Allah *the Almighty* would tell them. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And if We please We would have made you know them so that you would certainly have recognised them by their marks and most certainly you can recognise them by the intent of (their) speech; and Allah knows your deeds.' (*Muhammad*: 30)

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) He *the Almighty* exposes the hypocrites and reveals to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* what they keep in their hearts. Though their deception to the believers is one between the human beings, they sometimes lose control over their tongues so they reveal their reality. If their tongue is controlled, Allah *the Almighty* exposes them and consequently they do not deceive anyone since He *the Almighty* knows their secrets and declarations. Thus, sometimes He *the Almighty* helps the believers to reveal them and other times the tongues of the hypocrites themselves lose control and thus they reveal themselves.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

اَتَّخَذُوا اَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

**They use their oaths as a cover and so bar others
from God's way: what they have been doing is
truly evil [2] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 2)**

In fact, the oaths are one of the means of deception that the hypocrites use and master. They use them as a cover which protects them from being exposed. In this way, they conceal their deep disbelief in order to live among the Muslims without being exposed. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: 'But how will it be when misfortune befalls them on account of what their hands have sent before? Then they will come to you swearing by Allah: We did not desire (anything) but good and concord.' (*an-Nisa'*: 62) They believe that hypocrisy benefits them; it allows them the benefits of the Islamic legal rulings. Hence, whenever they are exposed before people, they resort to false swearing by Allah *the Almighty* as they desire sustainability of their hypocrisy.

Besides, they attempt to justify heading to unjust tyrants by claiming that they intended good conduct and reconciliation between them and their opponents.

Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘They swear to you by Allah that they might please you and, Allah, as well as His Prophet, has a greater right that they should please Him, if they are believers.’ (*at-Tawba*: 62) The hypocrites aimed to please the believers by means of false oaths so that the latter may trust them and expect no evil from them. This indicates the stupidity of the hypocrites since it is Allah *the Almighty* and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who are most worthy of being pleased. The human being can deceive other people, but s/he cannot deceive Allah *the Almighty*. Consequently, their deception does not escape Allah’s Knowledge and He *the Almighty* will justly recompense them for it.

So, the hypocrite always clings to false, solemn oaths because s/he wants to conceal his/her disbelief and that no one finds out about the secrets of his/her ill soul. On the other hand, the disbeliever, who publicly declares his/her disbelief, does not need to hide his/her disbelief. Thus, the hypocrites conceal disbelief and reveal the belief in Islam. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...and when they meet those who believe, they say: We believe; and when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: Surely we are with you, we were only mocking.’ (*al-Baqara*: 14) They are two-faced people, dealing with the believers in one way and dealing with the disbelievers in another different way; that is why they constantly need to swear, for no one believes them. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘They swear by Allah that they did not speak, and certainly they did speak, the word of unbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam...’ (*at-Tawba*: 74).

When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had called the people to fight the Byzantines in the cause of Allah *the Almighty*, the hypocrites made up false excuses in order not to go for Jihad. As a result, the Quran revealed verses concerning those retreaters for two whole months. A man called Al-Jallas ibn Suwayd⁽¹⁾ said, ‘By Allah, if what Muhammad says

(1) *Al-Jallas ibn Suwayd is among thirty-six hypocrites and one of those who retreated at the Battle of Tabuk. See Al-Baghdadi, Al-Muhabbar, 1/ 467.*

about those retreaters is true, then we are worse than donkeys.' 'Amer ibn Qays *Al-Ansari* replied, 'Messenger Muhammad spoke the truth; you are worse than donkeys and you, Jallas, are worse than the donkey.'⁽¹⁾

'Amer ibn Qays went to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to tell him about the incident. So, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sent for Al-Jallas ibn Suwayd to ask him about the issue. Al-Jallas swore by Allah that all what 'Amer ibn Qays said did not occur and that he did not say anything against Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Then, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* left him after swearing. Meanwhile, 'Amer ibn Qays raised his hands invoking Allah, saying, 'O Lord! Reveal the truth to your servant and Messenger, and allow the truthfulness of the truthful and the lie of the liar to be known.' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Amen!' Before they finished their supplication, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying ⁽²⁾: 'They swear by Allah that they did not speak, and certainly they did speak, the word of unbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam...' (*at-Tawba*: 74).

Those who remained behind after the departure of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had made up false excuses in order not to fight with him, telling each other: 'Do not go forth in the heat.' (*at-Tawba*: 81) In the same connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will swear to you by Allah when you return to them so that you may turn aside from them...' (*at-Tawba*: 95). The expression 'will swear' comes in a future tense to suggest that they have not sworn yet. So, they would swear by Allah *the Almighty* and make up trivial excuses. But why will the hypocrites swear by Allah *the Almighty* to the

(1) In his book, Abu Nu'aym Al-Asfahani narrates on the authority of Mohammed ibn Ishaq that Al-Jallas ibn Suwayd retreated from fighting with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the Battle of Tabuk, saying, 'If what this man (Messenger Muhammad) says about those retreaters is true, then we are worse than donkeys.' 'Umair ibn Sa'd related his words to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who was staying with Al-Jallas. Al-Jallas claimed 'Umair is a liar, swearing by Allah that he did not say so. Henceforth, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying: 'They swear by Allah that they did not speak...' (*at-Tawba*: 74) See Abu Nu'aym Al-Asfahani, *Ma'rifat As-Sahaba*, 15/88.

(2) See *Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi*, *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*; *Az-Zamakhshari*, *Al-Kash-shaf*, 2/291; *An-Nasafi*, *Madarik At-Tanzil*, 1/455; and *Al-Alusi*, *Ruh Al-Ma'any*, 5/328.

believers? Allah *the Almighty* provides the answer, saying: ‘...so that you may turn aside from them...’ (*at-Tawba*: 95). This means that they swear in order for the believers to stop condemning and blaming them for not fighting with them. Allah *the Almighty* indicates the best way to deal with such people, saying: ‘...so do turn aside from them...’ (*at-Tawba*: 95). They asked the believers to turn aside from them which suggest asking for forgiveness. Similarly, the governor of Egypt tells Prophet Joseph *peace be upon him* after the plot of his wife was revealed: ‘Joseph, turn aside from this...’ (*Yusuf*: 29). This means that the governor of Egypt asked him to forget what happened and forgive their abuse.

Allah *the Almighty* commands the believers to turn aside from the hypocrites as a way of belittling and insulting them, not to show that they had forgiven them. Thus, the believers were commanded not to blame or condemn them, for blaming them signifies that they may return to the truth, which in fact is impossible. Therefore, reproaching the hypocrites is of no avail, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...surely they are unclean and their abode is Hell; a recompense for what they earned.’ (*at-Tawba*: 95)

The hypocrites do not watch Allah *the Almighty* in their actions, believing that He *the Almighty* does not see them and knows nothing of what they conceal in their hearts. Besides, they are heedless of Him, thinking only about the benefits and interest people might provide for them. Indeed, their belief is infected. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘They will swear to you that you may be pleased with them...’ (*at-Tawba*: 96). They ask ‘the believers’ to be pleased with them, forgetting that the true Pleasure comes from Allah *the Almighty*. By swearing, they might gain the believers’ satisfaction with them, yet He *the Almighty* says: ‘...but if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allah is not pleased with the transgressing people.’ (*at-Tawba*: 96) If Allah *the Almighty* is not pleased with them, the believers’ pleasure will not benefit them; it will not bring forth or hold back anything which does not please Allah *the Almighty*.

Using their oaths as a cover, the hypocrites bar others from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* since they tempt others to follow their example by adopting deception and scheming as a means for concealment and hiding. By so doing, they attempt to avert the implementation of the Islamic rulings regarding their

disbelief. This tempts people to find ways far from Allah's Way of Guidance. Our popular proverb can be best quoted here: 'They asked the thief to swear, he rejoiced: Thanks Allah.' This is similar to the case of the deviant people who bar others, by means of their deviant behaviour, from the Way of Allah *the Almighty*.

Thus, the hypocrites refuse to follow the Way of Allah *the Almighty* and incite others to do the same. In other words, not only did they go astray, but they also mislead others. They disbelieve in Allah's Way of Guidance and seek to falsify it. Consequently, they oppose the implementation of the prescribed penalties and legal retribution and discourage people and keep them away from Allah's Way of Guidance. This makes people turn away from the religion. When the people see the disbelievers, who oppose Allah's Way of Guidance and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* having the upper hand, dance, sing and rejoice for their victory by means of plotting, deception, false swearing and hypocrisy, this will tempt people to follow the approach of the opponents to Allah's Way of Guidance.

The reason for their opposition to the Way of Allah *the Almighty* is that they want the Way to be crooked in order to avert people from faith. This will enable them to have a temporal power and to cause corruption in the earth. This is because the religious reformation disturbs them and prevents them from exploiting corruption.

So, how do they avert people from the Way of Allah *the Almighty*? Those who mislead people attempt to ensure that the verses of Allah *the Almighty* do not reach people since they know that the sweetness of the Call makes anyone listening believe in it. One of the things the hypocrites did in order to avert people from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* is by building a mosque called '*Masjid Ad-Dirar*' (Harming Mosque)⁽¹⁾. In this vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Then there are those who built a mosque—in an attempt to cause harm, disbelief, and disunity among the believers—as an outpost for those who

(1) *Allah the Almighty says: 'Then there are those who built a mosque—in an attempt to cause harm, disbelief, and disunity among the believers—as an outpost for those who fought Allah and His Messenger before: they swear, "Our intentions were nothing but good," but Allah bears witness that they are liars. [Prophet], never pray in that mosque.'* (at-tawba: 107-108)

fought Allah and His Messenger before...' (*at-Tawba*: 107). Those people desired to express their hypocrisy through a manifestation of obedience by building a mosque to divide the Muslims; a group of Muslims prays here and another prays there. If they stayed to pray in it, they would be free to say whatever they want; yet, if they headed to another mosque, they would stay there suppressed and unable to speak. Thus, their objective of building the mosque was to divide the believers, and to make that mosque: 'as an outpost for those who fought Allah and His Messenger before...' (*at-Tawba*: 107).

Those who built that mosque made it an outpost to Abu 'Amir the monk, whom Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* called 'the Disobedient.' This monk asked them to establish that mosque in order to cause harm, disbelief and division. It also would be an outpost for that monk who would head to Ash-Sham and bring soldiers to fight Allah's Cause and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Though, they dare to swear by Allah *the Almighty* falsely, saying: 'Our intentions were nothing but good.' (*at-Tawba*: 107) They swore claiming, 'By building this mosque, we only desire the interest of the Muslims; it would assist the disabled and sick people and those who are unable to walk to the other mosque. Besides, if it is a rainy or cold night, people could find another mosque to perform prayers.'

They desire to avert people from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* so the Quran has been decisive regarding this issue. Allah *the Almighty* says: '[Prophet], never pray in that mosque. You should rather pray in a mosque founded from its first day on consciousness of Allah: in this mosque there are men who desire to grow in purity – Allah loves those who seek to purify themselves.' (*at-Tawba*: 108)⁽¹⁾

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti relates that Ibn 'Abbas said, 'These are people from the Ansar (The Helpers). They built a mosque so Abu 'Amir told them, 'Build your mosque and prepare your arms because I am going to the Caesar of the Romans to provide soldiers in order to expel Muhammad and his Companions.' When they finished building their mosque, they came to Prophet Muhammad saying, 'We finished building the mosque and we would like you to establish the prayers and invoke Allah to bless it.' Thereupon, Allah *the Almighty* reveals His saying: '[Prophet], never pray in that mosque...' (*at-Tawba*: 108). As-Suyuti ascribes this narration to Ibn Jarir At-Tabari, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh and Al-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*. See As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, 7/522.

Allah *the Almighty* also says: 'And those who believe will say: Are these they who swore by Allah with the most forcible of their oaths that they were most surely with you? Their deeds shall go for nothing, so they shall become losers.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 53) The hypocrites who oppose Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* swore by Allah *the Almighty* with the strongest oaths so as to show those whom they swore to that they keep their word. When they swore by Allah *the Almighty* their strongest oaths, they might have been close to Faith. However, their hearts do not stick to one doctrine, but rather fluctuate constantly. Hence, if their doctrine is unstable, how can we believe them at the moment they swore by Allah *the Almighty*?

Another thing the hypocrites do to bar others from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* is that they divide the Muslims who intend to fight the enemy. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Go forth light and heavy, and strive hard in Allah's way with your property and your persons; this is better for you, if you know.' (*at-Tawba*: 41) This is the Decree of Allah *the Almighty* Who declares the mobilisation; yet, the hypocrites desired to avoid responding to it and began to make up excuses. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Had it been a near advantage and a short journey, they would certainly have followed you, but the tedious journey was too long for them...' (*at-Tawba*: 42). They only respond to easy tasks; however, if the task was difficult, they: '...steal away from among you, concealing themselves...' (*an-Nur*: 63); and another hypocrite says: 'Allow me and do not try me. Surely into trial have they already tumbled down.' (*at-Tawba*: 49)

When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* wants to meet one of his enemies, he rarely reveals his true destination. Yet, at the Battle of Tabuk, he said, 'O people! Know that I want to fight the Byzantines.' This was at the days of hardships, extreme heat, barren grounds and when the fruits of the city ripen. During that time, people liked to reside by their fruits and shades and hated to leave them.

One day, while Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was preparing for the battle, he asked Jadd Ibn Qays, 'Will you fight the Byzantines, Jadd?' He said, 'My people knew that there is no one more infatuated by women than me and I am afraid that their women might seduce me. So please permit me, Messenger of Allah, to stay.' Thereupon, Messenger Muhammad

peace and blessings be upon him ignored him saying, 'I permit you.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying: 'And among them there is he who says: Allow me and do not try me. Surely into trial have they already tumbled down.' (*at-Tawba*: 49)

Surprisingly, the Quran is revealed before they refused to join Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his war and before they swore their strongest oaths. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and they will swear by Allah: If we had been able, we would certainly have gone forth with you; they cause their own souls to perish, and Allah knows that they are most surely liars.' (*at-Tawba*: 42) Using the future tense 'will swear' suggests that they have not sworn yet, but rather will swear in the future. If they were alarmed, they would not swear and would say, 'The Quran says we would swear, but we did not.' However, Allah *the Almighty* knows that they will swear. Similarly, the opponents of Islam unintentionally testify to the veracity of Islam. By swearing, they divided the Muslims who were preparing to fight the enemy because they refused to go forth and thus they encouraged others to retreat, causing dissension among the Muslims. The hypocrites typically do that.

It is true that hypocrites' staying behind was better for the Muslims, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Had they gone forth between you, they would not have added to you aught save corruption, and they would certainly have hurried about among you seeking (to sow) dissension among you, and among you there are those who hearken for their sake; and Allah knows the unjust.' (*at-Tawba*: 47) Indeed, the hypocrites would have only caused confusion to the minds if they had gone forth to fight; thus, the Muslims would not have been able to take the right decision. It is as if they were spying for the enemies of the Muslims. Besides, they might have been factors for defeat, which was not destined for the Muslims. Thus, if the hypocrites had gone forth with the Muslims, they would have caused division

(1) In his book, *Al-Bayhaqi* narrates this Hadith on the authority of 'Asim ibn 'Amr ibn Qatada and 'Abdullah ibn Abu Bakr ibn Hazm. In his *Tafsir*, *As-Suyuti* narrates this Hadith and ascribes it to Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Al-Mundhir and Al-Bayhaqi. It is also narrated by Ibn Abu Hatim on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah Allah be pleased with him. See *Al-Bayhaqi*, *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, 5/ 214; *As-Suyuti*, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, 7/ 396; *Ibn Abu Hatim*, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim*, 6/ 1809.

between them and would have penetrated them, aiming at causing corruption; they would join the groups of the Muslims to corrupt and divide them.

Notably, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Had they gone forth between you...' (*at-Tawba*: 47). He *the Almighty* does not say 'gone forth with you' since 'with' implies total obedience; unlike 'between you' which signifies penetrating into weak spots and causing problems, arguments and division, such as those caused by microbes and germs when they penetrate the weak parts of the human body.

Mainly, they whisper in the ears of the believers and beautify falsehood in order to refute any directive issued by the leader. The hypocrites desire dissension and the defeat of the Muslims so that when the former would return to Medina, their popularity increases. Their leader ⁽¹⁾ even said: 'Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8)

Back to the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* describes their act of swearing falsely and using their oaths as a cover to avert people from His Way, saying: '...what they have been doing is truly evil.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 2) The evil meant in the verse is not temporal; rather, it implies a present and a future evil as well since its impacts are continuous. Their evil includes their speech and acts; they swore through their tongues, lied intentionally, sought dissension between the Muslims and averted others from the Way of Allah *the Almighty*.

So, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...what they have been doing is truly evil.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 2) Thus, their evil deeds are many; for instance, they avert people from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* by their speech and sometimes by force.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٣﴾

**Because they professed faith and then rejected it, so their hearts have been sealed and they do not understand [3]
(The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 3)**

This verse follows Allah's saying: '...they use their oaths as a cover and so bar others from Allah's way: what they have been doing is truly evil.'

(1) Their leader is called 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, the head of the hypocrites in Medina.

(*al-Munafiqun*: 2) So, with regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...what they have been doing is truly evil’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 2) it includes both of the hypocrites’ deeds, that is, using their oaths as a cover to bar others from Allah’s Way and disbelieving after believing.

The Quran tells us about those who believe and then disbelieve in many instances. For example, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path.’ (*an-Nisa*: 137) These are the hypocrites who declared belief and concealed disbelief. Thus, they turned belief, which is a doctrine that the heart believes in and the deeds confirm, to a mere word. The hypocrites were keen on performing the apparent rituals and requirement of Islam in order not to be doubted while concealing disbelief in their hearts. So, they desired to corrupt and to bring about confusion to the minds.

In the same vein, Allah *the Almighty* mentions the Bedouins, saying: ‘The desert Arabs say, “We have faith.” [Prophet], tell them, “You do not have faith. What you should say instead is, ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts.”’ (*al-Hujurat*: 14) Allah *the Almighty* reveals their inner secrets to make known to them that they are Muslims by words only since their hearts did not believe. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* addresses them with: ‘You do not have faith. What you should say instead is, “We have submitted,” for faith has not yet entered your hearts.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 14)

They have been the first ones in the rows of prayers; yet, when the Quran revealed their inner secrets, they recognised that it is revealed by Allah *the Almighty* and that He *the Almighty* had exposed their secrets to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. If they had believed that it is Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who knew their inner secrets, they would not have recognised him as a Prophet only; instead, they would have exaggerated the matter and would have made him a god. Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* settled the matter and indicated that Allah has revealed that to him as He *the Almighty* has asked him to tell them: ‘You do not have faith.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 14)

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...surely (as for) those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief...’—that is, they

disbelieved till their death — ‘...Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path.’ (*an-Nisa*: 137) He *the Almighty* will not guide such people because they disbelieved after their belief.

By so doing, they have committed what is mentioned in the previous verse: ‘...bar others from Allah’s way.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 2) By this behaviour, they intend to cause dissension since other people watch them when they believe and watch them when they disbelieve. These hypocrites would justify their disbelief saying that when they have delved into the doctrinal issues of Islam, they disbelieved. They act so in order to diminish the value of Islam. Mainly, they intend to cause dissension by showing belief then declaring disbelief. This is enough to cast doubt into the Muslims’ hearts.

Those who hesitate between belief and disbelief and ended up increasing in disbelief are punished, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...Allah will not forgive them nor guide them in the (right) path.’ (*an-Nisa*: 137) Indeed, they have committed high treason against faith.

Allah *the Almighty* tells us about a group of the people of the Book who believed then disbelieved, saying: ‘And a party of the followers of the Book say: Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe, in the first part of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps they go back on their religion.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 72) Some of the people of the Book wanted to make the Muslims skeptical about the religion of Islam so they planned this plot. Notably, at that time, the Arab and Quraysh, believers and disbelievers, were illiterate and acknowledged that the people of the Book are well versed in the Divine Revelation. So, if some of them believed in the Message revealed to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* at the beginning of the day and rejected it at its end, that would confuse the Truth with falsehood and amount to deception and dissension to the believers. So, by believing at the beginning of the day and disbelieving at its end, this group of the people of the Book aimed at making the believers skeptical and confused about the religion of Islam and averting those who want to believe by means of making them hesitate and then refuse to believe. In this way, they would hinder the spread of Islam.

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* reveals the plot of those who tried to conceal their deception and wickedness. They pledged each other to keep the matter secret

for fear that the plot would not achieve its aim. That is why these schemers told each other: ‘And do not trust except those who follow your religion.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 73) This means that they warned one another against revealing that secret except for those who follow their religion. However, Allah *the Almighty* revealed the whole issue to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in order to convey it to the believers. Thus, confusion ended and the psychological war that they waged backfired.

Allah *the Almighty* does not guide such people, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved after their believing and (after) they had borne witness that the Messenger was true and clear arguments had come to them; and Allah does not guide the unjust people.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 86)

Among those people who believed in the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* then disbelieved are Tu‘ma ibn Ubayriq, Ibn Al-Aslat and Al-Harith ibn Suwayd. After they had declared belief, they headed to Mecca, declared their disbelief and stayed there. One of them repented, yet the rest did not.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...and then rejected it...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 3). This means that the hypocrites denied their belief in Allah *the Almighty* and in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Disbelief is the attempt to cover and deny the existence of Allah *the Almighty* the Necessary Being. In addition, the attempt to conceal this existence is actually a declaration that Allah *the Almighty* exists since you do not attempt to conceal something unless it exists in the first place. The thing which has no existence does not need concealment, since it does not exist in our minds. So, when those disbelievers attempt to conceal the existence of Allah *the Almighty*, they prove His Existence because you do not conceal something unless it exists. Thus, disbelief is evidence for belief.

The disbeliever who denies the existence of Allah *the Almighty* deprives himself/herself of His Way of Guidance. Indeed, such a person had gone far, far astray. Belief in Allah *the Almighty* is a natural disposition in the created beings. Yet, some people reject this belief or became unconscious about it. Disbelief, which linguistically means to cover something, is evidence for

belief. If Allah *the Almighty* does not exist, how would they cover what did not exist?! Therefore, if someone tells you s/he disbelieved – Allah forbid – you shall reply, ‘Disbelief linguistically means concealing what exists, so you must have concealed what exists, that is, Allah *the Almighty*.’

Thus, the one who disbelieved in the countless universal signs of Allah *the Almighty* has concealed and denied their existence. Likewise, they disbelieved in the Messengers and their miraculous signs, which transcend the laws of nature. Similarly, they did not believe in the verses of the Book that are revealed to show them Allah’s Way of Guidance.

The result of their disbelief after belief was that: ‘...their hearts have been sealed...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 3). This shows that Allah *the Almighty* has sealed their hearts so that guidance could not enter their hearts, neither could disbelief leave them. It is worth mentioning that Allah *the Almighty* sealed their hearts only when they had disbelieved. Then, Allah *the Almighty* abandoned them in their error, and sealed over their hearts so that disbelief could not leave and belief could not enter.

Other disbelievers listen to Quran, and then leave faithlessly. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And there are those of them who seek to listen to you until when they go forth from you, they say to those who have been given the knowledge: What was it that he said just now? These are they upon whose hearts Allah has set a seal and they follow their low desires.’ (*Muhammad*: 16)

Those who do not believe in the Quran could not perceive or understand Allah’s Revelation; this is called ‘the rust of the heart’ about which Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Nay! Rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts.’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 14) Thus, their hearts became closed and blocked after Allah *the Almighty* had sealed them that they could not tolerate or incline to goodness; and thus, they do not believe.

The seal of the hearts is for those who are filled with wickedness and deny Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. So, Allah *the Almighty* does not unjustly seal their hearts; rather, this was due to the fact that they are hypocrites and conceal disbelief in their hearts. They led to that seal after they had disbelieved. So, Allah *the Almighty* sealed their hearts with the disease in it. If they had not disbelieved, Allah would not have sealed their hearts.

When the act of sealing is attributed to Allah *the Almighty* then it is considered the most powerful seal over hearts. It is a final Judgment that He *the Almighty* has issued against them, so even an atom of hypocrisy or disbelief cannot leave their hearts. He *the Almighty* emphasises that the hypocrites have driven this seal to their hearts since they disbelieved in their heart then apparently declared faith, vainly attempting to deceive Allah *the Almighty* and the believers.

So, Allah *the Almighty* wants to indicate to them that if they opted for hypocrisy and disbelief in their hearts, Allah would seal these hearts that disbelief could not leave them nor could faith enter them. They express their feeling about that seal, saying: ‘Our hearts are under coverings from that to which you call us, and there is a heaviness in our ears, and a veil hangs between us and you, so work, we too are working.’ (*Fussilat*: 5) He *the Almighty* has made their hearts under coverings that neither faith can enter nor can disbelief leave. By doing so, He *the Almighty* does not oppress His servants, but responds to what they asked for and desired. In other words, when they desired and were satisfied with disbelief, Allah *the Almighty* increased it for them because He is the Lord who grants His servant what s/he desires.

Allah *the Almighty* says in another verse: ‘There is a disease in their hearts, so Allah added to their disease and they shall have a painful chastisement because they lied.’ (*al-Baqara*: 10) Allah *the Almighty* responded to them with what they desired and sealed their hearts to increase their disbelief inasmuch as they liked it.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...and they do not understand...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 3). Understanding occurs after being convinced through the vision and other senses, though, those disbelievers do not see except their desires. Besides, their ears listen only to what they like; they do not listen to guidance nor do they reflect on the signs which prove the Existence of the Creator. Thus, they have no understanding in their hearts. So, when Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...and they do not understand...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 3), it means they do not understand by themselves. For the human beings, understanding is the first stage of having knowledge. Notably, there is a distinction between understanding and knowledge. Understanding suggests

that you have the ability to understand things by yourself. Yet, knowledge implies that you may not understand by yourself and that someone else shall understand and then teach you. Someone may ask here, 'As long as they do not understand, why do we blame them?' We say, 'Who does not understand has to accept learning; though, they did not understand nor did they learn. Besides, they insisted on refusing education and that is why they deserved the seal on their hearts.'

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنْهُمْ خَشْبٌ مُّسْتَدَدٌ
يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ فَنُلَهِمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَقُولُوا

When you see them [Prophet], their outward appearance pleases you; when they speak, you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up timbers — they think every cry they hear is against them — and they are the enemy. Beware of them. May God confound them! How devious they are! [4] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 4)

Allah *the Almighty* describes these hypocrites with numerous characteristics relating to their physical appearance: 'When you see them [Prophet], their outward appearance pleases you...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4) and their speech: '...when they speak, you listen to what they say...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). They are like propped up timbers. Due to their hypocrisy and fear of being revealed: '...they think that every cry is against them...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4).

In fact, their hypocrisy is a manifestation of the influence of Islam and the Muslims in Medina since the hypocrites used to deceive people with their pleasant speech and acts. So, hypocrisy originated in Medina, not in Mecca. In Mecca, Islam was weak, so hypocrisy did not appear there, for no one flatters weak people. However, the power of Islam in Medina gave rise to hypocrisy. Henceforth, the existence of hypocrisy in Medina was a healthy phenomenon as it proves that belief became so powerful that non-Muslims claimed it.

The hypocrites' speech was sweet and beautiful and they acted pleasantly in front of true Muslims; however, they do not adhere to righteousness. Yet, when they give Muslims their backs, they return to their disbelief.

The pleasant speech and acts of the hypocrites run counter to piety because they stem from insincere souls. It is true that they pray at the first row, show keenness on doing religious deeds and speak nicely to please the believers; yet, their behaviour and speech conceal a corrupt intent.

The believer has to be intelligent and smart in order not to apparently judge the pleasant speech of the hypocrites, for their speech contradicts their acts. Allah *the Almighty* reveals to us the reality of the hypocrites through actual practices so that no one among them shall say, 'I am not a hypocrite.' When He *the Almighty* exposes the hypocrite through a shameful incident, s/he will be stigmatised as a hypocrite.

Many people who practice hypocrisy during their life under their pretense of being Muslim are not left without punishment. Allah *the Almighty* must expose them to the believers so that they find out their reality. For instance, when the believer assembles with a group of hypocrites at the time of noon prayer and they hear the call to prayer, the believer says, 'Let us establish the prayer.' Then, the hypocrite mockingly tells the believer, 'Protect me on the Day of Judgment.' Let us offer another example; if a believer joined a group of people, the hypocrite among them would greet the believer sarcastically, saying, 'How are you, Sheikh so and so?' This suggests that he does not welcome the believer, so he mocks him.

Moreover, the hypocrites do not observe toward a believer any tie⁽¹⁾ of kinship or treaty. This is best illustrated by the story of Zayd ibn Thabit *Allah be pleased with him* and one of the hypocrites who was about to kill Zayd since the hypocrites conceal hatred and evil and reveal compliance with Islam. One day, Zayd ibn Thabit departed from Mecca to At-Ta'if with a hypocrite. When they arrived at a secluded place, the hypocrite said, 'Let us rest here.' So, both of them entered and Zayd slept. Then, the hypocrite tied Zayd in order to kill him. Zayd asked him, 'Why do you want to kill me?' He said, 'This is because Muhammad likes you and I hate him.' Zayd invoked Allah *the Almighty* saying, 'O Allah, You are the Most Merciful, so save me.' Then,

(1) Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Where believers are concerned, they respect no tie of kinship or treaty.' (*at-Tawba*: 10) This means that they do not consider kinship, a covenant, inviolability, etc.

the hypocrite heard a voice saying, 'Do not kill him.' So, the man went out looking for the one who spoke, but did not see anyone. The hypocrite came back to kill Zayd, but he heard a closer voice crying, 'Do not kill him;' and so he looked once again, but did not see anyone. He came back for the third time to kill him, but heard a closer voice saying, 'Do not kill him.' As soon as he had gone out, he saw a knight holding a lance; the knight killed him, then entered the secluded place and untied Zayd. Then, the knight asked him, 'Do you not know me? I am Gabriel. When you invoked Allah, I was at the seventh heaven. So Allah said, 'Save my servant.' At the second time, I was at the lowest heaven and at the third time, I reached the hypocrite.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...they are the enemy. Beware of them.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4) A believer should not trust a hypocrite with his/her life, wealth, chastity, ideas, doctrine or principles.

The hypocrites considered telling lies about the lawful Creator, thinking that Allah *the Almighty* does not see them. So, it is conceivable that they deceive and lie to the servants of Allah *the Almighty* Who says: 'And if We please We would have made you know them so that you would certainly have recognised them by their marks and most certainly you can recognise them by the intent of (their) speech...' (*Muhammad*: 30). Therefore, if you observe their speech, you will notice hypocrisy in it. Allah *the Almighty* tells Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that if He wished to identify them to him, He would reveal their identity to him. However, He *the Almighty* concealed their identities, taking into consideration that they might repent. However, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* can recognise them through their speech and behaviour. In this verse, Allah *the Almighty* calls people to examine what the hypocrites say, even if it seems pleasant.

Allah *the Almighty* draws our attention to the necessity of cautiousness and that the believers should have intelligence, shrewdness and true vision. So, He *the Almighty* reveals to us all forms of hypocrisy; He *the Almighty* identifies the hypocrites from among the people of Medina and the Bedouins, who include both hypocrites and non-hypocrites. Further, He *the Almighty* has educated

(1) See *Ar-Razi, Mafatih Al-Ghaib*, 1/ 154; and *Al-Safouri, Nuzhat Al-Majalis Wa Muntakhab An-Nafa'is*, 1/81.

the believers to identify the hypocrites by their appearances which reveal the inner souls.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...intent of (their) speech...’ (*Muhammad*: 30), it suggests that the tone of their words indicates other meanings; for instance, they greet Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘Death be upon you,’ instead of: ‘Peace be upon you,’ as the Arabic words for death and Peace are somewhat similar in the pronouncement. Another common instance is that they attributed frivolity to Messenger Muhammad while saying, ‘Consider us.’

So, Allah *the Almighty* advises us to beware of them. He will expose them in order that the believers know their behaviours and their evil deeds. He *the Almighty* says: ‘And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries.’ (*al-Baqara*: 204) With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder...’ (*al-Baqara*: 204) is it forbidden to be pleased with speech? No, it is better to be pleased by speech which does not concern the worldly life. Thus, speech which should please us is what is related to the eternal Hereafter in order that Allah *the Almighty* grants us goodness. It is enough for the flattered one to know that the flatterer conceals his/her hatred from him/her, which reflects the stupidity of the flattered one, since the flatterer says to himself/herself, ‘The flattered is an idiot because I flatter him/her though I hate him/her and s/he still believes my flattery.’

Allah *the Almighty* emphasises that the believer ought to be attentive and smart. If someone tells us a pleasant speech concerning the worldly life, we should tell him/her that his/her speech is unpleasant because the best speech concerns the Eternal Hereafter. So, when one of the caliphs of the Muslims sent for Imam Ja‘far As-Sadiq asking him, ‘Why do you not visit us like other people? Imam Ja‘far As-Sadiq wrote to him, ‘I have nothing in the worldly life to worry about and you have nothing from the Hereafter that I am looking forward to’ as if he wants to tell him, ‘Leave me alone. You need someone who flatters you, and you do not know that those who think badly of you are most willing to flatter you.’

Allah *the Almighty* has revealed His saying: 'And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart...' (*al-Baqara*: 204) with regard to Ubbay, Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq Ath-Thaqafi, He was called Al-Akhnas (the retreater) because he retreated and did not fight the Muslims with Quraysh at the Battle of Badr; he apologized to the people of Quraysh, claiming that his camels survived from the attack of the Muslims and returned to him. Besides, when he met Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he declared his belief in Islam, showed kindness towards him, and claimed his love for him. Though the verse is revealed with regard to Al-Akhnas ibn Shariq, it concerns every hypocrite.

Allah *the Almighty* teaches us that speech differs from the actual works. You may hear pleasant speech from someone, but when it comes to real work and execution, s/he disappears. At the beginning, s/he easily promises you, 'I am at your service or I am all yours,' but when you actually need him/her, s/he would vanish.

Hence, in the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* describes them, saying: '...they are like propped-up timbers...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). They are like pieces of wood. He *the Almighty* describes them by their pleasant look and sweet speech. They avoid understanding what they hear and refuse to implement what belief necessitates and, therefore, they became like wood. The hypocrite does not want to respond to Prophet Muhammad's orders or advice, so s/he seems to be inanimate or a piece of wood that does not move or respond. Besides, they are propped-up pieces of wood, leaning against a wall. The simile suggests there is no hope for their guidance. They are semi-people with no souls; they are bodies with no minds. So, some scholars said, 'They are like the empty and hollow pieces of wood which are useless.' Similarly, the hypocrites are endowed with big bodies which please people and eloquent tongues saying what pleases the audience; yet, their hearts are empty and bereft of belief and obedience.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...they think that every cry is against them.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 4) This is because doubt fills their hearts. If one of them saw a believer walking towards him, he would think he came to beat or kill him. The skeptical seems to say; 'I did it,' for his/her behaviour exposes him/her.

Allah *the Almighty* has cast terror into their hearts. That terror, which is one of Allah's soldiers, overwhelms them, so they are terrified lest they are exposed.

The 'cry' here does not mean 'the cry of punishment' which was sent upon some previous peoples, as when Allah *the Almighty* says about the people of Prophet Lut: 'By your life!⁽¹⁾ They were blindly wandering on in their intoxication. So the rumbling overtook them (while) entering upon the time of sunrise.' (*al-Hijr*: 72-73)

In the verse in question, 'the cry' suggests the shout of calling them for confrontation. In fact, the shout terrifies the opponent, and it is recommended in some sports, like karate where the player shouts to his/her opponent in order to increase his/her terror. Moreover, it is common to see certain shouts in the training of the military; these shouts enable the fighter to cast terror into the heart of his/her enemy. Namely, terrifying the opponents begins with a shout making him/her lose his/her mental balance.

In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* describes the behaviour of the hypocrites, saying: '...but when fear comes, you will see them looking to you, their eyes rolling like one swooning because of death...' (*al-Ahzab*: 19). Their eyes revolve here and there; they do not settle down whether for fear, anxiety, or uncertainty. When terror and horror overwhelm the eyes, the eyes either stare in shock or revolve here and there looking for an escape or resort. Terrified and frightened, people are subject to these states. Their eyes do not settle down and turn dull: '...like one swooning because of death...' (*al-Ahzab*: 19). This is their state when they are afraid and terrified: 'but when the fear is gone they smite⁽²⁾ you with sharp tongues...' (*al-Ahzab*: 19). 'Smite you' suggests that they hurt and abuse the believers by their insults, hurting and blaming.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...they are the enemy. Beware of them. May Allah confound them! How devious they are!'

(1) Allah *the Almighty* swears by the life of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Life means the whole life of the person. See *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 2/35.

(2) 'Smite you with their tongues...' (*al-Ahzab*: 19) means to abuse you. It also means exaggeration in saying what someone hates. So the hypocrites exaggerated in speech and opposed the believers fiercely. See *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 1/323; Ibn Mandhur, *Lisan Al-'Arab*, root: *Salaqa*.

(*al-Munafiqun*: 4) Here, Allah *the Almighty* commands the believers to observe the hypocrites' moves, speech and acts in order to feel secure. They should watch them closely and exert all efforts to avoid their evil deeds. The believers should not be deceived by their pleasant speech and falsified behaviours which they use to please them. If the believers were pleased with them, it would go against the pleasure of Allah *the Almighty* and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The word 'enemy' in the verse seems to be a singular word; yet, it can suggest one enemy, two enemies or a group of enemies. So, you say, 'He is an enemy, she is an enemy, both are enemy,' since this word is used for both genders, singular and plural.

Allah *the Almighty* employs the pronoun 'they' and the definite article 'the' to refer to the enmity of the hypocrites; as if Allah *the Almighty* limits all the enemies to one enemy—the hypocrites—since they are indeed the real enemies for the believers. These hypocrites drive people to doubt their religion, cause dissension between Muslims, attract those with fragile hearts and weak doctrine, divide the row of Muslims and spread misconceptions among them.

The enemy is the opponent who wants to cause you harm and abuse. Unlike the hidden enemy, the evil of the apparent enemy is clear. The hidden enemy is more dangerous than the apparent one since we can be cautious about the apparent enemy, unlike the hidden enemy who knows one's inner secrets and moves and can deceive his/her at any time without being noticed.

Enmity drives us to be active and attentive. The orientalists, for instance, oppose Islam; however, their opposition stimulates us to search and read in order to respond. Likewise, the human soldiers of the devil oppose the believers; yet, their enmity encourages us not to become oblivious. So, if you have an enemy, try to surpass him/her by all means. It becomes clear that belief awakens the souls of people to defend Islam when it is attacked by any of its enemies. If people did not find out the dire consequences of evil, they would not incline to good deeds.

The word 'enemy' suggests the existence of conflict, namely, the believer will go through a conflict against the hypocrite. It is a conflict between righteousness and wrongfulness concerning the principles and values. Besides, it

is a non-stopping conflict since it is controlled by the whims of the human beings; no wonder they differ deeply.

Enmity persists and becomes heated, while conflict grows fierce; so Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them, whom you do not know (but) Allah knows them...’ (*al-Anfal*: 60). Allah *the Almighty* draws our attention to the fact that the enemies of the Muslims do not only include those who appeared during the time of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* such as the disbelievers of Quraysh, the Jews and the hypocrites, but also include so many future enemies only known by Allah *the Almighty*. Further, Allah *the Almighty* highlights that the enemies of the Muslims do not only include those fighters who appear in the battlefield, but also include many other people who do not show up there, yet they are fighting the religion of Allah *the Almighty* and the Muslims by other means.

So, you should be a righteous believer so that Allah *the Almighty* grants you victory. You should also know that the hypocrite is worse than the disbeliever; since the disbeliever declares his/her opposition to the religion and is an apparent enemy whom you can take precaution against. Unlike the disbeliever, the hypocrite pretends belief so that you may trust him/her and thus, his/her abuse is greater and his/her betrayal is the fiercest.

So, Allah *the Almighty* says here: ‘...they are the enemy...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). Here, He *the Almighty* advises the believers to beware of thinking that the disbelievers are their only enemy, for the hypocrites are their real enemy who combines all the evils of all enemies.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Beware of them...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). Needless to say, being cautious about the enemies is important, so Allah *the Almighty* highlights this fact regarding the hypocrites. The hypocrites feel deep inside their hearts that every Muslim doubts their behaviours. Indeed, the believers are endowed with belief immunity which prevents them from believing what the hypocrites say in order to beware of them and avoid any plotted harm. Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* warns the believers against believing the speech of the hypocrites, even if they swore.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...May Allah confound them...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). Here, He *the Almighty* curses and expels them from His Mercy. If you see someone doing a foul act, we say, ‘May Allah kill him/her,’ as his/her life increase the wrong deeds.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...How deviant they are!’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4) The Arabic word for ‘how’ here suggests two meanings: ‘from where?’ and ‘how.’ An example for the first meaning is what Prophet Zechariah *peace be upon him* said when he entered upon Virgin Mary: ‘O Mary, from where comes this to you?’ (*Al-Imran*: 37)

An example for the second meaning is found in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away.’ (*at-Tawba*: 30) How can they turn away from righteousness while they should have realised the truth of belief directed by one’s natural disposition? How do they avert from the apparent truth and resort to falsehood?

In fact, no one can bear Allah’s fighting against him/her. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘O you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers. But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allah and His Messenger...’ (*al-Baqara*: 278-279). We have nothing to say about the war of Allah *the Almighty* except His saying: ‘And none knows the soldiers of your Lord except Him.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31) No one can beware of this war. As for the war of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the war of the believers against the hypocrites—it is apparent. It is clear that Allah *the Almighty* sends forth a huge number of His Soldiers, which are known by Him only, to fight the hypocrites just like those who deal by usury.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘How deviant they are!’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4) So, how do they avert from Allah *the Almighty* and the Truth? Deviation is to change the reality of something. That is why lying is called deviation since the liar speaks about an issue contradicting the reality; thus, s/he denies the existence of something existent and vice versa. Thus, mainly, the hypocrite is a liar.

A related derivation of the root deviation is translated as ‘overthrown’ in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And the overthrown cities did He overthrow.’ (*an-Najm*: 53) They are the villages which Allah *the Almighty* overturned.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا يَسْتَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَوَّأَوْا رُءُوسَهُمْ
وَرَأَيْتَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

**They turn their heads away in disdain when they are told,
‘Come, so that the Messenger of God may ask forgiveness
for you,’ and you see them walking away arrogantly [5]
(The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 5)**

When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* emigrated from Mecca to Medina,⁽¹⁾ the people of Yathrib were making preparations for appointing ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul king over Yathrib. Yet, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came to Medina, people abandoned Ibn Ubayy, as Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* directed all people’s attention. This made Ibn Ubayy angry and increased his hatred towards Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and thus he attempted to fight him, planned plots against him and envied him due to the love and support of the people for him. ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy could not forget that when Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* entered Medina, he got all people around him and affected his popularity. This was on the day when people were making him a crown to appoint him king.

The disbelievers gathered at Mount Uhud with 3,000 fighters to fight Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. So, he consulted his Companions and sent for ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul who was not summoned except for this Battle. Ibn Salul and most of the *Ansar* (The Helpers) said, ‘O Messenger of

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Jarir relates on the authority of Mohammed ibn Ishaq that Asad ibn Hudair told Prophet Muhammad: ‘O Messenger of Allah, be kind to him, for Allah has sent you as a Prophet while his people were preparing to appoint him as a king. He thinks you have seized his kingship.’ This is also narrated by Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi and Al Bayhaqi. See At-Tabari, *Jame’ Al-Bayan*, 34494; Al-Wahidi, *Asbab An-Nuzul*; and Al-Bayhaqi, *Dala’il An-Nubuwwa*, 4/53.

Allah, we were always defeated when we confronted our enemies out of Medina, yet, we were always victorious when we confronted enemies inside Medina. So we think you should not confront them out; if they stayed out, it would be the worst prison, yet, if they entered, our men would fight them face to face, women and boys would throw stones at them, and if they retreated, they would be disappointed.'

Meanwhile, other Companions suggested confronting the disbelievers, saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, let us out to confront our enemies lest they say we fear them.' The supporters of the second suggestion insisted on their opinion until Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* agreed to follow their opinion. So, he entered his house, wore his armour and carried his sword. Those who insisted on confronting the disbelievers thought that they pushed him into doing what he does not want, so they regretted doing so. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* met them, they said, 'We pushed on you, Messenger of Allah, and we should not have done that. If you wish, stay.' Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* replied, 'A Prophet who put on his armour should not take it off until he fights.'⁽¹⁾ So, they confronted them out.

In this story, we find that Ibn Ubayy supported the stance that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* should stay in Medina. What is the reason for this? This is because it is proved that if some people entered Medina to attack it, the people of Medina would win; though, if the people of Medina left it to confront them out, they would be defeated. So, it was clear for Ibn Ubayy that he refused to go forth because the past experiences proved that if they went out of Medina to fight their enemy, their enemy would win; yet, if they stayed, they would win. Thus, he was sure of the result of going forth. However, since this opinion came from the leader of hypocrisy, you cannot decide where the right is. Perhaps the day of *Hijra* from Mecca to

(1) In his book, Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abd Al-Barr relates that the Muslims said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if you wish, stay.' Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him replied: 'A Prophet who put on his armour should not put it off until he fights.' This is also mentioned by Al-Mubarkfuri and As-Suhaili. See Ibn 'Abd Al-Barr, *Ad-Durar Fi Ikhtisar Al-Maghazi Wa As-Siyar*, 1/145; Al-Mubarkfuri, *Ar-Rahiq Al-Makhtum*, 1/215; and As-Suhaili, *Ar-Rawd Al-Anuf*, 3/243.

Medina was still affecting him. At that day when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* emigrated from Mecca to Medina, Ibn Ubayy was supposed to be king of Medina; yet, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came with the Message, the situation changed and the crown had no king which badly affected Ibn Ubayy.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And that He might know the hypocrites; and it was said to them: Come, fight in Allah’s way, or defend yourselves. They said: If we knew how to fight, we would certainly have followed you. They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and Allah best knows what they conceal. Those who said of their brethren whilst they (themselves) held back: Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed. Say: Then avert death from yourselves if you speak the truth.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 167-168)

When Ibn Ubayy desired to discourage the army from fighting, some hypocrites agreed with him but others did not. Those who stayed inside Medina gloated over the fate of those who did not agree with them, went forth for fighting and were killed, saying, ‘If they had obeyed us and stayed in Medina, they would not have been defeated and killed.’ It is as if Allah *the Almighty* clarifies the behaviour of the hypocrites so that we can recognise their position. They stayed and said about their brothers who were killed in the Battle: ‘...Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 168). They thought that those who were less hypocritical were killed because they did not obey their order to stay behind. So, how does Allah *the Almighty* reply to this? Let us reflect on His beautiful reply: ‘You, hypocrites, say: ‘Had they obeyed us...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 168) as if your obedience was the means for their safety. So, you think you know the way which makes you avoid being killed. However, the one who knows how to avoid being killed, does he know how to avoid death?’ So, Allah *the Almighty* mocks them, saying: ‘Then avert death from yourselves if you speak the truth.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 168) This is a reply to their saying: ‘Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 168).

The heart of ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul was filled with grudge, bitterness, hatred and hostility; thus, there were dark depths inside his heart.

As the head of hypocrisy in Medina, Ibn Ubayy is known with many instances of hypocrisy. Among these was what is mentioned in a Hadith that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came to Medina after he returned from the Battle of Uhud while 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul was making his usual Friday speech where he would show off his nobility and that of his people, for he was the noblest among his people. If Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sat while he was making his speech on Friday, Ibn Ubayy would stand up saying, 'O people, this is the Messenger of Allah, sitting beside you. Allah *the Almighty* blessed and supported you through him, so support, revere and obey him.' Then, he would sit.

Thus, after his deed at the Battle of Uhud (i.e., withdrawing with a third of the army), he did what he was used to doing, that is, addressing people; yet, the people pulled his clothes from all sides urging him to sit down, saying, 'Sit down, enemy of Allah, you are not entitled to speak so after doing what you did.' So he left passing by all people while saying, 'By Allah, it is as if I said foul speech when I stood to strengthen his position.' Some of the Helpers saw him at the door of the mosque and asked him, 'Woe to you! What happened?' He said, 'I stood to strengthen his position so some of his Companions jumped at me, pulling me and condemning me as if I did a grave mistake when I stood to promote his cause.' They said, 'Woe to you! Return and the Messenger of Allah will ask Allah to forgive you.' He said, 'By Allah, I do not want him to ask Allah to forgive me.'⁽¹⁾

After Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* returned from the Battle of Uhud, he wanted to stand up and say what he used to say despite committing a major sin, namely, turning back at the battlefield and the withdrawal with one-third of the army that went forth to confront the disbelievers at the Battle of Uhud.

Fleeing the army is among the destructive things which Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ordered to avoid; he said: 'Avoid the seven destructive things.' It was asked: (by those present), 'What are

(1) This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Mohammed ibn Shehab Az-Zuhari. See Al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, 3/328.

they, O Messenger of Allah?’ He mentioned among them, ‘fleeing from the battlefield.’⁽¹⁾ In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And whoever shall turn his back to them on that day-unless he turn aside for the sake of fighting or withdraws to a company-then he, indeed, becomes deserving of Allah's wrath, and his abode is hell; and an evil destination shall it be.’ (*al-Anfal*: 16)

Thus, the withdrawer, who flees the battlefield, returns with the anger of Allah *the Almighty*. Such a person who retreats from confronting the enemy at the battles of Islam makes the hellfire his refuge, which is the most wretched destination. Those who retreated and avoided confronting the enemies lest they would be killed will find a worse destination than death.

Indeed, the following saying of Allah *the Almighty* applies to Ibn Ubayy ibn Salul: ‘...when they speak, you listen to what they say...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 4). He said about Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* pleasing words, thinking that the Muslims would accept and believe it. Mainly, after his deed at the Battle of Uhud (i.e., fleeing the battlefield with a third of the army), he did what he was used to doing, that is, addressing people; yet, people pulled his clothes from all sides urging him to sit down, saying, ‘Sit down, enemy of Allah, you are not entitled to speak so after doing what you did.’ So he left passing by all people while saying, ‘By Allah *the Almighty* it is as if I said foul speech when I stood to strengthen his position.’

As a hypocrite, Ibn Ubbay said so in order to conceal what he committed at the Battle of Uhud and his withdrawal with a third of the army after he had gone forth to confront the people of Quraysh with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Companions. If he desired to strengthen Prophet Muhammad’s position, why, then, did he not do that at the battlefield? Why did he withdraw and weaken the Muslims? Did he not realise that if the

(1) *It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘Avoid the seven destructive things.’ It was asked: (by those present): ‘What are they, O Messenger of Allah?’ He replied, ‘Associating anyone or anything with Allah in worship; practising sorcery; killing of someone without a just cause whom Allah has forbidden; devouring the property of an orphan; eating of usury; fleeing from the battlefield; and slandering chaste women who never even think of anything touching chastity and are good believers.’ See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 2766; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 272.*

people of Quraysh won, it would be a disaster for all the people of Medina? They would invade it, capture its people, kill and commit all kinds of atrocities.

So, 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Haram *Al-Ansari*⁽¹⁾ told the hypocrites, 'Go forth and fight with us. If you do not go forth to fight with us, go forth to defend yourself, your wealth and your women because if they defeat the Muslims, they would enter the Medina, committing so and so.'⁽²⁾ After losing hope that they would fight in the cause of Allah, 'Abdullah urged them to go forth by stimulating their enthusiasm and pride. Yet, when he found them insisting on turning back, he told them, 'Go, enemies of Allah, Allah will suffice His Prophet.' In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And that He might know the hypocrites; and it was said to them: Come, fight in Allah's way, or defend yourselves. They said: If we knew how to fight, we would certainly have followed you. They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts, and Allah best knows what they conceal.' (*Al-'Imran*: 167) Thus, Allah *the Almighty* exposes them, saying: '...They were on that day much nearer to unbelief than to belief...' (*Al-'Imran*: 167). The hypocrites say with their tongues what their hearts deny. They are wavering all the time between belief and disbelief, belonging neither to the side of the Muslims nor to that of the disbelievers. Their fleeing of the battlefield made their hearts nearer to apparent disbelief.

(1) He is 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Haram ibn Tha'laba, Abu Jaber Al-Ansari Al-khazraji As-Salmi, an honorable Companion, and one of the twelve heads. He witnessed Al-Aqaba with seventy of the Ansar, witnessed the Battle of Badr and was killed at the day of Uhud in 3 A.H. Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lām*, 4/111.

(2) In his book, Ibn Hisham mentions in the context of Prophet Muhammad's going forth to Uhud that 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul opposed going out of Medina to fight; yet, Messenger Muhammad considered the stance of the young people. So, when they were between Medina and Uhud, 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul turned back with a third of the people, saying, 'He obeyed them and disobeyed me; we do not know why we kill ourselves here, O people.' Then, he turned back with those who followed him among his tribe and the hypocrites. Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Haram of Bani Salma said, 'O people, remember Allah. Do not disappoint your people and your Prophet when he is about to fight the enemy. They said: If we had known that you would fight, we would not have left you; though we do not think there will be fighting. He said, 'When they insisted and refused to stay in the field, he said, 'May Allah keep you away, enemies of Allah, Allah will suffice His Prophet.' This is also narrated by At-Tabari. See Ibn Hisham, *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya*, 2/64; At-Tabari, *Jame' Al-Bayan*, 8236.

Some of the Helpers saw Ibn Ubayy at the door of the mosque and asked him, 'Woe to you! What happened?' He said, 'I stood to strengthen his position so some of his Companions jumped at me, pulling me and condemning me as if I did a grave mistake when I stood to promote his cause.' They said, 'Woe to you! Return and the Messenger of Allah will ask Allah to forgive you.' He said, 'By Allah, I do not want him to ask Allah to forgive me.' That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: '...when they are told, "Come, so that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness for you," and you see them walking away arrogantly.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 5)

The Noble Quran draws for us a picture for evading from the truth and arguing, saying: 'They turn their heads away in disdain...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 5). Evading from the Truth always begins with turning the head, then the side and finally giving the back. All these observances are used to avoid arguing when it fails to convince.

Similarly, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Turning away haughtily that he may lead (others) astray from the way of Allah; for him is disgrace in this world, and on the day of resurrection We will make him taste the punishment of burning.' (*al-Hajj*: 9) So, when someone disputes about Allah *the Almighty* without knowledge, guidance or illuminating books, s/he tends to turn his/her side and head because s/he does not like your speech not because your speech is false, but rather, because s/he is groundless. S/He does not have evidence to defend his/her point, so s/he tends to resort to this body movement.

The Helpers invited Ubay to elevate his lower rank, so Allah *the Almighty* says: '...when they are told, "Come"...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 5). The Arabic word for 'come' can also mean to rise from a low position, for the religion of Islam came to prevent us from falling. Similarly, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And when it is said to them, "Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger"...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 104). Answering this invitation elevates your low position to reach the level of belief in Allah *the Almighty* and receiving His Guidance so that you do not follow your own desires, stances or laws. They told Ibn Ubayy, 'Come and the Messenger of Allah will ask Allah to forgive you.' Needless to say, mercy and the wiping out of sins are granted for whom Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asks Allah *the Almighty* for forgiveness.

In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And We did not send any Messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission; and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.' (*an-Nisa'*: 64) It is necessary for those who wrong themselves by their sins, violate the laws of Allah *the Almighty* and cause harm to the Muslims to repent in the first place. Then, they should ask Allah *the Almighty* for forgiveness and please Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* so that he asks forgiveness for them.

However, the hypocrites were passive, adhered to the earth and things were reversed for them. When they were called to go to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask forgiveness for them, their response was: 'They turn their heads away in disdain...and you see them walking away arrogantly.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 5) Similarly, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And when it is said to them: Come to what Allah has revealed and to the Messenger you will see the hypocrites turning away from you with (utter) aversion.' (*an-Nisa'*: 61) This means that they ignore this call. Aversion, here, suggests ignoring and averting from following the right course. As for averting from the Way of Allah *the Almighty* it comprises averting and preventing others from following it. The one who averts others from the Way of Allah commits a greater sin since not only did s/he avert by himself/herself from it but averted others as well.

The one who averts from the right course does so in haughtiness; s/he is arrogant and considers himself/herself higher than following the right and responding to the Call. Ibn Ubayy, for instance, and some leaders of the hypocrites saw themselves higher than Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. So, they refused to come to him to ask forgiveness for them. Moreover, they turned their heads away, averted and showed their arrogance. They acted as great persons without having the qualities of greatness. The qualities of greatness are not inherent in anyone of us and they may be taken away from those who are endowed with them. So, it becomes clear that each one of us needs to be humble to his/her Creator and to observe his/her Lord.

When the hypocrite is reminded of the verses of Allah *the Almighty* and about Messenger Muhammad: 'And when Our communications are recited

to him, he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them, as though in his ears were a heaviness, therefore announce to him a painful chastisement.’ (*Luqman*: 7) Thus, Ibn Ubay turned away in arrogance and considered himself greater than what he is called to do. His arrogance is pointless since the arrogant is always forgetful of Allah *the Almighty* because s/he looks at himself/herself in comparison to people and forgets Allah *the Almighty*. If he had recalled the Greatness and Mightiness of Allah *the Almighty* he would have been ashamed to be arrogant. Pride implies greatness and mightiness and this can only be attributed to Allah *the Almighty*. His Pride is an honour for us; it prevents us from becoming servants for anyone but Him.

That arrogant one refused to listen to the verses: ‘...as though in his ears were a heaviness...’ (*Luqman*: 7). The Helpers said to Ibn Ubayy, ‘Woe to you! Return and the Messenger of Allah will ask Allah to forgive you.’ He said, ‘By Allah, I do not want him to ask forgiveness for me.’ This was due to his envy and malice which filled his heart with dark depths of hypocrisy, arrogance and plotting against the Muslims: ‘...out of envy from themselves...’ (*al-Baqara*: 109). Allah *the Almighty* also says: ‘Or do they envy the people for what Allah has given them of His grace?’ (*an-Nisa*: 54) They envy Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* since Allah *the Almighty* has chosen him and selected him to bear the Message. Envy is only generated from a malevolent heart revolting against the destiny of Allah *the Almighty*. Notably, envy occurs when someone desires that Allah’s Favour on others comes to an end. This amounts to a rejection of Allah’s Predestination for people. Thus, Ibn Ubay’s heart was burning with malice. In fact, Allah *the Almighty* will not forgive them, for He *the Almighty* then says:

سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَسْتَغْفَرْتَ لَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ لَنْ يَغْفِرَ
 اللَّهُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٦﴾

It makes no difference whether you ask forgiveness for them or not, God will not forgive them: God does not guide such treacherous people [6] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 6)

Allah *the Almighty* says in another verse: ‘Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy

times, Allah will not forgive them; this is because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.' (*at-Tawba*: 80) There are two issues here: Firstly, the Forgiveness of Allah *the Almighty*; and secondly, the flattery of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ubay, a believing son to a hypocrite father. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* knows that Allah *the Almighty* will never forgive the hypocrites.

There is asking for forgiveness which results in Allah's Forgiveness; yet, in the case of Ibn Ubay, it is meant to please 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ubay. Further, the one who committed a sin and desires to repent and ask for forgiveness must ask Forgiveness of Allah *the Almighty* by himself in the first place, then ask Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask Allah *the Almighty* to forgive him.

Because he did not desire forgiveness, Ibn Ubay, head of the hypocrites, did not know that way of asking forgiveness. Therefore, he should have come humbly to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in order that he asks forgiveness for him, not to look for someone else to ask him for that on his behalf. Then, Allah *the Almighty* illustrates the reason for not forgiving them, whether Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asked forgiveness for them or not, saying: '...this is because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.' (*at-Tawba*: 80) In the verse in question, He *the Almighty* says, '...Allah does not guide such defiantly disobedient people.' (*at-Tawba*: 80)

Allah *the Almighty* deprived three types of people of His Guidance and Support. They include the disbelievers: '...and Allah does not guide the disbelieving people;' (*at-Tawba*: 37) the unjust people: '...and Allah does not guide the unjust people...;' (*at-Tawba*: 19) and the defiantly disobedient people '...and Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.' (*at-Tawba*: 24)

Further, has Allah *the Almighty* prevented His Guidance first? Or have they committed sins which made them unworthy of His Guidance? How could a human being defy Allah *the Almighty* with disbelief and refuse to listen to His verses and His Messenger? They began with disbelief, wrongdoing or disobedience, so Allah *the Almighty* did not guide them. Some people say, 'Guidance comes

from Allah; if He had guided me, I would not have killed, stolen, or taken a bribe.’ However, we say, ‘This is a misunderstanding of the matter. Let us observe the Noble Quran. With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and Allah does not guide...’ (*at-Tawba*: 80), it negates that the wrongdoer, the disobedient and the disbeliever deserve Guidance; since Allah *the Almighty* does not guide someone who gave precedence to disbelief, wrongdoing, or disobedience. It is as if the disbeliever, the wrongdoer or the disobedient are the ones who prevent Guidance from themselves.

If the human being gives priority to belief, s/he will be included in the Guidance of Allah *the Almighty*. It is as if being excluded from the Guidance of Allah is an act controlled and chosen by the human being. S/he can choose the way of error and leave the way of Guidance. Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* does not guide him/her because He *the Almighty* only guides the believer. On the other hand, if the human being chooses the way of Guidance, Allah *the Almighty* will grant him/her more Guidance. This is because s/he believes in Allah *the Almighty* chooses the way of Guidance and accepts the religion of Allah. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* guides the one who listens to the Quran with the spirit of belief, is certain that s/he has a Lord and believes in Him.

Allah *the Almighty* clarifies that He does not guide the disbelievers, the wrongdoers and the disobedient people, for He guides the believers, the righteous and obedient people. Actually, He, guides who gives priority to the Way of Guidance and submits to Faith, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And Allah increases in guidance those who go aright...’ (*Maryam*: 76) and also His saying: ‘...and (as for) those who follow the right direction, He increases them in guidance and gives them their guarding (against evil).’ (*Muhammad*: 17) Allah *the Almighty* clarifies for us in advance who deserves His Guidance and who does not so that you can choose your way. You can either believe and receive His Guidance or choose the way of disbelief and wrongdoing – Allah forbid – and so you will be deprived of His Guidance.

It becomes clear therefore that their previous misdeeds lead Allah *the Almighty* to deprive them of His Guidance. In other words, if someone prefers disbelief and insists on defiance, Allah *the Almighty* will abandon him/her, increase his/her disbelief and seal his/her heart. He *the Almighty* says: ‘And We will

leave them in their transgression, wandering blindly.' (*al-An'am*: 110) They refused Allah's Guidance, so He *the Almighty* deprived them of His Support of Guidance. He *the Almighty* has made the Way of Guidance clear; yet, those people who ignored it deprive themselves of attaining the Guidance of belief.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says:

هُمْ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَىٰ مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ يَنْفَضُوا وَلِلَّهِ
خَزَائِنُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٧﴾

**They are the ones who say, 'Give nothing to those who follow God's Messenger, until they abandon him', but to God belong the treasures of the heavens and earth, though the hypocrites do not understand this [7]
(The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 7)**

The defiance of the hypocrites to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is limitless. They are the fiercest of enemies because they reveal their Islam while concealing their disbelief, malice and envy for Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers. One of the means they followed to defy him is that they desired to disperse people away from him using all means since their leader wants to be the king of the people of Medina. So, they thought that if they deprived the poor Emigrants of what the Helpers give them, they would disperse from around Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The hypocrites did not realise that those Emigrants believed in order to please Allah *the Almighty* and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* not for worldly life, wealth or getting close to the rich.

The hypocrites wrongly thought that if they did not support those who believed in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with their wealth, they would abandon their belief, forgetting that the Emigrant believers left their wealth and country for Allah's sake. If someone left his/her wealth for emigration in the cause of Allah and found no wealth, would s/he disbelieve in Allah? No, because s/he left everything for His Sake. For example, Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr⁽¹⁾,

(1) Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd Munaf, a young man from Quraysh, who relates particularly to the family of Bani'Abd Ad-Dar, was one of the first Companions=

who used to be the spoiled young man of Quraysh and whose mother used to shower him with favours and perfumes, emigrates from Mecca to Medina and wears leather of goats in order to cover his body. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* looked at him saying to his Companions, 'Look to what faith has done to your brother.' The hypocrites think that the believers can substitute a piece of bread with their belief; as if they forgot that who substitutes a piece of bread with his/her belief is the one who upholds a false doctrine. Yet, the one who believes in a right doctrine adheres to it, enjoys its sweetness in his/her inner soul and his/her reward is saved with his/her Lord. 'Ali Ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* said about him, 'I came to the mosque, then I saw Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr wearing a garment with a fur patch though he was the most spoiled boy in Mecca. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw him, he shed tears for remembering the advantages that Ibn 'Umayr left behind compared to his current state. Then, he said, 'Are you better today or when you had someone offering you some bread and meat?' We said, 'We were better that day when we had enough food and were dedicated to worship.' He said, 'No, you are better today.'⁽¹⁾

You should take into account that the believer enjoys the sweetness of Certainty and Belief when s/he sacrifices everything in the cause of Belief. Yet, those people with false principles do not attract the people to their ideology unless they pay for them in advance, i.e. they buy their followers. Therefore, if you see a principle whose supporters attract people by money, you should know it is a false principle. If it was a right principle, not only

= to believe in Islam. He believed in Mecca yet concealed his Islam. He helped Usayd ibn Hudayr and Sa'd ibn Mu'az to believe in Islam. He witnessed the Battle of Badr and held the banner of Islam at the Battle of Uhud. He was killed in the cause of Allah in 3 AH. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, 7/248.

(1) In his *Musnad*, Abu Ya'la Al-Mausili narrates that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Are you better today or when you were offered bread and meat, followed by other treats, moving from one place to another, and meeting the needs of your homes like the Ka'ba?' We said, 'We were better that day when we had enough food and were dedicated to worship.' He said, 'No, you are better today.' In his book, *Al-Haythami* says, 'At-Tirmidhi narrated some of it. It is narrated by Abu Ya'la through the narration of upright narrators including a unanimous narrator.' Abu Ya'la, *Musnad*, 502; *Al-Haythami*, *Majma' Az-Zawa'id* 10/ 231

would people spend all their wealth on it, but would sacrifice their lives in its cause as well.

Amazingly, when Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* made the covenant in The Pledge of Al-'Aqabah, Helpers said, 'If we fulfilled this, what is left for us?' It is as if they said, 'You took what you need, what will we get?' Observe the grandness of belief and the certainty of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when he said that belief itself is a reward. Did he promise he would give them the kingdom of the earth? Did he promise them that these weak people would be empowered? No, he said, 'You are promised the Paradise.'⁽¹⁾ Had he said to them, 'You will have the sovereignty of the worldly life, which actually took place afterwards, the truthfulness of his Prophehood would not have been proven for those whose lives came to an end before the fulfillment of this promise.' Thus, he told them about the guaranteed reward which the believer enjoys as soon as s/he dies. He said to them, 'You are promised the Paradise.'

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, while being surrounded by a group of his Companions, 'Come along and give me the pledge of allegiance that you will not worship anything besides Allah, will not steal, will not commit illegal sexual intercourse, will not kill your children, will not utter slander invented by yourself, and will not disobey me if I order you to do something good. Whoever among you will respect and fulfil this pledge, will be rewarded by Allah. And if one of you commits any of these sins and is punished in this world, then that will be his expiation for it, and if

(1) In their books, Abu Nu'aym and As-Suhayli relate that Mahmoud ibn Labid said, 'When people met for the pledge of allegiance to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* Al-'Abbas ibn 'Ubada ibn Nadlah Al-Ansari then one of Bani Salem ibn 'Awf said, 'O people of Khazraj, do you know why you pledge that man?' They said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You pledge him to fight; if you see that destroying your wealth is a disaster and that if your honourable people are killed, you will forsake him, then do not pledge allegiance to him, for if you did so, it would be shame on you in the worldly life and the Hereafter. But if you will fulfil what you pledge at the expense of the destruction of your wealth and the killing of the honourable people, what are we going to get, Prophet Muhammad?' He said, 'The Paradise.' They said, 'Extend your hand.' When he did so, they pledged him. See Abu Nu'yam Al-Asfahani, *Ma'rifat As-Sahaba; and As-Suhaili, Ar-Rawd Al-Anuf*, 2/271.

one of you commits any of these sins and Allah screens his sin, then his matter will rest with Allah: If He will, He will punish him and if He will, He will excuse him.’⁽¹⁾

He did not tempt them saying they will have power; neither did he say to them, ‘You will live luxuriously and the worldly life will be yours.’ Instead, he said at the very beginning of the pledge of allegiance, ‘You are promised the Paradise.’ He orders them not to long for anything except the Paradise. No wonder, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* loves the people of the *Ansar*. During the Battle of Hunayn, the emigrants were given some of the gains, while the *Ansar* were given nothing. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* regarded them with a faithful hint saying, ‘O people of the *Ansar*, is it not pleasing for you that people go with goats and camels and you return to your positions with the Messenger of Allah? By Him in Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, but for the emigration, I would have been one of the *Ansar*; and if the people took their way in a valley, I would take the *Ansar's* valley. May Allah extend His Mercy upon the *Ansar*, the sons of the *Ansar* and the sons of the *Ansar*!’⁽²⁾ The people cried until their beards became wet with tears saying, ‘We are pleased with the Messenger of Allah as our share and destiny.’ What sublime Faith is this!

The hypocrites said to the *Ansar*, ‘Do not spend your wealth on those who are with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* until they disband.’ However, the believers did not disband. They left the abundance and wealth in Mecca and emigrated from Mecca to Medina; they did not come for doubtful, limited, little bliss as they are satisfied with what they are promised of certain, vast, everlasting bliss. Through Belief, they knew that the worldly bliss is either missed when you die, or when it changes; yet, the bliss of the Hereafter is limitless: It never leaves you and you never miss it.

(1) This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari, Ahmad, An-Nasa'i and Ad-Daraqutni on the authority of by 'Ubadah ibn As-Samit Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 18, 3892, 6801, 7213 and 7468; Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no.22785; An-Nasa'i, Sunnan, Hadith no. 4161, 4178; and Ad-Daraqutni Sunnan, Hadith no. 3506, 3507.

(2) This Hadith is narrated by Ahmad on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri Allah be pleased with him. It is also narrated by As-Suhaili and Ibn Jarir At-Tabari. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no.11748; As-Suhaili, Ar-Rawd Al-Anif, 4/274; and At-Tabari, Tarikh Al-Umam wa Al-Muluk 2/ 177.

The hypocrites said to the Helpers, the wealthy people in Medina: 'Give nothing to those who follow Allah's Messenger until they abandon him.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) They wanted to sever the brotherhood ties between the Emigrants and the Helpers even though they described Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as: 'the Messenger of Allah' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7). Ironically, while they urge the wealthy people of Medina to let the Emigrants starve and thus they disband away from him, they say about him: 'the Messenger of Allah' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7). So, did they believe in that? Or is it the overwhelming of the truth? Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was subject to their ridicule and mockery. The Quran narrates their saying to him: 'O you upon whom the message has been sent down, indeed you are mad.' (*al-Hijr*: 6) With regard to their saying: '...upon whom the message has been sent down,' (*al-Hijr*: 6) it does not imply that they believe in the Message, as they mock and ridicule him. Their saying: 'the Messenger of Allah' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) does not result from their belief in him. Instead, either they are unaware of their untrue practices or they are ridiculing and mocking him. For example, if you were in a gathering and you saw someone pretending to have knowledge, you would say, 'Ask that scholar.' In another verse, Allah *the Almighty* says about their ridicule at Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'And those who disbelieve would almost smite you with their eyes when they hear the reminder, and they say: Most surely he is mad...' (*al-Qalam*: 51).

Surprisingly, the hypocrites admit and declare that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the Messenger of Allah; however, they deny that with their deeds and behaviours, causing confusion in thinking and statement. Though they know that he is the Messenger of Allah, they prevent people from spending on the poor Emigrants. Even their defiance is characterised with stupidity. They acknowledge the Quran, and they are convinced with it; yet, what makes them spiteful is that it is revealed to Messenger Muhammad. Then, we see them contradicting themselves regarding this as well when they admit, but unwary, that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the Messenger of Allah, saying: 'Give nothing to those who follow Allah's Messenger, until they abandon him.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) If they acknowledge that he is the Messenger of Allah, why do they oppose him? Indeed, their natural disposition contradicts them so that they utter the truth unwarily.

When they say: ‘Give nothing...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) not only do they withhold, but they urge people to be stingy as well. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Those who are niggardly and bid people to be niggardly and hide what Allah has given them out of His grace; and We have prepared for the unbelievers a disgraceful chastisement.’ (*an-Nisa*: 37) The stingy person can hardly give; s/he does not welcome giving out any of his/her own wealth and finds difficulty in giving others. Even though, s/he might be stingy on himself/herself. The poet⁽¹⁾ draws a picture of a miser called ‘Isa and wants to condemn him because he is so miserly. He is depicted as stingy with people as well as with himself regarding what would not harm if it was done and what would not benefit if it was prevented. Naturally, since he is stingy on himself, then it is expected that he is stingy on others:

‘Isa is stingy on himself, though mortal and approaches death

Were it possible, out of one hole⁽²⁾, he would take his breath

He is so stingy that he wishes to breathe out of one nostril in order not to use the other nostril. Allah *the Almighty* says about stingy people: ‘And let not those deem, who are niggardly in giving away that which Allah has granted them out of His grace, that it is good for them; nay, it is worse for them; they shall have that whereof they were niggardly made to cleave to their necks on the resurrection day; and Allah’s is the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is aware of what you do.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 180) From the beginning of emigration, they witnessed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* promoting the brotherhood relations between the Emigrants and the Helpers.

(1) This poet is Ibn Ar-Rumi Ali Bin Al-‘Abbas ibn Jarir Abu Al-Hasan who was born in Baghdad in 221 A.H., a major poet like Bash-shar and Al-Mutanabbi. Al-Mizribani said about him, ‘Anyone praised by him whether a superior or a subordinate is satirised later.’ He has a collection of poems in three volumes. In 283 AH, he was poisoned and died at the age of 62 in Baghdad. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A‘lam*, 4/ 297.

(2) In his book, *Al-Baghdadi* relates that ‘Ali ibn Al-‘Abbas said, ‘Al-Buhturi was sitting with me when Ibn ‘Isa Al-Mansour came and greeted us. He said to him, ‘Who is this?’ I said, ‘This is ‘Isa ibn Al-Mansour whom Ibn Ar-Rumi says about his father and mentioned two lines of poetry.’ He said, ‘That is among the thoughts of the demons not the thoughts of humans.’ Then he stood up and left. This is also narrated by Abu Hilal Al-‘Askari and Ibn Hamdun. See *Al-Baghdadi*, *Tarikh Baghdad*, 12/35; Abu Hilal Al-‘Askari, *As-Sina‘tain*, 1/34; and Ibn Hamdun, *At-Tadhkira Al-Hamduniya*, 1/328.

During that time, the Muslims spent nights without food and so the Jews and hypocrites ridiculed their state, saying, 'The hand of Allah is chained and cannot assist Muhammad and his companions.'

Furthermore, the hypocrites were criticising those who give charity among the believers. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They who taunt those of the faithful who give their alms freely, and those who give to the extent of their earnings and scoff at them; Allah will pay them back their scoffing, and they shall have a painful chastisement...' (*Al- 'Imran*: 181). Here, is the story of this verse: 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf emigrated from Mecca to Medina, leaving his wealth and properties in Mecca. Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has been establishing brotherhood bonds between the Emigrants and the Helpers, so he urged each one of the Helpers to share his wealth with a man from the Emigrants. When it was the turn of 'Abd Ar-Rahman Ibn 'Awf, his brother from the Helpers said to him, 'You will share my wealth with you' He said, 'May Allah bless your wealth; show me where the market is.' He went to the market and Allah *the Almighty* blessed his trade as he has been dividing his profits by half: one for charity and the other for his family.⁽¹⁾

One day, 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, I earned 8,000 *dirhams*. I spent four of them for Allah's sake and kept four for my family.' Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'May Allah bless what you gave and what you kept.'⁽²⁾ When the hypocrites knew about what 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf had done, they said, 'Abd Ar-Rahman has given alms

(1) *Anas ibn Malik narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him established brotherhood bonds between 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf and Sa'd ibn Ar-Rabi' Al-Ansari who offered to share his family and wealth. 'Abd Ar-Rahman said, 'May Allah bless you in your family and your wealth; show me the market.' He went to the market and gained some dried buttermilk and butter. Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him saw him some days later scented with yellowish perfume. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no.3937; Al-Bazar, Musnad, Hadith no. 6548, 6541; and Abu Ya'la, Musnad, Hadiith no. 3836.*

(2) *It is narrated that Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said to him, 'May Allah bless what you lent and what you kept.' So, Allah blessed his wealth very much. See Ibn 'Adel, Al-Lubab, 10/157; Al-Alusy, Ruh Al-Ma'any, 2/33; Az-Zuhaili, At-Tafsir Al-Wasit, 1/154; and Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil, 2/389.*

to show off and gain reputation.' However, do people have knowledge about showing off or does Allah alone have knowledge about it?

Likewise, 'Asim ibn 'Uday,⁽¹⁾ owner of a garden which yielded many fruits, contributed to charities with 100 loads of dates. The hypocrites said, 'By Allah, 'Asim has done so to show off.' Moreover, a man called Abu Uqail *Al-Ansari* came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: 'O Messenger of Allah, I spent the night working and my wages were two measures of dates; I kept one measure for my family and I would like to contribute to the charities.' The hypocrites said, 'Allah and his Messenger do not need your measure, Abu 'Uqail.'⁽²⁾ Thus, the hypocrites criticised 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf who donated much saying, 'This is showing off;' attacked 'Asim ibn 'Uday, saying, 'He shows off by donating half of the fruits of his garden;' and ridiculed Abu Uqail, though he had only a measure to donate, saying, 'Allah and his Messenger do not need your dates.' They mocked who gave much and ridiculed who gave little. They should have praised the contributors instead of ridiculing them since each one donated according to his ability; they gave out of the Bounty of Allah *the Almighty* whether it is much or little.

Among those who were with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* are some destitute people, people of As-Suffa⁽³⁾ about whom Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Alms are for the poor who are confined in the way of

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- (1) 'Asim ibn 'Udayy ibn Al-Jadd Al-Balwy Al-'Ajlany, ally of the Helpers, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* appointed him over Al-'Alia in Medina. He lived a long life (he died in 45 AH at the age of 120). In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti relates that 'Asim ibn 'Udayy said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have seventy measures of dates.' The hypocrites considered it exorbitant, saying: 'He donated to show off and gain reputation.' See *Az-Zirikli, Al-A'lam*, 3/ 248; and *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* 7/46.
 - (2) In his *Tafsir*, Muqatil ibn Sulayman says, 'Abu 'Uqail ibn Qays *Al-Ansari* from Bani 'Amr got a measure of dates and put it into the charity saying, 'O Messenger of Allah, I spent the night working and my wages were two measures of dates; I lent one measure for my Lord and left one for my family and I would like to contribute in the charities.' In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari relates that the hypocrites said, 'Allah and his Messenger do not need your measure, Abu 'Uqail.' See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 14/387; *Muqatil ibn Sulaiman, Tafsir Muqatil ibn Sulaiman*, 2/62.
 - (3) People of As-Suffa are the poor people among the Emigrants who had no home to reside in; they lodged at the shaded corners of the Mosque of Medina. 'As-Suffa' is the shaded corner of the mosque which the poor use as a refuge. See *Ibn Mandhur, Lisan Al-'Arab*, root: *Safaf*.

Allah— they cannot go about in the land...’ (*al-Baqara*: 173). Their limited charity was due to reasons beyond their will or their dedication to the cause of Allah. The Helpers used to bring dates, leave it in its bunches and hang them in tight robes to the pillars of the mosque so that those poor people, including those who were secluded for worship and were subject to rumors and rejection, could eat. The hypocrites used to criticise them, saying, ‘Why do not they work? Why do not they labour like all people?’

Moreover, the hypocrites went to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘We want you to regard us and leave those destitute people.’ So Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying: ‘And withhold yourself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not your eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world’s life; and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded.’ (*al-Kahf*: 28) Allah *the Almighty* has ordered Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to regard them saying: ‘...and let not your eyes pass from them...’ (*al-Kahf*: 28). This means that he should focus on them and not abandon them for other people of the worldly life; since his look is a supply for these poor believers. Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘....and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded.’ (*al-Kahf*: 28) This is because only the one who is heedless of the Remembrance of Allah orders you to ignore these poor people for the company of people of the worldly life; yet, the ones whose hearts are concerned with His Remembrance and tasted the sweetness of Belief will not issue such an order.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...but to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and earth...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7). This is a reply to the hypocrites who think they can give or deprive those with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Actually, Allah *the Almighty* is the Ever-Affluent; He does not seek the bounties we have because they are His Bounties in the first place and He does not need our wealth because He owns the treasures of the heavens and the earth. Treasure includes all kinds of precious things that you save in order to be used at the time of need.

Allah *the Almighty* owns all the treasures of the earth, a fact which is clear in His saying: ‘And the earth— We have spread it forth and made in it firm mountains and caused to grow in it of every suitable thing. And We have made in it means of subsistence for you and for him for whom you are not the suppliers. And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure.’ (*al-Hijr*: 19-21) The treasures of Allah *the Almighty* are either buried or highly secured and can only be bestowed by Him to the people at the appropriate time. When He *the Almighty* addresses the hypocrites, saying: ‘...but to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and earth...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) it means that if you consider those with Messenger Muhammad destitute people, Allah *the Almighty* Who owns all the treasures of the earth, is able to make them wealthy, possessing the countries and the earth.

Indeed, this is exactly what happened, as it has been a prophecy and good news to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. An example for this is Suraqah ibn Malik,⁽¹⁾ who pursued Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the emigration journey in order to win the prize of Quraysh. After he repented and returned to the right course, the Companions were wondering about his thin arms and mocking them with their descriptions. Thus, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* replied, ‘How do you find them in the bracelets of Kisra?’⁽²⁾ Later on, the Muslims control the dominion of *Kisra* and the bracelets are allocated to Suraqah, who wears them on his hands before people.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...though the hypocrites do not understand this...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) because: ‘They know what is apparent of the worldly life...’ (*ar-Rum*: 7). They know artificial issues without delving into the valuable matters. They have no knowledge about the realities, the essence,

(1) He is Suraqah ibn Malik ibn Ja'sham Al-Madlajy Al-Kanany, Abu Sufian. He narrated 19 Hadiths mentioned in Hadith collections. During the period before Islam, Abu Sufyan asked him to trace the Messenger of Allah when he went to the cave with Abu Bakr. He became Muslim after the Battle of Ta'if in 8 AH and died in 24 A.H. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, 3/80.

(2) See Al-Bayhaqi, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no.13414; Ibn Al-Athir *Asad Al-Ghaba*, 1/ 422; *As-Safady in Al-Wafy Bilwafyat*, 5/ 37; and Adh-Dhahabi, *Tarikh Al-Islam*, 1/377.

and the outcome of things and the changing state of the universe. Instead, they know apparent, superficial sciences; so they do not understand. They are similar to the people of Qarun, about whom Allah *the Almighty* says: 'So he went forth to his people in his finery. Those who desire this world's life said: O would that we had the like of what Qarun is given; most surely he is possessed of mighty good fortune.' (*al-Qasas*: 79) They were dazzled at the superficiality of his adornment since they look at issues according to their measure in the worldly life. Like the hypocrites, they consider the destinies of people by the extent of their wealth, fame and power. They admire the worldly life with its pleasures and adornments, unlike people of knowledge who consider issues with a different vision. Allah *the Almighty* relates that they said: 'And those who were given the knowledge said: Woe to you! Allah's reward is better for him who believes and does good, and none is made to receive this except the patient.' (*al-Qasas*: 80) They are unaware of the fact that the adornment is a worldly aspect which does not imply the outcome of those who oppress, spoil and rejoice at his/her adornment and wealth. That is why Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode...' (*al-Qasas*: 81). The swallowing involved him and his home, which includes his treasures, depositories and all his possessions.

The hypocrites do not understand that those with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would not disband if the Helpers did not spend on them or aid them, for they did not gather around him seeking the worldly life, but they sought to obey and follow him.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

يَقُولُونَ لَئِنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنَهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ
وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

They say, 'Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak,' but power belongs to God, to His Messenger, and to the believers, though the hypocrites do not know this [8] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 8)

The hypocrites, especially their leader Ibn Ubay ibn Salul, were constantly abusing Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Here, they

say: ‘Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) They mean that they are the powerful and honoured, while the believers are weak and humble. Allah *the Almighty* partly agrees with them, ‘Yes, the powerful will expel the weak’; yet, He *the Almighty* wants to indicate who is the powerful and who is the weak, so He says: ‘...but power belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the believers...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8). This is called a positive saying, that is, to agree with the speaker who means evil by his/her words; yet, you reverse the meaning of the speaker and direct it towards goodness. Here, it is meant to increase the humiliation of the speaker; you make him/her think you agree with him/her, filling him/her with joy and delight, but then you reverse what s/he said so s/he feels humiliation. It is exactly like when the guard of a prison agrees to bring a cup of water to a thirsty prisoner who begs for a cup of water, saying, ‘I will bring you a cup of water.’ Then, he comes back with a cup full of cold water. The prisoner rejoices thinking he will get what he longs for. Though, as soon as the guard brings the cup closer to the mouth of the prisoner, he spills the water on the ground. Thus, if the guard refused to bring the water from the beginning, the prisoner would not suffer more humiliation.

Another example of this is the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And there are some of them who molest the Prophet and say: He is one who believes everything that he hears; say: A hearer of good for you (who) believes in Allah and believes the faithful and a mercy for those of you who believe; and (as for) those who molest the Messenger of Allah, they shall have a painful punishment.’ (*at-Tawba*: 61) They mean to insult and abuse Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* accusing him of not examining the speech transferred to him and believing all what is said to him. Allah *the Almighty* agrees with them that he *peace and blessings be upon him* believes everything he hears; however, He replies with the contrary of their meaning, saying: ‘...A hearer of good for you...’ (*at-Tawba*: 61). He is a hearer of goodness because he listened to the last Revelation coming from the Heavens to guide the people of the earth and because he has brought goodness for all humanity. Yet, this does not suggest the intended meaning of the hypocrites. He may hear their insults, then listen to their excuse and forgive them.

When Ibn Ubayy said, 'the powerful,' he meant the hypocrites; and when he said 'weak,' he meant the Muslims of the Emigrants and the Helpers. Allah *the Almighty* approved his saying that the powerful will expel the weak, saying: 'They say, "Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak," but power belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the believers, though the hypocrites do not know this.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) The hypocrites will leave Medina, while the believers will stay powerful in it; however, why does Allah *the Almighty* say: '...but power belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the believers...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 8)? Allah *the Almighty* wants to indicate that the power of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that of the believers is derived from His Power. He *the Almighty* says in another verse: '...surely might is wholly Allah's...' (*Yunus*: 65). This means that Power in all forms belong to Allah *the Almighty*. His Power accompanies His Wisdom, Mighty, Forbearance, Anger and Revenge, for He is All-Wise, All-Mighty, All-Forbearing, the Avenger and the Omnipotent. All other forms of Power belong to Him. If this is the reality, then the hypocrites are the weak and they are the ones who will be expelled.

The reason for the revelation of this verse is narrated by Jabir ibn 'Abdullah who said, 'We were with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the Battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq⁽¹⁾ when a man from the Emigrants kicked a man from the Helpers. When he heard this, he said: 'Leave that, for it is disgusting.' 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul heard that and said, 'Did they really do that? By Allah, if we return to Medina indeed the powerful will expel therefrom the weak.' Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* knew about that, so 'Umar said, 'Allow me to cut off the head of this hypocrite, O Messenger of Allah.' He said, 'Leave him. I do not want the people to say that Muhammad kills his Companions.'⁽²⁾ So his son 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah

(1) *The Battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq is the ninth battle among the nineteen battles of Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him according to Al-Bukhari. It was before the Battle of Al-Hudaybiyya. Notably, Banu Al-Mustaliq were allies for Quraysh from Al-Ahabish, a tribe from Khuza'a. The name of Al-Mustaliq: Judhaima ibn Sa'd.*

(2) *In his book, Al-Bukhari narrates that Jabir ibn 'Abdullah said, 'We were along with Allah's Messenger in an expedition that a person from amongst the emigrants struck at the back of a person from the Ansar. The Helper said, 'O Helpers!' And the Emigrant said, 'O Emigrants!' Thereupon Allah's Messenger said, 'What are these proclamations of=*

said: 'By Allah! You shall not return until you admit that you are the mean and that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the honourable.' So he did so.⁽¹⁾

This incident shows that the hypocrites play a negative role in the society, seize any opportunity to divide the Muslims and arouse the spirit of tribalism among the Muslims. The incident that took place between an Emigrant and a Helper might have taken place in any time and any place; however, 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul wanted to seize the opportunity to quench the malice in his heart towards Messenger Muhammad, Islam and the Muslims.

The Jews were typically acting like them. When Islam reached Medina, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* established brotherhood bonds and put boundaries between Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj. Due to these brotherhood bonds, the scientific position of the Jews deteriorated since Islam came with a religious Law and a Book which is a guardian over the previous Books. Besides, the Jews lost their military position, as they witnessed a minority of believers defeating the disbelievers at the Battle of Badr. Moreover, the Jews lost all their authority in Medina; so they desired to revive their powers of the Pre-Islam period. They said, 'Let us fuel the hostilities and awaken the animosity between Al-Aws and the Al-Khazraj.' Upon witnessing the light of belief adorning the faces of Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj people, the harmony of belief uniting them, affection and smiles prevailing among them,

= *the Days of Ignorance?* They said. 'Allah's Messenger, a person from the emigrants struck at the back of a Helper, whereupon he said, 'It is something disgusting.' 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy heard it and said, 'They have indeed done it. By Allah, when we would return to Medina the respectable amongst them (The Helpers) would turn away the mean (the Emigrants).' Thereupon 'Umar said, 'Permit me so that I should strike the neck of this hypocrite.' But he (the Prophet) said, 'Leave him, the people may not say that Muhammad kills his Companions.' See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 4905.

- (1) In his Tafsir, As-Suyuti narrates this Hadith and ascribes it to Sa'id ibn Mansour, Al-Bukhari, Muslim, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ibn Mardawayh, Al-Bayhaqi on the authority of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah. At-Tirmidhi added, 'So his son 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah said, 'By Allah! You shall not return until you admit that you are the mean and that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the honourable.' So, he did so. He said it is an authentic, good Hadith. See As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur, 14/ 503; At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 3631.

a man called Sha's ibn Qays⁽¹⁾ was provoked. He said, 'By Allah! We must return the old days and bring back their grudge and animosity; we cannot settle down when they are united.'⁽²⁾ So, he sent a Jewish boy to sit in a gathering between the people of Al-Aws and the Al-Khazraj. Then the boy digressed talking about a day called 'Ba'ath', a day when Al-Aws tribe defeated the Al-Khazraj tribe in the pre-Islamic era. The boy began elaborating on the events of that day and recalled its poetry until he provoked the anger of the people of Al-Aws and the Al-Khazraj. This resulted in fighting, showing off, awakening hatred and calling for war.

Thus, the plot succeeded, so when Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* knew about it, he went with his companions to the gathering of Al-Aws and the Al-Khazraj to find that they were highly provoked (fighting, hating each other and carrying their swords). He said, 'The call of pre-Islamic pride while I am still among you!'⁽³⁾ This means that they should have been ashamed of themselves because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is sitting with them. He then added, 'Allah has blessed you with Islam,

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- (1) Sha's ibn Qays belonged to the Jews of Bani Qaynuqa'. He was a fierce disbeliever and enemy to the Muslims, and he was among those who said, 'The Hand of Allah is chained.' He was blind.
- (2) *In his Tafsir, At-Tabari relates that Zayd ibn Aslam said, 'Sha's ibn Qays, an old man known with his bold disbelief, intense grudge and deep envy for the Muslims, passed by some companions of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him belonging to Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj, gathering together in a seating he prepared. He was aroused by their gathering, their affection and unity over Islam though they were enemies before it. So he said, 'Bani Qila are gathering in this country. No! By Allah! We cannot live here if they are united.' Therefore, he asked a Jewish young man to go to sit with them, remind them of the day of Ba'ath and elaborate on some of its poetry...' See At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan, 7563; and Ash-Shukani, Fath Al-Qadir, 2/5.*
- (3) *In his Tafsir, As-Suyuti ascribes this narration according to Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ibn Abu Hatim, and Abu Ash-Sheikh Al-Asbahani on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam who said, 'The Messenger of Allah said, "O Muslims! Allah! Allah! The call of pre-Islamic tribalism while I am sitting among you! Allah has guided you to Islam, blessed you with Islam, prevented you from pre-Islamic customs, saved you from disbelief, and brought your hearts together. And now you return to your old state, disbelievers?" Thus, the tribes knew it was a whisper of the devil and plot by an enemy, so they threw their swords, shed their tears and hugged each other.' See As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur, 3/699; At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan, 5/ 628.*

prevented you from the days of the pre-Islamic era, and brought your hearts together.’ How did the words of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* influence the tribes? They made them drop their weapons, cry, hug each other and leave with the Messenger of Allah. There was no day worse in its beginning and better by its end like that one.

The same foul plot which the Jews used to implement in Medina between Al-Aws and the Al-Khazraj was planned by Ibn Ubayy to increase dissension, division and arguments between the Emigrants and the Helpers. Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah *Allah be pleased with him* narrated, ‘We were in a Battle when a man from the Emigrants kicked a man from the Helpers. The Prophet heard this and said, ‘Leave that, for it is disgusting;’ that is, stop that because it will result in a great evil and dissension. Believers cannot be subject to or provoked by tribalism and pride of the pre-Islamic era. Here, Emigrants kicked a Helper, so the latter said, ‘O Helpers!’ While the former said ‘O Emigrants!’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* heard this and said, ‘It is the evil call of the pre-Islamic tribalism.’

The call of the pre-Islamic tribalism aims at dividing the Helpers and the Emigrants or any two different parties, driving each party to factionalism, dissension and fighting; and consequently, resulting in acts which belong to the pre-Islamic era. So, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Leave that, for it is disgusting;’ that is, ugly and mean since it provokes disputes over falsehood and drives to fire. He said, ‘Whoever calls the Call of the pre-Islamic era is not one of us and let him take his seat in fire.’⁽¹⁾

The call of the pre-Islamic era is a call for war, for they used to say, ‘O the tribe of so and so.’ Then, the tribe gathers to support the speaker even if

(1) *Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn Masu’d that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘He who (on befalling of a calamity) slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes and follows the ways and traditions of the days of Ignorance is none of us.’ Al-Harith Al-Ash‘ari narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘He whoever calls with the call of the days of Ignorance, then he is among the coals of hell.’ A man said, ‘Even if he performs prayers and fasts, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said, ‘Yes. So call with the call that Allah named you with: Muslims, believers and worshipers of Allah.’ This is narrated by At-Tyalisi, Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi and others. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 1294, 1298 and 3520; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no.148.*

he is a wrongdoer; yet, Islam prohibits this. The people of the pre-Islamic era came together through tribalism regarding all the issues of the worldly life and were settling their rights through coalitions and tribalism. Islam came to prohibit all these and settle issues through the Islamic rulings. Thus, if someone engaged in an aggressive action against someone else, the judge would adjudicate between them according to the Islamic laws, not the tribal code, and would obligate him/her to receive the due legal punishment for his/her aggression.

When the call of the Pre-Islamic tribalism and achieving triumph through fanaticism and tribalism appear, the hypocrites – who desire to fuel the fires because they are beneficiary – appear as well. Here, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul, the head of the hypocrites, seized the opportunity as well, even though he was out of Medina. When he heard about the quarrel between a boy from the Emigrants and a boy of the Helpers, he said, ‘Did they really do that?’ It is as if he was waiting for this incident since he wanted dissension. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...had they gone forth between you, they would not have added to you aught save corruption, and they would certainly have hurried about among you seeking (to sow) dissension among you, and among you there are those who hearken for their sake; and Allah knows the unjust.’ (*at-Tawba*: 47) They cause division between the rows of the believers in order to penetrate them aiming at causing corruption. Allah *the Almighty* employs the word ‘between’ to indicate penetration and division between two things or persons. So, one of them would enter a group of believers to corrupt it and another one would join another group to corrupt it as well. Thus, they penetrate the believers to divide them.

When Ibn Ubayy said, ‘Did they really do that?’ he means that the Emigrants dared to harm the Helpers; though, at the beginning, the latter were greater in number than the former, as the Emigrants only increased later on. Then, he said, ‘By Allah, if we return to Medina, indeed, the powerful will expel therefrom the weak.’ It is known that he would have been appointed king of Medina and that during the celebration of the crown, they were surprised by the arrival of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* emigrating to Medina. This is one of the reasons for the malice of ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay towards Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; he lost kingship and his son, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay, became a true Muslim.

The proof of the sincere belief of his son can be found when he went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* upon hearing that he would order the killing of his father after he had said: ‘Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) The son went to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘If you have to order the killing of my father, O Messenger of Allah, let me implement it because I am afraid that if a believer brother killed him, I would hate him and I do not like to hate a believer.’⁽¹⁾ Thus, his truthfulness and strength of belief become clear; Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* desired to treat that hypocrite with generosity for his son, so he did not order him to be killed. Later on, the son came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah for forgiveness of my father.’ Due to the fact that he was sent as a mercy for all people, he asked Allah *the Almighty* to forgive ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay; and thus, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying, ‘Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them; this is because they disbelieve in Allah and His Messenger, and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.’ (*at-Tawba*: 80) The good son wanted to kill his father himself in order not to seek a Muslim for revenge. In the same vein, when ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* passed by the killer of his brother, Zayd ibn Al-Khattab, ‘Umar said to him, ‘Get away from me, I do not love you.’ The man replied with a daring faith, ‘Does your hatred deprive me a right of my rights?’ ‘Umar said, ‘No.’ The man said, ‘Women only cry over love.’

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sent for ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul in order to ask him about what he said; yet, he denied and

(1) In his book, *At-Tabari* narrates that ‘Asim Ibn ‘Amr ibn Qatada said that ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I heard that you want to kill ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy because of what he said. If you will kill him, order me and I will bring his head to you. By Allah, the Khazraj tribe did not witness a man more obedient to his father than me and I fear lest you order someone else to kill him. Do not let me see the killer of my father walking among people lest I would kill him and thus go to fire because I killed a believer in revenge for a disbeliever. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Alright, we will be kind and good to him as long as he stays with us.’ This is also narrated by Ibn Al-Athir. See *At-Tabari*, *Jame‘ Al-Bayan*, 23/407; *Ibn Al-Athir*, *Al-Kamil Fi At-Tarikh*, 1/309.

swore by Allah he had not said that. So, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying: 'They swear by Allah that they did not speak, and certainly they did speak, the word of unbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam...' (*at-Tawba*: 74). He made ibn Salul swear by Allah that he did not say that.

In the same connection, Zayd ibn Arqam said, 'We went for a journey with Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* where people suffered a hardship. So, 'Abdullah ibn Ubay said to his friends, 'Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they disband...if we return to Medina, the powerful will surely expel therefrom the weak.' Zayd came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and related that to him. Then, he sent for 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy to ask him; yet, he denied and swore he did not. They said, 'Zayd lied to the Messenger of Allah.' So, this really disappointed Zayd until Allah *the Almighty* revealed the truth, saying: 'When the hypocrites come to you [Prophet]...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1). Finally, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* called them to ask forgiveness for them; however, they turned their heads⁽¹⁾ aside.

Since the son of Ibn Ubay was a true Muslim, when his father returned to Medina, he carried his sword and said to his father, 'You claim if we return to Medina, the powerful will surely expel therefrom the weak. By Allah! You will not enter Medina until the Messenger of Allah permits you.' He also said, 'By Allah! You shall never return to Medina until you admit that you are the mean and that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the honourable.' He also said, 'By Allah! I will not return the sword back until you admit that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the honourable and you are the mean.' So, he admitted.

Ibn Salul was constantly hurting Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. For instance, when two men – one from the tribe of Juhaina, which

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti narrates this narration and ascribes it to At-Tabarani that 'Usama ibn Zayd said, 'When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came back from the Battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq, 'Abdullah ibn Ubay drew the sword against his father saying, "By Allah! I will not leave the sword until you admit that you are the mean and that the Messenger of Allah is the honourable." So he said, "Woe to you! Muhammad is the honourable and I am the mean." When this was narrated to Prophet Muhammad, he admired him and appreciated it.' See As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, 14/504.

is an ally to the Helpers, and the other from Ghafar – fought each other, the man from Ghafar defeated the man from Juhaina. So, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay cried out, ‘O people of Aws! Help your brother.’ He added, ‘By Allah! The example of Muhammad with regard to us is as one says, “Feed your dog and it would eat you.”’⁽¹⁾

Besides, Ibn Ubay abused Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by slandering his wife, ‘A’isha *Allah be pleased with her*. During the Battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq, he was involved in and increased the abuse of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and slandered the reputation of his wife, accusing her of committing adultery. So Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Surely they who concocted the lie are a party from among you. Do not regard it an evil to you; nay, it is good for you. Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin; and (as for) him who took upon himself the main part thereof, he shall have a grievous chastisement.’ (*an-Nur*: 11) ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul is responsible for spreading the rumour since he began the talk, saying, ‘The wife of your Prophet spent the night with a man, and then at the morning, he came to lead the camel for her.’⁽²⁾

The hypocrites were unaware that Power and Honour belong to Allah, His Messenger and the believers and that humiliation is for the hypocrites, so He

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Abu Hatim narrates that Qatada said, ‘It was mentioned to us that two men - one from the tribe of Juhain, which is an ally to the Helpers, and the other from Ghafar - fought each other, the man from Ghafar defeated the man from Juhaina. So, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay cried out, “O people of Aws! Help your brother,” and added, “By Allah! The example of Muhammad with regard to us is as one says, ‘Feed your dog and it would eat you.’”’ In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti ascribes this narration to Ibn Jarir, Ibn Al-Mundhir, and Ibn Abu Hatim. See Ibn Abu Hatim, *Tafsir Ibn Abu Hatim*, 10403; As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthour*, 7/445.

(2) In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Jarir At-Tabari narrates that Ibn Zayd said, ‘He who is responsible for spreading the rumour is ‘Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, the wicked man, since he began the calumny saying, ‘The wife of your Prophet spent the night with a man and then he came to lead us with her.’ Ibn Abu Malika narrated from ‘Urwa that ‘A’isha said regarding the calumny, ‘Then I rode and Safwan led the camel by the rope. We passed by a group of hypocrites who used to be hated by people. So, ‘Abdullah ibn Ubay, their head, said, ‘Who is this?’ They said, “‘A’isha.” He said, ‘By Allah! She did not survive nor did he survive.’ He added, ‘The wife of your Prophet spent the night with a man; and then at the morning, he came to lead the camel for her.’ See At-Tabari, *Jami’ Al-Bayan*, 26050.

the Almighty Allah says: ‘...but power belongs to Allah, to His Messenger, and to the believers...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8). Allah *the Almighty* defeats and is undefeatable. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is also honoured with untouchable dignity and chastity, and the believers, by following the Book of Allah, are endowed with honour and dignity. The word for Power in the verse in question is derived from a concrete meaning which is rigidity and toughness. For instance, we say ‘rigid earth,’ that is, concrete and cannot be affected by a pickax. Then, the adjective was used to describe anything sturdy. So, when it is said: Allah is Almighty, it means that He controls everything; no one can bear His Scheme, Power or Punishment. The same adjective is used to refer to something rare and valuable, for all precious metals are valuable due to their scarcity and rarity.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...though the hypocrites do not know this.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) This is not negation of their knowledge and obtaining the information, yet, it negates their benefit from the knowledge that reached them. In fact, the knowledge which does not influence the movement of the human being is useless. It is as if the knowledge is negated from the hypocrite because s/he did not benefit from it. They do not know the useful knowledge, nor the essence and outcome of the matters. This is because they do not assess the issues with the precision that leads to real benefit, nor do they value the true belief. The human being may not understand something, but someone else may understand it and help him/her understand it.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

**Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract
you from remembering God: those who do so will be the
ones who lose [9] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 9)**

Whenever the believer remembers that Allah *the Almighty* sends down the rain, for example, s/he thanks Him. So, remembrance is achieved through the tongue and the heart. Allah *the Almighty* is unseen and concealed from us. In

fact, His Mightiness lies in the fact that He is unseen; yet, His Favours are evidence for Him. So, remembrance should be always in our minds. We should constantly remember and thank Allah *the Almighty* for His Favours. Actually, remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* facilitates the movement of life in all aspects because when it exists in the humble hearts, it diminishes the sins, benefits all people, and corrects the movement of life. So, in the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: those who do so will be the ones who lose.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9) He *the Almighty* addresses the believers to keep their belief pure, clear and flawless.

This verse should be explained in the context of what was previously mentioned in the chapter of *al-Jumu‘a*. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘O you who believe! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if only you knew—then when the prayer has ended, disperse in the land and seek out Allah’s bounty. Remember Allah often so that you may prosper. Yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it, and leave you [Prophet] standing there. Say, ‘Allah’s gift is better than any entertainment or trade: Allah is the best provider.’ (*al-Jumu‘a*: 9-11) The believers are called to seek remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* when the call to prayer is made on Friday and stop trading; though after the prayer, they are encouraged to disperse within the land and seek from the Bounty of Allah *the Almighty*. During that time, you should: ‘Remember Allah often so that you may prosper.’ (*al-Jumu‘a*: 10)

Meanwhile, Allah *the Almighty* condemns those believers who disbanded, leaving Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* giving the Friday sermon and were deluded by the trade coming to Medina on that day. So, He *the Almighty* addresses the believers because they are the ones who are entitled to comply with His Commands and Prohibitions. Unlike the disbeliever, the believer is obliged to act in accordance with the religion of Allah; thus, s/he enters an agreement of Belief with the Almighty. Thus, He *the Almighty* does not address all people with respect to His Commands; instead, He addresses the believers only. For example, He says: ‘O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may

guard (against evil).’ (*al-Baqara*: 183) He *the Almighty* says: ‘O you who believe! Seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient.’ (*al-Baqara*: 153) Thus, Allah *the Almighty* only charges the believer who enters the agreement of Faith with the religious obligations. If the servant has believed, then his/her moves in life become the responsibility of his/her Lord who reveals to him/her the law of life. As for the disbeliever, Allah *the Almighty* does not command him/her to do anything. Belief is a commitment. As long as you acknowledged Allah’s Wisdom, then commit yourself to obtain the rulings of your religion from Him. Allah’s Justice necessitates that He does not command the disbelievers; unlike the humans whose leaders command all people whether they consent or not. Besides, if that human leader is powerful, s/he tends to force anyone under his/her authority to do what s/he says. So, Allah *the Almighty* often begins the verses which include commands with: ‘O you who believe...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9). Thus, Allah *the Almighty* does not command all people. He only commands those who believe.

Allah *the Almighty* does not interfere in the actions related to one’s free choice. He only commands those who believe to comply with His Way of Guidance. Notably, He *the Almighty* does not command the disbeliever because He has no agreement with him. Instead, He commands the believer. Thus, every verse bearing a ruling starts with this faithful call: ‘O you who believe...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9). Our belief in Allah, Who decrees the dos and do nots, is what makes us entitled to receive His Rulings and comply with them. Therefore, the one who agrees to believe in Allah *the Almighty* has entered an agreement of Belief with Him and that is why s/he receives from Allah the Islamic Way of Guidance related to the dos and do nots. In addition, s/he should apply this approach without questioning the logic of everything. The logic behind any religious decree is that it is issued from Allah *the Almighty*. You cannot argue it because it is not issued by an equivalent person to you. On the contrary, it is issued by Allah *the Almighty* Whom you are obliged to obey because He is the Lord and you are His worshiper. It is sufficient that He *the Almighty* says, ‘Do’ so that we carry out the command, and it is sufficient that He says, ‘Do not,’ that we refrain from what He prohibits. Thus, we comply with all the commands of Allah *the Almighty* because He has decreed them and not due to anything else. Mainly, we receive all what is revealed from Allah

in the Quran as the Words of Allah *the Almighty*. This is the belief that He *the Almighty* wants us to adhere to and follow in our life.

Allah *the Almighty* calls those who have believed saying: ‘O you who believe...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9) and commands them to seek the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘O you who believe! When the call to prayer is made on the day of congregation, hurry towards the reminder of Allah...’ (*al-Jumu’a*: 9). This is a Command to do something. In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* forbids those who believe, saying: ‘O You who believe, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9).

Diversion is spending the time in an act which may distract you from your duties. If the worldly life which Allah *the Almighty* created and created man in it, is free from His Way of Guidance, then it is diversion and amusement. Diversion is the unwise recreation; the worldly life may pass while the person is in diversion, amusement and business, for s/he did not take life seriously. Anything that diverts you from what Allah *the Almighty* has created you for is a diversion because it diverted you from what is most important. The word ‘diversion’ points to the thing which does not benefit you and diverts from what is required from you. There is a difference between diversion and amusement, yet both are useless and diverts from what is required from you.

The Quran mentions diversion and amusement in numerous verses, yet amusement was mentioned first in the following saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah, so will you not reason?’ (*al-An’am*: 32) And in another verse Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Know that life of this world is but amusement and diversion...’ (*al-Hadid*: 20). Yet, diversion is mentioned first in the following saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement...’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 64). Amusement is mentioned before ‘diversion’ in two verses because ‘amusement’ suggests that you make unintended moves like children while playing; mainly, it implies aimless movements which we call ‘amusement of children’. It is called ‘amusement’ since the child amuses himself/herself before s/he is charged with anything. Thus, amusement does not divert him/her from any duties. However, when s/he grows up and moves to the stage of being religiously

responsible, 'amusement' diverts him/her from something required from him/her; and thus, it becomes 'diversion'. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: '...yet they scatter towards trade or entertainment whenever they observe it, and leave you [Prophet] standing there...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11). So, it becomes clear that diversion is the thing which is useless and diverts you from what is required from you. Notably, the verse in the chapter of *al-'Ankabut* which mentions 'diversion' prior to 'amusement' means that the issues which divert from religion are countless, that corruption has prevailed and that diverting from what is required has exacerbated. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And of men is he who takes instead diversion of speech to lead astray from Allah's path without knowledge...' (*Luqman*: 6). According to the scholars,⁽¹⁾ 'diversion of speech' is all that diverts from what Allah decrees. Therefore, the work which diverts the person from performing the duties for Allah, such as performing the prayers, is considered diversion. It is extreme diversion and amusement that they play when they hear the Quran. They did not even listen to it like any purposeful diversion, but they heard it as amusement with no aim or benefit because its aim is harmful to them. Amusement is lawful in the period before adolescence; yet, the hearts need to be brought up to observe Allah *the Almighty* the Creator and the Provider in this early period of man's life. This task should be done by the father. When he brings food or drink for his child, he should say before him/her, 'Allah *the Almighty* has provided us with it.' Thus, we attribute all the issues of life to Allah. We should command the young boy to say, 'In the Name of Allah and praise be to Allah.' Hence, the father embeds in his child's soul Certainty of Allah the Almighty, the Omnipotent. If the boy does not see Him, he sees His signs and favours and sees his father, who takes responsibility for him, not attributing this favour to himself; instead, he attributes everything to Allah *the Almighty*. His father – his role model—is humble and attributes all issues to Allah. Thus, belief becomes

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti relates that Ibn 'Al-Abbas said, 'Diversion of the speech means futile speech, i.e. singing and other similar things.' Ibn Mas'ud said, 'A man buying a girl who sings for him at day or night.' In his book, Ash-Shawkani says, 'It is everything that diverts from goodness such as singing, clubs, false talk and all forbidden acts.' In his book, *Al-Biq'a'i* says, 'It means what distracts among the evolving things which amuse so man loses track of time such as singing and jokes among other useless things.' See Ash-Shawkani, *Fath Al-Qadir*, 4/483; *Al-Biq'a'i*, Nazhm Ad-Durar, 6/6.

embedded in the conscience of the boy. If the boy was not brought up this way, diversion and amusement would find their ways to his soul.

On the other hand, if you divert from the way of Allah *the Almighty* the worldly life will be a useless home for diversion and amusement. Yet, He *the Almighty* specifies, in the verse in question two things from the worldly life: wealth and children, saying: ‘O you who believe! Do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9). Allah *the Almighty* forbids the believers from being diverted from remembering Him by their wealth and children. Both these factors are also combined in another verse in *Al-Imran* and when Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life...’ (*al-Kahf*: 46).⁽¹⁾ Wealth and children are fundamental elements that test people in the worldly life. Yet, why does Allah mentions ‘wealth’ prior to ‘children’? Is the wealth more worthy for people than the children? We say, ‘Allah *the Almighty* mentions “wealth” before “children” in both verses not because wealth is more precious, but because wealth is more general, unlike children, since all people have property even if it is little, yet, “children” is more specific as some people are deprived of them. In addition, the children do not come unless the person possesses wealth because he needs marriage and expenses in order to produce and bring children. Everyone has wealth, yet, everyone does not necessarily have children. When Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life...’ (*al-Kahf*: 46) this means that they are not necessities of life: they are mere adornment and artificial things since the believer who is pleased with what Allah *the Almighty* has destined for him/her lives his/her life happily even with no wealth or children. Wealth or children might make the person so miserable that s/he wishes s/he had died before having that wealth or that child. You might see a distressed, worried man because he wants to

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Al-Qurtubi says, ‘Wealth and children are adornment of the worldly life because wealth has beauty and benefits while the children imply strength and advancement; thus, they become the adornment of the worldly life.’ In his *Tafsir*, Al-Baydawi says, ‘They adorn man in his worldly life and leave him sooner.’ In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Al-Jawzi says, ‘This responds to the polytheists who used to show off with their wealth and sons; Allah *the Almighty* tells them that these adorn only your worldly life.’ See Al-Qurtubi, *Jame‘ Ahkam Al-Quran*, 10/413; Al-Baydawi, *Anwar At-Tanzil*, 3/ 500; and Ibn Al-Jawzi in *Zad Al-Masir*, 4/ 228.

have a boy for ancestry and honour; however, he might be provided with a boy who truly humiliates him.

Wealth, here, does not mean gold and silver, but rather, it is a general word including gold, silver, money, horses, crops, cattle, and everything you spend to pay for something else. Wealth specifically refers to money because it enables us to buy everything. Wealth is divided into two types: wealth which is used directly, like food, drinks, clothes, etc. This type of wealth benefits people directly. The other type of wealth is money which does not benefit people directly. In other words, they can benefit from it only when they buy things that benefit them directly.

So, you should not be diverted by your wealth and children from the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* since they will not benefit you on the Day of Resurrection. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'As (for) those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allah...' (*Al-Imran*: 116). Moreover, wealth and children are reasons for temptation, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And know that your property and your children are a temptation, and that Allah is He with Whom there is a mighty reward.' (*al-Anfal*: 28) The hypocrites and the disbelievers do not succeed in the temptation of the wealth and children. Instead, there will come a day when they lose that wealth and these children. Even if they have wealth, it will not buy anything in the Hereafter and, besides, each one of their children will be fully busy with himself/herself, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'O people! guard against (the punishment of) your Lord and dread the day when a father shall not make any satisfaction for his son, nor shall the child be the maker of any satisfaction for his father; surely the promise of Allah is true, therefore let not this world's life deceive you, nor let the deceiver⁽¹⁾ deceive you in respect of Allah' (*Luqman*: 33). If wealth and children are among the decoration and adornment of the worldly life, why do we let them delude us from the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* and distract

(1) In his *Tafsir*, 'Abd Ar-Razzaq relates that 'the Deceiver' is Satan and falsehood. In his *Tafsir*, Ash-Shawkani says that the deceiver is the Satan who tempts people with false temptations and untrue promises. See 'Abd Ar-Razzaq, *Tafsir Ibn 'Abd Ar-Razzaq*, 2434; and Ash-Shawkani, *Fath Al-Qadir*, 2/62.

us from religious duties and obligations decreed by Allah *the Almighty*? Why are we attracted to mere decoration and adornment?

When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about this verse: ‘O you who believe! Do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9). He said, ‘They are worshipers from my *Ummah*, the good among them who are not diverted by trade or transaction from the remembrance of Allah and the five daily prayers.’⁽¹⁾ So, these are worshipers of the Prophet Muhammad’s *Ummah*, but he specifies their category, saying, ‘The good among them,’ who connect themselves to Allah *the Almighty* through His remembrance, and whom He *the Almighty* provides with support in order that they become able to lead the movement of life on earth and thus, establish security, peace, mercy and justice in it. This is what should make us feel proud.

Remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* is achieved through the renewal of connection with Him and standing before Him in the prayers. Even during war and time of fear, we should remember Him. In general, remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* includes recalling His Favours, Mightiness, Omnipotence and His Attributes of perfection. This should be continuous, and it is obligatory during prayers and at other times. So, Allah *the Almighty* says in this regard: ‘Then when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining...’ (*an-Nisa*: 103).

In addition, remembrance means reflection and to live as a true Muslim following Allah’s Way of Guidance. Remembrance can also mean glorification and praising of Allah *the Almighty*. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: ‘In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-due...’

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti narrates this Hadith on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas Allah be pleased with him. He ascribes it to Ibn Mardawayh. In his *Tafsir*, Ash-Shawkani narrates it on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas and ascribes it to Ibn Mardawayh as well. He said, ‘They were men seeking from His bounty, buying and selling; yet, as soon as they hear the call to prayers, they throw what is in their hands and rush to the mosque for prayers.’ See As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*; and Ash-Shawkani, *Fath Al-Qadir*, 5/228.

(*an-Nur*: 36-37). It is remembrance since there are people who glorify Allah *the Almighty* in the morning and in the evenings; they are men described as not being distracted from the remembrance of Allah by trade or sale.

Remembrance may also refer to Allah's Bounties bestowed on His worshipers; and it also may refer to their worship through obedience. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* remembers them with goodness, while they remember Him by obedience.

So, you should never let your world businesses and interests distract you from the remembrance of Allah, for He says: '...and leave off your trading—that is better for you, if only you knew.' (*al-Jumu'a*: 9) Yet, here, Allah *the Almighty* warns us against letting wealth and children avert us from remembrance of Him, as He *the Almighty* says: 'O You who believe, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: those who do so will be the ones who lose.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 9)

You should never think that the remembrance of Allah is done only in the mosque or during times of prayers. Instead, keep remembering Him during all events of life; if you do so and He remembers you, then you will be among the successful. Remembering Allah frequently means that you constantly feel Him beside you, so you fear Him, praise Him and ask Him for Guidance; and thus the connection between you and Allah *the Almighty* becomes constant at all times. However, whoever follows his/her desires and lets them distract him/her from the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* will not be concerned with what He *the Almighty* requires from him/her since s/he is busy with what s/he requires. In short, you should always remember Allah and be conscious of Him.

That is why, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and the Remembrance of Allah is greater...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 45). It means that the remembrance of Allah is greater than all other acts of worship because they need preparing, time, dedication and spare time, unlike remembrance which can be said at any time, with no preparation, or hardship, and regardless of your state. As remembrance of Allah means being mindful of Him, and it does not prevent you from working. It is the lightest and easiest worship for the soul and the heaviest worship in the Scale. It is the only act of worship which does not cost you anything; it does not occupy any of your senses or need time or effort, nor does it require a specified time. So, whoever remembers Allah *the Almighty* while standing,

sitting, or lying on his/her side is considered one of those who remember Allah *the Almighty* frequently⁽¹⁾ and so is the one who remembers Him at the morning or the evenings. Further, whoever says, ‘Allah is free from imperfection, all praise is due to Allah, there is no true god except Allah, and there is no change of a condition nor power except by Allah *the Almighty*’ 30 times a day is recorded among those who remember Allah frequently.⁽²⁾ Also, whoever wakes up at night, wakes his wife and prays two units of prayer becomes one of those who remember Allah frequently.⁽³⁾

Thus, to remember Allah *the Almighty* is an easy act of worship. You can remember Him *Glorified is He* while you are using an axe, writing by pen, eating a meal or having a drink. Though being the greatest act of worship, the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* is an easy, effortless act for the believers

Someone may ask, ‘If the act of remembering Allah *the Almighty* is an easy one and is considered the lightest act of worship, why would it be difficult for any person to do it?’ In the context of talking about those who get distracted

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- (1) *Abd Ibn Hamid, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Al-Mundhir and Ibn Abu Hatim mention that Qatada said regarding the saying of Allah: ‘Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides...’ (Al-‘Imran: 191), ‘These are all your states, son of Adam, remember Allah while you are standing, if you cannot, then remember Him while sitting; if you cannot, remember Him while lying on your side. This is to make it easier and lighter.’ In his Tafsir, Ibn Abu Hatim narrates that Mujahid said, ‘The worshiper does not become among those who remember Allah frequently until he remembers Allah while standing, sitting and lying on his side.’ See Ibn Abu Hatim, Tafsir Al-Quran Al-‘Adhim, 4657.*
 - (2) *In his Tafsir, As-Sam‘ani relates that Ad-Dahaak ibn Muzahim narrated on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that Messenger Muhammad Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘Whoever says, ‘Allah is free from imperfection, all praise is due to Allah, there is no true god except Allah, Allah is the Greatest and there is no change of a condition nor power except by Allah the Most High the Almighty’ is recorded among those who remember Allah frequently, wipes out his sins just as leaves of a tree fall down and Allah looks to him and whom Allah looks at him do not receive punishment.’ See As-Sam‘ani in Tafsir Al-Quran, 4/ 284.*
 - (3) *In his book, Al-Bayhaqi narrates on the authority of Abu Sa‘id and Abu Hurayra that Messenger Muhammad Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘If someone wakes up at night, wakes his wife and they pray together two units of prayer, they are known among those who remember Allah frequently.’ See Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan As-Sughra, Hadith no. 609.*

by their wealth and children from remembering Him, He *the Almighty* says: '...those who do so will be the ones who lose.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 9)

This clearly indicates that the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* meant here has an unrestricted meaning; it is broader than uttering words for glorifying and praising Allah *the Almighty*. Here, it means to abide by Allah's Way of Guidance which He has sent for us. Whoever does not abide by it will be one of the losers, for s/he disregarded Allah's Laws and established his/her own laws according to his/her whims and inclinations.

Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* describes those who deviate from His Way of Guidance, saying: 'These are they who buy error for the right direction, so their bargain shall bring no gain, nor are they the followers of the right direction.' (*al-Baqara*: 16) They lost everything and did not gain anything, that is, they did not achieve anything useful. Moreover, they lost guidance and thus lost the profit and capital of their trade, both in this worldly life and the Hereafter.

When Allah *the Almighty* says: '...those who do so will be the ones who lose,' (*al-Munafiqun*: 9) He indicates that the bargain has been concluded and that they, i.e. those deniers of the Truth ultimately lost everything. Moreover, such loss is timeless and cannot be compensated in any way. It is permanent and will be bitterly regretted.

As for those who remember Allah *the Almighty* and strictly observe His Rules and what He revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* they will be: '...the successful.' (*al-Baqara*: 5) Linguistically, the Arabic word *Al-Falah* (successfulness) means cultivating lands for growing crops. When a dry land is cultivated, it gives a large, bumper harvest, and that is why this word is used here. Allah *the Almighty* gives us an example from practical reality to enable our limited thinking to properly understand the Unseen. Therefore, He *the Almighty* likens the observance of His Rules and its reward in the Hereafter to the cultivation of lands. Thus, the successful person is the one who makes a profitable trade, so his/her position is the opposite of the loser.

After knowing this, how could we be distracted by our wealth and children from remembering Allah *the Almighty* and from following His Guidance? Those who are deluded in the worldly life by their wealth and children will find them a source of regret on the Day of Resurrection. But, what is the

reason for this? This is because whenever they remember that their wealth and children have distracted them from paying attention to the good deeds that prepare them for that Day, they feel regret and deep sorrow. That is why Allah *the Almighty* refers to them, saying: ‘...those who do so will be the ones who lose.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9)

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ
لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقْتُ وَأَكُن مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

Give out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to one of you and he says, ‘My Lord, if You would only relieve me for a little while, I would give in charity and become one of the righteous’ [10] (The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 10)

Allah *the Almighty* says that He does not ask us to spend on Him, but rather, He wants us to spend of what He has provided us with. The provision is gained as a result of the human beings’ actions which are based upon arranged thought. In fact, the human thought, organs, senses, and the materials s/he uses are created by Allah *the Almighty*. If we take the farmer as an example, we find that the land, which is his/her source of provision, is created by Allah *the Almighty*.

Thus, the human being uses what Allah *the Almighty* has created for him/her in order to get his/her provision. The mind which devises a plan; the organs and senses used by man to generate power; and even the materials which s/he makes use of to reap the fruit of his/her work are all created by Allah *the Almighty*. So, can you tell me which of all these things does the human being own?

Therefore, when Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Give out of what We have provided for you...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10), He *Glorified is He* means that we are not giving charity to Him in the material sense of the word; rather, we give charity to others out of what He *the Almighty* has provided for us. It is out of His Generosity that He appreciates the result of our effort and ascribes its outcome to us. So, when someone is in need, it is as if s/he borrows money from you, not from Allah, the Provider of everything.

Allah *the Almighty* draws our attention to the importance of giving charity out of what He has provided for us before the coming of the Last Day on which there will be no more trading. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'O you who believe! Spend out of what We have given you before the Day comes on which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the unbelievers— they are the unjust. (*al-Baqara*: 254)

In the Hereafter, there will be no bargaining, no purchasing, no friendship, and no intercession; those are the means on which the human being can depend. On that Day, s/he does not own money to buy with, nor do others own goods to sell. So, this door is closed. Likewise, there will be no friendship or intercession. Therefore, He *the Almighty* tells us that if we spend out of what He has given us, we will be well-prepared for that Day, and He teaches us that we should make use of this opportunity before the coming of that Day, as there will be neither bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession.

Furthermore, with regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Out of what We have provided for you,' (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) He *the Almighty* clearly states that He is the True Owner of all provisions, yet He makes the human being earn his/her provision and even makes it his/her property. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'O you who believe! Spend (benevolently) of the good things that you earn and or what We have brought forth for you out of the earth...' (*al-Baqara*: 267). He *the Almighty* directs our attention to the fact that pursuing one's provision is not the cause of gaining it, for having the means to gain the provision is part of one's provision gifted by Allah *the Almighty*. In other words, the means of gaining the provision such as the intellect and the bodily power are part of Allah's Provision bestowed on us, and so is His subjection of the earth for us.

In general, the act of spending, especially if rationally made, enhances the course of life and contributes to its development and promotion. On the contrary, the act of receiving money and then holding it hinders the course of life and results in unemployment, market recession and stagnation which spoil life and interrupt its course. So, the act of spending is a must to contribute to the development of the course of life. Spending entails transferring the money from the property of someone to another by selling, buying, or due to a relationship.

The Arabic word *Infaq* (giving out) in the verse in question originally refers to the flourishing of the trade in the market. Markets mainly depend on goods, and when we find a marketplace empty from goods, this means that it is a flourishing market. But if we find that the goods are heaped up in a marketplace, this means that it is in a standstill. Then, the flourishing of the market means that it became empty of all goods, just as the spirit departs from the corpse.

With respect to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Give out...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10), it does not mean only to give charity or *zakat*, but it also means to spend money in general and not to hoard it. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘O you who believe! Most surely many of the doctors of law and the monks eat away the property of men falsely, and turn (them) from Allah’s way; and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allah’s Way, announce to them a painful chastisement...’ (*at-Tawba*: 34).

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...(as for) those who hoard up gold and silver...’ (*at-Tawba*: 34), He *the Almighty* talks about two types of metal, namely silver and gold. These two metals are the base of economy in worldly life. The first economic business was conducted by exchanging some goods in consideration of other goods, which is called ‘bartering’. After the development of the economic business, the currency was invented and has become the main means for conducting businesses among people and countries.

Allah *the Almighty* wants to draw our attention to the fact that silver and gold are the primary means for running an economy, which requires permanent circulation of money as the benefit of money is to be used for populating the earth and creating its civilisation.

If you are a believer and you do not invest your money, it will decrease by 2.5% annually — which is the small value of *zakat* the Muslims are asked to pay out of their property — and thus it may run out within forty years. Thus, if a believer wants to maintain his/her property, s/he should engage in the course of life to invest and increase it, and s/he should refrain from hoarding it, otherwise, the annual repayment of *zakat* will decrease the amount of his/her property.

If a money holder invests what s/he owns in practical life, other people will benefit from that, even if s/he did not intend to benefit them. Let us give an example to illustrate this point: the one who invests his money in a building only cares about the profit he will reap for himself. However, other people get benefit of such investment even if he did not intend to do so, i.e. the one who sets up the foundations will have a remuneration; every one of those who bring bricks, cement or steel will receive its price; and so will the labs which manufactured the building materials; the workers in sanitary ware and electrical wires factories will also receive salaries; and those who install all such things will receive their remunerations, etc. Thus, a large number of the society members benefit from the owner of this building even if he does not mean it. Therefore, whoever builds a building provides the society with an economic service that benefits a large number of people, and so does everyone who sets up an investment project.

Allah *the Almighty* wants people to engage in financial transactions and not to make their money stagnant, even if they are disbelievers. This is because if such money is spent in a trade, all the people will benefit from it; they will sell and buy; goods will be produced; factories will be built; and job opportunities will be provided for the labour force, etc.

On the contrary, if every one of us hoards his/her money and does not spend or invest it in the practical life, goods will not be consumed; factories will stop working; and people's work will be interrupted. That is why Allah *the Almighty* wants money to be operated and not hoarded.

The aforementioned verse also refers to the act of not paying the duty that Allah *the Almighty* has ordered us to pay from our money. Thus, if the *zakat* due is taken from money, such money is not considered hoarded money because it decreases annually owing to the payment of *zakat*.

If we spend money and do not hoard it, markets will flourish and, therefore, there will be job opportunities and means for earning our living. For example, if you buy a washing machine or a refrigerator, or even build a small house, you are contributing to the economic development of the society. Meanwhile, we are developing the different means we use. Such prosperity stimulates people to discover more things that may serve humanity. On the one hand, hoarding all of our money leads to economic stagnation.

Evidently, this does not mean that a money holder spends all that s/he has because Allah *the Almighty* likes moderation in all things, a fact which is clear in His saying: ‘And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and (keep) between these the just balance.’⁽¹⁾ (*al-Furqan*: 67) Here, Allah *the Almighty* warns about being wasteful in our spending and not keeping a part of our money for any sudden crisis. At the same time, if we are niggardly, markets will stagnate; production will stop; and workers will stop working. But Islam wants a moderate spending that generates marketability of goods while saving what helps us promote our life and prepare us for crises.

There are two types of spending: first, spending for a material consideration which maintains a continuous trading between the producers and consumers and secondly, spending without a material consideration such as giving *zakat* to the poor, the needy, and the indigent. This purifies the society from many corruptions as it prevents malicious feelings among people.

If a poor person finds someone who satisfies his/her needs, s/he will ask Allah *the Almighty* to keep His Grace on the giver to be able to continue to give charities. Thus, the poor will not envy the rich as both of them receive equal benefit. When the poor person takes a charity, s/he will not feel dissatisfied with his/her state, but rather, s/he will be satisfied for receiving charity. Similarly, when the rich person gives a charity, s/he feels secure as s/he knows that if s/he no longer has this wealth, s/he will find someone who will give him/her. Thus, there will be a social equilibrium between people—no one will be unable to have the basic needs of life, and no one will have a surplus that s/he might hold from others.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...before death comes to one of you...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10). This means that He *the Almighty* wants us to take advantage of this opportunity, and to make use of our lifetime before death overtakes us. It is out of Allah’s Great Wisdom that He made the time of death unknown to all people. Were the human being to know the time of

(1) The word for ‘the just balance’ is being just, i.e. in the middle between being wasteful and miserly, that is, to be economical. In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Abu Hatim relates that Ibn Zayd says, ‘The just balance is to spend on the things that please Allah and to keep away from the unlawful things.’ See Ibn Abu Hatim, *Tafsir*, p. 15395.

his/her death, s/he would say, 'I will do whatever I want, then I will repent to Allah before death.'

No one doubts the fact that s/he will die; it is the destiny of all people. It is the time when our reality as humans fades, our life stops and our deeds come to an end. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'When a man dies, his deeds come to an end, except for three: a continuous charity, knowledge by which people derive benefit, a pious son who prays for him.'⁽¹⁾

When anyone dies, his/her deeds come to an end and his/her book of records is closed. S/he cannot compensate the good deeds or the degree of faith that s/he has lost. It is as if this death represents his/her Day of Resurrection. Every one of us should never feel that his/her lifetime in this worldly life is too long. This worldly lifetime extends to include all people's life span, so you should not think that your life span will be as long as that of the worldly life. So, one's life span is limited, and as long as the death time would come, believers should remember the saying of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'When any of you dies, this is his Day of Resurrection.'

It is out of the Wisdom of Allah *the Almighty* that He made the matter of death hidden in relation to time, cause, and place. So, this hidden nature of death is, in reality, the very essence of clarity because this makes the human being ready to face it at any time, for any reason and at any place. This is because death comes suddenly and does not depend on time, reason, or place. A child may die in his/her mother's womb, after a day or days of his/her birth or after a hundred years. S/he may also die without a reason. We may be surprised when one of us dies without apparent reason like a car accident, the falling down of a wall or a stone upon him, or an illness; so we wonder, 'What is the reason for his/her death?' The reason is death itself, i.e. s/he died because the time of his/her death has come. In this regard, it is being said that death without a reason is in itself the reason.

This death has a specific moment and hour that no one knows but Allah *the Almighty*. If a person's death time comes, s/he cannot delay nor hasten it,

(1) *This Hadith is narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and Ahmad on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. At-Tirmidhi grades it as good, authentic Hadith. See Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 4310; Abu Dawud, Sunnan, Hadith no. 2882; At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 1376; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 8831.*

even for a minute, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty* ‘...when their time comes, they cannot delay it for a moment nor can they bring it forward.’ (*an-Nahl*: 61) No one can delay the time of death, or bring it forward, as it is controlled by Allah, the Lord of this universe. This appointed time comes and it cannot be postponed or hastened.

Then Allah *the Almighty* tells us about some of those who fail, throughout their lifetime, to spend or give *zakat* out of what He *the Almighty* has provided them with, or who do not perform the prayers, and who were then taken suddenly by death. Allah *the Almighty* mentions that such people would say: ‘My Lord, if You would only reprieve me for a little while, I would give in charity and become one of the righteous.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10)

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...would only reprieve me for a little while,’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) this means that they ask Allah *the Almighty* to give them more time and to extend their lifetime even for a little short period so they can have further opportunity in life. The reason behind this failure is the extended false hope in life by which they were deceived. This is similar to the case of a person who dies before s/he can perform the Islamic pilgrimage; if Allah *the Almighty* would extend his/her life till s/he performs it, this obligation would be waived. But who can give him/her a guarantee that s/he will live until that time? Therefore, one of Prophet Muhammad’s Hadiths states: ‘Perform *Hajj* (Islamic pilgrimage) before you will not be able to perform it.’⁽¹⁾

Similarly, regarding the performance of the prayers, it seems that we have long and extended time for performing them, but who can guarantee such extendedness?! That is why the one who does not perform the prayers will be considered a sinner at the last moment of his/her life, i.e. if s/he has the opportunity to live till performing all the obligatory prayers, s/he will bear no

(1) *Ad-Daraqutni* narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘Perform *Hajj* before you will not be able to perform it.’ Then he was asked, ‘What would be the problem in performing *Hajj* to Mecca?’ He said, ‘The Bedouins will be at the gates of its valleys and no one can reach it.’ It is also narrated by *Al-Bayhaqi* and *Al-Fakihi*. See *Ad-Daraqutni*, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 2795; *Al-Bayhaqi*, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. 8963; and *Al-Fakihi*, *Akhbar Makka*, Hadith no. 809.

sin. However, such limited lifetime is doubted and uncertain; we may die at any moment, and, as we said before, when a person dies, his/her Day of Resurrection begins.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...I would give in charity and become one of the righteous.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) They ask Allah *the Almighty* to let them get back to life so that they can correct their deeds, yet their request will be unquestionably rejected. It is human nature that when death time approaches, the human being tends to repent and feel regret and remorse for his/her previous misdeeds and for his/her failure to do good deeds. So, s/he asks for extra time to pay *zakat*, perform Islamic pilgrimage, give charity, do more good deeds and voluntary acts of worship, and try to get closer to Allah *the Almighty* by doing the acts of goodness that He loves, but unfortunately, his/her wishes, requests and supplications will be of no avail.

The disbelievers ask Allah *the Almighty* imploringly to delay their death for a period of time so that they can compensate for the good deeds and the acts of spending that they were distracted from doing in this worldly life.

Here, someone may ask, ‘Why do they ask for “a little while” (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) and not for a long period of time?’ This is because it is commonly known among people that things that are simple and may not take much time are more likely to be accepted by an official. Therefore, such a conception prevails when they are asking Allah *the Almighty* and their souls follow the knowledge established in their minds.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...and become one of the righteous.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) In our daily life, we say, ‘S/he is a righteous person,’ and to the opposite of that, we say, ‘S/he is an unrighteous person.’ A righteous person leaves what is good as it is, or adds to its goodness. On the contrary, an unrighteous or corrupt person tends to spoil the good thing and does not do any good.

The words ‘righteous person’ mean that s/he is a suitable person to be a Vicegerent of Allah *the Almighty* on earth; s/he executes the good aspect of any act. We can see that the Quran correlates the acts of giving charity and spending for the sake of Allah *the Almighty* with righteousness and being righteous.

In another verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And there are those of them who made a covenant with Allah: If He gives us out of His grace, we will certainly give alms and we will certainly be of the righteous.’ (*at-Tawba*: 75) The person referred to in this aforementioned verse is Tha‘laba.⁽¹⁾ He asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to supplicate to Allah *the Almighty* to make him a rich man. Then, after Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* prayed for him and after Allah *the Almighty* had given him an abundant wealth, he stingily refused to pay *zakat* and tried to evade payment.

After the revelation of these verses, Tha‘laba tried to pay *zakat* to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* but he did not accept it. After the death of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he went to Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* but Abu Bakr did not accept it, too. Then, after the death of Abu Bakr, he went to ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him*, but he also did not accept it. Then Tha‘laba died during the reign of ‘Uthman *Allah be pleased with him*. This is what we can call rejection.⁽²⁾

(1) His name is Tha‘laba ibn Hatib ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubaid Al-Awsi Al-Ansari. He witnessed the Battle of *Badr*, as Muhamed ibn Ishaq says. He is the one who asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to ask Allah *the Almighty* to grant him wealth, then he refrained from paying *zakat*. Allah *the Almighty* then revealed some verses to Prophet Muhammad talking about this incident. He *the Almighty* says: ‘There are some among them who pledged themselves to Allah, saying, “If Allah gives us some of His Bounty, we shall certainly give alms and be righteous,” yet when He did give them some of His Bounty, they became mean and turned obstinately away. Because they broke their promise to Allah, because of all the lies they told, He made hypocrisy settle in their hearts until the Day they meet Him.’ (*at-Tawba*: 75-77)

(2) Abu Umama Al Bahli said, ‘Tha‘laba came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to provide me with wealth.’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Woe to you, Tha‘laba, a small amount of money that you can give its [due] thanks is better than having a wealth that you cannot give its [due] thanks.’ He said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to provide me with wealth.’ Prophet Muhammad said, ‘Woe to you, Tha‘laba, do you not want to be like me? If I asked Allah to turn these mountains into gold, He would turn them for me.’ He said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to provide me with wealth. I swear by Allah Who sent you with the True Message, if He provided me with wealth, I will give everyone who has a right what is due to him.’ Prophet Muhammad repeated, ‘Woe to you, Tha‘laba, a small amount of money that you can give its [due] thanks is better than having a wealth that you cannot give its [due] thanks.’ But the man said [again]: ‘O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to provide =

What we need to highlight here is that giving charity, spending for the sake of Allah *the Almighty* and paying *zakat* are indications to the righteousness of the person. Giving charity spreads the sense of goodness among people and protects the poor from being driven to committing sins and being deviated from the right course.

Social solidarity must be established in societies; there must be cooperation among all the members of the society. If you are poor or needy and a rich person gives you what helps you to satisfy your needs, you will wish him/her all the best because whatever blessing s/he will have, you will have a share thereof. On the contrary, if s/he does not give you anything, mistakenly thinking that if s/he gives you, s/he will become poor, your feelings of bitterness towards him/her will be intensified.

Allah *the Almighty* wants the sense of social solidarity to be fostered in societies. That is why some Muslim scholars in Andalusia⁽¹⁾ believe that the punishment

= *me with wealth.* Then Prophet Muhammad supplicated to Allah, saying, 'O Allah! Provide him with wealth.' Abu Umama said that Tha'laba bought sheep and their number increased rapidly like the number of worms increases. They increased till Medina became a small place for him to operate his trade. He took them to another place and was attending the prayers with Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him only during the day and not at night. Then they doubled again in the same way that the number of worms grows. He took them to another place and thus did attend the prayers, neither during the day nor at night. He was only attending the Friday prayers with Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him. Then they trebled, so he moved to another more spacious place, and he thus did not attend any of the prayers with Prophet Muhammad, even Al-Janaza prayer. He even used to meet the caravans and ask them about the latest developments. Then Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him asked about him and he was told that he had bought sheep and moved to another place more spacious than Medina, and Prophet Muhammad was told his story. Then he peace and blessings be upon him said, 'Woe to Tha'laba Ibn Hatib, woe to Tha'laba ibn Hatib.'

- (1) Allah *the Almighty* commanded Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him to take alms. He *the Almighty* says: 'In order to cleanse and purify them [Prophet], accept a gift out of their property [to make amends]...' (at-Tawba: 103). Then, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him sent two men, one of them was from Juhayna tribe and the other was from Bani Salama, to collect alms and wrote for them the ages of the sheep and camels and how could they know this from their faces. He asked them to go to Tha'laba ibn Hatib and another man from Salim tribe. When they reached Tha'laba and asked him to pay alms, he said to them, 'Show me the letter you have,' and after having a look, he said to them, 'It is a mere levy, continue your way and pass by on your way back.' For this incident, Allah *the Almighty* revealed the following verse: 'There are some among them who pledged themselves to Allah, saying, 'If Allah gives us some of His =

that should be meted out on someone who refrains from paying *zakat* of anything which reaches the minimum amount on which *zakat* is payable is to cut his/her hand, that is to say, the punishment of theft. Those scholars actually depended on the fact that Allah *the Almighty* ordained *zakat* as being a 'due right,' and whoever refrains from paying a right to whom it is payable is deemed as if s/he has stolen it from him/her. The Muslim scholars in Andalusia adopted this opinion for they were living in a rich country so that they were conservative towards this issue as there was no excuse for anyone who did so.

When individuals perform good deeds, everyone will receive larger returns of the good deeds done by others than those done by him/herself, i.e. s/he is one individual and benefits from the good deeds of the whole society. Hence, we should not feel that the Lawgiver's Orders and Obligations are burdens. In this way, we can deal in life with feelings of satisfaction at times of prosperity and feelings of safety at times of poverty.

The believers ask Allah *the Almighty* to return them back to the worldly life and to give them a chance to do good deeds. One of the Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gives this meaning: 'Whoever has wealth which enables him to perform the Islamic pilgrimage to the House of his Lord, or upon which *zakat* is obligatory, but he does not do it, then he shall ask to return to the worldly life upon his death.'⁽¹⁾

When Ibn 'Abbas narrated this Hadith, a man said to him, 'O, Ibn 'Abbas! Fear Allah! Only the disbelievers are the ones who will ask to be returned to

= *Bounty, we shall certainly give alms...* (at-Tawba: 75). Knowing about the revelation of this verse, Tha'laba came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said to him, 'This is the due alms of my wealth,' whereupon he *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Allah ordered me not to take alms from you.' Then he started to regretfully weep and cry. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'You brought it upon yourself. I ordered you and you did not obey.' Prophet Muhammad did not accept the alms from him until his death. Then Tha'laba went to Abu Bakr, and he did not accept it; after that he went to 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab who also did not accept it. See *Al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, 5/290.

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Suyuti narrates this Hadith and ascribes it to 'Abd ibn Hamid, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Al-Mundhir, Ibn Abu Hatim, At-Tabarani and Ibn Murdawayh, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas. It is also narrated by Ibn Abu Hatim, At-Tirmidhi and Hamid ibn Zanjwiyh. See *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, 8/179; see also Ibn Abu Hatim, *Tafsir*, 3316; At-Tirmidhi, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 18901; and Hamid Ibn Zanjwiyh, *Al-'Mwal*, 1352.

the worldly life.' In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: Send me back, my Lord, send me back; Haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! It is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised.' (*al-Mu'minun*: 99-100) But Ibn 'Abbas, who was known as the 'Interpreter of the Quran', clarified to them what they did not know. He said to them, 'I will recite to you verses of the Quran,' and he recited: 'Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah: those who do so will be the ones who lose. Give out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to one of you and he says, "My Lord, if You would only reprieve me for a little while, I would give in charity and become one of the righteous."' (*al-Munafiqun*: 9-10)

Throughout the worldly life, the believers are asked to hasten to good deeds before their death, and no one of them should think that s/he can escape from Allah's Ordinance of death. He *the Almighty* says: 'And a soul will not die, but with the permission of Allah the term is fixed...' (*Al-'Imran*: 145). The 'fixed term' sometimes refers to the whole lifetime of the human being, yet it may also refer to the time of his/her death. When a killer destroys by his/her act of killing the structure of the killed, s/he is just doing so at the appointed term that Allah *the Almighty* has previously set. But, if so, why is the killer punished? As a matter of fact, s/he is punished because s/he destroyed the structure of another person.

If some of the scholars who care about scrutinising words ask, 'If the killed person had not been killed by the killer, would have s/he died?' The answer is 'yes' because the killed person died because his/her death time has come. But, did the killer know the killed person's appointed death time? No, s/he did not. Therefore, s/he is punished for committing the crime of causing death. According to Allah's Will, the killed person was destined to die in that way. Death is to die without the body structure being destroyed; this is only done by Allah *the Almighty*. But the act of killing and causing destruction to the body structure can be done by anyone, and then the person dies by Allah's Will. This does not mean that the killer has interfered and hastened the time of death of the killed, but s/he merely interfered and caused destruction to a

body structure that Allah *the Almighty* has built. If no one interfered to cause such destruction to this body, it still would have died at its appointed term.

No one of us knows when s/he is going to die, no matter how so many physicians s/he sees, a point which is crystal clear in Allah's saying: 'He it is Who created you from clay, then He decreed a term; and there is a term named with Him; still you doubt.' (*al-An'am*: 2) With regard to Allah's saying: '...then He decreed a term...' (*al-An'am*: 2), it means that He *the Almighty* has specified a term of death for every one of us, and another appointed term for everything. So, the individuals will continue to meet their appointed time of death until the appointed time of the whole comes, which is the Day of Resurrection.

There is a piece of wisdom behind setting the moment of the human being's death at a time that is only known to Allah *the Almighty*. So if someone knows when s/he is going to die, s/he may commit sins for a long time, and then starts to do good deeds shortly before the time of death. But Allah *the Almighty* wants the time of death to be hidden, so it may occur at any time.

In this vein, He *the Almighty* says: 'And for every nation there is a doom, so when their doom is come they shall not remain behind the least while, nor shall they go before.' (*al-A'raf*: 34) When one's appointed time of death comes, no one can delay it, because it is controlled by the Maintainer of the universe, or hasten it as we do not know when it will come. When Allah *the Almighty* hides the time of death from us, it is as if He makes it a commonly known time. In fact, such hiddenness is the best way to make it obvious. Thus, when He *the Almighty* wants to make something very clear to us, He makes it obscure. Let us give an example to illustrate this point further; if He *the Almighty* sets a certain age for death, it would be totally a fixed time with no hope to change. But He *the Almighty* has not set for death certain age or cause, but rather made it possible to occur at all times. The human being may die at any moment; it does not depend on a reason, but it happens for and without a reason.

As long as the human being expects death at any moment, a sinner should not meet Allah *the Almighty* while s/he is committing sins. Death can be caused by many things, and it also can happen without a material cause. When it happens with no evident cause, then death itself is the cause, i.e. if someone just dies with no evident cause, s/he dies because the end of his/her lifetime has come.

There is an end waiting for every one of us; an end for the lifetime of every individual. Besides, there is an appointed time for the end of the lifetime of the whole, which is the Day of Resurrection. If such end comes, it cannot be delayed or hastened.

We have to know that every lifetime, even if long, can be counted, and anything that can be counted is still 'few' even if it seemed 'many,' i.e. anything that can be counted is considered few as long as we are able to enumerate it.

Can anyone guarantee that our lifetime will be extended until we repent? Death comes suddenly and our souls are not destined to be given a delay because, after reaching the end of our lifetime, this is impossible.

Reality proves to us that our ages are not similar, nor are the causes of death. Allah *the Almighty* has made the human soul expect death at any moment of our life. Thus, death exists at all times. As long as this is the case, we should be aware and fear to die while we are committing a sin. As we said before, hiddenness is the best way to make things obvious.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١﴾

**God does not reprieve a soul when its turn comes: God is fully aware of what you do [11]
(The Quran, *al-Munafiqun*: 11)**

Here, Allah *the Almighty* puts an end to the hopes of the sinners, criminals and hypocrites who might think that He *the Almighty* may delay the death of a soul whose time has come so that it can do what it could not do at the time of health and wealth and when there was a space of time in the worldly life; such delay cannot be achieved.

In this verse, He *the Almighty* employs the particle *Lan* (does not) to negate the future. He *the Almighty* does not say 'did not', but rather, He says 'does not,' which means that the delaying of a soul's appointed time of death will never happen. So, He *the Almighty* advises us not to give ourselves vague and groundless hopes. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'This shall not be in accordance with your vain desires or in accordance with the

vain desires of the followers of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it...' (*an-Nisa'*: 123).

What is a false hope? A false hope is a thing that you heartily wish that it would happen, yet it is impossible to happen. So, it will not occur and will never exist. False hopes mean that you deeply want a wish to be achieved while you do not have any practical means to achieve it. Thus, false hopes are the fools' longing for wishes that cannot be achieved, that is why they are 'false'.

In this verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* uses the word 'soul' as it refers to both the body and spirit of the human being. So, the assembly of both constitutes the soul. The soul has the choice whether to be obedient or disobedient. This will become much clearer when we quote the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'When you kill a soul...' (*al-Baqara*: 72). Here, the act of killing occurs both to the substance which is the body, by destroying its structure, and to the spirit, by causing its death. So the soul includes both together, as both of them constitute the human being.

Allah *the Almighty* uses the word 'soul' here and in many other instances without a definite article. Also, the one who scrutinises the verses of the Quran will find that when this word 'soul' has the definite article, it also refers to the body and spirit together. For example, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'In the Torah We prescribed for them the soul for the soul...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 45) and He *the Almighty* says: 'Do not kill the soul Allah has made sacred...' (*al-An'am*: 151). The word 'soul' here came with the definite article 'the', thus it means both the body and the spirit of the human being together.

But, with regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...man's very soul incites him to evil...' (*Yusuf*: 53) and His saying: '...you, soul at peace...' (*al-Fajr*: 27) the word 'soul' is used to refer only to the spirit of the human being.

One of the manifestations of the highly Quranic styles is that it uses one word to give various meanings. When Allah *the Almighty* says: '...when its death time comes...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 11), He says: '...its death time...' and does not say, 'The death time,' as a general term. Here, He *the Almighty* connects the death time to the soul which is mentioned here without a definite article. This means that every soul has its own death time which is not related to the other souls. There are those who die in their mothers' wombs; others might live for an hour or two then die; yet others might live too long. Even

the foetuses that die in their mother's wombs, some of them die after one hour, whilst others die after a month or months.

Death overtakes all living souls; this is a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Wherever you are, death will overtake you, though you are in lofty towers...' (*an-Nisa*: 78). The word 'overtake' shows that when the human being becomes alive, his/her spirit is being pursued by death till it overtakes it at the time that Allah *the Almighty* has previously specified.

Mystic scholars say: 'Death is like an arrow which has been shot towards you, and your life span is as long as the time it takes to reach you.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, we realise that this word 'overtake' demonstrates that the human being's life and spirit are pursued by death until it overtakes them.

With regard to the moment of death, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And He is the Supreme, above His servants, and He sends keepers over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss.' (*al-An'am*: 61) Those messengers do not disregard, fail in, or exceed the limit of their duty. They come to us at the appointed moment set previously by Allah *the Almighty* not before or after it. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Our messengers cause him to die...' (*al-An'am*: 61) and: 'Allah takes the souls at the time of their death....' (*az-Zumar*: 42).

The Arabic word for 'cause to die' linguistically means to take something in full. The Arabic language shows this clearly. For example, if you lent money to someone, then s/he asks you to deduct part of the loan and you refuse saying, 'I want to take my money in full,' when s/he yet pays you all your money, you say, 'I took my money in full, my money.'

With regard to delaying the time of death, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And warn people of the day when the chastisement shall come to them, then those who were unjust will say: O our Lord! Respite us to a near term, (so) we shall respond to Your call and follow the Messengers. What! Did you not swear before (that) there will be no passing away for you?' (*Ibrahim*: 44) The last two

(1) 'Abdullah ibn Al-Mu'taz said, 'Death is like an arrow which is shot towards you, and your lifetime is as long as the time it takes to reach you.' See *Ath-Tha'alibi, Al-I'jaz*, 1/90; and *Abu Ishaq Al-Qirawany, Zahr Al-Adab Wa Thimar Al- Albab*, 2/251.

verses of the chapter of *al-Munafiqun* arouse the fear that asking for a delay may be similar to what the disbelievers mistakenly think that Allah *the Almighty* may delay their reckoning time and may return them back to worldly life so that they may do good deeds and respond to the call of the Messengers, though they were swearing before that there is no Resurrection after death: ‘What! Did you not swear before (that) there will be no passing away for you?’ (*Ibrahim*: 44) Can anyone repel against death when it comes to him/her? We have no power to refuse the exit of our spirits from our bodies, a fact which is crystal clear in the Quran; Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And He is the Supreme, above His servants, and He sends keepers⁽¹⁾ over you; until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die, and they are not remiss.’ (*al-An‘am*: 61)

Allah *the Almighty* talks about their expected behaviour as an unquestionable issue. He *the Almighty* says: ‘...and if they were sent back, they would certainly go back to that which they are forbidden...’ (*al-An‘am*: 28). Whether they are returned again to the worldly life or their death time is postponed, they will return to the bad deeds and to the things that they were forbidden from doing. They are not honest in their request to return back to life, nor are they honest in their demand for a delay for their death time. If someone really had wanted to do good deeds, s/he would have done them at the times of health and power and when s/he had a space of time.

Thus, we can understand that the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Allah does not reprieve a soul when its death time comes...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 11) urges us to hurry to perform good deeds in advance of the coming of death. So, we should hasten to do good acts and be prepared for what is coming. Allah *the Almighty* will not grant a delay period for anyone, whoever s/he is, nor will He elongate his/her lifetime. This incites people to hurry towards performing good acts, lest death time comes while they had fallen short in doing good deeds, or while they had not prepared themselves for meeting their Lord *Glorified is He*.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says in the verse in question: ‘Allah is fully Aware of what you do.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 11) The fact that Allah *the Almighty* is fully

(1) Here, the keepers are the watching angels. In his lexicon, Ibn Mandhur says, ‘The keepers are the angels who list and record the deeds of the children of Adam; they are the watching angels.’ See, *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 1/163; Ibn Mandhur, *Lisan Al-‘Arab*, root: *Hafizha*.

Aware of what we do makes our hearts filled with fear and awe. The human being can deceive other humans like him/her. For example, there are some people who evade taxation by making two tax records, one for the real gains and another for the false losses. Such tax evaders own money and deny it. Such persons have to know that Allah *the Almighty* is fully Aware of all what they are doing. Therefore, we find in many instances in the Quran that Allah *the Almighty* describes Himself as the All-Subtle, Who knows the minute details of everything, the All-Aware and the Omnipotent over all things.

In our daily life, we frequently use the Arabic word for 'All-Aware' to mean 'an expert'. For example, when we face a problem, we say, 'We need the opinion of an expert,' and in courts of law we find the judge requests an expert to write a report on a special matter that this expert is specialised in and knows more about it. So, the expert in a certain field is the one who knows its details. What if we are talking about Allah, the All-Aware Who is not disobeyed by anything in His Dominion and Who perfectly knows everything in the universe, be it hidden or apparent? So, you should not deceive yourself, for if you hide something from people, it cannot be hidden from Allah *the Almighty*. If you were able to escape the law on earth, you will not be able to escape the Judgment of Allah *the Almighty*. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And your Lord will most surely pay back to all their deeds in full; surely He is aware of what they do.' (*Hud*: 111)

Allah *the Almighty* is Fully Aware of the deeds of His servants while they are doing them, and also before they do them. But when such deeds occur, they will be held accounted for them; they will not go in vain because the One Who knows about such deeds is the All-Aware Who has All-Knowledge.

The expert differs from the one who has general knowledge in that s/he is highly specialised in a particular field. That is why the two terms 'the All-Subtle' and 'the All-Aware' are usually used together because the 'All-Aware' means the One Who knows the places where things are, and the 'All-Subtle' means the One Who knows how to reach these places. For example, you may know the place where someone is hiding in a mountain, but such knowledge or information is not enough to reach and enter his/her place. But this needs something more which is experience, and more importantly, accuracy and delicacy.

Nothing can hinder Allah *the Almighty* as He is the All-Knower of the positions and locations of all things. He *Glorified is He* possesses both All-Subtlety and All-Awareness. His Power to know all the details cannot be confronted by anyone; nothing can be concealed from Him and nothing can stand against His Will.

Allah *the Almighty* is fully Aware of the positions of things, and His Knowledge is infinite. He is the All-Wise Who runs the course of events according to His Wisdom and no one can add to Him anything. He has the Absolute Perfection.

In some verses of the Quran, Allah *the Almighty* mentions His Attribute of All-Subtlety and All-Awareness together. He *the Almighty* tells us what Luqman was saying to his son: ‘My son, if even the weight of a mustard⁽¹⁾ seed were hidden in a rock or anywhere in the heavens or earth, Allah would bring it [to light], for He is All-Subtle and All-Aware.’ (*Luqman*: 16)

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...even the weight of a mustard seed...’ (*Luqman*: 16) it means something which is equal to the weight of a mustard seed. This was the smallest thing they knew at that time, so they used it as a unit which indicates small things. So, no one now can wonder and ask, ‘Is a mustard seed the smallest thing in the universe?’ The Quran used it as an example for tininess according to the people’s knowledge at the time of revelation. But for purposes of validation, we will find that the Quran mentioned atoms and other smaller things.

Allah *the Almighty* is the All Subtle. No matter how small or tiny things are, He reaches it by His Knowledge. Thus, He is the All-Aware and All Knowing of everything, regardless of how small it is. He is the All-Able to reach them regardless of how delicate they are because He is the All-Subtle and nothing can hinder Him. The Attribute of being All-Subtle means the full ability to know the minute details of things.

When Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘He is All-Subtle and All-Aware,’ (*Luqman*: 16) this means that He is neither in need for more Knowledge about space nor for something to facilitate access to things.

(1) Mustard is a tiny plant; if its seeds become dry, it becomes extremely tiny. It is an herb plant whose taste is bitter and whose seeds are used in medicine. See *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim*, 1/190.

As long as: 'Allah is Fully Aware of what you do,' (*al-Munafiqun*: 11) He is the One Who provides you with goodness of deeds by His Awareness, Wisdom, Omnipotence and Ever-Watchfulness. Awareness means the complete and wide knowledge that nothing, no matter how minute it is, can escape it owner. Allah *the Almighty* is fully Aware of our inner souls; He knows our inner thoughts and our intentions of doing good deeds. If someone does something in secrecy, s/he should not think, even if the people do not witness him/her, that this deed is forgotten. Indeed, it is not forgotten; Allah *the Almighty* knows what everyone does even if no one has witnessed him/her.

Someone may ask, 'Why does Allah *the Almighty* end the chapter of *al-Munafiqun* by His saying: 'Allah is Fully Aware of what you do.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 11)? The reason is clear. The original meaning of hypocrisy is to hide something other than what you show by your words or deeds. So He *the Almighty* clearly tells the hypocrites that He knows the reality of what they are doing or saying. He knows their secrets, their private discussions and what they are hiding.

Additionally, the chapter of *al-Munafiqun* talks about the issue of giving charity and spending out of our money. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Give out of what We have provided for you, before death comes to one of you and he says, "My Lord, if You would only reprieve me for a little while, I would give in charity and become one of the righteous."' (*al-Munafiqun*: 10) Here, He *the Almighty* is fully Aware of our intentions behind giving of charity, be they concealed or disclosed. In addition, He *the Almighty* will reward us according to them. It is not disapproved that your giving of charity is disclosed as long as it is done for the purpose of giving a good example.

What is important is that when you give charity, you should dismiss any intention of showing-off. Allah *the Almighty* puts it clear to us that we should not spend while we are showing-off. However, the one who gives charity while his/her heart is waiting for praise, this charity will reach to the poor; they will not be deprived of it, yet the giver will not be rewarded. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* is saying to the poor, 'Take the charity from him/her, but s/he will be the loser and s/he will not be rewarded, although the society will reap the benefit.'

Thus, the end of the chapter of *al-Munafiqun* is in line with its subject. When Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Allah is Fully Aware of what you do,'

(*al-Munafiqun*: 11) He reminds and warns the hypocrites that all their actions cannot be concealed from Him. Here, He *the Almighty* says that He is fully Aware of what we do; He does not mention what we say because ‘doing’ in Arabic includes both the actions and the sayings.

Allah *the Almighty* knows every act or feeling, a matter which requires being Fully Aware and All-Subtle. Deeds are divided into three types: the sayings of the tongue; the actions of the limbs; and the intentions and desires of the heart.

You should be aware of doing deeds that look sincere but, in reality, you are waiting for adulation. Every organ of our body has a field in which it performs its function. The function of the tongue is to utter; the ears’ function is to listen; and the function of the nose is to smell; and all of them are gathered under the umbrella of deeds which include both the acts and the sayings. Sayings are made by the tongue, whilst acts are made by the other body organs.

This chapter also discusses what the hypocrites were saying. They said: ‘We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) As Allah *the Almighty* is the All-Aware, He continues and says: ‘Allah knows that you truly are His Messenger. He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 1)

Allah *the Almighty* also says about them: ‘They are the ones who say, “Give nothing to those who follow Allah’s Messenger until they abandon him.”’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7) They also said: ‘Once we return to Medina the powerful will drive out the weak.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 8) Those are examples for their sayings.

As for their acts, they are the ones whose children and wealth distract them from remembering Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, He *the Almighty* commands the believers not to be like the hypocrites in their acts, saying: ‘Believers, do not let your wealth and your children distract you from remembering Allah...’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9) because this is an act, and Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...those who do so will be the ones who lose.’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 9)

Lastly, the hypocrites do not give charities, and prevent others from doing so, and this is an act. So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Allah is fully aware of what you do’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 11) includes both of their sayings and the acts they did not do. Thus, deeds include acts and sayings.

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