

**SPEECHES
FOR
AN INQUIRING MIND**

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Imtiaz Ahmad
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Assalamu Aalikum

I had the privilege of reading your book (collections) titled "Speeches for an Inquiring Mind" given to be as sadaqat in Madina Al-Munawwara during this years Hajj and I am pleased to let you know that the book is very enlightening, educative, scholastic and wonderful. Your effort is worth commending. The wisdom and foresight you have shown in contributing to the growth and development of Islam in this facet is unquantifiable. I would like to seize this opportunity to pray to Allah SWA to reward you with His Al-Jannah Firdausi, Amin.

As you are aware, very good Muslim wish and ambition is to see what contribution he or she can make toward the propagation of Islam to the generality of the mankind. This, I believe, informed your courageous stride in producing the book under reference and any others.

The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to intimate you of my desire to seek your indulgence and earnest permission to translate the book into Hausa language for the benefit of the teaming Hausa readers in Nigeria, Africa and the world over.

As you might be aware, Hausa language is one that is widely spoken in Africa is next to Swahili and Arabic. The language is growing fast and is gaining momentum throughout the world, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia inclusive. 90% of Hausa's and those who understand the language are Muslims.

Regarding my qualifications: I hasten to state that Hausa language is my first language because I am born in Kaduna State of Northern Nigeria. Once a teacher and examiner in the language for almost eight years before resigning to further my studies in Journalism at Bayero University, Kano. While in the University, I studied Mass Communications with combination in Hausa itself where I read Advanced Translated in Hausa.

Assistant Editor of one of the most widely read vernacular newspaper in Nigeria called 'A YAU' meaning 'TODAY' for five years and later editor of 'ZAMANI' newspaper - meaning 'THIS ERA', a position I held till date.

I also had the privilege of organizing and attending many seminars and conferences dealing with Hausa language as a medium of communication, education and enlightenment.

It is pertinent to state that your given go-ahead to undertake this laudable project could only be rewarded by Allah Subuhannahu Wa Ta' ala. Upon receiving your approval, I shall send to you a formal breakdown (proposal) for your perusal, consideration and support to start the project.

I thank you most sincerely for your service to Islam and Muslim Ummah and pray for Allah's blessing to all of us, Amin.

Bissalam,

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In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Alamin (mankind, jins and all that exist).

PREFACE

With reawakening of the Muslims from the deep slumber of unawareness of their hereditary Islamic Values, tides of resurgence are inciting them to acquaint themselves with the Islamic Etiquette. To quench their thirst of inquisition, this presentation, which covers a wide range of subjects, is a modest endeavor to fulfil their demand. It is an earnest attempt to condense maximum matter enriched with the Quranic injunctions, Hadith and a few touches of "Fiqa", Islamic jurisprudence, in an easy language and to make the intricate issues to reconcile with simplest possible diction.

I have gone through the enlightening research and material brought on the record by Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad. I think, invitation to Islam is incumbent upon all those who have known it, and have enjoyed its taste and have been guided through its guidance. In fact it is a great responsibility and trust (of Allah) over (the shoulders of) all those who know Islam, to preach it to mankind and invite them to it in a language which they speak and understand. Indeed, Mr. Imtiaz has well-done this duty.

This amazing book contains directions for national survival and it covers every aspect of national life. The language used in this book is non-Biblical, simple and spoken English.

Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad - as I know him - God gifted him with precision of intellect, fairness of outlook, incorruptible character and a strong charming personality. Allah has given him the eye gifted with vision and the craze for His love in his head.

I earnestly pray to Allah Almighty to bless more strength, light and vision to Mr. Imtiaz so that he may be able to succeed in his service to Islam.

S. Mubarakmand

Dr. Samar Mubarakmand
Atomic Energy Commission
Islamabad, Pakistan
27th October 1999

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The printing mistakes of first edition are removed. I am specially grateful to my school fellow Lt. Gen. (R) G. M. Malik for reviewing this book.

Jan 1, 2000

Imtiaz Ahmad
Madina Munawwara

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

I am very grateful to Dr. V. Abdur Rahim, Director Translation Center, King Fahd Quran Printing Complex Madina Munawwara and Dr. Asghar Ali Shaikh, Professor Faculty of Education, King Abdul Aziz University, Madina Munawwara for reviewing this book and for making a very valuable contribution.

Sept. 26, 2000

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(2)

INTRODUCTION

My twenty six year stay in America was very fruitful by Allah's Mercy although I went through some ups and downs. Allah ﷻ guided me closer and closer to the path which pleases Him. Al-Ahzab # 43

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

Allah and his Angels send blessings on believers so that He may bring believers out of all forms of darkness into light. He is extremely merciful to the believers.

Allah ﷻ not only sent books for our guidance from time to time but He also, sent His messengers to carry out this work. Hence the company of good people is very essential in order to improve Islamic practices. In my case the credit goes to many young men who were, in many cases, half my age. They trained and encouraged me year after year. I admit boldly that I was like many other American immigrants, a better practicing Muslim in America than in my native country.

These young brothers trained me and also expected me to carry the torch forward.

My first Juma Khutba was a tremendous experience for me. Preparing a Juma khutba is one thing and delivering it is another thing altogether. This kind of volunteer work is done by many in the Western World. Over the years I have prepared and delivered many such addresses with the Grace of Allah ﷻ. The purpose of this book is manifold.

1. Many of these volunteers do not find enough time to prepare a brief but comprehensive address because of their family and job situations. Some of them may like to use this book.
2. Many volunteers give Dawah to prisoners. It usually requires long distance travel and lot of time and patience with these residents of prisons. Some of these inmates are very intelligent and they ask for Islamic literature after accepting Islam. The various topics of the articles of this book may serve their need.
3. It is always better to give Friday address strictly following the Quran and Hadith. In this way it is not only effective but also does not create waves among Muslims of different schools of

thought. Hence very little, if any, is described in this book by my personal judgement or thinking.

4. I observed that the Islamic educational background of secondary and higher secondary students is pretty good in many Middle Eastern countries. Their English language skills are, however, limited. These students can use this book as enrichment material. It is very critical for them to have better English skills in order to be successful in both local and overseas universities. Islamic speeches may be the most appropriate for enhancement of their English skills.
5. Muslim teenagers in the western world are generally very intelligent and good hearted. They are craving for some easy readable Islamic material on suitable topics in the English language. It is earnestly hoped that this book will serve their needs.
6. Similarly, English speaking new Muslims also have a need for such material as our lovely teenagers. They will (إنشاء الله) find it helpful as well.
7. School and college students of institutions using English as a medium of instruction in any country will find this book equally beneficial.
8. It is more effective to talk about one specific topic in each Juma address. This book follows this thinking strictly.

Benefit is derived from many authentic resources. I am especially thankful to the authors of the following four books.

Tafseer by Ibn-e-Kathir.

Maarif-ul-Quran by Mufti Mohammed Shafi.

The Noble Quran in English language by Dr. Al-Hilali.

English Translation of Quran by Picktal.

May Allah accept this effort since He Alone knows the true intention of a person.

May Allah reward Saadat Ali Chughtai, Dr. Abdul Hameed Abdul Jabbar, Hafeezullah, Mazhar-ul-Haq, Ajmal Khan and Umm Yahya for their great help in putting it together in the form of a book.

Finally, I dedicate it to my wife, Dr. Sophia Ahmad, who sponsored me in this Islamic work.

Imtiaz Ahmad

Madina Munawara

August 2, 1999

ADDRESS FOR MARRIAGE CEREMONY

We have gathered today to have a reception party of Dr. Zahoor and Asma Rizvi. Congratulations to both of you from me, members of the community and all those who are present here. We are always longing for such parties and celebrations, and here we are with friends and family members and co-workers of all religions and nationalities. It is a wonderful feeling to take part in these wonderful festivities. However, Islam makes these festivities even more meaningful. Muslims, following the tradition of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ remind not only the newly wed couple, but also the previously wed, and those who wish to be wed of the roles, rights and responsibilities of the spouses. This is done because the family unit is extremely important in the eyes of Allah ﷻ. In fact, the topic which is discussed in the greatest detail in the Qur'an is the family life. The harmony in the family unit builds a better community and consequently determines the quality of life in a society.

First of all, we thank Allah ﷻ who has created this sacred institution of marriage. Allah ﷻ says: *خلق الإنسان ضعيفا*

Humans are created weak. If we are asked to stay single forever, it would be very hard for us to do so in many ways. Allah ﷻ not only created the sacred institution of marriage but also highly encouraged us to marry as soon as possible. It is indeed a beautiful and pleasant solution to overcome inherent human weakness. In this way two persons, who are strangers, bind themselves together and instantly develop care, kindness, consideration, sympathy, sincerity, and love for each other.

Allah ﷻ not only created this sacred institution, but also specified goals for it and means to achieve these goals. Allah ﷻ says: Ar-Rum # 21

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ

مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

And among His signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and love. Verily, in that are indeed signs for the

people who reflect.

Hence goal or objective of marriage is to find peace, comfort and tranquility.

This peace can only be achieved through mutual love between the spouses and not by merely one way traffic. In this verse two words are used side by side for this mutual love between the spouses. One is Mawaddah (مودة) and other is Rahmah (رحمة) both meaning love. Scholars explain that Mawaddah is perhaps the love and infatuation between the couple whilst they are in their prime youth or in the early stages of the relationship, and they are attracted to one another. Rahmah, is love, kindness and consideration that they have for each other when they grow old. However, they may exercise both of these terms at the same time throughout the relationship.

Now I would like to describe some rights of the spouses. We all have two kinds of rights. There are rights which we have in our business and trade transactions. These rights are spelled out in business contracts. If these rights are not fulfilled we have to recourse to a local justice department, and these can be enforced on the defaulting party. Then there are other rights between parents, children, spouses, and relatives. These can only be fulfilled if we show love, care, consideration, sympathy, and sincerity. There is no court system in the world which can fairly say who and how much a person is supposed to show love and consideration to others. There is no stethoscope or any other gadget to judge this. A person will only exercise these values if there is fear of Allah ﷻ and consciousness of accountability on the day of judgment. This is why the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ sometimes gave this brief Khutba اتقوا الله

Fear Allah or be conscious of Allah ﷻ in every walk of life. This is a sufficient reminder by itself. Since, different verses of the Quran are explanations of other verses. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ used to explain this verse by reciting the first verse of surah An-Nisa during a marriage ceremony.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا
كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾

O mankind be conscious of Allah ﷻ who created you from one person (Adam), and then created from him his wife and then created many men and women from them. You should also fear Allah ﷻ whom you refer to when you make your claims from others. Last but not the least, be conscious of fulfilling the rights of relatives. Since Allah ﷻ is definitely watching over you.

Why should we fear Allah ﷻ? The answer to this question is, since He created us and our very existence is due to Him. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an : Surah Al-Insan # 1

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا

Has not a long time passed on a person when he was not even a thing worth mentioning.

Hence, if a person is twenty years old who would have known about him twenty-five years ago. Even the parents did not know. It is Allah ﷻ who created him.

Allah ﷻ is not only the creator but also our nourisher and provider. Therefore all of our loyalties belong to Him alone.

He could have created us in a variety of ways, but he created us from one person (Adam), to guide and remind us that we are in fact one family. Hence the members of this large family must always show love, care and consideration to one another. In this way, Islam teaches us the universal brotherhood. No other religion commands and demands from its followers to practice this universal brotherhood so emphatically.

I would now like to explain the roles and responsibilities of spouses in light of the guidance of the Holy Qur'an and the teaching of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says in surah An-Nisa: # 34

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

The men are overall incharge over the women. This verse is often misunderstood, due to the fact that people ignore other verses in the Qur'an pertaining to this topic. For example it does not mean that men are to act as hard headed dictators. Allah ﷻ says:

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

Live with them in goodness. Hence we must treat our women nicely. Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 233

عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ

Consult your wives in matters of home life. Consultation or Shura is an important element of Islam and must be used in family unit as well. There is, in fact, absolutely no difference between a man and a woman as far as rights are concerned. Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 228

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

Women's rights over men are the same as men's rights over the women.

Each has a role which is very demanding in its own way. Only men can do men's roles the best and women can do women's roles the best. Why should He who created us not know, as He assigned these roles for us?

Hence, we see that man is overall incharge but he is to consult and treat his wife nicely all the time. Man could really be in trouble because if his judgment on a final decision in a matter goes wrong, it will fire back on him. Thus he will be accountable in this world and in the life to come for it.

So far I have given a lot of instructions to men. You may be wondering if there are any instructions for women. Yes. For example, who are the pious ladies? Allah ﷻ says: An-Nisa # 34

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

The pious woman is that one who whole heartily accepts man as the one who is incharge. In the absence of her husband she protects herself and his wealth." Wealth of course means, physical belongings as well as children. Hence, bringing up children Islamically is very important. Since, both of these obligations are difficult tasks, Allah ﷻ says that He will especially help the women to fulfill these obligations if they sincerely try.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ gave the explanation of this verse by saying, "The best wife is the one whom when you see her you feel happy,

when you ask her to do something she obeys, and when you are away she protects herself and the belongings.”

Life is not always smooth. There are some ripples. In case of any differences Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 237

وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

If you forgive, it is closer to piety. By forgiving you are not a loser but rather you are the winner. Therefore, do not act rudely or meanly towards each other in sorting out your differences. Resorting to cursing each other is an even worse behavior. For example, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said to his companions, “Do not curse your parents.” The companions humbly said, “How can one curse one's own parents?” Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, “When one curses another person's parents, then he may start to curse your parents.”

To avoid such confrontation the Qur'an guides us not only to forgive others but also it insists that we do not forget the goodness and graciousness between ourselves. Al-Baqara # 237

وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ

Do not forget the niceness between yourselves.

Allah ﷻ describes the mutual relationship between spouses in surah Al-Baqarah.# 187

هُنَّ لِيَاسٍ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاسٍ لَّهُنَّ

Women are men's clothes, and men are women's clothes. Allow me to ask you, what do clothes do?

They protect us from heat, cold, sun, dust, etc. Similarly spouses are protectors of each other and in a way a shield for each other.

Clothes cover our defects and spots on the body. Similarly spouses know each other's defects and are supposed to cover these defects and not to go around saying to relatives and friends the weaknesses of their spouses.

Clothes add to the beauty and charm of a person. Similarly spouses add to each other's beauty and charm. Physically, they should be best dressed for each other and not for ceremonies only. For example, men

are not supposed to be sloppily dressed at home and vice versa. Furthermore, each should display beautiful character and behavior of each other. If for example a woman does not have good behavior, it shows the behavior of her husband and vice versa.

Last but not the least, clothes are closest to the body. Similarly spouses are closest to each other and know each other's secrets. They should keep each other's secrets and should remain close to each other with sincere understanding. It is not proper that a woman remain closest to her relatives and a man closest to his relatives. There is no other phrase or wording in any book in the world except in the Qur'an which describes so beautifully, eloquently and comprehensively the mutual rights and responsibilities of spouses, than this tiny verse:

هٰن لِيَاْسُ لَكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لِيَاْسُ لِهٰن

I pray to Allah ﷻ that He may enable us to understand this guidance and also to make use of it in real life, I wish the best of luck to the newly weds and congratulate them, their parents and their relatives, wholeheartedly.

GREETINGS IN ISLAM

Allah ﷻ says in Quran: Surah Al-Hashr # 23

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ

الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

He is Allah and there is no other worth worshipping than Him. He is the sovereign Lord, the Holy one, Peace, Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Superb. Glory to Allah ﷻ who is above all that which they ascribe to Him.

In this verse, As-Salaam is one of the *الأسماء الحسنى* or Glorious Names of Allah ﷻ. We will try to understand the meaning, significance and use of this word Salam.

Before the dawn of Islam, the Arab used to greet each other with expressions like *حياك الله* which means may Allah keep you alive. Islam introduced a new greeting assalam-u-alaikum. It means may you be saved from all form of grief, hardship and misery. Ibnul Arabi said in *أحكام القرآن* that Salam is one of the attributes of Allah ﷻ and it means *الله رقيب عليكم*, i.e. may Allah be your protector.

This Islamic greeting is better than the greeting of love which is used by all the other nations. This is due to the following reasons.

1. It is not just an expression of love but the reason and logic for this love is expressed in the form of a supplication or *دعا* wishing that you be saved from all forms of grief. This supplication is not only for life as the Arabs used to say but for a life full of goodness.
2. It reminds us that we all depend on Allah ﷻ. Nobody can harm or benefit anybody without Allah's will. Hence it is a form of worship of Allah ﷻ or *عباده* which reminds the fellow Muslims of Allah ﷻ.
3. Note that when somebody says I pray that you be at peace, he is declaring and promising that you will be safe from his hand, tongue and he will respect your life, honor and dignity.

Ibnul Arabi says in أحكام القرآن :

أَتَدْرِي مَا السَّلَامُ؟ يَقُولُ أَلْتِ آمِنٌ مِنِّي .

Do you know what is salam ? The speaker is announcing that you will remain entirely unharmed and safe from me.

Hence we conclude that salam is (i) a remembrance of Allah, ذكر , (ii) reminder, تذكيره (iii), expression of love between Muslims (iv) a superior supplication and (v) a declaration or announcement that you will be safe from any harm by my hand or tongue.

A hadith sums it up very beautifully:

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ .

“True Muslim is he who does not harm any muslim by his hand or tongue.”

If we understand this Hadith alone, it should suffice to reform the whole Muslim Ummah. That is why, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ stressed this point of spreading the use of salam among Muslims and called it the most superior one out of all the good deeds you do.

There are several sayings of the messenger of Allah ﷺ to bring out the importance of this greeting amongst all Muslims:

It is narrated by Abu Huraira ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “You cannot enter heaven unless you are a believer. Your belief can not be complete unless you love each other. Let me tell you something which if you do, you will cultivate and enhance love between yourselves. Greet each other with salam whether the other person is known to you or not.” (مسلم)

Abdullah bin Umr ؓ said that one person asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ : “Which are the best deeds in Islam.” The Messenger of Allah answered: “Feed people and greet each other with salam whether you know each other or not.” (صحيحين)

Abu Umamma ؓ أبو أمامه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “That person is closest to Allah who initiates salam.”

(مسند أحمد / ترمذي / أبو داود)

Abdullah bin Masood ؓ narrates that Messenger of Allah said: “Salam is one of the names of Allah which Allah has sent to earth. Hence we should spread salam. When a person greets another with salam, his level is raised in the eyes of Allah. If members of a congregation do not

answer his salam, then creatures better than them (i.e. angels) answer the salam.”

(مسند بزار / معجم كبير / طبرانی)

Abu Hurraira narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The real miser is the one who is a miser in spreading salam.”

(معجم كبير / طبرانی)

In Quran Allah ﷻ says: Surah An-Nisa # 86

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِحَيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾

Whenever you are greeted with a greeting, you should greet with a better than it or at least answer back similarly. Indeed Allah will take account of all your deeds.

Hence Allah ﷻ says that one should answer with the same or better words. This was demonstrated by The Prophet ﷺ as mentioned in Ibn Jareer and Ibn Abi Hathim. One day when the Prophet was sitting with his companions, a person came and said assalm-u-alaikum. The messenger of Allah ﷺ answered walaikum salam wa rahmatullah. *و عليكم السلام ورحمة الله*. A second person arrived and said, assalam-u-alaikum wa rahmatullah, Messenger of God answered walaikum assalm wa rahmatullah wa barakatuhu *و بركاته و عليكم السلام ورحمة الله*. Soon after a third person arrived. He said assalamu alikum wa rahmatulla wa barakatuhu. The messenger of God answered : *Waalaika و عليك*.

The third person humbly asked: “O, the Messenger of Allah, when they greeted you briefly, you answered back with better wording. I greeted you in the most detailed way. I am surprised you answered me back very briefly saying Waalaika.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ answered: “You have not left any room for additions. Therefore I returned you similar greetings which fulfills the condition laid out in Quran by Allah.”

Hence we conclude that to answer salam with these three phrases is sunnah or the way of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Wisdom of limiting to these three phrases is that salam is meant to be a brief communication and not a long speech.

In this verse Allah ﷻ uses the objective voice without specifying the subject: Hence the Quran teaches the etiquettes of answer greetings.

It is indirectly ordering us to greet each other. This format where the subject is missing indicates that it should be a normal and customary habit and routine of the believers to greet each other. Of course the person who initiates salam is closer to Allah ﷻ as mentioned earlier.

Hasan Basri concluded that: *السلام تطوع والرد فريضة*

“To say salam is voluntary but to answer is obligatory.”

It is mentioned in Mautah of Imam Malik reported by Tufail bin Abi bin Kaab that Abdullah bin Umr ؓ used to go to market just to say salam to people with no intention to buy or sell anything. He really understood the importance of the initiation of salam.

Allah ﷻ says in Surah An-Nisa # 86

وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِحِجَّتِهِمْ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾

The Last part of this verse says: *Allah will take account of every thing.*

Here, of course, initiation and answering of salam are included also. Hence we should love to initiate salam. Similarly we must answer salam to please, Allah ﷻ and to cultivate love among us.

The Messenger of God ﷺ further guided that:

- ◆ The riding person should say salam to a person on foot.
- ◆ Walking person should say salam to a sitting person.
- ◆ Smaller group to a larger group.
- ◆ The one departing should say salam to those who are staying.
- ◆ When leaving or entering your home, say salam even if nobody is home (angels will answer).
- ◆ If meeting again and again, say salam again and again.

Exceptions for answering back the greetings:

- ◆ While praying. Prayer will become invalid by answering verbally.
- ◆ Khateeb, a person reciting Quran or a person making call for salat (adhaan and Iqama) or teaching Islamic books.
- ◆ While sitting in the washroom.

Allah ﷻ further explains the significance of salam in Sura Al-Inaam :54

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَايَتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ

الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُمْ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ

غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

Here Allah ﷻ instructed the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ about the believers who were poor and stayed mostly in his company. Although the rich non-Muslims wanted the Messenger ﷺ to send these poor muslims away so that the rich could be with him. Allah ﷻ ordered the prophet Mohammad ﷺ to address these poor believers by Assalam-u-alaikum on their arrival. It could mean two things. First, convey greetings of Allah ﷻ to them. It was a matter of great honor and respect for the poor and sincere Muslims. It would strengthen their hearts and raise their spirits. Secondly, convey to them the good tidings that they would be, with the permission of Allah ﷻ, at comfort, peace and tranquility even if they make some mistakes.

May Allah ﷻ grant us ability to practice this greeting with true Islamic spirit in our everyday life and in doing so generate love and unity among us. Ameen.

INDICATORS OF PIETY OR TAQWA

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Imran #133

﴿ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ ﴾

﴿ 133 ﴾ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

Race and compete for forgiveness from Allah, ﷻ and for a Paradise which is as wide as Heavens and Earth and is prepared for the pious believers.

Next Allah ﷻ describes the indicators of these pious believers. Al-Imran #134

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَبِيرِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ﴾

﴿ 134 ﴾ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Those who spend in Allah's cause (of that which Allah ﷻ has given them) in ease and adversity, those who repress their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind. Allah ﷻ loves the good doers.

Let us first try to understand what is piety. Piety has three levels. When a person saves himself from disbelief and from making partners with Allah ﷻ, he is called a pious person. In this sense all believers are pious people even if they commit some sins. If a person saves himself from all that what Allah ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ do not like, he has a higher level of piety. Finally if a person seeks love of Allah ﷻ at all times he has a still higher level of piety. Allah ﷻ describes in the Quran Al-Imran # 102

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾

O you who believe fear Allah as He should be feared and die not except as muslim. Note here taqwa does not exactly mean fear but rather to be conscious of the obedience of Allah ﷻ in every walk of life.

Allah ﷻ has described various characteristics of these truly pious people. They spend in ease and adversity. In other words if they have one thousand dollars they spend at least one dollar and if they have one

thousand cents they spend at least one cent. Spending in the way of Allah ﷻ is a way of life with them. Allah ﷻ may remove their adversity by this good act. Furthermore, a person who loves to help others will not usurp or swallow others' wealth; rather he prefers to do good to others. Aishia ؓ once gave one grape for charity since she did not have anything else. Some good people gave one onion in charity. Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said:

إِتَّقُوا النَّارَ وَلَوْ بِشِقِّ تَمْرَةٍ وَرُدُّوا السَّائِلَ وَلَوْ بِظَلْفِ شَاةٍ

Save yourself from hell fire even by giving one piece of date for charity. Don't let a beggar go empty handed. Give him the feet of goat if nothing else is at hand.

It is described in "Tafseer Kabeer" of Imam Razi that once the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ appealed to the people for charity. Some brought gold and silver. One person brought skin of dates and said, "I do not have anything else." Another person said to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, "I have nothing to give for charity. I give charity of my dignity. That is even if somebody mistreats me or rebukes me, I shall not get angry." Hence we learn that even the poor people used to spend whatever they had to help others at the time of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ.

In this verse spending is not specified. Spending does not mean to spend wealth only but also time and talent as well. There is a great wisdom in describing that the pious believers spend in ease and adversity. Most of the people forget Allah ﷻ when they are in much ease. They also forget Allah ﷻ because they are very worried about their adversity. An Urdu poet said:

ظفر آدمی اسکو نہ جائے گا چاہے کتنا ہو صاحبِ فہم و ذکا

جسے عیش میں یادِ خدا نہ رہی جسے طیش میں خوفِ خدا نہ رہا

The poet says to himself, "Do not consider a person to be an intellectual who forgets Allah ﷻ when he is prosperous and he does not fear Allah ﷻ when he is angry."

Allah ﷻ says that the second indicator of these pious believers is that they control their wrath. Thirdly they not only control their wrath but also forgive people whole heartedly. Last but not least they are good to,

their fellow-beings. Imam Baihaqi ؒ reported an event in his explanation of this verse. He said, "One time Ali bin Hussain ؑ was making ablution and a servant was pouring water on his hands with a container. The container of water slipped from the hands of the servant and fell on Ali. The servant observed some unhappiness on the face of Ali. The servant was very smart. He recited the above verse bit by bit. When he recited the part about pious people controlling their wrath, Ali ؑ swallowed His anger. When he recited that they forgive others Ali ؑ said, "I forgive you." When he recited that Allah ﷻ loves those who are kind to defaulters Ali freed the slave.

Forgiving others will have a great reward on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ will announce on the Day of Judgment, that those having any rights over Allah ﷻ should rise or stand up now. At that time those people who forgave the cruel people who tortured them will rise." Prophet Mohammad ﷺ also said,

Those who wish to have a lofty palace in paradise and high levels of paradise should do the following:

- Forgive those who torture them.
- Give gifts to those who never give anything to them.
- Not avoid meeting those who intentionally cut off relations with them.

It may not be out of place to remind you that the Muslims should exchange gifts as often as they like. It should be a matter of habit with them, and they should not limit themselves to special occasions like disbelievers do with Christmas and Thanksgiving.

Allah ﷻ guides us beautifully regarding how to behave with our worst enemies. Surah Fussilat # 34

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ

عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. If you return bad behavior with goodness, then those who are your bitter enemies will become your bosom friends and buddies.

Once a person misbehaved and rebuked Imam Abu Hanifa. Imam

Abu Hanifa did not say anything to him. He went home and gathered some presents and visited this person. Imam Abu Hanifa gave him these presents and thanked him for behaving like this and said: "You have done me a great favor by transferring your good deeds to my account by misbehaving with me like this."

Further more Allah ﷻ says in Al-Imran # 135,136

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ

وَمَنْ يَغْفِرَ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

﴿135﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

﴿136﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

Allah ﷻ is giving additional characteristics of the pious believers.

When they (the believers) happen to do an evil or wrong deed, they remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins-and none can forgive sins but Allah-And do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know.

For such, the reward is Forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing under neath, where in they shall abide forever .How excellent is this reward for these doers.

Note that:

Forgiveness of Allah ﷻ precedes the entry into paradise in this verse, it clearly indicates that entry into Paradise is only through the forgiveness and mercy of Allah ﷻ and not dependent on our deeds. It is also interesting to note that Allah ﷻ says that the value of Paradise is worth more than the Earth and all of the heavens combined. Alternately, another meaning of this verse is given. The width of Paradise is equal to the Heavens and the Earth combined. We wonder if this is the width of Paradise, what will the length be like, since the length is always bigger than the width. Finally, this verse states that this Paradise is already prepared for these pious believers. According to some renowned Muslim scholars Paradise is above the Seventh Heaven and the spirits of martyrs

are already benefiting from its fruits.

I pray to Allah ﷻ that He bestows us with these qualities of the pious and practicing believers. Ameen.

HYPOCRITES

In the beginning of the Quran Allah ﷻ divides the whole of mankind into three groups: believers, disbelievers, and hypocrites. Allah ﷻ describes very briefly the characteristics of the believers. Then disbelievers are mentioned in only one verse. This description is then followed with very extensive detail of the hypocrites. Hypocrites are described at great length because they are the most dangerous members of society. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the characteristics and fate of these hypocrites.

Notice that this grouping of mankind is based on beliefs and practices irrespective of color, creed, origin, language, and national or territorial affiliations.

Let us now examine the characteristics of hypocrites as described in Surah al-Baqarah Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 8,9

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَادِعُونَ

اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

Among people there are those who say we believe in Allah ﷻ and the Day of Judgement, they are not believers, they are trying to cheat Allah ﷻ and the true believers. Unfortunately, they are not deceiving anyone but themselves, and they are not even aware of this.

Note that although they are claiming belief in Allah ﷻ and the Day of Judgement, there is no mention of belief in the prophethood of Mohammad ﷺ. This was the case of the Jews of that time. Hence, any belief without the belief in the prophethood of Mohammad ﷺ is unacceptable. They are so lost that they cannot even understand their own actions.

Allah ﷻ says: Al- Baqarah # 10

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

In their hearts there is a disease and Allah ﷻ has increased their disease. There is a painful punishment for them because they lie.

Hence, lying is not an insignificant sin. It can transform a believer

into a hypocrite.

Allah ﷻ describes lying along with idol worshipping in the Quran:
“Save yourself from the evil of idol worshipping and lying.”

Allah ﷻ describes three distinct indicators of these hypocrites.

Allah says: Al- Baqarah # 11,12

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾
إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

When it is said to them don't create mischief in the world, they say that we are the peace makers, in fact they are indeed the mischievous ones, but they do not perceive it.

Secondly, Allah ﷻ further says: Al-Baqarah # 13

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ؕ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ
السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

When it is said to them believe like the other people believe they say, "Shall we believe like the foolish believe?" Verily, they are the fools, but they do not understand.

It is clear from this that the test of correct belief is to have belief as the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ had so much respect for the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ that He made this criteria to test the sincerity of belief. Similarly, Allah ﷻ honored the companions in an earlier verse where Allah ﷻ says that the hypocrites are trying to cheat Allah ﷻ and his believers.

Allah ﷻ describes a third indicator of hypocrites as follows. Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 14,15,16

وَإِذَا قَالُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت بِحُرَّتِهِمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

When they fall in with those who believe they say "We believe!"

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When they go apart to their devils they declare, "Look we are with you! Verily we did but to mock (or pretend)."

Allah ﷻ does mock them, and leave them to wander blindly in their rebellion. They are those who purchase error at the price of guidance. So their commerce will not prosper neither are they guided.

On the contrary, let us describe the fate of believing men and women on the Day of Judgement. Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Hadid # 12

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَانِكُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ

تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

On the Day of Judgement you will see the believing men and women with a guiding light in front of them and on their right hand side. These are good tidings for you, that you will reside in gardens below which rivers flow. They will reside there forever. It is indeed a great triumph.

Several points need to be mentioned. We noticed that believing men and believing women are treated alike for the rewards for their good deeds. There is light on their right hands because they are given their account on the right hand. It is also customary to have light in front for travelling. This light in front of them is there as a result of their good deeds. There are several sayings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to illustrate this fact.

Anas ؓ narrates that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Give glad tidings to those people who go to the Masjid during the dark nights. They will have all of the light on the Day of Judgement."

(Ibn Majah)

Ibn-e-Umar ؓ narrates that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Those who offer their prayers regularly and conscientiously, will be rewarded with a guiding light on the Day of Judgement; Those who don't will not have any light and they will be with Qaroon, Haman, and Phiraun."

(Musnad Ahmad)

Abu Saeed narrates that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Whosoever recites Surah Kahf on Friday will have a guiding light on

the Day of Judgement which will extend from his feet up to the heavens.”

(Tabarani)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said that: “Whosoever recites even one verse of Quran it will transform into guiding light for him on the Day of Judgement.” (Imam Ahmed)

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said that: “Whosoever will send peace and blessing upon me will have guiding light to cross the bridge on the Day of Judgement.” (Dailmi)

Similarly all good deeds will provide guiding light to believers. In contrast to all of this, Allah عز وجل describes the situation of Hypocrites. Allah عز وجل says: Al-Hadid # 13,14,15,

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتِسِبَ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ

فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَمْ يَأْتِ بِآيَةٍ بَاطِنٌ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرٌ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ

يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ

وَعَرَّيْتُمْ الْأُمَانِيَّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَكَم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿١٤﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ

فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَا أَوْسَكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَانَكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٥﴾

On the Day of Judgement hypocrite men and women will say to the believers to please wait for us so that we can make use of your light. It will be said to them go back and look for the light. A wall will be drawn between the believers and hypocrites. Inside this wall will be the Mercy of Allah عز وجل and outside the wall will be the misery. Hypocrites will say loudly to the believers “Were we not with you?” The believers will reply, “Yes indeed, but you tempted one another, hesitated and doubted, while your vain desires charmed you till the order of Allah عز وجل arrived. The deceiver deceived you concerning Allah عز وجل.” So this day no ransom can be taken from you nor from those who disbelieved. Your home is the fire, that is the proper place for you and it is a terrible end to your journey.

According to Ibn-e-Kathir رحمته الله, All believers and hypocrites will be given guiding light on the Day of Judgement while crossing the bridge. The light of the hypocrites will be soon extinguished. In this way Allah

ﷻ is mocking them as they used to mock Allah ﷻ and his obedient servants. Allah ﷻ says in the Quran: Al-Baqarah # 15

15 اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

Allah mocks at them and gives them increase in their wrong-doings to wonder blindly.

Note that the hypocrites were given some light initially, because they did some good deeds for showing off.

Hence, we conclude that sincere deeds will result in a permanent guiding light and hypocrisy will be mocked at on the day of Judgement. Ibn Kathir ﷻ has mentioned a very long Hadith in which he relates that each believer will have light according to his deeds. Some will have light like a mountain, some like palm trees, and some in length equal to the height of a person.

Allah ﷻ further says: Al-Hadid # 17

17 أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Remember that Allah ﷻ makes the dead Earth alive again. Allah ﷻ in this way makes His verses clear to you so that you can understand.

Here Allah ﷻ is reminding us that just as He can revive the dead earth, similarly He can revive the dead hearts of the hypocrites if there is sincere repentance. I pray to Allah ﷻ that Allah ﷻ makes us sincere Muslim and provides us with guiding light permanently on the Day of Judgement. Ameen.

BARZAKH

Barzakh is the time period between the death in this world and the time of resurrection on the day of judgment. We do not know what goes on during this period. We can however learn from various verses in Quran and sayings of the Holy Prophet about this period. For example Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Anam # 93

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرِجُوا
 أَنفُسَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
 وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

If you could see how the disbelievers are being tortured when they face death while the angels spread their hands towards them and remove their souls. Angels say to them, "You will be punished today because you used to say about Allah ﷻ what was not true. You used to be arrogant towards the message of Allah ﷻ."

It is clear from this verse people may be punished at the time of their death.

Similarly Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Anfal # 50, 51

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ
 وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ
 بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾

If you can see how the angels receive the disbelievers at the time of death hitting their faces and backs saying, "Taste the punishment of burning." This is because of their deeds in the past. Allah ﷻ is definitely not cruel with his creatures in any way.

It is clear from these two verses that we can not see what goes on at that time. Even the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ could not see when the angels were punishing disbelievers in the Battle of Badr. These unseen events are described to us by the mercy of Allah ﷻ for our guidance. Further

more the scholars explain the above phrase "taste the punishment of burning" that the angels hit the disbelievers with hot metallic rods on their faces and backs.

Allah ﷻ describes the drowning of people of Pharaoh in Surah Nuh # 25

﴿25﴾ مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا

They were drowned because of their sins and hence they entered the fire. They did not find for themselves any helper other than Allah ﷻ.

Here it is more clear that the people of Pharaoh were thrown in fire as soon as they were drowned in water indicating that there is the punishment right at the time of death. It is interesting to note that punishment of fire is mentioned along with drowning in water. Imam Razi says that this is a very strong proof of punishment in Barzakh and grave. He points out that the letter 'fa' is used indicating that the punishment of fire was immediately after the drowning. This is not referring to the punishment on the day of judgment.

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Ghafir # 45,46

فَوَقَّهٖ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿45﴾ النَّارُ

يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ

﴿46﴾ الْعَذَابِ

So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted (against him), while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh's people. The fire, they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon. And on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): Cause Pharaoh's people to enter the severest torment!

This verse again proves that there is punishment in the grave for the disbelievers in addition to the punishment to come on the day of judgment.

Abudullah bin Masood ؓ explains this verse stating that the spirits of the Pharaoh's people are brought in the forms of black birds every morning and evening towards hell. They are told that this is their final

abode. Allah ﷻ says in sura Al Takathur # 1, 2, 3, 4

أَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَكُمْ الْكَافِرُ ﴿١﴾ حَتَّىٰ ذُرِّمْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴿٢﴾ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾
ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

People love to have more and more of the worldly things till they reach their graves. Soon they will come to know about it. Again, soon they will come to know about it.

Here there is a repetition of a phrase 'soon you will come to know about it.' The explanation of this is given by Caliph Ali as narrated by Zir bin Hubaish ؓ. The first phrase refers to the punishment in the grave and the second is pointing towards the day of judgment.

Finally, Allah ﷻ says in the Quran

Allah says that whoever will forget me, I shall make his life miserable and make him rise as a blind person on the day of judgment.

Ibn Masood ؓ and Abu Sayeed Khudri ؓ said that the meaning of this miserable life means punishment in the grave. Similarly, Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that the meaning of the above phrase in this verse is that the Allah ﷻ will send 99 snakes in the grave of the disbeliever. These snakes will keep on plucking his flesh till the day of judgment.

What happens to the spirit of a person after death? As narrated by Abu Hurairah ؓ, Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "When the spirit of a believer leaves the body, it is taken towards the sky by two angels. The angels say a pious spirit has come from the earth. May Allah ﷻ bless you and the body which you used to reside in. The spirit is then presented to Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says, "Place this spirit in Sid ra tul Muntaha till the day of judgment."

When the spirit of a disbeliever leaves the body, the angels say that a bad spirit has come from the earth. Angels curse it and its bad smell spreads all over. Allah ﷻ orders the angels to place the spirit in Siggeen. Hence Siggeen is the location where spirits and deeds of disbelievers will be kept.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ placed his clothes on his nose to describe the bad smell of the spirit of a disbeliever. (Muslim)

There are several Hadith which further explain the period in the grave. Anas narrates that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, when a person is placed in the grave after his death, and when his family members and friends leave the grave, the dead person can hear the steps of the leaving crowd. Two angels come to the person in the grave. The angels make the person sit up and ask him the following questions: "What do you know about that person Mohammad ﷺ?" The true believer says, "I stand witness that he is an obedient servant of Allah ﷻ and true messenger of Allah ﷻ." The angels say to him, "If you had not believed, your place would have been in Hell. View it now. Allah ﷻ has replaced it with a paradise and view it now also." Similarly, angels will ask the hypocrites and the disbelievers, "What do you know about that person Mohammad ﷺ?" The disbeliever says, "I do not know any thing. I used to say what the people said." Angels will say to him, "Neither did you try to recognize him nor did you ever follow the believers". Angels will beat him with iron rods. He will cry so much that everything in the universe except jinn and the human being will hear his crying.

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Asma bin Abu Bakr ؓ narrates that one day the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ addressed the people and described the punishment in the grave. When he mentioned this, all the believers started crying loudly. It created a scene of a large hue and cry.

(Bukhari)

Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ recited the following dua just like verses of Quran.

"O Allah ﷻ, I seek your protection and help from the punishment of hell, punishment of grave and tests of life and death and tests pertaining to Dajjal."

(Muslim)

Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: recitation of Surah Al-Mulk on regular basis will save a person from the punishment of the grave. *(Tirmidhi)*

I pray to Allah ﷻ and seek His refuge and help to save me and the readers and listeners of this brief article from the punishment of hell and the punishment of grave and tests pertaining to Dajjal. Ameen.

RESURRECTION

It is very hard for a disbeliever to accept that Allah ﷻ can make him reborn after his death on the Day of Judgement. Al-Waqia # 47,48

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَأَنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوَّابًا أَوَّانًا

﴿٤٨﴾ الْأَوَّلُونَ

And they used to say, "What! when we die and become dust and bones shall we then indeed be resurrected? And our forefathers too?"

Hence disbelievers not only doubt but consider it simply impossible that man is resurrected after he is reduced to dust and bones. It is even harder for them to think that their forefathers would be resurrected, who had passed away long time ago.

Allah ﷻ explains this very beautifully in Surah Al-Qiyamah # 3,4

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ ﴿٣﴾ بَلَىٰ قَدَرِينًا عَلَيَّ أَنْ تُسَوَّىٰ بِنَانِهِ ﴿٤﴾

Does man (a disbeliever) think that We cannot assemble his bones? Why not, when We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.

We know that the prints of finger tips of every person are different. The impressions of finger prints are used to identify different persons through out the world.

The impressions of two people never match with one another. We further note that Allah ﷻ has not only created human being but also given these finer touches by making their finger prints differ from one another. If Allah ﷻ can do this why can't he resurrect a person from dust and bones. Similarly Allah ﷻ says in the same surah Al-Qiyamah # 36-40

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿٣٦﴾ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُُمْتَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً

فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدِيرٍ عَلَيَّ أَنْ

﴿٤٠﴾ يُخَيَّرَ الْمَوْتَىٰ

Does man think that he will be left aimless? Was he not a drop of

fluid which gushed forth? Then he became a clot, then Allah ﷻ shaped and fashioned it and made him a pair, the male and female. Is He not able to bring the dead to life?

Here Allah ﷻ is saying that he created human being from a fluid and made them male or female, who differ with each other physically, psychologically and emotionally. In spite of their wide differences in various ways they are complementary to each other and life of one, without other is incomplete. Hence if Allah ﷻ can produce such individuals who differ so much and are still absolutely necessary for each other, why can't He bring the dead to life again.

Allah ﷻ describes it even more simply in Surah An-Naziat # 27,28

﴿ 28 ﴾ رَفَعَ سَمَكَهَا فَسَوَّيْنَاهَا ﴿ 27 ﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

Are you harder to create, or the heaven that He built? He raised the height thereof and ordered it.

Allah ﷻ is explaining to us that it is very difficult to construct skies without pillars. If we try to find any fault in the creation of the skies we would totally fail and our eyes will become tired while looking for faults. If Allah ﷻ can create skies in this way which we see every day why should it be difficult for Allah to resurrect a person after his death.

Allah ﷻ Says in Surah Ar-Rum # 50

فَأَنْظُرْ إِلَىٰ ءَآثَرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِي
 الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿ 50 ﴾

Look at the effects(results) of Allah's Mercy, how He revives the earth after its death. Verily! That (Allah) Who revived the earth after its death can indeed raise the dead person too. He is able to do all things.

This scene is very vividly explained in Surah Fussilat # 39

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ ۚ أَنْكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ
 الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتِ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿ 39 ﴾

And Among His signs you see barren land. But when We send down

rain water to it, it rises and expands by itself showing signs of life and starts growing vegetations. He, Who gives life to this barren land, surely is able to give life to the dead, indeed. He is able to do all things.

This is fantastic daily manifestation and proof seen by young and old, rich and poor, educated or uneducated. The rain falls by grace of Allah ﷻ and the barren land slightly rises and somewhat expands giving way to the soft and tender plant coming deep down from this barren and hard grounds. This extraordinary miracle takes place in front of our eyes even in our backyards. Most of the people look at it very casually forgetting who actually revived the earth. We also forget who breaks each seed under this hard ground and enables a tender plant to come out of the hard crust of the seed. Then this new born tender plant finds its way out through this revived earth.

Whoever will look at these signs of Allah ﷻ with an open mind will have no doubt in his mind that He can resurrect us on day of Judgement after we are reduced to dust and bones.

Two very interesting scenes are described in Al-Baqarah for our guidance. First consider verse # 259

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ
قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ
إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ
نُنشِرُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

Or like the one who passed by a town and it had tumbled over its roofs. He said, "Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years then raised him up (again). He said, "How long did you remain (dead)?" He (the man) said, "Perhaps I remained dead a day or part of a day." He said, "Nay, you

have remained (dead) for a hundred years, look at your food and your drink, they show no change. And look at your donkey! And thus We have made of you a sign for the people. Look at the bones, how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh." When this was clearly shown to him, he said, "I know (now) that Allah is able to do all things."

Hence, one person's curiosity was turned into guidance for all coming generations. It is also interesting to note that Allah first brings together the bones of a donkey and then clothes them with flesh. Researchers have only discovered very recently that during the development of various creatures, bones are created first and then flesh is built on them. Allah ﷻ described this fact several centuries ago. The unjust people even ignore these signs of Allah ﷻ.

Similarly Ibrahim عليه السلام was curious to see how Allah ﷻ resurrects. It was simply to further strengthen his faith in resurrection. Al-Baqarah # 260

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولَٰئِكَ تُؤْمِنُونَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾

And (remember) when Ibrahim said, "My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead." Allah said: "Do you not believe?" Ibrahim said, "Yes I believe but to be stronger in Faith. Allah said, "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you (then slaughter them, cut them into pieces) and then put a portion of them on every hill, and call them, they will come to you in haste, And know that Allah is Almighty, All-wise.

Hence firm belief in resurrection is part of our Eeman, Any weakness in it shows the weakness of our faith. May Allah strengthen our faith day after day. Ameen.

MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF TRUST AND TRUSTEESHIP IN ISLAM

Allah ﷻ says in Surah An-Nisa (verse 58),

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا

بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾

Indeed, Allah commands you that you restore deposits to their owners and if you judge between mankind, you should judge justly. Indeed, Allah gives you very good advice. Allah is ever hearing and seeing.

The circumstances in which this verse was revealed are very interesting. We know that before the conquest of Mecca, the keys for the house of Allah ﷻ were kept by Uthman bin-Talha (عثمان بن طلحة). At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ asked Uthman bin-Talha to hand him over the keys. Uthman bin-Talha gave them reluctantly saying that it is 'amana' (trust) with you. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ opened the House of Allah ﷻ and removed all the idols from it. At that time his uncle Abbas and Ali ﷺ requested that these keys be kept in the family. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ did not give them the keys. As narrated by Umar ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ came out of the house of Allah reciting verse 58 of Sura An-Nissa. He handed the keys back to Uthman bin-Talha. This surprised Uthman, since the Holy Prophet ﷺ as a conqueror, could keep these keys for good. Uthman bin-Talha was highly moved by the character of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and immediately accepted Islam.

Anas ﷺ narrated that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ always insisted on fulfilling the covenants. Anas ﷺ said that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ rarely gave a khutbah in which he did not mention the following:

“He who betrays his trust, does not have an iota of faith in him. He who breaks a promise, has no sense of Islamic life.”

Abu Huraira ﷺ and Umar ﷺ narrated in Bukhari and Muslim that while describing the indicators of hypocrites, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ

said, "He who breaks his trust when he is trusted." Allah ﷻ mentions several prerequisites for entering Heaven in Surahs Al-Muminun and Al-Ma'arij. For example, Allah says in Surah Al-Ma'arij: # 32-35

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Hence some of the prerequisites are: *They fulfill their covenants and keep their promises. They also stand by their testimony firmly. They also establish prayer regularly and with full concentration. They will be honored in Gardens.*

Thus fulfilling covenants is just like performing salat correctly. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ also said that: *المجالس في الأمانة*

The meetings of people should display total trustworthiness, among themselves. Hence what is said in the meeting must not be disclosed, to outsiders.

Similarly, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Whosoever is consulted should act in a full trustworthy manner (المستشار مؤتمن). He should give the best and useful advice. He should not knowingly give wrong advice, otherwise he would break the trust. Similarly, if someone shares his secret with you, do not divulge it to others without his permission.

Let us examine how the companions handled such situations. Keep in mind that the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ were human beings like us and prone to slips like any other human being. Allah ﷻ mentions a specific situation in Sura Al-Anfal (verse #27),

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

Oh you believers, do not cheat Allah and his messenger and you betray your trust knowingly. Remember that your wealth and children are a test for you. And indeed there is a great reward with Allah.

This verse is referring to a particular situation, as mentioned by many scholars. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ surrounded Banu-Quraiza, (بنو قريظة) who had fortified themselves on the outskirts of Madina. This conflict lasted for 21 days, until the provisions of enemies were totally

used up. This tribe asked the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ for permission to go to Syria. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ refused, since he knew that the Jewish tribe would create mischief while in Syria. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ informed them that they should accept any decision by Sa'ad bin-muath ؓ as a mediator. The Jews requested that Sa'ad bin-muath ؓ (سعد بن معاذ) be replaced by Abu Lubaba ؓ (أبي لبابة). Since Abu Lubaba ؓ (أبي لبابة) had his family members and real-estate property on this Jewish neighborhood and they expected him to be kinder to them. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ granted their request. When Abu-Lubaba ؓ reached this tribe, they asked Abu-Lubaba, ؓ "What will be our fate if we just come out of this fort?" Abu-Lubaba said putting his finger on the throat that their heads will be chopped off. This was in fact the secret of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ with Abu-Lubaba ؓ. As soon as Abu-Lubaba ؓ left these people he realized his mistake and felt very bad. He tied himself to a tree, and this went on for seven days and seven nights. He declared that he will not untie himself until his repentance is accepted. He hardly ate anything during this time and passed out again and again. When the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ learned about him, he said, "He could have come directly to me and I would have prayed for his forgiveness. Now he has left the whole matter with Allah. He should wait until Allah accepts his repentance directly." After seven days the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was informed about the acceptance of his repentance by Allah ﷻ. Some of his brothers came running to him to untie him. Abu-Lubaba ؓ refused and indicated that he would rather wait until the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ very kindly untied him with his own hands, signaling total acceptance of his repentance. This shows us that breaking a trust was a very serious matter with the companions and they adopted such drastic measures to rectify it. Even now we see a pillar in the masjid Nabvi inscribed on it the pillar of Abu-Lubaba. This pillar has replaced the original tree with which Abu-Lubaba was tied up. Many people pray near this pillar and ask for forgiveness for their sins from Allah ﷻ with the sincere spirit of Abu-Lubaba ؓ.

Note that when the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ gave the keys of the House of Allah to Uthman bin-Talha, these keys had no monetary or intrinsic value since they were a piece of old metal. Actually it was the

high position of honor to serve the House of Allah. Hence, amanat (أمانة) means assigning positions of responsibility. We conclude that all positions in a government or organization are "amanat". The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that if a ruler assigns others for various positions of responsibility because of nepotism or friendship and these appointees do not have skills and/or ability to handle this assignment. Allah's curse is afflicted on such rulers. Their prayers are not accepted and they will go to hell-fire.

As mentioned in Bukhari, The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said :

إذا وسد الأمر إلى غير أهله فانتظر الساعة

"When you see that the responsibilities of jobs are assigned to those who are incapable, then just wait for The Day of Judgement." In other words there is no remedy for problems in such organizations or government agency, if these instructions of Qur'an and hadith are ignored.

We further note that trust is a big responsibility and should be fulfilled. On betraying the trust, grave consequences will occur. As an example, one time Abu-Zhar (أبو ذر) asked the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to assign him a position of high responsibility. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, as mentioned in Muslim,

يا أبا ذر انك ضعيف وإنها أمانة وإنها يوم القيامة خزي وندامة إلا من أخذ بحقها وادي الذي عليه فيها

"Oh, Abu-Zhar, you are an old man and a position of responsibility is a trust with Allah. Those who cannot fulfill the trust will be highly disgraced by Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgement. Those who keep the spirit of trust, however, will be safe from this shame and misery.

In the second verse, Allah ﷻ says that when you judge between mankind, you must judge justfully. This instruction is not only for leaders and officials, but also for common man. Note that Allah did not say, بين الناس : (بين المسلمين - بين المؤمنين)

"It means all people are to receive equal justice. In Islam friends or foes, muslims or non-muslims, countrymen or strangers, all must receive equal justice."

It is also important to note that Allah mentioned "amanat" first and then instructed to establish justice. Perhaps it is to guide us that justice

cannot be established unless deserving or capable people are assigned for various duties. This is what is missing these days in governments and other organizations including masajid and Islamic schools. Unless fair assignments are made, various problems in the organizations cannot be solved.

The Qur'an also dispels the wrong thought and practice of assigning positions in a government according to the number of people in a state or province. The Qur'an said that these positions are not their personal rights. These positions are a trustship with Allah and can be given to only and only qualified people. The Qur'an spells it out in a verse (قوي أمين), which means a person has to be fully qualified first even if he is honest and is a good practicing Muslim. Both conditions should be satisfied simultaneously. This was further brought out clearly in the case of the Prophet Musa عليه السلام. When he saw two young girls with their cattle near a well. The Prophet Musa عليه السلام noticed that many people came with their cattle and drew water from the well, their cattle drank the water and they left. These girls were holding their cattle away from the well for a very long time. The Prophet Musa عليه السلام asked them, "What is the matter?" The girls replied, "Our father is an old man. We cannot pull water from the well. We take our cattle to the well after everybody has left, so that our cattle can drink any leftover water." The Prophet Musa عليه السلام drew the water from the well and their cattle drank it to their fill, and the young girls went back home. They requested their father, to hire the Prophet Musa عليه السلام for the job because they found him qualified with his strength and honest in behavior. This is the criteria to assign any trust.

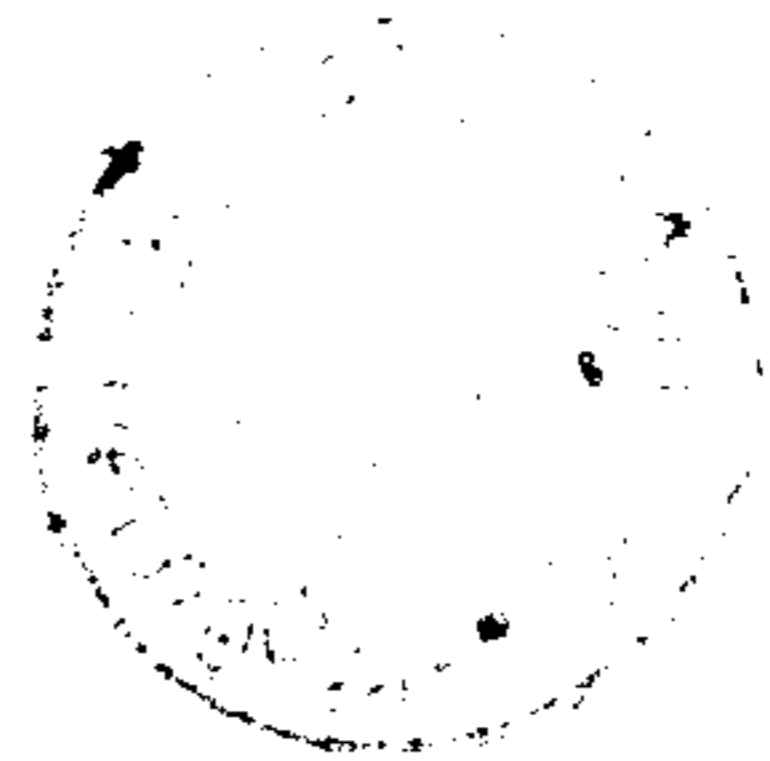
Hence the fundamental rules to formulate an organizational structure of a government are as follows:

1. Allah تعالى is "the real ruler and the order is from Allah alone. All governments are Allah's vicegrant or representative. The real power in a country is of Allah alone.
2. The jobs in a country are not to be distributed in the ratio of their population in various territories. Only qualified and able people should be assigned to various jobs.
3. Since people are only representative of Allah, they should always obey the instruction and guidance of Allah in all matters.

4. If a dispute arises, justice should be done irrespective of race, language, color, or religious affiliation.

Last of all, we note that at the time of migration of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ from Mecca to Madina, he left Ali ؑ in his bed and instructed him to return all the deposits to their owners. This was the time when all tribes had joined hands and surrounded the house of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to kill him outright. The Prophet on the other hand displays such high character that he insures that all deposits, even of his worst foes, are delivered to them under all circumstances.

May Allah help us to fulfill our trusts and promises with the same spirit. Ameen.



FATE AND DESTINY

It is very difficult for people to understand that life and death are solely in the hands of Allah ﷻ. There is an appointed time and no one can change it under any circumstances. Allah ﷻ has guided us about fate and destiny in surah Al-Baqarah by describing a group of Israelites who lived after Prophet Musa ﷺ. Al-Baqarah # 246, 247

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ لَهُمْ أَبْعَثْ لَنَا
 مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
 الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ
 دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
 بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ
 مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ
 سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ
 وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكُهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

Have you not thought about the group of children of Israel after the time of Musa. When they said to their prophet of that time, "Appoint a leader among us so that we can fight in the way of Allah ﷻ under his leadership." Prophet said to them, "I fear that you may not fight if fighting is prescribed for you." They said, "Why would we not fight in the way of Allah ﷻ when disbelievers have driven us out from our homeland and we are separated from our children?" When fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, all except a few of them. Allah ﷻ is aware of evil doers.

Their prophet ﷺ said to them, "Allah ﷻ has raised up Saul to be a king for you." They said, "How can he be a king over us when we are more deserving of the kingdom than he is? He has not been given

enough wealth." Their Prophet (Samuel ؑ) said, "Look Allah ﷻ has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in wisdom and stature. Allah ﷻ bestows His sovereignty on whom He wills. Allah ﷻ is all embracing, as well as all knowing."

Before we proceed with the story, we notice the rich considered it their right to rule over the poor. They forgot that Allah ﷻ is the ultimate sovereign. He can bestow His favors on whom He wills. Allah ﷻ gave Saul, the knowledge and the physical strength to fulfill this responsibility. Hence knowledge is more powerful than the riches. Furthermore it is necessary to be qualified physically as well as mentally to perform the job. Riches do not give a blank permit to rule over others.

The children of Israel asked their prophet in desperation to show them some signs that Saul was the appointed leader. Allah ﷻ describes those signs in the following verse: Al-Baqarah #248

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ
سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ
تَحْمِلُهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

Their prophet said to them, "The token of the kingdom is that there shall come to you a wooden box, wherein is peace of reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind. Angels will be bearing it. Indeed there are signs for you if you are believers."

The few members in this group of the children of Israel set out to fight in the way of Allah ﷻ. Some of them were sincere and others joined them out of formality. Allah ﷻ has His own way to sort them out through His tests. These tests are described in the next verse, where Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 249-250

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ
فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ

إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا
 الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلتَقُوا اللَّهَ كَم مِّن
 فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا
 بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ
 أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

And when Saul طالوت set out with an army, he said, "Look, Allah ﷻ will test you by the ordeal of a river. Whosoever drinks there of is not of me, and whosoever does not taste it is of me except he who drinks a little bit in the hollow of his hand." But they drank all except a few of them. After he had crossed the river, he and those who believed with him, they said, "We have no power this day to fight against Goliath and his forces." But those who knew that they would meet their Lord exclaimed: "How many times has a small group overcome the powerful enemy by Allah's ﷻ permission! Allah ﷻ is with the steadfast."

And when they faced Goliath جالوت and his forces in the battlefield they said, "Our Lord bestow on us endurance, make our foothold sure and give us help against the disbelieving folk."

We note that Allah ﷻ sorted out the committed believers from the casual Muslims through the ordeal of the river. The few committed ones not only reminded others about the power of Allah ﷻ but also humbled themselves by making a timely supplication. Hence it is not permissible to boast about one's piety and commitment. The result of this devotion, commitment and steadfastness is described in the next verse.

Allah ﷻ says: Al-Baqarah # 251

فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ
 لَّفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

These few committed believers defeated the army of Goliath with the permission of Allah ﷻ. David (one of the believers and not a prophet yet) slew Goliath. Allah ﷻ gave David the kingdom and the wisdom and taught him whatever He willed. If Allah ﷻ had not repelled some men by other men the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah ﷻ is the Lord of Kindness to His creatures.

It is interesting to note the phrase "a few" has been used thrice in this description. First, very few volunteered for fighting when it was prescribed for them. Then very few of them did not drink from the river. Of the few remaining, some refused to fight with the super power of Goliath. Finally, an extremely small number, having full faith in fate and destiny, faced the situation. Allah ﷻ rewarded them with not only success but also with sovereignty, and taught them various forms of wisdom. Allah ﷻ says in Qur'an : Al-Baqarah # 269

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا

يَذْكُرُ إِلَّا أَهْلَ الْآلْبَابِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾

He grants wisdom to whom He pleases and he, to whom wisdom is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember except men of understanding.

Khaled bin Waleed was a famous companion of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Khaled fought many wars. Hardly any part of his body was without marks of injury. He wished to be a martyr. Finally he died, but in his own bed in his house. You see, life and death is in the hands of Allah ﷻ alone.

Hence, it is necessary to have full faith in fate and destiny, and then with the permission of Allah ﷻ success is yours. May Allah ﷻ strengthen our faith (Eeman) in fate and destiny. Ameen.

FRIENDSHIP WITH NON-MUSLIMS

Allah ﷻ says in Quran in Al-Imran # 28

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَنَّهُ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾

Let not the believers take the disbelievers as helpers or friend instead of the believers, and whoever does that will never be helped by Allah in any way, except if you indeed fear a danger from them.

Let us first describe several possible levels of relationship between two individuals or two groups in order to fully appreciate this guidance.

The first level of relationship is directly heart to heart, and it is called Mowalat (موالات). This is allowed between believers only.

The second level of relationship is of sympathy and of goodwill and it is called Mowasat (مواسات). This is enjoyed by all disbelievers except those at war with the believers. This is mentioned in Surah Al-Mumtahinah. # 8

لَا يَنْهَى اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ

وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٨﴾

Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion and did not drive you out of your homes. Allah loves those who deal with equity.

The third level of relationship is to have good moral behavior towards others. It is called Madarat (مدارات). This is also allowed with disbelievers. For example, you must honor disbelievers when they are your guests. Believers are also allowed to display this good behavior in order to save themselves from the harm of the disbelievers. This is what it is meant when Allah ﷻ says in Al-Imran # 28

إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَنَّهُ

Except if you, indeed fear a danger from them.

The fourth level of relationship is in connection with trade, industry

and job relationship. And it is called Mu'amalaat (معاملات). This is permissible with all disbelievers as long as it does not hurt the interest of the believers. Hence it is permissible to seek a job with a non-muslim or to work in his factory. Similarly, it is allowed to engage in trade with disbelievers although it is not allowed to sell arms and ammunition to those who are at war with the believers.

This model behavior was demonstrated by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. For example, when the people of Mecca had famine, he helped them in spite of the fact that they had driven him out of his home. Similarly, after the conquest of Mecca, the people of Mecca expected the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to kill them, or make them slaves or at least take away their properties and belongings. They were extremely worried and wondered what declaration the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was going to make at this historic address. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ began this address by saying to the disbelievers,

لا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ

Today there will be no blame on you for anything and no one will harm you anyway.

There is no other such example in the history of mankind to show this excellent behavior towards the enemies. As a result of this exemplary behavior thousands of Meccans accepted Islam.

Similarly Prophet Mohammad ﷺ let a delegate of (Banu- Thaqeef) (بنو ثقيف) tribe stay in Masjid Nabvi even if they were non-muslims. It was to show them courtesy and respect.

Caliph Omar ؓ used to give scholarships to needy disbelievers from the government treasury.

Keeping all this explanation in mind we can now refer to several other verses in the Quran describing the relationship between the believers and the disbelievers. Allah ﷻ says in sura Al- Mumtahinah # 1

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا عَدُوِّيْ وَعَدُوْكُمْ اَوْلِيَاءَ تَلْقَوْنَ الْبَغِيْثَ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ

O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e: disbelievers) as friends showing affection towards them.

At the end of this verse Allah says Al-Mumtahinah # 1

تُسْرُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمُودَةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ

سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٥١﴾

You show friendship to them (disbelievers) in secret while. I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whosoever of you (Muslim) does that, then, indeed, he has gone astray from the Straight Path.

Allah ﷻ also says in Quran. Al-Maida # 51

﴿يَتَّيِبُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ

مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

O you believers, do not make friendships with Jews and Christians since they are supporters of each other. Hence who does this will be counted among them. Allah does not guide those people who are unjust.

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Mujadalah # 22

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا ءَابَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ

O Mohammad ﷺ you will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred people.

Hence the criterion for various levels of friendship or animosity is to obey Allah ﷻ and his messenger. Any other personal, racial, territorial reasons must not motivate a person for friendship or animosity.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "Whosoever had a friendship and animosity solely for the sake of Allah ﷻ, he perfected his faith."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

It is clear that believers are not allowed to make intimate friendship with even Christians and Jews so that they do not share secrets of Islamic state with others. It is to safeguard the safety and security of the people

and the state.

Allah ﷻ says in Quran, Al-Imran # 118,119,120

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِيَدَانِي مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُّوْا مَا عَنِتُّمْ
قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ
إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَاتَمْتُمْ أَوْلَاءَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ
وَإِذَا لَقُواكُمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُوتُوا
بِعَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾ إِن تَمَسَّكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ وَإِن
تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ
اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

O you who believe, do not make intimate friendship with others than your own folk, who would spare no pains to ruin you. They love to hamper you. Hatred is revealed by the utterance of their mouths, but that which their breasts hide is greater. We have made plain to you the revelation if you understand.

Look, you are those who love them though they do not love you, although you believe in all the Scriptures. When they fall in with you, they say, "We believe." When they go apart they bite their finger tips at you in rage. Say, "Perish in your rage. Allah ﷻ is aware of what is hidden in your breasts."

If good befalls you, it grieves them, and if a disaster strikes you, they rejoice there at. If you are steadfast and fear Allah ﷻ, none of their plans will be able to harm you. Allah ﷻ is surrounding what they do.

In spite of all this, Muslims are required to fulfill all obligations towards disbelievers living in an Islamic state. Ibn Masood narrated that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ has said, "I shall claim on behalf of the disbelievers on the day of Judgment whosoever bothered a disbeliever living in Islamic state, When I am the claimant, I shall be the winner."

Similarly, Ali ؑ narrated that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ has said, "Allah ﷻ has prohibited that I inflict cruelty on a disbeliever living in an

Islamic State.”

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ has also said: “I shall plead on the day of judgment on behalf of a disbeliever who was harmed or whose due right was diminished or if more than bearable pressure was exerted on him or if something was taken from him without his consent by a believer.”

Thus the relationship between believers and disbelievers is very fair, honorable and logical. May Allah ﷻ help us to live according to this guidance of the Quran and exemplary character displayed by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and his rightly guided caliphs.

Lawful And Unlawful in Islam Halal And Haram in Islam

Allah ﷻ says in Quran: Al-Baqarah # 188

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ

أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

Do not eat one another's property falselyly and do not take it to the rulers as a disputed property so that you may knowingly eat up a part of the property of others sinfully.

The circumstances in which this verse was revealed is mentioned in Roo-hul-Maaani (روح المعاني).

Two companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ had a dispute about a piece of land and they brought their dispute to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. The claimant did not have any witness to support his claim. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the other party, "Can you swear by Allah that it belongs to you." He consented. Prophet Mohammad ﷺ then recited the following verse by way of reminder before he swore. Al-Imran # 77

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلْقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

Indeed those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah's covenants and their own oaths, they will have no portion on the day of Judgement. Allah will neither speak to them nor look towards them on the day of resurrection, nor will He purify them. There will be a painful torment for them.

The present owner of this piece of land listened to this verse and then refused to swear. He was afraid that there may be some form of cloud on his title or doubt about his ownership of this piece of land and he did not want to be a loser on the Day of Judgement. Hence the Prophet

Mohammad ﷺ gave this property to the claimant. Note that this verse was revealed to prevent the acquiring of other's property by wrongful means. Similarly making a false case, false swearing and false witnessing are all Haram. In the first verse the use of word **بينكم** is very interesting. Allah is teaching us that when you usurp others wealth it encourages others to usurp yours as well. For example if one person mixes water in milk, another sells impure eatables, still another sells mixed dates. Each one is eating another's wealth wrongfully. In fact it amounts to using ones own wealth wrongfully and nobody is a winner. Secondly it teaches us that it causes pain to others losing their wealth just like it troubles you losing your wealth. Hence treat others wealth like your own wealth in safeguarding it.

Um-Salma narrates that the messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I am a human being like you. You bring your disputes to me. May be one of you makes more eloquent and impressive presentation and thereby I am led to decide in his favor. Dont forget real knowledge is with Allah ﷻ alone. If it is not your right don't take it. Since what I am giving you in this case will be a piece of hell." *(Bukhari and Muslim)*

Hence we conclude that any court or even the court of the messenger of Allah ﷻ cannot make Hallal a Haraam and vice-versa.

Similar verses came in other places in Quran. Allah says in surah Al-Baqarah:# 168

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ

لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

O mankind eat what is lawful and wholesome in earth and do not follow the foot steps of satan. Satan is your obvious enemy.

Similarly Allah ﷻ says in Surah An-Nahl:

يَأْتِيهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُّوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

O The messengers, eat what is wholesome and do good deeds. Indeed Allah ﷻ sees what you do.

In these two verses the word Halal and Tayyib is used. Here Halal

means what is permissible (without a knot or without restriction). Tayyib means that is Halal and furthermore you like it or are tempted to eat it.

We conclude from this that good deeds cannot take place unless we eat Tayyab. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ explained this verse by stressing that this order is not for the prophets only but for all their followers as well. The messenger of Allah ﷺ said that the supplication of a person eating Haram is not accepted. He added: "Many people put lot of effort in worship of Allah and then spread their hands saying O Allah! O Allah! Please accept our supplication. But if their eating is haram, their drinking is haram, their clothing is haram, how would then their prayer be accepted?"

(Muslim and Tirmidhi)

There are several other sayings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which clarify Halal and Haram for us. The Messenger of Allah said, "Those who eat Halal, follow the tradition of the Prophet and do not harm others will go to heaven." His companions said: "Oh Prophet ﷺ this is very common in your followers now." The Messenger of Allah said "And there will be people in the future who will follow this as well."

(Tirmidhi)

Abdullah bin Umar ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah said: "If you have the following four characteristics they are enough for you, even if you did not gain anything else in this world:

- (a) Safeguard covenants
- (b) Speak the truth
- (c) Treat others nicely
- (d) Eat Halal.

Once Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas ؓ requested the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to make a dua for him so that his supplications are granted by Allah. In other words he becomes (مقبول الدعاء) The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him: "Oh Sa'ad, If you eat Halal and Tayyab, Allah will answer all your prayers. You will become (مستجاب الدعوات)

The Messenger of Allah added: "I swear by the Allah ﷻ in whose hands is my life, when a person eats a tiny piece of an item which is Haram, none of his deeds are accepted by Allah ﷻ for forty days. When the flesh of the body is built from Haram then his body only deserves the Hell-fire."

Ma adh bin Jabal ؓ (معاذ بن جبل) narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When we are gathered on the Day of Judgment no one

will be able to leave his place till he answers the following five questions:

- (1) How did he spend his lifetime?
- (2) How did he spend his prime youth?
- (3) How did he earn his living?
- (4) How and where did he spend it?
- (5) How much did he act upon his acquired knowledge?

(البیهقی - الرغیب)

Abdullah bin Masoud narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "I swear by the God in whose hands is my life, a person is not a true Muslim until his heart and tongue become Muslim and his neighbors are safe from any form of harm from him. When a person owns Haram wealth then gives it to charity, it is not accepted by Allah. If he spends from it there is no barakah in it. If he leaves it for survivors he is leaving something which paves the way for them to Hell-fire. Allah does not erase bad deeds with more bad deeds. Allah however, washes out bad deeds with good deeds."

Abdullah bin Omar ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ addressed a group of immigrants and said: "I seek the refuge of Allah and hope that the following five characteristics are not generated among you:

- (1) When there is extensive shameful behavior or permissiveness or nudity or violation of Islamic dress codes in a group, then Allah ﷻ inflicts upon them plagues and other diseases which their forefathers had never heard of.
- (2) When people cheat in weighing (usurp other's rights as was the practice of the people of Prophet Shuaib ؑ) then Allah ﷻ sends famine and a high cost of living. They experience extreme physical hardship as well as cruelty from their rulers.
- (3) If they don't pay Zakat, it stops raining in their land resulting in economic disaster.
- (4) When they break the covenants of Allah ﷻ and his Messenger ﷺ, the foreign enemies are sent who snatch away their wealth forcefully. (Obviously this is one of the reasons that Muslims are suffering all over the world now).
- (5) If their officials do not make decisions according to the

guidance of Allah ﷻ provided in the Quran then Allah creates hatred among them and they keep quarreling among themselves.

(Muslim)

May Allah ﷻ save us from all of these ills. It is clear that various ceremonial activities and rituals will not unite the Muslim Ummah. They will be united by only following Halal ways.

It is very interesting to note that verse # 188 of Al-Baqarah is right after the detailed instructions about fasting where it is prohibited to use certain Halal things for a limited time during a fast. Hence, the purpose of fasting is to discipline and gain experience in constraining oneself in the use of Halal things. This training, perseverance and patience is very valuable. It will enable a person to use this experience in total abstinence of Haram things.

Furthermore, when one breaks one's fast one should provide only Halal food. If it is Haram, the fast will not be accepted, by Allah ﷻ.

Last but not least, the criteria for Halal and Haram has to be only one from Allah ﷻ. Any other international conference or agreement will not solve the problem since the intentions of various parties will be tinted by their own interests. Similarly, agreements made under pressure for individual or national affairs are not impartial and hence, not valid. Only Allah's law will be fair to all concerned for all of the times.

As mentioned earlier Allah ﷻ Himself decides Halal and Haram. It is not even left to the discretion of Prophets of any time. Allah's system is faultless.

May Allah enable us to adhere to Halal and save us from gray areas and doubtful situations.

SURAH AL-FATIHA

Surah Al-Fatiha is the opening chapter of the Qur'an. It is very significant for many reasons:

- 1) It is the first complete surah revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, hence it is called "Fatih al-kitab."
- 2) It is also called "the esteemed Qur'an", "Umm-ul-kitab", and also "Umm-ul-Qur'an." Abu-Huraira ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I swear by the Lord, in whose hands is my life, that there has been no surah like this in the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms of David, and even in the Qur'an." *(Muslim & Tirmidhi)*
- 3) Anas ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Among all the surahs of the Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatihah is supreme and the highest."
- 4) This surah is also called "Surah Al-shifa" (curing surah).

Now we will try to understand the meanings of this surah, bit-by-bit.

"Al-hamdulil-ah" (الحمد لله) means that all forms of praise is for Allah ﷻ alone. It is not only praise and thankfulness to Allah ﷻ, but also has in its meaning the oneness of Allah ﷻ (Tawheed) built in it. Hence, the logic or reason for praise is built in it. This is an example of the eloquence of Qur'an.

"Indeed, all praise is due to Allah, who is the creator of every body and every thing." Hence, the first pillar of Islam "Eeman" is built in this brief phrase.

Furthermore, (الحمد لله رب العالمين) is also the logic for all forms of praise for Allah alone. It means Allah is the Creator, Nourisher, and Sustainer of all universes known and unknown.

Let us see how Allah describes his creations in the Qur'an. For example, Allah says in Surah Az- Zariyat # 47,48,49

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾
وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

We have built the Heavens with our own handicraft, and it is vast and expanding. And we laid down the earth and we are the best spreader. We created opposite pairs of everything so that you may reflect.

The earlier scholars did not understand the meaning of expanding universe and advised us to be quiet about it. Now, through space research, we are gradually learning more and more about the expanding universe. For example, our solar system is part of a galaxy. There are many galaxies bigger than this. All these galaxies are moving away from one another. In this way the universe is expanding. Unfortunately, these scientists do not want to reflect and seek inspiration from the signs described by Allah ﷻ in various parts of the Quran centuries ago.

Then, Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Waqia, # 68-73

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
 لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾
 ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذَكُّرًا وَرَمْتًا
 لِلْمُقْوِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾

Do you see the water which you drink? Is it you who cause it from the rainclouds to come down or are We the one who bring it down from the raincloud? If We wished, We would have made it bitter (and unusable). Why, then, don't you thank Allah?

Do you see the fire which you light? Are you the one who grow the trees, or are We the grower of these trees? We have made this fire a reminder, as well as, a comfort for the dwellers in the wilderness.

Note that fire reminds us of hell fire. Here in this world Allah has enabled us to use this fire for our comfort and cooking as well.

Then, Allah ﷻ speaks about the creation of the human being: Surah Al-Insan # 1,2,3

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ
 مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَّبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا
 شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٣﴾

Has not a long time passed on human beings when he was not anything worth mentioning? We created the man from a drop of thickened fluid to test him, so we made him hearer and seer. Allah not only created human beings, but also showed them the right path whether he be grateful to Him or ungrateful.

A human being is a mini-universe with many systems working in harmony with each other. It is a great sign of the Creator. That is why Allah says in the Qur'an,

وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ

And there are signs within you; why don't you reflect?

This gives us a brief description of the creations of Allah ﷻ. Now let us examine the meaning of "Al-Rahman" and "Al-Raheem." Both of these words are extracted from the same root "Al-Rahmah."

"Al-Rahman" means the mercy from the beginning to the end. There is no plural for this word, and "Al-Rahman" can only be used for Allah ﷻ.

"Al-Raheem" is the complete or total mercy, This word can be used for human beings, as well. For example, Allah described the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ.

(الرؤوف الرحيم)

The Prophet ﷺ is the total embodiment of mercy for the believers.

Thirdly we say that Allah is the master of the Day of Judgement. This requires a separate khutba. The next verse is.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾

You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).

Hence, all form of praise is for Allah who created us in the past, and who is totally merciful during the living present, and is the master of the Day of Judgement in the coming future. Why should we not say,

"Him alone we worship; we ask Him alone for help." This verse is called the spirit of Surah Al-Fatiha. It is praise of Allah ﷻ, as well as, a supplication to seek the help of Allah. Next, we start with our supplication. We pray to Allah to guide us to the right path. This word "guidance" needs explanation. Allah ﷻ provides His guidance in three

forms: Allah provided guidance to all his creatures, as mentioned in various parts of the Qur'an. For example, Allah says in Surah Al-Isra (verse 44),

تَسْبِيحٌ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا

نَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤٤﴾

The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein, glorify Him and there is not a thing but glorifies His Praise. But you understand not their glorification. Truly, He is ever Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.

Look at our limitations. Indeed Allah has provided guidance to trees, stars, and even stones.

Again Allah says in Surah An-Nur # 41, *Don't you see that everything in the heaven and earth, and specifically the birds which fly with their outspread wings praise Allah ﷻ. Everything knows its prayer and its glorification for Allah, and Allah fully knows what they do.*

Furthermore, Allah says in Surah Al-A'la, verse # 1-3 *Glory the Name of your Lord, the most High. Who has created (everything), and then proportioned it, then balanced it, then guided it.* Hence, everything has guidance to follow. For example, an ear cannot be used for seeing, and eyes for hearing. That is why Allah says in Surah Maryam,

Nothing comes in this universe, except as an obedient servant of Allah ﷻ.

Secondly, Allah provides guidance through messengers and His holy books. Thirdly, Allah can provide direct guidance to his chosen people.

Amongst all the favors of Allah ﷻ to His creatures, the most important is providing His guidance to them. Without it, they will be lost and all systems will collapse. Now we see that everything has guidance from Allah. Why do we ask Allah to guide us to the right path? Furthermore, his messengers are indeed on the right path. Why should these messengers keep praying to Allah to provide them guidance towards the right path? The answer to this question is that Allah can increase his guidance to everybody and, hence, nobody can consider himself above this necessity. For example, Allah says to the Prophet

Muhammad ﷺ while describing the benefits of the Conquest of Mecca in Surah Fat'h,

“One benefit is to guide you to the right path”. In fact, All prophets strived for this higher and higher level of guidance from Allah ﷻ.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

is the most wonderful supplication stating,

Show us the path of those on whom Your blessing were showered.

The explanation of this group is spelled out in Surah An-Nisa # 69

And whoso obey Allah and the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, then they will be in the company of those on whom Allah has bestowed His grace, of the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the pious people.

Note that we are not saying here “Show me the straight path of a messenger or the straight path described by the Qur'an”. In fact Allah ﷻ is guiding us to look for the straight path in the light of the Quran in the company of good people who are present in all ages.

Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to his companions, “My followers will be divided into 70 groups. Only one of them is going to be on the right path.” A companion asked, “Who are they?” The Messenger of Allah replied, “Those who follow me and the way of my companions.” Hence the company of good people is essential. A poet said in Urdu,

کورس تو لفظ ہی سکھاتے ہیں آدمی آدمی بناتے ہیں ۵۸

“Course work only provides vocabulary. It is the teachers who really shape the personality.”

Some Muslims followed the explanation of Qur'an only and ignored the pious people around them. They forgot that Allah ﷻ always sent Prophets as teachers. Even for wordly skills, like medicine, just correspondence courses are not enough. It needs qualified teachers.

Other Muslims paid attention only to the pious people of their time and ignored the Qur'an. Hence, friction developed between these groups. In fact, we need the teachings of Qur'an and the company of pious people, who are present in all ages. That is why Allah ﷻ is pointing towards those people in specifying the straight path for guidance.

Finally, we ask Allah ﷻ not to show us the path of those on whom

his wrath was inflicted and also not the path of those who went astray. This is pointing towards Jews and Christians and needs a separate khutba to elaborate it.

Abu-Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates in Muslim that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ says that I have divided 'Salat' between Myself and My servant in two parts I grant him whatever, he asks for"

When man says

Allah ﷻ says:

② الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

My servant thanks Me

③ الرَّحْمَنَ الرَّحِيمَ

My servant praises Me

④ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

My servant describes My greatness

⑤ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It is direct connection between My servant and Me.

The first part of this verse is praise of Allah and the second part is a supplication.

Hence Allah ﷻ announces graciously and generously on hearing.

⑥ أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

My servant will get all what he asks for (Muslim)

Hence, Surah Al-Fatiha is praise of Allah ﷻ and is a supreme supplication to guide us towards the straight path. The rest of the Holy Qur'an deals with the explanation of this straight path. May Allah ﷻ show us and keep us on this straight path until our deathbed. Ameen.

We thank Allah for teaching us how to praise Him, how to ask Him, and what to ask Him for. Allah ﷻ has taught us to praise him by saying, "Al-hamdulil-ah Rabb-il a'lameen (الحمد لله رب العالمين)". This will be the greeting of the people of Paradise, as described in the Qur'an. Allah has given us this privilege to make use of this short form of praise of Allah in this world, as well. Indeed, Allah ﷻ is merciful to His obedient servants. It is most appropriate to conclude this khutba by saying Al-hamdulil-ah Rabb-il-a'lameen. (الحمد لله رب العالمين)

ISRA AND MIRAAJ

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Isra # 1

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا

الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾

Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place of Worship the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! Lo! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer.

This journey of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of a night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and is called Isra. The second part of this journey is an ascension from the masjid-al-Aqsa to the heavens and is called the Miraaaj. It is necessary to review the circumstances preceding this journey in order to understand the significance of Isra and Miraaaj.

Many things happened a year and half before this journey. First of all the disbelievers accelerated in their persecution and torture of the believers. At that time the Muslims were not allowed to fight back even in extreme circumstances. Allah ﷻ instructed in Quran: Al-Baqarah #109

فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ

Forgive and overlook till Allah brings His command.

It so happened that during this period the Prophet Mohammad's ﷺ uncle Abu Talib died. Abu Talib was a good worldly protection for the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ against the disbelievers. This made the disbelievers even more bold. Soon after this, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ beloved wife Khadija ؓ died. It was a matter of great grief for the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Under these circumstances, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ decided to go to another town called Taif for the propagation of Islam. He expected some support from the leaders of this town since they were distant relatives of his mother. These leaders gave a very cold shoulder to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ on his arrival there. The local leaders let the children loose on him who injured the Prophet badly

with stones. So much so that the shoes of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ were filled with blood trickling from his head. He took refuge in a garden in the outer skirts of this town. The owner of this garden took pity on him and scared off the mischievous children. It was here that the angel appeared and said to the Prophet, Mohammad ﷺ "Indeed people of this town are very cruel. If you like we can turn this town upside down and totally ruin it." The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ replied, "I have come as a mercy for the whole universe (رحمة العالمين) and not a punishment. Maybe the future generation of this town will see the truth." Because of the several sad events which took place this year it was called "the year of sadness" (عام الحزن).

As the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ came back to Mecca he was not allowed to enter Mecca any more because he was now considered a non resident of Mecca. After several attempts and negotiations he was allowed to go into Mecca provided that he did not preach anybody in Mecca. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ preached only to the people in fairs and festivals held outside Mecca. This explains the difficult time, the level of patience and steadfastness of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Allah ﷻ gave the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ a big reward for this extreme patience and took him to this journey of Isra and Miraaaj.

Let us now describe Isra. The Angel Gabriel came to Masjid-al-Haram in Mecca and asked the Prophet to do his ablution with Zam Zam. He took the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ on a very fast horse called "Burrak" from Masjid-al-Haram to Masjid-al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ offered two rakkat salat. Then the angel Gabriel offered him a cup of milk and a cup of wine. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ chose the cup of milk. The angel Gabriel said, "You have chosen that which is pure and which is clean. You are rightly guided and your people too. If you had chosen wine, your ummah would have been misled." We know that wine leads to corruption and is called mother of all evils (أم الخبائث). Hence, Islam is committed to purity, truth and goodness.

After this Miraaaj took place, the angel Gabriel took the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ on Burrak upwards to different heavens. There Prophet Mohammad ﷺ met some of the prophets. He saw Prophet Adam on first heaven, Prophet John and the Prophet Jesus on the second, Prophet

Joseph on the third, Prophet Anaq on fourth, Prophet Aaron on fifth, Prophet Moses on sixth and Prophet Abraham on the seventh sky. Prophet Mohammad offered salam to all these forefathers.

At one place, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ saw angel Malek, the guardian of hellfire. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ requested the angel Gabriel to let him view hell. The Angel Malek lifted the lid and Prophet Mohammad ﷺ saw roaring flames of fires which will consume everything. Prophet Mohammad was shown the examples of punishments for those who commit sins.

He ﷺ saw some people whose lips were like camels and they had fire balls in their hands. He saw them thrusting these fireballs in their mouths and then these balls came out of their posteriors. Angel Gabriel explained that these are the people who are dishonest in the trust put in their hands.

He ﷺ saw some people with very big bellies and mad and thirsty camels were running over them. It was explained that these are the people who engaged in usury.

He ﷺ also saw some people who had good fresh meals and also rotten stinking meals lying close to them. They ate rotten meals rather than good fresh meals. He was explained that these were the people who forsake their lawful spouses.

He ﷺ also saw some women hanging by their breasts. He was explained that these women betrayed their husbands.

During this ascension the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ even went beyond seventh sky where no angel has ever gone. It was there that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ saw various signs of Allah ﷻ in this unique environment. Allah described this in Surah An-Najm: # 17,18

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٨﴾

Neither the eye turned aside nor it became overbold. Verily he saw the greatest signs of his Lord.

This describes the personality, composure and self control of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. He saw what he was supposed to see and for as long as he was intended to see. He was not overbold and unnecessary inquisitive while he was feasting his eyes with Divine Entity and His

manifestation.

During this closeness with Allah ﷻ he was given following three gifts.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was informed that whosoever will recite Shahada sincerely will eventually go to paradise by the Grace of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ received last two verses of surrah Al-Baqarah.

He ﷺ was initially given fifty prayers to perform per day. It was reduced to five as a special concession to his ummah. They will, however, receive the reward of fifty salats per day by performing only five a day, Allah ﷻ is extremely kind to the ummah of Mohammad ﷺ.

Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said:

الصلاة معراج المؤمنين

“Prayer is the Miraaj of a believer.” Prayer is the direct and closest communication between Allah ﷻ and his obedient servant.

After this unique gift the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ came back to Masjid Al Aqsa. Other Prophets came there too. They all offered salat in a congregation led by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. This indicated oneness of the message of all the prophets and distinction of Prophet Mohammad over other prophets.

After this the Angel Gabriel brought the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to Mecca during the same night. When the disbelievers heard about the journey of the Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and further to the seventh sky and back to Mecca in the part of a night, they made fun of it. The disbelievers went to Abu Bakr ؓ and said to him Do you see what your friend claims about his night journey? Abu Bakr inquired. “Did he really say so?” The disbelievers answered, “Yes.” Abu Bakr remarked, “He is definitely truthful in his claim.” The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ called Abu Bakr as Siddique from that point onwards.

The first verse of Surah Al-Isra has many lessons for us. For example, Allah ﷻ is using the word Abd (عبد) or the most obedient servant for the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ instead of any other name for him. It indicates that even though he reached such closeness to Allah ﷻ he remains the most obedient servant and is no way a partner of Allah ﷻ. It

was to teach us that we should not make partners of Allah ﷻ as the People of the Book did.

It indicates that the journey took place in body and soul because of the use of the word Al Abd (العبد) in this verse. Note that "Al-Abd" consists of body and soul and not one or the other.

It also teaches us that we must love Masjid Al Aqsa whose surrounding is blessed by Allah ﷻ.

The further more the word Lailan (لَيْلاً) is a common noun indicating a part of the night only. Hence the whole journey took place only during part of the night. Allah is indeed Hearer and Seer. He heard the supplications of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and saw his extreme patience. Consequently He rewarded him by this unique journey of Isra and Miraaj indicating that finally he was going to be successful.

I pray to Allah ﷻ that He enables us to understand the true significance of Isra and Miraaj. Ameen.

THE BATTLE OF BADR

Muslims were not allowed to fight during their thirteen years of stay in Mecca even if they were tortured and turned out from their homes. After the migration of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ from Mecca to Medina, he established relations with non-Muslims in the form of agreements and laid down the foundation of the Islamic state.

The battle of Badr was the first battle in the history of Islam where the enemies were three times than the believers. The Muslim army consisted of 313 persons, 70 camels, 2 horses, and 8 swords. We notice that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was sharing a camel ride with Abu Lubabah ؓ and Ali ؓ just like others were sharing the rides. The enemy consisted of 1000 well equipped soldiers, 700 camels, and 100 horses.

Let us describe some of the events before the battle, during the battle and after the battle to learn various lessons from this battle.

Before the battle the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was extremely worried and prayed to Allah ﷻ that if these Muslims were defeated there will be hardly any Muslims left to carry the work of Allah ﷻ. This scene was described in Surah Al Infal. # 9,10

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ
 وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ بِهِ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ

اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

When you prayed to Allah ﷻ, Allah ﷻ accepted your prayer saying that Allah ﷻ will help you with 1000 angels which will come in succession till the job is done. Allah ﷻ is doing this to give you good tidings and for satisfaction of hearts. Victory comes only from Allah ﷻ. Allah is mighty wise.

Allah ﷻ is announcing this help in the form of angels so that Allah ﷻ gives a physical evidence to the believers for the satisfaction of their hearts. Allah is further saying that do not think that this help is from angels. Actually victory and help comes from Allah ﷻ alone Who sent these angels as well.

Angels were ordered to do many things. Allah ﷻ says in verse 12 of Surah Al-Infal,

إِذْ يُوحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبِّتُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَأَلَتِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ

كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ فَأَضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ وَأَضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ ﴿١٢﴾

When Allah ﷻ ordered the angels saying My help is with you. So make those who believe stand firm. I will throw fear in the hearts of those who disbelieve. Then strike the necks and each finger of the disbelievers.

We learn from this verse that angels not only strengthened the hearts and feet of the believers but they also took part in the battle physically. Abu Dawood Mazani and Suhail Bin Haneef narrated that when we used to point our swords towards the enemy, their necks were chopped off even before our swords had reached them. In fact these angels were doing the job. Verse 50 of Surah Al-Infal further describes this scene.

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ

وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾

And If you could see when the angels take away the souls of those disbelieve (at death), they smite their faces and their backs, (saying) "Taste the punishment of the blazing Fire."

This verse explains that when angels take out the souls of disbelievers from their bodies they punish them by hitting their faces and backs and hit them with heated metallic rods. Allah ﷻ is further saying in Verse 51 of Al-Infal, "This is because of their deeds that they have done themselves. Allah ﷻ in no way intends to be cruel to these people." Allah ﷻ also says in Verse 14 of Al-Infal, "Taste this punishment now, and there is a bigger punishment on the day of judgment." We conclude that Sukratul Maut or the time of death is a very difficult time for disbelievers. They are punished because they oppose Allah ﷻ and His Messenger. And whosoever opposes Allah ﷻ and His Messenger, Allah is very severe in punishment.

There were many other miracles which took place before the

Battle. For example, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ saw some dreams before the battle as described in Surah Al-Infal. # 43

إِذْ يُرِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَأَيْتَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَفَاشَلْتُمْ وَلَتَنزَعْتُمْ

فِي الْأَمْرِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾

Allah ﷻ showed you enemy a few in number in your dream. If Allah ﷻ had shown you large in number, you would have faltered and quarreled between yourselves in the matter. Allah ﷻ saved you from this disagreement. Allah ﷻ fully knows what is in your hearts.

Although the enemy were large in number Allah ﷻ showed the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ only a few in his dream. If Allah ﷻ had showed the enemy in a large number, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ would have shared this information with his companions and this would have resulted in a major disagreement between them. Disagreements are bad at any time. Disagreement in a battlefield is most disastrous. Allah ﷻ saved the believers from this disaster in a miraculous way.

Similarly, another miracle took place during the battle as Allah ﷻ describes in verse 44 of Al Infal.

وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ التَّفَيُّتُمْ فِيْ أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّلُكُمْ فِيْ أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ

اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

During the battle, the believers saw their enemies a few in number and also enemy saw that the believers are only a few in number. So that Allah ﷻ may conclude a thing that must be done. All deeds are brought back to Allah ﷻ

The believers experienced this miracle in the battlefield. They saw the enemy in few numbers, for their encouragement. However, the wisdom in showing the believers a few in number in the eyes of disbelievers was so that the disbelievers came forward and were punished in the battlefield.

Another interesting event took place during the battle. Satan came in the form of Siraka bin Malek, the leader of Banu Bakr, and joined the disbelievers. Satan made disbelievers' (evil) deeds seem fair to them and

excited the disbelievers by saying, "No body from mankind can defeat you today. I am your helper as well." When Satan saw two armies confronting each other, he ran away on his heels saying, "I have nothing to do with you. I see (the angels) which the disbelievers cannot see. I fear Allah ﷻ since Allah ﷻ is severe in punishment." This was described in verse 48 of Al-Anfal.

وَإِذْ زَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ
مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾

The muslims won the battle but Allah ﷻ says to them, in verse 17 Of Al-Infal.

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتُمْ إِذْ رَمَيْتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ
وَلِيَسْبِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلََاءٌ حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

You Muslims did not slay but Allah ﷻ slew them. You Mohammad ﷺ did not throw when you did throw, but Allah ﷻ threw.

Allah ﷻ is saying to the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, that they can not take credit for winning the battle. Victory comes only from Allah ﷻ. Allah is also reminding us that when the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ took some dust and pebbles in his palm and threw them towards the enemy. It changed into a whirl wind. This whirlwind got into the eyes of the enemy and forced the enemy to run away. Just like this handful of dust changed into a whirlwind with the help of Allah ﷻ, in the same way the total conquest came about with the help of Allah ﷻ alone.

Near the end of the battle, the Muslim army divided in to three groups. One group followed the fleeing enemy so that they do not come back. The second group started collecting the spoils of the war from the battlefield. These poor Muslims were very happy to have the belongings of rich enemy. The third group stood around the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ vigilantly lest a hidden enemy would harm the Prophet ﷺ. There was a serious problem between the groups regarding the distribution of the

booty as they met in the evening. The group which collected it claimed that it belonged to them because they gathered it from the battlefield. The other group said that they should have a share in it since they provided the opportunity for the first group to gather the booty while they were pursuing the enemy. The third group said that they should have a share in it since they did the most important duty of guarding the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. As narrated by Ubada bin Samit, ؓ there was a serious problem between them so much so that they started behaving disrespectfully towards each other. So far there had been no instructions regarding the distribution of booty. The previous Ummah were not allowed to make use of the booty. They used to put it in the form of a pile and if a lightning came and burnt it, it was considered as an indicator of their acceptance of their Jihad.

Allah ﷻ revealed the detailed instructions about the distribution of this booty to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in Surah Al Infal. As soon as the companions came to know about this guidance of Allah ﷻ, all their differences disappeared. The booty was distributed amongst all the participants according to the instructions of Allah ﷻ. It was the mercy of Allah ﷻ to grant this privilege and honor to the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to use this booty. It also teaches us a lesson about how the companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ united eagerly in following the guidance of Allah ﷻ.

According to non Muslim historians, the Battle of Badr is the most important battle in the history of mankind. This made a lasting impact on the history of the mankind.

We have reviewed many miracles which took place during the battle of Badr and how the help of Allah ﷻ comes to committed believers. An Urdu poet said very beautifully,

فضائے بدر پیدا کر فرشتے تیری نصرت کو
 اتر سکتے ہیں گردوں سے قطار اندر قطار اب بھی

“If you create the climate of Badr again, the angels can still come row after row to provide you with the help.”

I pray to Allah ﷻ to help us to follow the footprints of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions and grant us success as He granted them in the battle of Badr. Ameen.

THE NINE MIRACLES OF MOSES ﷺ

People at the time of Moses ﷺ were easily influenced by magic. Allah ﷻ gave Moses ﷺ nine miracles to convince these people of Allah's ﷻ existence and power. Two of these miracles are well known; the other seven are often forgotten.

Before describing these interesting events, we should describe the difference between miracles and magic?

A miracle is an extraordinary and unique act, which an ordinary person cannot perform. Allah ﷻ lets these events take place through His chosen prophets. Other features of miracles are:

Persons performing the miracles are always of high moral character and do not use the miracles to "play games" with the people.

Prophets can show only those miracles, which Allah ﷻ has chosen for them. The authority for the miracles rests with Allah ﷻ alone.

Miracles bring out clearly that there is a higher power who permits these things.

The chosen persons do not claim that these miracles are due to their personal super skills. They believe that Allah ﷻ has allowed this to happen in order to display His existence and power, and to build faith in Him.

It is not a physical deception which appears to be extraordinary to the audience.

Miracles are observed by all the observers and not by only one section of the audience, as is often the case with magic.

Prophets do not show off or boast about their God-given skills.

Prophets do not ask for rewards, monetary gain, or personal popularity.

On the other hand, magic is a physical trick practiced and presented by the people who have poor or no character at all. Their lives are very sinful. On the contrary, even the opponents of the prophets believed that they were good people.

Since magic is only a physical deception, it can be fouled up easily. On the other hand, a miracle is totally God's act. For example, Surah Al-Infal # 17

وَمَارَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ

Allah ﷻ said to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, "You did not throw the handful of pebbles toward the enemy during the battle of Badr. Allah did it."

These few pebbles became a large dust storm by Allah's act, and upset the rank and file of the enemy. This disruption resulted in a crushing defeat of the non-Muslims by a much smaller contingent of Muslims.

Magic is often for monetary gain or to increase popularity.

Magic can be used to create problems between people, even between husband and wife. It appears entertaining, but can be very destructive when misused.

Now let us return to the miracles of Moses عليه السلام.

Whenever Moses عليه السلام brought his hand out from under his cloak, it appeared a brilliant white to observers. This was not due to any disease.

Pharaoh, the ruler at the time, gathered his master magicians and arranged a public contest with Moses عليه السلام. The magicians asked Moses عليه السلام, "Should we show our magic first, or would you like to show yours first?" Moses said, "You go first."

The magicians threw their ropes on the ground, which appeared to the audience, like snakes. Moses عليه السلام then threw his staff on the ground. Not only did the staff of Moses عليه السلام become a snake, but it proceeded to swallow the staffs and ropes of the magicians, resulting in a crushing defeat of the Pharaoh.

Inspired by these two miracles, many lifelong disbelievers accepted Islam. The Pharaoh said to these Muslims, Surah Al- Araf # 124-125

لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلْفٍ ثُمَّ لَأُضِلُّبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ

رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

I will cut your hand and feet on the opposite sides to punish you. The new Muslims said, "It does not matter. We have to die in any case, and meet Allah ﷻ.

These new muslims made a beautiful dua (دعا) at this time Surah

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

O Allah increase our patience and make us die as muslims.

Moses عليه السلام preached to the disbelievers for twenty years in Egypt. The disbelievers broke their promises one after another, and troubled and tortured the believers. Allah ﷻ sent many clear signs to guide Pharaoh and his people. These are briefly described below:

Pharaoh's people experienced famine and there was a shortage of fruit for several years. Pharaoh and his followers promised Moses عليه السلام that if his Lord removed this hardship, they would follow the way of Allah ﷻ. Moses عليه السلام prayed, and the famine and shortage of fruit disappeared. But the disbelievers broke their promises saying, "It had to go away after a while."

Allah ﷻ sent a flood to punish them. The disbelievers promised that if this stopped, they would accept Islam. Moses عليه السلام prayed, and Allah ﷻ stopped the rain. The abundance of water resulted in very rich crops. The sight of the rich crops made the disbelievers feel safe and secure, and indifferent to the promises they had made to Moses عليه السلام.

Allah ﷻ sent locusts to eat the standing crop. In this way, the crop, which had gladdened the disbelievers now, disappeared before their eyes, and they again asked Moses عليه السلام to pray to Allah ﷻ to relieve them of their misfortune. They said, "This time, we will not break the promise." Moses عليه السلام prayed to Allah ﷻ. No more locusts were seen, and the crops recovered. As soon as the people had the grain stored in their homes, they forgot their promises once again.

Next, Allah ﷻ sent vermin to eat the stored grain. Again, the disbelievers rushed to Moses عليه السلام with the usual promises. Moses عليه السلام had patience and prayed again. This punishment was lifted, and the disbelievers returned to their old ways. They felt that they had plenty to cook, and could eat and enjoy life. They did not need Allah ﷻ at all.

Allah punished them by sending frogs to the land. There were frogs everywhere, in the houses, in the cooking pots, stored food, and their drinking water. The disbelievers cried helplessly, and requested Moses عليه السلام to pray, and promised to become Muslims as soon as they were out

of trouble. Kindhearted Moses ﷺ prayed, and Allah removed the frogs. Again, the disbelievers broke their promises and became even more arrogant. They said, "Moses is certainly a knowledgeable magician."

Allah ﷻ sent another punishment in the form of blood. When the disbelievers got drinking water from the well, it turned into blood. Their eatables were filled with blood. If they tried to cook food, it turned to blood. Miraculously, the followers of Moses ﷺ were spared from this. It took place only in the homes of the disbelievers. Further, if a disbeliever borrowed water from the believers, it turned into blood as soon as the disbelievers tried to use it.

Again, the Pharaoh's men rushed to Moses ﷺ with more promises that were broken when the punishment was removed. That is why Allah ﷻ says, "They were haughty and seasoned criminals."

Now the disbelievers were met with diseases such as plague and smallpox. Approximately 70,000 people died. They again requested Moses ﷺ to pray for them. Definitely, this time they would follow the guidance of Allah ﷻ once they were relieved of their misery.

But not only did they break their promise, again they also blamed their misfortunes on the presence of Moses among them. They turned Moses and his followers out of their homes, and followed them to kill them. The Muslims reached the bank of a sea. Allah ﷻ split the sea for them, and they crossed it safely. Pharaoh and his people angrily followed, and were drowned.

Scholars have related that the famine and shortage of fruit lasted for seven years. Other punishments lasted one week each. They had three weeks relief in between. None of these reminders helped them to come out of the darkness of disbelief.

This is mentioned in Surah Al-Araf # 130-133

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ

﴿130﴾ فَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبِهِمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ

وَمَنْ مَعَهُ إِلَّا إِنَّمَا يَطَّيَّرُ لَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿131﴾ وَقَالُوا

مَهْمَا تَأْتَانَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ لِنَسْحَرَنَّ بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ فَارْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالْبَضْفَاعَ وَالِدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا

مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

And indeed We punished the people of pharaoh with years of drought and shortness of fruit (crops etc) that they might remember (take head).

But whenever good came to them, they said: "Ours is this." And if evil afflicted them, they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him. Be informed! Verily, their evil omens are with Allah but most of them know not.

So we sent on them: the flood, the locusts, the lice, the frogs, and the blood (as a succession of) manifest signs, yet they remained arrogant, and they were of those people who were Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners).

We can draw several conclusions from this discussion:

People very easily forget Allah ﷻ when they are affluent, although comfort should mean more thankfulness. Unfortunately, for many of us., it is the other way round. For example, in spite of good facilities and amenities, very few of us come to the masjid for prayers on a regular basis.

Allah ﷻ wants to show guidance even to the seasoned criminals.

Allah forgives again and again.

Prophets have unbelievable patience and sincerity, this is why they are chosen by Allah ﷻ.

Those who have guidance should consider themselves fortunate and be thankful to Allah ﷻ.

We have a living miracle amongst us -- The Qu'ran. We should follow the guidance provided in the Quran to enjoy success in this life and in hereafter.

I pray to Allah ﷻ to increase His blessings on us.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

When Prophet Mohammad ﷺ started preaching Islam in Mecca, his message consisted of three points.

There is no God except Allah ﷻ who alone is worth worship. Do not make any partners of Allah ﷻ in any form. People of Mecca did not mind worshipping one God but they wanted to associate partners with Him. They, however, could not oppose the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ strongly enough to advance their point of view.

Secondly the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "I am the Messenger of Allah ﷻ." The People of Mecca did not want to accept this fact but they had no way to say to others that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ is not telling the truth since the people of Mecca had known him as Ameen, "the most honest." Hence people of Mecca could not counteract this new message.

Thirdly the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "There is going to be a Day of Judgment and people will have accountability of their deeds. They will be rewarded or punished according to their deeds on the Day of Judgment." This gave the people of Mecca a platform to oppose this new message tooth and nail. The People of Mecca said to the Prophet: Al-Waqia # 47, 48

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا إِذْنَا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوَّابًا أَوَّانَا

الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

And they used to say, "When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be raised again? and our forefathers too?"

The People of Mecca not only made statements like this but they joked and made fun of this message and called the Prophet ﷺ a mad man. Allah ﷻ gave answer to their question, Al-Waqia # 49 - 56

قُلْ إِيَّاكَ الْآوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ

أَيُّهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَأَكُونُ مِن شَجَرٍ مِّن زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَالْتَوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ

﴿53﴾ فَشَرِبُوا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿54﴾ فَشَرِبُوا شُرْبَ الْمَيِّمِ ﴿55﴾ هَذَا نُزْلُهُمْ يَوْمَ

﴿56﴾ الدِّينِ

O Mohammad ﷺ, say to them that those of old time and those of later time all will be brought together on an appointed day and then those who are erring and denying the truth will eat of a tree called Zaqqum. And they will fill their bellies with that. They will also drink boiling water just like a camel drinks. This will be their welcome on the Day of Judgment.

The word (نزل) means initial hospitality as soon as the guest arrives. Hence the words (نزلهم) points out that it is only the initial treatment for them. What follows will be even more unbearable.

The people of Mecca also used to say Al-Mulk # 25

﴿25﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

When will this Day come if you are truthful in your claim? Allah ﷻ answered that in next verse Al-Mulk # 26

﴿26﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

O Mohammad ﷺ! say to them, knowledge of this appointed Day is only with Allah ﷻ. I am only a clear-cut warner.

The People of Mecca used to ask this question about Day of Judgment jokingly again and again. Allah ﷻ said to them, An-Naba # 4,5

﴿4﴾ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ ﴿5﴾ كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ

Soon you will come to know about it and, again, you will soon come to know about it.

It meant that you will come to know about it at the time of the death called Sukratul Maut and in Burzikh (which is the period between the death and day of judgment). You will also come to know about it when you face this day during the judgment.

Sometimes Allah ﷻ gives very detailed answers to make us understand that it is not at all hard for Allah ﷻ to bring about this day of Judgment. An-Naba # 6-16

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
 وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا أَلِيلَ لَيْلًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا
 ﴿١١﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
 مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا أَلْفَاظًا ﴿١٦﴾

Have We not made earth as a wide expanse and mountains as pegs. And created you in pairs and made sleep for your rest and made the night as covering and made the day as a means of subsistence. And have We not built over you seven strong heavens and placed therein a light of splendor. And do We not send down from the clouds water in abundance that We may produce therewith corn and vegetables and gardens of luxurious growth?

Hence Allah ﷻ saying that, if He can do all this mentioned above why can't He bring about Day of Judgment? For example, he has granted us sleep which totally revives us. Even if somebody tries to avoid it, it will come to a person through the mercy of Allah ﷻ. After natural sleep the person will be up with more vigor and strength. If Allah ﷻ can provide such priceless bounties to mankind, generation after generation, why can't He bring about Day of Judgment. In fact each of the items mentioned above need similar commentary. For the sake of brevity, we will proceed to review some of the scenes from the Day of the Judgment.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ brought good tidings for mankind and also warned them about the punishment on the Day of Judgment for those who do not follow guidance of Allah ﷻ. Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment even if they have not seen it. Allah ﷻ through His mercy has described many scenes of the Day of Judgment for our understanding and guidance. Let us first describe the scenes from paradise. For example Allah ﷻ says in Surah At-Tur, # 17-20

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾ فَكِهِينَ بِمَاءٍ أَنْهَمَ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَّهَمُ رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ
 الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٨﴾ كُلُوا وَأَشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى سُرُرٍ
 مَّصْفُوفَةٍ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

Indeed the righteous will be in the Gardens, and in happiness enjoying the bliss which their Lord has bestowed on them and because Allah ﷻ has saved them from the hellfire. It will be said to them "Eat and drink to your fill because of your good deeds."

They will recline with ease on thrones of dignity arranged in ranks and We will wed them with beautiful ladies with wide lovely eyes.

Similarly Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al Haqqah, # 19-24

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ۖ فَيَقُولُ هَٰؤُلَاءِ مَآءٌ أَقْرَبُ وَأَكْنِيبُ ۖ ﴿١٩﴾ إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ

حَسَابٍ ۖ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۖ ﴿٢١﴾ فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۖ ﴿٢٢﴾ قُطُوفُهَا

دَانِيَةٌ ۖ ﴿٢٣﴾ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ۖ ﴿٢٤﴾

Then he who will be given his record in the right hand will say to others with great joy, "Look here and read my record. (The secret of receiving my account in the right hand is) I always kept in mind that I will see my account." And he will be in a life of bliss in a high garden where the fruits will be low and near (hence instantly available). "You eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past."

Similarly, Allah ﷻ says about the people of paradise in Surah Ya Sin, # 55-58

إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمِ فِي شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُونَ ۖ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَّلٍ عَلَى

الْأَرَآئِكِ مُتَكِفُونَ ۖ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ مَآيِدَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن

رَبِّ رَحِيمٍ ۖ ﴿٥٨﴾

Verily, the dwellers of the Paradise, that day, will be busy in joyful things. They and their spouses will be in groves of cool shade reclining on thrones (of dignity). They will have every fruit and they will have for them whatever they call for. Additionally, they will be honored with salam from the Lord, the most merciful.

According to this verse, when people of paradise will have all bounties of Allah ﷻ, Allah ﷻ will ask them "O my obedient servants,

what else do you want?" The residents of paradise will say "O Allah ﷻ! Thank you, we have everything." Allah ﷻ will say to them, "Let Me give you something which is superior to all these bounties you have." At this time they will be thrilled and honored to see Allah ﷻ and Allah ﷻ will greet them with salam.

Similarly Allah ﷻ described several scenes of Day of Judgment which informs us about the punishment inflicted upon the wrong doers. For example Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Mulk # 6-10

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٦﴾ إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا
 وَهِيَ تَفُورٌ ﴿٧﴾ تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ
 ﴿٨﴾ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ
 كَبِيرٍ ﴿٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾

For those who reject their Lord, their penalty is hell which is an evil destination. When they will be thrown into hell, they will hear its roaring as it boils up. It would appear to them as if it is ready to burst with rage. When any group of these disbelievers is thrown in the hell, the wardens of hell will ask them "Did no warner come to you during your life time?" They will say "Yes, indeed a warner came to us but we denied him and said Allah ﷻ did not reveal anything and you are lost in a big way. Had we listened to him and used some sense we would not have been among the dwellers in the flames."

Allah ﷻ also says in Surah Al-Haqqah # 25-29

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَلَيِّنِي لَرَأُوتَ كِنِّيهِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَرَأُوتَ مَا حِسَابِيهِ ﴿٢٦﴾
 يَلَيِّنَهَا كَأَنَّ الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيهِ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ ﴿٢٩﴾

And he who will be given his record in the left hand will say, "I wish that my record had not been given to me and that I had never realised how my account stood. I wish that it would have been done away during the process of death. My wealth did not profit me in any way and my worldly power actually brought about my destruction."

Allah ﷻ also describes the reasons for the punishment in hell
Al-Muddaththir # 40-48

فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوا لَمْ
نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نَطْعِمِ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ
﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ آتَانَا الْيَقِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَمَا نَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَعَةُ
الشَّافِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

The people of paradise will question regarding the sinners, "What led you into hell fire?" The sinners will say, "We were not of those who prayed and we were not of those who fed the poor. We used to talk vanities with vain talkers and we used to deny the Day of Judgment till it actually came about." Then that day no body's intercession will profit them.

These scenes of paradise and hell are to serve as important reminders. The entry into paradise will not just depend on our deeds. It will only be through the Grand Mercy of Allah ﷻ. I pray to Allah ﷻ to make us die as Muslims and count us among the people of paradise.

Roles and Responsibilities of Men and Women in Islam

Allah ﷻ said in Surah An-Nisa # 32

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا
اَكْتَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا اَكْتَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾

And wish not for things in which Allah has made some of you to excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned, Allah is Ever All-Knower of everything.

It is necessary to fully understand this verse in order to appreciate the assigned roles and responsibilities of men and women in Islam. The circumstances in which this verse was revealed is very interesting. Umm Salma ؓ the wife of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ asked the Prophet ﷺ, "Since women receive half the inheritance than that of men, do we get half the reward for our good deeds as compared to the men?" She did not intend to contest the share prescribed for men but her inquiring was for the purpose of education and learning. Some other women wished that they were men and could take part in battles and in this way earn additional bounties of Allah ﷻ.

Answers of all of these questions are given in this verse. Allah ﷻ is saying to Umm Salma ؓ and all the muslims not to even wish to emulate others whom Allah ﷻ has excelled over them in certain ways. Let us try to understand this in more detail. Allah has made some people short, others taller and still others more beautiful. If Allah ﷻ had made a person more attractive, he would not have been able to conduct himself and would have become prone to committing more sins. Allah saved him from committing sins by not making him additionally attractive. Similarly, some people are relatively poor, others have lower worldly status. Allah ﷻ knew that if they were made richer or given higher

wordly status, they would not have done justice to it. Similarly, Allah ﷻ chooses a certain piece of land for a Masjid in the town. This piece of land excels over all the prime land in the town and hence we pray "Tahayyat-al-masjid" تحية المسجد every time we enter the Masjid to show respect for this place over other places in the town. We often wonder why Allah ﷻ chose the city of Makkah in a desert land for His house, which is the most respected amongst all the places in the world. Therefore, we conclude that Allah ﷻ alone knows best and there is wisdom in excelling certain things in certain ways over others, which may be beyond our comprehension. This inherent excellence of one over the other is an involuntary act and is beyond our control. Allah gives His bounties to whom He pleases. Last, but not least, Allah has excelled His prophets over one another in various ways. Allah says in Al-Baqarah # 253

﴿ تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ﴾

These are the prophets whom we have excelled over one another.

With this detail, it should be clear that whatever Allah has given us, we should be happy with that. If a woman was given the role of man, she would not have fulfilled the role and responsibilities of a man adequately. Allah ﷻ answered Umm Salma ؓ and other women that there is no halving of reward for women as compared to men. Men and women will be rewarded equally for the same good deed. There are many verses in the Quran to substantiate this statement. For example Allah ﷻ says in Surah Ghafir or Momin # 40

﴿ وَمَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ

﴿ 40 ﴾ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

And whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer, such will enter paradise, where they will be provided therein without limit.

In fact prominent ladies like Umm Ammara Ansariah ؓ أم عمارة and Asma bint Umais ؓ أسماء بنت عميس expressed their concern to

the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ as mentioned in Tirmizi. They said Allah ﷻ addresses men directly most of the time, we wonder if women have similar promises. Allah ﷻ sent detailed verse # 35 of Surah Al-Ahzab

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَشِيعِينَ وَالْخَشِيعَاتِ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ
وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً

وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Verily, the Muslims men and women, the believers men and women, the men and the women who are truthful, the men and the women who are patient, the men and the women who are humble, the men and the women who give Sadaqat, the men and the women who observe Saum, the men and the women who guard their chastity and the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.

Hence women have the same rights and rewards as men in Islam. People commit many crimes and sins when they do not follow this guidance of Allah ﷻ. Some steal to become rich like others, others even try to kill someone to acquire their wealth. Allah's guidance eliminates this sense of jealousy and criminal attitude. If people are happy and satisfied with what Allah ﷻ has given, they will not commit crimes.

We notice that some people are very rich, others are very knowledgeable and they still excel in spirituality. We are allowed to strive to acquire these through our voluntary acts and ask Allah alone to grant these to us from His bounties. He will grant us, if it is good for us, since He knows everything.

If we understand the above verse clearly, it should be very easy to appreciate the roles and responsibilities of man and woman in Islam. They are also described in An-Nisa # 34

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا
مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَاالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

Men are the protector and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property).

This does not mean that men should become hot-headed dictators for women.

We have to put other verses of Quran with this to understand its meaning. Allah ﷻ says in Surah An-Nisa # 19

وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

Live with them in goodness. In other words treat your women nicely.

Allah also says in Al-Baqarah # 228

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

Women have rights over men just like men have rights over women. Allah further says in Al-Baqarah # 233

عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ

Consult your wives in matters relating to home life.

Consultation is very important element of Islamic faith and practice. It must be exercised in the family unit as well.

In light of all this, men should not only consult their wives, but treat them nicely and give them equal rights. After this important drill, they must make final decisions in various matters. In fact, men bear greater responsibility. If they make wrong decision, it will fire back them in this life and the hereafter. In other words, men have more accountability with added responsibility. If a woman was made a man, she might not have been able to cope with this difficult responsibility.

Hence, women should not wish to be like men and vice versa. Allah has assigned them their respective roles. A man can do his role the best and a woman can do her role the best.

Let us try to understand the wisdom in giving a woman half the inheritance than that of a man. Whatever a woman receives is hers. She has the right to keep it to herself entirely and not even spend for day to day maintenance expenses of her own family. When she is a daughter, her father supports her fully. When she is a wife, her husband supports her financially, no matter how rich she may be. When she is a widow, with or without children, she can go back to her father for maintenance and support, if necessary. There is always a man in her life to support her. When a man receives twice than that of a woman in inheritance, he cannot keep it to himself. He must spend it on his wife, daughters, and other members of the family. In view of all this, the woman is at a greater advantage, even when she receives half of the inheritance as compared with that of man. This shows the superior status of women in Islam.

It may be worthwhile to review the status of woman before the advent of Islam. Arabs used to bury their daughters alive in most cases. The hair of a woman were sometimes tied with the tail of a camel and the camel used to be let loose. This was the favorite pass time of Arabs of that time. Women, during that time, could not own or inherit any tangible property. Islam not only gave equal rights to women but also allowed them to own and inherit the property.

Let us review the characteristics of a pious woman. Allah says in An-Nisa # 34

فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property).

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that the best wife is the one whom when you see her, you feel happy. When you ask her to do something, she obeys and she looks after herself and your wealth in your absence.

Therefore a pious woman must obey all the laws of Allah including the one commanding them to whole-heartedly accept men as their in-

charge in all matters. They are also commanded to protect themselves against satan, who is a clear enemy of mankind. They are also supposed to protect the property. Hence, they are not supposed to have any dealings and visitation without the knowledge and consent of their husband. Furthermore, they must protect the most important property of the husband, i.e., children. In other words, they must educate and train children Islamically and cultivate good habits in them. These three responsibilities are, indeed very difficult. Allah promises in this verse that He will help and support them in fulfilling these responsibilities if they are sincere in their pursuit.

Islam also spells out how to deal with the misbehavior of a woman. Allah says in An-Nisa # 34

وَالَّذِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ

أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

As to those women on whose part you see ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Even Most High, Most Great.

Hence, we find that corrective steps have to be taken in various stages. First of all, personal and outside counseling should be sought. Unfortunately, muslims all over the world ignore this important stage and keep the problems bottled-up till they become totally unmanageable. Muslims fear to be labeled as having psychological problem and, therefore, avoid seeking counseling. In fact, every person needs some counseling at some point in life. I pray that we may follow this step more professionally and responsibly as soon as a problem surfaces.

Secondly, separate them from your beds. This does not mean that women should be forced to leave the household. Women should not also voluntarily go and live with her folks during this dispute. According to some scholars, they should not even sleep in different bedrooms. They are instructed to separate themselves from each other in the same bed. The wisdom in doing so is that it is very hard to endure. This difficulty may change their minds and unite them sincerely.

Thirdly, man is allowed to tap a woman gently to admonish her. Obviously, this does not mean that she should be hit on the eyes or face or even other parts of the body. As some say, tap with a toothbrush or similar simple objects to somewhat demean her.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that, "Good men will not punish their wives by beating."

We further notice that no prophet beat his wife, including the prophet Lot عليه السلام.

Prophet Mohammad ﷺ also said that those who are good to their wives will be closest to me in paradise.

Allah is advising if they start obeying you, don't talk sarcastically to them to remind them of previous conflicts. Man is further instructed by Allah that he should not forget that Allah is the highest and the greatest. He is the one who made him in-charge over woman and man is accountable to Him for his deeds. Therefore, he must treat her fairly in all these steps.

Allah further says in An-Nisa # 35

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا

إِصْلَاحًا يُّوفِّقُ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

If you fear a breach between them twain (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbitrators, one from his family and the other from her's; if they both wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Indeed Allah is Ever All-Knower, Well-Acquainted with all things.

Hence, if the conflict between husband and wife is still not resolved, we should appoint an arbitrator from either side. Here Allah is making a very beautiful promise. Allah says "If both of them desire reconciliation sincerely between themselves, Allah will bring this about. Since, He knows the sincerity of both the parties. Scholars point out that here 'both' refers to husband and wife as well as arbitrators from both sides. Hence if all four involved are sincere in seeking a justful solution, Allah promises to bring this about, since He is knowledgeable of our intentions.

Hence, Islam has given equal rights to men and women and has

prescribed a due process in case of conflicts. It is totally absurd to say that a woman is an under-dog in Islam and is confined to the four walls of the house. Both men and women are given their specific roles which each can do the best as assigned. Women can own and inherit and keep their portion to themselves forever.

The companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ thought that women were given too many rights to raise their status from the pre-islamic period. They thought that some of these rights would be withdrawn later. Hence, they asked the prophet again and again about revelations concerning women's rights. Allah says in An-Nisa # 127

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي
الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَى النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تُوْتُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَتَرْغَبُونَ أَنْ
تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوِلْدَانِ وَأَنْ تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ

وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾

They ask your legal instruction concerning women, say: Allah instructs you about them, and about what is recited unto you in the book concerning the orphan girls whom you give not the prescribed portions (as regards Mahr and inheritance) and yet whom you desire to marry, and (concerning) the children who are weak and oppressed, and that you stand firm for justice to orphans. And whatever good you do, Allah is Ever All-Aware of it.

In other words, equal rights and high status of women in Islam will remain forever.

I pray to Allah that we exercise these instructions in our family units to strengthen our Islamic communities (Ameen) آمين .

Suspicion, Spying, Backbiting

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Hujurat # 12

يَتَّيِبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

O you who believe! avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, Most Merciful.

Here Allah ﷻ teaches us mutual rights and social etiquettes. We are instructed not to indulge in suspicion, spying, nor backbiting in our daily life. Let us consider each of them one by one, starting with suspicion.

There are good suspicions and bad suspicions. Imam Abu-Bakr Jassas (أبو بكر جصاص) divided suspicion into four categories as described in his book Ahkam-ul-Quran (أحكام القرآن).

These four categories are: Haram (Unlawful), Wajib (Mandatory), Mustahab (Permissible), and Mubah (Acceptable).

The example of unlawful suspicion is to keep saying to himself that God will definitely punish or torture me and lose total hope in the forgiveness and mercy of Allah ﷻ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

لا يموتن أحدكم إلا وهو يحسن الظن بالله

“You should have good hope with Allah ﷻ till your death bed.”

A Hadith Qudsi states,

أنا عند ظن عبدي بي

“I treat my servant the way he feels about me.” (Bukhari, Muslim)

The example of Wajib Suspicion is that if, for example, you do not know the direction of Qibla and there is nobody to guide you, it is permissible to use your best judgement.

The example of Mustahab Suspicion is to keep good feelings about every Muslim. It is, however, permissible to use precautions in daily dealing without considering another a thief, or a traitor without a just cause.

The example of Acceptable Suspicion is that if one is not sure of completing three Rakat or four in Salat, it is acceptable to use the most prevalent in your mind. Other forms of suspicions are unlawful in Islam.

Let us now consider spying. It is not allowed to search and disclose secrets of others. Hence, to overhear somebody while hiding or pretending to sleep is like spying on others. However, if there is a possibility of another party harming you or harming another Muslim, then such spying is allowed.

Let us now consider backbiting. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that, backbiting is talking about somebody which if he heard it would grieve him.

Hence it is not allowed to talk about somebody in his absence even if what was narrated was true. If it was not true, then it would be a bigger sin and is called Buhtan (False Accusation).

It is important to note that to find others' faults or to talk sarcastically or to defame a person is called Lumz (لمز) in the Quran. Allah ﷻ says, Al-Hujurat # 11

وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do not defame one another.

It means that when you find faults with others, they will retaliate and find faults with you.

The beauty of this wording of Quran is that it says that finding faults with others is like finding faults with yourself. Likewise Allah ﷻ said,

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do not kill yourself.

Hence, if you kill others, they will try to kill you.

Allah ﷻ also says in the Quran, Surah Al-Humazah # 1

وَبَدَّلْ كَلِمَةً هَمَزَةً لَمَزَةً

Woe to every slanderer and backbiter.

Bahadar Shah Zafar said in Urdu,

نہ تھی حال کی جب ہمیں اپنی خبر رہے دیکھتے لوگوں کے عیب و ہنر
پڑی اپنی برائیوں پر جو نظر تو نگاہ میں کوئی برا نہ رہا

When I did not know about myself, I was always finding faults with others. When I focussed on my own faults I could not find any person worse than me.

In verse twelve of Surah Al-Hujurat Allah ﷻ made it clear that defaming another Muslim in his absence is like eating the flesh of your dead brother, which obviously everybody hates. Hence it is the most horrible sin. Note that if the person is present, he may have a chance to defend himself although everybody does not have the courage to defend himself in these circumstances. If, however, he is defamed in his absence, the damage is deep and somewhat permanent. Allah ﷻ describes this backbiting in such a manner that every Muslim should develop hatred for this hideous crime.

Backbiting is not done by tongue alone. It can also be done by eyes, hands, and other movements. For example, copying somebody who is limping in order to insult him.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, الغيبة أشد من الزنا

“Backbiting is a worse sin than adultery”

(Tirmidhi)

It is further explained in a saying of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, narrated by Abu Said and Jabar in Tirmidhi, “Allah may forgive a person if he repents after committing adultery. However, Allah will not forgive the one who backbites till his victim forgives him.”

One time the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed towards two graves and said to his companions that both of these people were being tortured in their graves. One of them used to backbite people, and the other was not careful about spilling drops of urine on his clothes and body whilst urinating.

(Bukhari and Muslim)

That is why the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once said to his wife Aisha ؓ, “Be careful about what you call small sins. They can cause terrible torture in the grave.”

During Miraaj, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ saw some people who had nails made of red copper. They were tearing apart their faces and

chest with their nails. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the angel Gabriel about them. The Angel Gabriel said, "They are being punished because they used to eat people's flesh in their lives i.e. used to backbite and defame others."

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that the killing of a Muslim by another unjustly, usurping others wealth or defaming other muslim brother is totally forbidden or Haram. (Muslim)

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه also narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Somebody who does not quit telling lies, Allah does not care for his quitting meals etc. during fasting. He will get no reward for fasting."

Imam Ghazali writes in Ihya al-Uloom (أحياء العلوم) a person used to backbite Hassan Basree, so Hassan Basree sent some dates as a present to this person on learning about his backbiting. Hassan Basree also sent this message, "By backbiting you are transferring your good deeds to me. I realize that these dates are not the fitting gift for the good you are doing to me. I request that you accept this humble present."

Note that backbiting a child, a mad person, or a disbeliever living in a Muslim state is also not allowed.

The following are not considered backbiting:

1. To complain to a person about a cruel official so that the concerned official can discipline the cruel one.
2. To complain to a father or husband about his child or wife respectively who can possibly reform them.
3. To describe detailed circumstances to get Fatwah.
4. To describe something to save muslims from religious victimization.
5. To describe full circumstances for professional consultations.
6. To mention the major sins of a person who commits that sin openly, boldly, and takes pride in it.

Note that the common point in all above cases is that, the mention is being made for a specific need and not for degrading or defaming others intentionally or unjustly.

Further note that listening to backbiting is the same as backbiting somebody. It is better to walk away from such individuals.

Backbiting violates the rights of Allah ﷻ and the rights of people

simultaneously. Hence, it is necessary to ask for forgiveness from the victim first, since Allah will not forgive unless the victim forgives. If the victim has died or is untraceable, then ransom has to be paid. Annas narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

“The ransom for backbiting is to pray to Allah ﷻ for forgiveness by saying, “Oh Allah” Forgive my sins and his too.”

I pray to Allah to save us from bad suspicion, spying, and backbiting. Ameen.

Major and Minor Sins

Allah ﷻ says in Surah An-Nisa # 31

إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا نُهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكْفَرْنَا عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ

مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall expiate from you your (small) sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance (paradise).

It is clear from this verse that there are two kinds of sins, major and minor. It is also clear that the promise of Allah ﷻ is, if a person avoids major sins, Allah ﷻ will forgive his minor ones. We should bear in mind that it is a prerequisite to perform fard (our obligations) such as Salat, Zakat, and Fasting, consistently while avoiding major sins. Defaulting in these obligations is in itself a major sin. Hence, if a person performs fard and avoids major sins Allah ﷻ will forgive his minor sins.

What is Sin? What is a minor Sin? What is a major Sin?

Anything done against the will and command of Allah ﷻ is a sin. In this sense there is no minor sin or major sin. Abdulla bin Abbas said,

كُلُّ مَا نَهَى عَنْهُ فَهُوَ كَبِيرَةٌ

Any action against Islamic teaching is a major sin. Therefore if a minor sin is committed repeatedly, carelessly and boldly it will be constituted as a major sin. One scholar explains the effect of minor sins and major sins by the following example. He said consider the bite from a small scorpion versus a bite from a bigger scorpion. Consider the burning pain from a small flame compared to a pain from a larger flame of fire. All are very painful, however, the harm inflicted by the larger is much more traumatic. Similarly, both types of sins are harmful but the major sins are more damaging than minor sins. Mohammad bin Kaab Kurazi (محمد بن كعب قرظي) said, "The best form of worship of Allah ﷻ is to abstain from all sins. Allah ﷻ does not accept a person's salat and other forms of worship if that person does not abstain from sin." Similarly, Fadail bin Ayyadh said, "The more a sin is considered minor by a person, more that sin becomes major in the eyes of Allah ﷻ."

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "When a believer commits a sin it appears as a dark spot on his heart. If he repents, the spot will disappear. If he does not repent the spot becomes larger and may cover the entire heart." Allah ﷻ describes this in Quran: Surah Al-Mutaffifin # 14

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

A kind of rust is put on their hearts due to their bad deeds.

When the heart is fully covered with the rust, no guidance can penetrate into the heart and such people will not benefit from the reminders in the Quran. The Quran stresses this point again and again that the Quran is a reminder for those who are God conscious and open-hearted to consider the guidance.

Let us define major sin in light of the guidance from the Quran and Sunnah. According to the scholars, any sin for which the Quran has fixed a punishment, or curse of Allah ﷻ is mentioned for it, or the warning of the hellfire is described, is considered a major sin. Hence, as mentioned earlier any minor sin committed consistently, carelessly and openly will become a major sin. Some one mentioned to Ibn Abbas ؓ that there are only seven major sins. Ibn Abbas ؓ replied that they are not seven. It is better to say seven hundred. Imam Ibn Hajar Meccy ؓ has described a list of major sins along with a detailed explanation in his book, Kitabuzawager (كتاب الزواجر). He has listed four hundred and sixty eight major sins, considering only the major areas of disobedience against Allah ﷻ.

How can a minor sin be forgiven? An example of the removal of minor sins is described in a Hadith. According to this Hadith when a person makes ablution, and washes various parts of one's body, the sins pertaining to that particular part of the body are washed away just like dry leaves fall from a tree as the wind blows. For example, when we gargle during ablution the sins of our tongue are washed away. When we wash our feet, sins assisted by our feet are also washed away. When a person proceeds towards the Masjid after performing ablution, each step forward acts as a ransom for his minor sins. Major sins cannot be washed away through making ablution, nor by performing salat only. This washing away of major sins requires true repentance. Repentance

consists of at least three elements. First of all a person must recognize and admit that he has committed this sin. Secondly, he should be determined not to repeat it. Thirdly, he should feel ashamed of his action and must sincerely ask for forgiveness. Therefore, if a person is performing salat and observing a fast and still involves himself in major sins, his major and minor sins will not be forgiven by Allah ﷻ. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ mentioned major sins varying in number according to the time and situation. Therefore, scholars agree that no fixed number can be assigned to name all of the major sins. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said "Let me inform you of the three greatest sins. Making partners with Allah ﷻ, disobeying your parents, and false witness."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

Someone asked the Prophet ﷺ about the greatest sin. The prophet's ﷺ reply was to make partners with Allah ﷻ. Then he asked which is the next greatest sin. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ replied, "To kill a child, because you fear the responsibility to provide the child with food." Then again he asked which is the next greatest sin? The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "To commit adultery with your neighbor's wife." Note that adultery itself is a major sin. It is mandatory for a believer to protect his neighbor's family. Therefore, adultery with your neighbor's wife is a double crime.

(Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ also said, "It is a major sin to curse one's parents." His companions humbly said, "It is very unlikely that a person will curse his own parents." The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ replied, "If you curse another person's parents he will begin to curse your parents." Therefore, to curse another's parents is as if you are cursing your own parents.

(Sahihan)

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "Making partners with Allah ﷻ, killing others unjustly, misuse of an orphan's wealth, to use interest income, to flee from the battlefield, to blame pious ladies, to disobey parents and to disrespect the House of Allah ﷻ, these all are considered to be major sins."

(Bukhari)

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ also said: "If a person falsely accuses

another with the intention to insult him, or to lose hope in the mercy of Allah ﷻ and to disobey the laws of inheritance are also major sins. According to another Hadith to combine two prayers without a valid religious reason is also a major sin. It is necessary for one to make salat at the prescribed time.

One time the Prophet ﷺ said, "That person is doomed" and he repeated this statement three times. Abu Zar ؓ humbly asked who is that? Prophet Mohammad ﷺ replied, "An arrogant person who wears his clothes so long that they touch the ground, the person who spends in the way of Allah ﷻ and reminds people of his favors, a person who is old and commits adultery, a person who holds an important position and is not truthful, a person who displays arrogance while Allah ﷻ has blessed him with children, or one who shows allegiance to an Imam with the intention for worldly gain."

(Muslim)

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "The following people will not go to paradise, one who consumes alcohol, one who disobeys his parents, one who disassociates himself from relatives without just cause, who reminds people of his favors, one who indulges in satanic activity to foretell the unseen and one who does not make an effort to prevent his family from engaging in immoral activities."

(Nasai and Masnad Ahmad)

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "A person who backbites will not go to paradise"

(Sahihan)

I pray to Allah ﷻ to forgive our minor and major sins, and enable us to follow the guidance of the Quran and the Hadith. Ameen.

CLAIMS OF PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

The most important favor of Allah ﷻ to mankind is to provide them guidance. Without guidance people will be lost in a darkness of various kinds. Jews and Christians were blessed with the true guidance of Allah ﷻ. Many of them, however, misused this divine guidance. Let us describe their attitude towards this guidance of Allah ﷻ

Al-Baqarah # 135

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ

المُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

They say become a Jew or a Christian so that you may be rightly guided. Say to them we follow the religion of Ibrahim ﷺ, the upright, and he was not of those who worshipped others along with Allah.

Hence we notice that Jews and Christians claim that they are the followers of Ibrahim ﷺ, but their claim is wrong since Ibrahim ﷺ never held partners with Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says in the Quran Al-Baqarah # 140

أَمْ نَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا
أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

Or say you that Ibrahim, Ismael, Ishaq, Yaqub, and Al-Asbat were Jews or Christians? Say, "Do you know better or does Allah know better (that they all were Muslims)?" And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony he has from Allah? And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

Allah describes this testimony received by the People of the Book and how clearly they know this evidence. Al-Baqarah # 146

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ

الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christian) recognise him (Mohammad ﷺ) as they recognise their sons. But verily, a party of them coceal the truth while they know it (i.e the qualities of Mohammad ﷺ which are written in their books.

Obviously the learned scholars of the People of the Book hide this truth intentionally for worldly gains. In spite of this, their various claims are stunning. For example the People of the Book say in Al-Baqarah # 111

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا

بُرْهَانِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

None shall enter in Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. These are their own desires. Say (O Mohammad ﷺ), "Produce your proof if you are truthful."

Similarly they claim: Al-Baqarah # 80

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ

يُخْلَفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

And they (Jews) say, "The fire (i.e. Hell-fire on the day of Resurrection) shall not touch us but for a few numbered days." Say (O Mohammad ﷺ to them): "Have you taken a covenant from Allah, so that Allah will not break his Covenant? Or is it that you say of Allah what you know not?"

The claims of the people of the book do not hold water, and make one wonder about any credibility or logic in it. That's why Allah ﷻ says in Al-Imran # 65

يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ

بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

O people of the scripture (Jews and Christians)! Why do you dispute about Ibrahim, while the Taurat and the Injeel were not revealed

till after him? Have you no sense?

Allah further says Al-Imran # 68

إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

Verily, among mankind who have the best claim to Ibrahim are those who followed him, and this Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and those who have believed (Muslims). Allah is the Protector and Helper of the believers.

The tactics of these people of the book are very alarming as again described in Quran Al-Imran # 72

وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَجَهُ النَّهَارِ

وَكَفَرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

And a party of the people of the Scripture say: "Believe in the morning in that which is revealed to the believers (Muslims), and reject it at the end of the day, so that they may turn back."

Similarly Allah ﷻ says in Al-Imran # 78

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ
مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ

الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

And verily, among them is a party who distort the book with their tongue (as they read), so that you may think it is from the book, but it is not from the book, and they say: "This is from Allah," but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while they know it.

Allah ﷻ consoles the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ who is striving extremely hard to give the People of Book true guidance. Allah ﷻ says Al-Baqarah # 75-77

﴿أَفَنظَمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
يَحْرِفُونَ﴾ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿75﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِعَضْبِهِمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضِ قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿76﴾ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
يُسْرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿77﴾

Do you hope that they will believe in your religion in spite of the fact that a party of them (Jewish rabbis) used to hear the Word of Allah, then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it. And when they (Jews) meet those who believe (Muslims), they say, "We believe but when they meet one another in private, they say, "Shall you (Jews) tell them (Muslims) what Allah has revealed to you {Jews, about the description and the qualities of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, that which are written in Taurat }, that they (Muslims) may argue with you (Jews) about it before your Lord?" Have you (Jews) then no understanding? Know they (Jews) not that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal.

That's why Allah ﷻ says Al-Baqarah # 79

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ
ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿79﴾

Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, "This is from Allah," to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby.

Finally Allah ﷻ invites them to the right path saying in Al-Imran # 64

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا

فُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا

أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Say "O people of the book (Jews and Christian): Come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allah.

It is interesting to note that the People of the Book are not all alike. As Allah says in Surah Al-Imran # 75

﴿ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ

بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدِّيهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دَمَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي

الْأَمِينِ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

Among the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) is he who, if entrusted with a Qintar will readily pay it back; and among them there is he who, if entrusted with a single silver coin, will not repay it unless you constantly stand demanding, because they say; "There is no blame on us to betray and take the properties of the illiterates. But they tell a lie against Allah while they know it.

Quran also declares in Al-Imran # 113-114

﴿ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ

يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

Not all of them are alike; a party of the people of the Book stand for the right, they recite the Verses of Allah during the hours of the night, prostrating themselves in prayer. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin Al-Ma'ruf (Islamic Monotheism, and following Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and forbid Al-Munkar and they hasten in good works; and they are among the righteous.

I pray to Allah ﷻ to show the true guidance to the people of the book which was originally revealed to them and which was no different than the Quran. Ameen.

THE MONTH OF SHA'BAN

Muslims celebrate a night during the month of Sha'ban and refer to it as "shab-barat" or "layla-tul-bara" in various parts of the world. It is a significant night. However, there are some popular beliefs and practices amongst the Muslims relating to this night which have no place in Islam. Examples of these are as follows:

1. Some Muslims believe that the spirit of the dead comes back to them during this night. They cook sweets and distribute to others. It is totally unislamic. We, as true Muslims, are not supposed to worship the dead but rather pray for them.
2. According to another superstition, some Muslims believe that the decisions of life and death are made by Allah ﷻ during this night or on the 15th day of Sha'ban. It is true that Allah makes these decisions of life and death. However, these decisions were made before we were even created.
3. Another prevalent story is that there is a celestial or heavenly tree and people's names are written on the leaves of this tree. During this night, this tree is shaken and leaves would fall symbolizing the people who are going to die.
4. Another wrong practice which goes on during this night is that people display fireworks. Allah only knows for what purpose they do this. This is due to the influence of some other cultures, like Hindus or Buddhists. We get very used to these wrong practices year after year, and, hence, we get very comfortable with these wrong practices. We do not even care to go to the learned people amongst us for fact-finding.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I am leaving behind me two things for you, the Qur'an and my sunnah. If you adhere to these, you will not go astray."

An obvious question is, what is the position of Qur'an and the sunnah about this night of Sha'ban?

There is no reference to this night in Qur'an, although very few commentators say that it is mentioned in Surah Ad-Dukhan, # 3-4

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبْرَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

We revealed it during the blessed night, and we are ever warning. That night is decreed every matter of ordainments.

Most of the commentators believe that this verse is also mentioning "layla-tulqadr", or the Night of Power, which falls in the month of Ramadan. As we notice in the translation, Allah says in Surah Al-Dukhan that, "I revealed it during the blessed night." Allah ﷻ also says in Surah Al-Qadr # 1

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

I revealed it during the Night of Power.

Finally, Allah says in Surah Al-Baqarah # 185

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

I revealed the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan.

Hence, verses of Surah Al-Dukhan refer to Layla-tulqadr and not to the middle of sha'ban.

In his book "Targheeb wa-Tarheeb", Imam Al-Mundhiri المنذري has given fourteen sayings of the Messenger Mohammad ﷺ about the month of Sha'ban. Some of them are as follows.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Pay special attention to the month of Sha'ban, because it comes before the month of Ramadan. Month of Ramadan is the sacred month in which Qur'an was revealed. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims observe mandatory fasting. Prepare yourself for the month of Ramadan during the month of Sha'ban. As an example, you make all sort of preparations before an honored guest arrives. Similarly, you make preparations during the month of Sha'ban for the sacred month of Ramadan."

According to another hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to fast very often during the month of Sha'ban. Aisha ؓ said, "Prophet Mohammad ﷺ used to fast the most during the month of Sha'ban. Sometimes, he would fast continuously during Sha'ban and it appeared that he would omit no day for fasting. At other times he did not fast for a long time during Sha'ban, teaching us that these fastings are only

voluntary and for extra credit." According to another hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ takes account of his creatures during this night." What does this mean? It means Allah gives a special chance to his creatures, especially rational creatures to repent, correct their behavior and lifestyle. Allah says, "Is there somebody who asks for forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there somebody who asks me for help so that I may help him? Is there somebody who has a difficulty or a need and asks me so that I may remove his difficulty?"

Hence, divine power is open to all, and there is an open invitation to all, especially during this month of Sha'ban.

According to another hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said,

"Visit cemeteries during the month of Sha'ban, since the cemetery is a significant and sufficient reminder." The Messenger added, "If somebody does not learn a lesson about this life and the hereafter by visiting the cemetery, he has no other hope of having true guidance."

I pray that Allah ﷻ guides us according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and keep us on his true path. Ameen.

LAILA TUL QADR

Allah ﷻ says in Quran Surah Al-Qadr # 1-5

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ

مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ نَزَّلَ الْمَلَكُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

We revealed the Qur'an during the Night of Power. What do you know of the Night of Power. The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. During this night, the angel Gabriel and other angels descend therein with the permission of Allah ﷻ with all decrees. This night is peace and goodness until the rising of the dawn.

According to this Surah, Allah ﷻ revealed the Qur'an during the night of power. We, however, know that the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ during the twenty-three years of his life, piece-by-piece. Obviously, the question is what it means when Allah ﷻ informs us that the Qur'an was revealed during the night of power?

It means that the Qur'an was transferred from the place of ultimate custody of Allah ﷻ called لوح محفوظ to this universe during the night of power. It also means that the first revelation, وحى to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, which took place in the cave Hira, during Al-Qadar this night of power. It is an interesting observation to note that the Surah is right after Surah Al-Alaq. It points out that the very first revelation did take place during the night of power.

What does 'Qadr' mean? Qadr means valuable, precious and power. What made this night the night of power? The revelation of the holy Qur'an during this night made it a night of value and power.

Furthermore, a person who had no value becomes valuable and God-conscious by worship during this night.

The second meaning of 'Qadr' is destiny or fate. Although Allah ﷻ has decided everything in advance, even before we were born, but the decisions for this year are handed over to the angels for execution during this night. According to most of the scholars, the first few verses of Surah

Al-Dukhan refers to 'this night also and strongly supports the above statement. Allah ﷻ says, In Surah Ad-Dukhan # 1-4

حَمَّ ۝۱ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ۝۲ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ۝۳ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ۝۴

By the Quran that makes things clear. We sent this Quran down on a blessed night. Verily, we are ever warning (mankind). There (in that night) is cleared every matter of occurrences (like deaths, birth etc.)

Very few scholars think that these verses of Surah Al-Dukhan point toward the month of Sha'ban. They say that decisions are made during the month of Sha'ban and handed over to the angels for execution during the night of power. Allah ﷻ knows best.

Next, Allah ﷻ says that the night of power is better than a thousand months. What does it mean? Arabs of that time considered one thousand, a very large number. It means that the worship during this night of power is better than very large number of nights.

One thousand months equals eighty-three years and four months. Arabs felt that a person in his eighties becomes devout and pious by worship all his life. But the worship during the night of power is better than the worship over eighty years of continuous submission to Allah ﷻ.

Furthermore, Ibn-abi-Hatim ابن أبي حاتم Narrated from Mujahid مجاهد that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ related to his companions the case of a person from the Israelites who continuously worshipped for eighty years without a break. Similarly, Ibn-Jareer ابن جرير narrated from Mujahid that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that a person from Israelites used to worship during the night and go for fighting in the path of Allah ﷻ in the day. He did it for eighty years without a break. Allah ﷻ is saying to the followers of the holy prophet ﷺ that worship during the night of power is better than the worship of that jew for eighty continuous years. Hence, the night of power is the unique characteristic of the Ummah of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and is a special gift from Allah ﷻ to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and his followers.

This shows how much Allah ﷻ loves his Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and the followers of this Prophet. Although followers of earlier prophets

had fasting prescribed for them but only the Ummah of Mohammad ﷺ is granted the supreme distinction of having a night of power during the holy month of fasting.

During this night of power, Gabriel عليه السلام and other angels appointed at "Sidra tul-Muntaha" سدرۃ المنتهى come down to the earth and make a special plea to Allah ﷻ for those whom they see engaged in remembrance of Allah ﷻ sitting or standing. This night of power is the night of total peace and goodness and this peaceful state lasts till dawn. Some people may have some extraordinary experiences that night. Those who do not see these unusual happenings do also benefit from this blessed night.

When is this night? Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an, Al-Baqarah # 185

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

We revealed the Qur'an during the month of Ramadan.

Allah ﷻ also says Surah Al-Qadr # 1

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

We revealed the Qur'an during the night of power.

Hence, the night of power happened to be somewhere in the holy month of Ramadan. There are many sayings of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ to point this out. As mentioned in Bukhari, Ayesha رضي الله عنها narrated that the prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Look for this night during the last ten days of Ramadan."

It is also mentioned in Muslim as narrated by Ibn-Umar that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Look for this night during the odd nights of the last ten days of the month of Ramadan." Many people believe it is on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan. It is not precisely specified so that we can earn extra bounties from Allah ﷻ by searching it and engaging ourselves in remembrance of Allah ﷻ. This is, in fact, a mercy of Allah ﷻ upon us.

Sometimes we wonder why Allah ﷻ revealed the Qur'an during the night and not during the day-time. Allah ﷻ knows best. However, we may say that the night is the time of peace, tranquility, and better concentration. Hence, we have a more keen sense of reception. As Allah

ﷺ says in Surah Al-Muzammil # 6

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿٦﴾

During the night the impressions are more keen and words come out more straight.

In other words, the words are more real and effective in the night and impressions are more lasting.

We also know that night, according to many schools of philosophy, means darkness, emptiness, hollowness and nothingness. When the day dawns, a light makes everything crystal-clear. When the Quran was revealed, the humanity was in total darkness. Quran changed this darkness into light. This clear-cut guidance of Quran made absolute distinctions between the right and the wrong. Allah ﷻ mentions this about Quran in Al-Baqarah # 185

هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

Quran is a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for guidance and the absolute criterion (between right and wrong).

Note that it is guidance not for Arabs only, nor for believers only, but rather for all mankind. Allah ﷻ says in Qur'an

"Allah ﷻ reveals the Qur'an on his obedient and beloved servant. This guidance is clear and this guidance takes people out from darkness and leads them into light. Allah ﷻ is, indeed, very kind and merciful for mankind."

Note that among all the favors of Allah ﷻ to mankind, the biggest favor is to provide this guidance. Obviously, without this guidance, humanity will be lost forever in absolute darkness.

Finally, Ayesha ؓ asked the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, "What should I do, if I happen to see this night of power?" Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Make this Dua':"

اللهم انك عفو تحب العفو فاعف عنا

"Oh Allah, you are indeed forgiving, you love to forgive, please forgive us too."

I pray that Allah ﷻ accepts this humble effort and forgives me and all the readers and listeners of this small article. Ameen.

Muslim Society in Madina

The Muslims who were residing in the city of Madina at the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ can be divided into two groups namely emigrants (Muhajireen) and local residents (Ansar). The characteristics of both of these groups are described in surah Al Hashr. Allah ﷻ says about the emigrants: Al Hashr # 8

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ

وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

(And there is also a share in this booty) for the poor emigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah (i.e Helping His religion) and His Messenger (ﷺ). Such are indeed the truthful (to what they say).

These emigrants were continuously tortured in Mecca, and living there became unbearable. It forced them to emigrate to Madina. The disbelievers occupied the properties and belongings of these emigrants. That is why the Qur'an calls these emigrants Faqeer, or extremely poor. Often many of them did not have anything to eat and they used to tie stones on their stomachs. Some would dig holes in the ground to sit in to shield themselves from the cold.

The second characteristic of these emigrants are the reasons why they left their homeland. Not for any worldly gain. Surely, it was to seek the pleasure of Allah ﷻ in this world and to seek the bounties of Allah ﷻ (ridwan) on the day of judgment.

The third characteristic is that they emigrated to help Allah ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ. Here, helping Allah ﷻ means to help the propagation of Islam. They offered outstanding sacrifices to achieve these two goals.

The fourth characteristic of these emigrants was, that they were truthful in their verbal and practical commitments. They stood by the testimony they made with Allah ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ at the time of their entry into Islam. Allah ﷻ is declaring in this verse that all emigrants are truthful. Hence to say anything bad about them is against

the above verdict of Allah ﷻ.

In the next verse Allah ﷻ describes the characteristics of Ansar.
Al Hashr # 9

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي
صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ
وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩﴾

And those who, before them, had homes and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given and give them preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful.

It is interesting to note that Imam Malik considers the city of Madina the most blessed and distinguished city in the world. Since it was conquered with Iman (faith). All other cities, including Mecca were conquered through actual battles. Allah ﷻ says, "Hence, the first characteristic of the Ansar is that they were raised in the esteemed city, which was to provide refuge, to a Prophet ﷺ and his followers."

Secondly, the Ansar did not consider these helpless emigrants to be a burden on them. They received them with open arms and loved them sincerely. Due to this love, the Ansar equally shared their entire belongings as well as their housing facilities with them. Those Ansar who had more than one wife, eagerly divorced one so that she may marry the incoming emigrant. In this process the Ansar introduced his emigrant brother to his wives, and gave him options to choose the one he likes the best. Incidentally, the instructions about hijab had not yet been revealed.

The third characteristic of the Ansar is that they whole heartedly accepted whatever was given to the emigrants by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. For example, when the Muslims gained control over Banu Nadher's بنو نضير and Banu Qainnqa's بنو قينقاع properties without indulging in any battle, it was to be distributed by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ amongst five categories mentioned for FAI في in Qur'an. The Prophet Mohammad

ﷺ asked Thabit bin Qais ؓ to gather all Ansar. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ addressed them and praised them for their exemplary behavior towards the emigrants. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ then suggested, two options regarding the distribution of newly acquired properties. "If I distribute it evenly among the Ansar and the emigrants in that case the emigrants would continue to stay in the Ansar's homes. Alternately, I can distribute it amongst the emigrants only and in that case they will be able to vacate the Ansars' homes and begin to live independently." The leaders of the Ansar, Saad bin Ibada سعد بن عبادة and Saad bin Maaz سعد بن معاذ responded, "Please distribute amongst the emigrants only, and they should also continue to live in our homes." Allah ﷻ loved this response of the Ansar and revealed the verse stating that the Ansar do not feel any uneasiness in their hearts about the distribution of prime property. The Ansar behaved in such a manner, as if they, themselves had no need at all for these belongings.

Incidentally, this property was distributed only among the emigrants, by the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. However, two very needy Ansar Sahal bin Haneef سهيل بن حنيف ؓ and Abu Dujana أبو دجاجة ؓ were also given shares in this distribution.

The fourth characteristic of the Ansar is that they prefer to satisfy the needs of the emigrants, even if they were in need themselves.

Qurtabi has described several situations pertaining to emigrants and Ansar. Some of these are described here since these are very enlightening for all mankind.

Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that one time a person came to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and said "I'm extremely hungry and it is unbearable for me anymore" The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ questioned his wives concerning food in their home. They said there was nothing except water. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ addressed the companions, "Who will host this brother tonight?" One Ansar volunteered. He took the brother to his home and asked his wife to serve the meals. She replied "Meals are hardly enough for our own children." The Ansar said to his wife, "Lay the children down, that they may go to sleep. Then serve the meal and turn off the candlelight. I shall pretend that I am eating with the guest. He won't know in the darkness." The guest ate the meal and

both came back to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ the next morning. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ congratulated this Ansar, saying "Allah ﷻ loved your hospitality last night."

(Tirmidhi)

Abdulla bin Omar narrates that one person sent a gift in the form of goat meat to a fellow Muslim. This person sent it as a gift to another Muslim, since he considered him more needy than himself. This third person sent it to a fourth person who he deemed even more needy than himself. This gift passed through seven hands until it reached back to the original donar. This is mentioned by Qushari قشيري. A similar narration is by Anas as described by Tha lbi. ثعلبي

Aisha ؓ narrated that one beggar came to her home and asked for charity. There was only one loaf of bread at her home. Aisha ؓ instructed her servant to give it to the beggar, the servant wondered how Aisha ؓ would break her fast in the evening. Aisha ؓ insisted on giving the loaf to the beggar. It so happened in the evening that a person sent a gift of roasted goat to Aisha ؓ. Aisha ؓ invited her servant to join her in dinner.

Nasai نسائي reported that one time Abdullah bin Omar ؓ fell ill and wanted to eat some grapes. Hence, grapes were purchased and brought to him. By chance a beggar came. Omar ؓ gave the grapes away to the beggar. One of the visitors of Omar ؓ followed the beggar, purchased the grapes from the beggar and presented the grapes to Omar ؓ. The beggar came back and Omar ؓ gave him the bunch of grapes again. Another visitor followed the beggar and purchased the grapes again, and then presented them again to Omar ؓ. The beggar wanted to come back again, but the people requested him not to return. Incidentally Omar ؓ thought that the grapes were bought from the market each time, otherwise he would not have eaten those grapes brought to him the third time.

Ibn Mubarik reported in his Masnad that one time Caliph Omar ؓ sent four hundred dinars to Abu Ubaidah bin Jarah أبو عبيدة بن الجراح through a servant as a gift. Omar ؓ instructed his servant to observe how he used this money. The servant reported that Abu Ubaidah distributed all of the money to needy persons.

Similarly Caliph Omar رضي الله عنه sent four hundred dinar to Maaz bin Jabal رضي الله عنه by a servant, and instructed this servant to observe how he used this money too. The servant reported to Omar رضي الله عنه that Maaz رضي الله عنه distributed it to the needy persons as well. When only two dinars were left, Maaz's wife said "I am poor too, I deserve some as well." Maaz رضي الله عنه gave these two dinars to her. Caliph Omar رضي الله عنه said to his servant, they are all brothers and are alike in their characteristics.

Huzaifah Aadvi رضي الله عنه حذيفة عدوي narrated "I set out to look for the body of my cousin, during the battle of Yarmook, I had some water with me for those who may still have signs of life. I found my cousin, who appeared to be near death. I offered him some of the water I had. He heard a cry from another Muslim brother close to him. My cousin refused to drink the water and insisted it be given to another injured person. As I approached the second person, he heard the cry of a third brother. This second injured brother instructed me to quickly take the water to the third person. In this way, I went to seven different injured persons. Each preferring others needs over his own need. When I reached the seventh, he had already breathed his last breath. I rushed back to my cousin, and he had died as well.

Allah سبحانه divided the whole Ummah of the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم into three groups, emigrants, Ansar and the rest of the Ummah. Allah سبحانه described many virtues of both emigrants and Ansar in the Holy Qur'an. However, Allah سبحانه described only one very notable virtue of the rest of the Ummah. This third group must sincerely appreciate the companions of the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, since they not only distinguished themselves with pure Iman (faith), but also this faith reached us through them. Hence, this third group should pray for the companions of the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, and should not hold any form of grudge in their hearts against the companions of the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. It is a very beautiful dua. Al Hashr # 10

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا

بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾

And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and

our brethern who have preceded us in faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindnesss, Most Merciful.

Mussab bin Saaid مصعب بن سعيد narrated that we can only belong to this group by acquiring the virtue stated above.

Kurtabi deduced from this verse it is mandatory for us to have great respect for the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Imam Malek said "A Muslim will not have any share in any booty if he does not have a good deal of respect for the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. Abdullah bin Abbas said, "Allah ﷻ has ordered all the Muslims to pray for the companions of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ although, Allah ﷻ knew they would differ with each other, and even fight with each other." Hence we must keep a good feeling about all the companions of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ.

Aisha ؓ narrated "I heard from the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ that his Ummah will not be destroyed, if they do not curse the one who has passed before them."

Abdullah bin Omar said "When you come across someone who curses the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, you should simply say: "May Allah's ﷻ curse be on the one who is worse among you." In this way Allah ﷻ will take care of the accuser.

Aawam bin Jushab عوام بن جشاب said: "I found the earlier Muslims reminding others about the salient virtues of the companions, to increase love for them. They avoided mentioning differences and conflicts among the companions, so that enemies do not become over bold about criticizing the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ."

May Allah ﷻ enable us to appreciate the virtues of the companions of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ so that we may belong to this third group, and be successful in this life and the life in the hereafter. Ameen.

TESTS OF PROPHET IBRAHIM ﷺ

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Baqarah # 124

﴿ وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ ﴾

﴿ 124 ﴾ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

When Allah ﷻ tested Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ, Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ passed the test. Allah ﷻ said to him: "I will make you leader of mankind" Prophet Ibrahim asked Allah ﷻ "Is this promise for my children too?" Allah ﷻ replied "Yes, but not for those who will be wrong doers."

Many questions come to mind. Why should Allah ﷻ test anybody when He is All Knowing? What is the nature of these tests? What was the result of the test of Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ? What was the reward, if any, for these tests? We will address these questions one by one.

The purpose of these tests is not to give pass/fail awards or any other credentials. The purpose of these tests is indicated by the word "RUB" رب in this verse. Allah ﷻ has chosen this word for Himself from all His attributes to indicate that the purpose of this test is to nourish the spiritual and physical faculties of a person and train him for higher and higher goals. A poet said in Urdu.

تندی بادِ مخالف سے نہ گھبرائے عقاب یہ تو چلتی ہے تجھے اونچا اڑانے کے لئے

"O eagle, don't be afraid of strong opposing wind. It is to raise you higher and higher." Hence, difficulties train a person for higher goals.

We notice that Allah ﷻ is announcing the result of tests of Ibrahim ﷺ stating that he has fulfilled these tests. Allah ﷻ refers to Ibrahim ﷺ even more beautifully in Surah An-Najm # 37

﴿ 37 ﴾ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّىٰ

That Ibrahim ﷺ who fulfilled his promises.

Hence we conclude that Ibrahim ﷺ passed all these tests. As a result of this Allah ﷻ said to him "I will make you leader of mankind." Prophet Ibrahim was not only happy but was concerned about his future

generations. Allah ﷻ said "There will be, indeed, leaders of mankind among your future generations except those who are wrong doers." Hence the people of book cannot be leaders since they made partners with Allah ﷻ.

Now we will describe some of the tests of the Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ. Let us start with the time when he was with his parents and people. He saw them worshipping idols which they had made with their own hands. The Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ addressed those idols as described in Surah As-Saffat # 91-98

فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ آلِهِمِ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ
ضَرْبًا بِأَيْمِينِ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوا إِلَيْهِ يَزْفُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ أتعْبُدُونَ مَا تَنْجِتُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾
وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوا لَهُ بُيُوتًا فَأَلْقُوهُ فِي الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٩٧﴾
فَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

Then he turned to their gods and said "Will you not eat (of the offering before you)? "What is the matter with you that you speak not?" Then he turned upon them, striking (them) with (his) right hand. Then they (the worshippers of idols) came, towards him, hastening. He said: "Worship you that which you (yourselves) carve? "While Allah has created you and what you make!" They said: "Build for him a building (it is said that the building was like a furnace) and throw him into the blazing fire!" So they plotted a plot against him, but We made them the lowest.

Prophet Ibrahim said,

حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Allah ﷻ is enough as my protector and the patron.

Allah ﷻ ordered the roaring flames of fire to become cool seasonably and reasonably to comfort Ibrahim ﷺ.

Now Ibrahim had to leave his father and folks and what they worshipped. He went to Syria with his wife. This scene is also described in Surah As-Saffat # 99- 100

وَقَالَ إِنِّي ذَاهِبٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي سَيِّدِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

The Prophet Ibrahim said, *I go to the way of Allah ﷻ who will indeed guide me. My Lord! Grant me (offspring) from the righteous.*

Scholars inferred from this that it is the sunnah of all the prophets to get married and try to have children who are righteous, so that they can carry on the work of Allah ﷻ. Another example of this is prophet Zakariya ﷺ who said Al-Imran # 38

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

At that time Zakariya invoked his Lord: "O my Lord! Grant me from You, a good off spring. You are indeed the All-Hearer of invocation."

Hence we must pray to Allah ﷻ to grant us pious and righteous Children.

Allah ﷻ did give Ibrahim ﷺ tidings of a son who was going to show extraordinary patience and perseverance. Hajira, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ, gave birth to Ismail ﷺ.

Allah ﷻ ordered angel Gibrael to take Ibrahim ﷺ, his wife and baby boy to a place that is known as Mecca now. The Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ was ordered to go back to Syria as soon as they arrived there. The spirit of submission to the will of Allah ﷻ was so high in the mind of Ibrahim ﷺ, that he started off immediately towards Syria. His wife asked him, "Where are you going, leaving us behind here?". He did not answer. She asked again, "Why are you leaving us behind, where there is no habitation, no water and vegetation?" He still did not answer her. Finally she asked, "Is Allah ﷻ sending you?" Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ answered, "Yes". She responded "Fine, He who is sending you will take care of us as well".

When the Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ went around the hill, he paused momentarily and made a supplication "O Allah ﷻ, I have stationed my family in a place where there is no sign of vegetation whatsoever. Please provide them with fruits of life so that they can establish prayer and be truly submissive to you."

It is interesting to note that this is the way the prophets make

balance between the rights of Allah ﷻ and the rights of the people. On the other hand sufi is totally submerged in fulfilling the rights of Allah ﷻ.

This was a big test for the whole family of Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ. Hajira ؑ found her baby boy crying for water. She rushed to nearby hillock called Safa in search of water. She was disappointed and came running back to the child who was still crying. She ran to the other hill called Marwa to find any signs of water. She was disappointed again. Hajira ran seven times between Safa and Marwa in search of water for her child. As she returned to her child after seventh round she found her child rubbing his feet on the ground. To her surprise a fountain of water gushed out from that place which is now called ZAM ZAM. This fountain of water is flowing till today providing water to the mankind.

Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ used to visit his family time to time. When his son Ismail became teenager, Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ said to him "O my dear son, I see in dream that I sacrifice you. What do you think about it?". This explains us how a father should communicate with his son. Prophet Ibrahim informed him politely and waited for his response. This left scope for any counseling if necessary. This also tested the level of sense of submission of his son to Allah ﷻ. We further note that this is the age when a child becomes a helping hand for his parents and all parents are anxiously waiting for this stage. Allah ﷻ ordered Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ to sacrifice his son in this prime age. This was another big test for the whole family. The answer of the son is very fascinating. He said "O my dear dad, go ahead do what you are ordered". This young man clearly understood that even the dream of the prophet is like a revelation from Allah ﷻ and hence an order from Allah ﷻ. Young Ismail further added "InshaAllah you will see me among those who are patient". This answer has many lessons for us. First of all we must use InshaAllah in our communications as we have been instructed in Surah Al-Kahf and Surah Noon. Secondly, young Ismail recognized that there have been many people before him who were extremely patient. He instead of boasting about his patience, humbles himself further and says that "You will, God willing find me among those who are patient".

Both father and son walked towards a site called Mina. On the way

Satan tried to persuade the father saying "You have only seen a dream. Why should you slaughter your son in his prime age?" The Prophet Ibrahim threw pebbles on Satan to overcome him. Then Satan similarly tried to persuade young Ismail and his mother. They treated Satan the same way and overcame Satan with their strong belief.

Father and son were now ready for the sacrifice. A very touching dialogue took place between them. Son said to his father the following things:

- ❖ O my dad tie my hands and feet so that I don't jump around.
- ❖ Please sharpen the knife and run it fast on my throat so that my soul can leave me fast. Death is a very difficult thing.
- ❖ Save your clothes from my blood so that my reward is not decreased and my mother may not be grieved to see this blood.
- ❖ Say my salam to my mother and give her my shirt. It may console her."

The Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام listened to this touching speech from his son and the Prophet Ibrahim was not carried away. He said to his son "O my dear son, how helpful you are in carrying out our duty of Allah ﷻ".

This is all described in As-Saffat # 103- 107.

فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَنَدَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا إِنَّا
 كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَفَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ
 عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

"When both of them surrendered to Allah ﷻ, the Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام laid down his son on his face. Allah called Ibrahim "O Ibrahim you have fulfilled the vision. We reward the goodness like this. It was indeed a clear test. We replaced it with a bigger sacrifice".

A lamb was sacrificed in place of young Ismail عليه السلام. Allah further recognized Ibrahim عليه السلام by instructing all the coming generations to salute him. Allah ﷻ not only saved Ismail but granted him another son, Isaac. Both were prominent prophets of Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ loved the submission of every member of the family of Ibrahim so much that He made it a symbol for the coming generations by

making it a part of Hajj.

May Allah ﷻ give us sense, spirit of submission and sacrifice to Allah's will like the family of Ibrahim. Ameen

MARYUM

Before Christmas, during Christmas and after Christmas we hear a lot about Maryum called Mary by Christians. We observe many displays of Mary in churches and commercial places and hear impressive religious songs. It confuses Muslims and their children. We would like to know who is the real Mary? It is very interesting to review her childhood, her bringing up, her youth and her adulthood in the light of Quranic guidance. The way Mary became pregnant and the way she gave birth to a unique child, Jesus ﷺ, has many signs of Allah ﷻ for the mankind. The scene of the birth of Mary is described in Al-Imran # 35,36

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا
وَضَعْتُ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذَرَيْتَهَا مِنَ

الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

When the mother of Mary became expectant she said to Allah ﷻ, "I offer this child in my belly exclusively for Your service. Please accept it from me since You know how sincerely I am saying and You hear all what we say."

Then when she delivered her (child, Mary), she said: "O my Lord! I have delivered a female child" - And Allah knew better what she delivered - "And the male is not like the female, and I have named it Maryam, and I seek refuge with You (Allah) for her and for her offspring from Satan, the outcast."

When the mother of Mary gave birth to a child she was amazed that it happened to be a girl. It was a common notion that only a boy can serve Allah ﷻ in a sanctuary. Anyhow she named this child Maryum and prayed to Allah ﷻ, "I put her and her children under the protection of Allah ﷻ against the Satan the outcast." This scene of the birth of the baby girl Maryum is further described in this Surah also. Allah ﷻ said, "Indeed this girl is not like a boy". In other words this baby girl is going

to be an extraordinary girl and very much different from a baby boy. It is also obvious from this verse that in Islam a mother has the same right to name her child as the father has. In other words it is not a exclusive right for males to name the children. In fact, the rights of men and women are exactly the same in Islam. Only their roles differ. The roles are assigned by Allah ﷻ since He knows the best as their Creator.

Allah ﷻ further describes the bringing up of this unique baby girl as follows Al-Imran # 37

فَنَقَّبَلْنَا رِبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَلَهَا زَكْرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَمْرُؤُا أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

Allah accepted this baby girl in the best possible way and also brought her up in the best possible way and put her in the guardianship of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah went to a sanctuary where she was, he found that she had food (in abundance of all kinds and all seasons). He said, "O Mary! From where does this food come to you?" She answered, "It is from Allah, He gives in abundance to whom He wills."

This was a very inspiring experience for Zachariah ﷺ. He considered it most appropriate to pray to Allah ﷻ to grant him a child since he had no offspring till this old age. He realized that if Allah ﷻ can provide this (baby) girl this food of all the seasons in abundance He can grant him a child even in this old age. His Dua is described in surat Al Imran as follows Al-Imran # 38

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾

Then Zachariah prayed to Allah and said, "My Lord! Please grant me a child who is pious. You, indeed, hear Dua."

It is interesting to add here that it is recommended for a muslim to marry and try not only to have children but also to try to bring them up as pious individuals through Islamic education and training. This is why the prophets like Zachariah ﷺ and Ibrahim ﷺ asked for children even in their old age so that these good children could carry out the work of Allah

ﷺ after their death.

Allah ﷻ granted this Dua of Zachariah عليه السلام as described in this surah Al-Imran # 39

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ

مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾

The angels called to Zachariah while he was praying in the sanctuary. Allah has given you a glad tiding of (a son whose name is) Yahya who comes to confirm a word from Allah ﷻ. Yahya will be lordly, chaste and a prophet of righteous.

We noticed that the Dua of a person is most likely granted by Allah ﷻ when he is making salat in a Masjid. Allah ﷻ is also demonstrating to the people of all generations that just as He can grant a child to Zachariah in his extreme old age, similarly He can give a child to Mary even though no mortal has touched her.

Zachariah عليه السلام said to Allah ﷻ Al-Imran # 40-41

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ

يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ

ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْزًا وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ ﴿٤١﴾

He said, "O Allah! How can I have a son when old age has overtaken me and my wife is already barren?" (The angel) Answered, "So (it will be) Allah does what He wills." Zachariah said, "O Allah! Please appoint a token for me." (The angel) said, "The tokens for you are that you will not speak to mankind for three days except with signals. During this time remember Allah a lot and glorify Him in the afternoon and in the morning."

Let us describe how muslims view Mary as an adult person. Allah ﷻ says in Quran Al-Imran # 42-43

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَأَصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ

الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

And when angels said to Mary, "Allah has chosen you and made you purified, (from disbelief) and has chosen you above the women of the mankind and jinn. O Mary! Be obedient to your Lord, prostrate yourself and bow down along with those who bow down in worship."

We note that when Allah's bounties are increased for a person, he is supposed to submit himself more and more to Allah ﷻ by additional prayers. The instruction to bow down with those who bow down indicates that salat should preferably be done in congregation. The Angles further said to Mary: Surah Al-Imran # 45 , 46

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَأِكَةُ يَمْرِيْمُ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيْحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا

﴿٤٦﴾ وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

(Remember) when the angles said: "O Maryam! Verily Allah has given you a glad tiding of a Word from Him whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near to Allah ﷻ. This child will speak to mankind in his cradle and in his manhood and he will be one of the righteous."

Mary was amazed, She said Al-Imran # 47

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وُلْدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللّٰهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا

قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾

She said, "O Allah! How can I have a child when no mortal has touched me?" He said, "So (it will be) for Allah creates what He wills." If He has decreed something, He says to it only: "Be" - and it is.

Hence the birth of Jesus was simply by the word of Allah ﷻ which was confirmed by Yahya عليه السلام. Furthermore, it was very clear that the birth of Jesus عليه السلام took place when no human being ever touched Mary.

The Quran describes in detail how Mary conceived miraculously and how she handled herself during the pregnancy. Maryam # 16-26

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَأَتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَامًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَى هَيْئٍ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾ ﴿ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهِ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴾ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَلَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهَزِيءَ إِلَيْكَ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسْقِطُ عَلَيْكَ رَطْبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكَلِمَةَ أَشْرَى وَقِرَى عَيْنًا فَأِمَّا تَرَبِّنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

And mention in the Book (the Quran) Maryam, when she withdrew from her people to a chamber looking East. She has chosen seclusion from them. We sent to her "Our Spirit (Angel)" and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said, "Look! I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from you, if you are God fearing." The angel said, "I am only a messenger of Allah, that it may bestow on you pious son". Mary said, "How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, neither have I been unchaste?" The angel said, "Allah said it is easy for Me and it will be since it is a thing ordained. Allah will make him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Him. "Mary conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place. When the pangs of child birth drove her to a trunk of a palm tree, she said, "Oh, would that I have died before this and had

become a thing of naught forgotten!" Then (one) cried to her below her saying, "Grieve not! Your Lord has placed a rivulet beneath you. Shake the trunk of the palm tree toward you it will cause ripe dates to fall on you. So eat and drink and be consoled. If you meet any mortal, say: Look!, I have wooed a fast for Allah, and may not speak this day to any mortal."

We note that Mary was told to try to shake the palm tree to obtain ripe dates. It teaches us a lesson that we must make our best effort to earn our livelihood. This effort is not against one's trust in Allah ﷻ.

After about forty days Mary went back to her people with her child in her lap. The dialogue between Mary and her people is also described as follows. Surah Maryam # 27-32

فَأْتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ يَتَّخِذَ هَرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكَ أَمْرًا سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ ءَاتَنِي الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَبِرًّا بِوَالِدَيْ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾

Then she brought him to her own folk, carrying him, They said, "Oh Mary! You have come with an amazing thing. O sister of Harun (Aaron), "Your father was not a wicked man nor was your mother a harlot." She pointed to him. They said, "How can we talk to one who is in a cradle, a young boy?" Jesus spoke out, "Look! I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and has appointed me Prophet. He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and has enjoined upon me prayer and alms giving so long as I remain alive. Allah has made me dutiful towards her who bore me, and has not made me arrogant, unblest."

In this quote we note that the first word which Jesus spoke was that he was an obedient servant of Allah ﷻ and hence should not be made a partner of Allah ﷻ at anytime. Secondly, Salat and Zakat are must for

every ummah and people must fulfill these obligations as long as they live.

We have seen Mary as a baby girl, her bringing up, her adulthood and as a unique mother. There are many signs of Allah ﷻ and guidance for those who would like to please Allah ﷻ. It is clear that real Mary is totally different from Mary which Christians profess, or portray.

May Allah save us from all forms of shirk and make us His obedient servant. Ameen.

The Will of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ (Part I)

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Anam # 151

﴿قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنزَلْ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
 إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا
 تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ
 اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْنَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿151﴾

“Say: come, I shall recite to you that which your Lord has made sacred for you: that you ascribe nothing as partner to Him and that you do good to parents and that you slay not your children because of poverty--We will provide for you and for them--and do not draw near shameful things whether in the open or hidden. You slay not the life which Allah ﷻ has made sacred, save in the course of justice. This He has commanded you in order that you may understand.”

This verse and the following two verses use the word وصيت thrice all together. In other words, Allah ﷻ is commanding us or insisting on us to follow these commandments.

It is mentioned in Tafseer Ibn Kaseer that Abdullah bin Masoud ﷺ said that if someone wanted to see the will of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ with his seal on it then he should read these three verses which he left for his Ummah.

Hakam wrote that Ubada bin Samit ﷺ narrated that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ once addressed the companions and asked them who would give him allegiance on these three verses. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ added that whosoever would fulfill this covenant his reward was assured by Allah ﷻ.

In these verses ten different things are called Haram. The approach of the Quran is inviting since it uses commands rather than negations. It starts with the word come, let me tell you as if somebody is inviting

someone from a high platform to raise the level of the listener higher and higher. It states, "Let me tell you what Allah ﷻ has forbidden you". It is emphasizing don't make Haram as Halal and Halal as Haram yourself. After this general statement, each Haram is mentioned separately and clearly.

Let us now describe each item one by one:

First of all, do not make any partners with Allah ﷻ. Shirk can be exercised in various forms:

- Making actual partners with Allah ﷻ like the Jews and Christians have done.
- Though believing that Allah ﷻ does everything but regards others true means of success in various means of affairs.
- To pray but to show off.
- To spend in the name of Allah ﷻ to gain personal recognition.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Nothing can benefit you without the will of Allah ﷻ and nothing can harm you without the will of Allah ﷻ."

Shirk is mentioned first because it is the greatest crime. Allah ﷻ does not forgive it at all.

Ubada bin Samit and Abu Darda narrated that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said that, "Do not make partners with Allah ﷻ even if you are put into the gallows or even if you are burnt alive."

Next, we are commanded to be good to our parents. It is interesting that it could have been stated: "Do not disobey your parents." But the approach of the Quran is fantastic. Allah ﷻ says not only obey but also be good to them so that they are fully pleased with you. Allah ﷻ also says:

وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ

Remain submissively obedient to them.

Allah also says:

❖ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

Your Lord has made this decision so that you should not worship any other than Him and be good to your parents.

Allah ﷻ further states: Surah Luqman # 14

أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ

Thank Me and your parents; for you must return to Me.

In other words Allah ﷻ says that if you don't thank Him and your parents you will be punished when you return to Him. In all these verses the rights of parents are mentioned just after the rights of Allah ﷻ. The rights of parents have a very high priority in the eyes of Allah ﷻ.

Abdullah bin Masoud ؓ narrates "I asked the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, "What was the best deed?" He replied, "Pray on time." I asked "What next?" He said, "To treat parents with goodness." I asked "What next?" He said "To strive and fight in the way of Allah ﷻ."

(Sahiheen)

Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that one day the Prophet Mohammad said thrice:

"He is doomed!" The companions asked, "Oh Prophet Mohammad ﷺ who is doomed?" He said, "Whosoever comes across one or both of his parents in their old age and did not enter heaven."

(Muslim)

This means if one serves his parents pleasingly and pleasantly in their old age, paradise is promised for that person. Here the condition of old age of the parents is specified to earn paradise. Because that is the time when they are weak and helpless.

Next Allah ﷻ describes the rights of children. Allah ﷻ is commanding us not to kill our children due to fear of poverty. Allah ﷻ will provide for them just as He is providing for you. In surah Al-Isra Allah ﷻ says:

نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ

We provide for them and you too.

Here it is pointed out that children who are weak and incapable of supporting themselves deserve provisions more than you. Hence Allah ﷻ is providing for you for their sake and they are a blessing for you and in no way a burden. SubhaanaAllah

Look at a seed which grows into a tree and bears fruits. Parents

do not grow it. Allah ﷻ does it. In this way Allah ﷻ will provide all of you with unlimited and unseen bounties. If we do not give Islamic education and training to our children that would also mean killing our children, since Qur'an calls such a person a dead person who does not recognise and obey Allah ﷻ. Hence those people who ignore the Islamic education and training are guilty of killing their children. This spiritual killing is worse than physical killing. The sins children commit due to lack of spiritual guidance, potentially ruin their future.

Allah ﷻ commands us not to go close to immoral activities which may be open or hidden. Open activity could mean activity by tongue, hand, or foot and the like. Hidden activities mean jealousy, lust, ungratefulness, and impatience. Open activity could also mean, public sexual notions. For example, looking towards another woman with bad intentions, touch her with hands, or talk to her with bad intentions. Hidden activities also mean to make secret plans which include some or all the activities mentioned above. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ warned us not to go close to doubtful situations or grey areas as they lead to sins. Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said:

من حَامَ حَوْلَ حَمِيٍّ أَوْ شَكَ أَنْ يَقَعَ فِيهِ

“Whosoever hovers around forbidden areas, it is very likely that he will enter that.”

Allah ﷻ also commands us not to kill anyone who's killing Allah ﷻ has forbidden to you.

Abdullah bin Masood narrates that the prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: “You are not allowed to kill any muslim except for the following reasons:

- Married person who commits adultery.
- Who kills another person unjustly.
- Who becomes kafir after accepting Islam.

(Muslim & Bukhari)

Calif Usman ؓ reminded people about this hadith when they were trying to kill him.

Similarly killing of a non-muslim unjustly is not allowed in Islam.

Abu Hurairah narrates that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, “He who kills a non-muslim in a muslim state unjustly breaks the covenant of

Allah ﷻ. He who breaks the covenant of Allah will not be able to smell the perfume of paradise although it reaches a distance traversed in seventy years.”

These are the commands of Allah ﷻ for us.

I pray that Allah enables us to understand these commands and follow them sincerely. Ameen.

The Will of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ (Part II)

Allah ﷻ says in surah Al-Anam # 152-153

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ
وَالْمِيزَانِ بِالْقِسْطِ لَّا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا
قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا
صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ
وَصَّانِكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

And do not approach the wealth of an orphan except with that which is better till he reaches maturity. Give full measure and full weight, in justice. We tax not any soul beyond its scope. And if you give your word, do justice thereof, even though it be against a kinsman, and fulfill the covenant of Allah. He commands you this so that perhaps you may remember. Allah ﷻ (also commands you saying): this is My straight path so follow it. "Do not follow other ways, lest you be parted from His way. Allah ﷻ ordained you this so that you can attain piety.

First of all we are commanded not to devour or consume an orphan's wealth in our custody. We are required to restore the deposits belonging to the orphans, as soon as they come of age. According to Imam Abu Hanifa we should further wait till orphans are capable of handling their affairs. We must, however, restore them before the orphan reaches the age of 25, unless the orphan is totally insane. Some scholars say to transfer the orphan's deposit to the department of justice who may appoint a responsible person to look after it.

Allah ﷻ says:

"When an orphan comes of age and is also capable of handling his affairs, restore the deposits to them." Hence we conclude that to come of age is not enough, but the ability to handle the affairs is also a

prerequisite. Allah ﷻ also says: "Those who devour Orphan's wealth are filling their bellies with fire."

Here Allah ﷻ also commands us to give full measure and full weight with justice. The People of prophet Shuaib ؑ were destroyed for disobeying this command. There is a strong warning in the Quran for those who cheat in weighing. Note that not doing justice in ones job is also like not weighing correctly. Hence a person should do his best. Anything beyond his capacity is not his fault. Swaid bin Qais (سويد بن قيس ؓ) narrated that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said:

زن و أرجع

"Weigh and give a bit more than due"

(Abu Dawud & Tirmidhi)

Jaber narrates that Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "May Allah's mercy be on the person who is soft hearted as a seller and gives a bit more than due and a soft hearted buyer accepts even if it is a bit less."

(Bukhari)

Further Allah ﷻ commands us when we speak we must speak out the truth even if it is about your near relatives.

The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "False witnessing is like making partners with Allah" He repeated this thrice and then recited the following verse:

"Save yourself from the filthy belief of idol worshipping and false statements and making partners with Allah."

(Abu Dawud & Ibn Majah)

Burrída narrates that the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said: "There are three kinds of judges. One kind will go to heaven and the other two kinds to hell. The one who researches the matter at hand according to the Islamic conduct and tries his best to discover the truth to give a fair and correct verdict will go to heaven. The one who arrives at correct conclusions through knowledge and research but gives a wrong verdict will go to hell. Similarly, one who lacks knowledge or reasonable research in a matter and delivers the verdict with his ignorance will also go to hell."

The Quran guides about witnessing very beautifully:

وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

You should speak the truth even if it is against yourself, your parents or your near relatives.

Islam has the highest standard of conduct. Allah ﷻ says:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا

Animosity with a group should not prevent you from witnessing righteously or delivering a decision justly.

Hence we are advised to be very careful even in our daily routine conversations. We are not supposed to lie, backbite, or say anything which harms or hurts another individual or causes others' personal monetary loss.

Allah ﷻ commands us to fulfill our promises. Allah ﷻ says in surah Al-Baqarah # 177

وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا

The true believers fulfill their promise when they make one.

It is interesting to note that this verse is stating that it should be a matter of habit with the believers to fulfill their promises since the disbelievers casually do fulfill their promises. Similarly Allah ﷻ says Al-Ma'arij # 32

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

One indicator of the true believers is that *they fulfill their trust and covenants.*

Finally Allah ﷻ is saying to us that this is my Straight Path. Hence follow it. Do not follow other routes since they will divert you from the way of Allah.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud narrated, "One time the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ drew a straight line and said, 'This is the way of Allah ﷻ.' He then drew other lines around it and said, 'These are Subul. Satan is on each of these extra lines and he tries to divert people from the way of Allah ﷻ.' The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ then recited the verse from surah Al-Anam quoted in the beginning."

(مسند دارمي)

Let us summarize and make some general observations about these three verses from surah Al-Anam.

FIRST VERSE:

The first verse describes five commandments.

- not to make partners with Allah ﷻ.
- obey parents.
- not to kill children (spiritually).
- to guard against immoral behavior.
- not to kill somebody unjustly.

Then Allah ﷻ said: "So that you may understand." Since these were not considered bad before the dawn of Islam. Allah ﷻ is advising us to leave these ideas of times of ignorance and come to our senses.

SECOND VERSE:

The second verse describes four commandments:

- not to devour the orphan's wealth.
- to weigh correctly.
- speak and stand for truth.
- to fulfill promises.
- Follow the straight path of Allah ﷻ.

These items are such basic truth that anyone can see the good in them. However most of us are very careless about these things. The solution for carelessness is reminder. Hence Allah ﷻ says at the end of this verse, "So that this guidance may serve as a reminder for you."

THIRD VERSE:

In the third verse we are asked to follow the straight path and avoid other paths. This can only be done by being conscious of Allah ﷻ and by trying to achieve piety. Hence in these verses there are ten commandments. These three verses are very important. Ka'ab Ahbaar ؓ was a Jew and well versed in the Torah. He said after accepting Islam:

"The Torah starts with these ten commandments mentioned in the Qur'an in the above three verses. These are the ten commandments which were revealed to prophet Moses ؑ."

Abdullah bin Abbas ؓ said that these are آیات محکمت clear

revelations which are mentioned in surah Al Imran. Furthermore all codes of conduct from Prophet Adam ﷺ to Prophet Mohammad ﷺ consisted of these ten commandments and were not canceled in any Shari'ah.

In tafseer of Ibn Kather, it is narrated by Abdullah Bin Masud ؓ that if any one wants to see the will of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ with his seal on it, he should read these three verses of Surah of Al-Anam.

Similarly Hakam described it as was narrated by Abada Bin Samat ؓ, that one day the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ addressed his companions and asked, "Who will give his pledge to me on these verses"? He then recited these three verses of Surah Al-Anam and then said, "One who will fulfill his pledge is ensured his reward with Allah ﷻ. I pray to Allah ﷻ to enable us to follow the will of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ.

Spending in the way of Allah ﷻ

Spending in the way of Allah ﷻ is one of the important characteristics of a true believer. Allah ﷻ not only commands us but motivates us in a beautiful way. For example Allah ﷻ says in Al-Baqarah # 265

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ
كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَثَمَرَاتُهَا أُكُلَتْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا
وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾

And the likeness of those who spend their wealth in the search of Allah's pleasure, and the strengthening of their souls, is as the likeness of a garden on the height. When the rainstorms strikes it, it brings forth its fruits twofold and if rainstorm does not strike it then a little shower is enough. Allah ﷻ is Seer of what you do.

It is easy to talk about spending for the sake of Allah ﷻ, but it requires a considerable amount of will power to do so. Hence spending in this way strengthens the soul and morale of a person. Furthermore even a tiny spending with true sincerity is enough to earn a big reward from Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ motivates us in Surah Al-Hadeed # 7 in a different way:

ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ؕ وَأَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا جَعَلَكُمْ مُسْتَخْلِفِينَ فِيهِ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَأَنْفَقُوا لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾

Believe in Allah ﷻ and his messenger and spend of what Allah ﷻ has made you trustees. Hence those of you who are believers and spend, there will be great reward.

Here Allah ﷻ is explaining to us, that whatever we have was owned by someone before us. Similarly whatever we have now will be owned by someone else after us. Hence we have temporary custody of it or we are only acting as trustees. Hence we should have no hesitation in spending from whatever is in our temporary ownership. Secondly, it is

made clear that only those who are believers and spend in the way of Allah ﷻ will have a great reward from Him. We conclude that if a disbeliever spends in charity he will have no reward from it on the Day of Judgement although he may get some kind of reward in this world.

In Surah Al-Hadeed # 10 Allah ﷻ says:

وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

What hesitation should you have in spending in the way of Allah ﷻ when everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Allah ﷻ.

Here is another interesting way to motivate and guide us to spend in the way of Allah ﷻ. For example do any one of us own any part of the Heavens? Obviously not. In fact all Heavens belong to Allah ﷻ alone. Exactly in the same way whatever is on the earth truly belongs to Allah ﷻ although we erroneously say "This is my car, my house or this is my clinic." Allah ﷻ by bringing the word heavens along with earth is explaining to us that just like everything in the heavens belongs to Allah ﷻ. everything in the earth also belongs to Allah ﷻ. We should have no hesitation in spending in the way of Allah ﷻ from what already belongs to Allah ﷻ. Hence Allah ﷻ invites us: Al Hadid # 11

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَكُمْ وَلَهُ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ

Who is ready to give a sincere loan to Allah ﷻ so that He can double it for him and give him a generous reward beyond it.

What do we mean by a big reward *أجر كبير* or a generous reward *أجر كبير*. This can best be understood by examining the following verse from Surah An-Naba # 36

جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءً حِسَابًا

There is reward for you from your Lord and an additional gift according to your (sincerity).

The bounties of paradise far exceed the reward we deserve for good deeds. Hence in addition to a reward there is a gift from Allah ﷻ. The size of the gift is according to the sincerity and intention. Allah ﷻ calls it a big reward or a generous reward in various parts of Quran. Hence we will be rewarded for spending in the way of Allah ﷻ according to the

intentions and sincerity.

Anas رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "If a person has a valley full of gold he will not be satisfied. This person would like to have another valley full of gold. As a matter of fact only the dust of the grave can fill the mouth of a person."

(Bukhari)

Ubbi bin Kaab said that this hadith was repeated so often, we thought it was part of the Quran till Surah Al-Takathur # 1-8 was revealed where Allah تعالى says:

أَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَنتَ كَاتِبًا ۝١ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ۝٢ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٣
ثُمَّ كَلَّا سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٤ كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ ۝٥ لَتَرَوُنَّ
الْجَحِيمَ ۝٦ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ ۝٧ ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ
النَّعِيمِ ۝٨

The mutual rivalry diverts you. Until you visit the graves. Nay! you shall come to know! Again nay! You shall come to know. Nay! If you knew with sure knowledge. Verily, You shall see the blazing fire! And again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then on that day you shall be asked about the delights (you indulged in, in this world)!

Ibn Omar narrates that one time Prophet Mohammad صلى الله عليه وسلم addressed his companions and said, "You should recite 1000 verses of Quran every day." The companions said, "Maybe someday we can't recite 1000 verses of Quran." The Prophet said, "Can't you read Surah Al Takathur"

(Al-Mazhari)

It means the message in this surah is equivalent to 1000 verses. Hence it is human weakness to accumulate and hold more and more untill our deathbed. It is however obligatory for a believer to pay Zakat which is 2-1/2 % of the income of a person's income. Allah تعالى mentions this Zakat along with Salat in the Quran most of the time. In other words even Salat is not accepted till Zakat is paid. Caliph Abu Bakr understood this the best. He sent forces against those who refused to pay Zakat although they were performing Salat and observing Fasting.

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Muzzamil # 20

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

Establish prayer and pay Zakat and give a sincere loan to Allah ﷻ.

Here Allah ﷻ is guiding us to not only to pay Zakat but to pay additional charity sincerely. Characteristics of true believers are mentioned in various parts of the Quran. Allah ﷻ says In Surah Az-Zariyat # 17-19

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ

حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾

They used to sleep very little in the night and before the dawn of each day would seek forgiveness and in their wealth there is a share for beggars and the poor.

Similarly Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Ma'arij # 24, 25

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾

And in their wealth they acknowledge well defined portion for the beggar and the destitute.

This well defined mathematically known portion is fixed by Allah ﷻ for all times in the form of Zakat which is 2-1/2 % of the income. Allah ﷻ also mentions in Surah Al-Insan # 8,9

وَيُطْعَمُونَ عَلَىٰ حَيْثُ مَسْكِنًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ

مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿٩﴾

And they provide food for the needy, the orphan and the prisoner for the love of Allah ﷻ alone. (Saying) "We feed you, for the sake of Allah ﷻ only. We wish no reward or thanks from you."

Sometimes we wonder why Allah ﷻ made Prophet Mohammad ﷺ an orphan. Allah ﷻ knows best. Perhaps one reason could be that Allah ﷻ wanted to teach the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ what the life of an orphan was like. This was a necessary training for one who was going to be the mercy for the whole universe. *رحمة للعالمين*

The companions of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ had very spontaneous effect from the guidance of Allah ﷻ. For example you recall the verse Al-Imran # 92

لَنْ نَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا نَحِبُونَ

You cannot attain true piety unless you spend in the way of Allah ﷻ what you love the most.

As soon as Abu Talha ؓ أبو طلحة listened to this verse, he went running to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and gave his best garden in charity. Similarly Zaid bin Haris ؓ زيد بن حارثة gave his best horse in charity.

I pray to Allah ﷻ to enable us to pay Zakat and sadaqa punctually, sincerely and generously. Ameen.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BELIEVERS

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Jinn # 14

﴿14﴾ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَمِنَّا الْقَاسِمُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا

Whosoever accepted Islam has chosen very precisely the correct path.

Even after making such a realistic decision a muslim cannot say that he will go to paradise just like the Jews and Christians claim. The entry into paradise is only with the mercy of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says about the people of paradise in Surah Al-Imran # 107

﴿107﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And for those whose faces will become white, they will be in Allah's Mercy (paradise) therein they shall dwell forever.

Here the word mercy is used in place of paradise reminding us that entry into paradise is due to the grand mercy of Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ however guides us in Quran about the various characteristics of people who would be good candidates for paradise. These characteristics are mentioned in Surah Al Mumenoon and Surah Al Ma'arij. We will follow the wording of Surah Al Ma'arij # 19-21

﴿19﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿20﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ

﴿21﴾ مَنُوعًا

First of all Allah ﷻ makes a general statement about the mankind. Allah ﷻ says, "Most of the people are very impatient and when confronted with difficulty they are fretful. When Allah replaces this difficulty with good time they refuse to fulfill the rights of people and the rights of Allah ﷻ."

There is however an exception to this. There is a special group of people who do not behave like this and their characteristics are as follows.

Surah Al-Ma arij # 22-25

إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ
مَعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾

They establish prayer and in establishing their prayers they do so with regularity and consistency. Secondly, they spend a definite portion of their wealth for those who are beggars and destitute.

It is interesting to note that Allah ﷻ could have only said that they acknowledge the right of needy and the poor. Allah ﷻ, however, is saying that these believers spend a very precise, well defined and mathematically known portion of wealth for the needy and the poor. In other words they always pay Zakat which is fixed two and a half percent for all times. Abu Bakar ؓ understood the meanings of this verse the best. He sent forces to crush those who refused to pay Zakat even though they established Salat. It is said that the Salat of a person is not accepted untill Zakat is paid. That is why Allah ﷻ mentions Salat and Zakat together in the Quran most of the time. Allah ﷻ further guides us to pay charity in addition to paying Zakat in various verses of Quran. Surah Al-Muzzammil # 20

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

And perform As-Salat and give Zakat and lend to Allah a goodly loan.

The next characteristic of this special class of people is that they believe in the Day of Judgement not by just lip service but with a sense of accountability on the Day of Judgement for their deeds. For example those people who will be given their account in their right hands on the Day of Judgement, will say that the secret of their success was as in verse 20 below. Surah Al-Haqqah # 20

إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلْقٍ حِسَابِيَّةٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my account.

Surah Al-Ma'arij # 26,27,28

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿28﴾ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ

And those who believe in the Day of Recompense and those who fear the torment of their Lord. Verily! The torment of their Lord is that before which none can feel secure.

Hence the next characteristic of these people is that they are always fearful of the punishment of Allah ﷻ. When companions listened to this verse they asked Prophet Mohammad ﷺ "Oh Prophet ﷺ! Are you also fearful of the punishment of Allah ﷻ", He replied, "Yes, even I am afraid of the punishment of Allah ﷻ since nobody can consider himself above the punishment of Allah ﷻ."

Hence, no practicing muslim can boast about his Islamic practices. He should rather act more and more humbly and be fearful of the punishment of Allah ﷻ. Further Allah ﷻ says Al-Ma'arij # 29-31

﴿29﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ

﴿30﴾ مَلُومِينَ ﴿31﴾ فَمَنْ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ

The next characteristic of these people is: And those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts from illegal sexual acts) except from their wives or the women slaves whom their right hands possess - for (then) they are not blame worthy. But whosoever seeks beyond that, then it is those who are trespassers.

Hence any other forms of sexual satisfaction will be totally out of line and unacceptable by Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says in Al-Ma'arij # 32

﴿32﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ

Another characteristic of these people is that *they keep their pledges and covenants.* Betrayal of trust and breaking of a promise are big sins.

Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, "Promise is a kind of loan which one must repay." Al-Ma'arij # 33

﴿33﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ

And those who stand firm in their testimonise.

It also means that they keep in their minds the promise made to Allah ﷻ on acceptance of Islam. Al-Ma'arij # 34

﴿34﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

And those who guard their Salat well.

Here Allah ﷻ says that these people are very attentive to their Salat and perform it with all Faraidh and Sunan.

It is interesting to see that Allah ﷻ started these characteristics with establishing of prayers and finished with the same. It becomes very clear that Salat is the most important in the eyes of Allah ﷻ, That is why everybody will be first asked about Salat on the Day of Judgement and if they fail in this test nothing else will be accepted. Al-Ma arij # 35

﴿35﴾ أُولَئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ

Allah is giving the verdict that people with the characteristics mentioned above will be honored in the gardens of paradise. It appears that there are many things a person has to do to be a reasonable candidate for paradise. In fact, if one does one of these things sincerely all others can be accomplished automatically and easily. If a person uses this total prescription he will, with the mercy of Allah, enter paradise. May Allah give us strength to follow this prescription fully.

The most important gift from Allah ﷻ to mankind is to provide it with guidance which leads it out of various forms of darkness into light. Allah ﷻ is extremely happy if we make use of the guidance. Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Ahzab # 43,44

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّوْرِ وَكَانَ

﴿43﴾ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿44﴾ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ سَلَامٌ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا

Allah ﷻ sends his blessing on you and His angels too so that He may bring you out from depth of darkness into light. And He is ever Most Merciful to the believers. They will be greeted with Salam when they meet Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ has prepared a very generous reward for them.

Allah ﷻ says to the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ again in Al-Ahzab # 47

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾

And announce to the believers the glad tiding, that they will have from Allah a Great Bounty.

May Allah ﷻ count us among those who will have this Great Bounty of Allah ﷻ. Ameen.

QIBLAH

What does QIBLAH mean? It literally means the direction of attention. Qiblah means prayer direction

Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Baqarah # 115

﴿115﴾ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And to Allah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn yourself or your faces there is a face of Allah. Surely! Allah is All sufficient for His creatures' needs, All Knowing.

It seems that no particular direction needs to be fixed to worship one God. If there was no fixed direction physically speaking, anyone could face any direction at any time.

What is the wisdom in fixing a QIBLAH? We know that fasting and remembrance of Allah ﷻ are individual acts of worship. Salat and Hajj are congregational acts of worship. In fixing QIBLAH, it was intended to point out and teach the manners and etiquettes of group dynamics. The most important principle for the unity and solidarity of a group is having one sense of direction, which is above racial, tribal, geographic, linguistic and country of origin. Allah ﷻ chose the QIBLAH to solve this issue since other choices divide rather than unite the nations. Islam is the religion of all prophets. Hence one and only one direction of worship points out the oneness of the teaching of all the prophets.

The oneness of the QIBLAH for all people of the world brought about unity and uniformity among them. This instruction was very easy to follow by men and women, educated and uneducated, rural or urban, rich and poor alike. This shows how simple and beautiful Islam is.

Note if this decision had been left to the people there would have been great disagreements. But Allah ﷻ through His mercy decided this once for all, to help unite and bring about uniformity in muslim nations. Hence, when Adam ؑ came to earth, the foundation of the House of Allah ﷻ was laid down by the angels. The QIBLAH for Adam and his progeny was this very QIBLAH. Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al-Imran # 96.

﴿96﴾ إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ

Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bakkah (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-Alamin (mankind and jinn).

Everyone followed the QIBLAH until the time of Prophet Noah عليه السلام. It was destroyed during the floods at the time of the Prophet Noah عليه السلام. Later, Ibrahim عليه السلام and Ismail عليه السلام reconstructed it under the command and guidance of Allah ﷻ. It was also the QIBLAH for them and their followers. Later Al-Quds was fixed as the QIBLAH for some of the prophets from Israelites. These prophets while praying in Al-Quds used to face it in such a way that both Al-Quds and house of Allah ﷻ were right in front of them.

Again as narrated by Al-Qurtabi, when prayers were made obligatory for the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ and his followers, initially, the QIBLAH was the same as for his forefather, Ibrahim عليه السلام. After Hijra to Medina, and according to some scholars just before Hijra to Medina, Allah ﷻ ordered him to face Al-Quds. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ used to stand between Hajr-e-aswad and Rukn-e-yameni so that both the House of Allah ﷻ and Al-Quds were in front of him. According to a hadith in Bukhari, the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ offered salah in Medina facing towards Al-Quds for sixteen or seventeen months. He ﷺ was totally submitted to the commands of Allah ﷻ. However, he wished that the QIBLAH would be the one as it was for Adam عليه السلام and Ibrahim عليه السلام. Allah ﷻ fulfills the wish of His chosen people. The Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was very hopeful that this wish of his would be fulfilled. He used to wait for revelations and looked towards the sky again and again for it. Allah ﷻ says in Surah Al Baqarah # 144

قَدْ زَرَى تَقَلُّبُ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ

الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ

Verily! We have seen the turning of your face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid-Al-Haram (at Makkah).

In this way, Allah ﷻ fulfilled the wish of the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ

❦. Note here the word *شطر* means that the people praying in other countries should try their best to face towards this mosque but do not have to be exactly towards the cubic structure. However, those who are seeing the house of Allah ﷻ must face exactly towards it during salat.

As soon as the Jews of Medina found that the QIBLAH for the Muslims is Masjid-al-Haram and not Al-Quds, they not only joked and made fun of it, but also were alarmed by this change. As long as Muslims were using the QIBLAH used by the Jews, Muslims were somewhat acceptable to the Jews. Now separated, the QIBLAH meant that Muslims were a separate and distinct nation. Hence, the Jews accelerated their opposition against the Muslims and regarded them as enemies. Allah ﷻ says Al-Baqarah # 177

❦ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ

Turning your face to the east or the west is not piety but the real piety is submission to the will of Allah ﷻ.

The characteristics of both Al-Quds and Masjid-il-Haram are none other than what Allah ﷻ has given them, dignity and status.

Even among the prophets, Allah ﷻ has made some excel above others in certain ways. Allah ﷻ says in Al-Baqarah # 253

❦ تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ

Those Messengers! We preferred some to others.

Hence these two holy places have no other qualifications except that Allah ﷻ exalted and excelled them over others. Again Allah ﷻ says in surah Al-Baqarah # 115

❦ وَاللَّهُ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

And to Allah belong the east and the west so wherever you turn there is the Face of Allah. Surely! Allah is All sufficient for His creatures' needs, All knowing.

Hence it is not the direction, but the demonstration of submission to the will of Allah ﷻ that is important in following a direction.

This change of QIBLAH further brought out clearly that the Al-Quds or Masjid-al-Haram are not some form of idols, but the real

purpose is to submit to the will of Allah ﷻ. The will of Allah ﷻ may direct to Al-Quds or Masjid-al-Haram. Submission to this command with full mind and heart is a must.

Another major benefit in the change of the QIBLAH was to sort out the hypocrites from the sincere muslims. Allah ﷻ says in Al-Baqarah # 143

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى

عَقْبِهِ

“And we made a Qiblah which you used to face, only to test those who followed Prophet Mohammad from those who would turn on their heels.”

According to a hadith in Musnad Ahmed which is narrated by Aisha ؓ the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ said, “The people of the Book are jealous of the Muslims for three reasons:

First of all, Allah ﷻ has fixed a day for worship each week for all the previous ummah. Saturday for Jews and Sunday for Christians and hence Friday was chosen for the Muslims. Secondly, this change of the QIBLAH. Thirdly, to say Ameen after the Imam. The people of the Book are deprived of all of these features.”

Note sometimes the Sunnah is canceled by the Quran, and if it is not canceled then the validity of the Sunnah is the same as the Quran. For example, initially the direction of the QIBLAH is not mentioned in the Quran. Muslims followed the Sunnah. Then it was changed by the Quran. But the Qur'an asserts that the prayers offered by the Sunnah are not lost.

According to a hadith in Bukhari and Muslim, the change of the QIBLAH took place while Mohammad ﷺ was praying ASR, though some narrations say Dhur (as mentioned in Ibn-Katheer).

Some companions finished their salat with Prophet Mohammad ﷺ. They noticed that their brothers were praying in their neighborhood mosque facing Al-Quds. The companions loudly informed them that we have just prayed with the Prophet Mohammad ﷺ facing Bait-allah. They turned their direction during prayer, without any fussing or questioning

whatsoever. This incident brings out the point that in Islam the credibility of one person as a witness is sufficient in some cases.

The change of the direction of the QIBLAH reached Quba the next day. As mentioned in Bukhari and Muslim that the people of Quba also changed their direction during the prayer on hearing the announcement even from one individual. It also shows how much mutual respect, confidence and trust the companions of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ enjoyed and practiced.

According to a hadith in Bukhari narrated by Ibn-e-Azib when the QIBLAH was changed to Masjid-al-Haram, the people asked the Prophet ﷺ about the Muslims who had passed away and followed Al-Quds as the QIBLAH. Allah ﷻ answered it in the above verse verifying that their prayers are not lost rather fully accepted by Allah ﷻ. Al-Baqarah # 143

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ

And Allah would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost.

It is interesting to note that the word 'Eeman' is used in place of salat in this verse. Hence there is no Eeman (or faith) without establishing the salat. In other words salat is the indicator of Eeman of a person.

May Allah ﷻ enable us to establish salat regularly and thereby strengthen our Eeman. May Allah ﷻ unite all muslims of the world who follow the one same QIBLAH. Ameen.

Kenya

Dear Sir,

Salaam Aleikum.

My name is Mahmood Nurani and I am a Memon from Kenya. I have come across a copy of your book and have really felt satisfied that such difficult topics can be handled in the way you have done.

I am a member of Muslim Hearts which is a small friends circle. We meet at least once a week pray the Quran and have a small session where one of us reads something on Islam in English. I am also a member of our community's bimonthly publication (for private circulation to Memon). I wish to take your permission to use your speeches wholly or partly as and when required for our groups reading as well as part publication in our community's newsletter

Thanking you, I pray that Allah (SW) be happy with your work and may it help you and all who read it to achieve the best in this world and in the hereafter. Ameen.

Wasalaam.

Mahmood Nurani

U.S.A

Dear Uncle Imtiaz,

I borrowed a copy of your book from a friend of mine and enjoyed reading it a lot. Matter of fact, so much so, that I would like to buy a copy for myself.

Currently I am a post-graduate student at Seattle University here in Seattle, Washington. I has also been treasurer in the Muslim Student Association here and feel this book would be a valuable asset to our library.

Here is my address:

Irfan M.Jafrey

218 NE 175th st.

Seattle, WA98155

Please let me know what I should do to get a copy of your book. Thanks

Irfan Jafrey

Ghana

Dear Sir,

Assalamu Alaikum.

This is the voice of Shaibu Mohammed writing to you from far away Ghana. My main aim of writing to you is to acquire a very good knowledge of the Islamic Religion as I need to know more about my worship.

In view with that I came across a book entitled "Speeches for an inquiring Mind" with a friend of which I enjoy reading but unfortunately my friend took the book away and gave me the address to write to the company for a copy of the said book.

I may need more books from your company but first and foremost, I would like to know much about the book of which I am writing you without any delay.

I hope to receive an early reply to this letter.

Yours faithful,

Shaibu M.Osabutey.

No. 1297 GWAMMAJA QUARTERS,
C/o P.O.Box 13951
KANO STATE, NIGERIA
23rd April, 2001.

Intiaz Ahmad,
P.O.Box 2079,
Madina Munawwara
Saudi Arabia.

Assalamu Alaikum

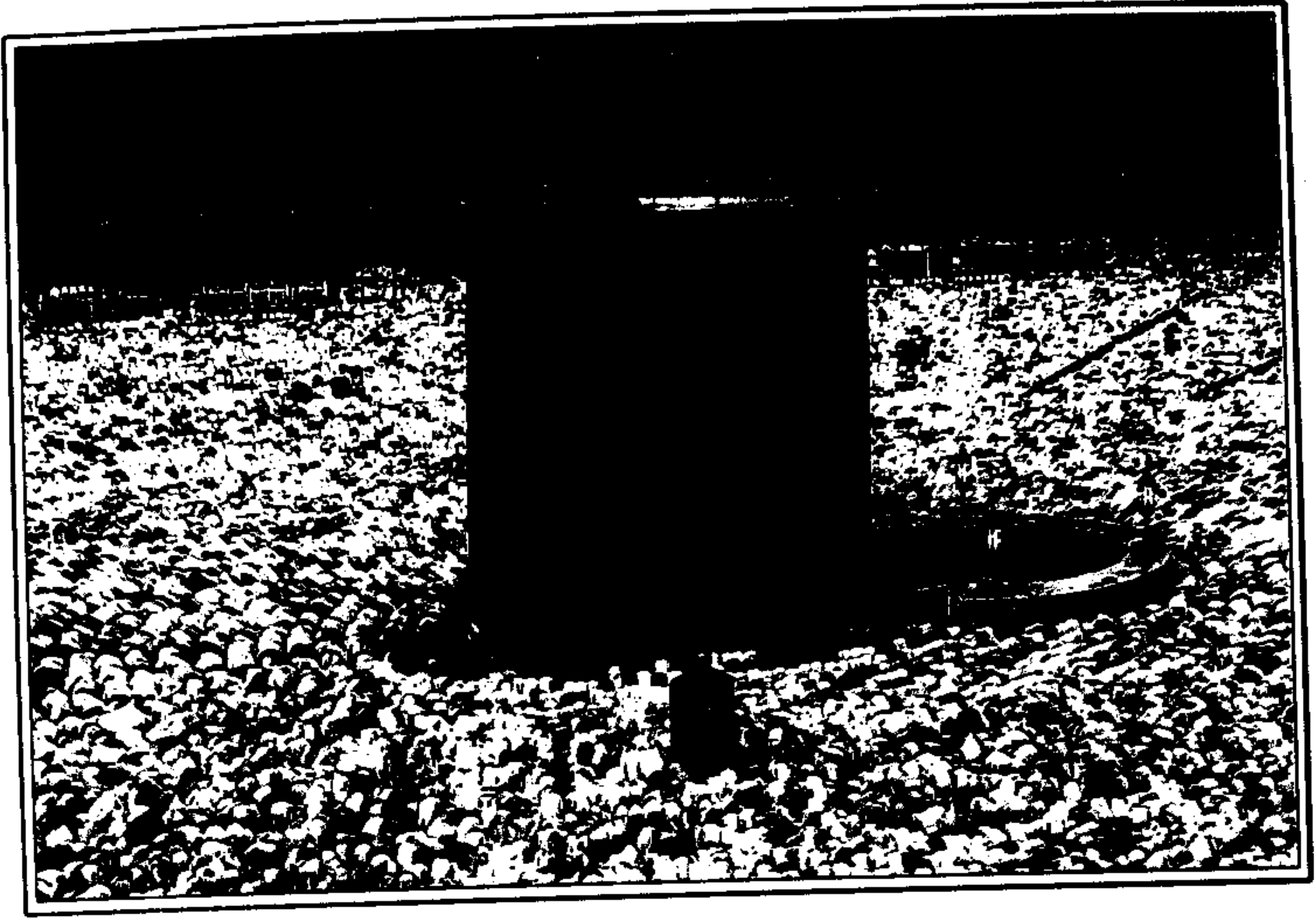
I am very glad to start writing this letter in Islamic manner. How are you? I hope you are fine. If so, thanks to the Almighty Allah.

However, the purpose of this letter is to inform you that I met with one of your publications, named "Speeches for an Inquiring Mind". Sincerely speaking you have done a Weldon job, because I found the book very interesting and attractive.

In addition, sir, I read the book and I learnt many things, which consequently some of my friends benefit from the book, because the book contains and covers every aspects of human life.

An lastly, sir, if possible I want you to send me a copy of one of the Islamic Universities admission form, such as university of Riyadh or Ummul Qurah University of Mecca. Because I want to further my education. More grease to your elbow. May Allah (S.wT) reward you wit Al-Jannatul Firdausi for your great contribution towards the development of Islam. Ameen.

Assalamu Alaykum
Yours Faithfully,
Ibrahim Musa Gwammaja



This book is an earnest attempt to condense maximum matter enriched with Quranic injunctions, Hadith and a few touches of Fiqa in an easy language and to make the intricate issues to reconcile with simplest possible diction.

This amazing book contains directions for national survival and it covers every aspect of national life.

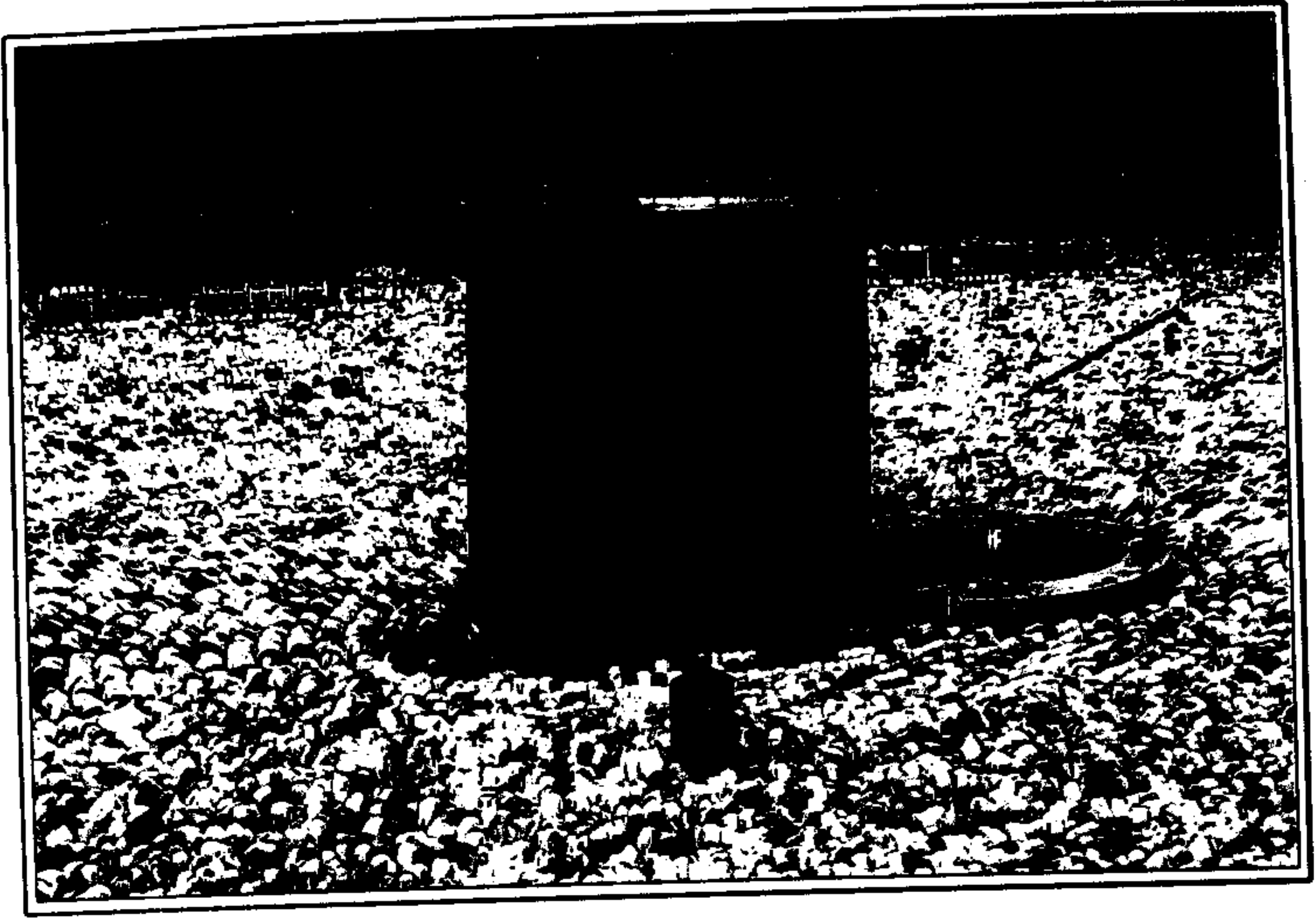
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S. Labademand

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