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Surah Al-Baqarah
Part I (Ayahs 1-75)

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For an introduction to our tafsirs and for a discussion of the Basmallah, which is the first ayah of this Surah, please see our tafsir of *Surah Fatihah*, which is also on Quran-Tafsir.org



2. Alif. Lam. Meem.

In this ayah Allah (swt) only says three letters of the Arabic language. These letters which begin some of the Surahs of the Quran are known as *Huruf muqatt'at*. No one knows their true meaning except Allah (swt). For our part we simply have to believe that they are from Allah (swt) and so we accept that they are a part of the Quran. It is not right for us to question their purpose if Allah (swt) did not reveal their purpose. Allah (swt) has told us in Surah Al-Imran that there are certain ayahs in the Quran that are known as *Mutashabiyat* ayahs, these are ayahs whose true meaning is only known to Allah (swt). Since our knowledge is very limited and since Allah (swt) has not told us about these ayahs we should not delve into their meaning. Part of our submission to Allah (swt) is for us to recognize the limits of our knowledge and the limits of our intellect and to not question or think into those issues that we do not know about. So the safest position concerning these ayahs is to say they are from Allah (swt) and their meaning is Known Only to Allah (swt).

Some scholars have said that even though we do not know the meaning of these letters, we do know their purpose. They say that that the purpose of these letters is to remind the Arabs and in fact all mankind that this Quran is in the Arabic language. In other Surahs of the Quran, for example in Surah Yusuf, Allah (swt) explicitly mentions that this is an Arabic Quran. The

scholars say that these letters serve the same purpose as those ayahs, that is to remind the people that this Quran has not been revealed in some ancient or alien language but it has been revealed in pure Arabic. The reason why Allah (swt) reminds the people that this is an Arabic Quran will become clear in ayah 24. That is the ayah where Allah (swt) challenges all of mankind to produce even one Surah like the Surahs in Quran. Allah (swt) challenges all of mankind and tells them that if they had any doubt whatsoever that this Quran was from Him (swt), then they only had to produce one small Surah like the Surahs the Quran contains. So with these letters Allah (swt) is reminding the people of this challenge and telling them that this Quran is in a language that they know. If it is really from the mind of a human being then why are they unable to reproduce it? Why can they even not produce one small Surah? Thus we see that by placing these Arabic letters at the beginning of these Surahs Allah (swt) reminds us that this is an Arabic Quran. Allah (swt) also reminds us that it could only have come from Him (swt) because no one can face the challenge of the Quran and produce a Surah similar to it. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how it was common practice at the time of the Prophet (saw) for poets and orators to begin their works with some letters from the Arabic language. So when the Quran was revealed no one questioned the purpose of these letters. Its usage was accepted by both the companions of the Prophet (saw) and the enemies of this Message, both of whom were experts in the Arabic language. It was only later when the use of these letters in poetry and prose declined did some people question as to why Allah (swt) is beginning the Surahs of the Quran with these letters. Some people then started to give meanings to these letters that were not supported by any ayah of the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (saw). For example in this ayah, they would say "Alif" is for Allah (swt), "Lam" is for Gibreel and "Mim" is for the name of the Prophet (saw). But there is no evidence for this whatsoever from the Quran or the Sunnah, so how can we accept it? If Allah (swt) did not tell us the meanings of these letters, then who are we to put a meaning of them?

So in conclusion concerning these letters we simply accept that they are from Allah (swt). The general meaning that we can take from them is that they are a reminder to all people that

this Quran is in the Arabic language. This shows that the challenge of the Quran is open to all mankind because the Arabic language is still with us today. It is not an ancient or forgotten language. We also know that the use of these letters was something that was common at the time that the Quran was revealed and no one questioned their usage at that time. It was later that ignorant people started putting meanings for these letters because they could not explain their usage. We have to save ourselves from becoming like them. We have to save ourselves from speaking about the Quran or Sunnah without knowledge. So for our part we simply accept that they are from Allah (swt), and we do not question into their details. May Allah (swt) guide us to the knowledge that will benefit us and protect us from knowledge that will not benefit us!

May Allah (swt) guide us to the knowledge that will help us to better worship and serve Him (swt) and save us from that knowledge that will distract us from that worship and servitude! All that should matter is worshipping and serving Allah (swt) so that He (swt) gives us His (swt)'s Pleasure. Every piece of knowledge that we learn should help us to reach the goal of the Pleasure of Allah (swt). If it does not, then we do not need it. May Allah (swt) guide us!

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

3. This is the Book in which there is no doubt. A guidance for the Muttaqoon.

This is the first ayah of the Surah that has a meaning that we can understand, so in many ways this really is the first ayah of the Surah. You can even say that this is the first ayah in the Quran. Why is this? It is because this is the first ayah that appears in the Quran after Surah Fatihah. Remember how Surah Fatihah was a prayer for guidance. The Quran is the answer to that prayer and this is the first ayah in that answer. So ponder deeply on the meaning of this ayah and think to yourself as to why Allah (swt) would make this ayah as the first statement in His (swt)'s response to your prayer.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by describing the Quran. There are two important attributes of the Quran that Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. The first is that this is a Book in which there is no doubt. The second is that it is guidance for the Muttaqoon. So in Surah Fatihah you were asking for guidance. In this ayah Allah (swt) is telling you that He (swt) has given you a Book that has no doubt in it. Allah (swt) also tells us you that this Book is your guidance, but in order to get the guidance that is in this Book you have to be among the Muttaqoon. So in this Book there is what will show you the purpose of your existence. But in order to receive it you must be among those who have *Taqwa*. You must be among those who always remember Allah (swt) and who fear Him (swt).

Just a note about the way in which this ayah is read in Arabic. Ibn Kathir said that when we are reading this ayah, it is better to stop after the words "fi-hi" rather than stopping after the word "rhayb". In this way the guidance becomes an attribute of the Quran rather than the Quran simply containing guidance. In other words the Quran does not simply have guidance but it IS guidance itself. So Insha Allah when we read this ayah it is better to read it in this way.

So first Allah (swt) tells us that this Book has no doubt in it whatsoever. Everything in the Quran is the Truth without even the smallest shred of doubt in it. When you want a Book to be a Book that you will live by, a Book that will be the manual for your existence, then would you ever want there to be any doubt in such a book? That is why first of all Allah (swt) tells us that this is a Book of Truth, a Book with no falsehood in it whatsoever. Everything in the Quran must be part of our 'Aqeedah. Our 'Aqeedah is the belief that we have in our hearts concerning which have no doubt whatsoever, the scholars say that our 'Aqeedah is tied into our hearts like a strong knot. Every single news or information that is presented in the Quran should be in our 'Aqeedah because everything in the Quran is certain with no doubt in it whatsoever. You should be as certain as to what is in the Quran as you are of your fingers that you see in front of you right now. This is what Allah (swt) means when He (swt) tells us that the Quran has no doubt in it whatsoever.

Then Allah (swt) describes the Quran as "**guidance for the *Muttaqoon***". The *Muttaqoon* are those who always have *Taqwa*. To have Taqwa is to always remember Allah (swt), it is to always remember that Allah (swt) Knows every single action that you do. This awareness that your Lord is watching you at this moment and that He (swt) will take you into account for everything that you say and do is what *Taqwa* is. It is a state of mind and it is those righteous actions that result from that state of mind. The people who are always remembering Allah (swt), the ones who know that He (swt) will call them to account for everything that they do, they are the ones who will strive never to do anything that is displeasing to Him (swt). They are aware of the fact that their Lord is always watching them so they strive to avoid anything that is displeasing to Him (swt). They always strive to their utmost for Allah (swt) to perform the actions that He (swt) is pleased with, and they strive to their utmost to restrain themselves from the actions that He (swt) is displeased with. This is because they remember Allah (swt) and they are afraid of standing before Him (swt) and having to account for their actions. They are afraid of being called to account for their sins by Allah (swt). That is why they try their best to save themselves from sin. To save themselves from being disobedient to Allah (swt). They are the ones who have Taqwa. They are the ones who are the *Muttaqoon*.

For such people the Quran is guidance. For them the Quran is the answer to their prayer when they called out to Allah (swt). Recall the prayer that we made in Surah Fatihah to Allah (swt) where we asked Him (swt) to guide us on how to worship and serve Him (swt). We asked Him (swt) to guide us to *Siratul Mustaqeem*. The Path of those actions that He (swt) is pleased with. The Path of the prophets, the true, the martyrs and the righteous. The Path of those who have earned His (swt)'s Pleasure and not the Path of those Who earn His (swt)'s anger or of those who go astray. The Quran is a guide to the Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s Paradise. To walk on this Path is to do the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with, and to stay away from the actions that He (swt) is displeased with. It is even to have the emotions and feelings that Allah (swt) likes and to remove from ourselves the emotions and feelings that Allah (swt) is displeased with. This is what the Quran shows us how to do and so

that is how it is guidance. A guidance to the purpose of our existence. A guidance to the Real and the True. Can you then imagine how important this Book is? May Allah (swt) allow all the sincere people in this Ummah benefit from this guidance that He (swt) has sent to us!

ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

4. The ones who have Iman in the *Ghayb*, and establish the Salah, and from what we have given them they spend.

We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told us that the Quran was guidance for the Muttaqoon. We said that the Muttaqoon are the ones who are always aware of Allah (swt), and as a result of that awareness they always try to do what is pleasing to Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what it is that is pleasing to Him (swt). This is what the Muttaqoon do that makes them eligible for the guidance that is in the Quran.

The first thing that the Muttaqoon do that earns the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is that they have Iman in the *Ghayb*. Linguistically the word *Ghayb* means anything that is hidden from the view of humans, anything that cannot be seen. But in this ayah Allah (swt) uses the word *Ghayb* to refer to everything in the unseen that He (swt) has told us about in the Quran. So the Muttaqoon are those who believe in what the Quran tells them even if it is in the unseen. The Quran gives us a lot of information that is from the *Ghayb*, it tells us about many things that we have not sensed at all. Examples of these are the Perfect Names of Allah (swt), descriptions of the Day of Judgment, descriptions of Paradise and Hellfire, and events of the previous prophets and the past nations. All of this is are things that we have never seen or heard of. For example you have never seen Paradise with your own eyes nor have you seen what happened when Musa

(as) went to Firaun, but you still believe in it even though it is in the unseen. So the first requirement that we have must fulfill to be worthy of this guidance is to have in Iman in everything that is in the Quran, even if it is in the unseen. When something is part of our 'Aqeedah then we have Iman in that thing. So to have Iman in what Allah (swt) tells us about in the Quran is to believe in it with utmost certainty. To believe in it without a shadow of doubt. As 'Ali (ra) once said "Even if I see the fire in front of me today, it would not increase my certainty in it". The meaning of this statement is that 'Ali (ra) already believed in the Hellfire with utmost certainty that even if he (ra) saw it with his own eyes it would not increase his (ra)'s belief in it. So the first condition that we must fulfill to be eligible for the guidance of the Quran is to believe in all that it has with utmost certainty. If we find ourselves reading an ayah of Quran and we doubt what it is saying in any way then we have already removed ourselves from that group of people that is eligible for the guidance that is in the Quran. In fact, we have even removed ourselves from being Muslim because part of the requirements of our 'Aqeedah is that we believe in everything that the Quran says without the shadow of a doubt. May Allah (swt) save us from having doubts! May Allah (swt) allow all of us to always have that level of certainty of what He (swt) has told us in the Quran!

All of the scholars agree that to have belief in what Allah (swt) revealed is a precondition to any of our actions. Before we do anything we must believe. There is nothing that is more important than belief, than Iman. Even the actions that we do for Allah (swt) must come from our belief in Him (swt) and from our belief in what He (swt) has told us through His Messenger (saw). The reason why we do our actions must be because we are aware that Allah (swt) is observing us and that He (swt) will take us to account for what we do. If we simply do righteous actions because they feel good to us, or to please some other human beings then we cannot expect Allah (swt) to reward us for that action. Our actions must be based on our belief in Him (swt). So we cannot underestimate how important it is for us to have the correct belief in Allah (swt) and all that He (swt) has told us in the Quran.

The second condition that we must fulfill to be eligible for the guidance that is in the Quran is that we establish Salah. Our prayer is the most important of all actions that we do for Allah (swt). Of all the commands that were ever given to us from Allah (swt), Salah is the only Law that Allah (swt) Himself told the Prophet (saw) about. All of the other laws in Islam, hundreds and hundreds of them, were revealed by the angel Gibreel (as). Salah is the only Law that was revealed by Allah (swt) directly to the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) met his Rabb on the *miraj*. This shows how important this command is for us to fulfill. The scholars all agree that there is no excuse whatsoever for a Muslim not to pray. If he cannot pray standing, he can pray sitting, if he cannot pray sitting, he can pray lying down, if he cannot move his hands while lying down, he can pray with his eyes. No matter what his condition is he must always pray.

We should also notice the verb that Allah (swt) uses. When Allah (swt) describes the Muttaqoon He (swt) does not simply say that they "make" Salah but He (swt) says that they "establish" Salah. This means that they make their Salah in the most perfect way. This means that the Salah must be made on time, it must be made with all the necessary preconditions such as having wudu, facing the qibla, covering the awra and so forth. It must also be made with tranquility and concentration. When you are standing and reciting the Quran, you should think about the words that you are reading. When you bow in *ruku* you must feel humbled before the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt). When you prostrate in *sujood* you must realize your nothingness and the absolute Perfection of Allah (swt). If you are praying one of the obligatory Salah then it is also best that you make it in congregation, and it is even better if that congregation is in the masjid. Thus we see that Allah (swt) is not simply telling us to make the Salah but He (swt) is calling on us to establish the Salah. So not only should we be among those who pray but we must be among those who constantly strive to improve their prayer. The Salah is a matter of great importance and so it must be implemented in a way that reflects its importance. Only then will you be among the Muttaqoon. Only then will you be among those who are eligible for receiving the guidance of the Quran.

Just a few of the many ahadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has stressed the importance of Salah include the narration of when a man once came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) as to what deed was most virtuous. The Prophet (saw) replied by saying "Salah made at the earliest time", the man asked again and again, and each time he got the same reply. The fourth time the Prophet (saw) finally replied "Jihad in the way of Allah". So we see from this hadith that the prayer made at the earliest time for that prayer is among the most beloved of acts to Allah (swt). There is also the hadith where the Prophet (saw) once gave the Sahabah (ra) a beautiful example by saying "If a person had a stream outside his door and bathed in it five times a day, do you think he will have any filth left on him?" The Sahabah replied by saying that he would not. The Prophet (saw) then said "That is like the five daily prayers. Allah wipes away the sins by them". These are just a few of the many hadith where the Prophet (saw) has told us the excellence of prayer. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember these words of our Prophet (saw)! May Allah (swt) make us always be constant in our Salah!

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to remember that Salah is the most important obligation that any Muslim has. If you find yourself being deficient in your Salah, for example you do not pray all or your Salah on time or you even miss your Salah or you always find yourself hurrying through your Salah such that it becomes like an exercise routine for you, then you have to realize what a grave situation you are in. You are failing to properly perform the most important command that Allah (swt) gave you. If this is your condition then before you start thinking about doing any work for Islam and the dawah you have to work on improving your Salah. Always think about Allah (swt) and think about all that He (swt) has done for you. Allah (swt) is the One Who created you and He (swt) is the One Who is sustaining you at this very moment. Remember how one day soon you will return to Him (swt). You will stand alone and naked before Allah (swt) and the first thing that He (swt) will ask you about is your Salah. If your Salah is not present then He (swt) will not look at any of your other deeds. Where then do you think that you will end up? May Allah (swt) allow us all to establish the Salah for our Rabb, the One to Whom we will all return!

The next condition that Allah (swt) tells us to fulfill in order to be being eligible for the guidance of Quran is to spend out of what He (swt) has given. This is the third action that the Muttaqoon do that makes them eligible to receive the guidance that is in the Quran. They spend out of what Allah (swt) has provided for them. Notice the significance of the language here. First Allah (swt) lets us know that the wealth that the Muttaqoon spend is something that He (swt) has given them. They are not spending out of something that they own, but they are spending from something that really belongs to Allah (swt). So by spending in the way of Allah (swt) they are giving the wealth that they have back to it's real Owner. Spending here could refer to the obligatory Zakat that is due on the wealth of all Muslims who are required to pay this, or it could refer to any voluntary spending that any Muslim does to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This could be spending on one's family, one's relatives and on the poor. Spending also does not need to be restricted to money. Anything that you have which you give away to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is considered spending. So it could be spending your time and efforts in this dawah. It could even be spending your time and efforts in earning a living if you do it for the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and to provide for your family as He (swt) has commanded you to do. Anything that you have which you give seeking only the Pleasure of Allah (swt) would qualify as what spending in this ayah refers to. Even a moment of your life where you simply stop and say "Al-Hamdulilah" to glorify and give thanks to your Rabb would be spending that moment in your life for Allah (swt). The key fact to keep in mind is that what we are spending does not belong to us. It really belongs to Allah (swt), so we should have no hesitation in spending it to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. May Allah (swt) enable us to spend everything that He (swt) has given us to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure!

Al-Qurtubi also brings our attention to the verb *yunfiqun* in this ayah. He notes how it is derived from the word *Nafaqa* which means to bring something out. So this word describes how we bring our wealth out from our pockets and spend it in the way of Allah (swt). It also similarly describes how Allah (swt) will bring out our reward and give it to us on the Day of Judgment. This shows us how the word that Allah (swt) uses matches the reality that He (swt) is describing

perfectly. In each and every word of the Quran you will find a similar deep and profound meanings. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to look for and discover these meanings that are in His (swt)'s Book!

As we have said, one of the ways we can spend our wealth in the way of Allah (swt) is to pay the Zakat that is obligatory on our wealth. This then brings us to the next most important obligation that Allah (swt) has laid down upon us after the Salah. That is the Zakat that is due on the wealth of all Muslims. As soon as the wealth that you have passes the *Nisab*, it becomes obligatory on you to spend a portion of it for Allah (swt). The *Nisab* is the amount of wealth that has to be exceeded in order for the Zakat to become obligatory. It is an obligation upon all Muslims who have wealth that is more than this *Nisab* to spend a portion of their wealth for Allah (swt) in Zakat. Allah (swt) brings our attention to the importance of Zakat in this ayah.

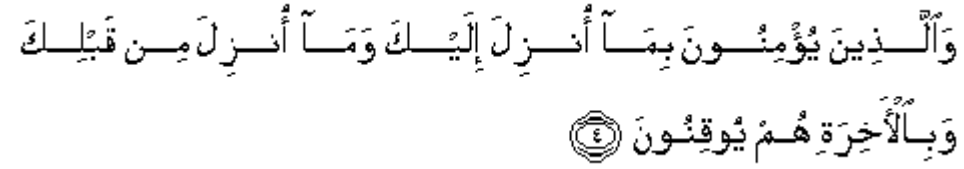
Unfortunately today we can see many Muslims are negligent of their Zakat. We see today in the Ummah that many Muslims, even those who are constant in their Salah and who fast in Ramadan and who make the pilgrimage, neglecting this obligation of Zakat. This is because the materialistic society in which we live puts in us such a love for wealth that we do not want to part with it for any reason. We see so much poverty and suffering in the world, that we are afraid that something similar would happen to our families if we give away our money for the sake of Allah (swt). When we have such thinking what we forget are four important facts. First is that we are on this earth only to worship and serve Allah (swt). That is all that should matter for us. So we should forget about the things of this world and we should focus on gaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Second is that the Zakat is an obligation so we have to do it no matter what. When an action is an obligation that is laid down by Allah (swt) then there can be no excuse for not performing that action. Thirdly we do not know the future so we cannot say for certain that we will be poor tomorrow if we give money in Zakat today. It could very well be that you will be poor tomorrow if you do not give Zakat and you may be rich tomorrow if you do give in Zakat. How can you claim to know the future? Finally when it comes to our wealth and our money we have to remember that it comes from Allah (swt). If we have our trust in Allah (swt) and spend in His

(swt)'s way, then we have to trust and believe that Allah (swt) will replace what we have spent with something that is even better, either in this life or the next. When we realize that Allah (swt) is the One Who is providing for us and not ourselves then we should never hold back in spending what Allah (swt) has made obligatory upon us.

If we still feel this desire to hold on to our wealth then we must remind ourselves of several narrations where the Prophet (saw) has told us about the importance of Zakat and the consequences of not paying it on our wealth. One especially terrifying hadith is when the Prophet (saw) brings our attention to the Day of Judgment by saying "Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay Zakat on his wealth, then on the Day of Standing his wealth will be made like a bald-headed poisonous snake with two poisonous glands. It will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks saying "I am wealth, I am your treasure". Can you imagine yourself in such a predicament? Can you imagine yourself being constricted by this huge snake that is biting you? The only way that you can save yourself from this monster is by giving your Zakat. May Allah (swt) save us from this reality! May Allah (swt) enable us to always pay Zakat on our wealth on the day that it becomes due!

Notice how in this ayah Allah (swt) describes the Muttaqoon as those who submit themselves to Him (swt) completely. Allah (swt) shows how the Muttaqoon submit to Him (swt) with their hearts and minds by believing with utmost certainty in all that He (swt) has told them in the Quran. They also submit to Allah (swt) with their entire body when they perform the Salah. In the sujood every single limb of their body is in prostration to Allah (swt). In the Salah everything that was permissible like eating and talking becomes forbidden, you must give your whole body for Allah (swt). Finally they submit to Allah (swt) with their wealth, provisions and time when they spend it in the way of Allah (swt). Giving it all way and never thinking about how much they are giving, caring instead only on earning the Pleasure of Allah (swt) with it! These are the Muttaqoon, they submit to Allah (swt) with everything that they have. They are the ones for whom the Quran is a guidance. They are the ones who realize the purpose of their existence. May Allah (swt) make us from among the Muttaqoon!

While all scholars agree that Surah Baqarah is one of the most important Surahs of the Quran, they say that the first four ayahs of this Surah, *Ayatul Kursi* and the two that follow it, and the last four ayahs are especially important and significant. Insha Allah we will discuss these ayahs when we come to them, but we should remember how the ayah that we are discussing now is among those first four. In his tafsir of this ayah Sayyid Qutb notes how these four ayahs describe the perfect model of the Muslim Community. We should remember that this Surah was revealed very soon after Hijra when the Prophet (saw) established the Islamic State in Madinah. So when that first community of believers was established in Madinah that was when Allah (swt) revealed these ayahs to describe how the Muslim Community should think and behave. The essence and the foundation of the believers are described in these four ayahs. Any believer, regardless of who he or she is, must have the characteristics that Allah (swt) is describing in these ayahs. They have to believe what is in the Quran with utmost certainty, they have to establish the Salah and they have to spend in the way of Allah (swt) out of what He (swt) has provided them. Once they do this then the believers are then joined by the strongest of bonds. Our belief, our salah and our spending in the way of Allah (swt) are the foundation of our lives. Everything that we do revolves around these actions. That is why Allah (swt) describes the believers as performing these actions. These actions are the cornerstone of our lives and it what unites our nation together.



5. And the ones who have Iman in all that was revealed to you and all that was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the description of the Muttaqoon. The ones for whom the Quran is a guide to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We saw in the previous ayah how Allah

(swt) told us that they have Iman in the Ghayb, they establish the Salah on time and with all of it's conditions, and they spend in what Allah (swt) has given them both in the obligatory Zakat and voluntary charity. Such was the description of the people who will receive the guidance from this Book. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with such a description.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us how they believe in all that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) is who is being referred to by the pronoun "you" because he (saw) was the only one who received the revelation of the Quran. Once again we see Allah (swt) stressing the importance of believing in all that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). Everything that we do is based on our 'Aqeedah, and we take our 'Aqeedah from the words of the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) is a man whom we believe and trust with utmost certainty has been sent to us from our Creator and Sustainer. So we believe in what he (saw) tells us even if it may seem to contradict the reality that we know. For example the Prophet (saw) told us about the time of Musa (as) and all of the miracles that Allah (swt) allowed him (as) to perform such as turning the sticks into snakes and making his hand glow white. Some one who does not have this trust in the Prophet (saw) may find these reports hard to believe. But we know that the Prophet (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), so everything that he (saw) has told us we believe in without a shadow of doubt. We would not believe such a story like the story of Musa (as) from any one else, but from the Prophet (saw), we believe in it with even more certainty than we believe in our own childhood.

Notice also that Allah (swt) uses the Arabic word "*ma*" to mean that we have to believe in everything that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). The Arabic word *ma* means "all" or "everything", there is nothing that can be excluded when this word is used. So Allah (swt) is describing the *Muttaqoon* here as the ones who believe in every single thing that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). The lesson that we can take from this is that we cannot pick and choose what parts of Islam that we want to accept. Everything that the Prophet (saw) told us, we have to believe that it is from our Creator and it is the Path on how to worship and serve Him (swt). We cannot pick and choose what we want to believe in. We cannot change Islam so that is suits our

desires or so that is suits the prevailing society in which we live. We have to believe in everything that comes from the Prophet (saw) as the guidance that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt), the goal that we are all seeking to attain.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the *Muttaqoon* also believe in what was revealed to the prophets and messengers before the Prophet (saw). Sayyid Qutb tells us how this part of the ayah clearly shows that the Message that was preached by all of the previous prophets and messengers was the same Message that was preached by our Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) creates a link between their nations and our nation and shows how it is really one nation of believers that goes back to the time of Adam (as) at the dawn of human civilization. Just as we believe that the Prophet (saw) received revelation from Allah (swt), we also believe that the previous prophets and messengers received revelation from Allah (swt). We believe in what was revealed to them just as we believe we believe in what was revealed to our Prophet (saw). So Islam is not a new religion, but it is the original religion, the true religion of man since the dawn of time.

However there is one important point that we have to bear in mind when we say that we believe in what was revealed to the previous prophets and messengers. Although we believe in all that was revealed to the previous prophets and messengers, we follow only the Law that Allah (swt) revealed to our Prophet (saw). The divine laws that Allah (swt) revealed for the previous nations is not applicable to our Ummah. The evidence for this is 49th ayah of Surah Maidah where Allah (swt) says, "For every one of you We have ordained a Divine Law and a methodology". The scholars say that this ayah is addressing the nations of the prophets, and Allah (swt) is telling us in this ayah that for each nation He (swt) appointed a Law and a methodology. Thus this ayah is a clear evidence that each nation was given it's own Law from Allah (swt). The Law of one nation is not applicable to another nation. So for example in Surah An'am, ayah 146 Allah (swt) tells us that the Jews were forbidden the fat of ox and sheep. Now of course this prohibition does not apply to our Ummah. We can consume such meat if we desire and it would not be a sin for us, but it would have been a sin for them to do so. Thus we see that they had their Law from Allah (swt) and we have our Law from Allah (swt). So although we

believe in everything that was revealed to the previous prophets as being from Allah (swt), we do not follow their Law. The only Law that we follow is the Law that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). This is the Law that was intended for our nation and Allah (swt) Knows best!

In addition we also have to remember that the scriptures which exist today with the Jews and Christians is not the same as what was revealed to the previous prophets. Allah (swt) Himself has told us in the Quran how the Jews and Christians changed the books of revelation that were sent to them with their own hands. They have put in these books stories and fables that are not only fabricated, but they are also completely contradictory to the reality and the truth. For example in their books they have put fabricated stories of the prophets committing sins and doing lewd and perverted actions. Sins that are so corrupted that they would not even be acceptable for any Muslim, let alone a prophet of Allah (swt). They made up stories of their prophets committing these horrible sins so that they can commit these sins themselves. They also changed the Law in their Book and made what was permissible as forbidden and what was forbidden as permissible. Paul changed the Christian scriptures to such an extent that he told the people that they did not need to follow the Sacred Law at all because "God was Love". So he told the people that they would be forgiven of all of their sins no matter what they did. Do you think this was what was preached by 'Isa (as)? But the worst corruption of all that is in their books is what they say about Allah (swt). We know how the Christians have ascribed a son to Allah (swt) and the Jews claim that He (swt) can make mistakes, may Allah (swt) protect us from such blasphemy and heresy! We do not even like to write such kufr in the same page as the Words of Allah (swt)! With such corruption and blasphemy in the books of the Jews and Christians, how can we ever accept anything that is in them? How can we distinguish between what is in them that is the Truth from Allah (swt) and what is in them that has been fabricated by these evil men? So the best course of action for us to follow is what the Prophet (saw) told us to do. If we find anything in their books that contradicts what is in the Quran or Sunnah, such as the ascribing of divinity to 'Isa (as), then we should automatically reject it. If we find something in their books that does not clearly contradict Quran and Sunnah then we should neither believe in

it nor reject it. The reason for this is because, even if it does not contradict the Quran or Sunnah, we still cannot be certain that it is from Allah (swt). It still may be something that was fabricated. Since the possibility exists that it is not from Allah (swt) we cannot accept it. Allah (swt) Knows best and we ask Him (swt) to guide us!

Mawdudi tells us that another condition that we need to fulfill in order to be eligible for the guidance that is in the Quran is that we must believe that Prophethood is the way in which we can be guided, both as individuals and as a society. In other words we must accept the fact that both as individuals and as a society we can only function properly if we follow completely the guidance that comes from the Prophet (saw). We all need guidance to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We all need guidance to properly live our lives. But we do not by ourselves know how to properly reach that goal. So we have to believe that the only way to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is to follow the Messenger (saw) that Allah (swt) sent. If we think that we do not need the Prophet (saw), that we can find out what is pleasing to Allah (swt) by ourselves or by some saint or wise man or imam, then we are no longer eligible for the guidance that is in the Quran. Allah (swt) has already told us that He (swt) has completed our Din in what He (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw), so what then could anyone else teach us? How could they show us anything more to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) that he (saw) has not taught us? So to be eligible for this guidance we have to believe that the way to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) can only be shown by prophets and messengers that He (swt) sends. Not only do we need to restrict ourselves to the guidance of the Prophet (saw) to receive the Pleasure of Allah (swt) but the guidance of the Prophet (saw) is the correct way for us to live as individuals and collectively as a society. When the Lord and Master of the universe has sent us a way in which we can live, can we then say that we can come up with a better way of life by ourselves?

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) describes the Muttaqoon as those who are certain of the Hereafter. The word that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah is *yaqeen*, which means certainty without the shadow of a doubt. We recall the narration of ʻAli (ra) where he (ra) said that he (ra) believes in the Fire as if he (ra) is seeing it right now, that is the level of certainty

that we must have about the Hereafter. The stronger our belief in the Hereafter is, the less will be our attachment to this world, and the less our attachment is to this world, the more serious and more diligent we would be in serving Allah (swt). So we see a direct link between certain belief in the Hereafter and being constant in worshipping and serving Allah (swt). It is our certainty in the Hereafter that makes us realize the limitation of our stay in this world. That realization should motivate us to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). Especially when we know that we are going to stand in front of Allah (swt) and be judged for each and every single one of our actions.

Mawdudi also reminds us that to be certain of the Hereafter is to realize what true success and failure is. When you realize that this world is only a temporary place that is doomed to destruction you will not get attached to it. You will not seek your success in it. You will not look for the final victory in it. Rather you will realize that the only purpose this world serves is to spend as many moments in it in worship and service to Allah (swt). That is the only purpose of this world. You are not in this world to satisfy your desires and lusts, if that is the thinking then you have then you have already failed in this test. Rather you are only on this world to prepare yourself for the Hereafter with as many deeds as possible that are pleasing to Allah (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this part of this ayah is that we must always be reminding ourselves that we are going to leave this world. As the Prophet (saw) told us, we must always remember the destroyer of pleasures and that is our death. The truth of the matter is that we all know that the Hereafter is a certain reality, Allah (swt) has told us about it in the Quran so many times. But what happens is that we fall so in love with the pleasures of this world, that we deceive ourselves into thinking that this world will never end. Shaitan comes and tricks us into thinking that we will live forever, or that our death will not be for many years. Then Shaitan reminds us how good it will feel when we satisfy our desires, and he tells us that we will have time to make repentance in the future. We must always be aware that these are tricks of Shaitan and as Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran the plan of Shaitan is weak. The emotions and the desires are no match for the firm conviction that we have in the reality of the

Hereafter. Our only task is to remind ourselves of the certainty of the Hereafter whenever Shaitan tries to prompt us with our desires. One day soon we will leave this world and we will be standing before Allah (swt). Then it will be told to us to either go to Paradise or to go the Hellfire. Either of these places then will be our final destination. We must be absolutely certain of this reality and when we do, then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will make us eligible for the guidance of the Quran. May Allah (swt) grant us that certainty in the Hereafter! May that certainty then make us constant in always abiding by the Law of Allah (swt)!

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝٥

6. These are the ones that are on guidance from their Rabb, and these are the successful.

This is the last ayah in this series of four ayahs where Allah (swt) described the true believers, the Muttaqoon, the ones who receive the guidance from the Quran. These are the ones whom we want to model in every aspect of our lives. Recall that as Surah Fatihah ended we stated our goal, and that was the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We asked Allah (swt) to guide us to the Straight Path of those whom He (swt) has blessed and not the paths of those who earn His (swt)'s wrath or of those who go astray. That is the goal that we said we would turn towards the Quran with. In these four ayahs Allah (swt) has given us the role model that we should strive to emulate if we want to reach that goal.

In these four ayahs we can clearly see that Allah (swt) is telling us that the Quran itself is that guidance which we seek. The Quran is the beacon of light that illuminates the Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). But to even be able to traverse this Path there are certain preconditions that we must fulfill. First we must believe in the unseen. We must have certainty in a reality that exists beyond what our senses can perceive. If we are not able to do that, then we have already disqualified ourselves from being able to benefit from the guidance that is contained in Quran. The second precondition that we must have is that we must be among those who

establish the Salah. If we are not among those who are constant in our prayers, and if we are not among those who at least try to make their prayer with concentration and humility, then we have again taken ourselves out of that group for whom the Quran was sent. The third precondition is that we must spend out of what Allah (swt) has provided us. If we are among those who love to hold on to our wealth even though it was Allah (swt) who gave it to us or if we are among those are stingy with our time, then we should not hope of receiving this guidance from the Quran. The next condition that we must fulfill is that we must believe in all that was revealed to the Prophet (saw) and all that was revealed to the prophets before him (saw). If we do not accept the fact that Allah (swt) sent guidance though prophets and messengers, or if we think that human beings can live without the guidance that comes through the messengers, then already we have disqualified ourselves from receiving the guidance that is in the Quran. The final condition that must be fulfilled is that we must have absolute certainty in the Hereafter. We must believe in the life after this one with as much certainty as we believe in this life. The Hereafter must become a reality for us. So just as you are certain that you will got to work or school tomorrow, you must be certain that you will stand before Allah (swt) on the Last Day. You must be certain that you will stay for all eternity in the Fire or the Garden. May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire and place us in the Garden! If we have any doubt in the Hereafter, if we think of it as merely stories, or even if we are unable to realize the sheer reality and inevitability of it, then we have disqualified ourselves from being eligible from the guidance that is in the Quran. How terrible would that be then? How terrible would it be if we ourselves disqualify ourselves from being eligible for the guidance of the Quran by failing to have these prerequisites? The Quran is the only beacon that lights the Path leading to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). How terrible would it be if we ourselves remove ourselves from this Path before we even start to walk it?

So we must strive with our utmost to have all of the preconditions that Allah (swt) has told us about in these four ayahs. None of it easy, it requires effort. But we have to remember that we are walking on a Path that leads to the most noble of purposes and that is to attain the contentment of the Lord and Master of the universe, can we expect such a Path to be without

effort? Can we expect such a Path to be without difficulties? So we have to tread this Path no matter how difficult it becomes. To give us strength we have to remind ourselves of the great reward that Allah (swt) promises for those who tread this Path. This reward is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. In this ayah Allah (swt) is telling us of the reward that we will get if we meet all of these conditions and if we tread this Path. So always remember this great reward when the treading of this path becomes difficult. Realize that there is nothing better in this world than this reward.

What is the reward that Allah (swt) gives for those who choose to tread this path? Those who strive to have the conditions that He (swt) told us about in the previous ayah? Allah (swt) says "**These are the ones that are on guidance from their Rabb**". What could be better than being on guidance from Allah (swt)? In the life of this world you will never feel lost or without direction. You will have clear purpose to your life. There will be a reason for your existence. What could be better than that? Can you even imagine the kind of life you would be living if you were not on guidance from Allah (swt)? You would think yourself to be only an animal, a descendant of a monkey, living this life only to satisfy your desires. You do not care you who you hurt or who you do injustice do. All that matters for you is satisfying your animal desires. Furthermore even while you are satisfying your animal desires you would be distraught and in despair because you do not know the true purpose of your creation. You do not know what will happen to you when you die, and you would always have that fear in the deepest corners of your mind that your death is coming closer and closer. Worst of all is that you would have been heedless of Allah (swt). This is the life you would be living were it not for the guidance of your Lord. Can you imagine a life for yourself without knowing Allah (swt)? How Perfect and Pure is Allah (swt) and how could you have ever lived without knowing Him (swt)?

So to be on guidance from Allah (swt) is to be saved from that existence. The more guidance that Allah (swt) gives you, the clearer your life becomes. The more guidance that you have, the more that each moment in your life you will know what will earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). There will be no confusion or no doubt in your life, for every second and for every choice

you will know what it is that pleases Allah (swt), and so you will know what to do. This then is the bounty of Allah (swt) and the gift of Allah (swt) for His (swt)'s sincere servants in the life of this world. This is the reward that Allah (swt) will give us if we met the preconditions and walk on the Straight Path. Guidance from Allah (swt) is the greatest of gifts in the life of this world. It is what leads to Allah (swt). It is what helps us to fulfill the purpose of our existence. So the best of rewards in the life of this world that we should hope for is the guidance from Allah (swt). This is especially true for the situation that Muslims face today. So low have we sunk, and so much has our understanding of this Din declined that only a few people can be said to fully understand this Din. Everyone else has some corruption or some weakness in their understanding of the Din. So in all this confusion that we find ourselves, we always have to pray to Allah (swt) to guide us to the Path that leads to His (swt)'s Pleasure. The guidance from Allah (swt) is the goal that we should all be seeking when we are in this world. This Quran is that guidance and to attain it we have to fulfill the preconditions that Allah (swt) has listed above. Once we have met the preconditions, once we have proven ourselves worthy, then Insha Allah Allah (swt) will grant us that guidance. That knowledge on how to please Him (swt). May Allah (swt) allow the sincere Muslims in this Ummah receive the guidance that is in the Quran!

Mawdudi makes a very important point in this matter by saying that if we want to make ourselves eligible to receive this guidance, we also have to implement the mission of the Quran in our lives. This is because the Quran was not revealed as a Book that to be read while you are reclining on your couch or to be studied in a monastery while you are detached from reality. Rather the Quran was revealed to raise a movement that will uproot the very foundations of the society that it was sent to. It was sent to completely transform a society that lived to serve the desires and passions of men into a society that submitted and worshiped the Creator and Master of the universe. For us to receive the guidance that is in the Quran, we have to take up this mission as well. We have to commit ourselves to this life of dawah to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and then to spread His (swt)'s Message to all mankind. A group or a movement needs to be formed that works towards such a goal. The details on the formation of such a group

are beyond the scope of this work. But what must be kept in mind is that the goal of such a movement must be to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land, and then to spread His (swt)'s Message to mankind. It is clear from the Seerah of the Prophet (saw) that such was his (saw)'s mission when he (saw) worked in the dawah. He (saw) worked to form a party that transformed a society that ruled by the laws of kufr into a society that submitted completely to Allah (swt). This is the exact same goal that any movement or group working for the dawah today must commit itself to. This is because the situation that we find ourselves in today is identical to the situation that the Prophet (saw) was in. We also find ourselves in a world of kufr and there is no land where the Law of Allah (swt) is fully implemented.

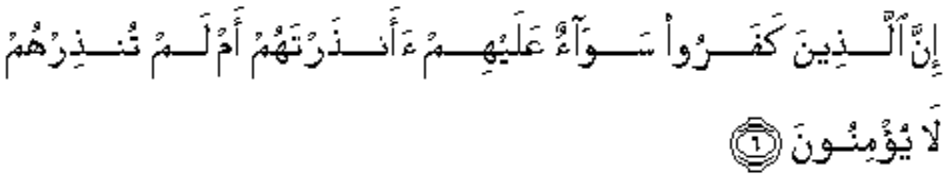
Now to establish the Islamic State is the goal of the movement, but the goal of the individual members within that movement should only be attaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The Pleasure of Allah (swt) is what we are all striving for, and this dawah is but one of many steps to reach that goal. But the Pleasure of Allah (swt) can only be obtained if we receive the guidance from Allah (swt) on how to properly serve and worship Him (swt). The guidance of Allah (swt) is the Quran. The Quran is the guidance that shows us how to worship and serve Allah (swt) in order to attain His (swt)'s Pleasure. But in order to get that guidance from the Quran we need to commit ourselves to this life of dawah. So when we work in this dawah we will be working to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and Insha Allah at the same time Allah (swt) will grant us the guidance of the Quran. This guidance then will allow us to obtain our goal. So you see how it is two way street, you work in this dawah to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and while you are working in this dawah, Allah (swt) will give you the guidance from the Quran in order to attain His (swt)'s Pleasure. May Allah (swt) allow all of us to live the mission for which the Quran was revealed, and in doing so to receive the guidance that it contains! May that guidance then illuminate the Path that leads to His Pleasure. Noting matters in this life except attaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt)!

In the second part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**and these are the successful**". So we see that the first reward that Allah (swt) grants for those who choose to have the conditions

mentioned in the previous ayahs and those who work in the dawah is that He (swt) grants them Guidance. He (swt) opens for them the doors of the Quran and lets the light of guidance flow out from it. With this Light He (swt) illuminates for them the Straight Path that leads to His (swt)'s Pleasure! The destination of this Path is the second reward that Allah (swt) gives them. The second reward is that Allah (swt) will make those who walk on this path to be among the successful. Allah (swt) describes His (swt)'s sincere servants in this ayah as the "successful". But what is the real success? Is it to be found in this world? Is it to obtain some position? Is it to make a six-figure salary? Is it to own a mansion? What is the success that Allah (swt) talks about in this ayah? If we read the Quran then we would know that the only real success and the only real failure is in the Hereafter. To be banished to the hellfire and to earn the Wrath of Allah (swt) is the real failure. To be granted the Garden and to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is the real success. So no set back or sorrow in this world should be considered a failure. Even if the dawah works for years and years without the Islamic State being established, as long as its members are sincerely seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and striving to the best of their ability then it should not be considered a failure. Similarly nothing in this world can considered a success, not the largest of mansions, not the most beautiful of wives, not the respect and admiration of all people, not even the establishment of the Islamic State, none of that is success. The only real success is to be admitted into the Paradise of Allah (swt) and to receive the Pleasure of Allah (swt). That is the only real success, and the attainment of that goal is all that any of us should care about. May Allah (swt) allow us to receive that goal, may we be among those who are the successful!

The description that Allah (swt) has given of the true believers or the Muttaqoon in these four ayahs is the ideal that we want to achieve. They are the ones who will benefit from the guidance of the Quran and they are the ones who will be successful in the Hereafter. Is there anything that is worth our life besides that? Is there any higher goal that we should be striving to achieve? However if we find ourselves falling somewhat short of the ideal Muslim community that Allah (swt) has described in these four ayahs we must not despair. For example we may not

always pray our Salah with tranquility and concentration, we may find it difficult to give in charity as much as we like, and sometimes we may even forget the fact that Allah (swt) is observing us and that He (swt) Knows what we are doing for every second of our existence, this in turn may lead us to acts of disobedience to Allah (swt). When this happens we must not fall into total despair, instead we have to remember that we are all human and that we all mistakes. We all have weaknesses and so we all commit sins. So we should not despair when we fall into sin. What is important is that we recognize our sin and that we try our best to recover from it. What is important is that we see this model that Allah (swt) has given us in these ayahs as the ideal that we want to achieve and we constantly strive to achieve that ideal. So even if we sometimes find ourselves falling short of this ideal, we must always be striving to achieve it. No matter how many times we fall down we have to always pick ourselves up and keep on trying. In the end it is for our efforts that we seek the reward from our Lord and Master. May Allah (swt) allow us to become this model community of believers that He (swt) has described in these ayahs!



7. Surely the ones who do *kufr*, it all is the same on them whether you warned them or not, they will not believe.

In the previous four ayahs of this Surah we saw Allah (swt) describe the true believers or the Muttaqoon. The ones who have such a strong belief in Allah (swt) that they are always conscious of Him (swt). Because of this awareness they always strive only do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Now in this ayah Allah (swt) brings to our attention the opposite of this ideal. These are the people who turn away from Allah (swt) and who do what is displeasing to Him (swt). So in the previous four ayahs Allah (swt) had given us the model that we should try to

follow, the ideal that we should try to be like. In this ayah Allah (swt) presents the opposite of that ideal; the kind of people whom we should try to avoid becoming at all costs. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like these people!

Allah (swt) describes these people whom He (swt) is displeased with as the ones who do *kufr*. In his tafsir of this ayah Al-Qurtubi describes the word *kufr* as being derived from the root word *kafara* which he says "indicates covering and hiding". He further explains "Night is called kafir because it covers everything in darkness. *Kafir* can also mean a sea or a huge river (because it covers what is underneath the water) and it also used with the meaning of cultivator – someone who covers seeds with the earth". So the first question that we have to ask ourselves is why did Allah (swt) use a word such as this to describe those who do not believe in His Message? Because the linguistic definition of this word does not suggest rejection or disbelief, it only means covering. Why then does Allah (swt) use this word to describe the ones who did not accept this Message? If we study the life of the Prophet (saw), it would become clear to us why Allah (swt) used a word such as this to describe those who did not follow this Message.

There was no one whom the Prophet (saw) presented this Message who was not convinced that he (saw) was truly the Messenger from Allah (swt). In other words everyone who received this Message knew that the man they saw in front of them had indeed been sent to them by Allah (swt). They were all certain that this Message was the Truth. They were certain because this Message came with undeniable proofs. On the one hand the Prophet (saw) came with the Quran which were words that none among them could reproduce, words which were so powerful that when all of them heard it they knew that it could not be produced by the mind of a human being. In addition to this linguistic miracle, the Quran itself had descriptions of events that no man from among them could ever have known about. These were events that were witnessed by no one except Allah (swt), examples of such events are when the angels came to Maryam (as) when she was alone in the temple or when the brothers of Yusuf (as) plotted together in secret. Just the fact that these stories are in the Quran show that this Book could not

be from any except Allah (swt). Neither the Prophet (saw) nor any of the Arabs at his time could ever have known about these events.

Not only was the Quran itself a proof that it could only have been sent by Allah (swt), but also the Prophet (saw) himself was a proof that he (saw) could only have been sent by Allah (swt). For the Arabs of Makkah, they had known the Prophet (saw) all of their lives and they knew that he (saw) was not a liar or a man of deception. On the contrary they had known nothing but honesty and integrity from him (saw) through his (saw)'s life in Makkah. So they were certain that he (saw) spoke the Truth when he (saw) said that he (saw) was a Messenger from Allah (swt). Similarly for the Jews of Madinah, they had descriptions in their scripture of the final Messenger and these descriptions fit the Prophet (saw) exactly. So they also were certain that this man who had come to them was indeed sent from the Lord and Master of the universe. Now, from both the Arabs and the Jews, the ones who were sincere and who had a pure heart, the ones who had a real desire to worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) had created them to, they believed in the Prophet (saw) and followed him (saw). The ones who were selfish and had a perverted heart, the ones who only wanted to serve themselves and satisfy their desires instead of worshipping and serving their Creator and Sustainer they did *kufr* to this Message that the Prophet (saw) brought to them from Allah (swt). They covered the Truth that they knew in their hearts by rejecting and disbelieving in this Message. They rejected this Message even when they were certain that it was the Truth from Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) described what they are doing as kufr or "covering". They are covering the Truth of this Message that they knew very well.

Allah (swt) begins their description in this ayah with the Arabic word *inna* to stress certainty and surety. Whenever Allah (swt) begins an ayah with this word the description that follows is definite without any doubt to it whatsoever. In fact there is no word in English to denote this much certainty and definitiveness. After this word to stress certainty Allah (swt) then says "**the ones who do *kufr*, it all is the same on them whether you warned them or not, they will not believe**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that it is all the same on

the disbelievers if he (saw) warns them or not, they will not believe. Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) that it does not make a difference if (saw) warns them or not, they will not believe. This is because they know that this Message is the Truth and still they have willfully chosen to reject it. They had made up their minds not to listen to this Message from their Creator, so no amount of warning and no amount of evidences is going to convince them otherwise. So no matter how much warning the Prophet (saw) gives them and no matter how many evidences he (saw) presents them with, they will not believe in this Message that has come to them from their Creator. That is why Allah (swt) stresses with emphasis and certainty to the Prophet (saw) that no matter how many times he (saw) warned them, they were not going to believe in this Message. They are a people who had preferred the temporary life of this world to the everlasting world that will come after this. They had chose to live a life where they serve their worthless selves rather than serving the Lord and Master of this universe, the One who created them and is keeping them alive for every second of their existence. So here Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) that because these people had decided to reject this Message that had come to them from their Creator when they were certain that it was the Truth, they are not going to believe in it no matter how many time that he (saw) warns them. The Prophet (saw) could remind them of the consequences of rejecting this Message again and again they are still not going to believe. This shows that they were in reality worse than garbage. They would purposely turn away from their Creator and Sustainer and from the life of worship and servitude for which He (swt) created them. See then how worthless a people they are. Even when they are certain that this Message is the Truth they would still reject it. Thus Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) should not waste any of the blessed moments of his (saw)'s life with such filth.

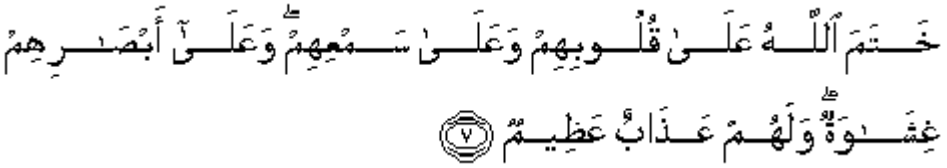
So this ayah is actually a consolation for the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) was so kind and tender hearted that he (saw) would have loved for all of mankind to be guided to the Straight Path. But here we see that Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) that there are some people who are so evil, so sick and so selfish that no matter how much they are warned, they will

not believe. They will always and forever insist on following their erring ways. Thus Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) here that he (saw) should not be grieved by them or even to waste his (saw)'s time with such people. They will not believe no matter how much warning they are given.

Before we leave this ayah let us comment once again on the choice of words that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah. Allah (swt) is not saying that they will not believe no matter how many times you "tell them" or "teach them" but He (swt) is saying that they will not believe no matter how many times you "warn them". The word "to warn" in this ayah is *andhara*, and Al-Qurtubi says that it means to give warning to the people while there is still time for them to take measures to avoid that thing they are being warned about. So the Prophet (saw) is warning them in this ayah about a punishment that is approaching them while there is still time for them to save themselves from that punishment. The Prophet (saw) is not merely telling them about this punishment but he (saw) is WARNING them. Some people criticize Islam for being a "fear-based religion", but these people failed to realize that fear is often one of the strongest of motivators. There are many forces that push the human to reject this Message such as their desires or their pride or their loyalty to their tribe or family. But at the same time there are many forces which push the human to accept the Message such as the signs in the universe that testify to Allah (swt) and to His (swt)'s complete Oneness and Sovereignty. Every ayah of the Quran is also a sign that brings us closer to accepting this Message, each one has such depth of meaning and such perfection in it's usage of the language that there is no way that it could be produced by the mind of a human. All of these signs bring our hearts closer to accepting this Message. In addition to the many signs that Allah (swt) has placed in the universe and in the Quran, there is also a great reward promised for those who believe and a strict punishment promised for those who refuse to believe. So this threat of punishment is in fact a Mercy for the people because it is an incentive for them to believe in this Message. It is almost as if Allah (swt) is saying that if you are rejecting this Message because of desires I will give you something that is much more deserving of your desires and that is Paradise, and if you are rejecting this Message because of fear I will give you something that is much more worthy of your fear and that is the Hellfire. This

Message is a clear evidence, a good news and a warning. But the warning is what is most appropriate for people who are stubborn and close-minded. That is why Allah (swt) refers to the Prophet (saw) in this ayah as warning the people.

Other scholars have commented on this word *andhara* and have said that it also gives the meaning of a warning that is given from love and compassion. It is not a warning that is only meant to put fear in the hearts but it is a warning that comes from genuine concern and compassion for the people. It is similar to the warning that you would give to your child to stay away from fire. Allah (swt) loves the people and He (swt) is giving them this warning of the punishment while there is still time for them to save themselves from it. He (swt) is giving them this warning only because of the Love that He (swt) has for them. Allah (swt) Knows that this is what is best for us even if we may not realize it ourselves. That is why Allah (swt) has sent us this Message. That is why He (swt) has given us this warning. But how many people will heed the warning that their Lord and Master is giving them?



8. Allah has placed a seal on their hearts and on their hearing. And over their vision is a covering. And for them is a tremendous punishment.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) exactly why it is that the disbelievers will never follow this Message no matter how many times it is that they are warned. Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes is a covering. These are the faculties through which one can receive this Message. Because they have chosen to turn away from this Message, because they have willfully decided to reject this Message, Allah

(swt) has closed off all of the faculties through which they can receive this Message. This is their punishment in the life of this world for choosing to reject this Message.

To correctly understand this ayah we have to create the following analogy. Allah (swt) presents man with two paths, one is a steep path filled with trials and difficulties, but this path ends in Paradise and the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The other path is an easy path filled with desires and laziness, but it ends in the Wrath of Allah (swt) and the Hellfire. The point at which man is presented with these two choices is when the Messenger of Allah (swt) comes to him and presents him with the choice either of accepting this Message or turning away from it. To accept this Message is to walk the steep path and to turn away from it is to walk the path of laziness and desires. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah about those who turn away from the steep path and choose the path of laziness and desires. The ones who prefer serving themselves to serving their Creator and Sustainer. Allah (swt) tells us that for such people who reject this Message and turn away from following the Messenger, He (swt) leaves them in the path of laziness and desires. Even though Allah (swt) could have put them on Straight Path that leads to His (swt)'s Pleasure, He (swt) does not. Rather He (swt) allows them to wander in that path that leads to the Hellfire. Not only that, but as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah He (swt) also seals up their senses and their comprehension so that they will never receive this Message. So that they will never choose the correct path. This is only because they chose to turn away from this Message when it was presented to them. They chose to turn astray so Allah (swt) allows them to go astray.

Now it is important to realize that we cannot in any way ascribe any kind of injustice to Allah (swt) because of this. First because Allah (swt) Himself tells us in Quran that He (swt) does not do injustice to anyone. Second because we have very little knowledge and so we do not even really know what justice is. None of us truly knows what justice is and none of truly knows what is the most fitting punishment for a crime. We have so little knowledge yet we are so proud and confident of that knowledge that we are ready to pass judgments on the One Who has all the Knowledge. May Allah save us from that! Finally we have to realize that Allah (swt) gave them the choice to accept or reject this Message. He (swt) presented them with the Message clearly

and they clearly saw all of it's proofs and evidences. Despite this, despite their certain knowledge that this Message was the Truth, they decided to turn away from it. That is why Allah (swt) allowed them to go astray. That is why Allah (swt) sealed their hearts. Could they then deserve anything less as a punishment?

In this ayah Allah (swt) mentions the heart first because it is the locus of reflection. It is the place where we reflect and contemplate on the Signs of Allah (swt), it is where we make the decision on whether to accept this Message or not. Our limbs and our tongue are nothing but servants of our heart. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah about those who decided to turn away from this Message that He (swt) has sealed their hearts. This means that the Truth of this Message will not penetrate into their hearts. Even if they see all of the signs and evidences, it will not lead them to accept this Message. The door through which faith can enter their hearts has been closed. So now they will never believe in this Message.

The Prophet (saw) recognized the importance of the heart and so he (saw) always made the prayer "O Allah, Who makes hearts firm, make our hearts firm in your obedience". In this prayer the Prophet (saw) is asking Allah (swt) to keep his heart firm on this Din. We should also always be in the habit of making the same prayer. This is because the word which Allah (swt) uses in this ayah for heart, *qalb* is derived from something that always turns. So even if we find ourselves in obedience to Allah (swt) today, we cannot be certain that we will be tomorrow. There are so many forces that are working to take us away from this Path. Our heart may be firm on Islam today but as the word which Allah (swt) uses to describe the heart gives the meaning, it can turn at anytime. We are always in need of Allah (swt) at every moment of our lives. We always need Him (swt) to keep our hearts steady on Islam. The Prophet (saw) realized this and that is why he (saw) always made this prayer. If the Prophet (saw) was frequent in making this prayer then how can we excuse ourselves from it? How can we be certain that we will be steadfast on this Din tomorrow? If we think that we are then we have not realized the nature of our hearts.

This ayah then shows us how much we are in need of Allah (swt) and how terrible it would be if we are deprived of His (swt)'s guidance. Allah (swt) has the Power to open hearts just as He (swt) has the Power to close them. How fortunate are we then that Allah (swt) has opened our hearts for us and allowed the light of Islam to enter it. We should always be grateful to Allah (swt) for this favor and we should constantly strive even harder to please Him (swt) in order to show our gratitude.

This ayah also shows us the terrible situation of the ones who turn away from this Message. Without a doubt they will have a terrible punishment in the next world, but even in this life they have the terrible punishment of their hearts being sealed. The fact that their hearts have been sealed is a punishment for them in this world. So once again we see how fortunate we are that Allah (swt) has opened our hearts for the light of this guidance to enter. Because of this great gift that Allah (swt) has given us we must always strive to do the actions that He (swt) is pleased with. We must always have the fear that Allah (swt) could seal our hearts if we are disobedient to Him (swt), and that should make us strive further in our obedience to Him (swt). Al-Qurtubi notes how Mujahid, one of prominent classical mufasir, said that the heart is like a hand and sins are like the fingers on that hand. Each sin we commit is like a finger that closes down on the hand and eventually when all the fingers come down the hand is sealed. The sins cover the heart and they create a barrier which prevents the guidance from Allah (swt) from entering. This shows how we must always strive to be obedient to Allah (swt) and it shows how we must always try our best to keep away from sin. It shows the fear that we must have for Allah (swt), the One Who has the Power to close and open hearts. We turn to Allah (swt) in complete humility and devotion, and we beg and plead of Him (swt) to keep our hearts open to the light of the Quran.

After Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) has sealed has their hearts, He (swt) then tells us that their hearing is sealed as well. It is sealed so that the sound of Quran cannot enter it. They hear the ayahs of the Quran being recited. They know that these could not have been composed by the mind of human being, but still the realization then they must be from Allah (swt) does not

fall into their minds. So because their hearing has been sealed they do not hear the Quran as it was meant to be heard, as a Miracle from Allah (swt). Thus the Quran does not serve to guide them to Allah (swt). They hear the word but they do not understand the Miracle. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate!

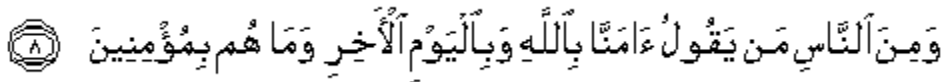
Allah (swt) also tells us that there is a covering over their vision. It is like a blindfold that has been thrown over their eyes. This is so that they do not see the Signs of Allah (swt) that are around them in the universe. They see the creation of Allah (swt) all around them, they see that everything they can sense is weak and limited. So then can see that everything that they can sense has the attributes of creation and thus must have a Creator. But this observation does not lead them to the realization that behind this universe is Allah (swt). They do not realize that this universe that they see around them could only have come from Allah (swt). They do not realize this fact, they are completely blind to it because over their eyes is a covering. So while the believers look around the universe and see the Signs for Allah (swt) in everything that they can sense, these disbelievers see only the material things of this universe. They are blind to the fact that all of these material things point to the Creator Who originated them.

So we see that Allah (swt) has prevented the guidance from reaching them on multiple levels. On the one hand their hearts are sealed so that they cannot comprehend this Message, they do not realize the Truth of it. But on top of that the senses which perceive the Truth of this Message are also closed. The hearing with which they can listen to the ayahs of Quran are closed, and the vision with which they can perceive the signs of Allah (swt) in the created universe is covered. So we see how terrible is their punishment in the life of this world because they have chosen to turn away from this Message that their Creator has sent them. Even before they face the terrible punishment of the Hereafter, they have the terrible punishment of being barred from comprehending this Message that Allah (swt) has sent. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to always be obedient to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) save us from the sins that can close the hearts! May Allah (swt) open our hearts and our hearing and may He (swt) lift all the veils from our vision!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tell us that for them is a tremendous punishment. So in the first part of this ayah Allah (swt) had told us about the punishment that they would receive in the life of this world, which is the sealing of their hearts and senses so that they are not able to comprehend this Message. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us about the punishment that they will receive in the Hereafter. Even the adjective that Allah (swt) uses to describe their punishment should tell us how terrible it will be. It should tell us how terrifying it will be. It should tell us how much we should want to avoid it. When Allah (swt) refers to a punishment as "great" or "tremendous", can you imagine what kind of a punishment it will be? How painful and intense it will be? Such is what they deserve for turning away from the One Who created them and the One Who keeps them alive for every moment of their existence. Allah (swt) gave them the choice to choose Him (swt) but they chose themselves, so this is what they deserve. If you do not realize the greatness of the evil that they have done then you do not realize how much we are all in debt to Allah (swt). You would not even be living at this moment were it not for Allah (swt), how much then are you in debt to Him (swt). Every moment that passes in your life, every breath that you take is only a gift from Him (swt), for which you have done nothing to deserve. So how much then are you in debt to Him? How evil then are those who refuse to even acknowledge Him (swt)? These people enjoy their lives and they enjoy all of the bounties and favors that Allah (swt) bestows on them but they do not even want to show the least amount of gratitude to Him (swt). They do not even want to acknowledge Him (swt)? How then can you say that they are not deserving of this punishment?

Not only does Allah (swt) deserve to be worshipped because of all that He (swt) has done for us but He (swt) also deserves to be worshipped because of Who He (swt) IS. Can you even begin to realize Allah (swt)? Can you even begin to realize how Tremendous and Sublime and Majestic He (swt) IS? Everything in the creation is worshipping Allah (swt) to the utmost of its ability. These people however refuse to. They think that they are above having to submit themselves to Allah (swt). What then can you say about such people? Even when the Message from Allah (swt) reaches them and they know that this Message is true they still will not bow

down before the Lord and Master. Is there any good in such people? Are not such people deserving of this punishment? What they have done to Allah (swt) is far worse than what He (swt) has done to them. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like these people! May Allah (swt) allow us to always realize how much we are in debt to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) make us to always remember all that He (swt) has done for us! How we would not even be existing at this moment if it were not for His (swt)'s Grace, His (swt)'s Mercy and His (swt)'s Love on our worthless selves! May Allah (swt) make us realize that there is no point to life whatsoever except to spend every moment of it in worship and servitude to Him (swt)! Only when we reach this realization will we worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) deserves!



9. And of mankind, there are those who say 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day'. But they do not believe.

The scholars have said that Allah (swt) has divided the first part of Surah Baqarah into three sections. In this first four ayahs Allah (swt) tells about the believers, then He (swt) tells about the disbelievers for two ayahs, and then for thirteen ayahs Allah (swt) tells us about the *Munafiqoon* or the hypocrites. The fact that Allah (swt) spends such a large number of ayahs describing the hypocrites shows how important it is that we as a Muslims know about them. One reason why it is important to know about them is so that we are aware of their presence within our community. Another reason is so that we can save ourselves from becoming like them. These ayahs were originally revealed about the hypocrites in Madinah. People like Abdullah ibn Ubay and others like him. They are the ones who pretended to be Muslims all the while they hated the Prophet (saw) and they hated Islam. They said with their tongues that they had submitted to this Message but in their hearts they had not. In their hearts they hated this Message and they wanted to destroy it. Although these ayahs were revealed about those hypocrites at the time of

the Prophet (saw), the meaning of these ayahs holds true for all hypocrites after them as well. Even the hypocrites who exist in the midst of our community today.

Before we discuss the hypocrites we should notice even the way in which Allah (swt) has divided mankind in these ayahs. Allah (swt) has not divided mankind based on the color of their skin, or the language that they speak or the land in which they originate. There is no distinction in these ayahs between Arab and non-Arab. There is no distinction in these ayahs between black and white. None of this matters to Allah (swt). We can see from these ayahs that what matters to Allah (swt) is the belief that you have in your heart and how you behave based on that belief. This is what matters. This is what we are being tested on while we are on this earth. On the Day of Judgment we will never be questioned on the color of our skin or the land from which our ancestors came. Why should any of that matter when it is all so superficial? It does not in any way communicate the worth of a human being. What distinguishes one man from another is how much he fears Allah (swt) in his heart and how he behaves based on that fear. That is why Allah (swt) divides mankind here based only belief and actions.

The word that Allah (swt) uses for the hypocrite is derived from the word "*nafaqah*". Al-Qurtubi says that this word describes a hole that is covered with earth. When you look at such a hole, on the surface it looks like there is earth but underneath this covering of earth there is emptiness. Such is the case of the hypocrites. On the surface it looks as if they have Iman, but underneath there is only emptiness. They profess with their tongues that they are believers. They say that they believe in Allah (swt) and the Day of Judgment. They even bear witness that the Prophet (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). They even do the external actions of the believers like prayer and pilgrimage. You will see them making Hajj and you will see them bowing next to you in Salah. However this is all simply a covering. Underneath all of these words and all of these actions there is nothing. They are not basing their words or their deeds on the recognition that Allah (swt) is their *Rabb* and so they have a responsibility to worship and serve Him (swt). Rather they only saw some benefit in taking the Shahada and pretending to be Muslims. In their hearts they have no desire to submit to Allah (swt) as this Message calls on

them to do. They do not hope for any reward in the Hereafter but they only look for the benefit for their words and deeds in the life of this world. Usually that benefit which they seek is to be accepted by the Muslim community, which is what they care about. They do not care about worshipping and serving Allah (swt) as He (swt) created them to do. They only want to deceive the Muslims into thinking that they are believers. See what a worthless people, they are just like an empty hole that is covered with earth on the surface.

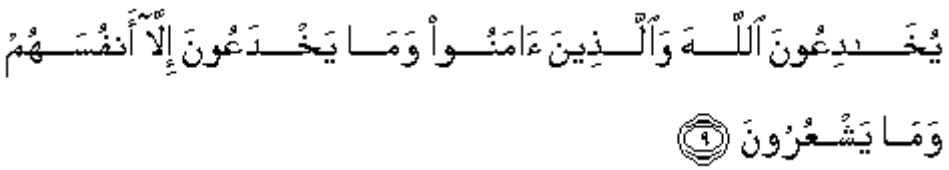
We should also notice about this ayah how Allah (swt) links the belief in the Last Day with belief in Him (swt). The vast majority of people believe in Allah (swt), no one can fathom how a universe like this can come into existence and be sustained without Allah (swt). Even in the West studies show that the vast majority of people believe in a Creator. So even these hypocrites believe in Allah (swt). But what they refuse to believe in, or what they do not want to believe in is that one day soon they will return to Allah (swt) and be judged for each and every one of their actions. They want to enjoy the life of this world for as long as they can. They do not want their desires and their passions curtailed. So they do not want to believe in a day of accountability before Allah (swt). They forget about this Day or they convince themselves that it does not exist. But the fact that they have convinced themselves that the Day of Judgment does not exist does not change the fact that it does exist and that it is coming and it is coming soon. Before they know it the Day that they used to deny will be a reality and they will find themselves in it. Then they will find themselves before Allah (swt) and He (swt) will expose them for the hypocrites that they are. So we must realize from this ayah that one of the keys to saving ourselves from becoming like these people is inculcating within ourselves the firm belief that we will one Day soon return to Allah (swt). The days of our lives will not simply come and go but there will be the Last Day.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to be aware that there are such people in our community. There are many Muslims in this Ummah who do not have real certainty in Allah (swt) and the Last Day. There are Muslims who only look for the benefit in this world. So these people would not be afraid to sell their Muslim brothers and sisters to the enemies of this

Message if they saw some worldly advantage in it for them. Now we cannot read the hearts of people. We do not know who is really a hypocrite and who is a sincere Muslim. So we have to base our relationships with our Muslim brothers and sisters only on what they say and what they do and not on what we think is in their hearts. We should not jump to conclusions about people when we have no evidence about what is be their true nature. If they say they are Muslims and they behave as Muslims then we have to accept them for their words and deeds. But at the same we must be aware that there are such hypocrites within our community, and so we should be careful of them. When we know that there are such hypocrites within our community we should especially take care when it comes to the dawah. We should not unnecessarily divulge information about the activities of our brothers and sisters who are involved in the dawah to others, even if they are Muslims. We should be aware that the enemies of this Message are sometimes within the ranks of the Ummah and so we must be careful. We must not say anything that might incriminate our Muslim brothers and sisters. We should be careful about what we say and what information we disclose even if we are speaking with those who claim that they are Muslims.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to once again realize how important belief in the Last Day is. It is not for a lack of belief in Allah (swt) that the hypocrites are being criticized in this ayah, even the hypocrites realize that this universe could only have come into existence through Allah (swt) and that He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master of this universe. What they are being criticized for is their lack of certainty in standing before Allah (swt) on the Last Day. It is this belief in the Day of Judgment that distinguishes the true believers from the hypocrites. Even if you believe in Allah (swt), if you do not then believe in the Day when you will stand before Him (swt) and be accountable for all of your deeds, you will not be motivated to live your life in worship and servitude to Him (swt). So to be righteous it is not enough for you only to believe in Allah (swt) but you must also believe in the Day when you will return to Him (swt). That is why it is extremely important for us as Muslims to always keep this Day on the forefront of our minds. The belief in the Last Day is also what reminds us of the finiteness of this world.

We see the sun rise and set as the days of our lives pass by but the belief in the Last Day is what reminds us that this world will end. The belief and conviction in the Last Day is what will remove from us the love of this world, and our unwillingness to spend and sacrifice from the things of this world. We strive and sacrifice for Allah (swt) in the life of this world because of our love for Him (swt). But the thought that we will one day soon we will return to Him (swt) is what makes us always remember Him (swt). Otherwise we will be tempted and seduced by the life of this world, and thoughts of it will drown us. May Allah (swt) always allow us to remember this Day! May Allah (swt) permit us to strive to serve and worship Him (swt) to prepare us for this Day!



10. They (think to) deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive none but themselves and they do not even perceive it.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the hypocrites and how they pretended to be Muslims by saying that they believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day. Allah (swt) told us about such people that despite their words and their actions they are not true believers. They say with their tongues that they believe and they may even act like believers when they are around others but in their hearts there is no belief in this Message that has reached them. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with their description. Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to their way of thinking, to their twisted logic and reasoning. Allah (swt) shows us how with their thinking, they actually thought that they could deceive Allah (swt) and the believers. Allah (swt) then shows us the utter foolishness of this thinking by showing us how they only deceive themselves with such thinking. They think that they are tricking Allah (swt) and the believers but in reality they are only tricking themselves. But what is most pathetic is that they are deceiving themselves and they are not even aware of this fact. They are only deceiving themselves and they are not even

aware of the fact that they are deceiving themselves. It is like you are only cheating yourself and you are not even aware that you are cheating yourself. How sad and pathetic are such people. They are indeed the worst of mankind because they would seek to join the most special community of human beings, the true believers in Allah (swt), but they join only with false words and insincere deeds. In their hearts they have no desire to be worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). They are untrue to the Muslims and worst of all they are untrue to Allah (swt)!

As Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah the efforts of the hypocrites to deceive the Muslim community will be to avail. Sooner or later, they will be exposed for the liars that they are. They might be exposed in the life of this world by Allah (swt) sending revelation to the Prophet (saw) to expose them or they could expose themselves accidentally when one of their lies or deceptions catches up to them. This latter case is where they might make some mistake or say some lie that is discovered, and then the entire Muslims community would see that they are indeed liars. But even if they are not discovered by the Prophet (saw) or the believers in the life of this world, they will definitely be exposed for the hypocrites that they are by Allah (swt) on the Last Day. That is what they should truly be worried about. That is the exposure that they should fear because there will be no escaping it. On that Day when they are exposed they will be made to account for all that they did. No amount of lies and deception will save them from the All-Knowing.

Some scholars have said that what Allah (swt) means by the part of the ayah where He (swt) says "They (think to) deceive Allah" is that they thought to deceive the Prophet (saw). These scholars say that this is because the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). They say that even the hypocrites should have know that no one can deceive Allah (swt). If we take this interpretation then the meaning of the ayah would be "They (think to) deceive the Prophet (saw) and the believers, but they deceive only themselves and they do not even perceive it". This might be a valid opinion but we think that it is best to stay with the meaning that Allah (swt) gives in the ayah. So the stronger opinion was that it was Allah (swt) Himself whom the hypocrites thought they had deceived. So much was the corruption in their thinking and so much

was their love for the life of this world that they actually convinced themselves that they could deceive Allah (swt). Praise and glory be to Allah (swt), how High and Perfect is He (swt), above what they think and say about Him (swt)!

The lesson that we can take from this is that we should realize that with Allah (swt) there are no secrets and there is no deception. We cannot hide anything from our Lord. Allah (swt) Sees everything, Allah (swt) Hears everything, and Allah (swt) Knows everything. We should always remember that there is not one moment of our life that Allah (swt) does not know about even more than we do. Allah (swt) Knows more about us than even we know ourselves. So how then can we ever hope to hide anything from Him (swt)?

These hypocrites thought that they had deceived the Prophet (saw) and the believers. Since the days passed in Madinah without them being exposed, they thought to themselves that they had succeeded in their deception. By thinking that they had deceived the Prophet (saw) and the believers they even thought that they had deceived Allah (swt), how foolish were they. So we must learn from their mistake. We must realize that simply because Allah (swt) does not punish us for a sin immediately, or if Allah (swt) does not expose one of our lies immediately, we must never think that Allah (swt) does not know about that sin or that lie. There might be a very good reason why Allah (swt) is withholding the punishment from us. So we must never think that we can deceive Allah (swt) or that we can outsmart in any way. We must never think that we can continue to live in sin and heedlessness without paying the consequences for it. Allah (swt) Knows everything, including all of the evil that we do and all of the evil that we say and even all of the evil that we think. So we must always remind ourselves that there are no secrets from Him (swt). We must never think to ourselves that we can escape Him (swt). We must always remember that He (swt) is the All-Knowing. If we think anything less of our Creator than this, then we would only be deceiving ourselves without even realizing it like just these hypocrites did. May Allah (swt) save us from that! So do not allow even a moment of your life to pass by without remembering your Lord. Remember Him (swt) and ask yourself if what you are doing at this

moment is pleasing to Him (swt). Insha Allah this is the only way that we can save ourselves from the self-deception that befell these hypocrites.

فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. In their hearts is a disease so Allah increases their disease. And for them is a painful punishment because they lied.

In this ayah we see Allah (swt) continuing with the description of the hypocrites. We have to remind ourselves that one of the reasons why Allah (swt) mentions the case of the hypocrites in such detail is so that we can protect ourselves from ever becoming like them. In the previous ayah we saw how they only deceived themselves by saying that they are believers and we saw how they were not even aware of the fact that they were deceiving themselves. In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) shows us the reason for the hypocrisy, it is because they have a disease in their hearts. We have to remind ourselves once again that the word heart does not mean the physical heart that pumps blood but it is the heart where reflection and contemplation occurs. That is why the scholars say that the word "disease" in this ayah refers to their hypocrisy itself. Their hypocrisy is their disease. In their hearts they made a decision that they would prefer to serve themselves rather than serve their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master. They made a decision to choose the life of this world over the next world. On top of that they made a decision to pretend to be believers. They saw their brethren and their family embracing Islam at

the hands of the Prophet (saw), and they saw the power of the Islamic State rising so they saw an advantage for themselves in this world in pretending to be believers. But in their hearts not only did they not have any desire to worship and serve Allah (swt) but in fact they hated this Din. They hated it because they prefer to enjoy the life of this world and serve themselves while this Din stood for the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). So because of their hatred for this Message and what it stood for, these hypocrites lied and pretended to be believers in the hope of destroying the Islamic State and preventing this Message from mankind. That was their hypocrisy and that was their disease. It was a poison that they had put in their hearts that made them act with such evil intentions and speak with such deception.

Allah (swt) then tells us in this ayah that He (swt) increases their disease. This means that Allah (swt) increases them in their hypocrisy. The way in which Allah (swt) increases their hypocrisy is that they are not immediately exposed for their deception. This fact makes them more confident in their hypocrisy. Instead of repenting to Allah (swt) and trying to be true believers they foolishly think that they have deceived the Prophet (saw) and the believers. They forget that Allah (swt) Knows what they are doing and that He (swt) will hold them accountable for their deeds. This then is the way in which Allah (swt) increases the hypocrisy that is in their hearts like disease. They continue to deceive the Prophet (saw) and the believers while plotting to destroy the Islamic State and the Message that Allah (swt) sent. They are not aware that all the while they are only accumulating sins in the Sight of Allah (swt) and they are only bringing an even more painful punishment for themselves in the Hereafter. Even though Allah (swt) could stop them, even though He (swt) could expose them, He (swt) allows them to continue in their evil and that is how He (swt) increases the disease that is in their hearts. Allah (swt) does not do any injustice to them, but they do injustice to themselves by choosing to reject this Message and choosing to plot against it.

That is why in the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they will have a painful punishment because they have lied. We know from other ayahs of the Quran that the hypocrites will be in lowest level of the Hellfire. The depths where the fire is the fiercest and the

pain is the most severe. This is because they sought to deceive the Messenger of Allah (swt) and the servants of Allah (swt) with their lies. Anyone who turns away from the purpose for which they were created, by refusing to worship and serve Allah (swt), is deserving of a great punishment. As Allah (swt) told us about in the previous ayah that is what the disbelievers will receive. But the hypocrites deserve an even more painful punishment because in addition to the fact that they turned away from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) like the disbelievers did, they also lied and deceived the Messenger of Allah (swt) and the true servants of Allah (swt). So because of their lies and deception they deserve an even more painful punishment than the disbelievers.

There are several lessons that we can see from this ayah. One is that there are diseases of the heart just as there are diseases of the body. These diseases appear in the heart because of the lies that people speak and the hypocrisy that they display in their actions. We need to be very careful of such diseases because as we can see from this ayah, if we allow such diseases to contaminate our heart and then we do not make any effort to remove such diseases then the result could be that Allah (swt) might increase the severity of such diseases. Allah (swt) may punish us by allowing these diseases to increase because we did not make any efforts to remove them. These diseases afflict our hearts because of the choices that we make, and if we refuse to reform or correct these diseases, then Allah (swt) may increase such diseases as a punishment for us. May Allah (swt) save us from such a fate! This is similar to the case of the disbelievers who refused to see and listen to the Signs of Allah (swt) and so their hearing was sealed and their eyes were covered as a punishment for their rejection. So if we find traces of hypocrisy within us. If we do what we do not say, and if the side of us that we keep hidden is much better than the side of us that we show to the world, then we must suspect that such diseases may be in our hearts. To be saved from this we have to first of all pray to Allah (swt). We have to ask Him (swt) to remove such diseases from our heart. Then we must strive to increase the sincerity in our actions. We should always check our intentions to make sure that they are for Allah (swt). We must also do more good deeds in secret and not tell others about what we have done. Let

that deed be between only us and our Lord. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from such diseases and may Allah (swt) allow us to recognize such diseases should they ever afflict our hearts!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the danger of lying and deception to the believers and to the carriers of dawah. Allah (swt) specifically promises the hypocrites the painful punishment in this ayah because of the fact that they lied to the Prophet (saw) and the believers. They lied to those who were working in this dawah by saying that they were also sincere members of this effort. But in reality they were seeking to destroy this Message and they were even collaborating with the enemies of this Message. If we find ourselves also entertaining such thoughts, like lying to those who are carrying dawah and selling them out to the enemy only to receive some benefit from the life of this world, then we must remember what Allah (swt) has promised in this ayah for such people. What can you say about a punishment when Allah (swt) Himself calls it a painful punishment? There is no punishment that is as painful as burning. So the next time you feel like betraying your brothers and sisters who are in this dawah put your hand over a flame for a moment and see if you can have patience with that pain. Now imagine your whole body submerged in a fire that is much fiercer than the pathetic flame you have in the life of this world. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember that our loyalty is first and foremost to Him (swt) and to the Message that He (swt) has sent and to our brothers and sisters in this Ummah who are striving in the way of dawah to establish this Message in the land and to spread it to mankind!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. When it is said to them, do not spread *fasad* in the earth they say "we are only *Muslihoon*".

In the previous ayahs we saw Allah (swt) tell us about why the hypocrites behave in the way that they do. We saw that they are a people who had a disease in their hearts. That disease was their hypocrisy itself. That stubborn refusal to submit to what they knew was the Truth. Because of their refusal to reform and become sincere Muslims, Allah (swt) increases their disease in the life of this world and in the Hereafter He (swt) has prepared the most painful of punishments for them. There is no punishment more painful than what Allah (swt) has kept reserved for the hypocrites. The lowest depths of the Hellfire. May Allah (swt) save us from that! This is because not only did they turn away from the purpose of their creation like the disbelievers did, but in addition to that they also tried to deceive Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw) and the believers by pretending to be Muslims. While claiming with their tongues to be believers they were in reality not extending any support to the mission that the believers were on to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. They did not realize that to participate and support this mission was the responsibility of every believer. These hypocrites were not helping the believers in any way. On the contrary they were actually plotting and working against this Message. They plotted against the Islamic State to bring about its downfall because they knew that it stood for the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) in all spheres of life, something that they are averse to and they had a great hatred for.

So after telling us about the thinking and reasoning of the hypocrites in the previous ayahs, in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to their behavior. As we alluded to in the previous ayah, their problem was not simply that they did not want to worship and serve Allah (swt) like they were created to do, but their problem was that they hated this dawah and they even hated the Prophet (saw). They wanted the Islamic State to crumble and this dawah to come to an end. They did not care that should this happen the dawah would stop and that mankind would not receive the guidance of Islam. They only wanted the power to rule for themselves. They wanted to rule by laws that they made up with their own minds instead of ruling by the Law of Allah (swt). This way they did not have to curtail their passions and desires. They could make alcohol and interest legal. They could allow women to walk in the streets naked. They could

cheat and exploit the common people with unfair wages and high taxes. Thus their intention was to bring down the Islamic State and replace it with a government where they could rule by their own laws. That is why they were making plans and plotting with the enemies of this Message to somehow reach this objective. For example they would try to kill the Prophet (saw), they would encourage pagan and Jewish tribes to invade the Islamic State, they would try to rally the people against the authority of Allah (swt), they would try to spread animosity and mistrust between Muslims. They would use every means at their disposal to bring down the Islamic State and replace it with a secular government that denied Allah (swt) the right to legislate the laws for the land. This was what the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) doing.

Allah (swt) calls such behavior spreading *fasad* in the earth. The closest translations for this word are "corruption", "disorder" and "evil". So see the words that Allah (swt) uses to describe those who try to bring down the Islamic State and replace it with the governments of man. Now look at the world today as we reach one hundred years since the Islamic State was destroyed. Do you not see how the *fasad* has spread through the land and overrun this earth? Go to any part of the world today and you will see how the society as a whole as well as the members of that society are suffering because that society has turned away from the worship and servitude to Allah (swt). The society has turned away from ruling by the Law of Allah (swt) to ruling by the laws of man and the people within that society have made serving their desires and lusts as the purpose of their existence instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt) as they were created to do. Because of this, we see how corruption and evil has spread to every corner of the world. There is no exception to this rule; if you go to any part of the world you will see examples of this. It is only that in some parts of the world, the corruption and evil is more salient and more visible than in others. For example in some parts of Africa and Asia you can see real evidences of this *fasad* in the wars that people are fighting, the innocents that are being massacred, and the children that are starving to death. But if you think that the same *fasad* is not happening in the West you are severely mistaken. The same *fasad* also happens in the West but in a different way. How high is the suicide rate in the West? How many people are addicted

to alcohol and antidepressants? That is in the wealthy parts of Western countries, if you go to the poorer portions you would see the situation to be much worse. You will see the dark side of Capitalism in the slums and the ghettos of the Western cities. Here how many are the people that are suffering because they are addicted to drugs and alcohol? How much crime and corruption have these drugs caused? You would see men kill each other for it, you would see women sell their bodies for it, you would see children being starved so their parents can acquire it? Is this sad state of affairs that you would find in the West all that different from what you find in the third world nations or in any other part of the world? It is the same *fasad* that has spread all over the world because mankind has refused to rule by the Law of Allah (swt) and they have refused to make the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) as the purpose of their lives. So we see that the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw) who wanted to destroy the Islamic State and replace it with a government where they can rule with their desires is no different from the countries of the world today where men rule by their desires. They both cause great *fasad* in the land. They both cause great suffering for all mankind.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how the hypocrites are even specifically being told not to spread *fasad* in the land with their actions. The believers are telling them not to spread *fasad* in the land with their actions. How evil are such people then that despite being warned that their actions are causing corruption and evil they still persist in doing it? And what is the reason that they are causing such corruption and evil in the land? It is only so that they could follow their lusts and their desires. They do not care if mankind does not receive the guidance and mercy that is in this Message. A Message that has been sent to them by their Creator and Sustainer. They only care that they satisfy their perverted lusts and they quench their endless greed.

Now to only add to their evil, when they are told that their actions to destroy the Islamic State are causing *fasad*, not only do they not desist with their evil actions and their plots, but they even claim that they are nothing but *Muslihoon*. The *Muslihoon* are those who do righteousness and spread peace in the land. So they claim to be the exact opposite of what they are doing. While they are spreading evil and corruption in the land with their actions, they are

claiming that they are working righteousness and spreading peace. This deception and hypocrisy is another level to their evil. So not only are they doing evil but while they are doing evil they are claiming to do good.

Is this any different from the enemies of Allah (swt) that we see today? They claim that they are bringing peace and justice to Muslim lands. They say that they are bringing freedom and democracy. They say that what they have is for the good of all people. But what they are really brining is *fasad*. What they are really bringing is a system of government that takes Sovereignty away from Allah (swt) and gives it to men. What they are really bringing is a way of life that teaches people that they should live to serve themselves and worship their lusts and desires instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). It is a way of life that teaches people that all that matters is their own freedom instead of abiding by the Law of Allah (swt). The people do not realize that such "freedom" is only being a slave to their lusts and desires. The true freedom for a human being is only in realizing the purpose of his creation and in being a servant of Allah (swt). So we see that what the enemies of Allah (swt) are bringing to Muslim lands today is the same thing that these hypocrites were trying to bring at the time of the Prophet (saw). They seek to replace the Law of Allah (swt) with the law of man and they will cause *fasad* in the land through it, even though they claim to be bringing good. May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from their evil! May Allah (swt) expose them for the liars and hypocrites that they are!

أَلَآ إِنَّهُمۡ هُمُ ٱلۡمُفۡسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشۡعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. No indeed! They are surely those who make *fasad* but they are not aware of it.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the hypocrites. Allah (swt) told us how when it is said to them not to cause corruption and disorder in the land they say that they are only making peace and setting things aright. In this ayah Allah (swt) responds to such a claim of theirs. First we see the word *la*, which is an extremely strong tool of negation. Then we see the

word *inna* to stress and emphasize certainty. So Allah (swt) is telling us that by no means, and in no way are they the *Muslihoon*. Allah (swt) tells us that in no way whatsoever are they making peace in the land. Look at the emphasis and certainty with which Allah (swt) is rejecting their claim to be *Muslihoon*. This shows that in no way whatsoever are they *Muslihoon*. They do not in any bring any peace and righteousness to the land. They only bring corruption and *fasad*.

Then in the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they are surely those who cause *fasad* in the land. Despite their claim to be *Muslihoon* they are certainly those who make *fasad*. See then how evil such people are. Their words are nothing but deception and what they are bringing is the exact opposite of what they are saying. May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from being deceived from such people! May Allah (swt) save us from the hypocrites within our own community and the enemies of this Message who pretend to be our friends and who pretend to be believers! The say that what they want is what is best for the Muslims and what is best for mankind but in reality they want to prevent Muslims from living the true Islam and they want to prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people.

This ayah also shows us that our final standard for judging people and judging statements must be what Allah (swt) says and not what the people say. No matter what people might say and no matter how vehemently they may claim it to be true, what they say should not be accepted if it in any way contradicts what Allah (swt) or the Prophet (saw) have said. Sometimes the corrupt people of this world will make a claim that is the exact opposite of what the reality is or a claim that completely contradicts Quran and Sunnah. So before we blindly follow what they say, we should first see what Allah (swt) says or what the Prophet (saw) have said about the matter. If what they say does not contradict with the Quran and Sunnah, then we should try to see for ourselves how true their statement is. If we find that their statement matches the reality then we can accept it. However if their statement does not match the reality or it is not in conformity with the Quran and Sunnah, then we should not accept it. Even if they are scholars and even if they are Muslims. For example there are respected and well-known Muslim scholars today who say that there is no such thing as the Islamic State. They say that

Islam has no political dimension and that it is only spiritual. Such a claim contradicts both the reality because the State existed for thousands of years and it also contradicts the hundreds of ayahs and ahadith where Allah (swt) has told us that Sovereignty is only for Him (swt). Now many ignorant and naïve Muslims believe such statements simply because it came from the mouth of a Muslim scholar. They do not check what he is saying against the reality and they do not check what he is saying against the Quran and Sunnah. Thus they are deceived by these hypocrites and their lies. Now we are not saying that we should mistrust and doubt our Muslim scholars. We are simply saying that we should be aware that there are hypocrites within our community, and we should be aware that the tongue of the son of Adam is capable of great lies and falsehood. There are people who claim to be Muslims but who are working for the powers be and who are trying to prevent Islam from returning. So before we accept any statement from anyone we should first see what the Quran and Sunnah have to be say about what they said. If we do not find any contradictions to their statements in the Book of Allah (swt) or the words of His (swt)'s Messenger (saw) then we should try to see if their statement fits the reality ourselves. If we do not find their statement to conflict with the reality as we know it then we can accept what they say. Otherwise we should be careful about what we accept from such people. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to distinguish between the Truth and falsehood! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to only take from this Din what is of it and may He (swt) protect us from what is not of it!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they are not aware. Al-Qurtubi says that there are two meanings for this part of the ayah. One meaning is that they are not aware of the fact that Prophet (saw) knows what they are doing. We know that Allah (swt) sent revelation to the Prophet (saw) to make him (saw) aware of the plots and plans of the hypocrites. If we take this meaning, then Allah (swt) is telling us that the hypocrites are planning to spread *fasad* in the land by plotting to destroy the Islamic State but they are not aware of the fact that the Prophet (saw) knows everything that they are doing. Another meaning that this ayah gives is the hypocrites themselves are not aware of the fact that destroying the Islamic State will spread

fasad in the land. They actually believe that they are *Muslihoon* and that they are doing good works and that they are spreading peace in the land. They actually believe this when in fact they are doing the opposite. So they are not even aware of the evil and corruption that they are causing in the land only because they want to follow their lusts and desires. They do not realize what a terrible catastrophe it would be for all mankind if the Islamic State were destroyed. They actually believe that a secular government where men rule by their desires is actually better for mankind than the Law of the Creator. They do not see the pressing need to convey this Message to all mankind on a global and mass level. They claim to be Muslims and they claim to be believers but their thinking and their view of the world is the exact opposite of what a Muslim should have. Because of this they continue to make plots against the Message of Allah (swt) without even being aware of the evil that their plots will bring.

For this ayah Sayyid Qutb also brings our attention to the fact that by believing themselves to be *Muslihoon* they are also displaying their arrogance and their pride. Even though they are trying to bring down the entity that represents the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and the entity that carries the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind, they are still so filled with pride of themselves that they think they are doing right in trying to bring the State down. They are so proud of themselves that in their eyes what is bad has become good, and what is wrong has become right. They think that what they desire is what is right. That is the extent to which they have corrupted themselves. They think that what is best and what is good is what will satisfy their desires and please them and not what will conform to the Law of Allah (swt) and please Him (swt). Such was their arrogance and pride in that they thought they knew better than the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize how dangerous such people are. It is one thing when a people want to spread *fasad* in the land by ruling with their own laws, but it is another thing when they think that they are *Muslihoon* by doing such a thing. They think that they are doing good by following their desires and lusts instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). They think that mankind would be better off being a slave of their

passions instead of being a slave to Allah (swt). Their arrogance and sense of self-righteousness that they have for themselves allows them to do anything they seem fit to achieve their goal. It blinds them to the evil of what they are doing. They do not care how many people have to die, they do not care how much disorder and chaos that they have to chaos. They see themselves on the right Path so they will stop at nothing to achieve their goal. An example of this in today's time is the saying of a Western leader that the thousands of children who died in Iraq as a result of the economic sanctions was "justified" to protect and preserve "freedom and democracy". They see themselves as *Muslihoon* and so they are willing to do anything to reach their goal. As they would say "the ends justify the means". May Allah (swt) save us from them!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلنَّاسُ قَالُوٓا۟
أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. When it is said to them 'have Iman like the people have iman'. They say 'Shall we have Iman like the foolish'. No! Certainly they are the fools but they do not know it.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues for describe to us the behavior of these hypocrites. In the previous ayahs we saw how the hypocrites were spreading *fasad* in the land by trying to bring down the Islamic State. All the while they were claiming to be among the *Muslihoon* and they even thought that they were doing the right thing. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the one key reason why they chose the life which they did. It only was because of their lack of *Iman.* These hypocrites did not have *Iman* as Allah (swt) had described the *Muttaqoon* of having Iman in the first four ayahs. In others words everything that the *Muttaqoon* believed in and had certainty of because it was from Allah (swt), these hypocrites had refused to believe in. For example they did not believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) had described Himself in the Quran. They did not have that certainty in their hearts that Allah (swt) was always with them, Seeing all that they did and Hearing all that they said. They did not have Iman in the fact that

they were created only to worship and serve Allah (swt). They were not convinced that such was the purpose of their life, instead they had convinced themselves that they only live in this world to serve their lusts and desires. Similarly they did not have the certainty in the Hereafter that the true believers had. They did not see the life after this world as a certainty like the believers did. They did not have Iman in the fact that one Day soon they would return to Allah (swt) and be accountable for all of their actions. They did not have Iman in the eternal bliss of Paradise or in the excorticating pain of Hellfire. Because they did not have this certainty in Allah (swt) and the Hereafter they only did the actions in the life of this world for themselves instead of for their Creator.

So if their lack of Iman was the reason for their corrupt behavior, why did they choose not to believe? Why did they not believe with certainty in all that was in the Quran like the true believers did? Why did they turn away from what they knew was the Truth? In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us why, Allah (swt) tells us how when they are told to have Iman like the true believers have, they reply by saying "Shall we have Iman like the fools have?" This then is how these hypocrites perceive the true believers. This then is how they saw this life of servitude that this Message called to. They saw the true believers in this Message as fools. The scholars say that the word *nas* or "people" in this ayah refers to the Sahahbah, both from the Muhajiroon and Ansar. Thus the hypocrites viewed the Sahabah as "fools" because of all the sacrifices and efforts that they made for the sake of Islam. They see a group of people giving up their lives, their wealth, their efforts and their souls for this dawah and they can only perceive such people as fools. So twisted was their way of thinking and their perception of the reality that these hypocrites saw the truest of believers and the most fearing of Allah (swt) among the Muttaqoon to be "fools".

Thus we see that the hypocrites simply do not see this world and life in this world as the true believers do. Although they claim to be Muslims with their tongues, and they may even perform the Salah and perform the Hajj, their hearts do not reach beyond the life of this world. All that they say and all that they do is only to get some benefit in this world. They do not have

any hope of meeting Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. Their hearts are trapped in the narrow existence of this worldly life. They have not realized the wide expanse of the Hereafter like the true believers have. The true believers have their hearts attached to Allah (swt) and the Hereafter. They long to leave this world and return to their *Rabb*. As the Prophet (saw) said "this world is a prison for the believer", he longs to escape from it and return to his *Rabb*. The only thing that keeps him in this world is the desire to strive in the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The only thing that he cares about in the life of this world is earning the Pleasure of his *Rabb* through his words and deeds. How different is this then from the hypocrites, who claim with their tongues that they are servants of Allah (swt) and they may even bow down before Allah (swt) in Salah, but their hearts are locked to this world. They do not look forward to the meeting with Allah (swt) and all that they care about is staying in this world for as long as possible and enjoying it as much as they can. So because their perception of this world and their perception of life are so different from that of the believers, the hypocrites see the believers as "fools". This is why they turn away from this life even though deep down inside they know that it is the correct life to live.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us who the real fools are. Allah (swt) shows us who correctly comprehends the reality of this existence and who is living in an illusion. Allah (swt) says "**No, certainly they are the fools but they are do not know it**". Once again we see Allah (swt) uses the Arabic words *la* and *inna*. First Allah (swt) completely rejects their way of thinking and their perception of the reality. The true believers are in no way fools, especially not the Sahahbah (raa) of the Prophet (saw). The Sahabah were the ones who perceived the true reality of this universe. They were the best generation of people that has ever existed among mankind. They were the ones who know the real meaning of life and they understand the true purpose of this world. So how can such people be fools? No, on the contrary they are the most insightful and the wisest of people. They give up the temporary and fleeting things of the life of this world to earn the Pleasure of their *Rabb*. They know that their *Rabb* loves them and their *Rabb* controls all good, so they know that their *Rabb* will replace what they

gave up with something much better in the life to come. Then Allah (swt) tells us how these hypocrites are the real fools. They are the ones who give up the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and give up the Garden only for this temporary and fleeting world. Who is a greater fool than one who does that? May Allah (swt) Allah (swt) prevent us from being among the foolish!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how deceptive the life of this world can be. This world tricked and seduced the hypocrites so that they completely forgot what the purpose of their life was. Although they were in the midst of the noble Sahabah and the Prophet (saw) himself, and they heard the adhan from the masjid of the Prophet (saw), and they saw the Muslims practicing their '*ibadah* all around them, all of this did not remind the hypocrites of the fact that they should live in this world only to worship and serve Allah (swt). They were so blinded by their lusts and greed for this worldly life. We need to be careful that the same does not happen to us. If this worldly life can delude a people who were in the presence of the Prophet (saw) then how much more careful should we be of it? We have to protect ourselves from our lusts and desires for this world. We must always remember that the final home is what lies with Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. This world is nothing but a shade under which we are resting for a few moments before we get up and continue on our journey to our *Rabb*. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember this fact!

وَإِذَا لَقُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قَالُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا۟ إِلَىٰ شَيَٰطِينِهِمْ قَالُوٓا۟
إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. And when they meet those who believe, they say 'We believe' but when they return to their devils, they say 'surely we are with you, we were only mocking'.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the description of the hypocrites. In the previous ayahs we saw how Allah (swt) told us that these were a people who spread *fasad* in the land while they claim that they are doers of good. Allah (swt) showed us how when they are called

onto have *Iman* like the true believers have, they refer to the true believers as fools. We said that this was because they had become so deluded by the life of this world that what was good for them had appeared as bad and what was right for them had appeared as wrong. They forgot that the purpose of their life was only to worship and serve Allah (swt). They forgot the reason for which they had been created. Instead they started to think that they were only in this world to enjoy themselves as much as possible. They thought that they had been created and that they continue to be sustained only so that they can serve themselves. They foolishly thought that they can make a life for themselves in this temporary and fleeting world that is doomed for destruction. Such was the utter foolishness of their thinking.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to another facet of their hypocrisy and that is how they change their behavior depending on how they are with. There is nothing that is true about the life of a hypocrite; his entire existence is a deception. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how they behave a certain way when they meet the believers and how they behave in a different way when they go back to their devils. When they meet the believers they say that they believe and they try to act like true Muslims, they may even perform the Salah alongside the Muslims and make the Hajj. But this is all lies and deception. Allah (swt) shows us how when they return to their devils they say that they are with them and they say that they were only mocking in the way that they behaved with the believers. The scholars say the word "devils" in this ayah could refer to the leaders of the hypocrites or it could refer to the Jews with whom the hypocrites had made alliances with and worked together to destroy the Islamic State. It seems that both meanings are possible and as always Allah (swt) Knows best! But simply the fact that Allah (swt) uses the word "devils" to describe such people tells us how evil they are.

So we see that the only reason why these hypocrites behaved like Muslims is because they wanted to win the friendship and love of the believers. They wanted to deceive the true and sincere believers into thinking that they really are their brothers. This is why when they met the believers they said that they are believers also. We know that this is a flagrant lie because in the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us how they thought the believers to be fools. They may even

have done their ibadah alongside the believers, but Allah (swt) showed us how all of this was falsehood and deception. In their words and in their actions there was nothing but deception. Their only objective was to try and fool the Muslims by saying that they are one of them. This way they could continue with their plots to destroy the Islamic Sate from within the ranks of the believers without being discovered.

Then Allah (swt) brings our attention to what they do when they return to their devils, to their allies in evil with whom they are working together to destroy the Islamic State. The first thing they do when they return to their devils is to say that surely we are with you. They want to reassure their evil allies that all the words that they had spoken with the believers and even the ibadah that they may have done alongside the believers was not a sincere show of friendship and brotherhood on their part. They reassure these devils that they are really with them and not with the believers. Once again we see the fear that is apparent in their words and in their deeds. We can see from these ayahs that the last thing that the hypocrites want to do is upset anyone. When they are with the believers they behave in a way to make them happy and when they are with their devils they behave in a way to make them happy. They are so scared of everyone and everything. This is the extent to which they have distanced themselves from Allah (swt). They fear everyone and everything but Allah (swt) when in reality He (swt) should have been the One deserving of their fear.

To reassure their devils these hypocrites then go even one step further. They say that they were only mocking in their behavior towards the believers and even in their claim to be believers. In claiming to be believers and even in participating in the *ibadah* with the Muslims they tell their devils that they were only making fun and mockery of the Muslims. So not only do these people see the true servants of Allah (swt) as fools but they also mock and make fun at the servants of Allah (swt). They mock and make fun of those who are striving to please Allah (swt) because of their efforts and striving. Can you see now the extent of the evil of such people? How can a people be so heedless of Allah (swt)? How can a people mock the worshippers of Allah (swt)? Can you imagine how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) they are brining down on

themselves? Can you even begin to imagine the kind of the punishment that Allah (swt) has kept reserved for such people? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

ٱللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِى طُغْيَـٰنِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. Allah mocks them, and grants them leave to wander blindly on in their wickedness.

The second part of this ayah explains the first part. Recall from the previous ayah how the hypocrites claimed that they were mocking the believers by falsely claiming that they believe. In the first part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) mocks at these hypocrites. The way in which He (swt) does that is explained in the second part. Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) grants them leave to wander blindly on in their wickedness. This means that Allah (swt) allows them to continue their evil actions without punishing them immediately. For these people such respite is actually a punishment. Allah (swt) could punish them right away for such evil actions like trying to destroy the Islamic State and assassinate the Prophet (saw). But Allah (swt) allows them to continue in their sinister plots and plans, and since the punishment does not reach them immediately they do not realize how evil are the actions that they have been doing. Because such realization does not occur to them, they continue with such actions without being aware of how much it earns the Wrath of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) describes them in this ayah as wandering blindly on in their wickedness. They are blind to how evil their actions are, they are blind to how

their actions are earning the Wrath of their Creator. The evil of such people is beyond words. Just imagine someone who claims with his tounge that he is a true Muslim, and he gives Salams to the Muslims, and he pledges allegiance to this dawah at the blessed hand of the Prophet (saw), but then in reality he has no loyalty to Islam and he is even working against this dawah. All the while pretending to be Muslim, all the while pretending to be a sincere worker in this dawah. In his heart he has great jealousy and hatred for the Prophet (saw), and he think the believers to be fools. He does not see that the purpose in his life is only to worship and serve Allah (swt). Can you imagine how displeased Allah (swt) would be with such a person? Can you imagine how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) such a person brings down upon himself? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like that!

So the more evil that they do, the more Wrath from Allah (swt) they are bringing down on themselves, and the more of Allah (swt)'s Wrath that they have, the more punishment they will receive. If Allah (swt) would have punished them when they did only a small amount of evil then their punishment would have been light because their evil was small. But Allah (swt) allows them to do more and more evil thus earning more and more punishment for themselves. This is how Allah (swt) mocks them. Their punishment could be in the life of this world but most likely it will be in the Hereafter, and we know the terrible punishment that Allah (swt) has kept reserved for the hypocrites in the Hereafter. That is the lowest depths of the Hellfire where the fire is the fiercest and the pain is the severest. Such pain is beyond description in words. Such pain hurts to even think about. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

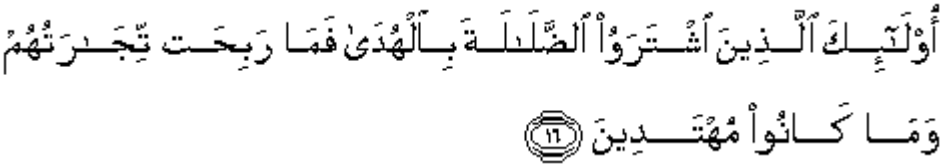
So we see that the way in which Allah (swt) mocks these hypocrites is by allowing them to continue in their sinister plans to destroy the Islamic State without punishing them immediately for such evil. Because of this they do not realize what an evil action they are doing in trying to destroy this Message that Allah (swt) sent to mankind as a mercy and a guidance to all mankind. So by persisting in such evil they are earning more and more punishment for themselves in the Hereafter. Just like they were deceiving the believers with their false promises of being true Muslims, Allah (swt) is deceiving them by allowing them to continue in their evil

without realizing the terrible consequences of what they are doing. That is how Allah (swt) mocks them just as they had mocked the believers.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize what a terrible and horrendous action it was that these hypocrites were doing. Allah (swt) Himself is telling us that He (swt) is mocking such people by allowing them to persist in such evil deeds. So that shows us how evil are their actions and how much their actions earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). Allah (swt), the Most Merciful and the Most Loving, is mocking them. Does this not tell you how evil of a people they are? This fact alone should make us terrified of their actions. This fact alone should make us terrified of ever becoming like them. When you say with your tounge that you are a Muslim, you are taking on a heavy responsibility. With such a statement you are now making yourself a part of the most honored of nations ever raised up for mankind. Other prophets like Musa (as) for example, wished that they were part of this nation. But at the same time along with that honor comes the heavy responsibility of making the effort to carry this Message to mankind. It requires a great striving and many sacrifices. Now as for these hypocrites, not only are they not working hard for the sake of this dawah like the true Muslims are, but they are actually working against it. They say that they are Muslims but their true actions are completely contradictory to what they are saying. That is why they have earned the Wrath of Allah (swt) with their actions. So the lesson that we must take from this ayah is to be terrified of such actions and avoid them at all costs. This dawah to establish the Islamic State and spread this Message to mankind is a heavy responsibility that Allah (swt) has placed on all who claim to be Muslims. If we work against this dawah or even if we neglect this responsibility then we should be aware of how much such actions earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us to work in the best of our capacity to support this Message that He (swt) has sent for mankind!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that when some disaster or calamity befalls us, we have to realize it may actually be a Mercy from Allah (swt). Our Rabb may be sending us a Message and telling us that we are doing some action that He (swt) is displeased with. We see from this ayah that Allah (swt) mocked the hypocrites by allowing them to wander

blindly on in their wickedness. Allah (swt) did not send them any punishment or any warning in the life of this world to let them know that what they were doing. So if we receive some calamity or some difficulty in the life of this world, then we have to stop and we have to think to ourselves that may be we are doing an action that Allah (swt) is not pleased with. May be we are becoming lazy in one of our obligations to Allah (swt) or may be we are committing some action that Allah (swt) has forbidden. So whenever some calamity or tragedy befalls us that makes us come to such a realization, we should thank our *Rabb* that He (swt) has sent us this clear message. We should then stop doing that forbidden action or we should start performing that obligatory action, and then we should seek forgiveness from Allah (swt) for our heedlessness. So we see how yet another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that sometimes disasters that come in our life may be a message from Allah (swt) that we are doing some action that He (swt) is not pleased with. In that way Allah (swt) is being most Kind and Merciful to us in that He (swt) is not letting us persist in our wrong like He (swt) did for those hypocrites. May Allah (swt) always be pleased with us in such a way! May Allah (swt) always guide us to those actions that He (swt) is pleased with and to those actions that lead to His (swt)'s Pleasure in the Hereafter!



17. These are the ones who trade guidance for error. So their trade has brought them no gain and they are not of those who are guided.

We saw in the previous ayahs how these hypocrites are those who had chosen to serve their desires and their passions instead of a life in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Despite the fact that they had the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah with them to set for them the excellent example of what the true servants of Allah (swt) should be like, they did not follow this

example. They chose to turn away from this life of dawah that the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah were living. A life dedicated to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) by working to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and spreading the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. These hypocrites chose to turn away from such a life. They chose instead to live a life where they existed only to maximize their pleasures. They chose to make the object of their hearts, their illah, something other than Allah (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) describes the choice that they made.

Allah (swt) describes the choice that they made as a trade. When they chose to live a life of serving their desires instead of serving Allah (swt), Allah (swt) describes such a choice as trading for error with guidance. They are giving up guidance and they are getting in return for it error or misguidance. Can you even begin to imagine how terrible is the trade that they are making? They have the guidance. They have the Quran being recited in their midst and they have the Prophet (saw) walking among them. They have already made it to where the source of guidance is, they are already in Madinah, the city of light and the city of the Prophet (saw). But they are giving this up, they are trading this away for the sake of this worldly life. They are trading away the guidance that they have for a miserly return of searching for fleeting pleasures in the life of this world. So how worthless is the trade that they are making. Giving up the Hereafter for the life of this world. Giving up the Pleasure of Allah (swt) for the pleasure of the devils. Giving up the pleasure and contentment of the Garden for the pain and suffering of the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from ever making such a trade! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that the key to His (swt)'s Pleasure lies in receiving His (swt)'s guidance and the key to His (swt)'s guidance is the Quran and the key to the Quran is in the life of the Prophet (saw) and the key to the life of Prophet (saw) is to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps by living a life of dawah to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and carry this Message to mankind! Nothing else should matter for us except this!

In the second part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they did not receive any profit from their trade. These are a people who got nothing whatsoever out of this trade that they

made. What was their profit? What did they get for themselves with this trade that they made? It was only the life of this world. When you give up the Hereafter for the life of this world you will always end up with nothing. Because what is the life of this world when compared with the Hereafter? How can you compare you temporal life in this world to your eternal existence in the Hereafter? This world is only a place of test, the only place where true pleasure can be found is in the Hereafter and the only place where you can find true pain is in the Hereafter. How can you compare the transient pleasures of this world to the endless joy and felicity in the Garden? How can compare the suffering and trials in this world to the punishment and pain of the Hellfire? There is no comparison and that is why in the trade that these hypocrites have made they have ended up with nothing.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they were not among those who were guided. As we learned from Surah Al-Fatihah, guidance is what we are always seeking from Allah (swt). We are always asking Allah (swt) to guide us to those actions that will earn His (swt)'s Pleasure and we are always asking Allah (swt) to guide us away from those actions that will earn His (swt)'s Wrath. Because these hypocrites have given up their Hereafter for the life of this world, they are not among those are guided. They are not among those who have been guided by Allah (swt) to His (swt)'s Pleasure and His (swt)'s Paradise. That is the result of the trade that they have made. These hypocrites walked away from the life of dawah that being a true Muslim demands and this is what they ended up with, being deprived of guidance. If you have already made up your mind that you do not want to live your life in worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as He (swt) had created you to do, then how could you expect Allah (swt) to guide you to Him (swt)? If you know Allah (swt) and you do not call to Him (swt) then how can you expect Him (swt) to love you? To receive the guidance from Allah (swt), you have to dedicate your life to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). A life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) includes a life of dawah. That is what these hypocrites failed to do. They were deceived by the life of this world and preferred an existence of fulfilling their desires instead of an existence of serving Allah (swt). That is why they were not among those who were guided. The only thing

that was guiding their actions were their desires and their devils. Because they chose to turn away, Allah (swt) did not guide them. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like them! May Allah (swt) make us among those who are willing to strive and sacrifice for this dawah like the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah (raa) did! May Allah (swt) make us among those He (swt) has guided!

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى ٱسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّآ أَضَآءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُۥ ذَهَبَ ٱللَّهُ
بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِى ظُلُمَٰتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

17. Their example is like the example of the one who starts a fire and when it lightens his surrounding, Allah takes away their light and leaves them in darkness where they cannot see.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us an example to describe the situation of the hypocrites. Allah (swt) often uses such examples in Quran to describe the situation of a people. The purpose of such examples is to bring to our attention the reality of the situation that they are in, so that we can fully comprehend it. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that the example of the hypocrites is like that of a person who has kindled a fire in a dark place. The fire then illuminates his surroundings. The fire also illuminates the surroundings of the people who are with this person who lit the fire. Then Allah (swt) takes away the light and these people find themselves in darkness where they cannot see. This is the example that Allah (swt) gives to describe the situation of the hypocrites.

Scholars like al-Qurtubi have put forward the following explanation for this example. The people referred to in this ayah are the hypocrites. The man who lights the fire is the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) lights a fire for the hypocrites who were once in darkness. That fire is

Islam. It provided the light of guidance. Guidance on how to worship and serve Allah (swt). It also provided warmth. Warmth is the safety and the prosperity that they enjoyed from the Islamic State which the Prophet (saw) established. When the fire was there, the hypocrites enjoyed the warmth that it brought. They basked in the security and prosperity that it brought. We know that the Islamic State, which consisted of the city of Madinah at that time, enjoyed unparalleled security. Although it had many enemies, these enemies were never able to conquer the city. Allah (swt) protected the Islamic State from all its enemies. The citizens of Madinah also enjoyed much prosperity. Allah (swt) gave the Muslims many victories from which they took much war booty. So the hypocrites took advantage of the security and prosperity of the Islamic State, and this was the warmth from the fire kindled by the Prophet (saw). But they did not take advantage of the light that it offered. They did not let it guide them to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Because they did not use this light that Allah (swt) had given them, He (swt) took away their light. They had the light of Islam but they choose not to believe in it, so Allah (swt) took it away from them. The way that Allah (swt) took it away from them was that He (swt) blinded their senses from being able to perceive this Message and He (swt) enfeebled their hearts from being able to comprehend this Message.

This then brings us to the second part of the parable and that is when the hypocrites find themselves in darkness where they cannot see. This refers to their deaths. After these hypocrites died, they found themselves in darkness. They find that the light of Islam that guides to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) is no longer there. In fact they find that there is no light at all and they are surrounded in complete darkness. It is pitch black to the point that if one of them would try to look at his own hand he would not be able to see it. At this point they are made to cross *As-Sirat*, the thin bridge that leads to Paradise but crosses over the Hellfire. How can anyone cross such a bride with no light? They will try to cross and they will fall. They will fall into that unspeakable place. May Allah (swt) save us from that! This is the interpretation for this example that our scholars have given. As always Allah (swt) Knows best!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always try to take advantage of this fire while we are still in this world. This fire is the Din of Islam and it is what the Prophet (saw) has kindled for us. This fire is the only light in a world of darkness. It is not enough for us simply to take advantage of the warmth that it gives without taking it's light. The light of this fire is the knowledge about Islam. It is the knowledge about Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw), the angels, the books, the previous prophets and everything else that is a part of this Din. This knowledge should then generate within us a certainty of faith. In other words our Iman must grow stronger from our knowledge. If we find some knowledge that does not increase our Iman, such as thinking too deeply about the Decree of Allah (swt) or about the Knowledge of Allah (swt), then we should leave such knowledge. The knowledge about Islam that increases our Iman is what we must seek. The primary sources for this knowledge should of course be the Quran and Sunnah. The reason why it is important for us to strive to learn about Islam now is because when we pass away this fire will no longer be there. Just like these hypocrites we will find ourselves next to *As-Sirat* in darkness. The only light that we will have is the iman that is in our hearts and the Quran that is in our hearts. Insha Allah the more iman and the more Quran that we have in our hearts, the more light that we would have. The more light that we have, the easier will it be to cross *As-Sirat* and the less the chances of our falling down from it. So we have to increase our knowledge of this Din and increase our knowledge of the Quran while we are still in this world. Insha Allah this is what will save us from what befell these hypocrites. This is what will save us from finding ourselves in darkness in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) give us light when there is no light! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to learn the Quran and to benefit from the guidance that it contains! May all the knowledge that we learn help us to better worship and serve Allah (swt)! May Allah (swt) allow all the knowledge that we learn to increase our Iman! May Allah (swt) protect us from all the knowledge that does not serve this purpose! May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like these hypocrites who ignored the light that they had in this world and then found themselves in darkness in the Hereafter!

صُمٌّۢ بُكۡمٌ عُمۡيٞ فَهُمۡ لَا يَرۡجِعُونَ ١٨

19. Deaf, dumb and blind. So they will not return.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us a further description of the hypocrites. He (swt) tells us how they are deaf, dumb, and blind. This means that they cannot hear, they cannot speak, and they cannot see. This means that they have turned off their senses to the evidences around them that testify to the Truth of this Message. It is because of this fact that they have turned away their senses that they have become hypocrites. If they would only open their senses to the evidences of this Message, they would realize that it was the Truth. They would be true believers instead of hypocrites. But because they have closed their senses to the signs that Allah (swt) has sent, they have no Iman behind the empty declarations that they make of being Muslims. They only speak and act as if they are believers but their hearts are empty of faith.

First Allah (swt) tells us that they are deaf. Now we know that they are not literally deaf, Allah (swt) gave them ears and they can hear. Rather they are deaf because they have made themselves deaf. They do want to hear. Now what is it that they do not want to hear? What is the clear proof of this Message that is there for every one to hear? Of course it is the Quran. These hypocrites have made themselves deaf to the Quran. They have closed their ears to a Book whose very verses Allah (swt) has called "signs". Every verse in the Quran is a clear evidence that this Book could only be from Allah (swt). But the hypocrites have turned away their ears from being able to perceive this Miracle so it is as if they are deaf to it. Insha Allah we will discuss the Miracle of the Quran later in the twenty-fourth ayah of the Surah.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that they are dumb, this means that they cannot speak. Of course we know that they can speak. We saw from the previous ayahs some of the evil words that they spoke. So what does Allah (swt) mean by the fact that they are dumb? It means that they have made themselves dumb to words that have the remembrance of Allah (swt) in them. These people do not speak any words with which they remember their Lord. Because they do not remember Allah (swt) in their words, it has made them forget about Him (swt). So just like

closing their ears to the Quran, their failure to mention Allah (swt) in their words has also become a source for their misguidance. The Prophet (saw) warned us against sitting in a gathering for too long if Allah (swt) is not mentioned in that gathering. If people talk for too long on something other than Allah (swt), they might forget Him (swt) and then this might lead to disobedience of Him (swt). How can you speak for a long time and not mention Allah (swt) when He (swt) is the purpose of your life? He (swt) is the love of your heart and He (swt) is the Only One Who you fear. How can you speak and not speak about Him (swt)? We live only to worship and serve Allah (swt).How then can we not remember Him (swt) with our words? May Allah (swt) allow us to remember Him (swt) both in the words that we speak and in the actions that we do!

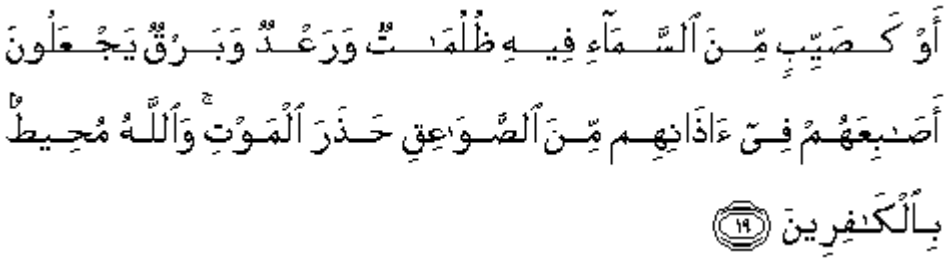
Then Allah (swt) tells us that they are blind. Once again this means that they have made themselves blind to the signs and evidences of Allah (swt). If one wants proof for the Existence of Allah (swt), for the Oneness of Allah (swt), and for the Absolute Sovereignty and Control of Allah (swt) over this entire universe, then one only needs to look at the signs that are all over this universe. As we discussed in Surah Fatihah everything in this universe is an evidence to the fact that Allah (swt) Exists, that He (swt) is One and Only and that He (swt) controls and governs everything in this universe. Please see our tafsir of the second ayah of Surah Fatihah for a more detailed discussion on these proofs. The hypocrites have made themselves blind to these signs as well. They see these signs everyday in the world all around them testifying to the fact that Allah (swt) is One and Only and that He (swt) should be the Only One to legislate. But they still turn away from these signs and seek to establish a system where they legislate instead of the Lord and Master of the universe. See then what an evil people they are. By turning away from these manifest signs they have made themselves blind to it.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they will not return. Notice the Arabic word *fa* that begins this part of the ayah. This word is similar to the English word "so" or "because". With this word Allah (swt) is telling us that the reason why they will not return is because they have turned off their senses. It is because they shut their ears to the Quran, it is because they have prevented their tongues from remembering Allah (swt), and it is because they

have covered their eyes to all of the signs in the universe around them. Because they have chosen to ignore these sings they will not return. Now what does Allah (swt) mean in this ayah by telling us that they will not return? The natural station for a human to be in is in the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) because this was this purpose that he was created for. When he chooses instead to serve his desires he leaves this natural station that his Creator had placed him in. And when he chooses to close his senses to all of the signs that his Creator has sent him to return him to his natural station, that is when his heart becomes sealed. At this point there is no hope for him to ever return to that natural station of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). This is because his heart has been sealed and his senses have been closed. Now there is no possibility of him ever being able to perceive the Truth of this Message. This is not injustice in any way on the part of Allah (swt) because they themselves chose to turn away from this Message in the first place. May Allah (swt) save us from this ever happening to us! May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember Him (swt), to listen to His (swt)'s Word, to mention Him (swt) in our gatherings and to observe and reflect on His (swt)'s signs!

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how important our senses are, and how they can establish and strengthen our Iman. Allah (swt) criticizes the hypocrites in this ayah for turning their senses away from the signs and evidences that are all around the universe and in the verses of the Quran. So that is why it is very important that we always keep our senses open to the many signs of Allah (swt) that we see in the universe around us. This could be the setting sun or it could be a bird in flight or it could even be in ourselves when we become sick and realize how weak we are. The signs of Allah (swt) are also in the ayahs of the Quran. Listen to the Quran and reflect on it's beauty and contemplate on it's deep meaning. If you have not realized it's deep meaning then you have not listened in the correct way. You have not approached it with the respect and sincerity that the Book of Allah (swt) deservers. If you do then you will realize the deep meanings that this Book contains. When you listen to the Quran with sincerity and with deep contemplation then you will know that this Book could only from Allah (swt). Finally always mention Allah (swt) with your tounge. This could either be praising

Allah (swt) when you are by yourself or mentioning the name of your Rabb in a gathering. That would also be part of your servitude to Him (swt). All of these are ways in which we can use our senses to please Allah (swt). All of these are ways in which we can be guided to Him (swt) with them. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like these hypocrites whose senses were turned away from being able to perceive the Truth of this Message!



20. Or a rainstorm from the sky, in it is darkness and thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from fear of death. But Allah encompasses the *kafiroon* (from all sides).

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives another metaphor describing the situation of the hypocrites. Mawdudi and other commentators of Quran say that this ayah is describing a different type of hypocrites than was described in the previous ayah. They say that while the previous ayah was describing those hypocrites who rejected Iman altogether and who were plotting against the Islamic State, this ayah describes the hypocrites who were weak in their Iman. These are those who say that they are Muslims with their tongues, and who may even think themselves to be Muslim, but in their hearts their Iman is very weak. Because of this fact they often fall short on carrying out many of the commands of Allah (swt). So the previous ayah was describing those hypocrites who hated Islam and hated the Prophet (saw), and who were actively working to destroy the Islamic State. This ayah however demonstrates a different kind of hypocrites. Those whose faith is weak and as a consequence of which fall short in the worship and servitude of their Lord. This may seem to you like a lesser degree of hypocrisy then the kind

described in the previous ayah, but it is actually this kind that many of us are in serious danger of falling into. May Allah (swt) save us!

So it is very important that we learn about these kind of hypocrites as well. Even if they may not pose a direct threat to the dawah, they are much more common in the Ummah today. Some contemporary scholars have even claimed that the majority of the Ummah today are hypocrites like this. Allah (swt) Knows best if such a claim is true or not, but when we see the weakness in the Ummah today of practicing this Din correctly we know that there has to be some truth to such a claim. That is why it is extremely important that we study about such people. So that we can know about them, and with the help and guidance of Allah (swt) we prevent ourselves from becoming them. May Allah (swt) help us!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah for describing a scene for us. You will have to use your imagination and picture this scene in your mind. Sometimes the Quran requires you to use the ability for imagination that Allah (swt) gave you. If you use your imagination to help your understanding of Quran, it would be much better than using it for some of the other purposes that people use their imagination for. Now picture a group of people on a dark night. There comes upon these people a rainstorm. The clouds of the rainstorm bring darkness. The darkness of the clouds combines with the darkness of the night, and there is darkness upon darkness. That is why Allah (swt) begins this description by telling us about a rainstorm from the sky where in is darkness, and the word that Allah (swt) uses for darkness is in the plural. These people are in darkness upon darkness.

As for the interpretation of this parable, once again we have to remember that this is what the scholars have put down. Allah (swt) Knows best if their interpretation is correct or not. We ask Allah (swt) to guide us on how to correctly understand His (swt)'s Book. So regarding this parable, the scholars say the rainstorm is the Quran. Just like rain the Quran has also been sent down to use from above. Also just like rain there is much benefit for many people in the Quran. But in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to a group of people who do not benefit from the guidance that is in the Quran. These are the kind of hypocrites whose Iman is very weak. They

are the people whom Allah (swt) describes as being in this rainstorm. We can see how this example fits the hypocrites perfectly. Firstly they are a people who are in darkness because they do not have the guidance. But when the Quran comes down to them, it only adds to their darkness. The darkness from the rainstorm are the doubts that the hypocrites have concerning what is in the Quran. Instead of being a source of light for them, the Quran is only a source of darkness for them. Instead of bringing them guidance it brings them misguidance. We saw that Allah (swt) uses the plural to describe the darkness that these hypocrites are in, this shows us that there are multiple levels to their misguidance. Firstly they themselves are in the darkness of the night because they are not guided, they do not have a Path that leads them to their Creator. Then when the Quran comes, it only adds to their darkness. Instead of being a source of light for them it is a source of darkness, instead of being a source of guidance it is a source of misguidance. Before we question how the Quran can be a source of misguidance for these people, it is very important for us to remember that these are a people who do not want to be guided. Instead of striving hard and searching for the guidance from Allah (swt), these are a people who would rather serve their desires and become lazy. So in reality the Quran did not misguide them but rather they misguided themselves by turning away from this Message. In other words they have made the Quran a source of misguidance for themselves by their turning away from it.

The scholars continue on their interpretation of this parable and say that the thunder is everything that the Quran contains which displeases the hypocrites. It is all of the commands in the Quran which entail hardships that they do not want to carry it out. For example the Quran commands them to be constant in prayer, whenever the time comes and whatever they may be doing they must make their Salah. The Quran also commands them to pay zakat, it commands them to pay zakat from their wealth which they love. It commands them to fast the long and hot days of Ramadan, it commands them to make the pilgrimage to the house of Allah (swt) no matter what the difficulties involved, it commands them to fight in jihad and be firm against the enemy, it commands them to work to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land no matter how

much effort and sacrifice is involved, it commands them to refrain from zina and looking at women, it commands them refrain from taking interest and from being unfair in business, it commands them to refrain from speaking ill of others, it commands them to refrain from all the things forbidden and indecent which their souls love to do. For these hypocrites following all of these commands are like thunder. It displeases them to hear it and they do not want to hear it. That is why they put their fingers in their ears. Whenever they hear the Quran or they hear the sincere Muslims calling on them to these commands they put their fingers in their ears. They put their fingers in their ears because they do not want to hear these commands. Allah (swt) tells us that they put their fingers in their ears from fear of death. For them following these commands would be like death. It would be the end of their life of pleasure in this world. So they think of Islam, and they think of submitting to the commands of Allah (swt) to be like death. Thus they put their fingers in their ears so that they do not hear it.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) encompasses the *kafiroon* from all sides. We mentioned earlier how the word *kufr* means "to cover". When it comes to the disbelievers we said this word was used to describe how they covered the Truth they knew in their hearts. This same definition also fits for theses hypocrites who are weak in their Iman. Deep down inside they are certain that this Message is the Truth. But their desires and their love for this world has made them to turn away from this Message. They do not take the time and make the effort to search for the guidance and so they are not guided.
In addition the word kufr can also be referring to how they are covering the favors and bounties of Allah (swt) upon them. Allah (swt) honored them and favored them by giving them a chance to be part of the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) honored them and favored them by giving them the Quran. What then can you say about a people who shut their ears to what is in the Quran only because some portions of it are too difficult to them? What are such people thinking? It is clear that they do not realize that the purpose of their existence is only to be a servant of Allah (swt). No matter what the difficulties are involved in a particular task, when Allah (swt) tells you to do something, you have to do it. You cannot bring excuses! If you do come

with excuses, then you are truly being ungrateful to your Rabb; your Creator and your Sustainer, your Lord and your Master. If you do then you should know that Allah (swt) encompasses the *kafiroon* from all sides. That means He (swt) Knows all about such people. There is no way that they can escape Him (swt). Allah (swt) Knows their hearts and so He (swt) Knows every thought that they had. Allah (swt) also Knows their actions so He (swt) Knows every single thing that they do. There is nothing that they can do to escape Him (swt), He (swt) surrounds them on all sides. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like such people!

يَكَادُ ٱلْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَٰرَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَآ أَضَآءَ لَهُم مَّشَوْا۟ فِيهِ
وَإِذَآ أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا۟ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَٰرِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ
ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

21. The lightning almost snatches away their sight. When it flashes they walk there in, and when darkness covers them they stand still. And if Allah wanted, He could take away their hearing and their sight. Surely over every single thing Allah has Power.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the parable of the hypocrites that He (swt) began in the previous ayah. In the previous ayah we said that the example of the hypocrites in relation to the Quran was like a group of people who are caught in a rainstorm during the night. The Quran was like the rain in such a rainstorm. The Quran is like the rain because it is sent down from the sky and because it brings benefits and blessings for many people. But for these hypocrites, the Quran only brought them darkness. We said that this was because they had chosen to turn away from the Quran, and turn away from the life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) that the Quran demanded. So the Quran was not a source of light and guidance for them. On the contrary it became a source of darkness. They had doubts concerning it, and it only lead them further into confusion and misguidance. The commands in Quran that they found difficult to implement were like thunderclaps for them. They hated to hear it so they thrust their

fingers in their ears whenever they it was spoken to them. Because of this fact that they were averse to fulfilling the commands of Allah (swt), they found some way to escape every command that He (swt) gave them. They always made some excuse for themselves. Allah (swt) then told us that He (swt) encompasses them from all sides; this means that He (swt) Knows everything that they are doing and He (swt) Knows everything that they are thinking. They cannot escape from Allah (swt) and they cannot hide from His (swt)'s Knowledge. Thus Allah (swt) encompasses them and surrounds them from all sides.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the lightning in the storm. But what does the lightning in this parable represent and what is the relation of the hypocrites to it? The scholars say that in this ayah the lightning represents the clear evidences and proofs of this Message. There is no one who can deny the Truth of this Message. The evidences are so strong and the proofs are undeniable. Whenever the hypocrites see these evidences, they become convinced of it. Whenever they hear the proofs of this Message they believe that it is truly from Allah (swt). Look here to how Allah (swt) describes the lightning. It is so strong that it almost takes away their sight. That is how powerful the evidences are, they are like brilliant flashes of lightning.

Allah (swt) then tells us that when the lightning flashes they walk, and when there is no lightning, when there is only darkness, they stand still. This is exactly how these kinds of hypocrites are in their relation to this Quran. When they see the evidences and proofs they become convinced and Iman begins to enter their hearts. Furthermore when they see something in the Quran that they like such as the promise of victory, they begin to march forward in the sake of the dawah. But when the lightning goes away and the thunderclaps sound, in other words when the Quran gives them a command that they find to be too difficult they stop. They stand still and refuse to carry out that command because of the difficulty that it entails. So when there is light from the lightning they walk, Iman enters their hearts and they begin to do the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with. But when there is darkness and thunder, they stand still. If Allah (swt) gives them a Law that they find too difficult they refuse to move.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that if He (swt) wanted, He (swt) could take away their hearing and their sight. Allah (swt) has given these hypocrites senses with which they can perceive and understand the evidences that He (swt) has given for this Message. They can see that everything in the universe is limited and controlled, and so everything must have a Creator and Controller. They can hear the ayahs of the Quran and they know that they can never produce anything like it. Allah (swt) has given them the senses with which they can reach certainty as to the Truthfulness of this Message. If only they would use their senses for this purpose. If only they would contemplate on that which they sensed they would reach the certainty of faith. But they refuse to use their senses for this purpose, to help them reach certainty about the Truth of this Message. They would rather use their senses to chase after this world and to satisfy their desires. That is why their hearts linger in doubt, and that is why they always find it difficult to carry out the commands of Allah (swt). Since they do not have the certainty of Iman in their hearts, since they have doubts and misgivings, they are not motivated to strive to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So because they have wasted these senses that Allah (swt) has given them, Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that if He (swt) wanted He (swt) could take them away. Since they refuse to use their ears to listen to the signs of the Quran and they refuse to use their eyes to see the signs in the universe, Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) could take away their senses if He (swt) wanted to do. These senses which they refuse to use in the proper way, to gain certainty in this Message, to know their Creator, do not belong to them but they belong to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gave them their ears and their eyes and if He (swt) wanted He (swt) could take these gifts away because of their ingratitude. So this is actually a threat for them. Allah (swt) is telling them that they better use their senses or else He (swt) will take it away from them. Even if Allah (swt) allows their senses to still perceive the physical world He (swt) may remove from them their ability to perceive the Truth of this Message.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling us that He (swt) surely has Power all things. These hypocrites should never think for one second that Allah (swt) would not take away their hearing and sight. Allah (swt) has Power over all things and everything is easy for Him (swt). If

they continue to show ingratitude to Allah (swt) for the tools that He (swt) has given them to recognize the Truth of this Message, then they should know that Allah (swt) can snatch away their senses in a flash and that would be easy for Him (swt). There is nothing that Allah (swt) cannot do and we must always be in fear of His (swt)'s Power. Surely He (swt) can do anything and noting is beyond Him (swt). Do you realize how terrifying a prospect this is? May Allah (swt) help us to remember this! May Allah (swt) allow us to do only that which pleases Him (swt). So that He (swt) will only do to us that which pleases us!

Notice also the beauty of the language in this ayah. Allah (swt) does not tell us that He (swt) has Power over all things but rather He (swt) says that over all things He (swt) has Power. There is a subtle difference. First Allah (swt) brings our attention to all things. At this point we are thinking that what is there about these things. What is it that is so special about all things? Then Allah (swt) tells us that over all these things He (swt) has Power. This truly drives home the fact that Allah (swt) has Power over every single thing. There is not a thing in this universe except that Allah (swt) has Power over it. So in the first part of the statement Allah (swt) draws the attention of the listener and brings him closer and then in the second part of the statement Allah (swt) tells him what He (swt) wants to say. This is part of the beauty of the Quran. In this Book Allah (swt) says everything in the most perfect way that it can be said, in the way in which it will have the most impact on the listener. Insha Allah we will discuss more on this soon.

So in this ayah and the one that preceded it we saw Allah (swt) describe a different kind of hypocrite. This is not the hypocrite that is openly opposed to this Message, nor is this the hypocrite that does not have any Iman at all. Rather it is those Muslims whose Iman is weak. Some would say that this is a lesser form of hypocrisy but as we can see from the way Allah (swt) describes such people there is nothing "lesser" about it. These are a people who say with their tongues that they are Muslims but they do not carry out the obligations that Islam demands of them. They do not submit to their Lord in all spheres of their life as their faith demands of them. How many are the examples of such Muslims that we can see in the Ummah today? How many Muslims do not make their five daily prayers? How many Muslims do not pay their Zakat?

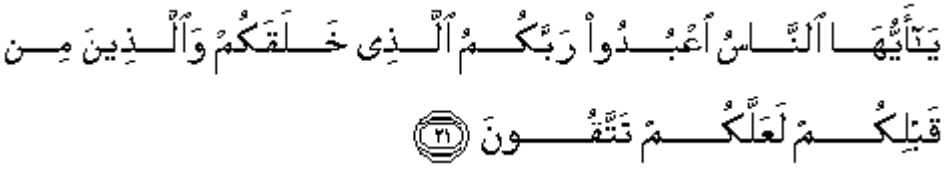
How many Muslim sisters do not cover their hair? How many Muslim brothers shave their beards? How many Muslims deal with interest? How many Muslims today are not involved in the dawah? We need to study and contemplate on the meaning of this ayah so that we do not become like them. In this ayah Allah (swt) has clearly told us at least two reasons for such hypocrisy. One reason is an unwillingness to use their senses to observe and reflect on the signs of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has placed clear evidences both in the Quran and in the universe around us. It is up to us to observe them, to reflect on them and to allow them to guide us to have stronger Iman.

The other reason that Allah (swt) has identified as the cause for such hypocrisy is a laziness and a weakness in carrying out the commands of Allah (swt). These hypocrites only moved when they saw the light from the lightning. But when there was thunder and darkness came they stood still. We must not be like that. We must move and carry out the commands of Allah (swt) when there is light and we see the evidences clearly. But we must also move and carry out the commands of Allah (swt) when they come to us like claps of thunder. It may be loud and we may not like to hear it. These commands may be to do something difficult and we may not like it. Our natural reaction may be one of fear or even one of inactivity and laziness. But that does not give us the excuse to neglect our obligations. We heard and saw the evidences, and we are convinced of this Message. Why then do we have an aversion to do what this Message demands of us only because it involves difficulty or only because we feel afraid? We always have to remind ourselves that our fear should only be for Allah (swt). We have to convince ourselves that nothing can hurt us if Allah (swt) is on our side and nothing can help us if Allah (swt) is against us. We have to convince ourselves that we need to strive hard to be worthy of the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We have to remind ourselves that nothing matters except Allah (swt). How can we know of a Being as Glorious and Magnificent and Tremendous as He (swt) and then not dedicate ourselves completely to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) is True. This Message that He (swt) has sent us is True. We have to always remind ourselves of this fact. Then we have to think and behave based on this realization.

Allah (swt) gave us the ability to work hard in His (swt)'s cause. If we truly realize all that He (swt) has done for us, if we realized how even if we spent our whole lives trying to number the favors of Allah (swt) how we would not be able to do it. If we truly love Allah (swt), if we truly fear Allah (swt), then all of the commands of this Din should not be hard for us at all. We should love spending every moment of our lives striving to earn Allah (swt)'s Pleasure. That then is the only way we can save ourselves from being like these hypocrites. First we have to remember that the purpose of our life is only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Nothing else should matter except that. Then we need to attach ourselves to the Quran because Allah (swt) has clearly told us that this Book is a guidance for the Muttaqoon. Then we need to be among those who have *Taqwa* by always remembering Allah (swt) and always rushing to carry out His commands. When Allah (swt) tells us to do something then we try our best to do it and when Allah (swt) tells us to refrain from something then we do not do it and we do not offer any excuses. We should use our eyes to witness the wonderful creation of Allah (swt) and see how they testify to His (swt)'s Oneness and complete Sovereignty. We have to use our ears to listen to the Quran and to know that it can be from none but Him (swt). So our one goal is the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the Path that leads to it to strive and sacrifice to be an obedient servant of Allah (swt). While we walk this Path by performing all of the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with, we also have to be attached to the Quran and contemplate on its ayahs just as we look for and contemplate on the ayahs of Allah (swt) in the universe around us. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! This prayer that we always make cannot be emphasized enough. We always have to be praying to Allah (swt) to purify our hearts and to give us the certainty of Iman! There is nothing more important than this certainty in our hearts. This certainty is what will save us from becoming like the hypocrites whom Allah (swt) has described in this ayah.

After learning about the hypocrites whom Allah (swt) has described in these ayahs our perception of what it means to be a good Muslim must change. We should never think that just because we make the five daily prayers or just because we fast in Ramadan, that then makes us a good Muslim. We can never compare ourselves to Muslims in the Ummah today and think that

we are better than them. Hypocrisy is one of the greatest of trials that has ever befallen our nation. It is so great that most often the one who suffers from it is not even aware of it. So do not ever be satisfied with yourself. Always think that you may be the hypocrite that Allah (swt) is describing in this ayah. The one who walks and then stands still. The one who closes his ears to the commands of Allah (swt). Come to this realization and then strive to improve yourself. Life is noting but the constant struggle to improve ourselves. To come closer to our Lord in everything that we do. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace for we can never do it without Him (swt)!



22. O mankind, make '*ibadah* to your *Rabb*, the Only One Who created you (all) and those who came before you, so that you may gain Taqwa.

In the first twenty-one ayahs of this Surah we saw Allah (swt) describe to us the three kinds of people there are among mankind. We saw that these were the true and sincere believers, the disbelievers and the hypocrites. In this ayah we see Allah (swt) calling out to all mankind, so all of these three kinds of people are addressed by this ayah. In fact every single human being who ever lived since the time the Prophet (saw) was sent is addressed in this ayah. Allah (swt) is calling out to each and every one of them. This is one of the many ayahs that show us that Islam was sent for all people and for all time until the Last Day.

In this ayah Allah (swt) calls out to all mankind and tells them to make '*ibadah* to their *Rabb*. Neither of these two words has a good translation in the English language. The word '*ibadah* comes from the word '*abd* which means "slave". So in this ayah Allah (swt) is telling all of mankind to be an '*abd* to Him (swt). To be a slave of Allah (swt) is to dedicate every moment of your life only to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. Nothing else should matter to you except pleasing

Allah (swt). That should be the only goal in your life. So for every second of your life, you try to think what action is it that you can do right now which will make Allah (swt) pleased with you and you do that action. Sometimes that action could be Salah, sometimes that action could be fasting, sometimes that action could be studying, sometimes that action could be working, sometimes that action could be spending time with family, sometimes that action could be eating, sometimes that action could be sleeping. At every moment you have to strive to find out what it is that will please Allah (swt), and then strive to do that action. All of these actions must be done with the recognition of all that Allah (swt) has done for you and with a realization of how because Allah (swt) is so Perfect and Majestic that He (swt) deserves that you dedicate yourself to Him (swt). So you must serve your Lord with all that you do while having the deepest of love for Him (swt) and the greatest of admiration and awe for Him (swt). This is the beginning of what it means to make *ibadah* to Allah (swt).

Another way in which you serve Allah (swt) is by even submitting your desires and your emotions to Him (swt). So when something good happens you, you praise and give thanks to Allah (swt). Similarly when you find yourself in some difficulty you are patient with the Decree of Allah (swt). You also love for the sake of Allah (swt) and you hate for the sake of Allah (swt). You love that which Allah (swt) loves and you hate that which Allah (swt) hates. So you love the Quran and you love the Prophet (saw) and you hate disobedience to Allah (swt) and you hate those who rule by other than what Allah (swt) has revealed. You fear only Allah (swt), and you trust only in Him (swt). You also seek help only from Allah (swt), you complain and cry only to Allah (swt), and you turn only to Him (swt) for forgiveness. So just as you serve Allah (swt) with your limbs you also serve Him (swt) with your heart.

Another aspect of your servitude to Allah (swt) is that you refrain yourself from everything that He (swt) has forbidden. No matter how much you might desire something, no matter how good it might feel to have it, or how painful in might be to be without it, you restrain yourself from it for the sake of Allah (swt). All of this is part of your servitude to Allah (swt) as well. Remember that you are only a slave that exists to please his Master.

The word *Rabb* in this ayah is also a word that does not have a single translation in English. On the one hand it gives the meaning of Creator, Sustainer and Nurturer and on the other hand it also gives the meaning of Lord, Master, King and Ruler. So Allah (swt) is the One Who created everything and the One Who maintains everything and as consequence of this He (swt) deserves that everything dedicate itself to Him (swt). This word also gives the meaning of the One Who has all the Power and Who can do all things. It also gives the meaning of the One Who the slave turns to at times of difficulty and need, which as we know is all the time. All of these meanings are encompassed in this word.

Allah (swt) then reminds us that He (swt) created us and He (swt) also created those who came before us. We mentioned in the previous ayahs how the disbelievers and hypocrites had turned away from the many evidences that Allah (swt) had sent to testify to the Truth of this Message. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us of those evidences. The first of these evidences is that He (swt) has created all things. What could be a greater evidence of the Existence of the Creator than that of our own creation? Just the fact that we exist at this moment is an evidence that we have been created. We know for sure that there was a time in the past when we did not exist, and now here we are living, seeing and breathing. This demonstrates without a doubt that we have been created. Scientists can explain the process of how we have been created. They would explain how the sperm meets with the egg, and they would explain how the embryo develops in the womb. But they cannot explain why this is happening. They can explain the "how" but not the "why". They cannot explain why the sperm is moving in the first place. They cannot explain why the cells are growing and multiplying to develop into the embryo. They just accept the fact that there is a force that is causing this or they think this is simply the way the universe behaves. They always look for the "how" and never worry about the "why". If they thought about the "why" then they would realize that the One Who is making all of this happen is only Allah (swt). So the fact that we have been created, the fact that we exist at this moment when we did not exist before, is a clear evidence that we have been created. Who then could have created us? If we look around the universe we see that everything else here is also a

creation just like us. Everything else has the attributes of the creation because everything else is also limited just like we are. Everything else only exists for a finite period of time. Everything else has a beginning and an end just like we do. So there is nothing of this world that can be the Creator. We realize that the Creator must be beyond this universe. The Creator must be One Who is not restricted to the limitations and confinements of this universe. That can only be Allah (swt). Only Allah (swt), the Eternal and Unlimited, could be the Creator for all things because only He (swt) is the One free of all limitations and weaknesses.

Allah (swt) also brings our attention in this ayah to the fact that everyone who came before us are also a creation just like we are. Allah (swt) created them just like He (swt) created us. Every single human being who has lived before us, every single one of our fathers and every single one of our mothers has also been a creation just like we are. This is to show us that no matter how far back we look in our history we only find human beings who were the creation of Allah (swt) just we are. Our fathers were a creation, just like us they lived and they died. As were their fathers, and their fathers, and their fathers. So the forefathers of all human beings, all the way back to the time of Adam (as) were only a creation of Allah (swt). How then can we as human being be anything other than a creation? How then can we deny our Creator? How can we ever even explain our existence if we were to deny our Creator?

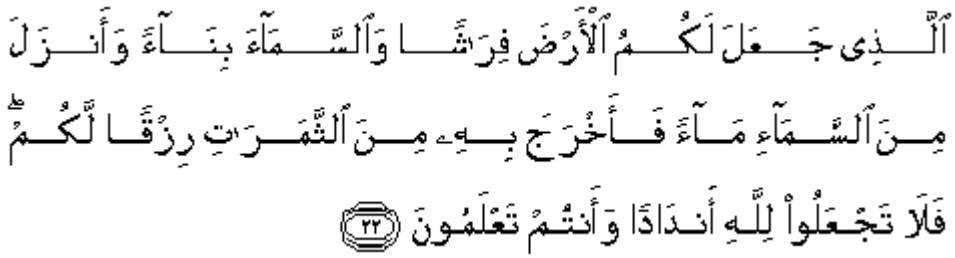
In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**so that you may gain Taqwa**". So the reason why Allah (swt) calls on us to serve Him (swt) is so that we may gain *Taqwa*. To have *Taqwa* is to be aware of the fact that Allah (swt) Knows what we are doing. It is the consciousness that we have that right at this moment Allah (swt) Sees what we are doing and that He (swt) will take us to task for it. As a consequence of such an awareness it is to protect ourselves from doing the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt) and it is to protect ourselves from His (swt)'s Wrath and His (swt)'s Punishment. So here we see that the key to protecting ourselves from the Wrath of Allah (swt) is to serve Him (swt). It sounds so simple, but so many times we forget this simple fact. That is why Allah (swt) reminds us of this simple yet extremely important fact. If we would only try our best to dedicate every moment of our lives to only doing

the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with then Insha Allah we would gain *Taqwa*. We would protect ourselves from doing the actions that Allah (swt) is displeased with and incurring His (swt)'s Wrath therein.

Not only should we seek to gain Taqwa to save ourselves from the Wrath of Allah (swt) but we should also seek to gain Taqwa to get the guidance and the light that is in the Quran. Recall the second ayah where Allah (swt) clearly told us that the Quran is a guidance only for those who have *Taqwa*. The Quran is the guide that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and that it is what we prayed for in Surah Fatihah. So the key to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is in the guidance of the Quran and the key to the guidance of the Quran is to always have *Taqwa* of Allah (swt) and the key to gain Taqwa of Allah (swt) is in the constant servitude to Allah (swt). So for every moment of our life we have to be striving to find out what is the action that is most pleasing to Allah (swt) and then we must do that action. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) let us spend every moment of our lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt)! Nothing matters in this life except seeking to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt)!

The scholars say that in this ayah and the next four ayahs that follow it, Allah (swt) has summarized the entire dawah of this Message. This dawah is a call to submit to Allah (swt) and to be a loving servant of Him (swt). So Allah (swt) begins this call by calling out to all mankind and calling on them to serve Him (swt). Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) is our Creator and that we were created to serve Him (swt). Allah (swt) then brings clear evidences to prove every tenet of this Message. Undeniable proofs to show that Allah (swt) Exists and that He (swt) is One and Only and that He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master of this universe. Then Allah (swt) then brings clear evidences to show how the Prophet (saw) is indeed His (swt)'s Messenger. So in order that we may reach certainty in the Truthfulness of this Message Allah (swt) has given us undeniable proofs and evidences. Anyone who ponders on these signs Insha Allah will reach the certainty that this Message is indeed from their Creator. Finally Allah (swt) brings our attention to the Hereafter. To the terrible punishment that awaits those who willfully reject this Message and the unimaginable pleasures that wait those who believe in it and submit

themselves to its requirements. All of this is contained in this set of five ayahs. So contemplate and think deeply about the meaning of this ayah and the four ayahs that follow it. Your Creator has summarized the entire Message that He (swt) has sent you in these five ayahs.


ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ فِرَٰشًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَأَنزَلَ
مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ
فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23. The One and Only Who has set in place for you the earth as a *firash*, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down from the sky water, and so brought out with it fruits for your sustenance. So do not set up with Allah partners while you know.

We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) addressed all of mankind and told them to make *ibadah* to Him (swt) so that they can gain Taqwa. Allah (swt) also reminded us that He (swt) was the Only One Who created us and our forefathers. By reminding us of this fact Allah (swt) clearly demonstrated that we are only a creation that is in need of a Creator. Thus bringing an undeniable evidence that He (swt) Exists and that He (swt) is nothing like the things that we can see in the world around us. Allah (swt) demonstrated how everything in the world around us has the attributes of creation and so needs a Creator. That Creator cannot be from the things that we sense since everything we sense is limited. Instead that Creator has to be outside of this world because that Creator has to be without limitations. That is Allah (swt) Who is totally different from all created things. The creation is nothing like Him (swt) whatsoever. In addition to reminding us how everything is a creation, Allah (swt) also reminds us of the favor that He (swt) has done for us by creating us. There was a time when we did not exist and we only exist today because of Allah (swt). Can you even begin to imagine how great was the favor that Allah (swt) did for you when He (swt) brought you into existence? Even if you spent your entire life in

prostration to Allah (swt), that would still not be enough to repay Allah (swt) for bringing you into existence. He (swt) created you and created all of mankind. Just look at mankind and see how ungrateful they are? See how ungrateful we all are? Does it not bring tears to your eyes? The only way we can save ourselves from such ingratitude is to serve Allah (swt) as we should.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to yet another favor that He (swt) has done for us, yet another favor that He (swt) has done for all of mankind. Allah (swt) brings our attention in this ayah to how He (swt) had made the earth as a *firash* for us. This Arabic word gives the meaning of something that has been spread out. Like a bed or a large couch that has been spread out so that it is extremely spacious and comfortable. Is that not a correct description of this earth on which we live? Has it not been spread out and made comfortable for us? Have we as human beings not been given much space on this earth? Even though there are over six billion of us today there is still plenty of room for all people. Not only has this earth been made wide and spacious for all of us but it has also been made comfortable and amicable. The temperature of the earth is just right for human beings; it is not too hot or too cold. There are humans living on every corner of this earth. That shows us how suitable this earth is for human life. The surface of the earth is also perfect for human habitation. Just imagine if the entire earth were filled with mountains like the Himalayas or if the oceans covered the earth, how hard it would be for us to live. The gravity on the earth also is just right to support human life. It is not too much nor is too little. As we now begin to explore other planets, we realize more and more now how there is no other planet like the earth. There is no planet that can support human life like the earth. There is no planet that even comes close. This is how Allah (swt) has made the earth as a *firash* for us. It is the most comfortable and most suitable places for human life.

There are at least two important lessons that we can take from this ayah. One lesson is that we can be thankful to Allah (swt) for making the earth so comfortable for us. Just imagine how difficult your life would be if Allah (swt) had not created the earth for you in this way. Imagine having to climb a mountain to go home everyday or imagine if your home was a boat on the ocean. How difficult would your life be? You would have to make the greatest of efforts just

to go back and forth from work. So one lesson that we can take from the fact that Allah (swt) has made the earth so comfortable for us is to realize how thankful we have to be to Him (swt) for this. Another important lesson that we can take from the fact that Allah (swt) has made the earth so comfortable for us is to realize how this earth and everything on this earth has been made subservient to us. Everything on this earth has been subjugated for the benefit of the human being to use as he wants. The fact that everything on this earth serves us also demonstrates how it has been created for us. This then is a further evidence that everything on this world has been created by Allah (swt). Just by the fact that this entire earth and everything on it serves the human being demonstrates that is in fact a creation of Allah (swt). Who else but Allah (swt) could have made an earth that is so comfortable for us to live in? Who else but our Lord could have subjugated this earth for us like this?

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) has made the sky above us as a canopy. Look at the sky above you. Do you see any breaks or flaws in it? See how it perfectly stretches over the earth from one horizon to another. Think to yourself and ask yourself, could anyone besides Allah (swt) have brought such a sky into existence? Could such a magnificent sky like the one we see above us everyday have come into being from the handiwork of an idol or a cow or any human being? Could it even have come into being on it's own? Of course not, rather it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who created the sky above us and made it cover the earth like a canopy. The perfection of the way in which this sky has been created shows us the perfection of its Creator.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) sends down water from the sky. Of course this refers to the rain that Allah (swt) sends down. It is not only mankind that benefits from this rain that Allah (swt) sends down, but it is all life that is on this planet. All life needs water to survive and the source of water for the creatures of the earth is the rain that Allah (swt) sends down. Once again there are two benefits that we can derive from this fact that Allah (swt) Alone provides water for all creatures. One is to be grateful to Allah (swt) for the water that He (swt) provides us with. The next time you bring water to your lips remember that it was Allah (swt)

and Allah (swt) Alone Who provided you with that water. The other benefit that we can derive is to realize how all forms of life are dependent on this water that Allah (swt) sends down and that also shows us how all life needs Allah (swt). All of life needs water and it cannot exist without this water. This fact clearly demonstrates that all forms of life are limited, and this is yet another of the evidences that all of life has been created. A created thing is always in need of it's Creator just like a baby is always in need of it's mother. So because all of life needs water that shows all life has been created by Allah (swt) and all of life is in constant need of Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) brings our attention to the fact that from this water that He (swt) sends down, He (swt) brings out fruits with which He (swt) provides for our sustenance. All of the food that we eat has come from plants that Allah (swt) brings out from the earth with the water that He (swt) sends down. Even the meat that we eat and the milk that we drink was sustained by the vegetation that Allah (swt) brings from out of the earth. We eat food every day of our lives, how many times do we remember that it was Allah (swt) Who provided us with such food? How often do we realize that every bite we take comes from Allah (swt)? If Allah (swt) did not give us this sustenance can you imagine where we would be? We take it for granted that we will get food today and that we will get food tomorrow. But we do not always remember that it was Allah (swt) Who made the earth fertile for us, Who sent down the rain for us, and Who brought forth fruits and plants for our sustenance. Allah (swt) provides us with food every day of their lives, but how many of us take notice of it? How many of us are grateful to Him (swt) for it?

By bringing our attention to the fact that He (swt) is the One Who provides food for us Allah (swt) once again shows us how we are in need of Him (swt) for every moment of our lives. This fact also clearly demonstrates that we are only a creation. We are dependent on Allah (swt) to feed us and that shows how we cannot exist on our own. No life can exist unless it is given sustenance by Allah (swt) and this shows the weakness and dependence of all creation and the Power and Self-Sufficiency of Allah (swt). We are always in need of Him (swt) and He (swt) is not in need of us. Since we need Allah (swt) and we exist, therefore Allah (swt) must exist as well.

After showing us all of these evidences to His (swt)'s Power and His (swt)'s Oneness as well as demonstrating how we are in debt to Him (swt) and how we are in need of Him (swt), Allah (swt) then gives us a clear command. Allah (swt) tells us not to set up partners with Him (swt) while we know. We know that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who created us. We know that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who made the earth a comfortable place for us to live in, and Who made all things on the earth subservient to us. We know that it is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone who sends down rain from the sky providing us with water to drink, and we know that it is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone who gives food for our sustenance. When we know all this about Allah (swt) and all that He (swt) has done for us how then can we ever serve anyone else besides Him (swt)? Allah (swt) has told us in the previous ayah how we should we be servants of Him (swt) and Him (swt) Alone. How then can we dedicate ourselves to anyone other than Him (swt)?

So in this ayah we see an emphasis on Tawhid and the destruction of all forms of shirk. The word *Tawhid* means to take what was many and to make into one. People worship and serve a great many things. What Allah (swt) emphasizes here is that they should give up all of that for Him (swt) Alone. We should worship Only Allah (swt). We should bow down and submit to Only Allah (swt). We should have that deep fear and that great sense of reverence Only for Allah (swt). When we are in need we should call only Allah (swt) for help. We should seek protection only in Allah (swt) and we should complain of our troubles only to Allah (swt). We should serve only Allah (swt) and we should obey only Allah (swt). No priest or saint should we go to with our troubles. No idol or human should we prostrate before. No holy man or pyr should we call in our prayer. No king or parliament should have the right to legislate the laws for us to live by. These are all partners that the people call on besides Allah (swt) and here He (swt) calls on us to worship Him (swt) Alone. Only Allah (swt) should we worship. Only Allah (swt) should we obey. No one can tells us our wealth should be spent or how our energies should be used except Allah (swt). No one can be the purpose of every moment of our lives except Allah (swt). Our lives must be dedicated Only to Allah (swt) because He (swt) has given us everything

that we have and He (swt) deserves that we dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember everything that He (swt) has done for us! May Allah (swt) allow us to dedicate every moment of our life to Him (swt)!

وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24. And if you are in doubt concerning what we reveal to our slave, then bring a Surah similar to it and call your witnesses and helpers from below Allah, if you are truthful.

In the previous ayahs we saw Allah (swt) establish without a doubt the concept of Tawhid. We were shown clear evidences that testify to the fact that Allah (swt) Exists, that He (swt) is One and Only, and that He (swt) has Power over all things. Now we know that the *Kalimah*, which are the words that are the foundation of our beliefs has two parts. The first part is that there is no illah except Allah (swt). The second part is that Muhammad (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). The previous two ayahs that we have discussed prove the first part of the Kalimah and this ayah proves the second part. This ayah brings an undeniable proof for all mankind that Muhammad (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). Insha Allah our discussion of this ayah is rather long because here we try to discuss the Miracle of the Quran in some depth. We did this because we feel that this is an extremely important topic of Aqeedah that many Muslims and non-Muslims are ignorant of. May Allah (swt) strengthen our Iman through our knowledge of the Miracle of the Quran! May Allah (swt) allow us to say only what is correct!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by bringing a condition. Allah (swt) says "***if*** you are in doubt concerning what we reveal to our servant". So this part of the ayah is addressing those

people who have some doubt concerning what Allah (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw). Those people who are not sure that this Quran which the Prophet (saw) brought to us is really from the Creator. The scholars say that the Arabic word for doubt in this ayah is the kind of doubt that has no basis or foundation. It is the kind of doubt that is not based on anything. So Allah (swt) is saying that you should not have doubt, but if you do then this ayah is addressed to you

Thus before we even look to the Miracle of the Quran, if only we were to look at the one who brought the Quran to us, then we would realize that there is no reason for us to doubt at all. When anyone gets to know the Prophet (saw) then they would realize that any doubt they have concerning this Quran has no validity whatsoever. So there is no reason why anyone should doubt this Quran when one considers the one to whom it was revealed. If we study the life of the Prophet (saw) we can see a man who was known throughout his society for honesty and integrity. Throughout the first forty years of his (saw)'s life he (saw) never told a lie or spoke any kind of falsehood. So honest was he (saw) that he (saw) even earned the nickname of *Al-Ameen*, which means "the truthful". We have with us today so many narrations about the life of the Prophet (saw) before he (saw) was given the Message, we even have the narrations of how he (saw) was perceived and known by the members of his community. Not one of those narrations ever mentions the Prophet (saw) ever telling any kind of lie. In fact if you study the life of the Prophet (saw) in detail, even his life before he (saw) became the Messenger, you would see the kind of person that he (saw) was. If you see him (saw) in his times of difficulty and sorrow, if you see how he (saw) responded to the events in his society, you will see how he (saw) was a man with a sincere heart and a pure soul.

For example when the Prophet (saw) was a youth he (saw) never used to attend the parties that the youth who were his age used to attend. But when he (saw) saw that all of the youth were attending such parties, he (saw) thought might be there was something in these parties that was worth looking into. We have to remember that this happened before he (saw) became a Messenger and so before he (saw) knew that such social events were forbidden. But notice here the sincerity in his (saw)'s actions, he (saw) did not say to himself that, "I am on my

path by not attending these parties and the youth are on their own path by going to these parties". He (saw) thought that maybe he (saw) was wrong in not attending those parties so he (saw) decided to go and see what happened in them. The first day that the Prophet (saw) decided to go, he (saw) was walking to the party and on the way he (saw) fell down unconscious. He (saw) only woke up in the morning when the party was over. He (saw) tried to go again on the second day, and again the same thing happened to him (saw). He (saw) was on the way and he (saw) fell down unconscious before he (saw) reached his (saw)'s destination. Then he (saw) decided that such parties were not for him (saw), and he (saw) knew that this was a sign from Allah (swt) for him (saw) not to go. Once again notice the sincerity in his (saw)'s actions. He (saw) was not set and stubborn on going after he (saw) had decided that he (saw) wanted to go, when he (saw) saw that Allah (swt) did not want him (saw) to go, he (saw) did not go.

Another narration from the youth of the Prophet (saw) was when the he (saw) was asked by his uncle Abu Talib to go and work for Khadija (raa) to support the family of Abu Talib. He (saw) did not hesitate to go and do this work to support the family of his uncle. We saw that even after he (saw) married Khadija (ra), we saw that the Prophet (saw) took his uncle's son 'Ali and raised him in his own house. Another example was when the Kabbah was being rebuilt and the various clans of Quraysh had a dispute as to who should be the one to place the sacred stone in it's proper place. They called on the Prophet (saw) to resolve their dispute because they knew that he (saw) was the most honest and truthful man among them. The Prophet (saw) could have chosen a position in the dispute that favored his (saw)'s family but he (saw) did not. He (saw) came with an equitable solution that was fair for all parties. So even from these few narrations we see that the Prophet (saw) trying to help his family and his society in every way that he (saw) could. He (saw) had this love and this compassion for the people. Even when the angel Gibreel (as) first came to Prophet (saw) in the cave of Hira and he (saw) went back to his (saw)'s wife in a state of fear, he (saw) started to think that a devil or jinn had visited him in that cave. How then did Khadija (ra) console the Prophet (saw) at this moment? She reminded him (saw) of all

the good qualities that he (saw) had, and she (ra) was certain that because of his (saw)'s good qualities that Allah (swt) would never forsake him (saw). She knew that her husband (saw) was a good person and because of that she was certain that Allah (swt) would not let any demon or any harm come to him (saw). There are hundreds of narrations similar to this. Take the time to study them and you will see how special this blessed man was.

So we see from all of these narrations that the Prophet (saw) was a man of impeccable integrity and pure morals. Someone who was known throughout his society for his honesty and truthfulness. Can you then expect such a person to lie about Allah (swt)? How can anyone expect someone like the Prophet (saw), may Allah (swt) bless his noble face, to lie about something like this Message? Do you really think that the Prophet (saw) is capable of telling such a lie and then living that lie for twenty three years? If you knew the Prophet (saw) then you would know that such is impossible. It is only in your ignorance of him (saw) that you entertain the possibility.

Furthermore if the Prophet (saw) was known to be a liar do you think he (saw) would have had any followers at all? If the Prophet (saw) did have a reputation of lying do you think anyone would have followed him (saw)? Of course not. But not only did people follow him (saw) but they were willing to sacrifice their lives and wealth because of what he (saw) said. They were willing to go through all forms of torture and persecution based on what he (saw) said. Would anyone do this if they know him (saw) to be a liar or even if they thought him (saw) to be a liar?

So that is why Allah (swt) is only bringing the Challenge of the Quran for those who have doubts concerning the Truth of the Prophet (saw). Those who knew the Prophet (saw) did not have doubts to begin with. People like Abu Bakr (ra) and Khadija (ra) did not need the Quran to tell them that the Prophet (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt). They knew the Prophet (saw) more than anyone else and they knew that he (saw) was incapable of lying. It is only for those who have doubts that Allah (swt) brings this Challenge. Allah (swt) is telling us that such doubts are unfounded and we should have no reason to doubt the Message of the Prophet (saw).

But if you doubt then you should answer this challenge. You should produce a Surah like the Surahs of the Quran.

Not only was the Prophet (saw) not known to be a liar, but he (saw) was also not known to compose works of poetry. This fact also is a further proof that it was impossible for him (saw) to have composed the Quran. If there was one thing that Arabs prided themselves on it was their language and their poetry. They would send their children to live with the desert Bedouins during their young age only so that they can learn the proper Arabic. They feared that if their children lived in the cities their Arabic would be corrupted because foreigners who did not speak Arabic properly would visit the cities. They feared that their children might not pick up the proper Arabic if they heard these foreigners speak. Such was the care that they took in protecting their language. They would also compose poetry for every single occasion. If someone hated someone else, he would write a poem against him. If someone loved someone, he would write a poem for her. If someone was wrong and some injustice was done to him, he would write a poem about it. If someone was proud of an accomplishment, he would write a poem about it. For the Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw), their language and their poetry was their life. If you read the classical books of Seerah that tell us about the Prophet (saw)'s life you would see that they are filled with poems that the Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) had composed, even poems from the close family of the Prophet (saw) such as his uncle Abu Talib. But even though poetry was so prevalent in his society and even in his family, the Prophet (saw) himself never composed such poetry. So how could someone who had never composed a line of poetry in his whole life come with a Quran that the Arabs who were the best in the language and the masters of poetry were unable to match? Not only were they unable to match the Quran but also they themselves admitted with their own mouths that this Quran was the best Arabic that they had ever seen and that they were unable to produce anything like it. They themselves admitted that the Arabic of the Quran could not have been produced by a human being. So perfect and pure were the words that when they heard it, they knew that it could not have been produced by

a human mind. They knew that it was far above anything that they had ever heard before or anything that they could reproduce.

This then was the Challenge of the Quran that Allah (swt) brought for the Arabs and for all mankind. If they were in doubt as to the Truth of this Message, even though they had no reason to be, then they should try to compose one single Surah like the Surahs of the Quran. The scholars have called this challenge the *ijaza* of the Quran. The best translation that we can find for the word *ijaza* is "miracle", but really it gives a far deeper meaning. The word *ijaza* means something that renders the people completely incapable to produce something like it. The Quran rendered everyone who tried to produce something like it completely incapable. It was utterly impossible for them to produce anything like it. This was the Miracle that Allah (swt) gave to the Prophet (saw) to prove to the people that he (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt).

It was not only the Prophet (saw) who came with such a Miracle. Every messenger that Allah (swt) sent was given a miracle to prove to the people that he was indeed a messenger from Allah (swt). The Miracle was always in the area that the people to whom the messenger was sent to were best in. For example the Egyptians were experts in magic so Musa (as) was given a miracle that used magic. Allah (swt) turned the sticks into snakes for Musa (as) to demonstrate to the Egyptians that he (as) was indeed a Messenger of Allah (swt). Similarly the Children of Israil whom 'Isa (as) was sent to were experts in the field of medicine and healing. So Allah (swt) allowed 'Isa (as) to cure the blind and heal the lepers. Since the Arabs were experts in the Arabic language and masters of poetry, they were given the Quran. It came with an Arabic that they had never seen before and it completely surpassed all the works of poetry that were written prior to its revelation. The Quran consists of one and hundred and fourteen Surahs. The shortest among these Surahs consist of three short ayahs and the longest of them, which is this Surah consists of two hundred and eighty six ayahs. Each Surah is at the peak of the Arabic language. In terms of literary quality every single Surah completely surpassed anything that the Arabs had ever produced in the long history of their language. When the Arabs heard it they knew that there was nothing else like it because the level of the Arabic that it used was far

higher to anything than they had ever written. In fact the Quraysh had taken the best poems that they had, ones that were composed by their ancestors and for which they had great reverence for, and they framed these poems in gold and hung them inside the Kabbah. When the Quran came to the Prophet (saw), every Surah in the Quran completely destroyed the best of these poems. Every single Surah was on a level that was infinitely higher than each of these poems. Not only was the Quran far superior to anything that the Arabs had produced throughout their history, but it was also at a level that was so high that it had rendered all the efforts to reproduce it in vain. Thus there was nothing that the Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) could do to meet the Challenge of the Quran. They were completely incapacitated to produce anything like it.

Now if the Quraysh chiefs who opposed the Prophet (saw)'s dawah had any doubt as to the Truth of this Message, they only had to produce a work that was similar to one of these short Surahs. They had to compose a work that was equal to the level of the Quran. They were the enemies of this Message and they knew that the best way to destroy this Message was to respond to the Challenge. Now these Quraysh chiefs who opposed the Prophet (saw) were masters of the Arabic language and experts in all the different forms of Arabic poetry and prose. So if the Quran had been from anyone besides Allah (swt) then they would have been able to meet this Challenge. They would have exhausted all of their resources and used all of their efforts to reach this goal. The dawah of the Prophet (saw) represented a threat to their entire way of life. They wanted to stop it more than anything else. They wanted to destroy this Message more than anything else. They even offered to make the Prophet (saw) their king if only he (saw) would stop calling to this Message. Then they even tried to kill the Prophet (saw), one of their own tribesman which was unheard of in their society, only because he (saw) was calling to this Message. So if there was any way in which these masters of the Arabic language could have composed the Surah to meet the challenge they would have done so. They knew that meeting the Challenge of the Quran was the best way to destroy this Message. So they would have exhausted all of their efforts and resources towards this goal. But they could not and they

knew that they could not. They even admitted with their own mouths that the Quran was not the speech of a human being. Al-Walid bin al-Mughira who was one of the enemies of this Message was also the best among the Quraysh when it came to language and poetry. However he himself admitted that he had never seen anything like this Quran in the history of the Arabs and he does not know how any human being could have composed such a work. These enemies of Islam hated this Message that Allah (swt) sent with their every fiber of their being. They knew that it came to completely destroy their way of life. They knew that if this Message gained supremacy in their land then they would no longer be able to follow their desires and they would no longer be able to exploit the people. They knew that this Message would make them equal in status to even the blacks and the slaves. This is why they hated this Message. This is why they would do anything to stop this Message. This is why they tortured and killed members of their own family who had become Muslim and who were working in the dawah to establish this Message. This is why they tried so many ways to bribe and make compromises with the Prophet (saw), such as offering him (saw) all of the wealth in Makkah, the most beautiful women in Makkah or even kingship over them. This is why they made an embargo against the family of the Prophet (saw) and prevented anyone from trading or interacting with them. They hated this Message and they wanted to destroy it at all costs. So if there was any way that they could have destroyed this Message they would have done it. If there was any way that they could have produced one Surah like it, they would have done it. But what we saw is that instead of producing a Surah like it they themselves admitted that it was the best Arabic that they had ever heard, and they themselves admitted that it completely annihilated all the works that preceded it's revelation since the beginning of the Arabic language.

We know that because of their pride and because of their love for this world most of the Quraysh chiefs did not follow the Prophet (saw) even when they though they were certain that he (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt). They were certain that they could not meet the Challenge of the Quran but they still persisted in their rebellion. But despite their opposition to it, they were still captivated by the Quran nonetheless. The narrations tell us how they would come

to the house of the Prophet (saw) at night to listen to the Quran being recited by the Prophet (saw) as he (saw) prayed, they did this because they were so much in love with the sound of the Words of Allah (swt). Even though they hated the Message of the Quran, they were still captivated by it. When they discovered each other listening they would be shocked and they would make each other swear that they would not return to listen to the Quran again. But the next night they would return again to listen to this Quran. Another narration tells us how the Prophet (saw) once recited the Quran in front of the Kabbah while the Quraysh chiefs were listening to it. They were listening so attentively and they were so captivated by it that when the Prophet (saw) reached an ayah that told the people to prostrate before Allah (swt), the Quraysh chiefs also prostrated without being aware of what they were doing. They were so captivated by the Quran that they made prostration when it called on them to. So we see that the attitude towards the Quran by the enemies of this Message also shows that it could not have been from anyone except Allah (swt).

This was the response towards the Quran by the enemies of this Message at the time of the Prophet (saw) but what about the enemies of this Message who came after them? Were they able to meet the Challenge of the Quran? We know that this challenge has existed for all mankind since the time of the Prophet (saw). If someone had any doubts whatsoever about the Truth of this Message they only had to produce one small Surah like Surah 'Asr or Surah Kawthar. Now we know that since the time of the Prophet (saw), this Message has had many enemies. Even today these same enemies still exist. Just like at the time of the Prophet (saw), there are many people today who would not like to see this Message gain supremacy in the land. They knew that this Message represented a way of life that embodied complete worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Thus they knew that if this Message came to power they would not be able to exploit the people and follow their desires. They knew that they would have to give up their wealth and power and submit completely to Allah (swt). So the enemies of this Message have tried many ways to stop this dawah. They would attempt material attacks such as invading the Islamic State, examples of this would the Crusades or the invasion of the State by the

colonialists after the First World War. They would attempt intellectual attacks to make the Muslims lose confidence in their Din. They would send missionaries and agents to try and take Muslims away from Islam. They would make up lies about the Prophet (saw) and bring all kinds of fabricated stories about him (saw). They would hire so called Muslim" scholars" and make them preach a watered down version of Islam that was compatible with their way of life. They would stop at nothing to destroy this Message because they knew that it represented a threat to their entire way of life. Despite all of these plans and all of these plots that they have made against this Din in the last fifteen hundred years, despite all of the money they spent and all the resources they wasted to destroy this Message, they know that if they can destroy the Aqeedah of the Muslims then they can destroy this Message completely and forever. Now we know that the foundation of our Aqeedah is to believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). That is the *Kalimah* that we all know by heart. We know that they can never destroy the first part of the Aqeedah because it is impossible to prove that Allah (swt) does not exist and it is impossible to prove that He (swt) does not control the universe. But what about the second part of the Kalimah, could they ever destroy our belief that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt)? If the Quran was the word of a human being, they could easily destroy our Aqeedah by producing a Surah like it. If the Quran was from the mind of the Prophet (saw), then they could meet the Challenge of the Quran. Just one small Surah. That is all that we are asking for. No need for huge military invasions or elaborate propaganda or sending covert agents and missionaries. No need for all that they are trying to do today. All that they had to do was to produce one Surah. No one can claim that this is beyond their means because we know that there are many among them who are experts in Arabic. We know that with the abundant wealth that Allah (swt) had given them they had all the resources and capabilities to gather their best scholars of Arabic language to try and come up with that one small Surah. They had access to all the classical forms of Arabic poetry that were composed both before and after the Quran's revelation. They had dictionaries with every single word in the Arabic language. They had every resource they could possibly need for such an endeavor. They

also had time because the Challenge of the Quran had existed for the last fifteen hundred years. So if the Quran was from any but Allah (swt) then they would have been able to produce that one small Surah. But as Allah (swt) has told us in the Quran, even if all of the men and all of the jinn came together and they pooled all of their resources for this effort they would not be able to reproduce this Quran. Thus simply the fact that no one has been able to meet this Challenge despite it being present for the last fifteen hundred years and despite Islam having so many powerful enemies is another clear evidence that this Quran can only be from Allah (swt). Do you really think that the challenge could have gone unmet for this long if this Quran had been from the mind of a human being? Even if the Prophet (saw) was a genius as they claim, he (saw) was still a human being. Could he (saw) really have been that good? We are all human being and to err is human and to make mistakes is human. How then could any human have produced a Book that to this Day all of mankind has not been able to match even a small portion of?

So how exactly is the Quran superior to all others works that have ever been produced? How exactly is the Quran the most perfect of speech? How does the Quran achieve its inimitability such that there is no way to produce anything like it? It is actually superior and it achieves inimitability on multiple levels. One is on the linguistic level and this is the way in which the Quran uses the Arabic language. The Quran uses the Arabic language in such a way that each word is the most perfect word to be used. The Quran uses the Arabic language in the best way possible in order to convey the meanings that it wants to convey. Insha Allah we will elaborate more on this soon.

In addition to the way in which it uses the Arabic language, there is also the content of the Quran itself which is also an evidence that is could only be from Allah (swt). The content of the Quran also shows us that it could not be from any but Allah (swt). In addition to the content there is also the effect that the Quran had upon the society onto which it was revealed. The Quran completely transformed the people onto whom it was revealed from a backward and barbaric people into the greatest civilization that mankind had ever witnessed. This also is a proof that it could only be from Allah (swt). Then there is also the way in which the Quran was

revealed. Often times the Quran would be revealed to respond to events that arose in the life of the Prophet (saw) and the Islamic movement. The Quran would directly address and comment on these events. All of these are different ways in which the Quran achieves its inimitability. Insha Allah let us look at each of these ways one by one.

Now we know that many so-called critics of the Quran from the West would claim that the Quran is only superior by its beauty and they would claim that this is subjective. In other words they claim that the measure by which we are judging the Quran varies depending on who is listening. They would claim that because of this fact the Challenge of the Quran is not valid because what is considered beautiful differs from one person to another. Such a claim as they make only comes from ignorance. Insha Allah we will demonstrate here that in all of the ways in which the Quran is superior, it is an objective measure that can be seen and measured by any rational human being. Insha Allah let us look first at the literary miracle of the Quran. This is how it achieves its inimitability through its use of the Arabic language.

The first way that the Quran is superior to all other works of Arabic is in it's *Uslub*. The *Uslub* is the "style" of the Quran. It is the coordinated arrangement of words to achieve a particular meaning. Any literary work is nothing but a collection of words arranged in a particular order so as to convey a meaning or an idea. So we would say that the *Uslub* of a particular work is the choice of words used in it, the arrangement of those words, and the meaning conveyed by those words. The *Uslub* of the Quran is superior to all other works in three ways. The first way is in it's *wuduh*, the second is in it's *quwahh* and the third is in it's *jammal*. These are all Arabic terms that our scholars have used when discussing the Miracle of the Quran. Insha Allah we will try our best to explain them in English and we ask Allah (swt) to help us.

The *wuduh* of a work is the number of words that are used to convey a meaning that is intended and the clarity of that meaning. The scholars of Arabic language say that the fewer the words that are used and the clearer the meaning that these words give, the stronger the *wuduh* of a work is. So in order for what you write to have strong *wuduh* it must convey the clearest meaning while using the fewest amount of words. The *wuduh* of the Quran completely

surpasses all other works of Arabic that have ever been written. Every ayah gives the clearest of meaning using the least amount of words. There are no words that the Quran uses which are unnecessary to the meaning that it is trying to give. Every single ayah gives the clearest meaning while using the fewest possible words. Each ayah is only as long as it needs to be and no longer. There are no words that are superfluous, and there are no words that can be replaced with a better word for that particular meaning. In fact our scholars have shown that for every single ayah of the Quran, you cannot replace a single word and give that ayah a stronger meaning. It already uses the best and most concise words for the meaning that it wants to convey. So the *wuduh* is already at its peak, it cannot be improved upon by anyone. No scholar of the Arabic language can come today and replace one word in an ayah with another word and then give that ayah a better meaning. Each ayah is already at the peak. In other words for any one ayah of the Quran, it would be impossible for anyone to reduce the number of words or change the words or change the ordering of the words and still have the same clarity of meaning that Allah (swt) has given us in the Quran.

In the Arabic language, to express the clearest of meanings using the fewest of words is an accomplishment that many poets and writers strive for. But no one has ever reached anything close to the *wuduh* of the Quran. They cannot compose a poem or prose that achieves a clearer meaning using as few words as the Quran. This is what people who have attempted to meet the Challenge have tried to do. But they have always fallen short. They have found that in order to make the meaning clear they need to increase the number of words, and if they reduce the number of words then the meaning is not so clear.

The next component of the *Uslub* of the Quran that makes it superior to all other works is it's *quwwah*. The *quwwah* is the force or the effect on the listener. This force is achieved by having the deepest and strongest meaning possible using the fewest amount of words. It is similar to the *wuduh* in that once again the goal is to use the fewest of amount of words, but instead of clarity of meaning the *quwwah* is concerned with the power of that meaning, the effect that meaning has upon the listener. So for every ayah, the Quran always uses the

strongest of words that give the deepest and most profound meaning possible. To have *quwwah* is also a goal which many Arab poets and orators strive to achieve with their works. They want to have the deepest impact on their listeners while using the least amount of words. They want their listeners to be shocked and awed by their words. They want their listeners to be moved by what they hear. But there is no one that has written or composed any work that has had the same *quwwah* as the ayahs of the Quran. There is no literary work that affects people like the Quran affects them. The power of the meaning is so strong that there is no comparison.

The scholars have told us that one aspect of the *quwwah* of the Quran is even in the sounds of the letters that Allah (swt) uses for different ayahs. If you look at the Quran you will see that whenever Allah (swt) describes something harsh and powerful, He (swt) will use harsh and powerful sounding letters. The sound that these letters make puts a sense of fear and dread into the ones who hear them. On the other hand when Allah (swt) describes something beautiful and gentle, He (swt) will use letters that are soft and easy on the ears. One can almost taste the pleasure and tranquility in the sounds of these letters. Thus these letters have the greatest impact on the listener. Either making them longing for the pleasure that is being described or making them dread the punishment that is being described.

The final component of the Uslub of the Quran is the *jammal*. This is in reference to the expressions that Allah (swt) uses in the Quran. The expressions that Allah (swt) uses in the Quran to convey a particular meaning are always the most fitting of expressions that can be used convey that meaning. For any meaning that you want to convey you could not have chosen a better expression than what Allah (swt) has used in Quran. For example Allah (swt) says in the Quran "*Often those who disbelieve wish that they were Muslims. Leave them to eat and enjoy, and let them be preoccupied with false hopes. They will soon come to know*" (Al-Hijr, 2-3). In this ayah Allah (swt) is conveying to us a description of those who do not believe in this Message. The expression that Allah (swt) uses to describe their situation is the most fitting of expressions because it most clearly describes the reality of their situation. With this expression Allah (swt) must accurately captures the reality of their situation and He (swt) conveys it to us in

the most beautiful of ways. So the *jammal* of the Quran refers to it's ability to use the best of expression to convey a particular meaning.

When you combine the *wuduh*, the *quwwah*, the *jammal* of the Quran, it makes the *Uslub* of the Quran. You will find that there is no work that has ever been produced which can compare to the *Uslub* of the Quran. We can clearly see that the *Uslub* of the Quran is an objective measure that can easily be compared with other works of Arabic. In order to perform this objective measure just take any ayah of the Quran and you compare it with any other Arabic work that has ever been written, poetry or prose, and see if that other work can equal the *Uslub* of the Quran. See if that other work can give a clearer meaning, and a deeper meaning and using better expressions while using the same amount of words or fewer words than what Allah (swt) has given us in the Quran. You will not find any work that can do this; you will not find any work that matches the *Uslub* of the Quran. You will not find in any of the works that have been produced in the history of the Arabic language, and you will not find in any works that will be produced till the Day of Judgment anything that equals the *Uslub* of the Quran. You can look at the millions and millions of works of Arabic that have ever been written both before and after the Quran and you will not find a single work whose *Uslub* is equal to that of the Quran. To improve on the *Uslub* of the Quran is impossible because it is already at the peak. Any sincere scholar of Arabic language will testify to this fact. If any fool wants to meet the challenge of the Quran he only has to try and write a work with better *Uslub* than the Quran. Many have tried to do this but none have been successful. For the last fifteen hundred years there has been no human being that has ever been able to do this. Do you think that anyone will do it in the next fifteen hundred years? What then does this tell you?

But the *Uslub* is only one aspect of the literary Miracle of the Quran. Another aspect of the literary Miracle of the Quran is the way in which it does not conform to any of the established ways of writing poetry and prose that the Arabs knew about. Both Arabic poetry and Arabic prose come in a certain format. All works of poetry and prose have to conform to this format. Arabic poetry comes in sixteen *Bihar*, which literally means "The Seas" because of the way the poem

moves according to its rhythmic patterns like waves in the sea. There are *at-Tawîl, al-Bassit, al-Wâfir, al-Kamîl, ar-Rajs, al-Khafîf, al-Hazaj, al-Muttakarib, al-Munsarih, al-Muktatab, al-Muktadarak, al-Madîd, al-Mujtath, al-Ramel, al-Khabab and as-Saria'.* These are the sixteen ways of writing poetry in Arabic. Any poem that has ever been written in the Arabic language has used one of these *Bihar*. The Arabs do not know how to compose a poem that does not use one of these Bihar. Now the Quran does not conform to any of these Bihar so it cannot be a poem like how the Arabs knew poetry. It does not fit into any of these sixteen ways of composing poetry. So although it was one of the most poetic of works that they had ever heard, they could not understand how it was composed. Its composition did not fit into any of the ways that they knew of. It was something the likes of which they had never seen before.

Just like poetry, Arabic prose also comes in a set format. There is what you call rhymed prose where each sentence ends with a rhyme or every other sentence ends with a rhyme and there is also what you call *mursal* prose which is straight prose that does not rhyme. Just like the Quran does not fit into one of the sixteen Bihar of poetry, it is also does not fit into a prose that the Arabs knew of. It is not straight prose nor is it rhyming prose. It seemed to be a combination of both straight prose and rhyming prose. A combination that is unlike anything that the Arabs had ever seen before.

Thus the composition of the Quran does not fit into any of the established ways of writing poetry or prose. The Quran is neither poetry nor is it prose. When it was revealed the Arabs had never seen or heard anything like it, and since the time of it's revelation nothing has been produced that is like it. Despite this fact the Quran is still in a plain Arabic language and its meanings are clear and comprehensible for all to understand. So the fact that the Quran does not conform to any of the established ways of writing poetry and prose is yet another component of the linguistic Miracle of the Quran. If any human were to have composed the Quran then he still would have had to conform to the rules of writing that the Arabic language has. How could anyone have composed a work without conforming to the rules of the language? In order to produce any work of Arabic you still need to do it on the based on the rules established for the

language. You cannot do it without conforming to the rules. Such a thing would be like writing English without knowing anything about grammar or sentence structure.

This was only an introduction to the linguistic Miracle of the Quran. For a more detailed discussion of this subject you can refer to books such as "*Ijaz al-Quran*" by Qadi Abu Bakr Baqilliani and "*Al-Itqan*" by Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti. These books discuss in detail how the Quran is far superior to any work that has been produced by the Arabs and how any attempt to reproduce it is in vain. They show how the Quran uses the Arabic language in such a way that it is impossible to reproduce it. These books cover the linguistic Miracle of the Quran in detail, something we have only given an introduction to.

Today it is truly unfortunate that Orientalist and Christian opponents of the Quran would dismiss the Miracle of the Quran as something subjective without even studying these classical works. They just claim that the Challenge is based on something subjective and dismiss it without responding to all of these arguments that Muslim scholars have brought in support of the validity of the Challenge. So not only have these fools been unable to produce a Surah like the Challenge has asked for, but they claim that the Challenge is invalid because it based on something subjective. They make this unfounded claim without even studying the real nature of the linguistic Miracle of the Quran or reading what the Muslim scholars have written. They claim that all there is to the superiority of the Quran is its beauty, like the beauty of a song. If they would only study the real nature of the linguistic Miracle of the Quran, they would see that this is the furthest from the truth. But we know that they would never do this. We know that they would never sincerely study the Miracle of the Quran. This is because they are not studying the Quran to see whether or not it is the Truth. They have already made up their minds that they are going to reject this Message. They have already made up their minds so no matter how many signs they are shown they will not believe. They had already made up their minds that they were not going to believe even before they looked at the Quran. This is because they were slaves of their desires and they knew that the Quran came to take them away from their desires. They knew that the Quran came to take them away from the devils that they were worshipping. Thus

they had no sincerity for the Truth, rather they only cared about their desires and their pride. Now the only effort for which they are spending their energies is to come up with lame excuses as to why they have rejected this Message. They want to justify for themselves their rejection of this Message so they try to invent weaknesses in the Challenge of the Quran where no such weaknesses exist. They only want to console themselves for their rejection and they want to fool the simple minded among the Muslims who have not studied the Miracle of the Quran in detail. They also want to mislead their own people from being able to comprehend and realize this Miracle. They want to mislead their own people from knowing and serving their Creator. In addition to saying that the Challenge of the Quran is subjective, some of them claim that the reason the Challenge has not yet been met is because Muslims are afraid to take up the Challenge because doing so would be an act of kufr. There are two important points they forget to consider when they come with such a claim. One is that Muslims are already convinced that this Quran is the Word of Allah (swt) so there is no reason for us to take up the challenge. We as Muslims already know that it cannot be done. Also if Muslims are afraid to take up the Challenge as these Orientalists claim, then why do they not do it themselves? They know Arabic and they can write Arabic. Why do they not make that one small Surah if such a feat is accomplishable by humans? Another excuse that they bring is that the Challenge has already been met and a work has already been produced that is similar to a Surah in Quran. They claim that someone in history has actually done it. If that is true then where is such a work? Why do they not bring it to the world and show everyone how it equals or surpasses the Quran? They do not do it because they know that it is not true. They know that the Challenge of the Quran can never be met. They know that this Quran is the Word of Allah (swt), and just like the enemies of this Message from before, they only reject it because of their pride or their desires. These are all excuses that they bring to justify their rejection and to mislead the people. If such is the condition of these people then let them read the next ayah of this Surah and let them fear that Fire. That Fire that Allah (swt) has promised for all those who reject the Miracle of the Quran once they are certain that it is the Truth. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

The Miracle of the Quran is not limited to the linguistic Miracle. In addition to being a Miracle in the way that it uses the Arabic language, the Quran's content itself is also a Miracle. The actual content of the Quran also shows us how it could be from none but Allah (swt). This Miracle also has multiple aspects to it. One of the ways in which the Quran is a Miracle in terms of it's content is that it has detailed narrations about the events of previous prophets and nations. These are accounts of events that no one at the time of the Prophet (saw) had ever witnessed or heard about. For example in the Quran Allah (swt) has told us about how the angel came to visit Maryam (as) when she was alone in the masjid and He (swt) has also told us about how the brothers of Yusuf (as) plotted together in secret against him (as). No one had witnessed these events so there was no one who knew about them and how they happened. Thus the fact that these events are narrated to us in the Quran also shows us that this Book is from Allah (swt). Who but Allah (swt) could have witnessed these events to tell us about it?

Now some people would claim that these stories could have been taken from the books of Jews and Christians. Such people who make these claims are truly ignorant about the Quran, about the Prophet (saw), about the books of the Jews and Christians and about the situation in Makkah between the Arabs and the Jews and Christians. People who make such unfounded claims forget the fact that the Prophet (saw) was unlettered and so he (saw) could not have read the books of the Jews and Christians. Furthermore the Prophet (saw) was never known for interacting with the Jews and Christians. In fact there were hardly any Jews or Christians in Makkah to begin with, and Makkah was where more than half of the Quran was revealed. Most of the Jews lived around Madinah and most of the Christians lived around Najran and in Yemen. So there was no way that the Prophet (saw) could ever have interacted with these people and learned these stories from them. Furthermore the descriptions that are in the Quran about the former prophets and nations are nothing like what is found in the books of the Jews and Christians. It is known that the Jews and Christians changed their books from what was originally revealed to their prophets. In their books you would find the prophets committing lewd and indecent sins, something that is completely unheard of in Quran. Even the events that are

described in the Quran are often very different from what is found in their Books. Many a times you would find the Quran giving a certain account of what happened, and then the Books of the Jews and Christians giving a totally different account. So even if the Prophet (saw) could have somehow come into contact with some Jews or Christians in Makkah, how does this explain the fact that there are such stark differences between what is in the Quran and what is in their books? How could the Prophet (saw) have known about such stories?

Another example of the Miracle of the Quran when it comes to it's content is the impact that the Quran had on the society onto which it was revealed. When Allah (swt) first sent down this Quran to the Prophet (saw), he (saw) found himself in a society of kufr. The people worshipped idols and submitted to their lusts and desires. There was anarchy and chaos throughout the land. Wars were fought for no reason, women were oppressed and treated as sexual objects, young children were buried in the sand. The strong and the powerful oppressed and exploited the weak and the defenseless. The people even ate the meat of dead carcasses. It was simply the most backwater and barbaric society that you could ever possibly imagine. But then through the Quran the Prophet (saw) built an Islamic movement, a group of people that completely revolutionized the society in which they lived. The Quran changed a people whose only concern was the life of this world into a people who lived and worked only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). It took the people away from worshipping idols into worshipping Allah (swt) Alone. It changed the hearts of such people from being attached to the life of this world, to the hope and love of the Hereafter. It transformed a backward and barbaric society into the greatest civilization in the history of mankind. It laid down an ideology, a way of life that brought complete harmony and tranquility for the people at both an individual and societal level. It organized the affairs of the people in such a perfect way like no system ever devised by a human being did. Mankind has never known progress and peace like it knew under Islam. Could any Book except one that was revealed from Allah (swt) do that?

Another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran when it comes to its content is the Message that it brought. This Book is basically a call to Allah (swt). A call to Tawhid or the absolute

Oneness of Allah (swt). What greater message could any book bring other than this? What greater purpose could anything serve other than this? Is not Allah (swt), the Creator and Sustainer of this entire universe, the most central and pivotal? What could be more important than He (swt)? This Book calls to Allah (swt). To worship Him (swt) Alone and not to make any partners with Him (swt) in this worship. There is no other sacred text that does this. So just the fact that this Book calls to the Oneness of Allah (swt) is another aspect of its Miracle.

Another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran when it comes to the Quran's content is the relevance that the ayahs of the Quran have had on the life of this Ummah throughout the history of our nation. The Quran has been a Book of guidance for this Ummah from the day that it was revealed until today and will continue to be so till the Last Day. Not one letter of the Quran has been changed since the time it was revealed and yet the Message of the Quran continues to be as relevant today for the Muslim Ummah as it was at the time of the Prophet (saw). No Muslim can sincerely look at the Quran today and say that it does not provide solutions for the Ummah for our situation in this world today. No Muslim can turn to the Quran today and not find the guidance within it. This Quran is a complete guidance for our Ummah for all time. This is true at both the individual and societal level. As Imam Shafi (ra) said "there is no problem that the Muslim Ummah can face for which there is no solution in the Book of Allah". There is a solution in the Quran for each and every one of our problems, both as individuals and as a nation. Thus another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran is that this Book is every bit a guidance for us today as it was for the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw). The only difference between us and them is that they searched for the guidance in the Quran while we have neglected it.

Another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran is the way in which it was revealed. As we know the Quran was revealed in portions over a period of twenty-three years that made up the Prophet (saw)'s dawah. Through the Quran the Prophet (saw) launched a movement that helped him (saw) carry out this dawah. What is amazing is that often times the ayahs would be revealed to address the problems and situations that were faced by the Islamic movement in their work of dawah. The Quran was not a theoretical book that spoke of abstract concepts or philosophical

discourses, but it was a practical Book that dealt with the issues that the dawah was facing. Whenever the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims were facing some difficulty in their work or some trial befell them, Allah (swt) would reveal an ayah to help them or to comfort them in their efforts. This practicality of the Quran to the situations that arose in the Islamic movement is another aspect of its Miracle. How could a Book be so beautiful and yet so practical to its environment at the same time? Only Allah (swt) is capable of bring forth such a Book.

Yet another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran in terms of it's content is that the style of the Quran does not resemble the speech of the Prophet (saw) in any way. Even the Orientalists agree that it was the Prophet (saw) who brought the Quran. None of them claim that the Quran came from any but him (saw). This is because there is so much evidence to show that the Quran only came from the mouth of the Prophet (saw). But instead of saying that it is revelation from Allah (swt) like they know that it is, these fools claim that the Prophet (saw) composed it. In making such a claim what these fools fail to consider was that he (saw) was illiterate, and that he (saw) was not a poet or a writer, and that the words of the Quran do not resemble his (saw)'s speech in any way. We have thousands and thousands of hadith from the Prophet (saw). If you compare the style of the speech of the Prophet (saw) in these hadith with the style of the Quran, you will see no similarity between them. Anyone who knows Arabic can clearly distinguish between an ayah of Quran and a hadith of the Prophet (saw). They can clearly see that the speaker in each of these is different. So the fact that none of the miraculous style of the Quran ever appeared in the Prophet (saw)'s own words is yet another clear evidence that the Quran could not be from him (saw).

Another part of the Miracle of the Quran is that the quality of the Quran never increases or diminishes for the twenty-three years over which it was revealed. If you look at any work that has been written by any human writer, you will see improvements or you will see portions where the quality diminishes. This is part of what it means to be human. Most of the time your writing improves as you learn more and you gain more experience, but sometimes the quality of your writing will decrease because just like any human you can make mistakes. The

Quran on the other hand never increases or decreases in terms of it's quality, there is no one who can say that any one Surah in the Quran is better in terms of the quality of the language than any other Surah. Many Surahs are different from each other in their style, but they are all at their peak. None of them can be improved on. None of them ever diminish or improve. Every single Surah of the Quran, even every single ayah is at the peak of the Arabic language. This is yet another evidence that the Quran could not have come from a human writer.

The bottom line is that most people who do not believe in this Message today falsely think that the Prophet (saw) himself composed the Quran. Such a belief comes from utter ignorance both about the Quran and about the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw)'s own tribe never thought for one second that he (saw) could produce anything like the Quran. This was because they knew him (saw) well and they knew the Quran also. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was not a liar or a trickster, and moreover they knew that the Prophet (saw) could not produce this Quran even if he (saw) wanted to do because he (saw) was illiterate and he (saw) was not a poet. Someone like the Prophet (saw) was the last person they would ever think could bring a Book like the Quran. Even when they made false propaganda against him (saw), they never claimed that he (saw) had produced the Quran himself but they accused him (saw) of having foreign slaves who would write this Quran for him (saw). Even when they made such claims they themselves knew that such claims were unfounded because those slaves were non-Arabs and the Quran is a pure Arabic Book. Just like they knew the Prophet (saw), they knew the Quran as well. They knew that such a work could not have been produced by a human mind.

Ultimately the Miracle of the Quran is a Miracle of knowledge. Any work of poetry or prose that is produced by the human mind is based on knowledge which that human previously obtained. So the question to ask is that is it possible for any human to have had the knowledge required to produce the Quran? We already said how the Quran is neither poetry nor is it prose. It does not fit into any of the sixteen Bihar of poetry nor is it rhymed prose or straight prose. We also said that the *Uslub* of the Quran is far superior to anything that the Arabs had ever produced in the history of the language. So much was the superiority of the *Uslub* of the Quran that even

when the Arabs heard the Quran, they knew that this work could not have been produced by a human mind. To the Arab who was an expert in poetry when he heard the Quran, it was just like when the magicians of Firaun saw the stick turn into a live snake, they knew right away that this could only be from Allah (swt). The same was the case of the Arabs when they heard the Quran being recited to them. That was the level to which the *Uslub* of the Quran was superior to anything that they had produced. The moment they heard it they knew that they could not match it. They knew that it was impossible for anyone to match it. We also said that the Quran contains detailed stories of the previous nations and prophets, knowledge that no one among the Arabs had, knowledge that even the Jews and Christians did not have in the correct form. We also said that the Quran contains the guidelines to raise a movement that will completely transform *dar ul kufr* (the land of disbelief) into *dar ul Islam* (the land of Islam). Once the Islamic State is established, the Quran also contains the framework to build a society of brotherhood where tranquility and peace is achieved both on the individual and collective level. The Quran can also make a Muslim completely give up this worldly life and his desire for the things of this world, and turn him into a complete servant of Allah (swt) who is willing to sacrifice everything for his Rabb. We also said that the Challenge of the Quran has existed for over fifteen hundred years, and not one person has been able to produce that one small Surah which Allah (swt) asked the doubters for. The enemies of this Message have tried every possible to destroy this Message but they have been unable to produce this Surah. Now the question to ask yourself is this. Think about this question. Is it possible for an illiterate merchant who had never written anything in his whole life to produce a Book such as this? Could he (saw) ever have had the knowledge to produce such a Book? After all he (saw) was a human being just like us. He (saw) was also born without knowing anything just like we were. He (saw) never went to school or received in any kind of formal education. For most of his (saw)'s life he (saw) lived as a Shepard and a merchant. So he (saw) never received the opportunity to learn much. Do you think then that he (saw) could have had the knowledge to produce a Book like this? We believe that this is not possible.

We believe that there is no way possible for the Prophet (saw) to have had the knowledge to produce a Book like this.

If there is anyone who thinks that the Prophet (saw) might have had the knowledge to produce such a Book, we can say there are only two possibilities for such a person to think in that way. One possibility is that they have some problem with their mind, and if that is the case then we ask Allah (swt) to forgive them for their doubts and He (swt) is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful. The other possibility for them thinking in such a way is that they are just making excuses for themselves for rejecting this Message when they know that it is indeed the Truth. They have already reached the conclusion that they do not want to accept this Message, and they are just finding excuses for themselves by saying that the Prophet (saw) could have produced such a Book. For such people we ask them to reconsider their stance. We ask them to consider what Allah (swt) says in the next ayah of this Surah.

In the next part of this ayah we see that Allah (swt) does not simply give mankind the Challenge of the Quran but He (swt) also allows them to call all of their witnesses and helpers besides Him (swt). Allah (swt) says "**and call your witnesses and helpers from below Allah**". This shows that Allah (swt) is giving every human being the chance to help each other on this endeavor. They can each be helpers and witnesses for each other. They can help each other to write that one small Surah and they can be witnesses for each other that such a Surah is similar to the Surahs in the Book of Allah (swt). Just imagine, Allah (swt) is allowing all of mankind to come together and work together to try and answer this challenge. Even though they can help each other, they still have not been able to meet the Challenge. Many must have been the enemies of this Message who must have gathered together in their secret rooms to try and destroy this Message. Still they have been unable to do it.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says, "**If you are truthful**". This means that mankind should only take up this Challenge if they truly doubt that this Quran is from Allah (swt). If they know that this Quran is from Allah (swt), which they do, then they should not even endeavor on such a Challenge. But if for whatever reason they have some doubt that this Quran

is from Allah (swt), only then should they try to take up such a Challenge and see what is the result that they meet with. Furthermore if they were true and if they were sincere, then once they realized that this Challenge cannot be met, then they should submit to the Truth that has come to them from their Creator.

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا۟ وَلَن تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِى وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ ۖ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And if you cannot do it, and you will never do it, then have Taqwa from the Fire, the one whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the Kafireen.

This ayah is a continuation of the previous ayah. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) presented the Challenge of the Quran for all mankind if they had any doubt whatsoever that this Quran was from Him (swt). Allah (swt) told all of mankind that if they had any doubt whatsoever that this Quran was from Him (swt) then they only needed to produce one small Surah similar to the Surahs in His (swt)'s Book. To meet this challenge they could all call all of their helpers and witnesses and they could all assist one another and support one another. In this ayah Allah (swt) confirms that all of mankind will never be able to meet this Challenge. Allah (swt) is already telling us that we will never be able to do it so we should not even try. Simply look at the confidence with which Allah (swt) tells mankind that they will never be able to meet this Challenge. That is a Miracle in and of itself. Which human writer can have such absolute certainty that no one will be able to meet this Challenge?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling mankind that they will never be able to meet this Challenge. You will never be able to do it so do not even try it. Then Allah (swt) tells mankind what they should do if they are not able to meet this Challenge and they still insist on not submitting to this Message. Allah (swt) tells them to have Taqwa of the Fire. To have Taqwa

from the Fire is to protect oneself from it. The only way to protect yourself from such a Fire is to release all of the pride and desires that are preventing you from believing in this Message. Whatever excuses you are bringing as to why you are not submitting to this Message have to be destroyed. Deep down in your heart you know that this Message is the Truth, so you should submit to it. If it is your desires for the pleasures of this world, or if it is your pride that is preventing you from submitting to this Message, then you should know that to be in the Fire for even for a moment is not worth all that this world has to offer. As the Prophet (saw) told us, if the man who had the most comfortable and pleasurable life in this world were dipped in the Fire for only a moment he would forget all his pleasures in this life and he would say that he had known no good at all. So you have to release all of your pride and submit to this Message as you know that you have been created to do. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Notice how Allah (swt) describes such a Fire. Allah (swt) says that it is being burned by the fuel of people and stones. The fact that people are the Fuel for such a Fire should make us terrified of it even more. We should imagine ourselves being thrown into it and we should cry from the fear of that thought. The fire has been prepared for people and we are people. So we should always fear the possibility that we may be among those for whom this Fire has been prepared. This fear should then motivate us to release our pride and our love for this world and submit to this Message as we know it to be true.

In addition to people, we also see from this ayah that the Fire will have stones. The stones here refer to the idols that were worshipped instead of Allah (swt), most of these idols were made from stone. They will be thrown into the Fire along with the idol-worshippers who worshipped them. So the burning of these stones will only increase the idol-worshippers in their torment. Another reason why the Fire will be filled with these idols is so that these idol-worshippers can see first hand what is the fate of the idols that they used to prostrate to instead of Allah (swt). Rather than being a source for their salvation, these stones will only add to their torment. Sayyid Qutb also says that the word "stones" in this ayah could be a reference to the hearts of those who had chosen to reject this Message. The hearts of these disbelievers are like

stones because they refuse to submit to the Truth even though they are certain of it. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like them!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that such a Fire has been prepared for the *Kafiroon*. Recall how we said the word kufr is derived from a word that means "to cover". Allah (swt) calls them *Kafiroon* because they cover the Truth that they knew in their hearts by their rejection of this Message. For these people who are so evil that they will deliberately turn away from this Message even when they are certain that it is indeed from their Creator, it is for such people that Allah (swt) has prepared this Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from this terrible destination!

We can also notice in this ayah how Allah (swt) linked the punishment in the Hereafter with the refusal to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt), and not with the refusal to believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt). There is hardly any rational human being that would deny that this was universe was created by Allah (swt) Alone. Even the idol worshippers at the time of the Prophet (saw) acknowledged this fact. What they refuse to believe in however is that Allah (swt) sent prophets and messengers as guides to humanity to teach them on how He (swt) should be served and worshipped. Most people would rather deceive themselves into thinking that Allah (swt) simply created the universe and then let it be. This way there could be no purpose to their life other than serving their desires. But to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) is to believe that Allah (swt) created this universe with a purpose. This is because in the Prophet (saw) mankind has a model and a guide to follow on how to worship and serve their Creator. The Prophet (saw) is the living embodiment of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Those who refuse to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt), those who try to find some excuse as to how the Quran could have been from other than Allah (swt), they are really the ones who are refusing to live their lives in worship and servitude to their Creator. This is because they are refusing to believe in the Message that their Creator has sent to them. That is why they are being promised the Fire for their refusal to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt)

Notice that Allah (swt) refers to the Prophet (saw) in these ayahs as His (swt)'s slave. This is to clearly demonstrate to all mankind what the purpose of their existence must be. It is nothing other than to be a humble slave of Allah (swt). To serve and worship the Master of the universe out of a deep love for Him (swt). This love for Allah (swt) comes from two sources. One is a recognition of all the bounties and favors that He (swt) has done for you, as Allah (swt) tells us that if were to even count all of the favors and blessings of Allah (swt) we would not be able to do it. The other source for our love of Allah (swt) is a realization of all of His (swt)'s Perfect Names, to realize how He (swt) can do everything, how He (swt) Knows everything, how He (swt) sees everything. When you realize how Perfect and Pure Allah (swt) IS, how Majestic and Glorious, why then would you not want to live your life to worship and serve Him (swt)? So to serve Allah (swt) means to live every moment in worship and servitude to Allah (swt), or at least to try and attain that goal. One should do this out of a deep love for Allah (swt) that comes from gratefulness and appreciation for all of His (swt)'s bounties as well as a realization of the Perfection and Greatness of Allah (swt). This was the life of the Prophet (saw), and to believe in him (saw) is to believe that one must live their life in this way as well. It is only for those who refuse to live their lives in such a way that Allah (swt) has prepared this painful torment. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

The lesson that we as Muslims can take from these two ayahs is to realize the powerful and intellectual arguments that Allah (swt) has given us to show us the Truth of this Message. When we consider these clear proof and undeniable evidences, we should have no doubts whatsoever concerning the Truth of this Message. The Quran has such strong evidences to show that it is indeed from Allah (swt) that we should have no doubt whatsoever in anything that it says. You have to believe in what is in Quran just like you believe in the reality that you see before your eyes at this moment. So whatever it is that is around you now, whether it is a train or your bedroom or a library, you are certain that you believe in it right? You must believe in all that is in the Quran with that level of certainty. You must see the descriptions that Allah (swt) gives you in the Quran as sheer reality. That is the level of certainty that many in the

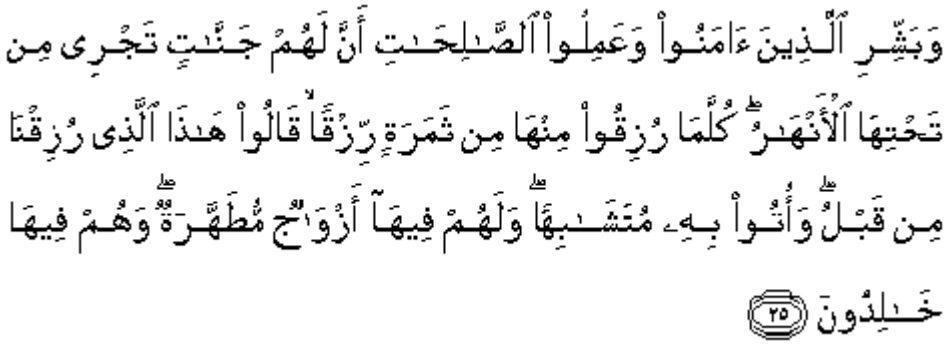
Ummah today lack. Part of the blame for this has to go to Shaitan and the enemies of this Message, but most of the blame has to go to us for our neglect of the Quran and our neglect of the Arabic language. Because we have neglected the Quran and because we have neglected the Arabic language required to properly understand the Quran, we no longer see this Book as a reality. But if only we would turn to the Quran, if only we would learn the language, then we would see the reality of all that Allah (swt) tells us in it.

Not only does this ayah tell us that the Challenge of the Quran will never be met, but it also serves to remind us of the Fire. Recall how we said that the entire call of this Message can be summarized in these set of ayahs. An important part of this Message is a warning to all mankind about the Fire. The Fire that has been prepared for all those who displease the Creator. How terrifying is the Fire? It is so frightening that you should never feel completely safe from it. You must always think to yourself that there is a chance that you might be placed in that Fire, so you must rush to make Tawbah to Allah (swt) for all the sins that you have committed. If you think that there is even a possibility that one of your sins could put you in this terrible place then you must constantly be asking for Forgiveness from Allah (swt) for that sin. Also you must be striving to do the good deeds that will Insha Allah erase that sin. As the Prophet (saw) told us, the good deeds wipe away the evil deeds. So we should all be striving to do more and more good deeds so that we can please Allah (swt) and save ourselves from this Fire. Another important point to bear in mind is that when we are striving to do the good deeds, it leaves less time for us to fall into evil. As Allah (swt) has demonstrated in many ayahs of the Quran the human being was created to work hard and to do actions. If he is not spending his time doing good actions, then he might fall into evil. If he does not have the Pleasure of Allah (swt) always in his heart, it might be replaced with the desire to serve oneself and one's passions. Thus another lesson that we take from this ayah is to remind ourselves that the Fire is true. The Fire is true and the only way we can save ourselves from it is by rushing to do good and staying away from evil.

So the Fire of Hell is so terrible that we must always have dread for it. In order to save ourselves from it we must always be striving to stay away from the actions that Allah (swt)

might be displeased with and we must always be striving to do the actions that He (swt) is pleased with. In addition we must also be striving to learn the Quran. It is the Miracle of the Prophet (saw), and the guidance to the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Every other path leads to this terrible punishment. This Quran is the only Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). How important then must it be in our lives? May Allah (swt) enable us to live every moment of our lives according to this Quran! May Allah (swt) allow us to come closer and closer to Him (swt) with every ayah that we learn! May Allah (swt) allow this Quran to be an evidence for us that will argue on our behalf on the Last Day!

Another lesson that we can take from these two ayahs is to recall how Allah (swt) described the people in the hellfire. Allah (swt) said that they do kufr and that their hearts are like stones. They knowingly reject the Truth when they see it and they are certain of it. They are stubborn and set on their ways of error and misguidance instead of following the Truth that they can clearly recognize. We must make sure that we never become like these people. We must not become like these people in anything that we do or in any opinion that we follow. We must always search for the Truth and we must never allow our pride to prevent us from following the Truth. When we are presented with an opinion or thought in Islam that we are convinced is the Truth, an opinion for which we see the clear evidences, then we must not hesitate to follow that opinion. We should not have any kind of stubborn loyalty to the opinion of our group or our movement or our school of thought. When we are convinced that a certain opinion is the correct one, when we can clearly see through the evidences in Quran and Sunnah, how it is correct, then we must no hesitate to follow it. If we do hesitate and turn away then we would be like these people who rejected the Truth after they saw it and they clearly recognized it. The ones who preferred their pride and themselves to Allah (swt) and the Truth. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) give us all of the ability to make our loyalty first and foremost to the Quran and Sunnah! First and foremost to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)!



26. And give good news to those who believe and do righteous actions that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are provided with the fruits from it, they will say "This is what we were given before", and they will be given *mutashabiyat*, and for them in it are purified companions, and they will stay therein forever.

In the previous ayah we saw Allah (swt) describe the terrible punishment that awaited those who refuse to believe and submit to this Message that He (swt) has sent through the Prophet (saw). However like in many places of the Quran, whenever Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)'s punishment, He (swt) also mentions His (swt)'s reward. That is also how the heart of a believer should always be. The believer must always have a fear from the punishment of Allah (swt) but at the same time, he must also always hope for the Mercy of Allah (swt). Ibn al-Qayyim (ra) has said that the bird needs two wings to fly, the wing of fear and the wear of hope. Not only does the bird need both these wings, but they must also be of equal weight and they must be properly balanced. If either wing one is of greater weight than the other, then the bird will not be able to fly. If we have too much fear we might give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt). We might think that there is no way that Allah (swt) will forgive us for all of the evil that we have done, and we might think that we are doomed for the Fire. This kind of thinking may allow Shaitan to trick us into believing that we might as well enjoy this world while we have it before we go the punishment in the next life. Not only is such thinking completely and utterly foolish but it could

also be kufr. This is because Allah (swt) has clearly commanded us never to give up on His (swt)'s Mercy and Allah (swt) has told us that the only ones who do are the disbelieving people. On the other hand, one cannot have too much hope as well. You must not allow the fact that Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful lead you into thinking that you can commit all the sins that you want and still be guaranteed the gardens. When such thoughts enter into your mind, you must remind yourself of the terrible punishment of the Fire. You must remind yourself that just as Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful He (swt) is also the Severe in Punishment. You must also remind yourself why you live and exist in this world. It is only to worship and serve Allah (swt) and not to satisfy your lusts and desires. So for you to think that you will be forgiven no matter it is that you do is completely wrong. Such wishful thinking goes completely against this purpose for which Allah (swt) created you. Thus in this ayah we see Allah (swt) tell us of His (swt)'s reward directly after He (swt) told us of His (swt)'s punishment and that is how our hearts must always be. In between the hope of Allah (swt)'s Mercy and the fear of His (swt)'s Wrath.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by giving a command. The command is to give good news for a specific kind of people. Who are these people for whom the good news should be given? They are the ones who believe and do righteous deeds. What does it mean to believe? It is to believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has told us about Himself (swt) in the Quran and Sunnah. It is to believe that Allah (swt) is One and Only, that He (swt) is the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, and that He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master of this entire universe. Once you accept this fact you must also believe that He (swt) demands and deserves the complete obedience and submission of all creation. The proper belief that is required of us also requires us to believe that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt), and that he (saw) receives revelation from Allah (swt). We have to believe that the purpose of our life is to worship and serve Allah (swt), and the way to do is by following the example of the Prophet (saw). This also answers the question of what it means to do righteous deeds. Because the deeds that are righteous are not what we think are righteous but it is what Allah (swt) has told us are righteous

through the example of the Prophet (saw). The actions which the Prophet (saw) did and which he (saw) called the Muslims to do are the actions that are righteous. Because good deeds are the deeds that are good in the sight of Allah (swt) and not in the hearts of men. Often times people may think an action is righteous because it feels right to them, but these are only their emotions and desires. So the actions that are righteous are only the actions which Allah (swt) told us are righteous through the Prophet (saw). Thus the ones who receive the good news of this ayah are those who believe correctly in Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) and the ones who do the righteous deeds to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) following the example of the Prophet (saw).

The good news that such people have been promised are gardens underneath which rivers flow. This is the reward for those people who fulfill the purpose of their creation. This is what Allah (swt) gives those who spent their lives in this world in worship and servitude to Him (swt). This is the manifestation of the Pleasure of Allah (swt) for those sincerely worship and serve Him (swt). As the Prophet (saw) has told us, the true reality of these gardens is beyond our imagination. There are delights in these gardens that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and that no mind has ever imagined. May Allah (swt) include us in that select company which experiences this!

The rivers of the garden are also beyond our comprehension. A general meaning that we can take from what Allah (swt) tells us about them in this ayah is that they are among the pleasures which the people of the gardens will enjoy. The narrations tell us that in these gardens there will be rivers of wine, rivers of milk, rivers of honey and rivers of water. We can only imagine that the drink from such rivers will be the sweetest and most refreshing of drinks that one can ever drink. We can also imagine that to bathe in these rivers will also be the most pleasurable of experiences. Can you even begin to imagine what it will be like to bathe in a river of milk? May Allah (swt) make us among those who will witness and experience such rivers!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**Every time they are provided with the fruits from it, they will say 'This is what we were given before', and they will be given *mutashabiyat***". Here Allah (swt) is describing what will happen when the people of the

Garden are given fruits. Allah (swt) tells us that when the people of the gardens are given fruits they will say that these fruits are just like what they were given before. Meaning just like the fruits in the life of this world. However Allah (swt) explains that these are not the same fruits that they were given before but they are *mutashabiyat*. The scholars say that this means that these fruits are similar to what they had been given previously in shape and form but they are different in taste. The fruits in the garden will be similar to the fruits of this world in shape and form but the taste of the fruits of the garden will be far superior. So just like you have grapes and apples and mangos in the life of this world, you will also have these same fruits in the Garden. But the taste of such fruits will be far superior to their counterparts of the fruits of this world. So just imagine the most delicious fruit that you have ever eaten in the life of this world. The fruit that brought you pure pleasure when it touched your tounge. Now imagine if the taste of it improved over a thousand times. That is what the fruits of the gardens will taste like. You will have such fruits every day of your life and you would never grow tired of them. You can have them whenever you want and you can eat however much you want. They will not make you sick and they will not make you fat. You will also never become bored of them or tired of them. Remember that this place was created to make you happy. May Allah (swt) grant us this place! May Allah (swt) allow us to be among those who partake in such fruits!

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the people of the gardens will have pure companions. Mawdudi explains this ayah by saying that for the couples of this world where both the husband and the wife were righteous servants of Allah (swt), they will have each other in the gardens. Both the husband and wife will be purified for each other, and any hatred or bad emotions that existed between the couple will be taken away. Each of them will be the most beautiful person that the other has seen. However for the couples where either the husband or the wife was not righteous and was not fit to be in the garden, the righteous wife or husband will be given new companions in the garden. Companions that were much better than the rebellious spouses that they had in the life of this world. For the ones who never married Allah (swt) will provide them

with beautiful and pure companions. So all the believers will have companions in paradise, either their spouses from the life of this world or better companions from the people of paradise.

Also notice that Allah (swt) describes the companions that the believers will be given in paradise as being pure. There are two meanings for the word "pure" in this ayah. One is that they will be pure of all the contaminants that the human body produces in the life of this world, such as mucus or urine for example. Another meaning is that their hearts will be pure. They will have no jealousy or hatred or despair in their hearts. Because of this there will be no quarrels, no fights and no despair between husband and wife in the gardens. There will be only love.

Finally Allah (swt) tells us that they will stay therein forever. Of all of the pleasures of the gardens this is perhaps the greatest. The greatest pleasure of the gardens is the knowledge that everything which you are enjoying will never end. In this world our lives are filled with toil and struggle. For some brief moments we may have a chance to enjoy ourselves and we may have some periods of rest. But for the most part our life is one of toil and struggle. Whatever small pleasure that we have in this world, we know that is bound to end. In fact even while we are enjoying that pleasure in the life of this world, there is a part of our mind that is in despair because we know that joy will soon come to an end. How painful is it when one of the happiness that you have comes to and end? That will not be the case in these gardens. Since the passing of time does not exist in the garden, we are free to do whatever we want for however long that we want to. Our existence will never end so the pleasures and the joys will never end. While we are enjoying the pleasures we never have to worry about it ever ending. We never have to worry about our time running out. A similar aspect of this world that is very painful is when the people of this world whom we love leave us, people such as our family members or our dear friends. In the gardens we will never experience that pain because all the people whom who love will be there with us forever.

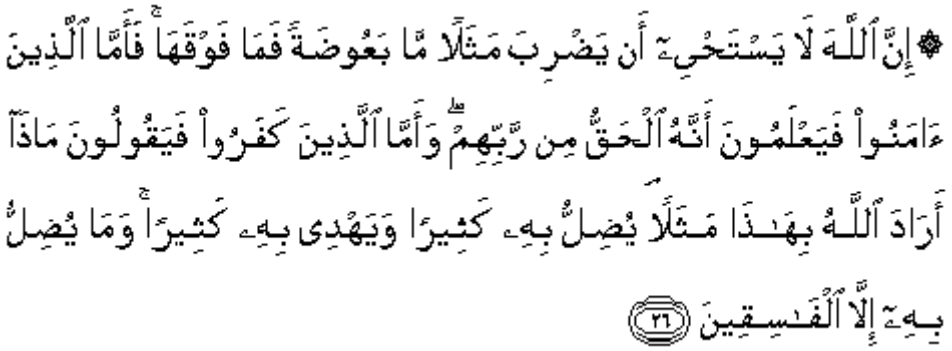
Another problem with enjoying the pleasures of this world other than the fact that they are very fleeting and short lived is that you are not sure if you have truly earned such pleasures. You do not know if you have truly worshipped and served your Creator and Sustainer as He (swt)

deserves. For any good thing that you have in the life of this world you cannot be certain if it is something that Allah (swt) has given to you because He (swt) is pleased with you or if it is a trial or punishment for you. In the gardens this will not be the case. In the gardens you will know that you have pleased Allah (swt) because He (swt) will tell you so. That will make you enjoy the pleasures of the garden even more because you know that Allah (swt) has given you such pleasures out of His (swt)'s love for you. How wonderful is that? We ask Allah (swt) to make us among those who are given these gardens. Ameen!

When we think about all of the pleasures that we will receive in the gardens and how it will never end we should realize how just a few moments in the garden will make us forget all of the suffering that we had to go through in this world. All the pain and distraught that we have seen will be wiped from our memory. The Prophet (saw) has also told us that if the person who lived the most miserable life in this world were only dipped in the garden for a moment, he will forget all of the pain and suffering that he went through in the life of this world. So whatever sacrifices that we have to make for this dawah, and however painful it may be, we have to realize that once we are in the gardens we will forget such pain and suffering. Most of all we would be delighted at having earned the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and just as we love Allah (swt) and so we strove hard to worship and serve Him (swt), He (swt) loves us as well and so He (swt) will reward us with that which will make us truly content. That is the gardens of Allah (swt) wherein are pleasures and delights which no one has ever imagined. May Allah (swt) make us among the companions of such gardens!

The garden is true and it is something that should always be on our mind. We have to believe that the pleasures of the garden are something that is real. It is as real as this world. We cannot think that the garden is only something spiritual or something metaphysical but rather we have to believe that it is as real as this world. How can we believe in Allah (swt) to be the Most Loving and the Most Merciful and then think that He (swt) created us only to exist in the life of this world? Do you really think that a Creator Who is Most Merciful by His Nature would create us only to suffer in this world and then die? To fade away into non-existence. How could that be

Allah (swt)? No, rather we have to believe that Allah (swt) will grant us this garden which is as real as this world if only we would try to please Him (swt).


۞ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَسۡتَحۡيِۦٓ أَن يَضۡرِبَ مَثَلٗا مَّا بَعُوضَةٗ فَمَا فَوۡقَهَاۚ فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُواْ فَيَعۡلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡۖ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَآ
أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا مَثَلٗاۘ يُضِلُّ بِهِۦ كَثِيرٗا وَيَهۡدِي بِهِۦ كَثِيرٗاۚ وَمَا يُضِلُّ
بِهِۦٓ إِلَّا ٱلۡفَٰسِقِينَ ٢٦

27. Surely Allah is not ashamed to give the example even of a mosquito or what is greater than it. So those who have iman, they know that it is the Truth from their Rabb. And those who do kufr, they say "what does Allah wish to teach by this example?". He guides by it many and He misleads many and He misleads not except the *Fasiqoon*.

In the previous ayahs we saw Allah (swt) challenge all of mankind to produce something similar to the smallest Surah that in His (swt)'s Book if they think that this Book can be from anyone but Him (swt). After they have received this Message clearly from their Creator, we can divide mankind into two groups. There are those who acknowledge that such a Book can only be from Allah (swt) and so they submit to this Message as is required of them. Then there are those who find some excuse as to why they do not want to submit to this Message and so they reject this Message even though they are certain that it is from Allah (swt). These are the two categories into which those have received the Message can be divided. Now those who reject this Message always find some excuse to justify their rejection. They always try to find some problem with this Message and they use it as a reason for their rejection. This ayah addresses one of the common excuses that such worthless people bring.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Surely Allah is not ashamed to give the example even of a mosquito or what is greater than it**". Here Allah (swt) addresses those

people who criticized the fact that the Quran had parables in it of spiders, flies and mosquitoes. There are some ayahs which mention these creatures and these people find fault with the Quran because of this. They say that it does not become of the Lord and Master of the universe to use such examples in His (swt)'s Book. Here Allah (swt) responds to such a claim. Allah (swt) says that surely He (swt) is not ashamed to use the example of the mosquito or anything bigger than that. In other words there is no example that Allah (swt) is ashamed to use. Allah (swt) is not ashamed of anything because He (swt) is Allah (swt). Because Allah (swt) is the Lord and Master of this universe that gives Him (swt) the right to use whatever example that He (swt) wants to. It is only we who should be ashamed and even afraid to question whatever examples Allah (swt) uses in His (swt) Book.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that those who have iman know that this Book is the Truth from the Rabb. Their iman gives them the certainty that what is in this Book could only be from Allah (swt). For the ones who believe in Allah (swt) sincerely with the correct and firm belief, they know that this Book is from Allah (swt). So they look for the wisdom and the guidance that is in these examples that Allah (swt) gives. When they look for such guidance with sincerity and in submission to their Rabb, then Allah (swt) opens the doors of the guidance for them and they understand the meaning of these examples. These sincere believers realize the Wisdom of Allah (swt) in these examples. Even if the examples are given using creatures such as mosquitoes or flies, they see past the surface of these examples and see the real guidance that Allah (swt) is giving in such examples. They see the Wisdom of Allah (swt) when He (swt) uses these examples. Thus such examples only serve to guide the believers closer to Allah (swt). As Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah, it is the believers' certain knowledge that this Book is the Truth that allows them to benefit from the guidance that is contained in it. When you know that this Book is the Truth from your Lord, when you are certain of this fact then you will not question any of the examples that Allah (swt) uses in it.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the ones who do kufr say "what does Allah wish to teach by this example?". Just like those who sincerely believe are guided by the ayahs of this Quran,

those who reject this Message and those who do not have the firm conviction in it are misguided by the ayahs of the Quran. The ones who do kufr are the ones who cover the Truth that they know in their hearts. They cover their knowledge that this Book can only be from Allah (swt). They find some excuse for themselves to reject this Message. These are the people who have already made up their minds that following their desires is a greater priority in their lives than worshipping and serving Allah (swt). One of the excuses that they bring to reject this Message is to point out these examples that Allah (swt) uses in the Quran. They claim that Allah (swt) should not be using such examples of mosquitoes and flies. They say that if the Quran truly was from Allah (swt) then it would not have examples such as these in it. However the bottom line is not the use of these examples, the bottom line is that these people were not sincere in their search for the Truth concerning this Message. They were just looking for reasons to reject this Message and so they went looking for their reasons. They found these examples of mosquitoes and flies in the Quran and they brought it forward, without even thinking that this is Allah (swt)'s Book and He (swt) is free to use whatever examples He (swt) wants.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) guides by it many and He (swt) misleads by it many. We have seen the meaning of this part of the ayah in the previous part of the ayah. The ones who are guided by the Quran are those who recognize that it is the Book of Allah (swt), and who sincerely search for the guidance that is in it while they strive to worship and serve their Lord. Allah (swt) guides such people by opening the doors of guidance that are in the Quran for them and giving them certainty in their iman. The ones who are misguided by this Book are those who think it is more important to serve their desires than to worship and serve Allah (swt). The ones who make some excuse as to why they have rejected this Message from their Creator calling on them to worship and serve Him (swt). Allah (swt) misguides such people by letting them go in their misguided ways even though He (swt) could have guided them if He (swt) wanted to do.

Such people who turn away from Allah (swt) are the *Fasiqoon*. These are the people whom Allah (swt) allows to go astray. The literal meaning of the word *Fasiqoon* are the

"transgressors" or "the ones who go beyond the limits". There are clear limits and boundaries that are set by Allah (swt) and these are the people who go beyond these limits. The first of these limits that must not be crossed is that the prophets and messengers whom Allah (swt) sends must not be rejected. Anyone who rejects the Message of one of Allah (swt)'s Messengers after clearly receiving the Message and after perceiving the evidences is one of the Fasiqoon. So the ones who do kufr are the worst among the *Fasiqoon* because they reject a communication that their Creator has sent to them. They reject the call by Allah (swt) to dedicate their lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt). Could there be anyone worse among mankind than such people? They are the first group of people who Allah (swt) misguides. Allah (swt) misguides them by allowing them to go astray to even though He (swt) could have guided them.

The other group of *Fasiqoon* are actually among the believers. They are the ones who fail to abide by the Law of Allah (swt), the ones who commit sins and acts of disobedience to Allah (swt). The scholars say that the Fasqioon among the believers are of two types. The first among them are the ones who have the committed major sins like adultery, drinking alcohol, or missing the prayer. The second among them are the ones who persist in committing the minor sins. The Prophet (saw) warned us about the dangers of persisting in the minor sins. He (saw) said "Beware of the sins which are treated as minor, just like a people who encamp in the center of a valley, so someone brings a stick of firewood and someone else brings another stick until they are able to bake their bread. Likewise sins which are treated as minor and for which the person is taken account will destroy him". So the Prophet (saw) illustrated for us in this hadith how a sin that we think is small is like a stick of fire. Once they begin to accumulate they can make a large and roaring fire. Thus anyone who continues to commit the minor sins without thinking much of them is also among the *Fasiqoon* just like those who commit the major sins. These are the ones whom Allah (swt) turns away from Him (swt) on account of their transgression and their disobedience to Him (swt). These are the ones for whom the doors of guidance into the Quran are closed shut. They will read the ayahs of the Quran and they will never be able to comprehend their meaning. When they try to ponder over the meanings in the

Book of their Lord it will only lead to confusion and doubt. So realize now the grave consequences of being among the *Fasiqoon*. May Allah (swt) save us from being among them!

ٱلَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مِيثَٰقِهِۦ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَآ أَمَرَ ٱللَّهُ بِهِۦٓ
أَن يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

28. The ones who break the covenant of Allah after having establishing it, and cut all that Allah has commanded to be joined, and they make *fasad* in the land. These are the losers.

In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us a further description of those who are the *Fasiqoon*. In the previous ayah we saw that these were the people who go beyond the limits set by Allah (swt). These are the people whom Allah (swt) misguides with the Quran. Allah (swt) misguides them because they chose to misguide themselves. We said that there were three kinds of such people. First are those who refuse to believe in this Message that Allah (swt) has sent, then there are those who believe but have committed a major sin and have not made repentance, finally there are those who believe but who persist in committing the minor sins without caring much for what they are doing. Because of the evil that each of these groups of the Fasiqoon have done they do not receive the guidance from Allah (swt). Instead they are the ones who Allah (swt) lets go astray even though He (swt) could have guided them. This is a punishment from for their choosing to turn away from this Message. May Allah (swt) save us from such disbelief and such disobedience! Since Allah (swt) has given us a further description of the Fasiqoon in this ayah, let us pay close attention to it so that Insha Allah we can benefit from the guidance that is in it. Insha Allah through that guidance Allah (swt) will save us from being like such people!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by describing the Fasiqoon as those who break His covenant having established it. The covenant in this ayah refers to the contract that every single human made with Allah (swt) before they were sent to this world. There was a time when Allah (swt) gathered the souls of all humans and He (swt) asked them "Am I not your Rabb" and they

all replied "yes". As we mentioned one of the meanings of the word *Rabb* is Lord and Master. So when you acknowledged that Allah (swt) was your Lord and Master you made a promise to serve Him (swt) and never to disobey Him (swt). All of us have already made this covenant with Allah (swt). All of us have already acknowledged that Allah (swt) is our Rabb and that we are His (swt)'s slaves. The Fasiqoon are those who break this covenant that we all have with Allah (swt). They were among those who acknowledged that Allah (swt) was their Rabb as well, and now they have turned away from that covenant. Through their refusal to follow this Message, or through their disobedience to its commandments they are breaking the promise they made to Allah (swt). Just think of yourself as a slave, Allah (swt) is your Master. You already promised Allah (swt) that you would worship and serve Him (swt). Your life in this world is where you have to fulfill this promise. The way you fulfill this promise is by believing in the Message of Allah (swt) when it comes to you and then by doing what Allah (swt) tells us you do to do in this Message. In other words doing what Allah (swt) has told you to do in the Quran and Sunnah. The ones who break this promise are the *Fasiqoon*. They are the ones who either refuse to accept this Message when it comes to them or they accept this Message but then they do not do what it commands them to. Thus they break the covenant of Allah (swt) after having established it. How evil then are such people?

The next description that Allah (swt) gives of the Fasiqoon is that they cut all that Allah (swt) has ordered to be joined. This means that they cut all the relationships that Allah (swt) has ordered us to establish and maintain. The first and foremost among these relationships is our relationship with Allah (swt). We establish that relationship by believing in Allah (swt) correctly and by living our life according to the commandments that He (swt) has sent down for us. Even if it entails difficulty to live according to the Law of Allah (swt) we still do it. We see our relationship with Allah (swt) as a rope that we are holding on to, a rope that we must never let go of. The Fasiqoon are those who break their relationship with Allah (swt) by refusing to believe in the Messengers that He (swt) sends, or by refusing to live their lives according to the laws in this Message. They break the most important of relationships and that is the relationship with their

Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master. Allah (swt) has ordered that our relationship with Him (swt) always be maintained and they cut and destroy these people bond.

In addition to cutting their relationship with Allah (swt), the Fasiqoon also break the ties of kinship. This is another relationship that Allah (swt) has ordered us to establish and maintain. We are required to keep our ties of kinship with our families. Allah (swt) has placed much emphasis on establishing and keeping the ties with family members because in this Din the basic unit of the society is the family. The well being of the Islamic society depends on the well being of the Muslim families in that society. If the families are established with love and understanding between all the members of the family and with each member helping the other, then the society as a whole will be good. That is why it is important for us to keep our relationships with our families, especially our close family like our parents and siblings. Even if might not always find love in our hearts towards them, we still have to maintain our relationships with them for the sake of Allah (swt). We have to remind ourselves that in the end the only relationship that should matter for us is our relationship with Allah (swt). Since Allah (swt) has ordered us to maintain relationships with our family then we have to maintain these relationships for Him (swt).

Then in the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) describes the Fasiqoon as those who spread *fasad* in the land. As we have said the closet meanings of this word *fasad* are "corruption", "disorder" and "evil". So by refusing to believe in the Message that Allah (swt) has sent and by being disobedient to Him (swt) these people are spreading corruption and disorder all over the world. There are several ways in which this happens. One way is that when people refuse to live their lives as slaves of Allah (swt) they then live their lives are slaves of their desires. For many people, this causes them to abuse the rights of others. They even hurt and kill other people to satisfy their own desires and to quench their greed. We can see this happening in the world today, both people and nations are exploiting and stealing from those who are weaker than them. We can clearly see the suffering and the evil that is being created all over the world because of this. Because both nations and people have refused to submit to Allah (swt). Because

this world refuses to rule by the Law of Allah (swt), this world has turned into a jungle and it is being ruled by the laws of the jungle. Where the strong take from weak, and they hurt and kill anyone who gets in their way. May Allah (swt) save us and save mankind by returning His (swt)'s Law to the earth!

So one way in which the Fasiqoon are causing disorder in the earth is through their own actions. They are hurting, stealing from and killing others only so that they can satisfy their desires and greed. Another way in which the Fasiqoon are spreading disorder in the earth is that their evil actions are bringing the punishment of Allah (swt) upon the earth. Their evil is causing the Wrath of Allah (swt) to descend upon the earth. We can see an example of this in what happened during the Khalifah of Umar (ra), there was a time when Madinah was struck by several earthquakes. Umar (ra) realized that such earthquakes were being caused by the sins of the people in Madinah. So he (ra) gathered all the people and warned them to stop committing sins if they wanted the earthquakes to stop. Thus another way in which the sins of people cause disorder and destruction in the land is that it brings down the Punishment of Allah (swt) on their land. Such Punishment could come in the form of wars or natural disasters. It is yet another way that destruction and disorder spreads through the land because of the evil that people do. May Allah (swt) protect us from such calamities!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) describes the Fasiqoon as the losers. It is clear that loss here refers to loss on the Day of Judgment. Whatever these people may have gained in the life of this world it is nothing when compared to what they are going to lose of the Day of Judgment. Whatever riches they may have acquired in the life of this world, however much honor and glory they may have had, it is nothing compared to what they will lose on that Day. The scholars say that on that Day they will lose the Mercy of Allah (swt). What does it mean to lose the Mercy of the Most Merciful? It means being denied the most joyous of pleasures and the greatest of contentments. It means pain and suffering the like of which we cannot even imagine! May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) protect us from being among the Fasiqoon!

May Allah (swt) allow us to believe in Him (swt) correctly and to live our lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt)!

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. How can you do *kufr* to Allah when it was that you were dead He then gave you life? Then He will give you death (again), then He will give you life (again) and then to Him you will return.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) described to us the *Fasiqoon*. They are the ones who refuse to believe in the Message that Allah (swt) sends to them. They are the ones who refuse to live according to the Law of Allah (swt). They are the ones who spread corruption and disorder through the earth. They are the ones who are misguided by this Quran. In order to justify their rejection of this Message they always try to find some problem with the Words of Allah (swt). For example they complain about the parables and similitudes in the Quran that mention mosquitoes and files. However as they bring these stupid excuses for their rejection of this Message they ignore the real problem and that is that they do not want to live their lives as worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). So these are merely excuses that they are bringing forward to justify their rejection. Anyone who turns away from the life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) after correctly receiving the Message is among the *Fasiqoon*. These could be those who reject the Message completely or it could be those who believe in the Message but who fail to submit to its laws completely. They are the ones who choose to serve their desires over serving their Creator and Sustainer. They are the ones who break the covenant that all mankind made with Allah (swt), they cut the relationships that Allah (swt) has ordered to be established and they spread corruption and disorder in the land. Because of this in the Hereafter they will be the real losers. They will have lost everything. These are the people whom Allah (swt) told us about in the

previous ayah. These are the people whom we must try our best to avoid being like if we want Allah (swt) to be pleased with us. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

How could a people do this? How could anyone be among the *Fasiqoon*? How could anyone break this covenant that they made with Allah (swt)? These are the questions that Allah (swt) asks us to think about in this ayah. Allah (swt) asks us in this ayah how it is that we can do kufr to Him (swt). Recall how we said that the word kufr means to cover something. In this ayah it could refer to covering the belief about Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) that you know to be true, or it could be referring to covering all of the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) has conferred upon you. Both of these are examples of kufr. While we as Muslims may not be guilty of the first kind of kufr, we are often guilty of the second kind. We are often ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all of His (swt)'s bounties upon us because of our disobedience to Him (swt). So we should pay close attention to what Allah (swt) is saying in this ayah regarding those who do kufr. It applies just as much to us as it does to those who would willfully reject this Message.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**How can you do *kufr* to Allah when it was that you were dead He then gave you life".** First Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) is the One Who created us when we were dead. There was a time in our past when we were dead. There was a time when we were non-existent. Allah (swt) gave us life by making our mothers give birth to us and by bringing us into this world. This is a reality which each and every one of us knows about. If we think back into our past, we remember less and less as we go further back into our past. We also know that there was a time in which we have no memory of ever existing. That was the time when we were dead. It was Allah (swt) Who gave us life, Who brought us out from that state where we dead into this state where we exist today. Every moment that we have in this life is because of Allah (swt). How can then we be ungrateful to Him (swt)? How can we fail in our obligations to serve Him (swt)?

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**Then He will give you death (again)".** We were once dead and Allah (swt) is the One Who gave us life. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) will make us dead once again. This is true for all

human beings. Allah (swt) gave us life by bringing us into this world, and then He (swt) will give each of us death once again. If there is one thing that you can be certain of it is that you will die. Every single soul will taste death. Each one of us is going to cross that gate from which no one has ever returned. Allah (swt) reminds us of this reality again and again in the Quran so that we can prepare for it.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**then He will give you life (again) and then to Him you will return".** Does our journey end with our deaths? Is that the purpose for which we were created? Just for our mothers to give birth to us and to live in this world for a few years and then die into non-existence? Is this all that there is to life? How limited and pathetic are people who think in this way? They believe that there is nothing to their lives except satisfying their urges and then passing away into nothingness. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that such is not the reality of our existence. After we have tasted death when our brief stay in on this earth has expired, Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) will bring us back to life once again. Not only will Allah (swt) bring us back to life once again, but Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah the reason why we will be brought back to life. It is to return to Him (swt). That is the purpose for our lives and our deaths and for our coming back to life after our deaths. It is so that we can return back to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One created us and He (swt) is the One took the covenant from our souls so it is to Him (swt) that we must return. We never belonged to this world. We belong to Allah (swt) and we return to Him (swt).

In his tafsir of this ayah Sayyid Qutb asks us to note how beautifully Allah (swt) describes the entire journey of all human souls in only the few words that compromise this ayah. First Allah (swt) brought our attention to how before this life we were once dead, that was the period of time before our souls were given bodies and placed on this world. Then Allah (swt) told us how He (swt) gave us life by bringing us into this world. We grew up in this world from childhood to adulthood. We experienced all that there was to see and do in this world. There are so many different experiences that all of us have had from childhood to the time we leave this world. Moments of pleasure and moments of pain. Moments of happiness and moments of grief.

This is something that all of us have gone through in the life of this world. All of this was possible only because Allah (swt). If it were not for Allah (swt) we would not have had any of the moments of this life that we treasure so much. Then Allah (swt) reminded us of the inevitable fact that we must all one day soon face death. Even though we have many moments from the life of this world that we treasure we must always remember that we are not on this world to enjoy ourselves but we live only to be servants of Allah (swt). We live only to show to our Rabb how well we can love, worship and serve Him (swt) in the short test that He (swt) has given in this world. Then Allah (swt) reminded us of the fact that one day soon we will return to Him (swt). That was the purpose of our entire existence in this world. For us to return our Creator and for Him (swt) to judge us for the time that we spent in this world. So notice how in only a few words, Allah (swt) has given us the entire journey that the human soul will take. That is part of the Miracle of the Quran that Allah (swt) is Able to place so much meaning in so few words.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always be grateful to Allah (swt). We have to be grateful to Allah (swt) for giving us life and we have to be grateful to Him (swt) for allowing us to return to Him (swt) and for giving us the opportunity to win His (swt)'s Pleasure and His (swt)'s Paradise. Remember that we show our gratitude to Allah (swt) by striving to worship and serve Him (swt). Every time you feel lazy in performing your obligations for Allah (swt), or when your desires prompt you to do an action that Allah (swt) will not be pleased with, then remind yourself of all that He (swt) has done for you. Remember when you did not even exist, and how Allah (swt) is the One Who gave you life. What did you to for Allah (swt) for Him (swt) to give you life in the first place? What does He (swt) owe to you? You did nothing to deserve this existence. Since you are in debt to Allah (swt) for every moment of your life you must try to dedicate every moment of your life to Him (swt). That is the test that Allah (swt) has given all human beings. We must always remember that our time on this world is very limited. There is a clock that is counting down every second of our lives. The sand is dropping in the hourglass. When it finishes we will die. Then we will return to Allah (swt) and He (swt) will judge us on every single action that we did while we were on this world. If you truly believed in

this fact and if you had certainty in this fact then every problem in your life will be solved. You would be living the tranquility and the peace that this Din promises all those who adopt it. Every moment of your life you will be thinking of Allah (swt). You will remember that one Day soon you will meet Him (swt). All that matters for you in this world is preparing to the best of your ability for that Day. Everything else in this world besides those actions that are done to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) becomes trivial to you. What is the value of this world when it is doomed for destruction? Why should you care about anything in this world when you are bound to leave it? The only way in which this world should matter to you is that you want to do more and more good deeds in it so that when you leave this world and return to Allah (swt), Insha Allah, He (swt) will be pleased with you. The only value that this world has is that it gives us the opportunity to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So use every moment that you have in this world to please your Creator. To be grateful to Him (swt) for giving you the opportunity to please Him (swt).

Thus the lesson that we should take from this ayah is to be shocked at ourselves at how ungrateful we are to Allah (swt). We should ask ourselves the question that Allah (swt) asks us in this ayah again and again. We should look back at all of our sins and be ashamed of them and we should feel a deep sense of regret for them. How could we have been so ungrateful to Allah (swt) when every moment in this world was only possible because of Him (swt)? We were once dead, and knew nothing of this world at all. We heard nothing, felt nothing and saw nothing. It was only Allah (swt) who took us out from that state where we dead and gave us this life. How ungrateful are we to Him (swt) because of those sins that we have done? Even by committing one sin how ungrateful are we being to Allah (swt)? It is only by the Mercy and Love of Allah (swt) that any of us are alive in this world. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to always remember that every moment we have in this world is only because of Him (swt) and that every moment in this world we are being tested by Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) guide us do the actions that He (swt) is pleased with! So that when we return to Him (swt), it will be a joyous and happy reunion and one that we will look forward to!

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰٓ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ
فَسَوَّىٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

30. He is the One and Only Who created for you all that is in the earth. Then He turned toward the sky and made it as seven skies, and with every thing He is Knowing.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) reminded us of the fact that He (swt) is the One Who created us, that He (swt) is the One Who gave us life when we were dead, and that He (swt) will then cause us die only to bring us back to life once again so that we can return to Him (swt). That is the journey of our souls. We must always have this journey that we are on in the forefront of our minds. We must never think that this world is our final destination, nor is death is our final destination. These are all stations that our train passes through. Our final destination is when we return to Allah (swt). With Allah (swt) our journey began and with Him (swt) it will end. In addition to reminding us that this life is only part of a journey, the previous ayah also reminded us of all the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) has done for us. Our very creation, our very existence in this world is a gift from Allah (swt) for which we have done nothing to deserve. Gratitude to Allah (swt) for such gifts is an obligation on every human soul. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us His (swt)'s favors and blessings.

Allah (swt) begins by saying, "**He is the One and Only Who created for you all that is in the earth**". Here Allah (swt) is telling us that He (swt) has created every single thing that is on this earth for us. Notice the Arabic words *ma* and *jammiyah* that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah, both of these words are used to mean every single thing. This is to emphasize that every single thing in this world has been created for the human being. Every animal, every plant, every tree, every rock, every piece of metal, everything. Allah (swt) created every single thing

that is on this earth only for the human being. Only for you. Allah (swt) created this whole world and everything that you see in it just for you. How grateful then must you be to Him (swt)?

There are many lessons we can learn from this fact that Allah (swt) has created everything for us. One is that it demonstrates the Power of Allah (swt). Simply look at everything that you see around you right now, and know that it was Allah (swt) Who created it. Do you know of anyone besides Him (swt) Who has the Power to create all of this? He (swt) created every single thing that you see. Allah (swt) created all of it from nothing because He (swt) is the Creator. The Originator of all things. This fact should make you humble before the Awesome Power of Allah (swt). It should make you want to prostrate yourself and bow down to Him (swt) in worship. It should make you want to serve Him (swt) with the actions that you do in this life. What can anyone do with so powerful a Being except submit to Him (swt) completely?

Another lesson that we can take from the fact that Allah (swt) created everything on this earth for us is that it shows the Mercy and Compassion of Allah (swt) for mankind. We do not deserve anything of this world that Allah (swt) has given us. What have we done to deserve all of this? Except for a select few, the vast majority of mankind are arrogant and lazy creatures. It is only from extreme Love, Compassion and Mercy that Allah (swt) gave all that is in this earth for us when we do not in any way deserve it. Now think about this fact for a second. Allah (swt) gave you life, placed you on this earth, and subjugated everything in this world for you when you did not do anything for Him (swt). You did nothing for Him (swt) and He (swt) gave you all of this. He (swt) gave you much more than you deserve. Such is His (swt)'s Love and Mercy for you. Now imagine if you lived your life in this world in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Imagine if you actually made a sincere effort to try and please Allah (swt). What will He (swt) give you as reward for that? Once again it will be far more than you could possibly deserve, but it will also be much better than what is in this earth. It is eternal life and gardens where you will know only happiness, contentment, pleasure and joy. In other words Allah (swt) has given us so much in this world when we did not do anything to deserve it, how much will He (swt) reward us when we dedicate our lives to worship and serve to Him (swt)? If we were to actually gain the

Pleasure of Allah (swt) then how would He (swt) reward us? So everything on this earth should remind us of the Mercy of our Lord. It should also remind us how much more Merciful He can be.

Many scholars have used this part of the ayah to say that when it comes to the objects of this world the default ruling on them is that they are permissible. Because Allah (swt) created these objects for the benefit of the human being, we are free to use whatever we find on this earth. Thus the default ruling in the Sacred Law when it comes to the things of this earth is that they are permissible. What we can learn from this ruling is that when any new invention or technology comes along, we can assume that it is halal as long there is no evidence to say that it is haram. When the West went through the Industrial Revolution, many in the Muslim world were hesitant to adopt the technologies of the West because they thought that these were from the unbelievers and so it was not permissible for us to use them. This ayah clearly shows that if it is something from the earth, then it is permissible for us to use. Regardless of who invented it or where it came from. So all of the technologies that the West produces are permissible for us to use unless there is a clear evidence showing that it is forbidden. Cars, planes, computers, phones. They are all permissible because they have all been made from materials on the earth of Allah (swt), and He (swt) has told us in this ayah that He (swt) has created everything on this earth for us.

However we still must be careful when we make this statement. We are saying that the default ruling for objects is that they are permissible, but we must still look in the Quran and Sunnah to see if they are in any way prohibited. For example marijuana and other drugs are forbidden for us even though they are from the earth. This is because the law prohibiting alcohol also prohibits all intoxicants, and so this includes all forms of drugs. Similarly a knife is permissible for us to use for many purposes, but we cannot use it to hurt someone for no reason. So for any object or any action we should still check with a scholar to find out if it is permissible or not. The benefit we can take from this ayah however is that we as a Muslim Ummah must not be afraid of new technologies. Just because some technology has been invented by the West or

by non-Muslims does not mean that is forbidden for us. It may well be permissible for us since it came from the earth of Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the next part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Then He turned toward the sky and made it as seven skies**". This part of the ayah is *mutashabiyat,* this means that the true meaning of this part of the ayah is known only to Allah (swt). We do not know how Allah (swt) "turned" since we did not witness it and Allah (swt) did not give us the details on how it happened. Thus we cannot delve into the details of this meaning rather we must simply take the general meaning that it gives. We have to know the limitations of our knowledge, and we have to know what we are able think about and what we should not think about. Stopping our minds from thoughts about which we have no knowledge is similar to stopping our limbs from actions that are forbidden. It takes patience and courage, but it demonstrates our submission and humility before Allah (swt). We admit that there is knowledge about which we do not know so we do not think about it. So we say that Allah (swt) Knows best about the meaning of this part of the ayah.

The scholars say that the general meaning that we can take from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) turned His (swt)'s *attention* towards the sky after creating everything in the earth. So it was not that Allah (swt) Himself turned but rather He (swt) turned His (swt)'s attention. Thus the meaning that we take from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) first created the earth and everything in it and then He (swt) turned His (swt)'s attention towards the heavens above and He (swt) made them into seven skies or seven heavens. We know from other ayahs of the Quran that there are seven heavens, one on top of the other. But as to exact nature of these heavens and what is in them we have to once again realize the limitations of our knowledge and not delve into things which we have not sensed and which Allah (swt) or the Prophet (saw) have not told us about. However we know that Prophet (saw) has told us about the size of these heavens. He (saw) has informed us that the size of each heaven to the one above it is like comparing the size of a ring to the size of a desert. Comparing each heaven to the one above it is like comparing a ring to a desert. So if there is one general meaning that we can

take from the fact that Allah (swt) created seven heavens above us is that it demonstrates the Power of Allah (swt). Just like how the creation of everything in this earth is a demonstration of the Power of Allah (swt), the creation of the seven skies above us also demonstrates the Power of Allah (swt) as well. Just imagine how Mighty and Powerful is the One Who can create seven heavens such as these one on top of the other. Can you even imagine the sheer size of them? The sky above us, including all of the many galaxies that astronomers have discovered is only part of the lowest heaven. Above this enormous heaven that we know of there are six other heavens, and they are each much greater in size than this sky that we know. What can we say about the One Who created such an awesome creation? The size of each one of us when compared to that creation is like a tiny speck of sand in the largest of deserts. So just like we are humbled and awed at the fact that Allah (swt) has created every single thing on this earth for us, we should also be humbled and awed at the Power of Allah (swt) when we think about the creation of the heavens above us. This knowledge and this realization should make us want to prostrate in worship before the One Who has such Power. It should make us want to be in complete servitude to the One Who has such Power. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) allow us to realize His Magnificence and give Him (swt) His due!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) has Knowledge about every single thing. We all know this fact but we need to be reminded of it again and again. In this ayah we saw how Allah (swt) demonstrated to us His (swt)'s Power in the creation of the seven heavens as well as in the creation of the earth and everything in it. But the Power of Allah (swt) is only one aspect of His (swt)'s Greatness and Majesty. Another aspect of the Glory of Allah (swt) is His (swt)'s Knowledge. There is nothing whatsoever that Allah (swt) does not know about. Allah (swt) Knows about every single action that you do. This fact is especially important to keep in mind in the context of this ayah. In this ayah Allah (swt) has reminded of the fact that He (swt) has created everything in this earth for us. Allah (swt) subjugated every single thing on this earth for the human. But for what purpose? Is it for us to simply enjoy ourselves with them? Is it for us simply to exploit these things for our own benefit while continue to serve ourselves

rather than serving our Creator? Is that why Allah (swt) created everything that is on the earth for us, so that we can use these things in disobedience to Him (swt)? Unfortunately this is how the vast majority of mankind seems to think. Even more unfortunate is that many Muslims start to think in this way as well. We think that we are the masters of this earth to do with as we please. If that is what we think, if that is how we want to act, then we have to remind ourselves that Allah (swt) Knows well every single thing that we do. Just think how frightening this fact is, there is not even the smallest of actions that you can take which Allah (swt) does not know about. Even for the smallest and most insignificant of your actions, you should know that Allah (swt) Knows about that action better than you do. So how much care should you then take to only do the actions that He (swt) is pleased with? May Allah (swt) guide us to the actions that He (swt) is pleased with so that He (swt) will know nothing but good from us!

We saw from the previous ayah how we are in debt to Allah (swt) for every moment of our life because of the fact that He (swt) gave us life when we were dead. In this ayah we see that we are also in debt to Allah (swt) for every single thing that we receive while we are in this world. Every morsel of food that you eat, every drop of water that you drink, every house that gives you warmth, every transportation that carries you, every tool that you use, even the beautiful sunrise that you see and the air that you breathe have been created by Allah (swt) and He (swt) has given it just for you. That chicken that you ate last night for dinner, it was born and it lived and it died only to be a meal for you. Allah (swt) decreed its existence to be so, how much then should you show your gratitude to Him (swt)? So not only must you always remind yourself that Allah (swt) has created all of the things on this earth for you, but you must also remind yourself that He (swt) Knows what you do with these things that He (swt) has given you. Allah (swt) Knows if you use these gifts to please Him (swt) or to displease Him (swt).

Allah (swt) has made most of the things of this world permissible for you. These things you can use them in your worship and servitude to Allah (swt), and you can even take pleasure from them. What you must always remember however is to be grateful to Allah (swt) for giving these things to you. To show your gratitude to Allah (swt) you should increase in your worship

and servitude to Him (swt). But there are some of the things of this world that Allah (swt) has made forbidden for you. Allah (swt) has made such things forbidden as a test for you. These things include wine, interest and even a glance with lust at members of the opposite sex. If you stay away from such forbidden objects out of fear from Allah (swt) then it is best for you, but if you indulge in them to satisfy your desires then know that Allah (swt) Knows everything that you do. Know that Allah (swt) Knows everything that you do and know that you will one Day soon return to Him (swt). May we always remember this fact and may this knowledge lead us to the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with!

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ
قَالُوٓاْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ ٱلدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

31. And when your Rabb said to the angels, "I am going to place on the earth a Khalifah". They said, "Are you going to place on it one who will spread *fasad* and one who will shed blood, while we make *Tasbih* to you and praise you and sanctify you". He said "Surely I know that you which do not know".

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) reminded us how He (swt) created every single thing on this earth for us, and how He (swt) then turned to the sky and created it as seven heavens. Because of this Love and Mercy of our Creator we as human beings have everything on this earth subjugated to us and we have seven strong skies above us. So in the previous ayah Allah (swt) was describing how He (swt) had prepared this world for the arrival of the human being. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the creation of the human being. Here Allah (swt) tells us what happened when the first human being was created. You cannot even imagine the greatness of the setting in which these events occur, as Sayyid Qutb has pointed out in his tafsir of this ayah, when you read this ayah, you are in the presence of Allah (swt) and the angels. You are

that moment when the father of all mankind was brought to existence. So we should pay very close attention to what Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, not only because of the greatness of the setting in which it takes place, but also because this ayah gives us insight as to the reason why Allah (swt) has placed us on this world.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the word *idh*. This word brings our attention to a specific point in time. At this point the earth has been created and the seven heavens above have been created on one on top of the other. The stage of this world has been set for the purpose that Allah (swt) intended for it. Allah (swt) then tells us about that purpose by telling us about a conversation that He (swt) had with the angels.

Allah (swt) begins this conversation by telling the angels that He (swt) is going to place on the earth a *Khalifah*. There are two meaning that this word gives. One meaning is that of representative or viceroy. We this meaning we can say that Allah (swt) intends to put the human being as His (swt)'s representative on the earth. Another meaning for the word *Khalifah* is that of successor or the one who follows. This means that it is not simply one human being who will be the representative of Allah (swt), but that human beings will follow each other in generations in fulfilling this role. So in this ayah Allah (swt) tells the angels that He (swt) is going to place the human being as His (swt)'s representative on this earth, and that humans will follow each other in fulfilling this role in generations.

There are many lessons that we can take from this ayah alone. First and foremost it shows us that we have been placed on this earth for a great purpose. There is a very important reason for your existence on this planet right now. We have not been placed on this earth just to enjoy ourselves or just to accumulate as much wealth and material goods as possible or just to sleep and let the minutes and hours pass away. Rather we are on this earth as representatives of Allah (swt). Just think how important is this responsibility that we have been given. Just think about the Greatness and Majesty of the One you are representing. This entire earth has been subjugated for you so that you can fulfill that representation. How hard then do you have to work and how much do you need to strive to be worthy of this representation. Just think now of

the One Who you are representing, how great is this burden? May Allah (swt) give us the ability to be worthy of representing Him (swt)!

But how exactly do we represent Allah (swt) on this earth? Can we come up with the way to represent Allah (swt) from our own minds? How could we know what Allah (swt) expects from us using only our own minds? We do not know how to fulfill this purpose, so the way in which we represent Allah (swt) in this world has to be defined to us by Allah (swt). We are representing Allah (swt) in this world, and since we cannot say from our own minds how Allah (swt) wants us to represent Him (swt), we need Allah (swt) to tell us how. From the ayahs that we have learned so far we can clearly see what Allah (swt) wants from us in this world. Allah (swt) wants from us that we spend our days in this world in worship and servitude to Him (swt). That is how we represent Allah (swt) in this world; it is by spending our lives being His (swt)'s worshippers and servants. Everything else on this earth is already worshipping Allah (swt). But for us Allah (swt) gave us the choice to worship Him (swt). So Allah (swt) created us, and created this earth for us, so that we would choose to worship and serve Him (swt).

One of the most important parts of our servitude to Allah (swt) in this world is establishing the State of Allah (swt) on this earth. The two great scholars of tafsir, Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi, state this responsibility for our Ummah in their tafsir of this ayah. These two great scholars of Quran tell us that to represent Allah (swt) on this earth is to establish the authority of Allah (swt) on this earth. Muslims today have failed in that responsibility because there is no country today that is a proper Islamic State following the example of what the Prophet (saw) established in Madinah. How many of the laws of Allah (swt) cannot be correctly implemented because we do not have a proper Islamic State? Most of the laws in the Quran and Sunnah were revealed after the establishment of the Islamic State, so they were revealed in an environment where the State was present. Thus these laws need the State to be correctly implemented.

Examples of these laws are the Islamic economic system that distributes the wealth and resources of the land fairly, the Islamic social system which correctly manages the interaction between men and women in the society, and the judicial system which seeks to

establish justice and fairness for all people. All of these systems are non-existent without the Islamic State. Because of a lack of these systems, Muslims today are living under oppression, injustice and tyranny. There are Muslim children who are starving right now in West Africa, at the same time there are exuberantly rich so called Muslim "princes" and "kings" who are building palaces of gold. Where is Zakat and the Islamic economic system to correctly distribute the wealth of this Ummah? To take it away from those lavishing in luxuries unheard of and to give it to the ones who are most in need. There are Muslim women now all over the world who are being forced to work in an environment where they have to interact with men and even reveal their beauty because there is no one to support their families. Where is the Islamic social system that makes certain all of our sisters can get married and that correctly separates men and women as Allah (swt) has commanded us to? There are Muslims now who are being oppressed, who are being taken advantage of and who are being robbed of their wealth and they have no where to turn. Where is the Islamic judicial system and the Qadis who will ensure that justice is done to all people regardless of who they are or how much wealth they have. The reason for all of this injustice is because we as a nation have stopped ruling by the Law of Allah (swt). We have chosen not to be the representatives of Allah (swt) rather we have chosen to be our own masters. In Muslim lands there are so called Muslims now in so called parliaments and palaces who are legislating laws for the Muslims from their own minds instead of referring to the Quran and Sunnah. Where is the Islamic ruling system with a Khalifah ruling by the Law of Allah (swt)? Where is the Khalifah who will rally the soldiers of this Ummah against the enemies of Allah (swt) who are occupying the lands of the Muslims? How many are the laws of Allah (swt) that are being ignored because there is no Islamic State?

Not only are the Muslims suffering under oppression and tyranny because we do not have a Khalifah, but what about the non-Muslims? The purpose of the Islamic State is not only to establish justice for the Muslims and allow them to practice their Din correctly but it also exists to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to all mankind. This dawah was not meant to be spread by converting people individually. When the Prophet (saw) carried dawah in the first three years in

Makkah, he (saw) was not looking simply to make people Muslim, but he (saw) was forming a party or group that will help him (saw) to establish the Islamic State. After that for ten years, the goal of the dawah in Makkah was to establish the Islamic State. It was not simply to convert people to Islam. It was only when the State was established with the Prophet (saw)'s hijra to Madinah and the power of the State was consolidated in the Arabian Peninsula with the treaty of Hudaibiyah did the dawah to mankind begin. At that point the Prophet (saw) sent emissaries to all of the neighboring empires inviting them to Islam. The rulers of these lands had to agree to surrender the political authority of their land to the Islamic State or face jihad from the soldiers of Allah (swt). Even though the people were still allowed to keep their religion and practice it in private, the political authority had to be with Allah (swt) where it belonged. Sovereignty has to be for Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. That is because this earth belongs only to Allah (swt) so only that which is pleasing to Him (swt) can be allowed to exist on it.

Now when the people of these conquered lands saw Islam being implemented in the way that Allah (swt) intended it to be, when they saw the justice and the prosperity that it brought for all people, when they heard the Quran and realized the evidences of this Message clearly without receiving any propaganda or lies, that was when they entered Islam in large numbers. So the way to carry dawah is only through the Islamic State, it is not by approaching people individually at dawah tables or interfaith dialogues. Although a few people may be guided in this way, the majority of people will not. The vast majority of the non-Muslims are caught up in the life of this world and they are completely ignorant of Islam. All that they know about this Message that Allah (swt) has sent to them are the lies and propaganda that the enemies of this Message have fed them through their television sets. The enemies of this Message are the ones who have power in the countries where non-Muslims live. They will make sure that the people never receive this Message correctly. They will fill the minds of the people with lies that this is a backward religion filled with violence and oppression. So in order to correctly convey this Message to the people, those enemies of this Message who have the power in the lands must be removed. This can only be done with dawah and jihad. First we invite them to this Message with

dawah and only if they refuse can jihad be used. But before there can be dawah and jihad, the Islamic State must be established. The Islamic State is the vehicle through which the dawah is propagated. So just as it is vital for Muslims that the Islamic State be restored, it is even more critical for non-Muslims so that they can correctly receive this Message that has been sent to them by their Creator.

When we study the Seerah of the Prophet (saw) we can clearly see that to work in dawah at the individual level like missionaries was not the way of the Prophet (saw). Rather what we see is that first the Prophet (saw) built a movement, then he (saw) used the movement to establish the Islamic State and then he (saw) used the State as a vehicle to carry this Message to mankind. So if you want Allah (swt) to guide the people to the Light of this Message, you have work in the dawah following the example of the Messenger of Allah (swt). This is not to say that you should not carry this Message to non-Muslims on an individual level, you should still do what you can to present this Message to the good people whom you know. But at the same time you must keep in mind that the best way and the way of the Prophet (saw) in carrying this dawah was through the Islamic State. Only when the Islamic State returns can we have any hope of the people entering into this Din in large numbers. So if we want to carry this dawah properly then we have to work in whatever way that we can to bring back the Islamic State. If all that we can do today is speak to other Muslims about it, or all that we can do is learn Arabic and study then that is what we must do. May Allah (swt) guide us and help us to restore the Islamic State so that the Muslims can correctly live Islam and so that the non-Muslims can correctly receive this Message! All success is only from Allah (swt)!

In the next part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us the response of the angels to what He (swt) had told them. They asked Allah (swt) "**are you going to place in it one who will spread *Fasad* or who will shed blood therein?".** The first thing that we have to understand regarding this part of the ayah is that the angels are in no way criticizing the decision of Allah (swt) to place the human being as a Khalifah on the earth. They are only asking this question out of amazement and wonder. It seems from this ayah that the angels know about the true nature

of the human being, that he is one will cause corruption and disorder as well as shed blood. Not only are the angels stating the fact that human beings can be creatures of violence and chaos, but they specifically mention the propensity of the human being to shed blood. There are many humans who simply do not know the value of human life. They do not realize what a great sin it is to kill another human being without a just cause, or even to hurt another human being without a just cause. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what a terrible sin it is to shed the blood of another human being without there being a just cause for such violence. Even the just cause must be defined by the Shariah and not by the mind of a human being. The only time it is permitted for us to spill the blood of another is in those specific instances where the Quran and the Sunnah have allowed us to. We have to always abide by the Law of Allah (swt), especially when we perform actions that will result in any kind of injury to another human being. If we do not then we might become like these people whom the angels are describing and the angels are telling Allah (swt) not to place humans on the earth because of them. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like such people! May Allah (swt) save us from ever shedding blood or causing disorder in the land!

Then Allah (swt) tells us how the angels said "**while we make *Tasbih* to you and praise you and sanctify you**'. Here the angels are telling Allah (swt) how they are in a complete state of worship to Him (swt). For every moment of their existence they are worshipping Allah (swt). For every moment the angels are declaring how Pure Allah (swt) IS, and they are praising Him (swt) and declaring His (swt) Glory, and they are sanctifying Him (swt) and declaring with every fiber of their being how He (swt) is far from any weakness or imperfection. They are doing this for every moment of their existence. So in a way they are asking Him (swt) as to why He (swt) should place the human being on the earth when they are already worshipping Him (swt) the most that any creation could.

So we see from this ayah that the angels were perfect in their worship of Allah (swt). How then does our worship and servitude to Allah (swt) compare to that of these noble creatures. These noble beings who were created from light, they have no impurities in them,

they never disobey Allah (swt), and they spend their entire existence in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). They show us how Allah (swt) deserves to be worshipped and glorified. Not five times a day but for every moment. That is how Great and Majestic He (swt) IS. In this ayah the angles are telling Allah (swt) that they are always worshipping Him (swt), The angels are aware of the nature of the human being, they are aware of the fact that if he is placed on the earth he might worship Allah (swt) or he might not. So the angels are asking Allah (swt) why He (swt) wants to create and put on the earth a creature that may not always worship Him (swt) like He (swt) deserves to be. Especially when they are worshipping at every moment like He (swt) deserves to be.

Allah (swt) then gives a brief yet comprehensive answer for the questions and concerns of the angels. He (swt) says, "**Surely I Know that which you do not know**". Once again we see Allah (swt) describing to us the Greatness of His (swt)'s Knowledge. Allah (swt) is telling the angels here that He (swt) Knows very well about the future, just as He (swt) Knows well about the past and present. Allah (swt) is telling the angels that there is a wisdom behind the creation of man and his appointment of Khalifah of earth. A wisdom that they do not realize but He (swt) Knows well. There is a purpose and a good reason to what Allah (swt) is doing that the angels do not realize at that moment.

An important lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize the limitations of our knowledge. Allah (swt) has all the Knowledge and He (swt) does as He (swt) pleases. Sometimes Shaitan may try to trick us into thinking that something that Allah (swt) has done is not fair. When some calamity befalls you, you might have such thoughts as "why is Allah (swt) doing this to me and not others?". First you should realize that such thoughts are dangerous because it demonstrates a lack of trust and submission to Allah (swt). There might be some wisdom and some good for you in what Allah (swt) has done, but it simply may be that you do not recognize it at that moment. So part of our submission to Allah (swt) is that we have to always remember the limitations of our knowledge. Whenever Allah (swt) does something, instead of questioning Him (swt), we should realize that He (swt) has more Knowledge than we

can even comprehend, and so there is a reason why He (swt) has done that. There may very well be some good in the calamity that befalls us and it will bring us closer to Allah (swt) if we remember Him (swt) in it. May Allah (swt) allow us to always realize that He (swt) has all the Knowledge and we do not! May Allah (swt) allow us to be patient and content with every one of His (swt)'s Decrees!

The scholars have said that the purpose behind the creation of man that the angels did not realize at that moment was that even though there would be among mankind those who would spread disorder in the land and shed blood, there would also be among them the righteous servants of Allah (swt). The sincere and the humble ones who will worship and serve Allah (swt) with their entire lives. There will be among mankind the noble prophets and the greatest of creation, the Prophet (saw). There will be men and women like the Sahabah and the wives of the Prophet (saw) who were willing to sacrifice anything for Allah (swt). So even though the majority of mankind will be very bad, these few among them who are righteous are so good, that they justify the creation of mankind as a whole. In other words, the good that comes from these few is more than the evil that comes from the rest of mankind. So the creation of mankind as a whole is justified because of these few. The good that comes from the Prophet (saw) alone is greater than the evil of all of the tyrants of this world.

One lesson that we can learn from this ayah is that only when we dedicate our lives to Allah (swt) like the Prophet (saw) did, like the prophets and messengers who came before him (saw) did, like the Sahabah did, only then does our life have any value. By our nature we are worthless creatures. There is nothing special about us, Allah (swt) has even told us in other ayahs of the Quran how our father has been created from dirt and we have been created from an insignificant liquid. We were not created from light like the noble angles. So where is the value of our existence? What is it that gives our lives purpose and meaning? It is only in worshipping and serving Allah (swt) as He (swt) created us to do. It is only in realizing and fulfilling this purpose can we truly be representatives of Allah (swt) on this earth. If we do not do this, if we only spend our lives in this world accumulating wealth and satisfying our desires, what

kind of a life is that? Is such a life worthy of your existence? What difference is there then between you and the animals? Such a life turns many men into nothing but animals. That is when humans do the actions that the angels feared that they would do. They create disorder and chaos in the land, they kill and shed blood only so that they can satisfy their desires and their greed. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like such people! May Allah (swt) allow us to be like the Prophet (saw) and dedicate our lives to worshipping and serving Him (swt) like we were created to do!

وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ ٱلْأَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنۢبِـُٔونِى بِأَسْمَآءِ
هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. And He taught Adam the names of every single thing, then He presented them to the angels and said, "Tell Me of the names of these if you are Truthful".

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us the events of what happened with the creation of the human race. We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told the angels that He (swt) was going to place on the earth a *Khalifah* or representative. Out of wonder and amazement the angels asked Allah (swt) why He (swt) was going to place in the earth one that would cause corruption and disorder and one that would shed blood. Allah (swt)'s only response to their question was that He (swt) Knows what they do not know. The scholars have said that this Knowledge which Allah (swt) had was that among mankind there would be His (swt)'s true and devout worshippers and servants. So even though many from mankind would be among those who shed blood and cause disorder in the land, there would also be among mankind the Prophet (saw) and the other righteous creation of Allah (swt). These few justified the creation of mankind as a whole because the good that was in them was greater than the evil of all the others. But what is it that made these few humans better than all of the others among mankind? What is it that made the creation of mankind as a whole with so many evil people in it who

spread corruption in the land and who shed blood justified only by the creation of these few? How are these few so special?

In this ayah Allah (swt) answers such questions. Allah (swt) says "**He taught Adam the names of every single things**". Here Allah (swt) tells us what He (swt) did with the first human being, our father Adam (as). The first thing that Allah (swt) tells us about this human being is that He (swt) taught him knowledge. So we see that it is through knowledge that the human being is raised above others. It is through knowledge that the human being has a high status in the creation. It is not just any knowledge, because we know that there is knowledge that has no benefit, but it is through knowledge that leads one to be a better worshipper and servant of Allah (swt). It is knowledge about Allah (swt), the Perfect Names of Allah (swt), the knowledge of the Hereafter, the knowledge of the previous nations and prophets, the knowledge of the life of the Prophet (saw) and the noble Sahabah (ra), the knowledge that is in the Quran and Sunnah. The knowledge of the lawful and the unlawful. The knowledge of what is pleasing to Allah (swt) and what is not.

It is this kind of knowledge that transforms men like 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (ra) from the enemies of Islam who used to torture and hurt the Muslims and who used to spread disorder in the land into the most devout and pious worshippers of Allah (swt). In fact Umar (ra), who once an enemy of this Message, through knowledge of this Din was transformed into a man who was so righteous that the Prophet (saw) said that "if there was a prophet after me it would be Umar". So we see that it is through beneficial knowledge that we can be raised above the base creatures that we were are. It is through knowledge that we can be among the righteous and the pious and we can even try to come close to the station of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. May Allah (swt) grant us the knowledge that will bring us closer to Him (swt)!

So we as Muslims must also recognize the importance of knowledge. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that the way in which man was distinguished and raised above the ranks of the angels is through knowledge. Knowledge of the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt), knowledge of our creation and from where we came, knowledge of our responsibility to serve and worship

Allah (swt), knowledge of the Day of Accountability where will be judged for our actions in this world, knowledge of Paradise and the Fire, knowledge of the righteous people who lived before us whose example we can follow, and knowledge of the sinful people whose example we must avoid. The Prophet (saw) has told us that excess in knowledge is superior to excess in worship. This means that there is more reward in spending our time learning knowledge and teaching others than there is in doing voluntary prayers and fasts. What we have to bear in mind however is that this knowledge must be sought and given only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and it must be knowledge that helps us to better worship and serve Allah (swt). It must be the knowledge that brings us closer to Allah (swt). When we gain knowledge it must only be to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has warned us about gaining knowledge for any other reason by saying "Do not acquire knowledge in order to compete with the scholars, nor to argue with the ignorant, nor to gain mastery over the gatherings. Since whoever does that, then: The Fire, The Fire". May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) allow us to only gain knowledge that will benefit us, that will help us to better worship and serve Him (swt), that will save us from the actions and the thoughts that are displeasing to Him (swt), and that will help us to fulfill the purpose of our creation!

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) taught Adam (as) the names of all things. We know what is a house, what is a bird, and what is a tree because our parents taught us the names of these things and their parents taught them. But where did this knowledge come from? It began here when Allah (swt) taught Adam (as) the names of all things. Allah (swt) taught Adam (as) the names of every single thing in the universe. Adam (as) then taught his children these names, and it is through this blessing that we have the knowledge of the universe around us. We know the names of all the things around us because of this knowledge that Allah (swt) gave to Adam (as). All of the languages that all humans speak are because of this blessing that Allah (swt) gave to Adam (as). Even the new knowledge that we learn is based on this knowledge that Allah (swt) gave to Adam (as). Even the new words that we make are based on the words that Allah (swt) taught to Adam (swt). For example the names that we give for things

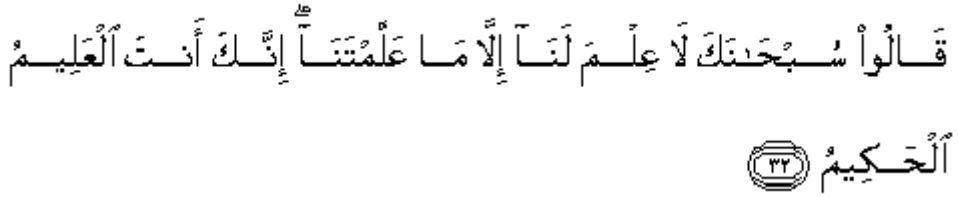
that we invent is based on this knowledge that we have already received. So the mouse with which we operate our computers was named so because it resembles the animal that we know.

The benefit that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize the great gift that Allah (swt) has given us in that He (swt) has taught us about the world around us and the meaning of the things in this world. We know what is the sky, we know what is the earth, we know what is hot, we know what is cold, we know what is pain and what is pleasure. We can express our feelings through this knowledge that we have been taught and we can communicate with others. All of this because of the knowledge that our Lord has taught us. How valuable then is this blessing that Allah (swt) has given us? This should be just another reason why we should strive to worship and serve Allah (swt), to show our gratitude for this blessing and favor that He (swt) has given us! May Allah (swt) allow us to do that!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**then He presented them to the angels and said, "Tell Me of the names of these"** ". Here Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) arranged all of these things in front of the angels. All of the objects the names of which Allah (swt) had taught Adam (as), He (swt) then presented them in front of the angels and Allah (swt) asked the angels to tell Him (swt) the names of these things. Recall from the previous ayah how the angels had questioned why Allah (swt) would want to place on the earth one who would cause disorder and shed blood. They then told Allah (swt) that they worshipped Him (swt) all of the time, by making Tasbih for Him (swt), by praising Him (swt) and by sanctifying Him (swt). They wanted to know why Allah (swt) would want to place on the earth one that would cause chaos and violence therein, when they already worshipped Him (swt) all the time. By showing the angels these objects, and asking them to name these objects, Allah (swt) shows the angels that there is a purpose to the human being that they do not realize. Even though many among mankind will spread chaos in the land and will shed blood, there will also be among the human race, men and women who will dedicate their lives to the worship and service of Allah (swt). They will seek the knowledge that Allah (swt) has given mankind and they will use that knowledge in coming closer to Allah (swt). Through this knowledge then they will be a benefit

both for themselves and the society in which they live. May Allah (swt) make us among such people! May Allah (swt) teach us the knowledge that will benefit us and those around us!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells the angels "**if you are Truthful**". If the angels were truthful in their questioning of Allah (swt) in the appointment of man as Khalifah on the earth, if they think that it was sufficient for them to worship Allah (swt) and not have man on earth as Khalifah, then they should be able to name these objects that were presented in front of them. Thus Allah (swt) is showing them that there is something that they cannot do. Adam (as) was able to learn the names of these things which Allah (swt) taught him (as), but were the angels able to name these things? Listen to the beautiful response that the angels give to Allah (swt) in the next ayah.



33. They said "*Subhana ka*, we have no knowledge except what You taught us. Surely you are the All Knowing and the Most Wise".

The first response from the angels was ***Subhana ka***. This means "How Perfect Are You!" or "How Far from any weakness Are You!" The angels did not commit any sin or make any mistake in questioning Allah (swt) about placing man on the earth as a Khalifah, but still they felt such remorse at questioning their Lord. When Allah (swt) asked them to name the things whose names He (swt) had taught Adam (as) they immediately praised Him (swt) and they immediately acknowledged the limitations of their knowledge. They were not proud or arrogant in any way. They did not make any excuses for themselves and they did not try to guess when they did not have the knowledge. When Allah (swt) demonstrated to them that Adam (as) had the ability to learn the names of things which they did not know, they realized that it was wrong of them to question Allah (swt) in any way. The angels realized since Allah (swt) had all of the Knowledge

and all of the Wisdom. They realized that He (swt) is not to be questioned on anything that He (swt) does. Allah (swt) is the One to question and He (swt) will never be questioned.

Then the angels say to Allah (swt) "**we have no knowledge except what You taught us**". Here the angels are saying that it was not proper for them to question Allah (swt) on the creation of Adam (as) and the placement of man as Khalifah. They should have realized that it was Allah (swt) Who had all of the Knowledge and that their knowledge was very limited. Notice once again their humbleness and respect before Allah (swt). Their realization that their knowledge is limited. So even though based on their knowledge they may have thought that the creation of man and his being placed on earth was not the wisest of choices they did not realize that this decision was being made by One Who had more Knowledge than them. Now at this point they did come to that realization and so they praise Allah (swt) and they ask for His (swt)'s Forgiveness. Once again we have to bear in mind that this was not a sin on the part of the angels but it simply demonstrates their awe and respect for their Lord.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how the angels said, "**Surely you are the All Knowing and the Most Wise**". The angels acknowledge the two Names of Allah (swt) that give Him(swt) the right to make whatever decision that He (swt) wants. We as human being can make mistakes in our decisions because our knowledge is very limited. We might think that we are doing the right thing today, but tomorrow when we learn something new, it might turn out that we are doing today was wrong. This is because we are so limited in knowledge and consequently we have no wisdom. But this is in no way true for Allah (swt). Since Allah (swt) has all of the Knowledge and all of the Wisdom, it is not possible for Allah (swt) to commit any kind of error. Allah (swt) is the One with the Perfect Knowledge and the Perfect Wisdom so every decision that Allah (swt) makes is the correct decision. Every law that He (swt) legislates is the correct law. By referring to Allah (swt) in this way the angels acknowledge that it was right for Him (swt) to place man on the earth. They acknowledge that Allah (swt) is the Most Knowing and the All Wise. If only we as His (swt)'s slaves can learn this fact like the angels did. If only we

can submit to the fact that Allah (swt) Knows more than us and so submit to Him (swt) completely.

قَالَ يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئۡهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡۖ فَلَمَّآ أَنۢبَأَهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ قَالَ أَلَمۡ أَقُل لَّكُمۡ إِنِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ غَيۡبَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَأَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُونَ وَمَا كُنتُمۡ تَكۡتُمُونَ ٣٣

34. He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names". Then when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth and I know what you reveal and what you hide".

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) arranged all things in front of the angels and He (swt) told them to tell Him (swt) the names of these things. The angels were unable to name these things, and instead they glorified and praised Allah (swt). They admitted that it was Allah (swt) Who had all of the Knowledge, and that they knew nothing except what that He (swt) had taught them. They realized and admitted that it was Allah (swt) Who was the All Knowing and the Most Wise and so it was wrong for them to question Him (swt) in any way. They affirmed that everything that Allah (swt) decrees is correct. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows the angels what Adam (as) was capable of.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us how He (swt) said **"O Adam, inform them of their names"** ". In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) us how He (swt) told Adam (as) to inform the angels of their names. We know that the angels have names as well just like we have names. Some angels whose names we know are *Gibreel*, the angel of revelation, *Mikail*, the angel of sustenance, *Ridwan*, the guardian over paradise, and *Malik*, the guardian of the fire. So at the command of Allah (swt) Adam (as) tells the angels all of their names. He (as) named each and every single one of them. When Adam (as) did this it demonstrated to the angels that he (as) had the ability to learn vast amounts of knowledge. So even though he was a creature created from dirt and mud, even though he had the propensity to shed blood and cause corruption and

disorder in the land, Adam (as) still had many virtues. One of these virtues is the ability to learn and retain vast amounts of knowledge. We see this from the fact that Adam (as) was able to tell the angels all of their names. He (as) was able to learn all of their names and he (as) then told them their names.

One lesson that we can take from this is to see how much ability Allah (swt) has given us to learn and retain knowledge. How much is the amount of knowledge that we can learn and retain. We waste so much of our time doing useless and fruitless activities when we can spend that time learning knowledge. Our Ummah is a nation of knowledge. Even the West has benefited from the knowledge of our Ummah. The industrial and technological revolutions that the West experienced was built on the shoulders of Muslim scientists and thinkers. It was the Muslims who gave Europe the knowledge with which they left their Dark Ages. It was with this knowledge that they went into their period of Enlightenment which lead to the industrial and technological revolutions. It was through the knowledge that they brought back from the Muslim lands after the Crusades that they were able to have their intellectual revival. Before this they were a people living in darkness and superstitions, they themselves will admit to this fact. Thus it is clear that our previous generations knew the value of knowledge. They used their minds to such great extents that they not only benefited themselves with their knowledge but other nations as well.

So we as Muslims do not need to run away from Islam if we want to embrace the technological advancements of the West. We have to realize that Allah (swt) not only permits pursuing such advancements in technology but He (swt) encourages it. We can realize this from the great importance that Allah (swt) has placed on knowledge in this ayah. Allah (swt) demonstrates to the angels how Adam (as) was able to learn great knowledge thus Allah (swt) was proud of the fact that His (swt)'s slave was able to learn this knowledge. Similarly Allah (swt) will be pleased with us as well if we seek the knowledge of this world if our intention in seeking such knowledge is serving Him (swt) and His Message. Even Prophet (saw) sent the Muslims to Yemen to learn how the best kind of swords can be made. He (saw) also ordered the trench to

be dug around Madinah to protect the city, this was a new tactic in warfare that had never been used by the Arabs before him (saw). It was strategy and technology that was taken from the non-Muslims. This earth belongs to Allah (swt) and the knowledge of how it works is also from Allah (swt). Science and technology is a bounty from Allah (swt) as long as it is not used in disobedience to Him (swt). So when it comes to knowledge about science and technology, we should seek the knowledge and implement it so as to better improve our situation in this world. We should also have no problem taking from the West, just like they have taken from us. We only have to be careful that whatever we adopt from them does not contradict the Shariah in any way. Allah (swt) Knows best and we ask Him (swt) to guide us!

Then when Adam (as) had informed the angels of all of their names, Allah (swt) says to the angels "**Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth and I know what you reveal and what you hide**". Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to the fact that it is He (swt) and He (swt) Alone Who has Knowledge of all things. Among this is the Knowledge of the unseen of the heavens and the earth. Only Allah (swt) is Perfect. Only Allah (swt) has the Knowledge of the Unseen. Everyone else only has knowledge of what they sense or what they have been taught. Think about it, you only know what you have seen and heard or what others have taught you. This is all that you know. There is so much that you do not know. You do not know the unseen of the heavens and the earth. You do not know the future. You do not know most of what happened in the past. You do not know what is in people's hearts. You do not know what happens in the heavens above. You do not even know what is happening right now outside of the room that you are in. We are so arrogant and so proud in that we make so many assumptions and pass so many judgments and we think we know so much when our knowledge is so limited. It is only Allah (swt) Whose Knowledge is Perfect. So with whatever He (swt) decrees we have to be patient and content. We should never question anything that Allah (swt) does even if our lower selves may prompt us to. We have to realize that such questioning is from Shaitan. So we have to strive to destroy such questions and we must strive to submit to the Knowledge and Wisdom of Allah (swt). We have to realize that Allah (swt) Knows and we do not

know so we have to make ourselves content with whatever He (swt) decrees for us. Be this in terms of laws or in the situations of our lives. May Allah (swt) allow us to do that! Ameen!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is in the statement of Allah (swt) that He (swt) Knows what we reveal and what we hide. There is no thought that passes through our minds that Allah (swt) does not know about. Whatever thought which goes through our mind we have to be sure that Allah (swt) Knows about it. The thoughts that we keep hidden, and the thoughts that we disclose, we have to be sure that Allah (swt) Knows about them all. Fortunately for us we know that Allah (swt) will not hold us accountable for the thoughts that we have in our mind. It is only if those thoughts are articulated on our tongues or if they acted out by our limbs will Allah (swt) hold us accountable. Imam Qurtubi quotes a hadith from the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said "Allah will pardon for My Community for what their selves suggest to them when they do not articulate that nor act on it". In fact the Prophet (saw) has also told us in another hadith then when we feel like doing an action that is displeasing to Allah (swt) or saying something that is displeasing to Allah (swt), and we control ourselves and not do it, then Allah (swt) will actually reward for us it. This is a bounty and a grace from Allah (swt) for which we always have to be grateful. Allah (swt) is rewarding us even when we have an evil thought and we do not act on it. If Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) could have punished us even for the thoughts that we have. Just for the thought Allah (swt) could have punished us and such would not be injustice for Him (swt). But He (swt) Forgives us again and again.

Another lesson that we can take from the fact that Allah (swt) Knows what we hide is that we also have to be careful of the thoughts that we have. We have to always ask Allah (swt) to give us the good and the positive thoughts that will help us to better worship and serve Him (swt). We always have to also ask Allah (swt) to protect us from the negative thoughts that make us do evil actions or that put doubts in our hearts. If Shaitan puts such evil thoughts in our minds, we have to destroy such thoughts by always thinking about Allah (swt) and thinking instead about the thoughts that will benefit us. At that time we should think about the Perfect Names of Allah (swt), and we should think about all the blessings and gifts that Allah (swt) has

given us. We have to think about the great sacrifices and the many trials that those who came before us have gone through for the sake of Allah (swt). Insha Allah this should protect us from even having the thoughts that are displeasing to Allah (swt). Although it is our actions for which we will be judged we must also be constantly striving to improve our thoughts and feelings as well. This is because our thoughts and feelings impact our actions. Often times it is our thoughts and feelings that drive our actions. Moreover Allah (swt) Knows our thoughts. As we can see from the ayah He (swt) Knows what we hide. So do you not want to make even the thoughts in your heart to be that which is pleasing to Him (swt)? By striving to have the thoughts that are pleasing to Allah (swt) Insha Allah we will then do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). The best of thoughts to have are those where you reflect on the Majesty and Perfection of Allah (swt) and where you recount all of the favors and blessing that He (swt) has bestowed on you. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do always have such thoughts! May Allah (swt) always give us the thoughts that will benefit us and may He (swt) protect us from the thoughts that will hurt us! All help and support is from Allah (swt)!

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِـَٔادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَٱسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. And when We said to the angels "Prostrate before Adam", so they all prostrated except Iblis, he refused, and he was proud, and he was one of the Kafiroon.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us the events that happened with the creation of our father Adam (as). In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) told us about the great responsibility that we have on this earth, to be His (swt)'s representatives. To live our lives in this world as worshippers and slaves of Him (swt). To establish the His Law on the earth and to carry His Message to the people. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) also reminded us of the importance of knowledge, and we also learned that the source of all Knowledge was He (swt). So

while we must always strive to seek knowledge, we must also realize the limits of our knowledge and know that Allah (swt) is the One Who has all the Knowledge.

Now that we know our responsibility and we know what will help us to fulfill that responsibility, we also have to know about the obstacles that will stand in the way of us fulfilling that responsibility. We know what our mission is, but we must also know who is our enemy that will prevent us from completing that mission. This enemy is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. This is a matter of grave importance for which we must pay very careful attention. Because only if we know our enemy can we have any chance against him. We ask Allah (swt) to guide us and to help us.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the word *'idh*, this word brings our attention to a specific point of time. This point of time is when Allah (swt) told the angels to prostrate before Adam (as). So we see that at some point after Allah (swt) created Adam (as) He (swt) told the angels to prostrate before him (as). We do not know exactly how they prostrated but we know that was not any kind of worship, rather it was a prostration to show respect. The angels knew that worship and sanctification was only for Allah (swt). So this prostration was not a prostration of worship but it was a prostration of respect. It was similar to how Yusuf (as)'s parents and brothers prostrated to him (as) and how the trees and camels used to prostrate before the Prophet (saw). It is merely a prostration to show respect and not a prostration of worship. However even this kind of prostration, which is only to show respect and not worship of any kind, is not permitted for our Ummah. The Prophet (saw) told us that we are only permitted to prostrate before Allah (swt).

The general meaning that we can take from the angels' prostration before Adam (as) is that it shows the worth and value of the human being. Although there were many negative traits about human beings such as their propensity to cause disorder in the land and their propensity to shed blood, human beings also have the ability to be true and sincere worshippers and servants of Allah (swt) just as He (swt) created them to be. We know that among the children of Adam (as) there will be the prophets, the sincere, the martyrs and the righteous. The

ones who walk on the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We also know that among the children of Adam there will be the best of all the creation (saw). Now the angels are creatures of light that never commit sin. But by prostrating before Adam (as), they are showing that there will be among the children of Adam (as) those who are even better than the angels. Among the children of Adam (as), there will be the Prophet (saw), who is the most beloved of Allah (swt) and the best of creation. So the fact that the angels prostrated before Adam (as) shows the value of the human being. It shows the potential that is within you to be the very best of the creation of Allah (swt) just like the Prophet (saw) was. All that you have to do is strive to remember Allah (swt) and strive to dedicate yourself to Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says " **so they all prostrated except Iblis**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) told the angels to prostrate before Adam (as) and they all prostrated except *Iblis*. Iblis was the only one who did not prostrate. Now we know that Iblis is Shaitan, the open and clear enemy for all mankind. There is a disagreement among our scholars about whether Iblis was one of the angels or whether he was from among the jinn. We feel that it is not necessary to get into this debate. We feel that what he does is more important than what he is. Regardless of whether he is a jinn or an angel what we have to always remember is that he is our enemy. People are always questioned and judged for what they do and not who they are. It is always for our actions that we will be questioned and not for who we are. Allah (swt) will not question us about the color of our skin, or how short or tall we are, or in what land we were born. These are aspects about ourselves that we cannot control so we will not be questioned about them. What we will be questioned about are our actions, how well we fulfilled our purpose of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So rather than argue about whether Iblis was an angel or a jinn, let us look to what he has done and why he because of that he became our clear and open enemy. It is in the actions of Iblis that we have the example to avoid at all costs.

First Allah (swt) commanded Iblis to prostrate to Adam (as), and he refused. This was the first mistake that he made when he disobeyed a direct command from Allah (swt). This was the first step that he took on the path that led him to the Fire, this was the first step to kufr, it

was disobedience to Allah (swt). The scholars tell us that Iblis used to be righteous. He used to be among those who worshipped and served Allah (swt). But then he changed the path on which he walked. He chose a different path other than the path that lead to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This was disobedience to the commands of Allah (swt). This was how it began.

So the lesson that we can take from this is that we must always strive to obey the commands of Allah (swt). If we do not then we should know whose example it is that we are following. We are not saying that you become a disbeliever by disobeying just one of Allah (swt)'s commands, but we are saying that disobedience is one step in that direction. By that act of disobedience you are becoming closer to example of the one who you are trying to avoid and you are getting further away from the example of the one who you are trying to follow; the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) never disobeyed Allah (swt). Not even once. How then can you claim to love him (saw) and leave the path on which he (saw) walked? So although to sin is not kufr, sin could be the first step in the path that leads to kufr. We should always be scared of sin and scared of disobeying any of Allah (swt)'s commands. Whenever we find ourselves in disobedience then we must rush to come back to Allah (swt). If we do not then we have to remember whose path it is that we are walking on. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Then Allah (swt) tells us the reason why Iblis did not prostrate before Adam (as), it was because he was proud. He though himself to be better than Adam (as), and he thought that Adam (as) did not deserve his prostration. So even though Allah (swt) had given him a direct command, and even though he knew that Allah (swt) was his Rabb and so he had a responsibility to obey Him (swt), Iblis refused to carry out this direct command from his Lord and Master. For Iblis, his pride was more important for him than obeying Allah (swt). That was why he disobeyed a direct command from his Lord and Master. Simply look at the magnitude of his evil here. Here he is in the Presence of Allah (swt). He is with Allah (swt) and the angels. Allah (swt) is giving him a direct command. This is not a command that came through the intermediary of a prophet or an angel but it is a command that came directly from Allah (swt) Himself. Iblis had no reason whatsoever to disobey this command unless he purposely wanted to rebel against the Authority

and Sovereignty of Allah (swt). So by disobeying this command he not only committed sin and transgression but he affirmed that Allah (swt) was no longer his Lord and Master. He had made himself his own lord and master. He did this only because of pride. At that moment he made a conscious decision that he no longer wanted to live his life in servitude of Allah (swt). From that moment on no matter what Allah (swt) commanded him to do on he would not obey Him (swt). Because of his pride he had taken himself out of the role of being a servant of Allah (swt). Then if we feel too proud to obey Allah (swt) because of some pride that we have then we know whose example we are following.

So the second way in which we must avoid the example of Iblis is to strive to remove all the feelings of pride in our hearts. The Prophet (saw) has told us that the pride that is dangerous is the "rejection of the truth and looking down on the people". In order to save ourselves from this when we know something is the truth we should not hesitate to follow it. We must have the sincerity in our hearts that we do not care about anything except worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So whatever sacrifice we may have to make for following the truth, and no matter what people may say or think about us if we follow it, we have to do it. This is because we do not care about anything except gaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt). That is all that should matter for us. So when the truth is presented before us, we should follow it, regardless of what our selves may say or what people may think of us if we do. In addition to always following the truth we must also never look down on anyone. Who are you to look down on others? What have you done that makes you better than anyone else in mankind? The only way in which one human being is better than another is in their nearness to Allah (swt), and how do you know how pleased Allah (swt) is with you? For all that you know you could be the worst hypocrite and the most despised of creatures for Allah (swt), so who are you to look down on others among mankind? We always pray and hope that Allah (swt) accepts us and accepts our efforts, but we can never be certain of this until we leave this world and meet Him (swt). Until that Day we must always think that there are ways in which we can improve ourselves and we must never think that we are better than anybody. So the way in which we save ourselves from becoming like

Shaitan is that we must always accept the Truth when it comes to us and we must never think that we are better than anyone else. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do this!

Pride was the main characteristic and the most salient feature of your clear and open enemy. If that is not enough to make you try and avoid it at all costs, there is also the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has promised that a person with even an atom of pride in his heart will not enter paradise. If you are not going to paradise when your short vacation on this earth is over then where are you going? No one said it would be an easy task to remove all of the pride that is in your hearts. We as human beings loved to be praised, and we like to be thought of as better than others. We like to look at the faults of others while ignoring our own faults. Even though it is a difficult task to remove our hearts of all feelings of pride, we still have to do it. With the Mercy and Support of Allah (swt), we have to believe that we have the capacity to do it. This is because Allah (swt) has commanded us to do so and He (swt) will not give us a burden more than we can bear.

The first step in cleansing our hearts of all feelings pride is to pray to Allah (swt). It is only with the help and support of Allah (swt) that we will be able to do it, and if Allah (swt) were to abandon us then there would be no hope for us. The next step is to remind ourselves of who we really are and where we came from. We were created from an insignificant liquid. We came from two urinary tracts, from our father into our mother and from our mother into this world. Even when are in this world we are nothing but a carrier of contaminants. Our bodies are weak, always in need of food and sleep. So when you think about the nature of the human being, when you think about you are, where is their room for pride in such a creation? You are a despicable and disgusting creature. Now that you know your worth, think now about the Majesty and Greatness of Allah (swt). What are you compared to the Lord and Master of the universe?

When you realize this fact you know that there is only one hope for you. You realize that the only way that your life can have any worth at all is if you be a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt) like He (swt) created you to be. If you dedicate your life to Allah (swt), then your life will have value. You will be something more than this body that carries you. There will be more

to the purpose of your existence that simply eating, sleeping and defecating. When you dedicate your life to Allah (swt), when Allah (swt) is all that matters in your life, then you are not the same person that you were anymore. Insha Allah you will become among the *awliyya* or the close friends of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says about His (swt)'s *awliyya* , "My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties that I have imposed upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it". When you reach this level you would not care what other people think about you. You would not compare yourselves to other people and look down on other people. All that you care about is what Allah (swt) thinks about you, and all that matters to you is earning the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So we see from this hadith that the way to reach this level is by doing more and more of the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with. We start with what is obligatory for us, and then we do more of the actions that are Sunnah. May Allah (swt) enable us to reach this level! May Allah (swt) protect us from the pride of our own selves! May Allah (swt) save us from Shaitan!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that Iblis was one of the Kafiroon. This means that he was one of those who covered. First he covered the truth that he knew in his heart. He knew that Allah (swt) was his Rabb, and that He (swt) deserved his complete obedience and loyalty. He knew that it was wrong for him to disobey the orders of his Creator and his Sustainer. But he covered this truth that he knew in his heart and followed his desires instead. This desire was the pride he felt in his heart, his feelings of superiority over Adam (as). By refusing to submit to the command of Allah (swt), he also covered all of the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) had bestowed on him. Every single blessing and gift that Allah (swt) gives us is something for which we can never repay Him (swt). But we must still strive to do the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased, even though we can never repay Him (swt). Even though we

can never be truly grateful to Allah (swt) we still have to try. Iblis was not like this, he covered all of the favors that Allah (swt) had given him. Instead of being a humble servant of Allah (swt), he was arrogant and disobeyed the commands of Allah (swt). So we see here that there are two levels to the kufr of Iblis. First he covered the fact that Allah (swt) was his Lord and Master and that he had a duty to obey Him (swt). Then he covered all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on him. This was why he became among those are Kafiroon. The rejecters of Truth. The ungrateful to the Divine.

But we know that the crimes of Iblis did not end here. He had such a great hatred for Adam (as) and his children that he asked Allah (swt) to give him respite until the Day of Judgment. In that short time he promised to lead astray as many of the children of Adam (as) as he could. He would call them away from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) and call them towards the worship of idols and towards serving their passions and their desires. He would come at them from their left and their right and he would come at them from where they expected not. He has a lifelong mission and goal to lead each and every one of us astray and to place each and every one of us in the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from him! This then was the third crime of Iblis. Not only did he himself stop being a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt), but he even called other people away from this path.

So to avoid his path we have to avoid doing what he did. We must always obey the commands of Allah (swt) even if they are difficult for us. We must never become arrogant and look down on the people. We must always be grateful for all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) bestowed on us. Finally we must call other people to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). We ask Allah (swt) for the ability to do that! We ask Allah (swt) to always give us the ability to recognize Shaitan! We ask Allah (swt) to protect us from him! All Might and all Power is with Allah (swt)! Ameen!

وَقُلْنَا يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ ٱسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا
وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. And We said "O Adam, dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat from it *raghadan* whatever you like, but do not come near this tree. If you do, you will be from the wrongdoers".

From the story of Adam (as) that we have learned so far we know a lot about our responsibility and purpose in this life. We know that we have been created to be the representatives of Allah (swt). We know that one of the great gifts that Allah (swt) has given us to help us to accomplish this mission is our ability to learn and retain knowledge. Finally we know that the enemy who stands in our path is Iblis or Shaitan. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about how it was that Adam (as) who was once in the garden, came down to the earth and became our father. This is a very important story for us to learn because this story tells us how it was that we fell. This is the story that tells us how Shaitan tricked us. This is the story that tells us what was the mistake that we made. Insha Allah if we can learn this story and always keep it mind then we can save ourselves from falling in the future. Insha Allah we can save ourselves from being deceived by the deceiver. May Allah (swt) help and support us! All Might and Power is with Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) begins by telling us about Adam (as) and his wife's stay in the garden. Huwaa (as) was the wife of Adam (as) that Allah (swt) created for him as a companion in the garden. Allah (swt) tells them both to dwell in the garden. Notice that the Arabic word for "dwell" is *oskon* which gives the meaning that their residence in the garden would be a temporary one. We already know from the previous ayah that Allah (swt) never intended for Adam (as) to remain in the garden. Allah (swt) wanted to send Adam (as) to the earth as a representative. So even here when Allah (swt) tells Adam (as) to stay in the garden, He (swt) reminds him that his stay would be temporary.

Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) were told that they could eat from the garden anything that they wanted. Notice the word that Allah (swt) uses to describe how they can eat is *raghadan.* This means that they could eat any amount without ever getting full and it also means that they never have to work for their food. Insha Allah this is how it will be for us in the garden as well. We can eat any amount we want of the most delicious and pleasurable of foods. We would never have to work or make any kind of effort to get that food. We would also never be full or never have a lack of desire such food. How wonderful is that? How pleasurable would that be? All the food and drink would be perfect. All the food and drink would bring imaginable pleasure. All the food and drink would be unlimited. All will be yours without you have to make the slightest effort, you simply have to desire it and it is yours.

However one condition that Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) were given when they were in the garden was that they could not approach one tree. Allah (swt) tells them that they could eat all that they wanted but they could not come near one tree. The scholars say this is similar to our situation in this world. We can have anything that we want from this world; all objects have been made permissible for us, except for those few that the Law of Allah (swt) has made forbidden. With regarding these forbidden objects we should not even come close to them. Similar was the condition for Adam (as) and Huwaa (as). Everything was made permissible for them except that tree. The tree was what was forbidden for them, and they were forbidden from even coming nearing that tree.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) that should they come near the tree then they would be among the wrongdoers. The word for "wrongdoers" in this ayah is *Dhalimoon.* This word is used to describe those who commit transgression and injustice. Such is the state of people who disobey the Law of Allah (swt). They are transgressors and unjust in every sense of the word. Allah (swt) created them and sustains them for every moment of their lives. Everything that they have in their lives is only from Allah (swt). Because of all of this that Allah (swt) has done for them they should be worshiping and prostrating before Him (swt) in gratitude and submission. They should spend their lives in worship of Him (swt)

because of all that He (swt) has done for them. But instead not only do they not worship and serve Allah (swt), but they also do the actions that Allah (swt) has forbidden. They do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). They do the actions that earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). Do you realize how evil such people are? How arrogant and rebellious they are? They are turning away from their Creator and their Sustainer, the One Who they need for every second of their existence. They are disobeying and rebelling against the One Who brought them into existence. This is why they are called *Dhalimoon*. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like such people!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to notice how in some ways the situation of Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) in the garden is similar to our situation on the earth today. Here on this earth Allah (swt) has made the vast majority of actions and objects permissible rather than forbidden for us. As one scholar has said it would be much easier to list everything that is forbidden than it would be to list what is permissible. But concerning what is forbidden we should be very careful. Allah (swt) told Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) not to even go near the tree, similarly we should not even go close to what Allah (swt) has forbidden for us. So the more fear that we have of Allah (swt), the more love we have for Allah (swt), the more we are submissive and humbled before Allah (swt), the further away we would stay from such forbidden actions and objects. This is a principle that Allah (swt) has also given us in the Quran when He (swt) has commanded to not even go near zina. So not only must we not commit zina but we must not even go close to it. We should not even do the actions that have a possibility of leading to zina. This is different for each person of course. The more you feel that you have a weakness for members of the opposite sex, the more that you must avoid them. The more you feel is your weakness for the opposite sex, the more important it is for you to get married. If you are married then find the comfort that you desire in the companion that Allah (swt) has given you. When you remember that it was Allah (swt) who gave you this partner and you remember that you took him or her through a contract which had the Name of Allah (swt) on it then Insha Allah you will find the love for that person. But at whatever the cost, you must stay away from

Allah (swt) has forbidden for you. This same principle can also be found in the hadith of the Prophet (saw) as well when he (saw) said, "That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain but between the two of them are doubtful matters about which not many people know. Thus he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honor, but he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like the shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Truly every king has a sanctuary, and truly Allah's sanctuary are His prohibitions. Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh which if it be whole all the body is whole and if it be diseased all of the body will be diseased. Truly it is the heart." From this hadith we see that if we want to cleanse our heart and keep our heart only for Allah (swt) then we have to avoid what Allah (swt) has forbidden at all costs. We must do this even if it means avoiding the actions and objects which are doubtful as to whether they are permissible or not.

Since our knowledge about the Law of Allah (swt) is so limited and since we are living in a society where there are so many new situations and new inventions, we may be uncertain as to whether they are permissible or not. This ayah and this hadith clearly demonstrate that it would be best for us to avoid such actions and such objects. So is listening to live music that has instruments permissible or not, is smoking permissible or not, are going to the movies permissible or not? Allah (swt) Knows best. They could be permissible or they could be forbidden. But if you see the forbidden actions of Allah (swt) as a tree that you must avoid at all costs then you will not even do these actions because you fear that they might be near this tree. You might not know it because your vision is so limited; meaning your knowledge of the Law of Allah (swt) is so limited. But since you realize this fact you stay away from whatever you think has a possibility of being near this tree. When you realize that your knowledge is limited, and you are not sure if an action that your desires are prompting you to do is permissible or not, then it would be best for you to avoid that action. If you do not have the strength to avoid that doubtful action then you should not despair but rather you should know that Allah (swt) is Forgiving and Merciful, but if you can bring yourself to leave that doubtful action then you should know that it

is best and you should know that your Lord will give you the best of rewards both in this life ad in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) give us that strength! May Allah (swt) give us the strength to avoid His (swt)'s prohibitions and to leave the doubtful matters as well!

If we were to think about it we would realize that there are so many good and pure things in this world that we are certain are permissible that we do not even need to go near the forbidden and doubtful matters. Examples of such pure things are our wives, the sweet fruits, the delicious drinks, the companionship of our friends, and the beautiful images of this earth. There is so much that Allah (swt) has made permissible for us. But the problem is that Shaitan always turns our attention to those things which are forbidden or those things which are doubtful. He puts a desire in us for these forbidden or doubtful things. He makes us think that we need these things and that we cannot survive without them. Ask yourself if you really need these things. Ask yourself if your life would really be better with these things. Think about the regret and sorrow that you will feel after you have indulged in what is displeasing to your Lord. Just as Shaitan turns your attention towards what is forbidden or doubtful, he also turns your attention away from what Allah (swt) has made permissible. Does anyone ever ask if Ice Cream is halal or not? Shaitan also makes us forget that life is short and that we are on this world for a test. We always have to remind ourselves that Allah (swt) created us only to worship and serve Him (swt)! Shaitan always makes us forget this fact, that is how he deceives us into the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from him! May Allah (swt) make us content with what is permissible in this world and keep us away from what is forbidden or what is doubtful! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that this world is only a test, and Insha Allah it is in the garden after this life where we will be given everything that we want without any restrictions or conditions!

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ۖ وَقُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟
بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَٰعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ
٣٦

37. But Shaitan made them slip from it, so they were driven out from it. And We said "Get down, some of you are enemies to others. And for you on the earth is a dwelling place and provisions for a while".

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) gave Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) the test. They could stay in the garden and they could eat from whatever they wanted, but they were forbidden from coming near one tree. Everything in the garden was permitted for them except that one tree. This was the test that Allah (swt) had given them. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about how they failed this test that they had been given.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**But Shaitan made them slip from it**'. Here Allah (swt) describes for us how Shaitan made them slip from the garden. The language in this ayah is beautiful; it describes how Shaitan just made them slip from the place where they were in. The words give the meaning that Shaitan did not force them out, but rather he just made them slip. The way that he made them slip was that he put a simple suggestion into their mind. But because they were not on their guard against him they followed his suggestion. They forgot that what he was suggesting them to do was in direct disobedience to Allah (swt). They forgot that Allah (swt) had ordered them not to go near the tree, so when Shaitan told them to go near it they went near it. For that moment they forgot Allah (swt) and their responsibility to Him (swt). They were not careful. They were not on their guard. They did not watch out for Shaitan, so he came and tricked them. He had no power over them whatsoever. He just put one evil suggestion in their minds and because they were not on their guard they followed his suggestion. This is how he made them slip into disobedience and sin. He did not force them or push them, but he just made them slip. He just put a simple suggestion in their hearts to go near the tree and they

listened to him. See then how weak Shaitan is and how he only has power over us when we let our guard down.

So one lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must try to always be on our guard from Shaitan. Allah (swt) has reminded us time and time again that he is our open and clear enemy. In this ayah Allah (swt) showed us how Shaitan deceived our parents, from this we should realize how vulnerable we are to him. If he was able to trick our father then we have to think that he will be able to trick us as well. So why are we off our guard when we know that we have an enemy lurking about? Are we so arrogant and proud to think that he can never get to us, if we think in this way then he has already gotten to us. However if we would only put up our defenses against him then we will find that he is not a powerful enemy at all. As we know from the hadith the best of defense against him is the remembrance of Allah (swt).

The Prophet (saw) has told us many times that the best defense against Shaitan is the remembrance of Allah (swt). Shaitan comes to you through your pride. He will tell you that you deserve to be disobedient to Allah (swt). He will tell you that you deserve those things which Allah (swt) has forbidden for you. If you forget about Allah (swt) for even a moment, you might start to think that what he is saying is true. You would think that you should have all of those things that are forbidden for you. That is how he tricks you into disobedience to the Law of your Creator and Sustainer. But if you remember Allah (swt) then you would know that you do not in any way deserve to disobey Allah (swt). You would remember Who Allah (swt) IS and who you are. Allah (swt) is the Creator and you are the created. He (swt) is the Sustainer and you are sustained. You need Him (swt) at every moment and He (swt) has never been in need of you. He (swt) is the Lord and you are the servant. You are in need of Allah (swt) for every moment of your existence and He (swt) does not need you at all. You would remember all that Allah (swt) has given throughout your life and you will remember how every good thing that you have in your life is only a blessing for Him (swt) for which you have done nothing to deserve. You would remember how Glorious and Majestic Allah (swt) IS. How He (swt) is the All Powerful and the All Knowing, the Most Wise and the Most Sublime. When you remember all of this about your Rabb,

then you would think how you could ever do anything that is displeasing to Him (swt)? Right there Shaitan's plan has failed. As long as you continue to remember Allah (swt) in this way, then Shaitan has no power over you. May Allah (swt) allow us to remember Him (swt) at all times!

We can also notice from this ayah how Allah (swt) now refers to Iblis as *Shaitan*. The scholars say that this name is used to refer to something that is far, and he has been given this name because he is far from all good. Good is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt), and since Shaitan has turned away from this, he is now far from all good. Once again we have to emphasize that he is the example that we must try to avoid in every sphere of our life. The root of the evil of Shaitan is arrogance and self-contentment. This is the root of all evil. It is to be satisfied with yourself, it is to think that you are the best and there is no room for you to improve. It is to think that you are the best and you look down on other people. You always see the faults of others and you do not see the faults of yourself. You think you deserve everything. This kind of thinking is how Shaitan affects us, this kind of thinking is how Shaitan tempts us into disobedience to Allah (swt). This is how he deceives us into thinking that satisfying our desires is more important than worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Our lusts for sex and our greed for wealth comes from this thinking. Our anger and our rage comes from this thinking. All these negative emotions come when we start thinking that our own selves are more important than Allah (swt). We all have these feelings within us, but what is important for us is that we realize that they are from Shaitan and we try our best to fight these emotions. We have to always remember that the more we struggle, the more that Allah (swt) will reward us. Our remembrance of Allah (swt) and all that He (swt) has done for us are our best weapons against such feelings. When we think about the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt), all of His (swt)'s Perfect Names, how He (swt) Knows everything and how He (swt) Sees everything and how He (swt) is the Most Patient and the Most Wise, the Most Powerful and the Most Just, all of this should make us want to worship and serve Allah (swt) more and more. We should realize that Allah (swt) is more worthy of us than we ourselves are. We must also remember all that Allah (swt) has done for us. Everything that we have in this world, every breath of air that we take is from Allah (swt). Even

our very existence is from Allah (swt). When we remember Allah (swt) in this way, we can see that to live a life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) is not difficult at all. In fact it is what we love to do. When we remember Allah (swt) in this way, Shaitan cannot come near us. This was how the Prophet (saw), may Allah (swt) raise him (saw) to the highest station in Paradise, lived his (saw)'s life. He (saw) was good and Shaitan was far from him (saw). So let us all try to follow his (saw)'s example and remember Allah (swt) much.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**so they were driven out from it**". Here Allah (swt) tells us how Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) were driven out of the garden because of their disobedience. Because they approached the tree, through the temptations of Shaitan, they hade to leave the garden. At this time we should comment briefly on the connection between the actions of the human being and the Knowledge of Allah (swt). It is wrong for us to link the actions of the human being with the Knowledge of Allah (swt). You could argue that Allah (swt) Knew that Adam (as) would be taken out of the garden and placed on the earth and that is why He (swt) told the angels that He (swt) was going to place on the earth a Khalifah. Then you could say that Adam (as) should not be help responsible for eating from the tree. Then you could say that even you should not be responsible for your sins because it is part of the Knowledge of Allah (swt). This is a wrong, sick and twisted way of thinking. Such thoughts come only from Shaitan. First you should realize that Allah (swt) Knows everything. But Knowledge of Allah (swt) does not justify the wrong actions of the human being. This link between the Knowledge of Allah (swt) and the actions of the human being cannot be made. Allah (swt) Knows everything and still He (swt) will hold us accountable for our actions. Allah (swt) has Knowledge of all and at the same time we have free will as well. Even though Allah (swt) Knew what we would do, He (swt) still gave us the free will to choose. As part of our submission to Allah (swt) we have to accept this fact and believe in it. We have to remember that Allah (swt) is the One Who questions and He (swt) will not be questioned. He (swt) will question us on the Day of Judgment but we do not have any right to question Him (swt). This is because He (swt) is the Master and we are the slaves. He (swt) is the Creator and we are the creation. It is only those who are arrogant in their

knowledge and rebellious in their nature who ask such questions about Allah (swt) which they should not be asking. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! The fact that Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) will not be unjust to any of His (swt)'s creations should be enough for us.

In the next part of the ayah we see the speech of Allah (swt) as He (swt) speaks to the ones who were cast from the garden. First Allah (swt) says to them "**Get down**". The meaning of these words is not simply that they are going from a place that is high to a place that is low, but it also to signify that they are leaving a place that is better to a place that is worse. They were leaving the Garden of Allah (swt). They were leaving a place in which there was no sorrow and no pain, a place in which there was no fear and no boredom. They were leaving a place in which they never had to work and never got tired. A place in which they never got sick and never felt the slightest discomfort. So it was not simply that they were coming down from the heavens and into the earth, but they were going from a place that was better to a place that much worse. That is why Allah (swt) says to them "**Get down**".

Then Allah (swt) says, "**Some of you are enemies for others**". The scholars disagree about whether this is addressing Adam (as) and Shaitan or if it is addressing the children of Adam (as). Since neither of these two opinions contradict, it is most likely that they are both correct and Allah (swt) Knows Best! Allah (swt) is speaking both to Adam (as) and Shaitan as well as to the children of Adam (as) when He (swt) says "**Some of you are enemies for others**". We should always try to take the most general meaning that the text gives so that is why we take both of these opinions our scholars have given. Furthermore we can also see that both opinions are correct. Adam (as) and Shaitan are enemies of each other, and the children of Adam (as) are enemies with Shaitan, and some of the children of Adam (as) are also enemies of others of the children of Adam (as). We have been sent to this earth as enemies.

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that there are enemies all around us. Shaitan is a clear and open enemy for us as Allah (swt) has reminded us again and again. Allah (swt) tells us here that there are also enemies for us from among the children of Adam (as). Even among mankind there are enemies for us. It is part of the test that Allah (swt)

has given us in this world that He (swt) has placed various enemies for us. These enemies want to lead us to our destruction. They want to lead us away from the life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). With these enemies Allah (swt) tries us in various ways. Now we are not saying that we should treat everyone around us as enemies, we as Muslims have a responsibility to be kind and just with everyone unless they clearly show that they are an enemy of Islam. But at the same time we should also be aware that there are people out there who are our enemies. There are people out there who might try to take us away from Allah (swt). So we should be careful and we should always ask Allah (swt) to protect us and keep us safe.

Another lesson that we can take from this is to see that the nature of our life in this world is one of conflict. There are enemies for us in this world and we do have a conflict with them. This is a battle between good and evil. This is a battle between Truth and falsehood. This is a battle that will continue till the Last Day. Some Muslims today think that we should simply love everyone and that there should be no conflicts whatsoever. This kind of thinking is wrong and we can see how it is wrong from this ayah. Now by no means are we saying that all non-Muslims are our enemies, there are many non-Muslims who have not received this Message and we have no conflict with such people. But for those who have received the Message and they have rejected it. For those who have chosen to oppose this Message, then there is conflict between us and them. This we must always remember.

Then Allah (swt) says "**there will be for you on the earth a dwelling place**". This is what Allah (swt) has given us in this earth for our time of testing. Look at the description that Allah (swt) has given in this ayah for the earth and see how well it matches the reality of our stay here. The Arabic word *mustaqaron* that Allah (swt) uses to refer to the earth gives the meaning of a temporary home. A home that was meant to be lived in only for a short time. It also gives the meaning of a home that is not a home of pleasure and delight like the garden, but at the same time it is not a harsh and uninhabitable home. It is a home that is comfortable but it is not a home of pleasure and joy. Allah (swt) has made it just right for our test. We can see how this is true, there are things in this world that will give us some pleasure and some comfort for which

we always have to be grateful to Allah (swt), and there are things in this world that will cause us suffering and pain for which we have to be patient for the sake of Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and provision**". In addition to making the earth habitable and livable for us, Allah (swt) has also provided us with provision from it. Even though this earth is a place of test and trial, Allah (swt) in His Mercy has given us so much in it. We have delicious food and drink, we have companionship with friends, we have fine clothes to wear, we have intimacy with our wives, and we have much more of the lawful things that we enjoy. Allah (swt) has given all these things as a provision for the people of the earth. Even though we are here as part of a test and even though we here are because of the mistake that our father made, Allah (swt) has still given us so much on this earth. Even one drop of water that we drink from this earth is much more than we could ever deserve. It is all from the Mercy and Bounty of Allah (swt). How grateful are we to Allah (swt) for all this that He (swt) has given us?

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**for a while**". So the residence of the human being on this earth is only a temporary one. There is a set time for which each of us will live in this world and there is also a set time for which mankind as a whole will live here. Before we know it, the Day of Judgment will be upon us and the time of testing will be done. This earth has been created only for a short time, it is by its very nature fleeting. May Allah (swt) allow us to use every moment that we are here as a moment that we spend in worship and servitude to Him (swt)!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves of the reality of our situation on this earth. You can imagine yourself as a traveler who has been given a few provisions and sent on a journey. This earth that you are in right now is the land that you have traveled to. You have a few provisions to sustain yourself on this journey and you have a place to stay in this earth. But this earth is not your home. Your home is the garden. The garden belonged to your parents, Adam (as) and Huwaa (as), so it belongs to you as well. There is a place in the garden, more spacious than this entire earth, that has been reserved just for you and it is being kept just for you. The only way that you can lose this place in the garden that

belongs to you is if you disobey Allah (swt) in the short time that you are here in this planet. That is the only way you can lose your true home in the garden. But on the other hand if you spend your time in this world in worship and servitude to Allah (swt), as you were created to do, as you know that you should do, then you will return from this journey to your true home. You will then find your true home to be a much better place than that temporary residence that you left behind. How wonderful would that be? May Allah (swt) allow us to return to our true homes! May Allah (swt) always help us to remember that this earth is not our home!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that every child of Adam (as) has a right to this earth and to the provisions in it. Allah (swt) is addressing Adam (as) and his children by telling them that on earth there are provisions and a dwelling place. So every son and daughter of Adam (as) has a right to this earth and to the provisions in it. The Prophet (saw) has told us that the son of Adam (as) has no greater right than that of food, shelter and clothing. From this ayah and this hadith our scholars have ruled that it is an obligation of the Islamic State to provide these three necessities for all the people living under it's protection. This includes Muslims and non-Muslims. That is why in the Islamic State, there is no child that will go hungry, there is no family that will be without a home, and there will be no person who does not have some clothing to preserve his dignity and to protect him from the cold. Allah (swt) has given this earth and the provisions on it for the children of Adam (as) to sustain themselves during their period of testing here, so there is no reason why anyone of them should be denied what they need to survive. This is food, shelter and clothing. These are the three basic necessities that all of the children of Adam (as) need and all of them have a right to. Now the reason why the Islamic State was able to provide for all its citizens was because Islamic economic system distinguishes between these basic necessities, and what is beyond this. The State always makes sure that all the people receive these three basic necessities. What is beyond these three needs are the luxury goods and for these luxury goods it is up to the people to obtain for themselves. The Islamic State will not provide the luxury goods because they are not needed for survival. The capitalist economic system under which we live today does not make this distinction between

basic necessities and luxury goods. The capitalist economic system is based on the principle that the resources of the earth are limited and the wants of people are unlimited, so they say it is impossible to provide for all of the people. Because of such thinking they do not even try to give the people the basic needs. So they see no problem with children starving in their society or with people living without a home. They simply accept it as a reality of this world. They forget that this earth belongs to Allah (swt), and Allah (swt) provides through it more than enough for every man, woman and child on it. If they would only distinguish between the three basic necessities and the luxury goods, they would see that this earth has more than enough to provide these necessities for all the people in it. May Allah (swt) bring back the Islamic State so that the needs of all people in this world can be provided for!

فَتَلَقَّىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ كَلِمَٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

38. Then Adam received words from his Rabb, and He turned towards him. Surely He is *At-Tawab* and the Merciful.

So far in the ayahs that we have looked at, we have seen that Allah (swt) has fulfilled the purpose that He (swt) stated at the beginning of this section of ayahs concerning the creation of mankind. Adam (as) has been created, he has been taught the knowledge of the universe around him, he has seen who his enemy is, and he has even realized that he can make mistakes. Adam (as) and his wife have been sent to the earth where they will start a family and from their seed will come all of mankind. The earth has been prepared as a dwelling place for Adam (as) and his children, and provisions have been provided therein for them. What is missing in the picture now? Remember that the purpose for the creation of Adam (as) and his children was so that they can worship and serve Allah (swt). It was so that they could establish the Law

of Allah (swt) on the earth and be His (swt)'s representatives. So then do they have all that they need to fulfill this purpose? No, they are still missing the most important part.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Then Adam received words from his Rabb**". Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) sent down to Adam (as) "words". These words are the words of prophethood. When Adam (as) was on the earth, Allah (swt) did not leave him there without guidance and without a light, but He (swt) sent him words of revelation. It was with these words that Adam (as) became a prophet. It was only after he received these words did he become a prophet. Up until this point, Adam (as) was only a man. A man that can make mistakes and commit sins. But after he received these words, he became a prophet. He became a representative of Allah (swt) for the people. Since Adam (as) was now a guide for his children on how to worship and serve Allah (swt), Allah (swt) protected him from sin from that point on. That is why our scholars say that all prophets and messengers are protected from both the minor and major sins. Since they are the guides and the role models for the people, they need to be kept safe from sins in order to fulfill this task correctly. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and He turned towards him**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) turned towards Adam (swt). Once again we should be careful and not take the literal meaning of this ayah. Rather the meaning of this ayah that we take is that Allah (swt) turned to Adam (as) in Forgiveness. This means that Allah (swt) forgave Adam (as) for the sin that he had committed of eating from the tree. We should remind ourselves again that Adam (as) committed this sin before he (as) became a prophet. But then when Allah (swt) sent Adam (as) down to the earth, Allah (swt) then forgave him (as) for that sin and Allah (swt) made him (as) into a prophet. After that Adam (as) did not commit any sins at all and Allah (swt) Knows best!

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to remind ourselves once again as to how Forgiving Allah (swt) IS. We see here that it is part of our nature to commit sins and to make mistakes. We are meant to make mistakes because it is part of who we are. But what is most important is that we always turn to Allah (swt) for Forgiveness. We know from other ayahs of the Quran that Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) turned to Allah (swt) to ask Him (swt)

for Forgiveness. So even though it is part of our nature to commit sins, we must also be always turning to Allah (swt). We should turn to Allah (swt) knowing that He (swt) is the Most Forgiving. The Prophet (saw) has said that "the example of the believer in regards to Iman is like the example of a horse with regards to it's tethering stake; it roams around and then returns to it's tethering stake, and the believer is negligent and then he turns to his Iman". So our Iman is clear, we know that we are on this earth only to worship and serve Allah (swt). We know that is the purpose of our existence. But we are also forgetful creatures as our father was. We are also creatures that can make mistakes as our father did. But what is important is that we realize this weakness within us. We recognize our failures and we admit them. We then allow our failures to give us even more resolve to strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). You will commit sins, there is no doubt about that. There is no child of Adam (as) besides the prophets who did not commit sins. However the difference between the people of the garden and the people of the fire is that the people of the garden recognize their mistakes and they continue to strive to improve themselves no matter how many times they make a mistake. The people of the fire are those that give up on asking for Allah (swt) for Forgiveness and continue in their sins. But how can anyone give up on the Forgiveness of Allah (swt), just look at how Allah (swt) describes Himself in the final part of this ayah.

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying that He (swt) is *At-Tawab* and the Most Merciful. *At-Tawab* means the One Who accepts the *Tawbah* or the "repentance" of His (swt)'s servants. How wonderful is that when one of the very names of our Rabb is that He (swt) is "The Acceptor of Repentance"? This means that no matter how many times it is that you commit the sin, as long as you make a sincere Tawbah to Allah (swt), then your repentance will be accepted. No matter how far you have gone into sin and transgression, as long as you do not tire of turning towards Allah (swt) He (swt) will not tire of turning towards to you.

The scholars say that four conditions must be fulfilled for your Tawbah to be accepted by Allah (swt). First you must stop the sin what you are doing, you cannot ask for Tawbah while you are committing that sin. Second you must feel a great sense of remorse and regret for that

sin. Your Tawbah is not valid unless you deeply regret what you did. Third you must plead and beg Allah (swt) for Forgiveness for that sin. Finally you must have a firm resolution in your mind that you will not commit that sin again. Once you have made this promise never to return to that sin then you must always remember this promise that you made to yourself, especially at the times when Shaitan prompts you to return to that sin. If you are sincere in your Tawbah, then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will accept your Tawbah no matter how many times you make it. The Prophet (saw) has told us that Allah (swt) loves for us to make to Tawbah to Him (swt) even more than we would love being rescued from a desert after thinking that we are doomed to die in it. As happy as we are after being rescued from a desert when we were thinking that we would die in it, Allah (swt) is even more pleased with our Tawbah to Him (swt). So what is preventing you from making Tawbah to Allah (swt) now?

We see from this ayah that not only is Allah (swt) *At-Tawab* in that He (swt) always accepts Tawbah but He (swt) is also the Most Merciful. If we make a sincere Tawbah to Allah (swt), then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will not punish us for that sin we committed but instead He (swt) will have Mercy on us, far more than we could ever deserve. Such is the Mercy of our Lord. We committed that sin, we deserve to fill pain for that sin. But there will be no pain, there will be no punishment. Such is the Mercy of the Most Merciful. Even if Allah (swt) decides to punish us in His (swt)'s Wisdom and Justice, it will be a punishment that is far less than what we deserve. This is all from the vast Mercy of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is also Merciful in the fact that if we are sincere to Him (swt) and we strive to worship and serve Him (swt), then He (swt) will also protect us from committing that sin in the future. Protection from sin is also part of the Mercy of Allah (swt). Even our ability to keep away from sins is not something that we can accomplish on our account but it comes from the Mercy of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow all of us to always turn to Him (swt) in repentance and may He (swt) also turn to us in Mercy! We are all in desperate need of the Mercy of Allah (swt), for every moment of our lives, if only we realized how much!

Another important lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how it shows us that it is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone who accepts Tawbah, and so it is to Him (swt) Alone that we should turn repentant. So when we commit a sin we should not turn to anyone else except Allah (swt). We only need to seek Forgiveness from Allah (swt) and from no one else. We can see from here how wrong is the Catholic belief where they say that sins must be confessed to their priests. Our life is only about Allah (swt), so why should we turn to anyone but Him (swt) when we fail in our duty to Him (swt)? Will that priest be able to help us on the Day of Judgment when we return to Allah (swt)?

From this ayah we also see the foolishness of the Christian concept of "original sin". The Christians foolishly believe that Adam (as) was never forgiven for his sin, and that his sin is carried by all his children. They further believe that 'Isa (as) went to the Fire for the sin of Adam (as), and the only way for mankind to be absolved of that sin and of all their sins is to accept 'Isa (as) as their savior. So by their twisted reasoning if you do not accept 'Isa (as) as your savior then every breath that you take is a sin because of something that someone else did. In their view anyone who does not accept 'Isa (as) as a savior is destined for the Fire for a sin that they did not even commit. They say that it was Adam (as) who committed the sin, yet all of his children must be punished for it by eternal damnation in the Fire unless they accept 'Isa (as) as their savior. Even small children and babies who never did any wrong in their life. This is because the sin of Adam (as) is on all of his children. Can you even begin to comprehend how foolish such a belief is? Is it then any surprise that their people are so weak of faith? The Truth that Allah (swt) has taught us in the Quran is so different from what they believe. We believe that Allah (swt) forgave Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) for their sin, and that each of their children is only responsible for himself or herself. We also believe that children who die before the age of accountability are in the garden, as are those who do not receive the Message correctly. The only ones who are in the Fire are those who knowingly rejected this Message after they had received it correctly. The ones who were certain that this Message was true and they still chose to reject

it. They are the only ones who are in the Fire forever. Allah (swt) is the Most Just and Allah (swt) Knows best!

So after they were expelled from the garden Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) dwelt on the earth and from their children came all of mankind. Since Adam (as) was a prophet, he (as) taught his children to worship and serve Allah (swt) Alone. So Islam is the natural way of life for all human beings, it is the purpose for which we were created and it was the way of life that was followed by our parents. It was only after Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) passed away did their children start to serve and worship other than Allah (swt). They worshipped other gods besides Allah (swt) and they obeyed other sovereigns besides Allah (swt). So only the humans today who have dedicated their lives to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) are on the right way of life that was prescribed for mankind by Allah (swt) and the way of life that was followed by the parents of mankind. May Allah (swt) include us in that company!

قُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّى هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَاىَ فَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. We said "Get down from it (the garden) all of you, then whenever there comes to you from Me guidance, then for whoever follows that guidance there shall be no fear on them and they shall not grieve".

Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the words "get down". In the previous ayahs we saw that this command was given in reference to Adam (as) and Huwaa (as). Allah (swt) told them to get down from the garden and go down to the earth. Not only were they going from a place that was high to a place that was low but they were also going from a place that was better to a place that was worse. This is why Allah (swt) commanded them both to "get down". They were going from what was higher and better to what was worse and lower. In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "get down from it all of you". We know that the pronoun "it" in this ayah refers

to the garden, but who does Allah (swt) mean by "all of you"? Who is Allah (swt) addressing in this ayah? Is it only Adam (as) and Huwaa (as)?

Actually in this ayah Allah (swt) is addressing all of mankind. Allah (swt) is commanding all of mankind to get down from the garden. We mentioned before how Allah (swt) told us that when He (swt) created Adam (as), He (swt) also made a covenant with the souls of all of the children of Adam (as). Allah (swt) asked those souls if He (swt) was their Rabb, and each and every one of them acknowledged that He (swt) was indeed their Rabb. They all acknowledged that Allah (swt) was their Creator and Sustainer to Whom they owe everything. They also acknowledged that Allah (swt) was their Lord and Master Whom they existed to worship and serve. Allah (swt) took this covenant from each and every one of us. Every single human being that would ever live on this earth gave this promise to Allah (swt). We see in this ayah that after taking this covenant from all of the souls, Allah (swt) then tells all of the souls to go down from the garden and into to the earth. That is why Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "Get down from it all of you". Allah (swt) is addressing the souls of all mankind and telling them to leave the Garden so that their time of testing can begin.

Then Allah (swt) tells mankind "**Whenever there comes to you from Me guidance**". Here Allah (swt) is telling all of the souls that guidance will come for them from Him (swt) and He (swt) is telling them what to do when that guidance comes. The first lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that guidance will definitely come from Allah (swt). We can be certain of the fact that Allah (swt) will indeed send guidance for mankind. As we know this guidance will come in the form of prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) will send to mankind to show them how they should live their lives in order to worship and serve Him (swt). The life goal of each and every human being should be the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and the prophets and the messengers are the guides on how to reach that destination. The prophets and the messengers have been sent by none other than Allah (swt), and that is why Allah (swt) says that the guidance will come from Him (swt). This guidance comes from Allah (swt) and it shows us how we can fulfill the purpose of our existence. It shows us how we can attain the Pleasure of

Allah (swt). So we see here that before Allah (swt) made our souls leave the Garden, He (swt) reminded us that guidance would come from Him (swt). If we follow that guidance then Insha Allah we can make our way back to the Garden.

Then Allah (swt) says that whosever follows the guidance that He (swt) sends there shall be no fear on them and they shall not grieve. Whoever follows the guidance that Allah (swt) sends will be safe from both anxiety and fear. We can see how this is true, what does a true servant of Allah (swt) have to fear from anything in this world? The Prophet (saw) once told Ibn Abbass (ra) "know that if the nations of the world gathered together to harm with you anything, they would only harm you with that which Allah (swt) has already decreed for you". So the true believer does not fear anything of this world. He knows that whoever is against him and whatever they to do him, it will only be part of the Decree of Allah (swt). He also knows that whatever calamity befalls him will also be only by the permission of Allah (swt). Moreover he also realizes that this world is only a temporary abode. The worst that can happen to him in the life of this world is that he can die, and then he will return to his Creator. He also know that his Rabb is watching whatever pain and suffering the enemies of this Message subject him to, and he knows that on account of that pain that he is subjected to they will be punished and he will be rewarded. In fact any pain and suffering that he has to endure while he is worshipping and serving Allah (swt) he can be certain that his Rabb will reward him for it. That is why he does not fear anything whatsoever from the life of this world.

In addition to not feeling fear those who follow the guidance of Allah (swt), those who are true and devout worshippers and servants of Allah (swt), will also not grieve. Why should you be sad about anything of this world when you know that everything comes from Allah (swt)? If you lose something of this world, if you did not get something that you thought you should have gotten, why do you need to be sad? Why cannot you accept the fact that Allah (swt) did not decree for you to have it? You have to constantly remind yourself that your purpose in this world is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). So if you do not attain something of this world you must simply accept the fact that Allah (swt) had not decreed it for you. But as long as you

continue to strive to worship and serve Allah (swt) and as long as you keep your intention purely for Him (swt), then you should know that you already have your reward with your Rabb. You should know that He (swt) is keeping with Him (swt) what is much better than what you have been denied of this world. When you realize this fact why then should you be sad if something of this world passes you by? How can anything of this world compare to what Allah (swt) has kept for you in the Hereafter? Just try your best to be a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt) and know that all good and all evil is only from Him (swt).

We should note that the fear and the grief which Allah (swt) speaks about in this ayah is only in relation to the life of the world and not in relation to the Hereafter. It is only in this world that we should strive not to have any fear. On the other hand we should be afraid of the Hereafter, we should be afraid of the Day when we will stand naked before Allah (swt) and have to account for all that we did in this world. We should be afraid of the fire of hell that burns more than seventy times fiercely than the fire of this world. We should be afraid of failing in our duty to Allah (swt), and from earning the displeasure of our Rabb on that Day. We should be afraid of being denied the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and being denied admittance into the Garden.

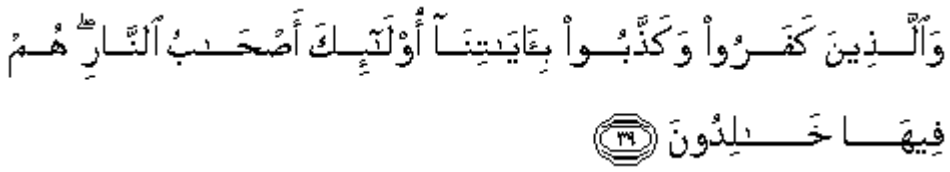
Similarly we should also be sad when we perform an act of disobedience to Allah (swt). We should feel remorse and grief because we have been unjust to the One Who created us and to the One Who is sustaining us for every second of our existence. We should also feel sad when we see injustice happening to our Muslim brothers and sisters in this Ummah. When we see their pain and suffering we should feel sad as well. The Prophet (saw) has told us that this Ummah is like one body in that if one part is hurting the entire body will suffer. We should also feel sad when we see the resources of this Ummah being plundered by the enemies of this Message. We know that the wealth of this world is under the feet of the Muslims but it is the enemies of this Message who are reaping all of this wealth for themselves. We should feel sad when we know that there is no Islamic State under which Muslims can practice their Din correctly and through which this Message of Allah (swt) can be carried to mankind. These are all examples of grief that we have for the sake of Allah (swt) and not for our own selves. We are not sad for

our own selves but we are sad because of our love for Allah (swt). So instead of being sad when we lose something of this world, we should only grieve when we disobey the Law of Allah (swt) or when we see the ones who believe in Allah (swt) suffering or when we see the Law of Allah (swt) not being implemented. These are the times when grief in this world is praiseworthy and as always Allah (swt) Knows best!

Now we are not saying that it is a sin if we ever become sad or if we ever feel fear on account of anything of this world. There is a natural feeling of fear and a natural feeling of grief that comes within all of us. Even the Prophet (saw) himself shed tears when his (saw)'s son Ibrahim passed away. So these feelings of sadness and fear are natural. But we must always look to what it is that is making us sad or what it is that is making us scared. However what is important is that we do not allow this grief or this fear to overwhelm us and we do not allow it to prevent us in worshipping and serving Allah (swt). We have to ask ourselves that does this thing really deserve our grief or our fear? When we know that our only purpose in life is to worship and serve Allah (swt) and all that should matter to us is to please Him (swt) then is that thing really worth our fear or our grief? So it is okay for you to be sad if a loved one passes away but do not be sad if you lost some money because you left work for Salah. Remember your purpose in life and remember the value of this world.

For the most part however the Prophet (saw) only had fear and grief for the sake of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) was terrified of the Day of Judgment and he (saw) grieved for this Ummah. But fear never touched the Prophet (saw) on account of himself (saw) from anything of this world. For example when the Prophet (saw) made hijra, and the enemies of this Message were pursuing him (saw), he (saw) showed no fear whatsoever. Even when the enemies of this Message were directly outside the cave in which he (saw) was hiding, he (saw) showed no fear whatsoever. He (saw) was always thinking about Allah (swt) and he (saw) knew that Allah (swt) was the Best of Protectors. The Prophet (saw) also never became sad on account of anything that he (saw) lost in this world. When the Prophet (saw) took up this Message, he (saw) went from being a successful merchant who was loved by everyone in his (saw)'s community to one

who was starving from lack of food and one who had become despised by his (saw)'s own people. Despite all that he (saw) lost, he (saw) never became sad because of these setbacks and sufferings. Instead he (saw) simply continued on his (saw)'s mission, continued to strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) had his heart attached to his (saw)'s Lord and so all that he (saw) cared about was pleasing his Lord. May Allah (swt) allow us to follow his (saw)'s example! May Allah (swt) protect us from being among those who fear the things of this world and who are sad from the losses of this world! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that all that matters is worshipping and serving Him (swt)!



40. And the ones who do kufr and reject Our Signs, these are the companions of the Fire. They will stay in it forever.

In the previous ayah we saw Allah (swt) address all of mankind and He (swt) said that whoever follows the guidance that He (swt) sends, there will be no fear upon them and they will not grieve. We should note that the word "follow" in the previous ayah meant that the people needed to both believe in what the prophets and messengers said to them, and they needed to do what the prophets and messengers told them to do. So for whoever believes and obeys then Allah (swt) promised them that they will have no fear upon and they will not grieve. They will live a peaceful and tranquil life in this world, and in the Hereafter they have the gardens of paradise waiting for them. But what will be the fate of those who refuse to follow the prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) has sent? Allah (swt) tells us about such people in this ayah.

Allah (swt) identifies such people as the ones who do kufr. Recall how we said that this means they cover the Truth that they know in their hearts. Deep down in their hearts, they know

that this Message is the Truth from their Rabb. But they always find some reason to reject it. They always find some excuse that they make for themselves as to why they do not want to believe. In addition to covering the Truth that they know in their hearts, they also cover all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them. Everything that the human being has is from Allah (swt), and when he refuses to believe in the prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) sends he is showing ingratitude for each and every one of these gifts. So double is the crime of these people. On the one hand they are refusing to believe in a Message that they are certain is from their Creator. On the other hand they are being ungrateful for all of the blessings and favors that their Creator has conferred upon them. Everything from their existence to the food that they eat to the air that they breathe.

Allah (swt) presented these people with clear signs and evidences to show them that this Message was indeed the Truth but they rejected these signs. How evil are a people who reject the Signs of Allah (swt)? These are clear evidences that Allah (swt) has given us for us to have certainty in this Message. If we look in the Quran we can see that Allah (swt) is not telling us to believe based on blind faith but He (swt) is showing us clearly how this Message is the Truth. Everything in the universe testifies to the Truth of the Existence and the Oneness of Allah (swt), and every ayah of the Quran testifies to the Truth that this Book could only be from Him (swt). How then can you reject this Message when there are such powerful and overwhelming evidences? For those who reject this Message their problem is not with the evidences. The proofs are so clear and convincing that anyone who looks at them sincerely has to accept them. Their problem is that they know that if they follow this Message then they will no longer be able to submit to their lusts and their desires. They know they would have to control their arrogance and pride. They know that they will have to live a life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). They know that they will have to give up their power and control over the people. This is a reality that they do not want to accept, so they try to find some excuse to reject this Message. They completely deny all of the Signs and proofs that Allah (swt) has sent them.

About such people Allah (swt) tells us that they are the companions of the Fire and they will stay therein forever. Notice the word that Allah (swt) uses here, He (swt) does not simply say that they are in the Fire but He (swt) says that they are the *companions* of the Fire. This means that the Fire is very close to them and they are very close to the Fire. The Fire mixes with them and burns every single part of their body. We know from the hadith that every time a portion of their body is burned away, it will grow back only to be burned again. We also know from the hadith that their bodies will be huge, much larger than our bodies in this world. This is so that they can feel the fire upon them even more. Every space of their body will feel that excruciating pain of being burned. How terrible is it! Every second that we are not in that Fire is a Mercy from Allah (swt) for which we always have to thank Him (swt). Just the fact that you are not in the Fire at this moment is a Mercy from Allah (swt) that you should always be thanking Him (swt) for. May Allah (swt) keep us and our loved ones far away from this horrible place!

Even though the people who reject this Message and who show ingratitude for the gifts of Allah (swt) will be feeling this excruciating pain, that is not the worst part of their punishment. The worst part of their punishment is that they will stay in that Fire forever. There is no chance for them to leave it whatsoever. What could be a greater pain for them than to know that they will be in there forever? Any pain or discomfort that we suffer in the life of this world, we at least have the consolation that it will end some day. That is what gets us through that pain or discomfort. But the companions of the Fire have no such consolation. In addition to the physical suffering that they are experiencing from the Fire itself, they are also experiencing a psychological suffering in their mind by knowing that this pain will never end. Can you even begin to imagine how terrifying a concept is that? May Allah (swt) save us from it!

Now some ignorant people would bring the argument that this punishment is too severe. Such an argument is actually so stupid that it does not even deserve a response. But we will briefly comment on it just in case one of our readers is confronted with this question in their path of dawah. The response to bring for such people is to ask them why they are ignoring the clear and undeniable proofs that Allah (swt) has given. Can they prove that Allah (swt) is not the

Creator and Sustainer of the universe? Can they prove that the Quran is not the Word of Allah (swt)? If they cannot, then they have to admit that the Quran is from Allah (swt). If they admit that the Quran is from Allah (swt), then by saying that the punishment of the Fire is unjust then already they are claiming that they know better than Allah (swt). They are saying that they know what is justice better than the All-Knowing and the All Wise. So the way to deal with such ignorant people and such foolish questions is to bring them back to the evidences that Allah (swt) has given for this Message. Can they create a universe such as this? Can they produce a Quran like this? If they cannot then tell them that they should fear this Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from being like such people! May Allah (swt) make us submit to Him (swt) both in the actions that we do and in the thoughts that we have!

يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَوۡفُواْ بِعَهۡدِيٓ
أُوفِ بِعَهۡدِكُمۡ وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱرۡهَبُونِ ٤٠

41. O children of Israil, remember My favor the one that I bestowed on you, and honor My contract and I will honor your contract, and fear Me (Alone).

This ayah begins a new section of this Surah where Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil. "Israil" is another name for Yaqoob (as). We know that Ibrahim (as) had two sons in Ismail (as) and Ishaq (as). The Prophet (saw) was the descendant of Ismail (as), and Yaqoob (as) was the son of Ishaq (as). Yaqoob (as) had twelve sons and from them came a nation called the children of Israil. This nation was responsible for carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. It is this nation that Allah (swt) calls out to in this ayah. The scholars say that one reason why Allah (swt) addresses them in this ayah as the "children of Israil" instead of calling them "Jews" or calling them the "sons of Yaqoob" is because the name *Israil* means "servant". So Allah (swt) wants to remind them that they are descendants of one who was a true and devoted servant of Allah (swt).

We should note that although Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil in this ayah and the ayahs that follow it, this does not mean that there are not lessons in here for us to learn from and gain guidance from it as well. The children of Israil were those who carried this Message before us. At times they were successful in this task that Allah (swt) had given them, and at these moments they are an example for us to follow. But many times they failed in this role of being the bearers of this Message, and here they are an example of what we should avoid. At such times of failure we should avoid them in terms of both thinking and behavior. May Allah (swt) enable us to learn from the example of the children of Israil that He (swt) has given us in the Quran! May we follow them where they were right and avoid what they did when they were wrong!

In this ayah Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil by calling out to them. First Allah (swt) tells them to remember the favor that He (swt) bestowed on them. The word *niyama* that Allah (swt) uses here means more than just "favor". It means "blessing", "privilege" and "gift". The language of the ayah Allah (swt) emphasizes that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who had had bestowed this favor on them. So they should have gratitude to Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. How can they show their gratitude? Allah (swt) tells them in the next ayah that it is by believing in this Message that He (swt) has given the Prophet (saw).

So what exactly is this favor that Allah (swt) has bestowed on children of Israil then? The best source of tafsir is the Quran itself, and at many places the Quran explains itself. We can find out the favor that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil by looking in the Quran itself. When we look at the Quran we see not one but many favors that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil. So we see that the word *niyama* that Allah (swt) uses here for "favor" is actually comprehensive to include all of these favors. Among the favors that Allah (swt) bestowed on them is that Allah (swt) chose them to be the first nation of dawah carriers to mankind. How great a blessing and gift is this? What greater purpose can you have in life than being among those who call to Allah (swt)? If you are among those for whom Allah (swt) has chosen for this task, then you should consider it to be a great blessing and privilege. You should feel that you

always have to thank Allah (swt) for this blessing. You can thank Allah (swt) by your words, but an even better way to thank Him (swt) is through your deeds.

Allah (swt) favored and blessed the children of Israil by allowing them to be a nation of dawah carriers. They were the ones who were chosen to carry Allah (swt)'s Message to mankind. Allah (swt) had prepared them for this task from the very beginning of the formation of their nation. They were all descendants of prophets who called to Allah (swt). Moreover they were descendants of Ibrahim (as) who was the close friend of Allah (swt). Because they had dawah carriers in their past, they knew clearly what was their duty and their responsibility. They were handed down the details of their mission from their parents. From their parents they received the guidance that they should follow on how to worship and serve Allah (swt) and how to call others to this path. So the first favor that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil was that He (swt) chose them and prepared them to be the ones to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind.

The next favor that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them is that He (swt) saved them from the people of Firaun. He (swt) also provided them with water gushing forth from stones, and He (swt) also provided them Manna and quails. Insha Allah we will discuss the details of this in the later parts of the Surah. Allah (swt) also sent them many prophets and messengers to remind them of the Truth and to guide them on how to worship and serve Him (swt). Every time that they would deviate, every time they would turn away from this path, Allah (swt) would send them another messenger to return them to the path. Messenger after messenger, prophet after prophet. Another part of the blessing that Allah (swt) bestowed on them is that He (swt) also mentioned His (swt)'s beloved Prophet (saw) in their Books. These were all part of the favors that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells them to remember all of these favors and blessings that He (swt) had bestowed on them. In this ayah Allah (swt) calls on them to believe in this Message through these favors that He (swt) has sent them. In other words because they had been given these favors then that should then be even more of a reason for them to follow the Prophet (saw) and believe in this Message. They are even more in debt to Allah (swt) then the other

people who had not received similar blessings from Allah (swt). They had received so many prophets to show them the correct way on how to worship and serve Allah (swt), and to bring them back to the Straight Path after they had strayed. If they were now to turn away from this Message even after receiving all of these favors and blessings from Allah (swt) then they truly would be an evil and despised people. How ungrateful a people would they be if they were now to turn away from this Message after all of these favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had conferred upon them? If they were to turn away from this Message now they would not just be showing ingratitude to anyone but they would be showing ingratitude to the Lord and Master of the universe. So the first way in which Allah (swt) calls on the children of Israil to believe in this Message is by reminding them of the favors that He (swt) had bestowed on them.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**honor My contract and I will honor your contract**". Here Allah (swt) calls on the Children of Israil to honor their contract with Him (swt) and if they do then He (swt) will honor His (swt)'s contract with them. So the Children of Israil have a contract with Allah (swt) and He (swt) has a contract with them. In his tafsir of this ayah Imam Qurtubi says that we should take the most general and comprehensive meaning of what is meant by contract on either side. The contract that the Children of Israil need to honor for Allah (swt) is that they must believe in the prophets and messengers that He (swt) sends and they must never reject them. Even if the prophet is not from their tribe, they must still believe in him. The second part of the contract is that they must do everything that Allah (swt) has told them to do through these messengers that He (swt) has sent. This includes both the outward and the inward actions. So for example if the messengers call on them to fight in jihad, they must respond to the call to arms even if they fear losing their life or being injured in battle. If the messengers call them to remove their love for fame and their love for this world from their hearts and devote themselves completely for Allah (swt) then they must do this even if they find in themselves the love of this world and the love for fame. If they do this, then Allah (swt) promised them that He (swt) will honor His (swt)'s contract with them. First He (swt) will give them peace and tranquility in the life

of this world, then Allah (swt) promised them victory and success in the life of this world, but most importantly Allah (swt) promised them the garden and His (swt)'s Pleasure in the Hereafter.

This is a contract that is not just for the Children of Israil but it is one that we have with Allah (swt) as well. To fulfill our part of the contract we have to believe in the Prophet (saw) who is the messenger that Allah (swt) has sent for us. We must have conviction in all that he (saw) has told us. We also have to do everything that he (saw) has commanded us to do. Every single action that we take in this life has to be according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). The way that we pray, the way that we perform hajj, the way in which we carry dawah and the way in which we fight jihad has to be following the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Even the actions of our hearts have to be in accordance with what the Prophet (saw) has taught us. So the Prophet (saw) has told us that we should love for our brother what we love for ourselves, so as part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt), we have to build this love for our fellow Muslim brothers. We should love them for the sake of Allah (swt). If we do all of this then we would be honoring our contract with Allah (swt).

If we honor our part of the contract, Allah (swt) will then honor His (swt)'s contract with us. There are several parts of the contract that Allah (swt) has with us. First in the life of this world Allah (swt) will give us peace of mind and tranquility. Allah (swt) has told us already that those who follow this guidance will have no fear upon them and they shall not grieve. This is the tranquility that the true believer has in the life of this world. He or she knows that whatever befalls them in this world is only by the permission of Allah (swt). So they have a calmness in their heart because they know that Allah (swt) is Aware of all that they go through and they know that He (swt) will reward them for their patience and strength. Another part of the contract that Allah (swt) will fulfill for us if we fulfill our part of the contract is that Allah (swt) will give our community victory. Allah (swt) has promised this Ummah victory if we are sincere in our service and devotion to Him (swt), so this is something that we must be certain of. Part of our submission to Allah (swt) is that we must be certain that one day soon the flag of the Prophet (saw) will fly over every land of this earth.

But the largest part of the contract that Allah (swt) will fulfill for us if we honor our part is that He (swt) will admit us into the garden and give us His (swt)'s contentment. This is all that any of us should really desire. Just the possibility of entering this amazing place is enough for us to enter into this contract with Allah (swt). Comparing the garden with the pleasures that you can attain in this world is like comparing the ocean to the wetness on your finger. How can you even begin to compare eternity with what is temporary and fleeting? How can you compare a world that Allah (swt) created for happiness and joy to a world that Allah (swt) created for trials and laboring? There is simply no comparison between the two. So sacrificing the short time that we have in the life of this world for the garden of Allah (swt) is a deal that we should all be willing to make. It is a deal that we should love to make. May Allah (swt) enable each of us to fulfill our contract with Him (swt)!

In the final portion of the ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil that they should fear Him (swt) Alone. Often times it is some kind of fear that will prevent people from honoring their side of the contract with Allah (swt). We know for example when Musa (as) ordered the children of Israil to fight to liberate their promised land from it's occupiers, they complained and said that in the land were a powerful people. They were afraid to go and fight. This is not only true for the children of Israil, but we find it true for ourselves as well. We also sometimes find fear within ourselves for the things of this world. Sometimes this fear will hold us back from fulfilling our duties and obligations in Islam. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that we should have fear of Him (swt) Alone. We should not fear anyone except Allah (swt). When we think about Allah (swt) and what He (swt) can do to us, how does that compare in any way to how the things of this world can harm us? As we said the things of this world cannot really harm us. As long as we are worshipping and serving Allah (swt), then whatever calamity or misfortune befalls us, whatever pain and suffering that we have to endure, we have to be sure that Allah (swt) Knows it well and Insha Allah it will be in the path of Allah (swt). Then we know that Allah (swt) will reward us for that difficulty that we had to endure while we tread the path that leads to His (swt)'s Pleasure. So we should not fear anything in this world, rather we should fear Allah (swt)

Alone. If we were to earn the displeasure of Allah (swt), then how can anything of this world save us on that day? On the other hand if we were to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) then is not anything that we have gone through in this world worth that? So do not fear anything of this world but rather know that Allah (swt) is with wherever you may be. May Allah (swt) be with all of the sincere Muslim brothers and sisters! May Allah (swt) forgive us our shortcomings and may He (swt) accept our efforts! Nothing matters in this world except attaining the Pleasure of our Lord, nothing matters except fulfilling our contract with Him (swt)!

وَءَامِنُواْ بِمَآ أَنزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوٓاْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِۦ ۖ
وَلَا تَشْتَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِى ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّٰىَ فَٱتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

42. And believe in what I have revealed confirming that which is with you, and do not be the first to make kufr to it, and do not trade away my signs for a small price, and fear Me Alone.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the address to children of Israil that began in the previous ayah. Allah (swt) has already told them to remember the favor that He (swt) had bestowed upon them by making them the nation that carried His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Just the fact that they were the nation who were chosen to carry this dawah should make them the foremost of those who respond to this Message. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) also told them to honor their contract with Him (swt), and if they do then He (swt) will honor His (swt)'s contract with them. In this ayah Allah (swt) makes clear for them exactly how they have to honor their contract.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And believe in what I have revealed**". First they have to believe in what Allah (swt) has revealed. They have to believe in the final revelation that has been given to the Prophet (saw). Of course this is not only a command for the children of Israil but it is a command for us as well. We also have to believe in what Allah (swt) has revealed. Before anything else, what is of utmost importance is that we believe in this Message. We have to believe in this Message and we have to constantly be working on strengthening our belief. This Message is one that has been revealed by Allah (swt). This is not a message that was sent to us by anyone of this world but rather it is from the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It is from the One Who has Knowledge of every single thing. So we have to believe in it with utmost with certainty. This Message is something that we have to live our lives by. Our belief has to be reflected in our actions. We say with our mouths that we believe in this Message but do we really understand what that means? Do we really understand what it means for us to believe that this Quran is from Allah (swt)? If we did then we would not waste a moment of our lives except in service to this Message. We will not allow a moment to pass us by except that we are striving to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) in that moment.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**confirming that which is with you**". Here Allah (swt) describes this Message to the children of Israil as something that is confirming what is with them. This Message that they had received through the Prophet (saw) is not something new or not something that they had never heard of. On the contrary it was a Message that they knew all to well. It was the same Message that was preached by all the prophets and messengers that were sent to them. It was a Message that called on them to live their lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). A life of servitude that comes from a deep love of Allah (swt) in their hearts. It was a Message that called on them to believe in Allah (swt) as the sole Creator and Sustainer of this entire universe, to believe in Him (swt) as the Only One Who has all of the Perfect Names, to believe in Him (swt) as the very reason for their existence and to love Him (swt) because of this. This love has to be the greatest of loves in one's heart and it has to be a love that motivates one to live their life in worship and service to their beloved. This was the Message that the children of

Israil were being presented with, this was the Message that they were being called on to believe in. This was a Message that they knew very well because it was the same Message that they found in their own books. That is why Allah (swt) describes this Message as confirming that is which is with them.

This was all that the Prophet (saw) was calling them towards. The Prophet (saw) was not calling them towards a life where they served him (saw) or made him (saw) a king among them. Far from being a king, the Prophet (saw) lived the most simple of lives and he (saw) called the people to this as well. We know from the authentic narrations that even when the Prophet (saw) was in Madinah and even he (saw) was the leader of the Islamic State that had been established there, he (saw) lived a very simple life. We have narrations of where the Prophet (saw) could not sleep because he (saw) was so hungry and he (saw) had to go out in the middle of the night in search of food. We also have narrations where the Prophet (saw) had to sleep on a straw mat and it would leave marks on his (saw)'s blessed back. So even though the Prophet (saw) was the leader of the Islamic State, he (saw) never called on the people to honor him (saw) or to give him (saw) the wealth and riches of the land. He (saw) never called on anything for himself (saw), rather he (saw) only called on the people to live their lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). All that the Prophet (saw) called on the people to do was to believe in this Message that their Creator had sent them and to fulfill the requirements of this Message.

This fact is especially important to bear in mind when we look at the attitude that many among the children of Israil had towards the Prophet (saw). Many of these Jews would reject this Message only because of a hatred that they had for the Prophet (saw). They were jealous because Allah (swt) had chosen to reveal the Final Message to an Arab and not to a Jew. Instead of the Prophet (saw) they had always hoped that it was one of their own to whom this Final Message would be revealed to. So even though they were certain that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), they chose to reject this Message because of this jealousy and hatred that they had for him (saw). But what they failed to realize or what they did not want to realize was that the Prophet (saw) was not calling them to him (saw) but rather he

(saw) was calling them to Allah (swt). This Message was from Allah (swt) and not from the Prophet (saw). So by rejecting this Message these Jews were not hurting the Prophet (saw) in any way but they were only hurting their standing with Allah (swt).

In the next part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) tells them not to do exactly what they ended up doing. Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah "**and do not be the first to make kufr to it**". Here Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil not to be the first to reject this Message when they know that is indeed the Truth. A question may arise here, one might say that when this ayah was revealed in Madinah, there were already many people in Makkah who had already rejected this Message. So why then does Allah (swt) tell the children of Israil that they should not be the first to disbelieve in this Message when there were others who had already disbelieved in it before them? Allah (swt) Knows best, but one reason could be that the ayah is saying, "Do not be the foremost of the rejecters of this Message". So instead of saying do not be the first to reject this Message the ayah could be saying do not be the foremost of those who reject this Message. Allah (swt) is telling the children of Israil not to be the foremost of those who reject this Message. This is because the rejection of the children of Israil would be even worse than the rejection of the pagans of Makkah. Both groups were presented with clear evidences and undeniable proofs, but in the case of the children of Israil they also had their own Books that foretold of the coming of this Message. They knew the Final Messenger was coming, they were expecting him. Furthermore as the previous ayah had told us, they were a nation who had constantly received many favors and bounties from Allah (swt). They had received several prophets and messengers from Allah (swt) showing them the path of worship and servitude to Him (swt). So this was a Message that they knew very well. It was not something that was new and foreign to them like it may have been for the idol worshippers of Makkah. Despite all of this if they were still to do kufr to this Message, then their kufr would be the foremost and the worst of all kufr. Their rejection would be the worst of all rejections because they had so many reasons why they should believe in this Message. That is why Allah (swt) tells them in this ayah not to be the foremost of those who reject this Message. As always Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) commands the children of Israil to "**not trade away My Signs for a small price**" Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil not to trade away His (swt)'s Signs for a small price. The proofs and evidences for this Message are the Signs of Allah (swt) and the children of Israil had more of these Signs than anyone. On the one hand there was the linguistic Miracle of the Quran that we have already discussed in ayah 24. This was a Book that had Arabic like none of them had ever seen before. It was far superior to any work that had ever been produced in the history of the Arabic language and there was no way for anyone to come up with anything like it. The Jews who lived in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (saw) knew Arabic very well so this was a fact that they were very much aware of. They knew that even if they all came together and helped each other they could not replicate even a small portion of this Quran. In addition to the linguistic Miracle there was also the fact that the Quran contained detailed narrations of many of their previous prophets like Ibrahim (as), Yusuf (as) and Musa (as). These were narrations that could be found in their own books but in the Quran they are presented in more detail and they are more accurate to the reality. These Jews could not understand how an illiterate Arab could bring such narrations? In addition the Quran also has narrations of events that no human ever witnessed and the Jews knew about this fact very well too. Examples of these narrations are when the Quran tells us how the brothers of Yusuf (as) were plotting against him (as). How could anyone but Allah (swt) have known about this secret gathering? In addition to these narrations of the previous prophets, there was also the fact that the children of Israil had their own books which described the Prophet (saw) in detail and even described the land to which he (saw) would come. In fact this was the reason why many of the Jews had migrated all the way from Jerusalem and came and settled in the harsh deserts of Madinah. They were awaiting the arrival of the prophet that their scriptures had foretold. All of these are the Signs of Allah (swt). They show the children of Israil that this Message is indeed from Allah (swt). So the children of Israil had so many Signs to make them believe in this Message. Allah (swt) tells them in this part of the ayah not to trade these Signs away for a small price, and what is this small price? It is the life of this world and it is their pride. If they chose to

reject all of these evidences because of their love for the life of this world or because of their pride and arrogance, then they would be trading away the Signs of Allah (swt) for a small price. What is the value of this world? What is the value of our arrogance and pride? Is this worth trading away the Signs of Allah (swt) for? May Allah (swt) save us from being like these people!

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that the life of this world is not worth giving away the Signs of Allah (swt) for. The Signs of Allah (swt) can give us absolute certainty and faith in the Truth of this Message if only we have the sincerity to look for it. Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) will guide those who strive hard in His (swt)'s way. But if we are attached to the life of this world, and if we prefer our comforts and our desires to worshipping and serving Allah (swt) then we would be guilty of throwing away these Signs of Allah (swt) for the temporary and fleeting gains of this world. We should then not expect the guidance from Allah (swt) and the certainty of faith that will take us the garden. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

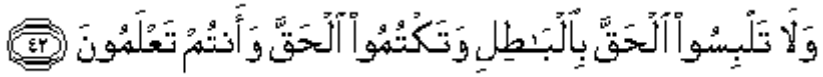
In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil once again that they should fear Him (swt) Alone. If they feel in their hearts the desire to deny all of these signs and evidences because of some trifling gain in this world then they should remember the One Who deserves all fear. If they want to make this transaction where they throw away all of the Signs of Allah (swt) for the fleeting pleasures of this world and for their arrogance and pride, they should first remember Allah (swt) and remember how He (swt) deserves their fear.

Fear should only be for Allah (swt) Alone. Fear should be for Allah (swt) Alone. This is a fact that we always need to keep in mind. When Allah (swt) repeats a fact in Quran, it is for emphasis and certainty. If we are finding in ourselves fear from the things of this world, then we have to recognize that this is disease of the heart that we have to work hard to remedy. Fear comes from emotions and the way to control emotions is through thought. When you think about Allah (swt) in all His (swt)'s Power and Majesty. When you bring to mind that Allah (swt) can do anything and that nothing whatsoever can overcome Him (swt), then how could you fear anything besides Him (swt)? When you know that Allah (swt) is on your side, and you know that

Allah (swt) is with you wherever you are, and you are aware of this Power and Might of Allah (swt) then how can you fear anything other than Him? What enemy is there that can defeat you? What beast is there that can attack you? What calamity is there that can befall you? What force is there that can overcome you when you have One that is so Powerful with you?

Sometimes you may fear losing something of this world. You may fear losing your money which you believe will lead to you losing your home and your clothing and your food. Shaitan puts images of poverty for you and your family in your mind and leads you to acts of disobedience to Allah (swt), he says that only by disobeying Allah (swt) can you save your family from such poverty. He puts this fear in your heart and this makes you deal with interest and miss the congregational prayer for work and business. You are unwilling to pay Zakat and you are unwilling to spend your time learning about the Din of Allah (swt) because of this fear that you have in your heart. All of this disobedience because of the fear that you have of losing a few things of this world. This fear can also be removed by thoughts of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the Ultimate Reality and this world is only an illusion. This is what you need to bear in mind. Also remember that everything belongs to Allah (swt) and He (swt) gives and takes from whomever He (swt) pleases. If you lose something of this world then know that it was part of the Decree of the Lord and Master of this universe for you not to have that in the first place. Furthermore if you do lose something of this world while you are worshipping and serving Allah (swt), then you should know that you have lost that thing in the path of Allah (swt) and that He (swt) will reward you for it. So for example suppose you lose your job because you went out for Salatul Jummah, then you have lost that job while you were obeying your Creator and Sustainer. Thus you will get double the reward from Him (swt), you will be rewarded for the difficulty that you had to endure to go to Jummah and even the courage that you had to leave your work, and in addition to that once you lose your job you will be rewarded for the patience that you have for His (swt)'s sake. So instead of having fear of your manager or losing some money in your business, what you should have fear of is Allah (swt). Just imagine having to stand before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment with sins as big as missing prayer and dealing with interest on your neck. Can anyone

help you then? Can your manager or your money save you then? This is what should terrify you. When you see the Fire and the torments and horrors that are within it, then this is what should terrify you. May Allah (swt) allow all of us to fear Him (swt) as much as we love Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) allow us to run towards Him (swt) even though we fear Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) enable us to transform our fear into acts of obedience and into the strength to refrain from acts of disobedience!



43. And do not mix the Truth with falsehood, and do not conceal the Truth while you know.

In this ayah we see a continuation of Allah (swt)'s address to the children of Israil. In the previous ayahs we have already seen Allah (swt) tell them to remember the favor that He (swt) bestowed on them, and to honor their contract with Him (swt), and to believe in what He (swt) has revealed to the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) also told them not to trade away His (swt)'s Signs for the small price of the life of this world and their arrogance and pride. Finally Allah (swt) reminded them to fear Him (swt) Alone. Now the clear Message has come to them from Allah (swt) and in this Message is the Truth that they recognize. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells them what should be their relationship with this Truth. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells them what they should do with this Truth.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And do not mix the Truth with falsehood**". In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil not to mix the Truth with falsehood. So there is the Truth and there is falsehood. The Truth in this ayah refers to the news of the coming of the Prophet (saw). This Truth is in the Books from Allah (swt) that the children of Israil have. In their

books it clearly says that the Final Messenger will come to Madinah and the descriptions of that messenger fit the Prophet (saw) perfectly. This is the Truth that is in their books that Allah (swt) refers to in this ayah. So what they have done is take this Truth that they have, this Truth that clearly foretells the coming of the Prophet (saw), and they have mixed falsehood with this Truth. The falsehood refers to the lies that they injected into this Truth. Since there are such clear evidences for the Prophet (saw) in their books, they cannot deny the Prophet (saw) completely. They cannot deny the fact that what he (saw) calls the people towards, which is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) Alone, is what all prophets have called to. They cannot deny the fact that the Prophet (saw) came with a Miracle that no one among them can reproduce. Most importantly they cannot deny the Prophet (saw) because he (saw) is mentioned in their own books. So instead of denying him (saw) completely they acknowledge that he (saw) is a messenger but they say that he (saw) is for the Arabs and not for them. So they take the Truth which they have in their books and they mix their lies and fabrications into it. Can you imagine a worse sin than this? They are taking the Truth that is in their books, Truth that has been given to them by Allah (swt), and they add lies and falsehoods to it only because of their desires and their pride. The bottom line is that they did not want to follow the Prophet (saw) because he (saw) was an Arab and not a Jew. So they wanted more than anything else to reject him (saw) and the Message that he (saw) brought them from their Creator. At the same time they could not deny him (saw) completely because they have so many signs telling them that he indeed is from Allah (swt), so they add falsehood to the Truth and say that he (saw) is only a messenger for the Arabs. Can you see the stupidity in what they are saying? If what they are saying is true and the Prophet (saw) was only for the Arabs, then why would he (saw) being a messenger from Allah (swt) lie and say that he (saw) is for all mankind? How could a messenger from Allah (swt) ever lie? So not only were these Jews wrong to reject the Prophet (saw) but even the excuses that they made for their rejection were the most foolish of excuses. They denied him (saw) even though they were certain that Allah (swt) had sent him (saw) as a messenger to them. So they are in

reality not denying him (saw), but they are denying their Rabb. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them!

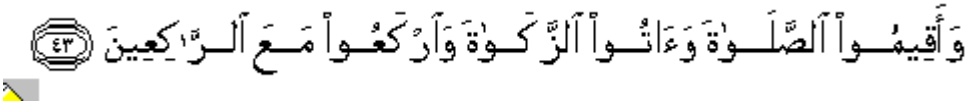
In the second part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells them not to cover the Truth while they know. They know what the Truth is, they know that it is in their books and they know that they have a responsibility to disclose it. Allah (swt) gives them a clear warning here not to cover this Truth that is in their books when they know that it is indeed the Truth. But of course just as before they did exactly what Allah (swt) told them not to do. The Truth here is not simply any truth but it is revelation from the Lord and Master of the universe. How unjust are a people who knowingly hide this Truth away? They have a responsibility to their people and for all mankind to disclose the Truth that is in their books. They should tell mankind that the Prophet (saw) has indeed been explicitly mentioned in their Books. But they chose not to do this. They chose to remove all of the verses that speak of the Prophet (saw) from their books. Can you imagine how many people they have misguided and lead astray because of these lies and because of this concealment of the Truth? How many more people would have believed in this Message if they knew the fact that the coming of the Prophet (saw) had been clearly foretold by the earlier messengers? How many people have these evil men denied from knowing their Lord only so that they could serve their desires and only because of their arrogance and pride? They have taken all of these signs and evidences in their books and twisted and distorted them into giving a completely different meaning. They have changed the words of Allah (swt) only for the paltry price of the life of this world. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like such people!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must realize that what is in the Quran is the Truth. If we attempt to change the Quran in any way or if we try to hide anything that is in the Quran, then we would also be guilty of this sin that Allah (swt) is warning the children of Israil against. We would be guilty of taking what is the Truth and mixing falsehood into it. Now there are some parts of the Quran that some people might think are not compatible with the "modern world" or Western society. Examples of these are the laws pertaining to punishments and the laws for jihad. So they try to hide and conceal these ayahs that they think

might not be favorable with non-Muslims. They even publish "copies" of the Quran where these ayahs have been removed. But what these people do not realize is that if we try to change these laws or hide them away from the people only to appease the society in which we live then we would also be guilty of concealing the Truth that is in our Book. We would be guilty of mixing falsehood with the Truth. If you do such a thing then you should know that you are blocking the implementation of laws that were sent down by the Lord and Master of the universe. The Prophet (saw) has said, "Whoever intercedes and prevents one of the punishments prescribed by Allah, the Mighty and the Majestic, then he has opposed Allah regarding His orders." Where will you be in your station with Allah (swt) when you know that you have stood in opposition to His (swt)'s Laws? How can you save yourself from Him (swt) on the Day of Judgment if you should do that? May Allah (swt) give us the sincerity to follow the Quran and the Sunnah as He (swt) has revealed it to us! May Allah (swt) prevent us from covering or hiding any part of it! May Allah (swt) save us from changing any part of it only to suit our whims and desires or to conform to the society in which we live!

There is actually a good reason why the Quran and Sunnah will never be compatible with the society in which we live today. This is because the Quran opposes such societies from the core. The foundation of any society is the individual and the foundation of any individual is the Aqeedah that he has in his heart. If you compare the Aqeedah of Islam and the Aqeedah that is taught by the West you will see that they oppose each other like night and day. The Aqeedah of Islam and the Aqeedah of the West are different in every way possible. One is where you believe that you exist to worship and serve your Creator and one is where you think that the purpose of life is only to satisfy your desires. One is where you live to sacrifice for your Lord and one is where you live to accumulate as much of this world as you can. How then could the way of life that is promoted by these beliefs have anything in common? They will not, in fact you will see that they are diametrically opposed to each other. One is the Truth and one is falsehood, and as Allah (swt) has told us in this ayah, we cannot mix the Truth with falsehood. So there can be no compromise between Islam and the West. The forces of Truth will always have to battle

against the forces of falsehood, and there is no middle ground. This battle must start here and now on an intellectual and personal level before it starts on a material level when the Islamic State is established. We need to start practicing Islam fully and we need to culture ourselves with the thoughts and ideas of the Quran and Sunnah. We as Muslims must recognize that our Aqeedah and our way of life is the Truth and everything else is falsehood, and we must remember that you cannot mix the Truth with falsehood. The Prophet (saw) said "Whoever imitates a people then he is of them" and he (saw) said, "The best Mujahid is the one who strives against his own self and his desires for Allah". So it is true that this society can be very tempting and alluring, but for the sake of Allah (swt), you have to be patient and you have to fight against it. Especially for those of us who are living in the West we feel a desire to conform to those around us. We want to be like everyone else, and we even want to do what they do. We forget the stark difference that exists between our way of life and their way of life, between our Aqeedah and their Aqeedah. We forget the command of Allah (swt) in this ayah not to mix between Truth and falsehood. That is why we always have to be vigilant and we have to strive not to adopt anything from their culture. May Allah (swt) help us to do that! May Allah (swt) make us remember this ayah and these hadith! May Allah (swt) allow us to be like the Prophet (saw) and not compromise on any part of this Message! May Allah (swt) help us remember that this Message is from Him (swt) and so we should dedicate our entire lives to it!



44. And establish Salah, and given Zakat and bow with those who bow.

This ayah continues the address of Allah (swt) to the Children of Israil. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) called on them to believe in what He (swt) had revealed to the Prophet (saw). We mentioned how they knew from their own books that he (saw) was a True Messenger from Allah (swt) but still they rejected him (saw) because of jealousy and pride. They rejected him

(saw) despite the fact that Allah (swt) commanded them not to hide the Truth that was in their books and He (swt) commanded them not to mix the Truth with falsehood. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what is the very essence of this Message that He (swt) has sent.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And establish Salah**". Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to the most important action that one must fulfill after belief. That of course is the prayer. After you believe in this Message, this is the next most important obligation that you must fulfill for Allah (swt). Our Salah is our connection with Allah (swt). Our Salah is our ascension towards Allah (swt). So our Salah must be the most important of actions that we perform. All the actions that we perform during the day must revolve around our Salah. We should not make Salah fit into our day but we must make our day fit into our Salah. Salah is the action that most clearly demonstrates our submission to Allah (swt). When you prostrate yourself before Allah (swt) in the Salah, you are demonstrating how you were created to be a complete worshipper and slave of Allah (swt). When you are in prostration you are in the natural position that you were created to be in. In total submission to Allah (swt). So we see in this ayah that Allah (swt) is calling on them to this most important of obligations and purest of worship.

Then Allah (swt) calls on the children of Israil to give the Zakat. After you purify yourself with the prayer, you have to purify your wealth and your property with the zakat. As we know the Zakat is an obligatory payment that all Muslims must give on their wealth. It is a small portion of the wealth and it is only taken from those who have some degree of wealth. The scholars have set what is called a *nisab* or a threshold on the wealth. It is only when the amount of wealth passes this threshold does the Zakat become due on it. So the Zakat is only levied on those who have enough and it is never levied on the poor. The Zakat purifies our wealth because it absolves the right of the poor to it. Every Muslim has a responsibility of taking care of those who are less fortunate than him. If he hoards his wealth and does not share it with anyone, then that wealth has a curse and blight on it. The only way to cleanse wealth of this corruption is to give away a portion of it. When the Muslim does this, then his wealth becomes pure of the evil

that would have been on it if he had kept it to yourself. So it is to this most important of obligations that Allah (swt) calls the children of Israil towards in this ayah.

In addition to giving a meaning of purification, Zakat also means increase and gain. Many would argue as to how the wealth can increase if one is giving it away when paying Zakat. The answer to this question is that the blessing in the wealth increases. So even though you may have less wealth after giving Zakat, Allah (swt) will increase the blessing in that wealth and you will see that it suffices for your every need. So even though you literally may have less money, you will be able to do more with that money. It is also said that one can never become poor by giving Zakat, this is because this is wealth that is given for the sake of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) loves for this wealth to be spent and He (swt) will look after those who spend this wealth. Because they have spent this wealth sincerely for Allah (swt), He (swt) will protect such people from poverty and financial difficulties. May Allah (swt) make us among those who sincerely give wealth for His (swt)'s sake! May Allah (swt) take care of us and our families when we spend for Him (swt)!

Zakat is also one of the many important laws of Allah (swt) that needs the Islamic State to be implemented correctly. It is the Khalifah who is responsible for collecting the Zakat from the wealthy and who is responsible for giving to the poor. He ensures that the most needy receive the wealth and he ensures that those who have wealth give it. So we see how this law needs a Khalifah to be implemented correctly. Since we do not have such a ruler for our community we can see how the Law of Zakat is not being implemented correctly. There are several wealthy Muslims who do not pay Zakat, there are millions of deserving Muslims who do not receive Zakat, and even the Muslims who do pay often give their Zakat to those who do not deserve it. The Khalifah knows the entire Muslim Ummah so he is aware of which persons are most deserving of the Zakat and he is aware of those who are obligated to pay Zakat. Today even if we want to give Zakat, we do not know who deserves it the most. When we give our money to these so called charities and relief organizations, we cannot even be certain that it will reach those of our brothers and sisters who need it the most. Even relief organizations have

administrative and overhead costs and so they often keep a portion of the money for themselves. Only the Khalifah can ensure that the money reaches those who need it the most. Finally the Khalifah can enforce the collection of Zakat from those who refuse to pay it. How many Muslims are there today who are extremely wealthy but they do not pay Zakat? How many Muslims are there today who are so poor that they do not have any food to eat, any clothes to wear or any home in which to sleep? Today in the Muslim world there are "kings" and "princes" who lavish in luxuries unheard of while at the same time there are Muslim children who dying of starvation and curable diseases. This is the state of affairs that our Ummah finds itself now that we have chosen to rule by our lusts and desires instead of by the Sacred Law that our Creator revealed. May Allah (swt) guide us and help us to reestablish the Islamic State so that all of the laws of Islam can be implemented correctly and the wealth of this Ummah can be divided fairly through Zakat!

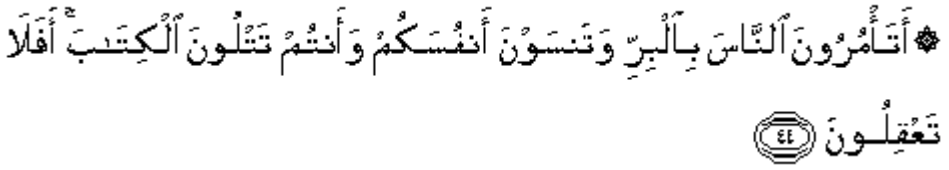
One question that may be asked at this point is why is Allah (swt) telling the children of Israil to establish Salah and pay Zakat when they have not become Muslim yet? In this ayah Allah (swt) is calling on them to establish Salah and give Zakat but they still have not become Muslims yet. The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) is calling on the children of Israil to become Muslim and then to implement these two important obligations of Salah and Zakat. Recall from the previous ayah where Allah (swt) called on them to believe in what He (swt) revealed, this was a call for them to accept the Prophet (saw) as a messenger from Allah (swt). Once they had done that, then the two most important of obligations that Allah (swt) calls on them to fulfill are the establishment of prayer and the paying of Zakat. From this we can take the lesson that Salah and Zakat are the two pillars of this Din. The entire ideology and way of life rests upon the implementation of Salah and Zakat. You could even say that this Message was sent to call the people to Salah and Zakat, and everything else in this Din exists to support Salah and Zakat. Even the Islamic State is an entity that exists to ensure that Salah is properly established and Zakat is properly collected.

Finally in this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil to bow along with those who bow. There are two meanings that are possible from this part of the ayah. The first meaning is

that it is a call for them to perform the prayer in a group. We know that *ruku* or bowing is one of the integral parts of the prayer. So here Allah (swt) is calling on the children of Israil and us as well to perform the prayer with a group of people. The Prophet (saw) has told us that prayer in a group has twenty seven times more reward than the prayer that is performed individually. For Muslim men it is also extremely important for them to try and make the obligatory Salah in the masjid. The Prophet (saw) promised that when you go to the masjid for Fajr Salah and Isha Salah, then your sins will drop for each step that you take and you will be raised in rank for each step that you take. When you see other Muslims bowing down before Allah (swt), it should please you because you see other souls who are submitting themselves before the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt) just like you have. You love Allah (swt) and you want to humble yourself in worship before Him (swt), when you see others submit themselves in worship to Allah (swt) as well, this sight should please you. For example when the Prophet (saw) was about to pass away, he (saw) saw his nation in prayer with Abu Bakr (ra) leading them in prayer and this sight pleased him (saw). When Muslims bow to Allah (swt) in worship together, it also shows our unity in submission before our Creator. So the group prayer is one of the most important of actions that we must fulfill. Some scholars have held it to be an obligation, and others said it is highly recommended with great amounts of reward in it. May Allah (swt) enable us to perform as many of our prayers in congregation as possible!

Another meaning for this part of the ayah where Allah (swt) says to bow with those who bow is that the word "bow" in this ayah could be used to mean obedience. The meaning of this part of the ayah then is that Allah (swt) is telling the children of Israil to be obedient to Him (swt) just like others are obedient. So just like we can take benefit and guidance from the literal meaning of the word "bow", we can also take benefit and guidance from the metaphorical meaning when it is used to mean "obedience" and "submission". Thus the command here is to submit oneself in obedience to the Law of Allah (swt). To implement the Law of Allah (swt) in our lives takes some degree of effort. Depending on the individual the action may require a small amount of effort or a large amount of effort. Despite this difficulty involved we still have to carry

out these commands of our Rabb. When we obey Allah (swt) despite the difficulty that is involved it shows that we are submitting ourselves to Him (swt). So here Allah (swt) calls on the children of Israil and us as well to submit with those who submit. To obey with those who have obeyed. It is true that implementing these laws requires some degree of effort, but we have to look and see that there are others who have done it. We are not the only ones who Allah (swt) is telling to submit to His (swt)'s Law. If the Sahabah (raa) and the friends of Allah (swt) that have existed throughout this Ummah's history were able to submit themselves, why should we not be able to? After all they were human beings just like we are. If they were able to do it, then why should we not find within ourselves the ability to do it as well? They were humans just like us and if they can do it then Insha Allah we can do it as well. They bowed before Allah (swt) in obedience and so we must be able to bow as well. It only takes determination, perseverance and always seeking help from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to bow before Him (swt) in prayer and in obedience!



45. Do you command the people to righteousness and you forget yourselves, while you are reading the Book? Do you not think?

So far we have seen Allah (swt) call on the children of Israil to believe in the messenger that He (swt) has sent and not to conceal the Truth that they know about this messenger in their own books. After belief Allah (swt) called on them to perform the two most important of obligations of this Din which were establishing the prayer and paying the Zakat. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with this address to the children of Israil. Once again it is extremely important that we try to derive a lesson from these ayahs for our lives as well. The

Quran is an Eternal Book, the guidance that it contains is not limited to a specific people or a specific period of time. It is a guidance for all people and all times. So let us try to get the guidance from these ayahs for our lives.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by asking the children of Israil a question. Allah (swt) asks them if they are going to command the people to righteousness when they forget it for themselves. The scholars say that this ayah was revealed about the Jewish Rabbis. Many of the Jewish Rabbis would command the people to do acts of righteousness but they would fail to do these actions themselves. For example they might tell their people about the obligation of paying Zakat but they would fail to pay this money correctly themselves. They would tell their people not to commit adultery but they would commit adultery themselves. Allah (swt) asks them how they could possibly call on others to do good works when they fail to do these actions themselves? With many of these rabbis it was not simply that they fall into sin every now and then, but they were among those who constantly and repeatedly violated the law of Allah (swt). They did not see a problem with this constant disobedience to Allah (swt). They tried to correct everyone else but they always excused themselves.

There is a very important lesson that we as Muslims who are involved in dawah can learn from the actions of these Jewish Rabbis. Before we try to correct others we first have to look at ourselves. There are many reasons for this. First we are responsible for our own souls even more than we are responsible for the souls of others. On the Day of Judgment we know that one soul will not be able to help another in any way. It is true that we have to teach others and carry this Message to others, but we must also remember the obligation that we have to our own souls. Allah (swt) has not given us the right to be unjust to our own souls by falling into sin and disobedience to Allah (swt). So before we try to correct others, we should strive to improve our own selves. We are responsible for our own salvation just as much as we are responsible for the salvation of others.

Another reason why we must correct ourselves before correcting others is because others look to us as an example. If you are a dawah carrier, the image that you convey to others

is very important. All human beings need role models whom they can look up to and follow. Of course the Prophet (saw) is the model that we should all strive to follow. But many people need someone living whom they can look at. So if we are involved in the dawah or even if we are just Muslims who practice the Din regularly, then there might be people who look towards us as examples of what a good Muslim is. Even if they are wrong to make this assumption, they might still do it. So it is extremely important that we also do righteous deeds so that we portray to them the correct image of a Muslim. Because when we call others to be worshippers and servants of Allah (swt), they might look to us as examples of how such worshippers and servants of Allah (swt) should be like. You might say that you do not deserve to be looked at as an example, you might say that you are a sinner and that you are weak, but as long as you are involved in any kind of dawah, there is the possibility that there might be people who take you as examples. Most likely these people are your own family members or those whom you know very well. The danger here is that if they are invited to Allah (swt) through you, and then they witness you committing some acts of disobedience to Allah (swt), then that might lead them away from Allah (swt). Would you then want to be responsible for that? How will you stand on the Day of Judgment before Allah (swt) then? What excuse will you give when Allah (swt) asks you why you misguided others through your acts of disobedience? Now of course we all fall into sin every now and then, but what is important is that we make an effort to reform ourselves. We make an effort to keep away from sin. When we do fall into sin we should also make an effort to keep it concealed so that no one else finds out about it. May Allah (swt) save us from disobeying His (swt)'s Law! We are not able to do it ourselves but it is only with His (swt)'s support and enabling grace that we do.

Inviting people to the path of Allah (swt), commanding good and eradicating evil is an obligation that we all have. It is also an action for which we all hope for a great reward from Allah (swt). As the Prophet (saw) told Ali (ra) "If Allah (swt) guides one person to Him (swt) through you, then it would be better for you than a hundred red camels". This hadith shows the great reward that Allah (swt) gives those who call others to His (swt)'s Path. When you guide

someone to Allah (swt) you not only get the reward for your guiding them, but you also get a share of every good deed that they perform afterwards. Just think then how much your scale of good deeds will increase by guiding people to Allah (swt). But since dawah is such an important obligation and carries such a great reward it is by no means an easy task. Not only do you have to strive and preserve in carrying this Message to the people, but the thoughts and ideas that you call to must be reflected through your own actions as well. You should think of the righteous actions that you do as part of your dawah as well. You are not only calling the people through your words but also through your actions as well. May Allah (swt) allow us to do the righteous actions through which we can set a good example and call the people to the path of worshipping and serving Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) always allow us to remember the great reward that come from calling others to Him (swt)!

A common argument that is raised by some people is that they would say that if they are not following the Law of Allah (swt) themselves, then they should not call others to this path. They would say that since dawah can have this negative effect of driving people away if the dawah carrier is sinful, then one should not carry dawah until one is free and clear of all sins. Such thinking is completely wrong. First of all we should realize that we all commit sins, such is part of being human. So if we are waiting for us to be completely free of sin before we start dawah, then we will be waiting until our death. Second we should realize that we have an obligation before Allah (swt) to do both. We ourselves have to be obedient to Allah (swt), and we have to invite others to this path as well. We cannot choose which of these obligations we want to take. We cannot invite to Allah (swt) while we are persisting in sin, and at the same time we cannot seek to reform ourselves while ceasing all dawah all together. It has to be a process where we are striving to do both, and in the end what we have to hope for is that Allah (swt) accepts our efforts. At the end of the day that is all that matters. So you have to strive to correct others and teach them about Islam, and you have to strive to correct yourself as well.

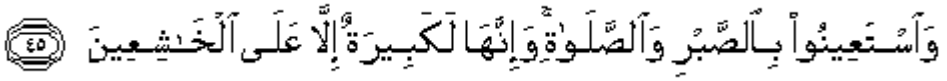
Then Allah (swt) says, "**while you are reading the Book**". The Jewish Rabbis had the Tawrah between their hands. They knew that is was as much an obligation for them to follow

it as it was for them to teach it to others. They knew of the severe punishment that awaited them if they commanded others to do righteous deeds but failed to practice those deeds themselves. The same is true for us as well. For example in his tafsir of this ayah Imam Qurtubi quotes a hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) describes a people that he (saw) saw when he went on the Night Journey, he (saw) saw that these people were literally cutting their own lips with scissors of fire. Can you imagine this? They are cutting their own lips with scissors of fire. Gibreel (as) told the Prophet (saw) that these were people who used to encourage others to do good actions but failed to practice those actions themselves. Just imagine how painful it is to cut your lips with scissors of fire. The only way you can save yourself from such torment is if you also practice the good actions that you call others to. The Jewish Rabbis knew this fact very well because they had the Book between their hands, the Book that told them not to commit sin while they were calling the people to Allah (swt). They had this Book and still they refused to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). They still refused to keep away from sin. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) make us realize that if we were to do what they did, it would be even worse for us because the Book that we have is the Quran, the very words of Allah (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Do you not think?".** Are you not thinking? What is the matter with you? What kind of a fool expects others to follow him when he himself is not doing what he is calling others to do? How can you expect to be a dawah carrier when you yourself do not try your hardest to be the best worshipper and servant of Allah (swt) that you can be? People who work in dawah while they continue to commit sins are fools. If they are calling others to righteousness but they do not see a problem with themselves committing acts of disobedience to Allah (swt) then they are only deceiving themselves. Such people see a problem with everyone else but they always excuse themselves from sin and excuse themselves from performing the actions that are required of a believer. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah how wrong these people are, they do not even think. Look at the Power of the words of Allah (swt) in

this ayah. See how He (swt) forces them to think about their situation and that which it is that they are doing.

If such people thought about what they were doing then they would realize that not only is it wrong for them to excuse themselves from sin while calling others to righteousness, but also to do so shows their pride and arrogance. It is only from a sense of pride and arrogance that you think that you are somehow excused from having to obey the Law of Allah (swt). You know what the Law of Allah (swt) is and you call the people to follow it, as Allah (swt) has commanded you to do, but when it comes to yourself you make excuses. You convince yourself that you are above having to submit your desires to the Law of Allah (swt). When the example of the Muslim should be the exact opposite of this, he should be one who always makes excuses for his brothers and who always finds faults with himself. May Allah (swt) allow us to correct ourselves before we correct others! May Allah (swt) allow us to realize that to excuse ourselves while we are correcting others is a sign of Shaitan within us because we are comparing ourselves to others and seeing fault in them but finding ourselves blameless! May Allah (swt) make us realize that we have the Quran and that should make us strive to learn it and to implement in our lives as well as carry it to others! May Allah (swt) make us always think and reflect on the actions that we are doing to make sure that they are pleasing to Him (swt)!



46. And seek help through *Sabr* and *Salah*. Truly this is extremely difficult except on the *Khashi een*.

In the previous ayah we saw Allah (swt) command the children of Israil and us as well not to commit sins while we are calling others to Allah (swt). Such a thing is by no means easy. We are created as weak creatures, and we are especially prone to sin. Shaitan and his forces are waiting at every corner to attack us and to ambush us, to pull us into disobedience to Allah (swt).

Furthermore when we are calling others to the path of Allah (swt) we may get the feeling that we are better than them. Since we are calling them to Allah (swt) we may get the feeling that we are more beloved to Allah (swt) than they are. This feeling of pride and self-contentment is also from Shaitan. This accursed devil may then trick us into thinking that since we are calling others to the path of Allah (swt) and we are more favored to Allah (swt) than they are, this then gives us an excuse to perform sins. He would tell us that we are better than them, and so if we sin it can be excusable. Such thinking is also terribly wrong. Who are you to say who is more favored to Allah (swt)? Maybe Allah (swt) loves them more than us because even though they are sinners they do not have this pride and arrogance in their hearts that we may have. May Allah (swt) save us from Shaitan! May Allah (swt) save us from ever thinking that we are in any way better than the ones whom we invite to this path! May Allah (swt) make us remember that it is only He (swt) Who can Judge people and only He (swt) Who Knows who is the better among us.

So we see that it is difficult to enjoin people to do righteousness and carry the dawah to them while at the same time trying to abide by the Law of Allah (swt) ourselves. Such a feat is truly difficult. On the one hand we have to struggle hard to carry dawah to others, and on the other hand we have to struggle hard to perform all of the obligations required of us and we have to struggle hard to refrain from the forbidden actions. So how do we perform these actions that require so much struggle and are so difficult? Allah (swt) tells us how in this ayah.

Allah (swt) tells us to seek help with *Sabr* and *Salah*. First let us look at *Sabr* and the meaning of this word. Al-Qurtubi says that it comes from a word that means to bind and tie someone up. So when you have *Sabr* it is like you are actually tying yourself up. You are restraining yourself for the sake of Allah (swt). The scholars say that there are three kinds of *Sabr*. One is to be patient when some misfortune or calamity befalls you. Another is to persevere in performing the actions that are required of you, and another is to be patient in refraining from what is forbidden to you. All of these meanings are included in the word *Sabr*, and as the linguistic definition indicates it is something like you have tied yourself up and not allowed yourself to become distraught at calamites, and not allowed yourself to become lazy in

performing the obligations, and not allowed yourself to perform the actions that are forbidden. You have tied yourself for the sake of Allah (swt) because of your love and fear of Him (swt).

Salah in this ayah refers to the prayer that we know very well. Allah (swt) tell us in this ayah that just like Sabr, *Salah* can also can be a source of strength for us in our path of dawah. In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb says "Salah is the link between man and his Lord, through which the human heart draws strength and fortitude". So your Salah is your connection with Allah (swt), it brings you closer to Him (swt) and from this closeness your heart gets the strength to continue on this path of dawah that Allah (swt) has ordained for you.

So to overcome the difficulties involved in carrying dawah while still remaining obedient to the Law of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) commands us to seek help through *Sabr* and *Salah*. If we do these two actions then we know that Allah (swt) will help us in this difficult task that we have of carrying dawah to others while keeping ourselves clear of sin. Note that both of them are tied to the strength of Iman or belief, the stronger our Iman the more Sabr we will have and the more we will be able to make Salah. However many scholars also say that there is also a reverse connection, the more Sabr that you have and the more Salah that you make, then the stronger your Iman will become. So in order to strengthen your Iman you have to increase in your Salah and you should have more Sabr. As always Allah (swt) Knows Best! For our part we must remember that if only we have deep Sabr and we make our Salah correctly, then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will help us in this difficult task that we have. Through our Sabr and our Salah, Allah (swt) will give us the strength that we need to carry on in this Path. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to have Sabr and the ability to make our Salah so that we can seek help from Him (swt)!

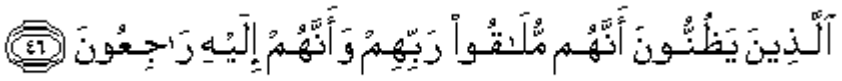
In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Indeed that is extremely difficult except for the *Khashieen***". Allah (swt) is telling us here that to seek help through deep Sabr and constant Salah is extremely difficult except for these kind of people. It is so difficult that if you are not among the *Khashieen*, then you will not be able to do it. So now we must strive to find out who are the *Khashieen* so that we can try to be among them. Because only if we are

among them, can we receive the help of Allah (swt) in this great task that we have of carrying dawah and being obedient to Allah (swt) at the same time.

The *Khashieen* are those who have *Khushu*. The scholars say that *Khushu* is a feeling of humility and humbleness that appears in the heart when you recognize the Power and Majesty of Allah (swt) and you recognize your own weakness and insignificance. *Khushu* comes from a deep and certain belief in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has described Himself in the Quran. When you remember Allah (swt) in this way, with all of His (swt)'s Perfect Names, such as how He (swt) is the All Powerful, the All Knowing, the Most Merciful, the Most Just, and then you think about your own self and your own weakness and how imperfect you are, then a feeling of humbleness and tranquility should overtake you. This feeling is *Khushu*. It is only for those who have this quality in them, who look for this quality and try to inculcate it within themselves, is the difficult task of carrying dawah and remaining obedient to the Law of Allah (swt) possible. In other words if you do not have *Khushu*, you will not be able to perform this task of carrying dawah and being righteous yourself. Since dawah is an obligation, and dawah cannot be done without having *Khushu*, so then having *Khushu* is an obligation as well.

The scholars have emphasized that *Khushu* is more an action of the heart than it is of the limbs. Many people think that they have *Khushu* if they walk slowly, bend down all of the time and if they speak softly. Many people think that there is all to *Khushu*. Such people may even do these outer actions of humbleness but in their hearts they have no fear or reverence for Allah (swt), in fact in their hearts they would look down on others and think themselves to be better than others. This is not *Khushu*. You have *Khushu* in your heart by always remembering Allah (swt) and thinking about how Glorious He (swt) IS and how weak and insignificant you are. So it starts first and foremost in the heart. On the outside you do not need to walk slowly and bend down and speak softly. On the out side you have to be strong and confident. You are a servant of Allah (swt) so you should be proud of that fact. You must not think yourself to be better than others, but at the same time you must be proud of the fact that you are a servant of Allah (swt). This fact that you are a servant of Allah (swt) should give you confidence and

strength. This is what it means to be among the *Khashieen.* May Allah (swt) make us among the *Khashieen*! May Allah (swt) make us among those who call to Him (swt) and who are obedient to His (swt)'s Law at the same time! May Allah (swt) make us among those who are constant in their Salah and who have an ocean of Sabr! All help and success is only from Allah (swt)!



47. The ones who are sure that they will meet their Rabb, and they are sure they will return to Him.

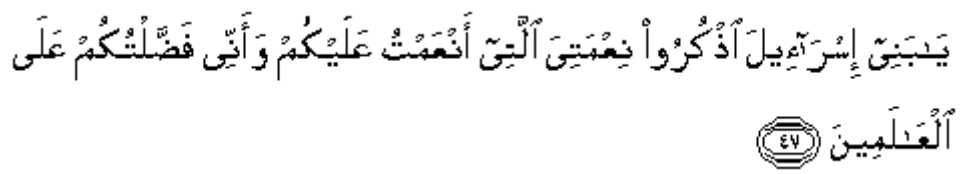
We are continuing to look at the ayahs where Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil. We know that just as these ayahs are meant for both the Jews and Christians at the time of the Prophet (saw), they are also addressing the Jews and Christians in all the generations after them including the Jews and Christians today. Allah (swt) is calling them to this Message that He (swt) sent with the Prophet (saw). First Allah (swt) tells them to believe in what was revealed to the Prophet (saw), and not to conceal the Truth concerning him (saw) that was in their books. Then they have to make the Salah, pay the Zakat, and to call others to this Din as well. But when they call others to the Path of Allah (swt), they have to be sure that they abide by the Law of Allah (swt) as well. They cannot call others to Allah (swt) when they themselves are persisting in sin. They cannot call others to Allah (swt) when they themselves are failing to abide by the Law of Allah (swt). But this task of calling others to Allah (swt) while being true to Allah (swt) yourself is by no means an easy task. That is why Allah (swt) commands them and He (swt) commands

us as well to seek help through Sabr and Salah. These two are the pillars that strengthen and support the believer. But it is difficult to have a deep Sabr and to be constant in the Salah unless you are among the *Khashieen*. So in order to be a true believer you have to be among the *Khashieen*. In other to do dawah you have to be among the *Khashieen*. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe the *Khashieen*.

Allah (swt) begins by telling us that the *Khashieen* are "**The ones who are sure that they will meet their Rabb**". So first Allah (swt) describes them as the ones who are certain that they will meet their *Rabb*. Allah (swt) is the *Rabb* for every single person and every single thing. As we have said Rabb means the Creator and Sustainer and the Lord and Master of all things. So the *Khashieen* are the ones who are sure that they will meet their Rabb. From this firstly we can see that they acknowledge Allah (swt) as their Rabb. They acknowledge Allah (swt) as their Lord and Master. They are always thinking about Allah (swt). Their minds are always reflecting on the Greatness of Allah (swt) and their hearts are always attached to Him (swt). They are humbled before His (swt)'s Majesty and thoughts of Him (swt) never leave them. When you are sure that you are going to meet someone you are always thinking about that person, and when that person is the most beloved in your heart then thoughts of that person should be in your heart even more. This is how it is with Allah (swt), you are sure that you are going to meet Allah (swt) and you love Him (swt) more than anyone else and more than anything else, so you are always thinking about Him (swt). These thoughts on Allah (swt) and the Greatness of Allah are what will make you among the *Khashieen*, may Allah (swt) make us among them! Not only are the *Khashieen* always looking forward to meeting Allah (swt) but Allah (swt) describes in this ayah as those who are certain that they will meet with Him (swt). They have no doubt whatsoever about their meeting with their Rabb, so they are always looking forward to it and they are always doing all that they can to prepare for it.

Then Allah (swt) describes the *Khashieen* as those who are sure they will return to Him (swt). Notice that Allah (swt) does not say that they will go to Him (swt) but He (swt) says that they will *return* to Him (swt). So not only must we have certainty that we are going to meet Allah

(swt) but we must also be certain that we came from Him (swt). We must be certain that we began with Allah (swt) and so when this life is over we are going back to Him (swt). The fact that our beginning is with Allah (swt) should also make us remember Him (swt) more. Not only are we going to meet Him (swt) one Day soon, but even the beginning of our existence was with Him (swt). We are living, breathing and thinking at this moment only because of Allah (swt), so why should our thoughts be on anyone else or anything else? May Allah (swt) make us among those who always remember that we are from Him (swt), and may He (swt) make us remember that one Day soon we will return to Him (swt) to meet Him (swt)! May this knowledge and these thoughts make us among the *Khashieen*! The ones who are humble before Allah (swt) and call to His (swt)'s Path while submitting completely to Him (swt) themselves!



48. O children of Israil, remember the favor the one that I bestowed on you, and that I favored you above all the nations.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the address to the Children of Israil. Allah (swt) once again reminds them of the favor and the blessing that He (swt) bestowed on them. In this ayah Allah (swt) explicitly mentions that blessing by telling them how He (swt) favored them above all the other nations of the world. As we have discussed the way in which Allah (swt) favored them is by sending them His (swt)'s prophets and messengers, and by choosing them to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. So in this ayah Allah (swt) calls on the Jews and the Christians to believe in this Message and He (swt) reminds of them of all the favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on them. The greatest of these favors is that He (swt) had chosen them to be the nation to carry His (swt)'s Message.

Many would question as to how being the Message bearers could be a favor because of all the difficulty that it entails, we have already discussed how difficult carrying the dawah is and how it is only the *Khashieen* who can accomplish it. So how was it a favor for the children of Israil that Allah (swt) chose them to be the nation to carry His (swt)'s Message? The answer to such a question is that the reward for an action equals the difficulty of that action. So the more difficult an action is, and the more that you have to strive to accomplish it, the more your reward with Allah (swt) will be for that action, Insha Allah. So even though carrying dawah to mankind was a tremendous task that required a great deal of fortitude and patience, it is still a great honor and blessing if Allah (swt) chooses your nation for this task because of the great reward that you will be given for walking on this Path. This is the path of the prophets and messengers. This is the path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). You know that you exist in this world only to serve Allah (swt), so what action could you doing that is more pleasing to Him (swt) than calling on the people to worship and serve Him (swt) just like you have done. What action could bring you more of the Pleasure of Allah (swt) than that of dawah and jihad? So even though this path is difficult and even those this path is dangerous those who have been chosen to walk this path have been given the greatest of favors because they have been chosen to walk on the path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

Mawdudi notes in his tafsir of this ayah that yet another favor that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil is that He (swt) gave them the divine knowledge. This is the knowledge that was contained in the Tawrah and the other Holy Scriptures that they received. How fortunate are those who have such knowledge that comes from Allah? This is a special kind of knowledge that comes from Allah (swt) Alone, knowledge of unseen things that lies beyond human perception. Knowledge of the true reality of this universe. Knowledge of Allah (swt). Knowledge of the Hereafter. Knowledge of the angels. This knowledge was a great blessing that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them. Because Allah (swt) gave this knowledge to their nation before anyone else, this is a special favor that He (swt) bestowed on them that was not given to any of the other nations. So in addition to being grateful to Allah (swt) for choosing them to carry

His (swt)'s Message they should also be grateful to Allah (swt) for this divine knowledge that He (swt) bestowed on them.

We as Muslims should also be grateful for the favor of divine knowledge that Allah (swt) has given us. The knowledge that is in the Quran and the knowledge that can be found in the Sunnah is knowledge that cannot be found anywhere else in this world. It is knowledge about the true reality of the universe. The Quran and Sunnah have knowledge about Allah (swt), and all the Perfect Names of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who created us and everything around us, should we not then want to know as much about Him (swt) as we can? It has knowledge that tells us that this world is only a temporary place of residence, and that one Day soon we will return to Allah (swt). This is the Day on which we will be judged for every moment of our lives in this world, should we then not want to know as much about this Day as we can. It is knowledge about the garden and the fire; each soul that was ever created will be taken to one of these places. Should we not then want to know as much as we can about these places? So we should always be grateful for this knowledge that Allah (swt) has given us in Quran and Sunnah. It is a bounty and blessing from Allah (swt) the magnitude of which we will never truly comprehend. The best way in which we can show gratitude to Allah (swt) for this knowledge is by striving to learn it and by striving to live our lives according to it. So try to spend more and more of your time learning about this Din. Learn about the Quran. Learn about the hadith of the Prophet (saw). Learn about the stories of the previous prophets and the lives of the Sahabah. The lives of the righteous Imams and scholars. Insha Allah this is how you can show the proper gratitude for this blessing of knowledge that Allah (swt) has conferred upon you. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to spend our lives learning knowledge of this Din and teaching it to others!

It is important to note that this blessing which Allah (swt) mentions in this ayah, where He (swt) says that He (swt) favored the children of Israil above all nations, is in reference to the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) had given them in the past. Their nation had been the most favored nation by Allah (swt) before the coming of the Prophet (saw). Insha Allah as we will see

later on in this Surah, after the coming of the Prophet (saw), the responsibility and the privilege of carrying this Message to mankind was given to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). During the time when this ayah was revealed the children of Israil had already given up on this task of carrying dawah to mankind, and they had chosen instead to chase after the life of this world. They had failed in this responsibility and trust that they had been given. So Allah (swt) took this bounty of being the carriers of His (swt)'s Message away from them and gave it to our nation. Thus the meaning of this ayah holds true just as much for us as it does for them. We also must constantly remember this favor that Allah (swt) bestowed on us and how He (swt) chose us above all the other nations to be the bearers of His (swt)'s Message. May Allah (swt) allow us to learn from their mistakes and prove ourselves worthy to carry this Message to mankind!

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِى نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَـٰعَةٌ وَلَا
يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

49. And have *Taqwa* of the Day when one soul will not be able to stand for another at all, nor will intercession be accepted on its behalf, nor shall ransom be accepted for it, nor shall they be helped.

Allah (swt) called on the children of Israil to remember the blessing that He (swt) bestowed on them in the previous ayahs. To remember how He (swt) had favored them above all of the nations of their time by sending them many prophets and messengers, by giving them the knowledge that is in the divine books, and by making them the nation that is to carry this Message to mankind. So in the previous ayahs Allah (swt) had given them a very good reason why they should follow the Message that the Prophet (saw) had been sent with. It would be to show their gratitude to Allah (swt) for all of these bounties and favors that He (swt) had bestowed on them. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives them yet another reason why they should

follow this Message. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings their attention to the consequences of what will happen should they choose to turn away from this Message.

In this ayah Allah (swt) commands the children of Israil to have *Taqwa* of the Last Day. We should always remember that this is an address to us as much as it is an address to them. In this ayah Allah (swt) describes such a Day and why it deserves our fear and why it deserves for us to be always thinking about it. First Allah (swt) describes this Day as a Day when no soul will be allowed to stand for another. Allah (swt) will judge every person and no one will be allowed to stand for another during judgment. The reason why this ayah is especially relevant for the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) is because they used to think that since they are the descendants of righteous men and prophets like Yaqoob (as) and Yusuf (as), then these righteous ancestors of theirs will stand for them on the Day of Judgment. They were so proud of their ancestry that they thought that their ancestors could easily take their place at the time of reckoning. They thought that their ancestors can save them on that Day. Through this foolish and wishful thinking they excused themselves from having to abide by the Law of Allah (swt). They made themselves believe that they were free to commit all the sins that they wanted because they would never be judged for their actions. They thought that they could live a life of evil and lewdness and then have Yusuf (as) or one of their ancestors stand for them on the Day of Judgment. How corrupted and evil is their thinking? That is why this ayah is so important for such people. Allah (swt) clearly tells them that on this Day one soul will not be able to stand for another. Everyone will stand on their own. Allah (swt) will judge each and every single one of us for everything that we did.

Sayyid Qutb in his tafsir of this ayah mentions how this ayah emphasizes the concept of individual responsibility. You live in this life, but as you live, you must be aware that you will be responsible for every action that you take and even for every thought that you have. The only thoughts that you will not be responsible for are those thoughts that Shaitan puts in your heart but you immediately dismiss and destroy. However if an evil thought comes into your mind like pride or jealousy or hatred, and you do not try to fight these thoughts within yourself then you

will be responsible for them. You will be responsible for every thought and every action. If you lie, if you steal, if you have jealousy and hatred towards your brother, then you will be responsible for each of these actions and thoughts. Each and every human will be responsible for each and every thing that they did, and Allah (swt) will punish and forgive whom He (swt) pleases. Islam is the only thought in the world that presents this idea of individual and personal responsibility and accountability so clearly and so forcefully. We have already seen how the Jews have twisted this concept to make themselves believe that their forefathers will save them, and the Christians believe that if only you accept Jesus Christ as your savior then you are immediately absolved of all sins. The eastern religions also do not have such a concept of where you will be judged for each and every one of your actions. No other religion or thought presents this idea so forcefully into the minds of it's adherents. Only in Islam do we have this idea of individual responsibility where we believe that we will be judged for every action that we do.

This idea of individual responsibility is important because once this concept is clear in the mind of the human, it makes him strive to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) with each and every one of his actions. He does not rely on others to save him on that Day. He is always aware of the seconds ticking away in the clock of his life and so he strives to do more and more good in that time that he has. All that he cares about is pleasing his Lord. All that he cares about is doing good. So what you have is a human being who is selfless. A human being who is always looking to help others and help the society in which he lives. He is willing to sacrifice what he has in order to improve the situation of others. This is the personality that Islam creates. What kind of a world do you think we would have if more of the people were like this? Thus Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah to have Taqwa of that Day, a moment very soon where will stand before our Rabb and be judged for each and every thing that we did.

Then Allah (swt) describes the Last Day as a Day in which intercession will not be accepted from any soul. The scholars say that this refers to intercession for the unbelievers. Because we have other ayahs of the Quran and clear hadith from the Prophet (saw) that tell us that the believers will receive intercession on the Day of Judgment. There will be intercession for

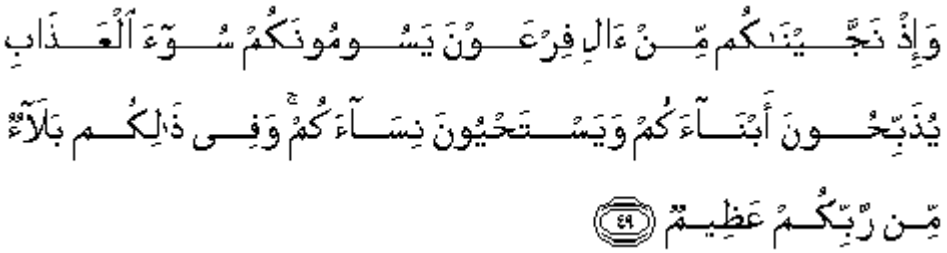
the believers from the martyrs and the memorizers of Quran, and the most important intercession will be that of the Prophet (saw). This intercession will be only for the believers. However in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that the unbelievers will receive no intercession. Since this ayah was originally addressed to the children of Israil Allah (swt) is calling on them to believe in this Message that He (swt) had sent them. If they do not believe then they should know that on that Day they will not receive any intercession. No one will be allowed to interfere with the judgment that is due upon them. May Allah (swt) save us from being among them on that Day!

Then Allah (swt) says that no ransom will be taken on that Day. Many people believe that their wealth and their riches can save them from anything. They see that any judge in this world can be bought if the price is right. So they think that they can offer their wealth on the Day of Judgment as ransom to save them from the punishment. How foolish is such thinking? Bribes only work when the one being bribed needs the criminal's money or wealth. But what does Allah (swt), the Owner of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, need with the wealth of these pathetic people?

Finally in the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that they will not be helped. If you find yourself on the Day of Judgment without the true belief in your heart and without the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt), then you should know that you will not get help from anywhere. Where can you turn to for help on a Day that belongs completely to Allah (swt) and a Day in which Allah (swt) is the King and Master, having all power and control? What can you possibly do? If you should see the punishment coming towards you, then where can you turn to run? Allah (swt) is bringing to our attention the complete weakness and utter inability of all human beings on that Day. There is no help for anyone on that Day. They will not be helped in any way whatsoever. Not even the smallest of help will be given to them, they will not even be helped to relieve the punishment or the fear for only a moment.

The only ones who will be saved are those whom Allah (swt) is pleased with. Those whom Allah (swt) is not pleased with will have no help or support from anywhere else. Now we know the nature of human beings, how weak and how forgetful we are. How hard then do we

have to work to be worthy of Allah (swt) being pleased with us on that Day? How many sins have we committed both knowingly and unknowingly? We know that this is a Day on which we can have no hope unless Allah (swt) is pleased with us. How much then do we have to strive in order to have the hope that Allah (swt) will be pleased with us on that Day? May Allah (swt) always make us to remember this Day, the Day on which we will stand alone, and the Day on which we will have no one to help us against Him (swt) except Him (swt)!



50. And (remember the time) when We saved you from the People of Firaun who were afflicting you with dreadful torment; killing your sons and sparing your women, and in that was a great trial for you from your Rabb.

Allah (swt) had already given the children of Israil two reasons why they should follow the Prophet (saw). First He (swt) reminded them how He (swt) had favored them above all nations by sending them prophets and messengers, letting them be the bearers of His (swt)'s Message, and giving the diving knowledge that was in their scriptures. Then Allah (swt) reminded of the Day of Judgment when every soul will have to stand on it's own and intercession and ransom will not be accepted for any soul. If they willfully turn away from this Message when they know that it is the Truth then they will have to pay the consequences on that Day. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives them yet another reason why they should surrender their pride and follow the Prophet (saw). Just look here at the Mercy of Allah (swt), even though these people have done so much wrong, Allah (swt) is still calling on them to believe in this Message and through that

they might be saved. Believing in this Message is what is best for them even if they do not realize it. That is why Allah (swt), in His (swt)'s Mercy, is calling them to this Message again and again.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by bringing the attention of the children of Israil to an event that happened in their history. We know from Surah Yusuf that Yaqoob (as) and his twelve sons settled in Egypt after the famine came to the land of As-Sham. The descendants of these twelve sons became the nation known as the children of Israil. Although the children of Israil flourished in Egypt for many years, the Egyptian people eventually turned against them. Their nation was eventually forced into servitude by the Egyptians, and they suffered much under the brutality and persecution of the Egyptians. Then Firaun, the self proclaimed god and ruler of the Egyptians, learned of a prophecy about a first-born male child that would be born among the children of Israil who would free them from servitude and who would destroy the Egyptian empire. When Firaun learned about this prophecy he wanted to prevent it from being fulfilled at all costs. So he ordered all the first-born male children who were born to the children of Israil to be killed. There was not a single child that was spared. The soldiers of Firaun would watch every woman from the children of Israil who was pregnant, as soon as she gave birth, if the child was first born and male they had it killed. Now we know that this child about whom the prophecy spoke was Musa (as) and we know that Allah (swt) protected him (as) from the forces of Firaun. However there were many children who were not saved, and it is to this event that Allah (swt) brings the attention of children of Israil in this ayah. Without a doubt the children of Israil suffered a lot under Firaun in various ways, but this event was by far the worst. Just imagine how painful it must have been for parents to see their infant child being taken away from them to be killed. Most of us have never seen such a reality so the grief of it is beyond our comprehension and realization. But we do know that Allah (swt) will take care of all those infants in the Hereafter. Any child that is killed before the age of accountability is automatically in Paradise. Notice also the words that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah, He (swt) does not merely say that the sons were killed but He (swt) says that they were slaughtered. This gives the meaning

that they were killed on a mass level, with hundreds if not thousands of infants that were killed. That is why Allah (swt) calls it a dreadful torment.

Notice also in this ayah that in addition to the killing of sons, Allah (swt) also mentions the sparing of the women. The fact that the women were spared was also part of the severe torment that the children of Israil had to endure. A Muslim woman is an extremely important member of the family, the family cannot survive without her. But we must also remember that she needs her family just as much as her family needs her. The correct place for a Muslim woman, the role which Allah (swt) created her to fulfill, is to take care of the family, looking after her husband and her children. Although she should still learn knowledge and teach others about the Din, her place in life is that of a homemaker just like the ideal role in life for the man is to be the provider. Now when many of the sons of the children of Israil were killed, there were many more women than men in their society. So because of this many women could not find a home for themselves, they did not have a family to be part of. They were unable to fulfill their role in life for which Allah (swt) created them. When a woman does not have a husband to provide for her, and if she has parents who are elderly and need care, we know the unspeakable acts that she might do in order to support herself and her parents. So this fact that many of their women could not get married and could not have families was also part of the dreadful torment that the children of Israil had to endure.

That is why Allah (swt) refers to this event as a great trial. This whole event was a test for children of Israil. Allah (swt) wanted to test their patience and fortitude in the face of adversity and calamity. Allah (swt) was preparing them for the task of carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. The path of dawah is by no means easy. Only the strongest and the most patient can walk this path. So by giving them this great trial, Allah (swt) is preparing them for the tremendous task that they will have to undertake when they carry this Message to mankind. Similarly we can also see how Allah (swt) prepared the Prophet (saw) and the early generation of the Sahabah in Makkah. They also had to face severe torment and persecution from the Quraysh.

Even though this was extremely difficult, it was a preparation for the task that they had in front of them of carrying Allah (swt)'s Message to mankind.

So we see in this ayah that Allah (swt) brings the attention of the children of Israil to the fact that it was He (swt) Who them saved from this great trial they were suffering. The trial was from Allah (swt) and it was He (swt) Who saved them. There was good for them in both. There was good for them in the trial and there was good for them in being saved from the trial. They may not have realized this fact but at that moment there was good for them even in the great trial that they had to endure. On the one hand it prepared them for the task of carrying dawah, and on the other hand they were rewarded for the patience they showed during such a trial. Their Deliverance from Egypt was also good for them because it was a reason for them to be grateful to Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us that when the believer faces calamity and he is patient then it is good for him, meaning that he get reward for the patience that he shows thorough that calamity. The Prophet (saw) has also said that when some Mercy or Bounty reaches the believer and he is grateful, it is also good for him, meaning that he is rewarded for his gratitude also. So in either case, the believer is rewarded. As were the children of Israil who were believers at that time also rewarded, they were rewarded for their patience for the sake of Allah (swt) through their trials and they were rewarded for their gratitude to Allah (swt) at their Deliverance from Egypt. They were also prepared for the task of dawah through this trial, and in carrying out that task of dawah they were rewarded as well. So Allah (swt) brings their attention to how He (swt) had favored them; both in preparing them to carry this Message and also in saving them from the people of Firaun. Should they then not accept the Final Message that has been sent to them through the Prophet (saw)?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is that when we walk on the path of dawah, we should expect many trials as well. Although such trials are difficult to endure, we should remember at least three benefits that are in them. One is that such trials make us strong and prepare us for the task of carrying dawah. This dawah requires strength and only those who go through such trials will have this strength. Another benefit of such trials is that Allah (swt)

rewards us if we are patient for His (swt)' sake through these trials. Yet another benefit is that Allah (swt) may forgive some of our sins through these trials. We all have sins, and these sins that we have done have contaminated our souls. We know that no one can enter paradise unless they are pure. So these trials that we have to suffer in the life of this world are one way in which we can be cleansed of all the sins that we have committed. Thus yet another benefit of the many trials and difficulties that we have to suffer in this world is that our sins are removed and we became purified. Yet another benefit that we can get from trials and difficulties is the reward for our patience through such trials. Just like we are rewarded for our prayer and fasting, we are also rewarded for our patience. Even a drop of patience that we demonstrate from even the smallest of trials is a reward in our scale pan of good deeds. The only requirement is that this patience must be for the sake of Allah (swt).

Thus we see that there is good for us even in the trials that we go through and so this trial is also a favor and blessing from Allah (swt) for us. So when any trial or difficulty befalls us, we must realize that there is a benefit in that trial which we may not see at the moment of that difficulty. When any difficulty or calamity befalls us, we must hope that perhaps Allah (swt) is forgiving us our sins, or else He (swt) is preparing us for the task that is ahead us , or else He (swt) is reward us for our patience. As long as we are sincerely striving in the path of Allah (swt), we have to believe that whatever Allah (swt) gives us in this world is good for us. Even if it may be very painful, it is good for us. May Allah (swt) always make us remember that fact! May Allah (swt) make us patient through all of the trials that we have to endue! We cannot do it without Him (swt)!

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ ٱلْبَحْرَ فَأَنجَيْنَٰكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَآ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ
وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51. And (remember the time) when We separated the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the people of Firaun while you were looking.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to address the children of Israil and He (swt) continues to remind them of the favors that He (swt) had bestowed upon them. We have already seen how Allah (swt) described the time when the children of Israil were suffering a severe torment at the hands of the people of Firaun who were slaughtering their sons and sparing their women. We also saw how Allah (swt) saved them from that torment. Not only did Allah (swt) save them but He (swt) also made that torment which they had to suffer as a means for preparing them for the task of dawah that their nation would be given. Allah (swt) also rewarded them for the patience during these trials. Through these favors that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them, He (swt) calls on them to believe in the Message of the Prophet (saw).

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings the attention of the children of Israil to yet another favor that He (swt) bestowed them. We know that Allah (swt) sent Musa (as) to Firaun. Musa (as) carried dawah to Firaun and told him to worship Allah (swt) and to give up the legislative power of Allah (swt) that he had usurped. For a long time Musa (as) carried dawah to Firaun, and Allah (swt) showed Firaun many signs to prove that Musa (as) was indeed His (swt)'s messenger. But Firaun rejected each and every one of these signs, and each sign only made him more arrogant and more firm in his rejection of the Truth. Then Allah (swt) commanded Musa (as) and the children of Israil to leave Egypt by night and He (swt) told them that they would be pursued. So in the darkness of night Musa (as) and the entire nation of the children of Israil made an escape from Egypt. Just as Allah had told them, soon after Musa (as) and the children of Israil had left Egypt Firaun found out about their escape and he started to pursue them. Musa (as) was leading the children of Israil out of Egypt and soon they found themselves at the Red

Sea. This large sea separated the children of Israil from the Promised Land in Philistine. This was the land to which Musa (as) was taking them. The land which they had been promised. We should note however that this land was promised to them when they were the nation of dawah carrying this Message to mankind. When they gave up this role, the land then belonged to the nation that was to carry this dawah after them, and that is the nation of the Prophet (saw).

So the children of Israil found themselves at the sea, a large body of water in front of them and soon they learned that the army of Firaun was behind them. The scholars have also said that on either side of them were tall mountains that could not be surmounted. Imagine what a difficult situation this must have been. They had nowhere to run whatsoever. There was death in front of them and death behind them. If you find yourself in a situation like this, who would you turn to? What can you possibly do? Such a predicament truly shows the weakness of the human being and what a helpless creature he is. How he is so limited in what we can do. We are all human beings just like that. We are all such weak and helpless creatures? How dare then should we have any kind of arrogance or pride before Allah (swt)? How dare we refuse to follow any of His (swt)'s laws? How evil would it be for a people to ever rule by other than the Law of Allah (swt)?

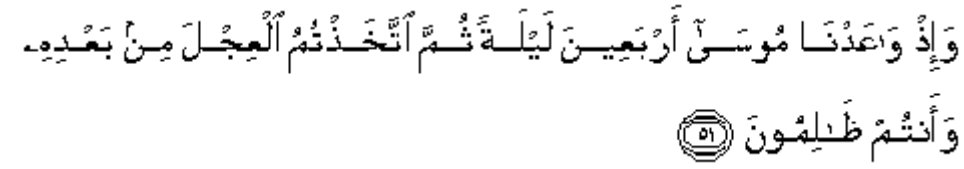
At this point when all hope seemed lost. At this point when their deaths seemed certain. That was when Allah (swt) saved them. Allah (swt) ordered Musa (as) to strike the water with his staff and the waters of the sea parted. All the water of the sea was divided into two, and a path was given to the children of Israil to walk on the basin of the sea. It was Allah (swt) Who parted the sea for them and made for them this path on the sea floor on which to walk. This is the path that leads to salvation. This is the path of Allah (swt) that is shown to us by the prophets. If we want to be saved then we must walk on this path also. We must believe in what the Prophet (saw) has told us and we must do everything that he (saw) commanded us to do. By walking on this path that was given to them on the floor of the sea, the children of Israil were saved from all of the persecution and torment that they had to suffer from the people of Firaun.

Allah (swt) reminds them in this ayah that it was He (swt) and He (swt) Alone Who had saved them.

This ayah is specifically addressed to the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) is reminding them that it was He (swt) Alone Who had saved their ancestors when their nation as a whole was facing certain death. Should they then not be grateful to Allah (swt) for saving them? Should they then not follow the messenger that Allah (swt) had sent to them instead of allowing their pride and their jealousy to prevent them from submitting to this Message? The fact that the Prophet (saw) was from the Arabs was a great test for them. It takes a great deal of patience and courage to follow a man who was from a people that your people viewed at as a lesser race. But Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil that they had gone through similar trials before, and they were in debt to Allah (swt) for all of the favors that He (swt) had bestowed on them. So they had a duty and responsibility to follow the Prophet (saw) even if it may have been hard for them to do so. This was a test that Allah (swt) had given the Jews of the Prophet (saw)'s time, and only a few of them passed this test.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells them how the people of Firaun were drowned while they were looking. This fact is especially significant. Not only were the people of Firaun punished with a horrible torment of being drowned alive but the children of Israil were watching this happen before their very eyes. When Musa (as) and the children of Israil had crossed the sea, Firaun and his army entered the path along the sea floor in pursuit of them. But as we know Allah (swt) then commanded the sea to come back together when the army of Firaun was in the path on the sea floor. Firaun and his entire army were drowned by the waters of the ocean. Simply look at that, a mighty king and his powerful forces were destroyed by water. Water which is the source of life was the source of destruction for this mighty empire. No one knows the armies of Allah (swt) except He (swt). Anything and anyone can be a soldier of Allah (swt). So in this ayah Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil how they saw the people of Firaun being destroyed with their own eyes. They saw the Miracle of Allah (swt) with their own eyes. They saw the waters of the ocean part for them and then they saw the waters come down

on the army of Firaun. Is this not enough to remind them that Allah (swt) is always there at every moment of their lives? Is this not enough of a sign to prove to them the Reality of Allah (swt)? That Allah (swt) can help them anywhere that they are. How then can they turn away from Allah (swt) after seeing such signs? How then can they refuse to believe in the Message that has been given to the Prophet (saw)? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! They had a responsibility to serve and worship Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) had done for them but they failed in that responsibility. May Allah (swt) enable us to always remember Him (swt) and to always turn to Him (swt) when we are in need!



52. And (remember the time) when we appointed for Musa forty nights, then you took the calf (as a god) after him and you were *Dhalimoon*.

In this ayah we see Allah (swt) continues the address to the children of Israil. As we read these ayahs where Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil, there are two important facts to keep in mind. One is that these ayahs are part of the Mercy of Allah (swt) for the children of Israil in that He (swt) is giving them so many reasons why they should believe in this Message that He (swt) has sent to the Final Messenger. Another fact to keep in mind is that these ayahs are a warning for our Ummah. We always have to remind ourselves that we are on the same path that they once walked on. We are humans just like they were, and Shaitan is our enemy just like he was theirs. Now we are the nation who is carrying the Message of Allah (swt) just like they once were. So whatever mistake that they made, we might make as well and where ever Shaitan deceived them, he might deceive us as well. So as we read these ayahs we should firstly

remind ourselves how Merciful Allah (swt) IS to these people, even though they have failed in their duty so many times, He (swt) still invites them to their salvation again and again. Then we must also look at the mistakes that they made and see how we can avoid them for ourselves. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) protect us from Shaitan!

What mistakes did the children of Israil make you might ask? You might say that so far we have seen them do only good. They were patient through the great trials that they had to suffer at the hands of the people of Firaun, and because of their perseverance and their prayer, Allah (swt) parted the sea for them saving them and drowning the people of Firaun. So it seems like they have not made any mistakes. However in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to one of the greatest mistakes that they made. Allah (swt) tells us of how even after they were shown all of these signs and even they had gone through such preparation, they still committed the worst of crimes that any human being can commit.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by once again mentioning an event in the history of the children of Israil. This was the time when Musa (as) had to leave them for a period of forty nights. So Musa (as) who was their leader and their prophet, they one who watched over them and the one who lead them out of Egypt had to leave them for over a month. Allah (swt) had appointed for Musa (as) forty nights of worship in solitude before he (as) received the Law of the Tawrah. This was the Sacred Law that the children of Israil were to live by. So their prophet and their leader had left them. This was when they sank into mischief and even into shirk.

Now there was an evil man among the children of Israil named Samri. He was somehow able to see the special horse of Gibreel (as) when the army of Firaun was drowned. Gibreel (as) must have been present, riding on his horse, when the army of Firaun was destroyed. No one else from among the children of Israil were able to see Gibreel (as) except Samri. Now Samri saw the horse of Gibreel (as) strike the ground with it's hooves, and he took some of this dirt where the horse had struck the ground. When Musa (as) had gone, Samri commanded the children of Israil to melt all of the gold that they had taken from Egypt, and he then put this special dirt in the molten gold. He then told the children of Israil to mold the gold

into the form of a calf. Because the golden calf had this special dirt within it, it started to moan and make a noise like it was alive. Samri then told the children of Israil that this calf was their god and that they had to worship it. The calf was so beautiful and the sound that it made was so alluring to them that they followed him and worshipped the calf as he commanded them to. Shaitan has minions from among the humans and the from among the jinn, and we can see how Samri was one is his minions from among the humans. Just see how the two of them had lead the children of Israil astray.

Recall how these were a people who had been praying to Allah (swt) to deliver them from people of Firaun. Recall how Allah (swt) had sent Musa (as) to save them. Recall how they had seen Allah (swt) drown the great army of Firaun with their own eyes. How then could these people be deceived so easily into worshipping something besides Allah (swt)? This is how Shaitan works, he has promised that he will try his best to lead mankind astray and that is exactly what he will do. He will try every trick and ploy to take people away from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Just see how a people who had so recently seen such a great miracle from Allah (swt) such as the parting of the sea, and who were able to endure such trials as they had suffered from the people of Firaun, were deceived by Shaitan into shirk. Shirk as we know is the worship of another god besides Allah (swt) or the servitude of another master besides Allah (swt) or the sovereignty of another legislator besides Allah (swt). All of these are different forms of shirk and Shaitan has a goal to take mankind away from Allah (swt) and into this shirk. Can we then ever feel safe from Shaitan? May Allah (swt) save us from Shaitan and from all of his plots!

Because of what they had done Allah (swt) calls them *Dhalimoon*. These are the people who do *Dhulm*. The meanings of *Dhulm* include "injustice", "oppression" and "wrong-doing". What could be a greater injustice than worshipping another god besides Allah (swt)? What could be a greater oppression than submitting one's self to other than Allah (swt)? What could be a greater wrong than bowing down to other than Allah (swt) when He (swt) was the One Who created you and He (swt) is the One Who is keeping you alive for every moment? That is why to worship other than Allah (swt) is the greatest of crimes.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how easily Shaitan can take us away from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Not only can he take us away from making Allah (swt) as the goal in our lives, but he can also trick us into taking things from the creation as objects of worship. So we must always have our defenses up against Shaitan. It is actually very simple, the only challenge lies in remembering to always implement it. What we have to do is to always remember that the purpose of our existence is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Every action that we take and every thought that we have must be only for Allah (swt). The only challenge lies in always remembering this fact and always trying to implement it. May Allah (swt) help us to always remember this task that we have! May Allah (swt) save us from Shaitan through our remembrance of Him (swt)! Only in the remembrance of Allah (swt) are we safe from our pride and our desires! Only in the remembrance of Allah (swt) are we safe from Shaitan!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the danger of shirk and how it can seep into even the community of believers. The children of Israil were believers and they knew very well about Allah (swt). They had seen Allah (swt) save them from the people of Firaun and they had even seen Allah (swt) part the sea for them before their very eyes. So these were a people who had all the evidences to give them certainty about Allah (swt). They were sure that Allah (swt) Exists and that He (swt) was their Creator and Sustainer, and so He (swt) should have been their Lord and Master as well as their God and object of worship. They knew that they must worship and serve Allah (swt) Alone. Despite this knowledge Shaitan still tricked them into worshipping other than Allah (swt). So just as we must always be on our guard against Shaitan, we must also always be on our guard against shirk. The sad truth is that we have not been careful. There are so many different kinds of shirk that our Ummah has been guilty of even though we have the greatest of miracles in the Quran. Just like with the children of Israil we can see that this Ummah is also guilty of the most blatant form of shirk and that is literally worshipping other than Allah (swt). There are people today who actually call themselves "Muslims" but who bow down and show reverence for other than Allah (swt). This reverence

could be towards so called "saints" or "kings" or towards graves or it could actually be towards idols. How could our Ummah have sunk to this level when Allah (swt) has clearly warned us in this ayah how dangerous shirk is and how easily we can fall into it? How can you kiss the hand of that "saint" in respect of him? How can you bow before that "king"? How can you call on that dead body in the grave? How can you show this respect for the creation when you know that Allah (swt) is your Creator and Sustainer as well as their Creator and Sustainer?

The only cure for this disease is knowledge. People need to be taught and people need to be reminded that only Allah deserves to be worshipped. Every moment of your life is possible only because of Allah (swt), so how then could you ever bow down before anything other than Him (swt)? The people need to be taught and the people need to be reminded. We believe that only when the Islamic State is established can this knowledge and guidance be given to the Ummah on a mass level. Only the State can reach the masses and show them the error of their ways. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to re-establish the Islamic State so that the proper educational system can be implemented and the Muslims can be taught the correct beliefs!

So we see that the key to protecting ourselves from Shaitan and the key to protecting ourselves from shirk is the remembrance of Allah (swt). The more that we remember Allah (swt) in the way that He (swt) should be remembered, the less our chances of being deceived by Shaitan and the less our chances of falling into any kind of Shirk. The way to remember Allah (swt) is to think about Him (swt) as He (swt) has told us about in the Quran. We should remember that He (swt) is our Creator and Sustainer; we would not exist at this moment if it were not for Him (swt). We should remember Allah (swt) as the Rabb of all things, everything belongs to Him (swt) and He (swt) has complete Power and Authority over all things. We should remember Allah (swt) as the Perfect One with no flaws and weakness. Everything in creation has some weakness or flaw but He (swt) has all Perfection. Everything in creation is controlled in some way and He (swt) is the Controller. The All-Seeing. The All-Knowing. The Most Wise. The

Most Just. The Most Merciful. When we remember Allah (swt) in this way, then Insha Allah He (swt) will save us from Shaitan.

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. Then We pardoned you even after that, so that you may be grateful.

In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil how He (swt) had pardoned them in order that they may be grateful to Him (swt). Even after they had done the terrible sin of shirk Allah (swt) still pardoned them. How terrible was the crime that they had committed? Not only did they commit shirk by worshipping the golden calf, but once the calf was taken as their *illah* instead of Allah (swt), this then opened the door for them to commit many more sins and transgressions. This is because your whole life, all of your actions and all of your thoughts are based on the *illah* that you have in your heart. If Allah (swt) is no longer the *illah* in your heart, then how can you be serving Him (swt) in your actions? So once the children of Israil took the calf as their *illah*, it gave them free reign for them to commit many sins and many of the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). There was nothing that was holding them back from doing all of the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). This is what Shaitan and Samri did to the children of Israil when they replaced Allah (swt) with the calf as the illah in their hearts. When your heart is not filled with the Reality of Allah (swt), then you will allow whatever demon you please into it. This is what happened to the children of Israil. They may have been prostrating and bowing down to the calf but what they are really worshipping was their desires. They no longer remembered Allah (swt), they no longer saw the Reality and the Truth of Allah (swt), so they did whatever their desires prompted them to do. So they committed zina, they drank wine, they hurt and killed each other, and they did whatever evil that their souls prompted them to do. Because they had forgotten Allah (swt) there was nothing holding them back. However despite all of this, Allah (swt) still pardoned them.

We should note however that the word that Allah (swt) uses for "pardon" is *awf*. This word gives a meaning that is different from forgiveness. This word gives the meaning that they were pardoned but they also had to a pay a penalty for what they had done. So there was some punishment that was given for their sins before the evil of their actions was erased. When Allah (swt) forgives He (swt) wipes away the sin completely but when Allah (swt) does *awf* He (swt) pardons the sin after some punishment in this life. Insha Allah we will learn about what that punishment was in ayah 55. Even though they had this punishment the fact still remains that Allah (swt) pardoned them despite the great evil that they had done. Their sins were erased completely through the punishment that they received in this world and they were able to enter the Hereafter cleansed of these actions of evil. They had done so much evil and Allah (swt) still pardoned them. See then how evil and unjust is the human being, and how Merciful and Forgiving is Allah (swt). What can you do with a Being that is so Loving and Merciful with His (swt)'s creatures, except love Him (swt) in return and dedicate your life to worshipping and serving Him (swt)?

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that the reason why He (swt) pardoned them was so that they may be grateful. For the enormity of the sins that they committed, Allah (swt) could have destroyed their entire nation right there. Reflect once again on how horrible was the sin that they committed. How ungrateful they were to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) had given them. Allah (swt) saved them from the people of Firaun, and they even saw the sea part for them right in front of their eyes, yet they still worshipped the calf despite this favor that Allah (swt) had bestowed and despite this clear Miracle of Allah (swt) that they had seen with their own eyes. Still Allah (swt) pardoned them and He (swt) saved them from the Fire in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) only did this in order that they may be grateful.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always try to remember the favors and blessings of Allah (swt) upon us and we must always try to be grateful for all of them. Allah (swt) has told us in the Quran that if we were to try to number all of the favors and blessings that He (swt) had bestowed on us we would not be able to. So we have to constantly

be in this state of showing gratitude to Allah (swt). There are many ways in which we could express gratefulness to Allah (swt). First is to acknowledge in our hearts that every single blessing that we have is only from Allah (swt). Think about your life, think about the air that you are breathing now, think about the clothes that you wearing, think about the chair on which you are sitting, think about the computer screen or the page from which you are reading this, and then know that it was only Allah (swt) Who gave it to you. This realization that everything that you have is from Allah (swt) is your first step in showing gratitude to Him (swt). The next way to show gratitude to Allah (swt) is through your tounge. You should praise Allah (swt) by saying *Al-Hamdu lilah* and know that this means that "all praise and thanks is for Allah (swt)". Finally you must show gratitude to Allah (swt) through your actions. You should never use anything that Allah (swt) has given you in disobedience to Him (swt). So do not use your eyes to look at what is forbidden. Do not use your ears to hear what is forbidden or listen to the private conversations of others. Do not use your tounge to speak evil about others or to speak anything that is not necessary in your worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Use your tounge only to satisfy your needs in this world and to recite Quran and to glorify Allah (swt). Do not use your limbs to do any action that is displeasing to Allah (swt), and at the same time do not allow your limbs to become lazy in performing the obligations and duties that they have to Allah (swt). Every moment of your life is from Allah (swt) and so you should spend every moment of your life trying to be grateful of Him (swt). Of course you can never repay Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for you and even what you do to show gratitude is only possible because of Him (swt). But you still must try, that is what Allah (swt) will reward for you Insha Allah. The best that any of us can do is to try our very best and hope for the acceptance of Allah (swt). None of us can be truly grateful to Allah (swt), but imperfect as we are, we must still labor and try. May Allah (swt) enable us to do that! May Allah (swt) allow us to spend every moment of our life in worship and servitude to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) allow us to learn from the example of the children of Israil and the mistakes that they made!

وَإِذْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. And (remember the time) when We gave Musa the Book and the *Furqan* in order that you may be guided.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings the attention of the children of Israil to yet another event that happened in their past. To yet another favor that He (swt) bestowed on them. We saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) called Musa (as) for a period of forty nights. In this time when their leader and their prophet was gone, the children of Israil took the calf as an object of worship. They did this unspeakable act even after Allah (swt) had saved them from the people of Firaun and even after they had seen Allah (swt) split the sea into two for them. All of the blessings and favors that one could ask for were conferred on them and all of the miracles that one could ask for were shown to them, yet they still chose sin and evil instead of worshipping and serving their Creator. They still chose the calf instead of Allah (swt)!

While the children of Israil were committing these great acts of evil, Musa (as), the noble prophet of Allah (swt) was with his Rabb. The scholars tell us that Musa (as) devoted forty days and nights fasting and praying to Allah (swt). So Musa (as) would fast throughout the day and he (as) would pray throughout the night. When this period of worship and solitude was over, Allah (swt) granted Musa (as) the greatest of gifts. It is this great blessing that Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And (remember the time) when We gave Musa the Book and the *Furqan* in order that you may be guided**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil how He (swt) gave to Musa (as) the Book and the *Furqan* so that they may be guided. This refers to the Tawrah or the Sacred Law that was given to Musa (as) to guide the children of Israil. The Tawrah is called "The Book" because it contains a detailed Law that covers every action that a human being can take. It was a complete guide for the children of Israil on how they can fulfill the purpose of their creation in worshipping and serving Allah (swt). It was a

detailed Law for them both at the level of the individual and that of the society. For the individual it was a complete guide that addressed every action that he can take from the time in which he woke up to the time he went to sleep. For the society it was a complete guide on how to set up the systems of government with which to rule the people in a way that brings justice to all people, and equity and fairness to all people. If both the individuals and the society as a whole were to live according to this Law then they would both be pleasing to Allah (swt).

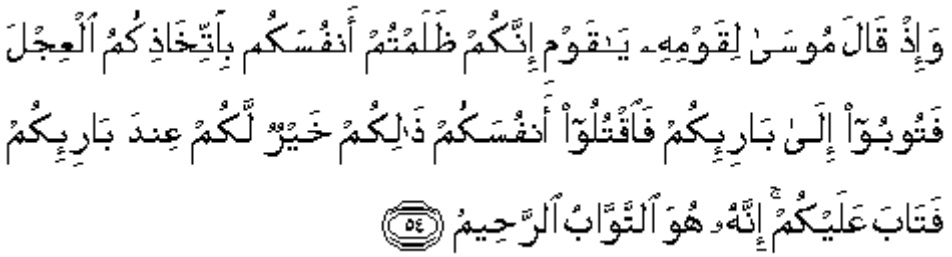
Furqan is that which separates into two, something that divides into two is called *Furqan*. Allah (swt) refers to the Tawrah in this ayah as *Furqan*. The Tawrah is called *Furqan* because it separates between what is right and what is wrong. It distinguishes between those actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and those actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). It distinguishes between those beliefs which are true and those which are false. So just like the Quran, the Tawrah is also referred to as *Furqan* because it clearly separates everything into two. It separates between Truth and falsehood and it separates between that which is pleasing to Allah (swt) and that which is displeasing to Him (swt).

Thus in the Tawrah the children of Israil found guidance. Guidance on how to please Allah (swt). The human being needs guidance, he cannot know by himself what is the purpose of his creation. He cannot know by himself how to worship and serve the Creator. Any human being who ponders on the signs in the universe around him will come to the certainty that there is only one Creator and one Controller for the universe, one Lord and Master. But no human being can know how to worship and serve the Creator unless that Creator tells them how. Once we realize that the Creator exists how can we from our own minds know how to worship and serve Him (swt)? How can we even know why He (swt) created us unless He (swt) tells us? So the purpose of the Tawrah was so that the children of Israil could be guided. It is so that they may know what their Creator wants of them. Is this not then the greatest of blessings and gifts? It shows the children of Israil what is the purpose of their creation and it teaches how them how to fulfill this purpose. It is a detailed guide for each and every one of their actions. So in this ayah Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil that they were given this great blessing of the Book and the

Furqan in order that they may be guided. This blessing that Allah (swt) bestowed on their nation should be another reason why they should have followed the Prophet (saw) without hesitation. They owe it to Allah (swt) to believe in and follow the messenger that He (swt) had sent to them, and to not allow their pride or their arrogance to stand in the way of their accepting this Message.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that the Quran is to our community what the Tawrah was for the children of Israil. The purpose of this Quran is to guide us to Allah (swt). It is a Book that contains a detailed Law to guide us both at the individual level and that of the society. It is *Furqan* in that it clearly distinguishes between the beliefs that are true and those that are false, and it distinguishes between those actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and those that are not pleasing to Him (swt). But in addition to this the Quran is also a living Miracle. Every ayah of this Quran is one that cannot be reproduced, thus clearly demonstrating that it could only be from Allah (swt). Furthermore the Quran has been preserved today exactly as Allah (swt) revealed it. There is not even small vowel of the Quran that has been changed. These latter two are two qualities that even the Tawrah does not have. The Tawrah today is not the same as it was when it was revealed, in fact we know from other ayahs of the Quran how the Jews changed and removed much of what was in the original Tawrah that was revealed to Musa (as). Furthermore the Tawrah is not a Miracle like the Quran is. So why then are we not guided by this Quran? The purpose of both the Tawrah and the Quran is to be Books of guidance, and the Quran should be an even greater source of guidance because it is a Miracle and because it has not been altered and changed. So why is it that our Ummah is still so lost even though we have this Quran? It is because we have not turned to this Quran. We do not see it as a Book with a Law through which we can live our lives. We do not implement it in our government and we do not take it as a *Furqan* to separate between what is pleasing to Allah (swt) and what is not pleasing to Him (swt). We have abandoned this Quran. Our only hope lies in making the Quran a manual with which to live our lives once again, just like the Prophet (saw) taught the Sahabah how to. Remind yourself of the hadith of Aisha (ra) once again when she (ra)

said about the Prophet (saw) that his (saw)'s character was that of the Quran. This means that everything that the Prophet (saw) said, did and thought was based on the Quran. So the Prophet (saw) took the Quran as the complete guide for his (saw)'s life. For example when he (saw) conquered Makkah, and the Quraysh chiefs who had once opposed him (saw) were now at his (saw)'s mercy, he (saw) pardoned them and forgave them just like Yusuf (as) had pardoned his brothers who had once opposed him (as). So the Prophet (saw) followed the Quran in everything that he (saw) did. We also know that the Sahabah modeled the Prophet in everything that they did. So they also followed him (saw) in making the Quran the guide book for their lives. That is why they were successful in this world and the next, and that is why Allah (swt) blessed them with victory. May Allah (swt) allow us to do that as well! May Allah (swt) enable us to always turn to this Quran and to benefit from the guidance that it contains!


وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُم بِٱتِّخَاذِكُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ
فَتُوبُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوٓاْ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ بَارِئِكُمْ
فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. And (remember the time) when Musa said to his people, "O my people surely you have been unjust to your own souls by taking for yourself the calf, so make Tawbah to your Creator, and kill yourselves, that is better for you with your Creator". So He turned towards them, surely He is the Acceptor of Repentance and the Most Merciful.

So far we have seen Allah (swt) call on the children of Israil to accept this Message that He (swt) has sent through the Prophet (saw). Part of this call to the children of Israil is a recount of their history. Allah (swt) reminds them of all of the favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on them in the past. He (swt) also reminds them of all of the mistakes that they

had done in their past, and how He (swt) had pardoned them and been Merciful towards them. In learning about the history of the children of Israil, we can also take a great lesson for our own Ummah as well. We must look at the path in which they walked and follow them where they were correct and avoid them where they are wrong. May Allah (swt) guide us!

In summary what we have seen so far is that the children of Israil were suffering great persecution and torment under the people of Firaun. They had turned the children of Israil into a race of slaves. Then when the Egyptians learned that a man would be born among children of Israil who would free them and destroy Egypt, the Egyptians killed all of the first-born male infants among the children of Israil. Allah (swt) is the Only One Who saved the children of Israil from this torment. Not only did Allah (swt) bring them out of Egypt but He (swt) also destroyed the army of Firaun by drowning them in the mighty waters of the sea. The children of Israil saw this Miracle of the sea opening for them and closing in on the people of Firaun with their own eyes. After Allah (swt) had saved the children of Israil from the people of Firaun, Allah (swt) called their prophet and leader Musa (as) away for a period of forty nights. In this time they made the golden calf and took it as an object of worship. This was the worst form of shirk because it is something that they themselves invented. It was not that they found their fathers worshipping idols and they were simply following their ancestors. On the contrary their fathers were Muslims who had been praying to Allah (swt) to save them from the people of Firaun. This shirk was something that they themselves invented. They made the calf with their own hands. Then they themselves chose to bow down and prostrate themselves before it.

Once the calf replaced Allah (swt) as the illah that is in their hearts, then there was nothing that was preventing them from committing the acts that were displeasing to Allah (swt). So in addition to worshipping the calf, they did many other actions that were displeasing to Allah (swt) such as adultery and drinking. Their whole tribe became a cesspool of sin and corruption. A people who had once been so pious. A people who had been chosen to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. A people who were supposed to be the exemplars for all other nations to follow and emulate. They had now lost all inhibitions. They just did whatever their desires

prompted them to do. Then we saw that despite all of this sin and corruption Allah (swt) still pardoned them. Despite all of this evil Allah (swt) still allowed them to come back to Him (swt). Allah (swt) wiped away the evil of their actions, He (swt) removed sins as huge as these from their scales pans. But Allah (swt) only did this after they received some punishment in the life of this world. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what that punishment was.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by reminding us of the speech of Musa (as) when he (as) said "**O my people, you have done injustice to your own souls by taking for yourself the calf**". Notice the words of Musa (as) in this ayah, and see the depth of meaning that it contains. First Musa (as) addresses the children of Israil as his people. This shows that he (as) is their prophet and they are his (as)'s nation. Every prophet was sent to a particular nation except our Prophet (saw) who was sent for all mankind. Musa (as) also shows his closeness and nearness with them by addressing them in this way. He (as) calls them "my people". Often times people are more likely to listen to the advice of someone who is close to them, and whom they know very well. So Musa (as) reminds them that he (as) indeed is their brother and their countryman. Musa (as) then tells them that surely they have done injustice to their own souls. As we have mentioned our souls do not belong to us. They were created by Allah (swt) and they belong to Him (swt). Thus He (swt) is free to do with our souls whatever He (swt) pleases, but we are not. When we choose to do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt) and earn punishment for our souls through these actions, then we are doing injustice to our own souls. Who are we to do injustice to our souls when it was Allah (swt) Who created them and Allah (swt) Who owns them? So not only did the children of Israil do wrong by worshipping the calf when Allah (swt) should have been the purpose of their lives, not only did they do wrong in satisfying their lusts and their desires when they were created to worship and serve Allah (swt), they also did wrong in earning sin and punishment for their own souls when they had no right to do so. No matter how good it may feel and no matter how much you are tempted into sin, you should know that sin brings punishment to your soul and you have no right to punish your own soul. Your soul belongs to Allah (swt) and so only He (swt) can determine what should be done

with it. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember this fact! May Allah (swt) save us from doing injustice to our own souls!

We can also notice in the words of Musa (as) that he (as) does not say that they worshipped the calf, but he (as) says that they "**took the calf for themselves**". This means that they took the calf to be the *illah* in their hearts instead of Allah (swt). This is something that is far worse than worship. When people take idols as the *illah* in their hearts, deep down inside it is their desires and lusts which is their *illah*. So the crime of the children of Israil was much worse than simply worshipping the golden calf. They had made their lusts and their desires as the *illah* in their hearts when they knew that this place was reserved only for Allah (swt). So instead of serving Allah (swt) with each and every one of their actions they served their desires. They just did whatever their desires prompted them to do without paying any heed as to whether or not their Lord would be pleased with such an action.

Then Musa (as) commands them "**So make Tawbah to your Creator**". They had done great wrong by worshipping the calf and taking their desires as their illah, so Musa (as) commands them to make Tawbah to Allah (swt) to repent for their horrible sins. As we have mentioned the word Tawbah literally means "to return". It is to return from a state of disobedience and sin into a state where one is pleasing Allah (swt). It is to return to the natural state that a human being was created to be in, that of a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt). After drowning in sin and disobedience Musa (as) calls on them to return to Allah (swt).

Notice also how Musa (as) refers to Allah (swt) for the children of Israil in this ayah as their "Creator". This is to remind them of the fact that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who created them. Thus they should realize that they belong completely to Him (swt). They should realize that they only know existence at that moment because of Him (swt). They should realize that they were created only to be worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). So by making Tawbah they can return to this role for which they were created. They can return to their Creator.

Then Musa (as) says, "**kill yourselves**". The meaning of this part of the ayah is that those who were guilty of constructing the calf and worshipping it had to be killed. The ones who were innocent among them of committing shirk had to kill those of them who were guilty. Shirk is a crime that is so great that it will not be forgiven without a penance being extracted for it. So the children of Israil had to kill the guilty among them, they had to kill those among them who had actually worshipped the calf. They had to do this even if they were members of their own family. Some may claim that this is a harsh punishment. People who make such a claim are not aware of the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is so Great and so Glorious that if anyone does a crime as horrible as this where they bow down and worship something other than Him (swt), then they deserve much worse than this. How can any but the most vile and evil of people turn away from the Glory and Splendor of Allah (swt)? Furthermore before we say that this is harsh punishment, we should remind ourselves once again that if anyone receives a punishment for their sins in the life of this world, then they are absolved of that sin in the Hereafter. So for those among the children of Israil who realized that they had done wrong and they accepted the consequences of their punishment, then Insha Allah in the Hereafter they will be absolved of their sin. Instead of burning in the Hellfire, they will be allowed to enter the Garden. So this punishment that they were given in this world was actually a tremendous Mercy for them from Allah (swt) in that He (swt) allowed them to be punished for their sins in the life of this world. Then in the Hereafter, they will know nothing but peace and pleasure for all eternity. How Merciful is Allah (swt)! Praise and Glory be to Him (swt)!

If Muslims were living today under an Islamic State, then we too would have the ability to be forgiven for our sins in the life of this world. The Khalifah who rules over the Islamic State is the only one who can administer the legal punishments prescribed by the Law of Allah (swt). All the scholars agree that individual Muslims as well as governments that rule by kufr cannot implement the punishments prescribed in the Quran and Sunnah. We should all wish that we would be punished for our sins in the life of this world because we know that the punishment in the Hereafter is much worse than anything in this world. But since we are living today without a

State, there is no one to implement the punishment of Allah (swt) upon the Muslims. If there are Muslims today who have committed the great sins like adultery or theft, then they would have to take these sins with them to the Hereafter. Then it is up to Allah (swt) to punish them or to forgive them. May Allah (swt) forgive this Ummah!

Some people may ask the question here that does not Allah (swt) say that He (swt) will not forgive the sin of shirk. So how come the children of Israil were forgiven in the life of this world when they were killed for their crime. The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) will never forgive those who die on shirk. But if someone did shirk at some point in their life, and they made a sincere Tawbah to Allah (swt), and they died on Islam worshipping and serving Allah (swt) Alone, then Allah (swt) will forgive them in the Hereafter Insha Allah. Such was the case of many of the Sahabah like Umar (ra). Although they lived a life of shirk, they turned to Allah (swt) and became Muslim worshipping and serving Him (swt) Alone, and He (swt) in return forgave them their sins. Not only that but He (swt) also raised them to the highest levels of Paradise. So for those commit shirk but then they repent and come back to Allah (swt), realizing the wrong that they had done, then Allah (swt) is the Most Pardoning and the Most Forgiving. But on the other hand if someone lived their entire lives in shirk, and they died on shirk, then there is no chance for them to be forgiven. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Musa (as) says his people "**that is better for you with your Creator**". It was better for them to kill their own people than not to. This shows where Musa (as)'s mind always was. It was always with Allah (swt) and the Hereafter. What is the value of the life of this world if one spends the short time that they have here in disobedience to Allah (swt)? Is this short life worth earning the Wrath of Allah (swt) over? Is a lifetime of pleasure in this world worth even one second in the Hellfire? The only purpose of this world is to spend every moment that we have to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So for the children of Israil, even if it meant killing their own family members, that was still better for them than earning the Wrath of Allah (swt). Those who were with Musa (as) recognized this fact, that is why they carried out this punishment as Allah (swt) commanded them to.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) turned towards them. This means that He (swt) forgave them and allowed them to return to the state of being His (swt)'s servants. Even though they had done so much sin and so much evil. Even though they had gone so far away from Allah (swt), He (swt) still allowed them to make Tawbah to Him (swt) and He (swt) turned to them in Forgiveness and Mercy. Allah (swt) wiped these horrible sins from their Book of deeds, and He (swt) allowed them to enter the Garden purified of all sin and evil.

This is because as Allah (swt) says in the final part of this ayah, He (swt) is the "**Acceptor of Repentance and the Most Merciful"**. These are two of the most beautiful names of Allah (swt). We see here that Allah (swt) is truly the Acceptor of Repentance and the Most Merciful. Why should Allah (swt) accept the Tawbah of even one of His (swt)'s servants? What have we ever done for Him (swt) and what does He (swt) owe us? Allah (swt) created us for Him (swt), and then we turn away from Him (swt). Why then should He (swt) ever allow us to come back to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) only accepts our Tawbah because He (swt) chooses to. It is part of His Greatness and Majesty that He (swt) has chosen for His (swt)'s Mercy to be more than His (swt)'s Wrath. Notice also how Allah (swt) uses the word *inna* to stress with emphasis that surely and certainty He (swt) is the Acceptor of Tawbah and the Most Merciful.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how Merciful Allah (swt) IS and how willing He (swt) IS to accept Tawbah. The children of Israil saw Allah (swt) separate the sea for them with their very eyes. Yet they still built the golden calf and worshipped it when Musa (as) was not there. Despite this horrible sin that the children of Israil had committed, when they made Tawbah, Allah (swt) accepted their Tawbah. He (swt) in His (swt)'s Mercy allowed them to be punished in the life of this world, and to enter the next world without any sins. They were going to die anyway, as all human beings will eventually face death, but as part of the Mercy of Allah (swt) He (swt) allowed their deaths to be a means of cleansing their sins. Now think to yourself, if Allah (swt) accepted the Tawbah of the children of Israil who had worshipped the golden calf that they built with their own hands after seeing the Miracle of Allah (swt) so clearly, do you think that He (swt) will not accept your Tawbah as well if you make it to

Him (swt) sincerely? So the lesson for us in this ayah is that we must never give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt). No matter how great are the sins that we have done we must always think that there is a chance Allah (swt) will forgive us if we make Tawbah to Him (swt) sincerely. How Perfect and Glorious and Magnificent is Allah (swt)! He (swt) is in no way in need of us, and still He (swt) has been so Merciful towards us. Allah (swt) could have destroyed us at the first sin that we committed, and that would not have hurt Him (swt) in the least. But Allah (swt) has forgiven us time and time again. What then is keeping us from striving to worship and serve Allah (swt) when He (swt) is so Perfect and so Magnificent? Why are we so disobedient to Allah (swt) and why are we so lazy in fulfilling our obligations to Him (swt) when He (swt) has forgiven and pardoned us time and time again? Insha Allah let us benefit and learn from the lesson that is in this ayah. The children of Israil suffered when they had to be killed for worshipping the calf, but their punishment was indeed a Mercy for them because it absolved them of their sins in the Hereafter. Similarly when we face some difficulty or some test in the life of this world, we also have to think that perhaps Allah (swt) is pardoning us our sins through this difficulty or this calamity. Allah (swt) Knows how many sins each of us have done, if some punishment in this world wipes away even a portion of those sins then we should be thankful to Allah (swt). We should not ask for calamites and difficulties but at the same time we should see their benefit as well when they come. At the same time we should always ask Allah (swt) to be Merciful with us. May Allah (swt) shower His (swt)'s Mercy upon us!

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى ٱللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ
ٱلصَّٰعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

56. And (remember the time) when you said "O Musa, we will not believe in you, until we see Allah plainly", then the thunderbolt and the lightning overtook you while you were looking.

In this ayah Allah relates another incident that happened with the children of Israil. Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil and tells them to remember the time when their ancestors told Musa (as) that they will not believe in the Message that he (as) brought until they see Allah (swt) plainly. They are telling Musa (as) that the only way they will believe in this Message is if they see Allah (swt) with their own eyes. The scholars say this statement was made by seventy among the children of Israil who were supposedly the best among them. They were the scholars and leaders among the children of Israil.

Notice that they are not saying that they will not believe in Allah (swt), any rational person who looks at the universe around him will not doubt Allah (swt), but they are saying that they will not believe in Musa (as) as a messenger from Allah (swt). They are saying that they will not believe in the Message that Musa (as) was sent with until they see Allah (swt) with their own eyes. This has been the attitude among most of the disbelievers. They never deny Allah (swt), they deny the messenger that Allah (swt) sent. Even the Quraysh chiefs at the time of the Prophet (saw) never doubted Allah (swt), they only denied the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). It is only today when human beings have become so far from Allah (swt) and they have become so corrupted by this materialistic life style and have become so attached to the life of this world that they will put forward thoughts and ideologies that deny the Existence of Allah (swt). Atheism as a thought is something that has only been introduced in our time, no one ever believed in this in the past generations. Even today and even in the West the vast majority of people are not atheists. This is because if anyone were to consider the evidences for Allah (swt) that are all around this universe they would see how foolish and how ludicrous ideas like atheism and antagonism are. No one can explain how this universe could have come into existence unless they believe in Allah (swt).

Any sane person would believe in Allah (swt), otherwise how else could one explain the creation of this universe filled with limited things? Every single thing in this universe testifies to the fact that it is created by the simple fact that it is limited. So no sane person denies the existence of Allah (swt), but what people have a problem with is the Message that Allah (swt) sends to mankind through His (swt)'s prophets and messengers. If people believe only in Allah (swt) and not believe in the Message that He (swt) sends, then they are free to do whatever they want and they are free to submit to all of their passions and desires. They think that Allah (swt) just created them and let them be. Such thinking is not acceptable to Allah (swt). That is why true belief in Allah (swt) must also be accompanied by belief in the Message that Allah (swt) sends. This is because you have to believe that Allah (swt) created you and the world around you for a purpose. Allah (swt) did not create you simply so that you can live your life sleeping or playing games. People realize that if they should believe in Allah (swt) and the Message that He (swt) has sent, then this would mean submitting their entire lives to Allah (swt). They would have to live their lives as worshippers and servants of Allah (swt) as He (swt) created them to be. Many people are not willing to do that, so they find some excuse to reject this Message even though they know that it is the Truth.

This was the case with these seventy men among the children of Israil. They knew that should they accept this Message that Musa (as) was bringing them from Allah (swt), then they would no longer be able to live their lives to serve their desires. They would no longer be able to exploit the people. They would no longer be able to be proud and arrogant. So even though they knew that Musa (as) was indeed sent to them by Allah (swt), they found a reason for themselves to disbelieve in him (as) and to reject the Message that he (as) was sent with. They said "**O Musa, we will not believe in you until we see Allah plainly**". This was the excuse they gave for their kufr.

We should also note that this exact claim was also made by many of the Quraysh chiefs at the time of the Prophet (saw). They said that they would not believe in this Message that the Prophet (saw) was sent with until they saw him (as) ascend on a staircase that goes all

the way up to the heaven and then to come down from the heaven with a book that was signed by Allah (swt) testifying that he (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). This was the condition they put down for their belief. This was the condition they put down for their salvation. We can see that these people are not serious in the claims that they are making. The bottom line is that these people have rejected this Message. For whatever reason they have chosen not to accept this communication that was sent to them by their Creator. So they are finding some way to justify their rejection of this Message. They want to bring some excuse to the messenger as to why they are not believing in the Message. After all they have seen the evidences and they are convinced that this Message is the Truth but they have decided to reject it nonetheless. So this is only an excuse they are bringing to justify their rejection.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says that they were struck down with thunderbolt and lightning while they were looking. This was their reward for their insolence and their rebellion. As they were asking to see Allah (swt) and they were looking towards the sky, a bolt of thunder and lightning came down upon them and struck them all dead. A severe punishment because of the severity of their crime. They did not realize Who Allah (swt) IS. Allah (swt) does not Exist to play games with the human being or to suit his whims and desires. Allah (swt) created the human being only so that the human can worship and serve Him (swt). Allah (swt) then sent the human being a Message through His (swt)'s Messenger on how He (swt) should be worshipped and served. The human beings who reject the Message of Allah (swt) and the ones who refuse to follow the Messenger of Allah (swt) are the worst of creation. They do not even deserve to live. That is why Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) struck down those among children of Israil who posed this question to Musa (as). Allah (swt) had pardoned them so many times but because they insisted on rebellion they received this terrible punishment from Allah (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that Shaitan will always come to put doubts in our minds about Allah (swt) and about the Message that He (swt) has sent. Even if the evidences are so clear and even if we are fully convinced, Shaitan will still come and put

foolish questions in our hearts. This is because Shaitan has a goal to lead us away from our Creator and Sustainer, he has a goal to lead us away from our Lord and Master. He wants to put doubts in our hearts so that he can turn us away from this Message that Allah (swt) has sent us. At the very least he wants us to be disobedient to Allah (swt) because of these doubts. The best way to combat him and to foil the plans that he has is to remember Allah (swt) and to pray to Allah (swt) for protection from him. Pray to Allah (swt) that He (swt) removes the doubts from your heart and puts the correct understanding of this Message in your mind. The only prayer that is obligatory upon us to make is the prayer for guidance and that should show how desperately we are in need of guidance. Even if you think that you are guided today you should still pray to Allah (swt) to give you an even firmer conviction in the Truth of this Message and you should pray to Allah (swt) to prevent you from going in a wrong direction. The next way in which we can combat Shaitan and destroy these foolish questions that he puts in our hearts is to not think about them in the first place. Rather we should spend our time and our energy doing the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and thinking the thoughts that are pleasing to Allah (swt). When your mind is busy reflecting on the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) and the Perfect Names of Allah (swt), and busy pondering on the ayahs of the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet (saw), then where does that leave room for Shaitan to put doubts in it? When your limbs and your tounge are busy doing the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and speaking the words that are pleasing to Allah (swt), then where does that leave Shaitan time to tempt you and trick you into the deeds that are displeasing to Allah (swt). What we have to do is remember, remember, and remember. We are creatures who forget so we should always remember. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَٰكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

56. Then We resurrected you after your death, so that you can be grateful.

This ayah continues to relate to us the events that Allah (swt) told us about in the previous ayah. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told us about seventy men from among the children of Israil who demanded to see Allah (swt) with their own eyes. They refused to believe in the Message that Allah (swt) had given to Musa (as) unless Allah (swt) allowed them to see Him (swt) with their own eyes. They had already seen more than enough signs and evidences to know that Musa (as) was indeed a messenger from Allah (swt). In addition to the miracles that Musa (as) had displayed in Egypt, they also saw the great sea separate into two when Musa (as) had struck it with his staff. Was that not enough to convince them that this man is indeed a messenger from Allah (swt)? Who is there among humans who can part a sea by just striking the water with a staff? So the reason why they wanted to see Allah (swt) was not because they doubted this Message. They knew very well that this Message was indeed sent from Allah (swt), but they wanted to follow their desires and their passions instead. They did not want to submit to this Message so they found some excuse to reject it. They demanded of Musa (as) that they were never going to believe in him (as) until they saw Allah (swt) with their own eyes. Because of their insolence and rebellion, Allah (swt) sent a thunderbolt filled with lightning. It struck these seventy men while they were looking, and it killed them all.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) then brought these seventy men back to life. Allah (swt) addresses the children of Israil, and tells them to remember the time when He (swt) brought these men back to life after their death. Allah (swt) shows the children of Israil that even though their ancestors had been so rebellious and so insolent, He (swt) still pardoned them and He (swt) still brought them back to life. The fact that Allah (swt) can take life from whomever He (swt) pleases and that He (swt) can give life back to whomever He (swt) pleases shows the Power and Ability of Allah (swt). Life and death are completely in the Power of Allah (swt) and He (swt) can give life and take death from whomever He (swt) pleases. Thus in this

ayah Allah (swt) brings the attention of the children of Israil to the fact that He (swt) had pardoned them even after they had been so insolent and rebellious. Allah (swt) also shows them how He (swt) is the only One Who has complete control over life and death.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil that the reason why He (swt) brought them back to life was so that they could be grateful. Here you have a people who refused to believe in the Message that Allah (swt) sent to them and they refused to live their lives to worship and serve Allah (swt) as they were created to do and they even demanded that Allah (swt) present Himself (swt) to them before their very eyes. See the arrogance and insolence of such a people that they would make such a demand of the Lord and Master of the universe. Who are they to make such a demand of Allah (swt)? Did they realize Who Allah (swt) WAS and who they were? However despite this insolence Allah (swt) still pardoned them and brought them back to life. Allah (swt) could have left them dead and sent them to the Fire for their rebellion and their foolish demands. But Allah (swt) pardoned them yet again, He (swt) brought them back to life, and He (swt) gave them another chance to live their life in worship and servitude to Him (swt). Those seventy among the children of Israil and all of their descendants were given a second chance at life by Allah (swt). This was only so that they could be grateful. As we mentioned previously, the heart, the tounge and the limbs all can be used to express gratefulness for Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) calls on the children of Israil to express their gratitude by believing in this Message that has been given to the Prophet (saw).

One of the lessons that we can take from this ayah is to see the Power and Ability of Allah (swt) in that He (swt) can give and take life from whomever He (swt) pleases. For us life and death is everything. But for Allah (swt) He (swt) does not require the least amount of effort to take life away from anyone or to give life back to anyone. At this very moment Allah (swt) could take away your life in an instant with a flash of lightning and thunder, just as He (swt) did for the children of Israil. The taking and giving of life also does not harm Allah (swt) in any way, He (swt) could take life from whoever He (swt) wanted and He (swt) could give life back to whomever He (swt). All of that is easy is for Allah (swt) and it would not hurt Him (swt) in the

least. Since we know this Power and Ability of Allah (swt) we should always remember that our life and our death are only with Him (swt). We should always have the fear that Allah (swt) could snatch away our lives at any moment, and so we should try our best not to make that a moment in which He (swt) displeased with us. We must always be grateful to Allah (swt) because He (swt) is the One Who gave us life, and we must be grateful to Him (swt) because He (swt) has promised to bring us back on the Last Day. Allah (swt) has decreed that our existence not end with our deaths, and so we must always be grateful to Him (swt) for that. If we truly want to know what it means to live and we truly want to prepare for death, then the only way to accomplish this is by always turning to Allah (swt), the source of life and the source of death. May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember that life and death are only from Him (swt), and may this remembrance always make us do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt)!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that resurrection is a reality and that it is easy for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) brought these men from the children of Israil back to life after they had died from the thunderbolt. So we should see how easily Allah (swt) is Able to give life to a human after he or she has died. In this society we are taught that death is the ultimate frontier, which after it is crossed we will never return from. We are made to think that everything ends with death. However in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us that death is only a temporary rest that we will take, similar to how we sleep. We will all die, but soon Allah (swt) will bring us back to life for the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) did not create our souls to know death but rather Allah (swt) created our souls to live. That is why death is only a temporary state that we will be in. Resurrection is a reality and the eternal life after it is a reality. May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember this fact, and may He (swt) allow us to do the actions that prepare for the resurrection!

وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَنَّ وَٱلسَّلْوَىٰ ۖ كُلُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ
مَا رَزَقْنَٰكُمْ ۖ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَٰكِن كَانُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

57. And We shaded you by placing the Clouds over you, and We sent down onto you the *Manna* and the *Salwa*. Eat from the good and pure things that We have provided for you. And they did not wrong us, but they used to wrong themselves.

In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us more of the favors and blessings that He (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil. Allah (swt) calls on them to believe in this Message because of these favors that He (swt) had bestowed on them. We know that for a period of over forty years the children of Israil had to roam the harsh deserts of the Sinai Peninsula. This was a punishment for them for their refusal to fight in jihad when Allah (swt) commanded them to. After they had returned from Egypt to their homeland of Philistine they found their homeland occupied by the Amaleks. Allah (swt) told the children of Israil that they had to fight to liberate their land from these occupiers. However when the children of Israil saw the military strength of these people, they refused to fight. They were too scared and they were too attached to the life of this world to fight in the path of Allah (swt). As a result of their cowardice they were left without a homeland and they had to wander in the desert for over forty years. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how even in the desert, and even at that time, He (swt) still had Mercy on them.

The desert that the children of Israil had to live in for over forty years was not a pleasant place to be in. It was extremely hot and barren. There was no food nor drink nor shelter from the heat of the sun. Because they had to stay in such extreme conditions they asked Musa (as) to make duaa to Allah (swt) for them. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us that even in that place, and even after they had displayed such cowardice and insolence as they had refused to go out in jihad as Allah (swt) had commanded them to, even after such disobedience, He (swt) still showed Mercy to them. So much was the insolence and disobedience of the children of Israil and so Great and Full was the Mercy of Allah (swt) to them despite their rebellion to His (swt)'s

commands. This once again demonstrates the Glory and Majesty of Allah (swt) and the weakness and the degradation of the human being in comparison to that Glory and Majesty.

Allah (swt) begins to enumerate the Mercy that He (swt) had for the children of Israil by reminding them of how He (swt) shaded them by sending the clouds over them. This was done to protect them from the scorching heat of the desert sun. The scholars say that Allah (swt) sent over them a thin white cloud that followed them everywhere they went. Wherever they went this beautiful cloud followed then and it provided them with shade. So Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil in this ayah that it was He (swt) and He (swt) Alone Who provided shade for their ancestors when they were lost in the desert. If not for this shade they would have been burned by the heat of the sun. Not only did Allah (swt) save them but He (swt) also made their stay comfortable by this shade. It made the harsh land of the desert a comfortable place to be in. Now in return for this blessing, Allah (swt) is calling on them to believe in the Final Messenger (saw) that He (swt) has sent.

Then Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil how He (swt) sent down onto them *Al-Manna*. Some scholars say this was a special kind of drink that was whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. Other scholars say that it was a kind of grain. We do not really need to delve on the exact kind of food that it was. What is important for us to know was that it was a special kind of food that was given to them in the barren desert where there was no other food. Not only was it delicious and it sustained and satisfied them completely but also this *Manna* never spoiled. So whenever they felt like eating it, it was always there for them and it was always good for them. So we see how *Manna* is yet another blessing that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children of Israil despite their insolence and rebellion towards Him (swt).

In addition to *Al-Manna*, Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah that He (swt) sent to them *As-Salwa*. The scholars say that this was a special kind of bird. The children of Israil could catch these birds wherever they found them and these birds were also a delicious and satisfying food for them. They were yet another blessing and gift that Allah (swt) bestowed on the children

of Israil. Allah (swt) reminds them of these favors so that they can show gratitude to Him (swt), gratitude to Allah (swt) for the children of Israil is believing in the Prophet (saw).

Then Allah (swt) says to **"Eat from the good and pure things that We have provided for you**". Allah describes this food of *Al-Manna* and *As-Salwa* as *Tayyib*, which means "good and pure". It was good in that it satisfied their hunger and it tasted delicious, and it was pure in that Allah (swt) approved it for them and it was healthy for their bodies. Allah (swt) tells them that they can eat freely from that food, and Allah (swt) also reminds them that it was He (swt) and He (swt) Alone Who had provided it for them.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is that Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone is the Provider for all good things. We must not think of this ayah as only applying to the children of Israil. We must think that we are the children of Israil in this situation. Allah (swt) has given us shade, do we not all have homes that we can go to? Do we not all have shelter to protect us from the heat of the sun? Who is that has provided us with this roof over our heads? Allah (swt) has also given us good and pure food and drink. The next time you have something to eat or something to drink, remind yourself about Who it was that provided it for you. As you eat food and you realize how delicious it tastes and how it satisfies your hunger, then know that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who provided it for you. Every single good and pure thing which you partake in and which you consume in this world has been given to you only by Allah (swt). Why then do you not show gratitude to Allah (swt) when you know that Allah (swt) will reward the grateful?

We also see from this ayah that Allah (swt) gives a command to eat of the good and pure things. Because of this fact we should think to ourselves that Allah (swt) has given us more than enough of things that are good and pure, why then should we ever eat of anything that is forbidden? That which Allah (swt) has given us He (swt) has described as "good and pure", that means it is beneficial for us in every way. Why then should we ever look to what is forbidden? It is only Shaitan that calls us towards that which is forbidden. Through his deceiving words he persuades us into thinking that there is some benefit for us in what Allah (swt) has forbidden.

But if we would only think about the lies and the false promises that he is calling us towards we would see that there is nothing for us in these things. So as we read this ayah, we have to remind ourselves of all the good and pure things that Allah (swt) has provided, and so we should know that these things are from our Rabb. We should then be satisfied with the good and pure things that Allah (swt) has given us without even considering those that He (swt) has forbidden for us.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that the children of Israil did not wrong Him (swt) but they only wronged themselves. In the acts of disobedience that they committed against Allah (swt) they did not wrong anyone but themselves. Allah (swt) favored them and provided for them again and again, and yet they disobeyed Allah (swt) and committed the great sins again and again. They repaid the Mercy and Generosity of Allah (swt) with arrogance and pride. Yet despite all of this sin and all of this arrogance, Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they did not harm Him (swt) in the least. They did not do any injustice to Allah (swt) whatsoever but they only did injustice to themselves. Who are you hurting when you refuse to worship and serve Allah (swt)? You are hurting only yourselves by refusing to fulfill the role for which you were created.

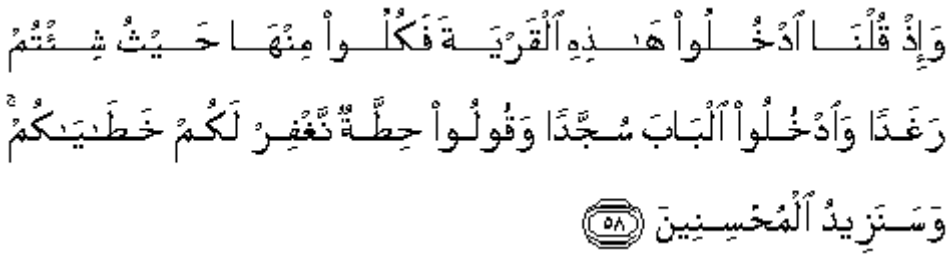
Notice also that Allah (swt) uses the word *kanu*, which means "used to". Allah (swt) uses this word to describe a people who are in a particular state for over an extended period of time. This means that it was not simply that they wronged themselves on one occasion, but they used to constantly and repeatedly wrong themselves. For an extended period of time they used to do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt) thus doing injustice to their own souls. This ayah once again serves to teach us about the nature of the human being. The human is not simply a creature that disobeys Allah (swt) once in a while, but the human forgets and forgets. So he is deceived by Shaitan again and again. Reflect on this fact for a moment; the Prophet (saw) called this Surah "the apex of the Quran", and in this Surah Allah (swt) presents the narration of the children of Israil in great detail after He (swt) has told us about the battle between Adam (as) and Iblis. So in the events of what happened to the children of Israil that

Allah (swt) tells us about in this Surah we have the perfect example of how the human being would be if he lets down his guard against Shaitan and allows Shaitan deceive him. This is true even if the human has guidance from Allah (swt). The children of Israil had prophets in their midst and they had books from Allah (swt), but still they allowed themselves to be deceived by Shaitan. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah they used to wrong their souls for an extended period of time. That means again and again, they allowed themselves to be tricked by Shaitan again and again. Again and again they fell into disobedience to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us to learn from their example and to avoid their mistakes!

One lesson that we can take from this final part of the ayah is to see that no one can ever harm Allah (swt) in any way. Allah (swt) clearly says in this ayah that even though the children of Israil used to disobey Him (swt) again and again, they did not do injustice to Him (swt) at all. They did not harm Him (swt) at all. So we see that even if every single human and every single jinn were as wicked and evil as one can be, that would not harm Allah (swt) in the least. So if you are doing the actions that are forbidden by the Sacred Law of Allah (swt), then you should know that you are not hurting anyone but your own self. You are doing injustice to your own self. As we have mentioned even this is something that you are not allowed to do. Allah (swt) is the One Who created your soul and so He (swt) is the One Who owns your soul. Allah (swt) did not give you the right to do injustice to your soul by doing the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So if we want to save our souls then we have to believe in what Allah (swt) has told us in the Quran and the Sunnah, and we also have to strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and we have to stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Another lesson that we can take from this final part of the ayah is to realize that we must never become upset or become sad when we see so many people who are doing the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). We should not become depressed when we as servants of Allah (swt) see those who are even refusing to believe in Allah (swt) correctly and who are committing all forms of shirk and idol worship. Although such people are so ungrateful

and so rebellious to their Creator and Sustainer, we do not need to feel bad for Allah (swt) at all. These people are not hurting Allah (swt) in any way, they are not doing any kind of oppression or injustice to Allah (swt). Instead they are only doing injustice to themselves. Allah (swt) is completely free of being in any kind of need of them whatsoever. They could be as evil as they want to be and they could turn away from Allah (swt) however many times that they want and they still would not hurt Him (swt) in the least. When they disobey Allah (swt) and when they turn away from Him (swt), they are only hurting themselves. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like such people! May Allah (swt) enable us to do only the actions that He (swt) is pleased with so that we can do justice to our souls and give our souls an abode in the Hereafter that they will be pleased with!



58. And (remember the time) when We said "Enter this city, and then eat from it whatever you like *raghadan,* and enter it's gates in prostration and say '*Hittah*". We will forgive for your sins and soon We will increase the *Mohsineen*.

The event that Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah actually takes places after the death of Musa (as). So far we know that when the children of Israil left Egypt, after Allah (swt) had saved them from the people of Firaun by parting the sea for them and drowning the people

of Firaun, they then found themselves in the land of Philistine. But when they saw that their homeland was occupied by a powerful people, they refused to fight in jihad to liberate their homeland from its occupiers. Because they were unwilling to fight they had to roam the deserts without a home for a period of over forty years. In this period Musa (as) passed away, and the leadership of the children of Israil fell to Yusha bin Noon. Under the leadership of Yusha, the children of Israil finally found the courage to fight in jihad and they were able to defeat the occupiers of Philistine. At this point Allah (swt) helped them and supported them in their battles. When they finally had the courage to fight they found that the Help of Allah (swt) was near. On one incident Allah (swt) even prevented the sun from setting so that the children of Israil would have more time to fight and to defeat their enemies. Once again this shows the Mercy and Compassion of Allah (swt) to the human being, despite all of the sin, rebellion and arrogance of the human being. It also shows that if we only find the courage to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt), then He (swt) will help and support us in our efforts. Now the children of Israil had finally defeated their enemies and their homeland of Philistine was liberated. After their victory, they found themselves at the gates of the main city of Philistine. This ayah tells us of the command that Allah (swt) gave to them to enter the city.

Most of the scholars say that the city in this ayah refers to Jerusalem. This was the city that the children of Israil found themselves at the gate of after they had defeated their enemies. The fact that Allah (swt) mentions Jerusalem in the Quran shows the importance that He (swt) has placed on this city. We also know from Surah *Isra* that Allah (swt) blessed the surroundings of this city and Allah (swt) took the Prophet (saw) on the Night Journey to this city. It was also from this city that Allah (swt) took the Prophet (saw) up to heavens on the *Miraj*. This city was also the first qibla for our Ummah and it was the homeland of our father Ibrahim (as). There are many other blessings that can be found in Jerusalem, and all of this shows the importance of this city for our Din. How sad is it then that today this city is in the hands of the enemies of this Message and none of the so-called Muslims states are doing anything about it. The liberation of Jerusalem then should be another reason why we should work to bring back the

Islamic State. Only when the Islamic State is restored can an army be raised that is powerful to give this blessed city back to the Muslims. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) liberate this city from its occupiers and return it to the Muslims once again!

Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil in this ayah to enter this city and eat from it whatever they wanted *raghadan*. Recall how we also saw this word when Allah (swt) told Adam (as) and Huwaa (as) on how they could eat from the garden. The basic meaning that we can take from this word is that Allah (swt) is saying that they can eat however much they want, they could eat to their heart's content. As a general rule we should try not to eat too much because as the Prophet (saw) has said "The son of Adam does not fill a vessel that is more evil than his own belly". But in this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil to eat freely as a reward for their striving. They fought hard and sacrificed to liberate this city from its powerful occupiers, so on this occasion Allah (swt) allowed them to eat freely as a reward for their hard working and striving. So after being lost in the desert and having to be without a home for a period of over forty years, Allah (swt) allowed them to enter the city of Jerusalem as victors and eat from it whatever they wanted. Notice how Allah (swt) says that it was He (swt) Who told them to enter the city and it was He (swt) Who told them to eat freely of what is in it, this shows that it was because of Allah (swt) Alone that they were able to enter the city and it was because of Allah (swt) Alone that they were able to eat freely from it. It was Allah (swt) Alone Who gave them victory and it was Allah (swt) Alone Who gave them the city. This once again serves to demonstrates the Mercy of Allah (swt) to the children of Israil. In reward for their efforts and their striving, they were allowed to enter the city and from it they could eat whatever they pleased.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says to the children of Israil "**Enter the gates in prostration and say *Hittah* **". In this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) is telling the children of Israil how they should enter the city. The scholars say that what Allah (swt) means by "in prostration" is that they should enter the city in humility. They should not enter the city with pride and arrogance, thinking that it was through their efforts and their dedication that the city

was won. Rather they should enter the city realizing that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who gave them this city. So the word "prostration" here means that they should enter the city in submission and in recognition of the fact that this city was taken because of Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone.

This was exactly how the Prophet (saw) entered Makkah when Allah (swt) gave that city to the Muslims. After many years of war with the powerful tribe of Quraysh, Allah (swt) finally gave victory to the Islamic State. When the Prophet (saw) finally marched into Makkah, he (saw) did not come in full of arrogance and pride. The Quraysh were a people who had chased the Prophet (saw) out of Makkah, so when he (saw) was finally given victory over them and he (saw) marched into their city, the Prophet (saw) could have come in full of pride and with a sense of self-satisfaction. But he (saw) did not, he (saw) realized that this victory was only from Allah (swt), and he (saw) knew that the city really belonged to Allah (swt), and it was only though the help and support of Allah (swt) that the Muslims were able to take the city. So the Prophet (saw) entered the city with humility and submission knowing that it was only though Allah (swt) that they were able to take Makkah. This is how Allah (swt) commands the children of Israil to enter Jerusalem in this ayah.

Regarding the word *Hittah* the scholars say that it means to ask Forgiveness of Allah (swt). So not only were the children of Israil commanded to enter the city in humility and submission, but they were also commanded to enter the city seeking Forgiveness of Allah (swt). First they should seek Forgiveness of Allah (swt) for any pride or arrogance that might surface in their hearts on account of achieving victory over their enemies and taking the city. The victory is only from Allah (swt), so you have no right to be proud when you get that victory. You did nothing, it was only through Allah (swt) that you were able to conquer that city. So if Shaitan puts in any pride in your heart because of that victory, you must destroy that feeling and remind yourself that the victory has come only from Allah (swt). You must then plead to Allah (swt) for Forgiveness for any sense of pride that you may have had because of the victory. That is why Allah (swt) commands the children of Israil to say *Hittah* as they enter the gates of the city, it is

to plead for Forgiveness from Allah (swt) for any pride that they may have. In addition to asking Allah (swt) for Forgiveness for their pride, they also need to ask Forgiveness for all of the wrong actions that they have committed in the past. We know that for many years before Allah (swt) gave them this victory they were too cowardly to march out in jihad for the sake of Allah (swt). They even allowed their prophet Musa (as) to pass away without ever seeing his Ummah victorious. For this cowardice and for all the other wrong that they had done in their past, they should ask Forgiveness from Allah (swt) before they can enter the city and eat from it's provisions.

Then Allah (swt) says to the children of Israil "**We will forgive for you your sins**". How beautiful is this? Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil in the previous part of the ayah to ask Forgiveness of Him (swt) and in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) will forgive for them their sins. Notice here how Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will forgive their sins *for* them. So even the forgiveness of sins is something that Allah (swt) does for them, it is a favor and blessing that Allah (swt) bestows on them. Their sins is something that they themselves have earned with the wrong actions that they did, but as part of His (swt)'s Grace and Mercy, Allah (swt) removes these sins from them. Allah (swt) purifies them of the wrong that they did, and He (swt) allows them to go the Day of Judgment without these sins on their scales.

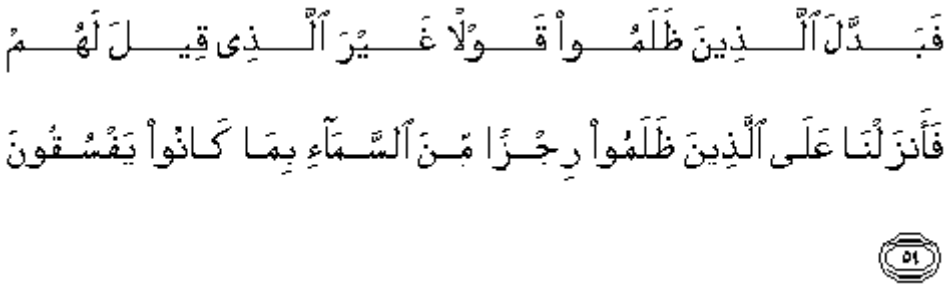
We can see here how Merciful and Generous Allah (swt) IS. Look at what Allah (swt) is asking the children of Israil to do, all that Allah (swt) is telling them to do is to control their pride and enter the city in a state of humility and submission. For some this might seem like it is difficult to do, but when one thinks about the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) and when one remembers that the victory comes only from Allah (swt) and when one remembers how he himself is so powerless and weak, an insignificant creature, then it does not become so difficult to control one's feelings of pride Insha Allah. Then Allah (swt) tells them to ask for Forgiveness for their sins. If they would only do this, then in return Allah (swt) is allowing them to enter the city, and Allah (swt) is allowing them to eat from it however much they pleased, and Allah (swt)

is granting them Forgiveness for all of the wrong that they have done. See then how Generous is Allah (swt) to these people.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Soon We will increase the *Mohsineen***". The *Mohsineen* are those who are always conscious that Allah (swt) is Aware of them; in one famous hadith the Prophet (saw) has described them as those who worship and serve Allah (swt) as though they see Him (swt). That is how conscious they are of Allah (swt) and that is how close they are to Allah (swt). They are so conscious of Allah (swt), they are so close to Allah (swt), that every single action that they perform they do it in the best way possible. They try their best to do all of their actions in the most perfect way because they know that Allah (swt) is Aware of all their actions. They know that Allah (swt) is Aware of even the minutest details of their lives. So they try to do every single one of their actions to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and thus they do it in the most perfect way possible.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that soon He (swt) will increase such people. The word "increase" here is general and so it has a wide array of meanings. One meaning is that Allah (swt) will increase their reward on the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) Knows how the *Mohsineen* are so careful in their actions, and how they will always do the actions that will seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. Because of this fact, Allah (swt) loves them and He (swt) will increase for them the reward that He (swt) has prepared for them. Since the *Mohsineen* were so careful in their actions, the reward that they receive for their actions will be much more than what they deserve for that action. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that Allah (swt) will punish the sinner equal to the sin that he committed, but Allah (swt) reward the true believer far more than he deserves for even the smallest of good deeds that he did. In addition to increasing their reward, Allah (swt) will also increase their status and their rank on the Day of Judgment. Even if the *Mohsineen* may have been among the lowest of people in the life of this world and they may have been among the poor and the forgotten of society, on the Day of Judgment they will increase in rank above the rest of mankind. Allah (swt) will increase their honor and their status above that of the kings and princes of this world because of the fact that they were among the

Mohsineen. Even in this life we can see that Allah (swt) increases for the *Mohsineen* the contentment in their lives and the tranquility in their hearts. When someone always remembers the fact that Allah (swt) is Well Aware of all of the troubles and suffering that he or she goes through in the life of this world then they will never become sad or depressed. When they remember that no harm can come to them and no calamity can befall them except by the permission of Allah (swt) then they have no fear in the life of this world. Remember the ayah where we learned how Allah (swt) told all the souls before they were sent to the earth that if they would truly believe in the guidance that He (swt) sends then they would have no fear on them and they will not grieve. The ones who truly follow this guidance are the *Mohsineen* and we pray to Allah (swt) to make us among them and to grant us increase in every way!



60. But those who did *Dhulm* replaced the word to other than what was said to them, so We sent down upon them *Rijz* from the sky because of their evil.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us the events that He (swt) told us about in previous ayah. Recall from the previous ayah how we learned that after the children of Israil had conquered Jerusalem with the help and support of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) told them to enter

the city in prostration and say *Hittah*. We said that the basic meaning of this word was asking Allah (swt) for Forgiveness. They should have asked Allah (swt) for Forgiveness for any pride that was in their hearts and for all of the sins that they had committed in the past. If they only would have said this word and entered the city in humility, then Allah (swt) would have given them the city and He (swt) would have allowed them eat freely of it's provisions and He (swt) would have forgiven for them all of their sins and He (swt) would have given them increase in every way possible. All that they had to do was have humility and say this word as they entered the city and they would have gotten all of this in return. But did they say this word? Did they submit themselves before their Lord?

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how those who did *Dhulm* replaced the word to other than what was said to them. So while they were ordered to say *Hittah* as they entered the city, instead they said *Hintatun*, which means "wheat". They replaced the word that Allah (swt) told them to say as they entered the city with a completely different word that has a different meaning. Allah (swt) gave them a command and they turned this command from their Lord into a complete joke and mockery. The purpose of saying *Hittah* was to ask for Forgiveness from Allah (swt) but these people did no such thing. Rather they made a mockery of the command of Allah (swt) and they entered the city with arrogance and pride. It was because of this that Allah (swt) refers to them in this ayah as those that did *Dhulm*. Recall how we said that this word means oppression and injustice. Is not the worst kind of oppression and injustice to change the words of Allah? Your Creator and Sustainer and your Lord and Master commands you to say one thing and then you say something else. Allah (swt) tells you to ask forgiveness for your faults, and you make a jest of His (swt)'s command. What could be more evil than that? What could be more unjust than that?

Because of such sin and transgression Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah how He (swt) sent down upon them *Rijz* from the sky. Notice how in the second part of the ayah Allah (swt) does not use the pronoun "them" but He (swt) refers to them once again as "the ones who do Dhulm". Even though the pronoun would be perfectly acceptable use of the language in this

ayah, Allah (swt) still refers to them in this ayah as those who do Dhulm. The scholars say that this has been done to emphasize and stress the evil and injustice that they have done. How evil are people who change the words of Allah (swt)? How corrupt are people who invent new things in the Din of Allah (swt)?

Allah (swt) sent down upon them *Rijz* from the sky because of their corruption and their transgression. Allah (swt) sent down upon them *Rijz* from the sky because they changed His (swt)'s word. The scholars say that *Rijz* was the plague that was sent down upon them, and that it killed thousands of them. Because of their evil and their arrogance they had to suffer through the plague. The plague is one of the most painful of deaths with which one can die, it is a slow death filled with much suffering. Once again we should remember that the severity of the punishment fits the severity of the crime. Because of the evil that they did when they replaced the word of Allah (swt) with another word from their desires, Allah (swt) sent down upon them this terrible and fatal disease. So the plague caused much suffering to the children of Israil and it was sent on them because they had replaced the word that Allah (swt) commanded them to say with another word. They had made a joke and mockery of the commands of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from such a fate! May Allah (swt) save us from ever treating any of His (swt)'s commands as a jest!

If the question should arise in your mind as to why the children of Israil would ever do such a thing as replacing the word of Allah (swt) with another word, the answer to such a question is that you are forgetting how arrogant and how forgetful the human being can be? The base nature of the human being is that he is forgetful and he likes to do what his desires push him towards. He does not believe that he has to obey or follow anyone, even Allah (swt), the Lord and Master of the universe. So the children of Israil felt like saying *Hintatun* instead of *Hittah* and they forgot all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them, they forgot the Power of Allah (swt) and they forgot how Terrible in Punishment Allah (swt) could be. So they forgot Allah (swt) and just did what their desires prompted them to do. As they were entering the city Shaitan put this evil word in their mind and they spoke it instead of saying the

word that they were commanded to say. At that critical moment of testing they chose not to obey Allah (swt). So we see that their crime was because of a combination of arrogance and forgetfulness. May Allah (swt) save us from these traits!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize what a terrible sin it is to play with the commands of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) told the children of Israil to say one word and they instead said another word. Allah (swt) told them to do one thing and they instead did another thing. So you see how they were playing with the commands of Allah (swt). They were not treating these commands as coming from their Lord and Master and as commands that should be implemented without question, but they treated them as a joke. So we must be careful to only do what Allah (swt) tells us to do and we must not change His (swt) commands in any way. We should not even change in any way the method that Allah (swt) has prescribed for us to worship and serve Him (swt). We know the hadith where the Prophet (saw) has said that every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire. So we should be careful and not change anything of what has reached us from the Quran and Sunnah. Even the way in which we pray has to be exactly how the Prophet (saw) prayed, and the way in which we make Dhikr must be exactly like how the Prophet (saw) made Dhikr. Just like we cannot add one more rakah to our Salah, we cannot add a new word to our Dhikr that the Prophet (saw) did not say. We should not even do Dhikr in a way that is different from how the Prophet (saw) did it. If we were to change our worship of Allah (swt) in any way then we would be just as guilty as the children of Israil were when they replaced the word that Allah (swt) told them to say with another word that was from their desires. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) allow us to practice this Din exactly as the Prophet (saw) taught us!

۞وَإِذِ ٱسۡتَسۡقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوۡمِهِۦ فَقُلۡنَا ٱضۡرِب بِّعَصَاكَ ٱلۡحَجَرَۖ فَٱنفَجَرَتۡ
مِنۡهُ ٱثۡنَتَا عَشۡرَةَ عَيۡنٗاۖ قَدۡ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٖ مَّشۡرَبَهُمۡۖ كُلُواْ وَٱشۡرَبُواْ
مِن رِّزۡقِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تَعۡثَوۡاْ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ مُفۡسِدِينَ ٦٠

61. And (remember the time) when Musa prayed for water for his people, and We said "Strike the rock with your staff, and there gushed forth from it twelve springs. Surely each tribe knew it's drinking place. Eat and drink from the *Rizq* of Allah and do not act corruptly in the earth, spreading corruption therein".

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to yet another favor that He (swt) had bestowed on the children of Israil. This was yet another favor for which they were in great debt to Allah (swt). A debt that could only repaid by believing in the Final Message that He (swt) has sent. Once again Allah (swt) demonstrates His (swt)'s Generosity and Mercy to the people and their rebellion and ingratitude in return. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about how He (swt) provided for the children of Israil in the desert the one thing that they needed the most and that is water. But Allah (swt) did not simply give them water, but look at the amazing way in which Allah (swt) gave them water. Despite their sin and insolence Allah (swt) provided them with pure and delicious flowing water.

Before we discuss the ayah however we have to note that this ayah takes place during the lifetime of Musa (as). Remember how the two previous ayahs took place after the passing away of Musa (as) at the time Yusha bin Nun. We saw how Allah (swt) led the children of Israil to victory, and they were able to conquer the city of Jerusalem. However in this ayah Allah (swt) returns the narration to the events that happened at the time of Musa (as). If you are wondering as to why Allah (swt) is shifting the period of narration in this way, it is because the purpose of the Quran is not to tell a story. The Quran is a not a fictional tale with events ordered in sequence like a story would have. As we know from the beginning of this Surah, the purpose of the Quran is guidance for the Muttaqoon. So we as read the story of Musa (as) and the children

of Israil, we should not be seeking to be entertained but we should be looking for guidance. We should be looking for lessons that we can take for our lives from the events that happened to them. We have to look at their relationship with Allah (swt), see what they did that was correct in this relationship and follow them in that way and see what they did that was wrong in this relationship and avoid them in that way. So because the Quran is a Book of Guidance and not a book of history or a storybook, it should then not seem strange that Allah (swt) shifts the period of narration. For each ayah Allah (swt) gives us the lesson and the guidance that He (swt) deems as most appropriate for that ayah and Allah (swt) Knows Best!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by reminding us of the time when Musa (as) prayed for water for his people. What could be more important for the children of Israil in the desert than water? They may have been arrogant and rebellious but when they were in the desert for a short time and their water rations ran out, they recognized their need and dependence on Allah (swt). If you ever think that you are above being a slave of Allah (swt) then ask yourself how you would ever survive without the water that Allah (swt) has provided for you. Try staying for a while without water and see the discomfort that you will soon feel. Before long this discomfort will turn into pain and eventually it will lead to death. What right then does such a weak and insignificant creature have to be arrogant and disobedient before Allah (swt), the Eternal and the Perfect, the One with no weakness and no needs? Before long the children of Israil recognized their need for water and so they went to Musa (as). They realized that they could not survive without water, and they knew the Only One Who could give them water was Allah (swt). They knew that Musa (as) was their link to Allah (swt), and so they went to him (as). Note how most people never go to Allah (swt) except during times of need. If Allah (swt) had made the human being without needs, the human being would not have realized that he had a purpose to worship and serve Allah (swt). So even our weaknesses and our needs are a great Mercy from Allah (swt) for us because it helps us to realize the purpose of our existence. It helps us all to realize our need and dependence on Allah (swt). So when the children of Israil realized their need for water in the desert, they went to Musa (as) and asked him (as) to pray to Allah (swt) for water.

Musa (as), in his kindness and compassion for his people, listened to their request and prayed to Allah (swt) for water. All prophets have a love and compassion for their people, this is a gift that Allah (swt) has placed in their hearts. Even if their people are disobedient and they refuse to submit to Allah (swt), the prophets still try their best to carry the Message to them and at the same time they also care for them and they wish the best for them. So Musa (as) prayed to Allah (swt) to grant water for the children of Israil as they had asked him to. Allah (swt), in Mercy and Generosity, answered the prayer of Musa (as).

There was a special rock and Allah (swt) told Musa (as) to strike the rock with his staff. When Musa (as) hit the rock, twelve springs of water gushed forth from this rock. Mawdudi notes that this rock is still there today in the Sinai Peninsula, and it also has the marks of where the water had once flowed forth. The fact that pure water gushed forth from stone was another Miracle that the children of Israil observed with their own eyes.

Some people may question as to why Allah (swt) asked Musa (as) to strike the rock with his staff first. Why did Allah (swt) not simply make the water to flow forth from the stone when Musa (as) prayed for it? Why did Allah (swt) make Musa (as) strike the rock with his staff first? The scholars explain that this is because it demonstrates the principle of "cause and effect". This is an important principle that Muslims must always keep in mind. There is always a certain cause and there is always an effect that results from that cause. So here the cause was Musa (as) striking the rock with his staff, and the effect was the gushing forth of twelve springs of water. So cause and effect is a very important principle for us to bear in mind. We have to always believe that there is a cause for every effect. The fact that the universe around us exists is an effect and Allah (swt) was the Cause for it. The actions that we do in this world are a cause, and the reward or punishment that we receive in the Hereafter are the effect for that cause. So this is a principle that we must always bear in mind, it is what reminds us of our Creator when we reflect on the universe around us and it prepares us for the Day that we meet Him (swt) because it reminds us that there is a reward or punishment for every action. Thus we have to

remember that everything that we do in this world has a consequence. If we do not see that consequence in the life of this world then definitely we will see it in the Hereafter.

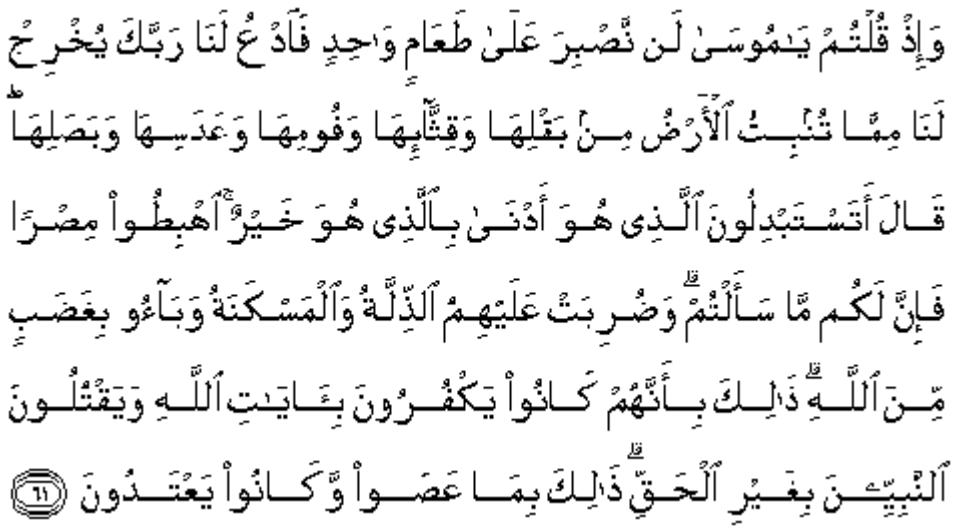
Why did Allah (swt) make twelve different springs gush forth from the rock? Why did Allah (swt) not make one spring for all of the children of Israil? In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) answers this question when He (swt) says "**Surely each tribe knew it's drinking place**". Allah (swt) designated a separate spring for each of the twelve tribes among the children of Israil. In this way there would be enough water for everyone and there would be no fighting between the different tribes. Each tribe was like an extended family, and so each family had it's own water resource. Once again this shows how the basic component of any Islamic Society is the family and it is through strong families that strong a society can be built. In this case each family knew it's place of water and the water from each spring was shared among the members of the family. The families came together to make up the members of the society. Just as each family shared the water spring, the society as a whole shared the stone from which the water springs emanated.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Eat and drink from the *Rizq* of Allah and do not act corruptly in the earth spreading corruption therein**". So far we have seen Allah (swt) give the children of Israil shade to cover them from the sun, and He (swt) gave them sweet and refreshing *Manna* and He (swt) gave them delicious *Salwa* that they could easily catch and eat, and in this ayah we see that Allah (swt) has also given them an abundant source of water. Despite all of their rebellion and all of their arrogance Allah (swt) still provided them with all of these provisions. Once again remind yourself of the Mercy and Generosity of Allah (swt) and the rebellion and ingratitude of the human being. These provisions are what Allah (swt) calls the *Rizq* of Allah (swt) and in this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil to eat and drink from this Rizq and also not to act corruptly in the earth spreading corruption therein. Notice how Allah (swt) emphasizes the act of spreading corruption by using two words for it that give the same meaning. They can eat and drink from what Allah (swt) provides for them but they should not spread corruption and evil in the land.

Notice also how Allah (swt) makes a connection here between the good provisions that they have been given in the life of this world and their refraining from the acts that are displeasing to Allah (swt). Every action that is displeasing to Allah (swt) is an act of corruption, and every action that is displeasing to Allah (swt) spreads corruption in the land. So if we are going to partake of the good food and drink that Allah (swt) has provided us with then we should not do evil by disobeying Allah (swt). Sometimes the evil actions themselves are a source of corruption and disorder such as when people kill for no reason or when they steal or when they commit fornication. These actions all cause corruption and disorder in the land. They hurt people, they break families, and they leave children without parents. But even the evil actions that people do in private that they think do not harm anyone can also be a source of corruption and disorder in the land. This is because such actions bring down the Wrath of Allah (swt) on the community or the nation that practices them. Allah (swt) tells us in other ayahs of the Quran how corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the sins that the hands of men have wrought. This is because their sins have brought down the Wrath of Allah (swt) on them. Much of the corruption and disorder in the world today can be attributed to the sins of man. So in last part of this ayah Allah (swt) commands the children of Israil to eat of the good provisions that He (swt) has provided for them and not to spread corruption and disorder in the land by doing the actions that He (swt) is displeased with. In other words they should show gratitude to the provisions that Allah (swt) has given them by obeying Him (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that when we enjoy the good things of this world such as our food and drink, we have to always remember that this is the *Rizq* of Allah (swt). So our partaking in these provisions is dependent on our worshipping and serving Allah (swt) properly. We have to show gratitude to Allah (swt) for our delicious and wholesome food and drink. How ungrateful and evil creatures would we be if we ate and drank to our fill with the food and drink that Allah (swt) has provided for us without being grateful to Him (swt)? What kind of a creature does that? Even the animal will show gratitude to its master for the food that it receives. How then can we be among those who eat and drink from the

provisions of Allah (swt) without even making the effort to worship and serve Him (swt)? Can you imagine what it would be like if Allah (swt) were to take away your provision? Can you imagine going to sleep hungry or having to suffer through constant thirst? Know that many of your Muslim brothers and sisters in the world today are going through this right now. Will you then be among the ungrateful? May Allah (swt) prevent us from being among those! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that all of the good provisions that we have been given, including our food and our drink, come only from Him (swt), and may Allah (swt) guide us to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) to show our gratitude for that provision!


وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَٰحِدٍ فَٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ
لَنَا مِمَّا تُنۢبِتُ ٱلْأَرْضُ مِنۢ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا ۖ
قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِٱلَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۚ ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِصْرًا
فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ ۗ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلذِّلَّةُ وَٱلْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ
مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ يَكْفُرُونَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا۟ وَّكَانُوا۟ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. And (remember the time) when you said "O Musa, we will not be patient with one kind of food, so make duaa for us to your Rabb that He bring forth for us that which grows from the earth of it's herbs and it's cucumbers and it's wheat and it's lentils and it's onions". He said "Will you exchange that which is better for that which is lower? Go to *Misr*, for surely there you will find what you ask for". They were covered with *Dhilla* and *Maskana*, and they brought on themselves Wrath from Allah. That is

because they used to deny the Signs of Allah and kill the prophets without right. That is because they disobeyed and they used to transgress all bounds.

So far we have seen that Allah (swt) has saved the children of Israil from oppression and persecution in Egypt. Allah (swt) has separated the sea for them, giving them deliverance into their homeland and destroying their powerful enemy. Allah (swt) then provided them with clouds to shade them from the sun, He (swt) gave them delicious Manna to drink, and sent to them Salwa that they could easily catch and eat. Allah (swt) also provided each tribe with a spring of pure and refreshing water miraculously flowing from stone. So we see that so many were the blessings and the favors that Allah (swt) bestowed upon them. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was the response of the children of Israil to all of these favors that He (swt) had bestowed on them.

Allah (swt) begins by reminding us of the time when they said "**O Musa we will not be patient on one food**". Look here at even their choice of words. They are telling Musa (as) that they will not be patient on one type of food. First this is a lie because we know that Allah (swt) gave them at least two different foods; one in the Manna that was better than milk and honey and the other was in Salwa that was the most delicious kind of meat that one can eat. In addition we know that Allah (swt) also provided them with springs of pure water gushing forth from stone. Second they said that they could not be "patient" on this kind of food. As if eating this kind of food was some kind of punishment that they had to endure. We know that in reality they suffered no discomfort whatsoever from eating Manna and Salwa, and drinking the water from the stone. This was in fact the best of foods on the earth, and it is impossible to grow tired of such delicious and wholesome food. So notice their insolence in this part of the ayah, on the one hand they lie about having only one kind of food and then they complain about their food when it is in fact the best of foods.

But the real issue is that they are a people who want to complain. They were an arrogant and evil people and they wanted to find some way to deny the blessings and favors of

Allah (swt) upon them. So even though they had the best of foods with them, they went to Musa (as) complaining and saying that they are tired of this blessed food.

Then the children of Israil tell Musa (as) to "**make duaa for us to your Rabb**". Look only from this part of the ayah how they perceive their relationship with Allah (swt) to be like. First they do not consider Allah (swt) to be their Rabb but they consider Him (swt) to be Musa (as)'s Rabb. Even though Allah (swt) was just as much their Rabb as He (swt) was Musa (as)'s Rabb. Who did they think created them? Who did they think sustains them for every second of their lives? Second they only think of Allah (swt) when they need Him (swt) in some way. If they are in no need of Allah (swt), and their life is good, then they forget about Him (swt). But when they find that there is some need in their life that is unfulfilled and they realize that they themselves do not have the power to fulfill that need, only then do they turn to Allah (swt). Does this behavior remind you of anyone that you know? May Allah (swt) save us!

We see that the children of Israil then asked Musa (as) to pray to Allah (swt) to give them from what the earth grows. They then give a long list of the different vegetation that the earth produces and how they have a desire for each of these different kinds of vegetables. They ask for herbs, cucumbers, wheat, lentils and onions. Allah (swt) lists each part of their demand one by one in this ayah to show us the arrogance in their request. They did not know Who they were talking to when they made this request. It is almost as if they are talking to a servant or butler.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Imam Qurtubi lists several ways in which this vegetation is inferior to the Manna and Salwa that Allah (swt) had provided for them. Firstly Manna and Salwa are much more delicious and more wholesome than these vegetation that they were demanding. Second is that these vegetables are grown from the earth so one has to labor and toil to acquire them, but the Manna and Salwa simply came to them. Also the Manna and the Salwa never spoiled or went bad but this vegetables that they were asking for did. Finally the Manna and Salwa was the food that Allah (swt) had provided for the children of Israil, so by eating this food they were showing their gratefulness to Allah (swt). For them to make themselves content with

what Allah (swt) had given them would have been much better for them with their Lord. It would also have been better for them in the Hereafter. So why then would they want to exchange this blessed food that Allah (swt) had given them for the food of the common people? That is exactly the question that Musa (as) asks them in the next part of the ayah.

Musa (as) tells them "**Will you exchange that which is better for that which is lower?**" What is the matter with these people? Why are they throwing away the life that is better for them for the life of the common people? There is an old saying that for the cow the grass is always greener on the other side. This means that the human being who does not have guidance from Allah (swt) is never satisfied and he is never happy. He always considers what other people have to be better than what he has, even if what he has might be much better. When the human being does not remember Allah (swt) and he does not remember that he has a purpose in the life of this world to worship and serve Allah (swt), then he is never satisfied with what Allah (swt) has provided him. He always thinks that he deserves more than what he believes has been dealt to him in life. But the true believer who recognizes the purpose of his existence knows that everything he has is from Allah (swt), and he is content with whatever Allah (swt) has provided for him. The Prophet (saw) has said that the one who is truly rich is the one who is content with whatever Allah (swt) has provided him. However the children of Israil at this time did not realize this fact. They saw what other people had to be better than what they had. So that is why they sought to replace the blessed food of Manna and Salwa that Allah (swt) had provided them with the common vegetation of the earth.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that what Allah (swt) has provided for us is what is best for us. We should never seek to replace anything of what Allah (swt) has given us from the things that other people and other nations have been given. This does not apply only to food, but is applies to our entire way of life. What do we see as the purpose of our lives? What is our relationship with our family? What we do for entertainment and leisure time? Allah (swt) has given us answers to all of these questions in this complete way of life that He (swt) has revealed for us. Why then should we ever, ever choose a

different way of life? Why should we especially try to copy and be like those who do not follow a way of life that was revealed by Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) guide us to be always happy with Islam and never to look for anything beyond it!

Then Musa (as) tells the children of Israil "**Go to Misr, for surely there you will find what you ask for**". The scholars have two opinions as to what the word *Misr* in this ayah refers to. Some scholars say that it refers to Egypt because *Misr* is one of the names of Egypt. If we take this interpretation then we see that Musa (as) is being sarcastic with them in that he (as) is telling them to return to the city of Firaun. In the city of Firaun where they were persecuted and tormented, they will find the vegetation that they are asking for. Other scholars say that it refers to any large city. If we take this interpretation then Musa (as) is telling them that the food that they are asking for is the food of the common people and it can be found in any large city. With this interpretation as well we see that Musa (as) is mocking them. He (as) is telling them that what they are asking for can be found in any city, but the Manna and Salwa is a special provision that Allah (swt) has provided them. Either of these two interpretations gives the same meaning. It is amazing how they could ask for these common foods that can be found anywhere when they have the special and blessed food that has been given to them by Allah (swt). Do they wish to return to the life of the common people, the life of degradation and servitude that they lived before when they were under Firaun? If they wished that Musa (as) tells them to return to Misr to find what they are looking for.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that they were covered with *Dhilla* and *Maskana*. The word *Dhilla* gives meaning of "abasement", "humiliation", and "shame". The word *Maskana* means "poverty" and "misery". Because of their rejection of the commands of Allah (swt), they were brought low and humiliated. They also had to suffer poverty and to live in misery and need. Remember that Allah (swt) chose the children of Israil to be the nation that would carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Allah (swt) gave them the task of carrying this Message to mankind. This was a special responsibility that was not given to any other nation. This is what happened to them when they failed in this duty to Allah (swt). Humiliation and degradation covered them as

well as poverty and misery. They lost their honor and respect in the eyes of mankind and they became impoverished and dependent. All this was because they had given up on this dawah. Does this remind you of anyone you know?

Then Allah (swt) tells us that they brought on themselves His (swt)'s Wrath. Allah (swt) is the Most Loving, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving, the Most Patient, the Acceptor of Repentance, and the All Knowing. If Allah (swt) is All of this, then how could a people ever earn the Wrath of Allah (swt)? This shows how evil and disobedient the children of Israil were in that they brought upon themselves Wrath from Allah (swt) when He (swt) has all of the Perfect Names of Love, Compassion and Mercy. How could it be that they could have been so evil and so disobedient? Allah (swt) answers that question in the next part of the ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**that is because they used to deny the Signs of Allah and kill the prophets without right**". This was the terrible sin that they did for which they earned the Wrath of Allah (swt). How many Signs did Allah (swt) show them? First Allah (swt) sent them the messenger that He (swt) promised them to deliver them from the oppression of the people of Firaun. Even though Firaun tried to kill all the first-born sons among the children of Israil so that this prophecy would not be fulfilled, Allah (swt) saved Musa (as) from the clutches of Firaun. Allah (swt) sent Musa (as) to the children of Israil as He (swt) had promised. Allah (swt) also sent Musa (as) many miracles that the children of Israil witnessed, among these was the turning of sticks into live snakes and when Musa (as)'s hand became pure light. When the punishments descended upon the people of Firaun, such as the locusts and the turning of the Nile into blood, the children of Israil witnessed these as well and they knew that these punishments were from Allah (swt). Finally the children of Israil witnessed Allah (swt) separate the huge waters of the sea for them, saving them and drowning Firaun and his powerful army. How many more signs and miracles could a people need than this? Are these not enough evidences to show that Allah (swt) Exists, that Allah (swt) is All Powerful and that Musa (as) is the messenger of Allah (swt)? But they denied and rejected all of these Signs of Allah (swt). They knew that this Message was

from Allah (swt) but they refused to follow it, only because of their pride and their desire for the life of this world. Instead of living their lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as they were created to do, they lived a life of following their pleasures and their desires. They spread evil and corruption in the land with the sins that they committed. Examples of these sins is that they allowed the free mixing of men and women, they told women that they did not have to cover themselves, they legalized wine and they legalized interest. They knew all of these actions earned the Wrath of Allah (swt) but they did anyway. Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Mercy and Compassion sent them prophets and messengers to remind them to come back to the straight path, to come back to the life of worshipping and serving Him (swt). What did they do with such prophets and messengers?

Allah (swt) tells that they killed the prophets without right. What right does anyone have to kill the prophets of Allah (swt)? Men who were sent by Allah (swt) to guide the people to Him (swt). Men who dedicated their lives to calling people to Allah (swt), to bringing people out of the Fire and into the Garden. Men who came to call the people to fulfill the purpose of their existence. Men who sacrificed and struggled more than anyone else in this world ever did. What right did they have to kill such men? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that the prophets were killed without right. The prophets were men who were guilty of no sin and no crime whatsoever. They are the representatives of Allah (swt) to the people. They have the most right to be protected from all forms of harm. They have the most right to be supported and helped. But the children of Israil did not realize this right that the prophets had, they killed many of the prophets that were sent to them including Yahya (as) and Zacharia (as). That is why they are a people who have earned the Wrath of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! This is a prayer that we can never make enough because to be like them is what Shaitan is calling us towards. May Allah (swt) save us!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us another reason why they were deserving of the Wrath of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) tells us that they were a people who disobeyed and they transgressed all bounds. They disobeyed the prophets and messengers that were sent

to them, so in reality they disobeyed Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has placed limits and bounds that are not to be crossed. By violating the Law of Allah (swt), the children of Israil had crossed all these bounds that Allah (swt) has placed. They had transgressed and gone beyond the limits in every way imaginable. Whether it was in their legalization of interest and gambling, or their normalization of adultery and fornication, or in their refusal to rule their land by Law of Allah (swt). There is not a single law of Allah (swt) that they did not violate and not a single bound that they did not cross. The consequence of their disobeying Allah (swt) and transgressing the bounds and limits placed by Allah (swt) is that they brought down upon themselves the Wrath of Allah (swt). The Wrath of Allah (swt) in the life of this world is the *Dhilla* and *Maskana*, the humiliation and the poverty, and the Wrath of Allah (swt) in the next life is the Fire. May Allah (swt) save our community from ever being like theirs! May Allah (swt) make the Muslims wake up and see who it is that we are imitating and may Allah (swt) prevent us from ending up on their path!

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ وَٱلصَّٰبِـِٔينَ مَنْ
ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْأَخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. Surely the ones who believe, and the Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, for them their reward is with their Rabb and there is no fear on them and they will not grieve.

Many people today who read only the translation of the Quran and who do not bother look in the tafsir say that this ayah is evidence that anyone who believes in Allah (swt) and the Day of Judgment and does good deeds will go the Garden. They say that even if these people are Jews and Christians today, and they do not believe in the Prophet (saw) thinking that he (saw) was just a man who invented this Din in his mind, then they will still go to the Garden.

Even if the correctly received the Message of the Prophet (saw) and they were to reject, they would still go to the Garden as long as they believed in Allah (swt) and the Last Day. All that such people have to do is believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day and do good deeds. There are even Muslims who think in such a way. This is really wishful thinking on the part of many Muslims. They read only the translation of the ayah, they are unfamiliar about the context in which the ayah was revealed and they are unfamiliar as to what the scholars have said concerning the ayah. They simply draw a conclusion for themselves to suit their whims and desires based only on the translation that they have read. We can only advice such people that they are dealing here with the Book of Allah (swt) and so they cannot treat it as a joke. Before we draw a conclusion about what an ayah means we have to study the context in which the ayah was revealed and we have to study what the scholars have said about the ayah. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to give His (swt)'s Book the respect that it deserves and may Allah (swt) save us from speaking about it without knowledge!

Ibn 'Abbas (ra), one of the greatest of scholars of Quran from the Sahabah, a man whom the Prophet (saw) himself prayed to Allah (swt) to give him (ra) the current understanding of Quran, said concerning this ayah that it does not mean what the Muslims we mentioned above are thinking. It does not mean that anyone after the time of the Prophet (saw) who refuses to believe in him (saw) but who believes in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, that they will go to the Garden. Ibn 'Abbas (ra) quoted the 86th ayah from Surah Imran where Allah (swt) says ,"anyone who chooses for himself a Din other than *Al-Islam*, it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers". Notice that Allah (swt) uses the definite article "Al" to qualify the word "Al-Islam" in this ayah. This means that it is not simply any kind of submission to Allah (swt) but it is the submission to Allah (swt) that was taught by the Prophet (saw). The Din that this ayah refers to is the Din that was brought by the Prophet (saw), anyone who chooses other than this will be among the losers in the Hereafter. That means they will not be in the Garden in the Hereafter. Regardless of whether they believed in Allah (swt) and the Last Day or not.

So what then is the meaning of this ayah? To understand the meaning of this ayah we have to understand the context in which it was revealed. Recall that this ayah was revealed in the context of ayahs discussing the children of Israil. It was specifically revealed in the context of ayahs where Allah (swt) brings to our attention to what the children of Israil have done wrong. In this ayah Allah (swt) addresses one of the false claims that they used to make. One of the false claims that the children of Israil used to make was that they said only their race was promised the Garden by Allah (swt). Despite all of their sins and all of their disobedience to Allah (swt), they used to claim that only they are going to the Garden and everyone else is going to the Fire. This ayah is a response to that claim of theirs. Allah (swt) declares in this ayah that whoever believes in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, whether they are Jews, Christians, Sabians or Muslims, they are going to have their reward with their Rabb. The qualification of this statement however is that in addition to believing in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, one must also believe in the prophet or messenger that was sent to them. We as Muslims believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, and we also believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). Thus this ayah applies to the Muslims and it is the Muslims that Allah (swt) is referring to when He (swt) says "the ones who believe". As for the Jews, it refers to those among them who lived at the time of Musa (as) and they believed in Musa (as) as the messenger of Allah (swt). Those among them who believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, and they do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt), the actions for which they hope they will be rewarded on the Last Day, the actions that are taught to them by their messenger, it is these that are going to the Garden, it is these have their reward with their Rabb. The same is true for the Christians. Those among them who believed in 'Isa (as) as the messenger of Allah (swt) and they worshipped Allah (swt) correctly. They do the actions that 'Isa (as) commanded them to do hoping to get their reward from Allah (swt) on the Last Day. It is these that have their reward from their Rabb. So we see that this ayah is discussing those among the previous nations who believed in their prophet correctly. It is only those among them who believe in the prophet or messenger who was sent to them that are promised salvation in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) Knows best!

However for those among the Jews and Christians that hear the Message of the Prophet (saw), they see the evidences that the Prophet (saw) has presented to them, they know that he (saw) is the Messenger from Allah (swt) and they still choose to reject him (saw), then nothing that they do will ever be accepted from them. Even if they believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, and they do the actions that their previous prophets had commanded them to do, it will not be accepted from them. So we see that the meaning of this ayah is that whoever believes in the prophet that was sent to them whether that prophet is Musa (as), 'Isa (as) or the Prophet (saw), these people will have their reward with Allah (swt). So the condition must be that you must believe in the Message of Allah (swt) that reaches you during your time. Allah (swt) Knows Best!

Now the burning question that is on the minds of many Muslims today is what will happen with the people of the world. What will happen with the four billion in the world today who are not Muslim? The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) Knows Best. Allah (swt) has told us in Quran that He (swt) will never punish a people before He (swt) sends them a messenger. We know that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt) to all mankind today. But what does it mean for a person to correctly receive the Message of the Prophet (saw)? Allah (swt) Knows Best. It seems to us that to correctly receive the Message of the Prophet (saw) a person must be presented with the Quran and it must be demonstrated to that person how the Quran is a Miracle. The person must then be convinced that the Quran is a Miracle. If they then turn away from this Message even after they are convinced that the Quran is indeed from Allah (swt), then they are truly disbelievers like Abu Jahl and the Quraysh chiefs were at the time of Prophet (saw). However if they have never been presented with the Miracle of the Quran, we cannot be certain that the *Hujja* or the proof has been established over them. In this case, their fate will be like those who have never received a messenger and their judgment is up to Allah (swt) whether to admit them into the Garden or throw them in the Fire. The bottom line is that we cannot say where they will end up. We only say that their fate is with Allah (swt). What we must always remember however is that Allah (swt) is the Most Kind and the Most Merciful and

that He (swt) will not do injustice to anyone. Thus we can be certain that Allah (swt) will only place in the Fire those who deserve to be in the Fire. Once again Allah (swt) Knows Best!

That being said this does not absolve us from carrying the obligation dawah to the non-Muslims. Carrying this Message to mankind is a responsibility that Allah (swt) has given us and it is a responsibility that we will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment. We know the Truth, so we are not like those who are ignorant of it. We have no right to sleep or take a break while humanity is being devoid from the Light of this Message. We have to work and strive as hard as we can to take this Message out to mankind. Although we can still carry dawah to the individual non-Muslims that we know personally, we have to realize that the method of the Prophet (saw) in carrying this Message to mankind was to establish the Islamic State and to allow the State to be the vehicle to carry this Message to mankind. So if we want to make certain that mankind gets this Message and we want to be absolved of this responsibility that we have to carry on the job of our Prophet (saw), then we have to work in whatever capacity that we can to re-establish the Islamic State. Only then can dawah be carried to mankind following the way of the Prophet (saw). May Allah (swt) guide us and help us to that goal!

We should also bear in mind that we do not know what is in people's hearts. So if someone does not profess with their tounge that they believe in the Prophet (saw) and the Message that he (saw) brought to them from Allah (swt), then in our relationship with them we cannot treat them as we would treat our Muslim brothers and sisters. Even if they are very nice people and they are simply ignorant of this Message and even if Allah (swt) would admit them into the Garden in the Hereafter, in our relationship with them we cannot treat them in the same way as we would treat our Muslims brothers and sisters. The Muslims are one nation and one brotherhood. We should love each other and we should be willing to die for each other. If a Muslim says that he believes in the Message that was brought by the Prophet (saw), then you have to treat him as your brother. You do not know his heart, you only know his words so judge him by what you know. Leave his heart to Allah (swt) and know that Allah (swt) is the Best of Judges. As long as he says he is a Muslim with his tounge, you have to treat him as your brother.

This same treatment cannot be extended to those who do not believe in this Message. If they are not Muslims then we cannot have this brotherhood between us and them, we cannot treat them in the same way as we treat our Muslim brothers. We should still be righteous towards them if they are good people but we cannot treat the same as our Muslim brothers and sisters. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Going back to the ayah we can also note that when Allah (swt) says that "*their reward is with their Rabb*", there is also something special that we can see about the Arabic word Allah (swt) uses for "with". There are two words in Arabic that give the meaning of "with", one is *ma´* and one is '*indha*. Allah (swt) uses both of these words frequently in the Quran. The difference between these two words is that *ma´* is used when something is with something else anywhere while *indha* is used when something is with something else in the place where the latter of those belongs. So for example when you would say that the student is the with the principal in the park you would use *ma´* because this is a random location but when you say that the student is with the principal in the principal's office you would use *indha* because the office is where the principal belongs. Here Allah (swt) uses the word *indha* because the reward of the believers is with Allah (swt) and that is where their reward belongs. It is not just that the reward of the believers is with Allah (swt), but with Allah (swt) is where there reward should be. With Allah (swt) is the rightful place for the reward of the believers. The believers do not have their true reward in the life of this world, in this world they have to struggle and work hard. Their reward is with Allah (swt), and Insha Allah they will have their reward when they meet Him (swt). May Allah (swt) make us among those who find our reward with Him (swt)!

Scholars say that the "Sabians" in this ayah refers to those who never received a Message from a prophet. The Quraysh at the time of the Prophet (saw) used this word to refer to those who abandoned the religion of worshipping idols and chose instead to worship Allah (swt) Alone. That is why they would often label the Muslims with this title. However "Sabians" actually refers to those who never received a messenger and yet knew that only Allah (swt) deserves to be worshipped. It refers to those who knew that it was wrong to worship idols so they

abandoned the religion that their people were practicing. They knew that only Allah (swt) could create and sustain this world that they see around them. But they did not have a messenger so they worshipped Allah (swt) in any way that they could. As always Allah (swt) Knows Best!

Another evidence that the "believers" whom this ayah talks about are believers in the prophets and messengers as well as believers in Allah (swt) is the fact that Allah (swt) describes these people as doing the good deeds. The "good deeds" are those that Allah (swt) is pleased with. Good is never what we think is good but good is what Allah (swt) says is good. Now how can any human know the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with unless He (swt) tells the human those actions? The only way for us to know the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with is if He (swt) tells us through a prophet or messenger that He (swt) sends. We cannot say from our minds which actions are pleasing to Allah (swt). So we see clearly that the believers that this ayah talks about are not only the believers in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, it is those who also believe in the prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) sends to them. It is for those who believe in the Message of Allah (swt) when it reaches them. For all of humanity today their messenger from Allah (swt) is the Prophet (saw).

So we have seen in this ayah that Allah (swt) responds to the claim by many among the children of Israil who say that only their nation will go the Garden. Those who say that only their tribe has a reward with Allah (swt) because of who they are and because of the tribe into which they were born. Allah (swt) tells them in this ayah that whoever believes in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, whoever is certain of the fact that they will meet Allah (swt) and be judged for their actions on the Last Day, whoever does the actions in preparation for this Day and in preparation for the meeting with Allah (swt) they are the ones will have their reward with their Rabb. This is true regardless of the tribe that they are from, regardless of the color of their skin or the land in which they were born. Anyone who believes in Allah (swt) and the Last Day and who does the good actions following the example of the messenger that Allah (swt) sent in preparation for the Last Day then they will have their reward with Allah (swt). There will be no fear upon them and they will not grieve. May Allah (swt) include us in their company!

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ
وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. And (remember the time) when We took the covenant from you and We raised the mountain over you, (saying) "take all that We give you with power, and remember all that it is in it so that you may become among the Muttaqoon".

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings to our attention yet another event that happened with the children of Israil. The fact that Allah (swt) continues the theme of the children of Israil in this ayah is further evidence that the previous ayah has to be studied in this context. The previous ayah was not a general ayah standing on it's own, but it was part of the address of Allah (swt) to the children of Israil. In all of these ayahs Allah (swt) is calling on the children of Israil to accept the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) to them, so how then can anyone take the previous ayah by itself and say that it means that one does not need to believe in the Prophet (saw) to attain salvation? Rather we saw that the previous ayah was an ayah that attacks and destroys the concept that many among the Jews have of only their race being saved in the Hereafter. The ayah showed us that it is not who you are that Allah (swt) looks to but rather it is what you do. Now this ayah here continues on that same theme of reminding the children of Israil of all of the favors of Allah (swt) to them and telling them of their responsibility to Him (swt). This ayah continues to call on them to believe in the Prophet (saw) and become Muslim because of all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them in the past.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And (remember the time) when We took the covenant from you and We raised the mountain over you**". In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil of the time when He (swt) raised a mountain above them as He (swt) took a covenant from them. This is an actual event that happened with the children of Israil. Recall from the previous ayahs of the incident when seventy elders who were supposedly

the best among the children of Israil went with Musa (as) to the mountain of At-Tur. We saw that they then refused to believe in Musa (as) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) until they saw Allah (swt) plainly. We then know that Allah (swt) struck them down with a powerful blast of lightning. Then Allah (swt) raised them up back to life once again so that they may be grateful. However even after seeing all of these proofs and evidences they still refused to submit to the Law of Allah (swt). They still refused to do what was required of them as Muslims. That was when Allah (swt) commanded that the mountain be raised above them, and their covenant was taken with the mountain literally hanging above them. Can you imagine what an awesome sight this must have been? To see this huge mountain hanging over you? When they saw the mountain hanging over them they finally accepted the covenant to abide by the Law of Allah (swt).

Some people may ask why Allah (swt) is forcing them to accept the covenant when we know from other ayahs of the Quran that one cannot be forced to accept Islam. The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) is not forcing them to accept Islam because they are already Muslims. They have already professed with their tongues that they believe in Allah (swt) as their Rabb and that they believe in Musa (as) as the Messenger of their Rabb. So they are not being forced to become Muslims in this ayah. What they are being forced to do here is to live up to the covenant that they have already made when they became Muslims. When they were in Egypt and while they were under the persecution and tyranny of Firaun they had prayed to Allah (swt) that if He (swt) would deliver them from the oppression that they were suffering then they would dedicate their lives to worshipping and serving Him (swt). Now that Allah (swt) had rescued them and they found themselves free of that oppression, Allah (swt) told them to live up to the promise that they made. Allah (swt) told them to accept the Law that He (swt) sent through Musa (as) in the Tawrah. It is only when they adamantly refused to do this was a threat like this placed over them. So no one can be forced to become Muslim, as Allah (swt) tells us in other ayahs of the Quran there is to be no compulsion in religion. But once someone does become Muslim then they can be forced to live up to the obligations that they themselves took. They

knew what they were getting into so they do not then have a right to walk away from it. Such is the command and ruling of Allah (swt) and our task is only to submit to it.

Another question that some people may have regarding this ayah is that why is it that our Ummah is not being shown miracles such as this to attest to the Truth of this Message. Such people would claim that if they saw a mountain being raised from the earth and made to hover over their heads then they would gain absolute certainty in this Message as well. The answer to this question is that our Ummah already has a Miracle that is even more amazing than a floating mountain. Of course that Miracle is this Quran. The Quran is an intellectual miracle rather than a sensory one. Please recall our tafsir of ayah 24 where we discussed some of the ways in which the Quran is a Miracle. So our Ummah does not need to see oceans separating or mountains floating, we already have the greatest of miracles right here. It is up to us to study and comprehend this Miracle so that we can attain the certainty of belief that we all seek. First and foremost this must start with a study of the Arabic language. May Allah (swt) enable us to do that!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells the children to take what He (swt) gives them with power. The meaning of this phrase is to take hold of what is in the Tawrah firmly. In other words they should practice the commandments of the Tawrah to the best of their ability. They should not follow this Law in a weak or haphazard way. They should take hold of this Law with strength and hold on to it to their best of their ability.

This same rule applies to our relationship with the Law of Allah (swt) in the Quran and Sunnah as well. We must take this Law with power and strength, we should hold on to it as much as we can. It is not right for us to one day follow the Law of Allah (swt), and then to abandon it the next day because we find it to be too difficult or we find it to be inconvenient. Notice that Allah (swt) uses the word *maa* , which means "all". So we should take with firmness and power all that is in the Quran and Sunnah. We cannot pick and choose which laws we would like to follow and which are too difficult for us. We have to take hold of everything that is in Islam and we have to try to implement it in our lives to the best of our ability. Such

determination on our part demonstrates our willingness to submit to Allah (swt). If you truly love Allah (swt), if you want to dedicate your life to worshipping and serving Allah (swt) then you will follow all of the commandments in the Law of Allah (swt) to the best of our ability, with all the strength and determination that you can muster. May Allah (swt) enable us all to do that!

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says to "**remember all that is in it so that you can become among Al-Muttaqoon**". Recall how these are the people who have Taqwa, and to have Taqwa means that one is always is remembering Allah (swt) and thinking about how Allah (swt) Knows each of one's actions and that one will be called to account before Allah (swt) for those actions. So to have Taqwa is to always remember Allah (swt) and then to only do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) because of that remembrance. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil that they have to remember all that is in Tawrah in order for them to gain Taqwa. Once again the same rule applies for Muslims as well. In order for us to gain Taqwa we have to always remember what is in the Quran and Sunnah. In order for us to gain Taqwa we have to carry out the commandments in the Quran and Sunnah to the best of our ability. So for example in the Quran Allah (swt) tells us to pray so we have to pray and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) Allah (swt) tells us not to mix freely with members of the opposite sex so we should not mix with them. When we remember the Law of our Lord and we try with the best of our ability to implement that Law our lives that is when Insha Allah we will be among the Muttaqoon. The Quran is the Book of Allah (swt) and so to remind ourselves with the Quran is to remind ourselves of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) guide us to always read the Quran and to always reflect on what is in it, so that Insha Allah we can remember Him (swt) and become among Al-Muttaqoon!

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَكُنتُم
مِّنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Then you turned away from after that, and if it had not for Allah's Grace upon you and His Mercy, you would have been among the losers.

We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) raised a mountain over the children of Israil and told them to take with power all that is in the Book that He (swt) revealed unto them. When they saw this awesome sight of the mountain hovering above them, and when they were faced with the dread of being crushed by this mountain, they agreed to the covenant that Allah (swt) had given them. They finally agreed to follow the Law of Allah (swt). They finally agreed to live up to their commitments as Muslims. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us that even after taking such a solemn promise and even after they had seen this awesome sight of the mountain hovering over them they still turned away. Turning away here means turning away from obedience to Allah (swt), it means that they broke the covenant that they had made with Allah (swt) to abide by His (swt)'s Law. They returned to a life of disobedience to the Law of Allah (swt), and they violated the Law of Allah (swt) whenever they felt like it. Even after they had taken such a solemn promise from Allah (swt), with a mountain hovering over them they went back on their promise.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and if it had not for Allah's Grace upon you and His Mercy, you would have been among the losers**". The word "losers" in this ayah refers to their condition on the Day of Judgment. To be a loser on the Day of Judgment is to have failed in the test that Allah (swt) had given you while you were alive in this world. You find too few good deeds on one side of your scale and too many evil deeds on the other side. Your only destination in that case is the Fire. That is what it means to be a loser. We can see how the English word does not convey the sense of dread and hopelessness that the Arabic word that Allah (swt) uses gives. In the Arabic you can almost taste the condition of these people, a people who have lost

absolutely everything. So we see here that Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil that had it not been for His (swt)'s Grace and Mercy upon them they would have been losers.

The Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) includes the sending of prophets and messengers to warn and admonish the children of Israil. Even after they had seeped into error and sin, Allah (swt) sent to them many prophets to remind them to return to the Straight Path of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Such reminders were Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) for them because if Allah (swt) had not sent such prophets and messengers then they would certainly have found themselves on the Day of Judgment as losers. Through the reminders of those prophets and messengers they were saved from many sins and thus they were saved from the Fire. Allah (swt) also sent to them the Prophet (saw), a man whose exact descriptions they found in their books and who was a messenger they had been expecting. The Prophet (saw) came with a guidance that if they followed would have brought them back to the Straight Path. This is all part of the Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) on them.

Another aspect of the Grace and Mercy for the children of Israil is that Allah (swt) forgives them and pardons them for many of their sins and their faults. Allah (swt) may simply wipe away some of their sins without any penalty whatsoever, or He (swt) could make them go through some difficulty or trial in the life of this world to purify them of their sins. In either case, the evil deeds on their scales are cleared and they no longer find themselves to be losers on the Day of Judgment. All of this is part of the Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) for a people who had done nothing but disobedience to Him (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that no matter how many times we have disobeyed Allah (swt), we must never give up on the Grace and Mercy of our Lord. Look here at the situation of the children of Israil, they made a promise to Allah (swt) to obey Him (swt) while they were literally under a mountain. Yet still turned away from this promise that they made. Time and time again they turned away from their promise to worship and serve Allah (swt). Despite this Allah (swt) still showered them with His (swt)'s Grace and Mercy and He (swt) saved them from being losers on the Last Day. How then can we then think

for ourselves that our sins are too great and that Allah (swt) will never forgive us? On the contrary we must always have a hope that no matter how many times we turn away from Allah (swt) that Allah (swt) will always be there ready and waiting to accept our Tawbah and allowing us to return to the life of worshipping and serving Him (swt). All that we have to do is make the effort to come back to Him (swt). Nothing else matters in the life of this world except that you worship and serve Allah (swt). Shaitan will try to take you away from your purpose in life as many times as he can, and he will try to make you among the losers as he is. But you know from this ayah that no matter how many times you turn away, the Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) is always there for you if you choose to return to it.

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱعْتَدَوْا۟ مِنكُمْ فِى ٱلسَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا۟ قِرَدَةً خَٰسِـِٔينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

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66. And surely you know well of the ones from you who broke the Sabbath and so We said to them "Be apes, despised and rejected".

This ayah continues to relate the mistakes and errors that the children of Israil committed in their past. As we read these ayahs we have to remind ourselves that these ayahs serve two purposes. Firstly it is a reminder to the children of Israil of all the ways in which they have failed in their duty to Allah (swt) in the past, thus Allah (swt) is telling them that they should not repeat the same mistake of their ancestors. The most important decision they have to make now is whether or not to accept the messenger that Allah (swt) has sent them in the Prophet (saw). Do they follow him (saw) now as they know they rightfully should or do they let their desires and their pride get the better of them? This is the fundamental question that all men face. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives guidance for those who want to make the right decision. Allah

(swt) reminds the children of Israil how they can make up for their past mistakes by making the right choice now.

The second purpose that these ayahs serve is that they are a guidance for our Ummah on how to avoid the mistakes made by the Ummah who carried this Message before us. So as we read these ayahs we should always think to ourselves that what Allah (swt) tells us as happening to the children of Israil could very well happen to us if we do not fulfill our purpose of worshipping and serving Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the words "**you surely know**". Allah (swt) is addressing the children of Israil and He (swt) is telling them that the events that He (swt) is going to speak about is something that they should have known about very well. Allah (swt) is going to tell them about an event that happened in their past and He (swt) tells them here that they surely knew about this event. There was no one among the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) who rose up and said that this event never happened in their history. They all knew about it very well. What should have been amazing for them is how the Prophet (saw), an illiterate merchant from the desert, could have known about this event that happened a long time ago in their history. The Prophet (saw) did not know about it, but Allah (swt) knew about it and He (swt) knew that they knew about it.

The scholars say this event happened with a fishing village at time of the prophet Dawud (as). This happened many years after the time of Musa (as). Dawud (as) was not in this village but it was part of his kingdom, and just like Dawud (as) the people in this village were among the children of Israil. The people of this village were also fisherman. Now the Law of Allah (swt) that they had to live by was that they were allowed to fish and earn a living on every day of the week except Saturday. Saturday was the Day of Sabbath and they were not allowed to fish on that day. Allah (swt) had commanded that this entire day be devoted to worship.

Allah (swt) then gave them a test so that it could be shown how strong their Iman in Him (swt) was and also to see how much Taqwa they had of Him (swt). Allah (swt) commanded the fish to come near the shore on the Sabbath Day so that they could easily be caught. This was

a test for them because many of them felt the urge to fish on that Day. The fish on that day were so easy to catch because they all came so close to the shore. So many of them wanted to violate the Law of Allah (swt) and fish on that day. These are those who preferred the life of this world and preferred enjoying themselves here to worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So when they saw the fish coming near the shore on the Sabbath day they had an urge to fish on that day. At first they tried several tricks. For example they would leave their nets out on Friday so that the fish would get trapped in them on Saturday. So even though they were not fishing on Saturday the fish were still getting caught in these nets. This was their trick to get around the Law of Allah (swt). They thought that they could make a plan but they forgot that Allah (swt) is the Best of Planners. There were some righteous people among them who would admonish them and tell them that they should not fish in any way on the Sabbath. But those among them who were greedy for the life of this world and enjoying themselves therein paid no heed to this admonition. Not only did they continue to fish but soon started to fish out in the open. They dispensed with tricks and went out on the Day of the Sabbath and started fishing. The righteous among them continued to admonish them and continued to tell them to fear Allah (swt) but these people paid no heed to this dawah. Their lusts for wealth and the material things of this world were more important in their hearts than Allah (swt) and obedience to Him (swt). That is why Allah (swt) says in this ayah that they broke the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a special day that was given to them, and by fishing and doing business on that day instead of worshipping Allah (swt), they broke their promise and their responsibility to Allah (swt).

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was their punishment for this great crime. They were turned into apes! They became monkeys! Those among them who violated the Sabbath by fishing on that day were literally transformed into apes. If you think that this punishment is too harsh then remember that it was not only on one occasion that they broke the Sabbath but they did it again and again. They were admonished and warned to change their behavior and to fear Allah (swt) but they paid no attention to such warning. Just like animals they cared more about satisfying their lusts and their desires than worshipping and serving Allah

(swt). What is the difference between the human being and the animal if the human does not dedicate his life to worshipping and serving Allah (swt)? How fitting a punishment is this for a people who constantly turned away from Allah (swt)!

Not only did they become apes but also Allah (swt) says that they became "apes despised and rejected". This adjective describes the way their families perceived them. After they were transformed, their families looked upon them with disgust and hatred. They were completely rejected by everyone and they had nowhere to go. The scholars say that these animals lived only for three days and they could not eat or drink anything. Soon they died and Allah (swt) Knows best what was their destination in the Hereafter. Because of their rebellion and their insisting to fish on the Sabbath Day, even when they were commanded not to, Allah (swt) gave them a humiliating punishment and painful punishment in the life of this world. Allah (swt) Knows Best what will be their fate in the life after this, the permanent life.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always abide by the Law of Allah (swt) no matter how tempting the life of this world becomes. The evil actions become very easy if one forgets about Allah (swt). Shaitan will always give us a hundred reasons why we should violate the Law of Allah (swt). But we must always remember that our duty to abide by the Law of Allah (swt) is a covenant that we have with Him (swt), if we fail in that duty then we are violating this covenant with Allah (swt). If we fail to restrict our actions by the Law of Allah (swt), then we would be no different from these Jews who went out to fish on the Day of the Sabbath. Every human is faced with a choice and when we choose to violate the Law of Allah (swt), we are like those who choose the life of this world over worshipping and serving Allah (swt). We see in this ayah what is the result of those who made the wrong choice. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them!

فَجَعَلْنَٰهَا نَكَٰلًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. So We made them an example for all who were among them and for all who came after them and a lesson for Al-Muttaqoon.

This ayah continues on the narration that began in the previous ayah concerning those among the children of Israil who had been transformed into apes. We saw that Allah (swt) levied this strict punishment on them because they fished on the Day of the Sabbath, thus breaking it when they were specifically commanded not to. They were warned and admonished by the righteous people of their town but they continued to fish and continued to violate the day that Allah (swt) had made sacred for them. That is why they had the humiliating punishment of being turned into apes in the life of this world, and Allah (swt) Knows best what is their fate in the Hereafter.

In this ayah Allah (swt) says that such people were made into an example for all those who were among them and for all who came after them. The fact that Allah (swt) transformed such people into apes serves not only as a strict punishment for them but it is also a lesson for others not to repeat the same crime that they did. Allah (swt) says that He (swt) made these people into a lesson for all those who lived at their time and also for all those who came after their time. Since we are among those who are after their time, it includes us as well. We said earlier how the human being is faced with a fundamental choice in life. The choice is whether to dedicate one's life to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) or whether to follow one's lusts and desires. We should know which of these is the correct choice. For those who forget or for those who feel like following their lusts and desires Allah (swt) gives reminders and lessons of those who came in the past. We all need role models, ever since we are children we look to people whom we can imitate. In the Quran Allah (swt) gives us those role models whom we should strive to emulate and those whom we should strive to avoid. With the town from the children of Israil who were transformed into apes, Allah (swt) gives an example of the latter. They were a people who were faced with the choice of worshipping Allah (swt) or submitting to

their greed and they chose the latter. In their choice, there is a lesson for us on what we should do when we are faced with this dilemma.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and a lesson for Al-Muttaqoon**". This second part of this ayah emphasizes and confirms the meaning given in the first part. However here Allah (swt) says that they are a lesson for the Al-Muttaqoon. Taqwa is a continual state of being that we must always strive to maintain. It is not something that we can have only on Ramadan or only on the Day of Jummah. Every second of our lives, we always have to be aware of the fact that Allah (swt) is Aware of us and He (swt) is Aware of what we are doing and He (swt) is Aware of what we are thinking. However Allah (swt) also Knows that Shaitan always comes to us and tries to make us do the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). Shaitan always puts this world in front of us and tells us of all the opportunities for pleasure, enjoyment and wealth that we are missing if we are worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Of course this is pure deception, the only thing that we are really missing if we choose not to follow him is the misery of knowing that we are servants of Allah (swt) who are not doing the role for which we were created. But Shaitan can be so deceptive and we can be so weak and so forgetful, so we need lessons and we need reminders to show us the true reality of the universe. The true reality of this universe is that we have been created to worship and serve Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gave us a mind through which we can recognize the Truth of His (swt)'s Existence and His (swt)'s Oneness and His (Swt)'s Total Sovereignty over the universe. Our minds also allow to recognize the prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) sends to us by comprehending the miracles that He (swt) gives them. Once we know the Message that Allah (swt) sends to us through our prophet, our task then is to follow this Message to the best of our ability. We know that once we fulfill the purpose of our creation by worshipping and serving Allah (swt), then we hope that we are earning the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We also know that part of the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is the reward that He (swt) will give us in this life and in the next. But if we disregard this Message and follow our desires instead, then what good are we? What then is the purpose of this mind that Allah (swt) has given us? What then is the purpose of our creation and the creation of the universe around us. The only

difference between us and the apes is this mind that Allah (swt) has given us. Remember the first thing that Allah (swt) did with Adam (as) after He (swt) created him (as). Allah (swt) gave Adam (as) knowledge and Allah (swt) taught him (as) how to use his mind. That is how we are different from the apes and that is how we can have any purpose to our lives. When we know Allah (swt) through our minds and we know the Message that Allah (swt) has sent to us and we use our minds in striving to worship and serve Allah (swt), only then can we be fulfilling the purpose for which we created. The ones who truly strive to worship and serve Allah (swt) with every moment of their lives are Al-Muttaqoon. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, the example of the children of Israil who were transformed into apes are lesson for Al-Muttaqoon. Try to have Taqwa at every moment and every second of your life. Remember the fate of those who forgot to have Taqwa, the fate of those who forgot the purpose of their existence. You decide what you are by the choices that you make in the life of this world, at every second of your life you make these choices and you decide what you are. Are you the servant of the Most High and the Most Great or are you an ape hated and rejected?

Finally we should look at the society in the West today and see what they teach to their children about who they are. You can tell a lot about a society by what they teach their children, what do they say to their kids as to where we all came from. They teach their children that we are nothing more than apes. Simply a set of apes on a lonely planet in a huge universe that by chance became a little smart and made some technology and innovation. Just like an ape, you live only to eat, defecate, procreate and then die. That is the purpose of your existence. Can you even begin to imagine the psychological problems that a child will have if he grows up thinking that this is all that there is to his existence? Not only does such a perception of the universe and of man's role in the universe completely contradict the nature of the universe and the nature of man but it is also a very depressing and bleak outlook on the purpose of our existence. Would you even want to live if that was all there was to your existence? This then shows us how much Allah (swt) blessed us and favored us by sending us this Message through the Prophet (saw). It shows what Allah (swt) saved us from. The Muslim teaches his child that

the purpose of existence is to worship and serve Allah (swt) to the best of his ability. If he does that, then he is indeed the best of the creation of Allah (swt), even better than the angels and the mountains. How much better would a child be if he thought this of himself rather than thinking that he is an ape?

We once again find a great similarity between our own Ummah and the children of Israil. We all have a contract and covenant with Allah (swt). We all are the children of Israil and the actions that Allah (swt) has forbidden for us in our Shariah are our Sabbath. For every moment of our lives we are faced with the choice of whether to violate this Sabbath or not. The choice that we make determines who we are. Are you going to be the best of creation like your beloved Prophet (saw), or are you going to be an ape hated and rejected? You choose now on who you want to be, when you choose to obey the Law of Allah (swt) and do what is pleasing to your Lord then you go closer to the station of the Prophet (saw) but when you choose to ignore the Law of Allah (swt) and yield yourself to your desires and your greed then you become closer to these people who were turned to apes. You decide who you are based on the choices that you make in life. Remember that Allah (swt) has given you the best examples to follow and the best examples to avoid. All that you need to do now is choose which of these paths you want to walk on. All the guidance that you could need is in the Quran and in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Always remember that the choice is yours. May Allah (swt) guide us all to the choice that He (swt) is pleased with!

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تَذْبَحُوا۟ بَقَرَةً ۖ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا
هُزُوًا ۖ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِٱللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68. And (remember the time) when Musa said to his people "Surely Allah commands you that you sacrifice a cow". They said "Do you make fun of us?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah that I should be among the *Jaahiloon*".

In this ayah Allah (swt) narrates yet another event that occurred in the history of the children of Israil. This is yet another place where they failed in their duty, another choice that they made that was the wrong one. Allah (swt) reminds them of these mistakes so that they can make up for them by following the Prophet (saw). In addition to reminding the children of Israil, relating to us this event also serves as an example for our Ummah to avoid. After all of these examples and all of these lessons, if our Ummah still ends up becoming like theirs, then we truly have no excuse in front of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like these people after He (swt) has given us so many examples and lessons!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling the children of Israil to remember the time when Musa (as) told them to sacrifice a cow. This incident happened when a man from among the children of Israil was killed. The man was killed and no one knew who the killer was. So the people went to Musa (as) and told him (as) about their dilemma. They asked him (as) to help them find out who the killer was. Musa (as)'s response to their problem was to tell them that Allah (swt) commands them to sacrifice a cow. Notice how Musa (as) uses the word "surely" to let the children of Israil know that this indeed is a command from Allah (swt). This lets them know that this is something that they should do and not something that they should take lightly or something that hesitate to perform. Definitely they had to sacrifice a cow. It was a definite command from Allah (swt) and so it must be implemented. Thus we see in this ayah that in response to their request to help them find the killer of this man, Musa (as) tells them that surely Allah (swt) has commanded them to sacrifice a cow.

Notice also that it is a cow that must be sacrificed and not a camel, goat or sheep. Why did Allah (swt) choose the cow for the children of Israil? What is so special about this animal? One reason could be because the cow is the most valuable of domestic animals. It provides milk that can be used in a variety of foods, and it can also be used to till the land, and it also produces fertilizer for the land. But there is another more important reason for the children of Israil as to why Allah (swt) commanded them to sacrifice specially a cow. That is because they used to worship the cow at some point in their history. Remember the incident when they built the golden calf and worshipped it. So by telling them to sacrifice a cow at this point in time, Allah (swt) is making them demonstrate that their reverence and respect is only for Him (swt) and not for any animal. As can be seen from their past actions, the children of Israil had a special liking for the cow, so by making them sacrifice this specific animal, by making them kill it in the Name of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) makes them demonstrate that they do not revere the cow but rather they only revere and respect only Him (swt).

Of course the children of Israil were not fond of sacrificing any of their cows so their response to Musa (as) was "**Do you make fun of us?**". They knew that they were addressing the messenger of Allah (swt) and they knew that Musa (as) demanded total obedience because he (as) was the messenger of Allah (swt) to them. They knew what they had to do, but it was not to their liking and their desires. They knew that they had to sacrifice the cow but they did not want to. So they pretended like they were surprised with the command of Allah (swt) and they asked Musa (as) this question. With their question they actually suggested that Musa (as), the messenger of Allah (swt), is making fun of them. The utter foolishness of such a question shows they were not serious in asking it. They knew they had to sacrifice the cow, but they did not want to. So they asked Musa (as) this stupid question.

Musa (as)'s response to their question is beautiful. He (as) says "**I seek refuge in Allah that I should be among the *Jaahiloon***". The word *Jaahiloon* in this ayah could be those who are ignorant or those who are foolish. Both of the meanings of the word fit in this ayah. Musa (as) is telling them that he (as) seeks refuge in Allah (swt) that he (as) should

become among the ignorant or among the foolish. Musa (as) is not among the ignorant, he (as) is the messenger of Allah (swt), so he knows what he is talking about and his commands are actually the commands of Allah (swt). Musa (as) is also not among the foolish that he (as) would jest and make a joke over a matter like this. A man has been murdered and the killer must be found. Never would a messenger of Allah (swt) make a joke about something like this. Joking about serious matters is something that only the fools do. Musa (as) is telling the people that he (as) is seeking refuge in Allah (swt) that he (as) should become among the ignorant or among the fools.

Notice also that Musa (as) does not tell them that he (as) is not ignorant or foolish but rather he (as) says that he (as) seeks refuge in Allah (swt) from being among the ignorant or among the foolish. He (as) is telling them that if it were not for Allah (swt), he (as) would have been among the ignorant or foolish. So for anything good that we do or for any good within ourselves we must always praise Allah (swt) and never attribute that good quality or good action to ourselves. Everything good that we do is only because Allah (swt) has guided us and shown us how to do that good. So if you are kind and generous then that is because Allah (swt) made you kind and generous and if you always make your prayers on time that is because Allah (swt) has allowed you to make your prayers on time. Do not attribute anything good about yourself to yourself, but attribute it to the One Who deserves all of the praise and all of the thanks. Musa (as) is seeking refuge in Allah (swt) from being among the ignorant or the foolish, because he (as) knows that if it were not for Allah (swt) he would be ignorant and foolish. So like Musa (as), if you are someone who has some knowledge, then do not attribute your knowledge to yourself. Rather know that it was Allah (swt) who taught you everything that you know and always seek refuge in Allah (swt) from losing that knowledge.

Notice here also that Allah (swt) did not specify the kind of cow that it is. Allah (swt) simply commanded them to sacrifice a cow. Because the type of cow has not been specified in the command, any cow would have been sufficient. The children of Israil could have sacrificed any cow that they found, even the most frail and the oldest of cows and it would have been

sufficient. Any cow would have fulfilled the command that Allah (swt) because it was the most simple and clearest of commands. Allah (swt) had simply commanded them to sacrifice a cow.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that when Allah (swt) gives us a clear and simple command then we should carry it out. The mistake that the children of Israil made was that when their prophet gave them a clear and simple command to sacrifice a cow, they did not rush to obey that command. They should have known that the purpose of their life is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt), so when the messenger of Allah (swt) gave them a command there should have been no hesitation to carry it out. Similarly for us when we hear that the Prophet (saw) has told us something, we should not hesitate in doing what he (as) has told us. We should always remember who the Prophet (saw) is, he (saw) is the messenger of Allah (swt) to us. He (saw) is the medium through which our Creator and Sustainer and our Lord and Master speaks to us. So when he (as) gives us a command there should be no hesitation in carrying it out. As we will see Insha Allah in the ayahs that follow this one, the children of Israil were coming up with one excuse after another as to why they should not sacrifice this cow that Allah (swt) commanded them to. May Allah (swt) enable us to learn from their mistakes, and may Allah (swt) make us rush to implement the commands that He (swt) gives us through His Messenger (saw).

قَالُواْ ٱدۡعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٞ
لَّا فَارِضٞ وَلَا بِكۡرٌ عَوَانُۢ بَيۡنَ ذَٰلِكَۖ فَٱفۡعَلُواْ مَا تُؤۡمَرُونَ ٦٨

69. They said "Pray for us to your Rabb that He make clear for us how it should be". He said, "Surely He says that surely it should be a cow neither very old or very young, but in between the two. So do as you are commanded"

In the previous ayah we saw that Allah (swt) gave the children of Israil the most simple and most clear of commands to sacrifice a cow. The sacrificing of the cow would enable them to discover the killer of the murdered man among them. All they had to do was sacrifice the cow as Allah (swt) had told them to. Any cow that they found would have sufficed. But did they do it? Did they carry out this command? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah what was their response to this simple command that He (swt) had given them.

When Musa (as) told the children of Israil that Allah (swt) had commanded them to sacrifice a cow, they replied to him by saying "**Pray for us to your Rabb that He make clear for us how it should be**". They were given a simple command to sacrifice a cow and any cow would have been sufficient. However the bottom line is that they did not want to sacrifice the cow. They did not want to obey the command of Allah (swt) because it meant giving up something that was dear to them. They loved their cows and they did not even want to sacrifice one of them for the sake of Allah (swt). So this question of theirs was only an excuse not to fulfill the command of Allah (swt). This is obvious by their request to Musa (as) to ask Allah (swt) to make clear how the cow should be when the command was already very clear. They were told to sacrifice a cow, how more simple a command could one have. Allah (swt) had told them exactly what they needed to do. Allah (swt) did not tell them to sacrifice a specific cow, but He (swt) told them to sacrifice any cow. But they did not want to do it, so they came with this stupid question. They thought they could escape having to sacrifice the cow by asking this question. They were planning a plan and Allah (swt) was planning a plan and Allah (swt) is the Best of Planners.

Musa (as) replies to their question by first saying "**Surely He says that surely it should be**". Notice that Allah (swt) does not order Musa (as) to immediately rebuke them for posing this question; they were planning a plan to outsmart Allah (swt) with their question. But Allah (swt) Knows that if they want to be smart with Him (swt), then He (swt) will be even smarter with them. So Allah (swt) allows them to continue in their self-deception. They thought they can get out of having to sacrifice the cow by asking this question, but they were in fact making the matter more difficult for them. Also note how Musa (as) once again repeats the word "surely" twice in this ayah. This is once again to show that this command is definitely from Allah (swt) and how it definitely must be carried out.

Allah (swt) tells them that it must be a cow that is neither too young nor too old but in between the two. In other words it must be a cow that is in the prime of it's age in between the calf that is young and the cow that is old. That means it must be the most valuable kind of cow. So we see how by their questioning they made matters more difficult for them. Where if they had carried out the command that Allah (swt) had given them in the previous ayah, they could have sacrificed a cow that is very old or very young. Now because of their questions, they had to sacrifice a cow that is in the prime of it's age. One that can produce milk and one that can till the land. See what happens to people when they try to be smarter than Allah (swt), when they try to get around fulfilling the commands of Allah (swt).

In the final part of the ayah Musa (as) tells them "**So do what you are commanded**". Musa (as) still cares for his people and he (as) wants them to do what is best for them. He (as) wants to make things easy for them. So he (as) repeats the command to sacrifice the cow. Musa (as) is telling them not to ask any more questions but to simply do what they are commanded. They asked a question and their question was answered. So now they had no more reason to question any further. Now all that remained was for them to carry out the command as they had been commanded to do. But do you think they carried out the command that Allah (swt) gave them? Do you think that they gained any sense or insight?

قَالُواْ ٱدۡعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوۡنُهَاۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٞ صَفۡرَآءُ فَاقِعٞ لَّوۡنُهَا تَسُرُّ ٱلنَّٰظِرِينَ ٦٩

70. They said "Pray for us to your Rabb that He make clear what color it should be". He said, "Surely He says, surely it should be a cow of bright yellow color, pleasing to the beholders".

In this ayah we see the children of Israil continue on their questions to Musa (as) regarding the kind of cow that they should sacrifice. They came to Allah (swt) with a problem that a man had been murdered in their community. Allah (swt) told them that in order to find the killer, a cow must be sacrificed. But the children of Israil did not want to sacrifice a cow, they loved their animals just like they love all of the material things of this world. Such is the nature of the human being who does not always contemplate and remember Allah (swt). They knew that they could not refuse Musa (as) outright because he (as) is the Messenger of Allah (swt) to them. They also knew that they still need Musa (as) to find the killer of the murdered man. So instead of refusing outright they decided to ask questions. Through these questions they hoped to escape having to sacrifice the cow. They thought that they could trick Allah (swt) into not having to fulfill this responsibility.

In the previous ayah we saw that they asked Musa to make clear for them the kind of cow it should be. Even though the command was already very clear, they still asked Musa (as) this question. This shows where their thinking was and what their intentions were. They never had a sincere desire to worship and serve Allah (swt). They were only trying to find the easiest way out of not having to fulfill the commands of Allah (swt). At their request, Musa (as) made clear to them the kind of cow it should be. Did they then do as they were commanded?

Of course they did not we see in this ayah that they pose yet another question to Musa (as). They tell Musa (as) to pray to Allah (swt) for them to make clear for them the color of the cow. We see once again the complete irrelevance and stupidity of their question. Allah (swt)

never mentioned color, Musa (as) never mentioned color, so why did they bring up the issue of color? What difference does it make what the color of the cow is? The bottom line is that they did not want to sacrifice the cow, so this question is yet another excuse.

Look at the beautiful response of Musa (as). Once again he (as) expresses with certainty that this statement is from Allah (swt). He (as) says that is must be cow of bright yellow color. The yellow must be so bright that the sunlight must reflect from the hide of the cow. Musa (as) then says that the cow must be pleasing to all who behold it. It must be a beautiful cow that is pleasing for everyone to look at. The yellow color of the cow must cover it, it must not have any spots of any other color, and it must be a bright and beautiful yellow. We can see how such a cow would be very valuable and very rare. Such a cow would be very difficult for one to find. Once again we see how because of their questions and because of their tricks, they made matters far more difficult for themselves. Before they could have sacrificed any cow. Then they made themselves have to sacrifice a cow of middle age, not too old or too young. Then they made themselves have to sacrifice a cow of bright yellow color that covered it's whole body and that is pleasing to all who look at it. Now they have no choice except to sacrifice this specific kind of cow. See here what is the fate of those who try to be smarter than Allah (swt). See here the condition that you can place yourself in if you think you can try to escape the commandments of Allah (swt). In the end you will end up a loser. In the end you will end up lost and confused. May Allah (swt) save us from being like such people! May Allah (swt) rush to fulfill all of the commands that He (swt) gives us!

قَالُواْ ٱدۡعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ ٱلۡبَقَرَ تَشَٰبَهَ عَلَيۡنَا وَإِنَّآ
إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَمُهۡتَدُونَ ٧٠

71. They said "Pray for us to your Rabb that He make clear for us how it should be, surely all cows appear the same to us and we will Insha Allah be among the guided".

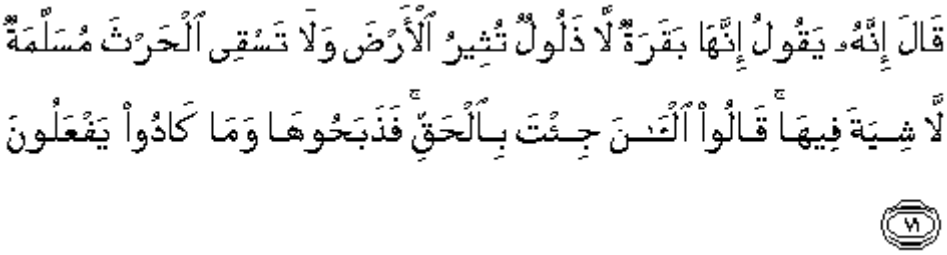
In this ayah we see the fourth question that the children of Israil pose to Musa (as). They were given the simple command to sacrifice a cow, but because of their reluctance to carry out this command they came with one question after another. In this ayah we see that they repeat a question that they had already asked. Once again they tell Musa (as) to ask Allah (swt) to make clear for them how the cow should be like. Recall how they had already asked this question and Allah (swt) had told them that it should be a middle-aged cow; not too old or too young. We see that they are running out of questions to ask, and they still did not want to sacrifice the cow. So now they are repeating their questions out of desperation.

They then tell Musa (as) that surely all cows appear the same to them. This statement also betrays their foolishness and their insincerity. First of all, the original command that Allah (swt) had given never specified a particular type of cow, so why was it even necessary to distinguish between cows? The original command that Allah (swt) gave did not specify the kind of cow so there was no need to choose one type of cow over the other. Even at this point when Allah (swt) had said that it must be a middle-aged cow of bright yellow color, who among rational people cannot distinguish that? Any child can tell the difference between a yellow cow and a black cow. Any farmer can tell the difference between a young calf, a middle-aged cow and an old cow. How can the children of Israil then say that all cows appear the same to them? This shows that they had no sincerity in this statement whatsoever. The issue here is not that cows appeared the same to them, the issue here is that they did not want to sacrifice the cow because they wanted to follow their desires. They cared more about keeping the material things that they had been given than worshipping and serving Allah (swt).

In the final part of the ayah they say "**Insha Allah, we will be guided**". Al-Qurtubi records a hadith from the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said that if the children of Israil had not said "Insha Allah" in this ayah then they never would never have been able to sacrifice the cow. However because they said these words "Insha Allah", Allah (swt) guided them to complete the action. Allah (swt) Knows best if they truly wanted to be guided to do what is right or not when they said this, but we see from this ayah that because they said "Insha Allah, we will be guided", Allah (swt) did indeed guide them. Because they said these words of "Insha Allah", Allah (swt) guided them to sacrifice the cow. Even though the cow that they were told to sacrifice was very difficult to find, because they had said these powerful words of "Insha Allah", Allah (swt) completed the statement that came after "Insha Allah", and that was how they were guided to finally sacrificing the cow.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is the power of the words "Insha Allah". When you say these words, you are praying to Allah (swt) that He (swt) brings to completion and makes into reality the statement that follows these words. So whenever you want something to happen in the future, make sure that you say these words before you mention that event that you hope will happen in the future. As you say "Insha Allah", make sure you realize the meaning of what you are saying. You are saying that you hope that Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Power and His (swt)'s Wisdom brings into reality what you hope for. You know that not even a leaf can fall unless it be by the Will and Power of Allah (swt). Even our own actions are because of Allah (swt), and we only have the intention to do that action. So there is no might and power anywhere in this universe, all Might and Power is with Allah (swt). Allah (swt) does what He (swt) Wills and no one can frustrate the Will of Allah (swt). So whenever we want anything to happen in the future we should first say these words. We should especially say these words when we say that we will be guided. This one statement of the children of Israil is actually very true and is something that we should all strive to say; "**Insha Allah, we will be among the guided**". Allah (swt) is the One Who chooses who will be among the guided, and so we must always pray to Allah (swt) to be among the guided. We must strive to the best of our ability to be among the

guided, but ultimately we must know that is up to Allah (swt) to decide who will be among the guided. We should always try our best to worship and serve Allah (swt) and at the same time we must say that "**Insha Allah, we will be guided**". May Allah (swt) guide us among those whom He (swt) deems as worthy of receiving the guidance from Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that if we walk towards Him (swt), He (swt) will come towards at speed!



72. He said "Surely He says that surely it must be a cow that has not been tamed to plough the earth nor water the fields, unblemished, without any defect in it." They said "Now you have come with the truth". So they sacrificed it, but they almost did not do it.

In this ayah we see Musa (as) reply yet again to the questions that the children of Israil were posing to him (as) regarding the cow that they had to sacrifice. We saw in the previous ayah that they were getting so desperate to escape their responsibility of having to sacrifice the cow that they actually started to repeat the same question again. But does Musa (as) get angry with them and punish them for their insolence? No, on the contrary we see here that he (as) gives even further detail into their inquiry.

Allah begins this ayah by telling us what was the response of Musa (as) to this the latest of their inquires. Musa (as) said "**Surely He says that surely it must be a cow that has not been tamed to plough the earth nor water the fields, unblemished, without any defect in it**". Notice once again the emphasis and certainty with which Musa (as) stresses that this definitely is a command from Allah (swt) and that it is a command that definitely must

be carried out. In this description of the cow Musa (as) begins by saying that it is must be a cow that has not been tamed to plough the earth nor water the fields. This description of the cow makes it even more difficult to find because many cows are used to plough the earth and water the fields. Then Musa (as) continues by saying that it must be unblemished without any defect or flaw in it. This description makes it even harder to find such a cow because most cows have some blemish or scar on them. This cow has to be perfect, without any wounds or scars on it.

So we see how because of their incessant questioning the children of Israil now had to find a very specific kind of cow to sacrifice. Before they could have sacrificed any cow to find the killer of the murdered man. But now they had to find a cow that was not young and not old, it had to have a bright yellow color that delighted any who looked at it, it had to be one that had never been used to till the earth or water the fields and it must be perfect with no scars or defects on it. You would think that they would never be able to find such a cow. But remember in the previous ayah that they had said "Insha Allah we will be guided". They had a made a prayer to Allah (swt) that they would be guided to the correct way in which to sacrifice the cow. Allah (swt) Knows best if they were sincere when they made this prayer or not, but just the fact that these said these words "Insha Allah", Allah (swt) decreed it that they would sacrifice the cow. Such is the Power of these words. That is why Musa (as) had given them such a detailed description of how the cow to be sacrificed must be like. After such a detailed description, they had no more questions that they could ask. They had nowhere to go. They could not avoid their duty anymore.

They now found themselves against a wall, Musa (as) had given them such a detailed description that they had to sacrifice the cow, and that is why they finally say, "**Now you have come with the truth**". Once again look at the utter foolishness of their words and their complete insolence before the messenger of Allah (swt). They are saying that only *now* is Musa (as) coming with the truth. What then has he (as) brought them before? Falsehood? Is it only now that he (as) is speaking to them the Truth? In addition to that, look at the way they are even speaking to the messenger of Allah (swt). Compared their attitude towards their messenger

to the attitude of how many of the noble Sahabah were towards the Prophet (saw). When the Sahabah dealt with the Prophet (saw), they held him in so much respect that they would not even look in him (saw) in the eyes when they spoke with him (saw). They would shade him (saw) from the sun, they gave all their wealth for him (saw), and they even died for him (saw). Which of these two groups were better guided on how they should worship and serve Allah (swt)?

The children of Israil do finally admit that they have to sacrifice the cow, and they do finally do it. But instead of placing the blame for their hesitation and their questioning on themselves they place it on Musa (as). They are implying that it is Musa (as)'s fault that they had not sacrificed the cow in all this time. How evil are such people? Not only did they not sacrifice the cow immediately like they had been commanded to, but they place the blame of their failure to do so on their messenger.

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**So they sacrificed it, but they almost did not do it**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that they sacrificed the cow but they almost did not do it. They finally sacrificed the cow because they had said "Insha Allah" in the previous ayah. However Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they had almost not done it. This means that they had such a desire not to sacrifice the cow, that they had almost not done it. If it were not for their statement in the previous ayah where they said "Insha Allah", they would not have done it. Once again we can see that it was only because of the Mercy of Allah (swt) that they were able to do what they were commanded it. They were a people who were being lead around by their desires and their passions. It was only because Allah (swt) had given them the ability to do it, that they were able to do it. All Might and Power is with Allah (swt), Praise and Exalted be He (swt) above all the weaknesses and shortcomings of His (swt)'s slaves!

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا ۖ وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا
كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. And (remember the time) when you killed a soul, and you disagreed amongst yourselves concerning it, and Allah brought out all that you were hiding.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us the events that happened when a man had been murdered among the children of Israil and they were unable to find the killer. In the previous ayahs we saw how Allah (swt) had commanded them to sacrifice a cow. We said that this command was given in order to find out the killer of the murdered man. In this ayah and the one that follows Allah (swt) shows us how this was so.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And (remember the time) when you killed a soul.**" Allah (swt) begins the ayah by telling the children of Israil to remember the time when they had killed a soul. Even in these few words of the ayah there is such beauty in the language and such depth in the meaning. First we can note that even though it was only one man who had actually committed the crime of murder, Allah (swt) accuses the entire tribe for the crime. Why is that? Why is the entire nation held guilty for the crime of one person? We know that in the Law of Allah (swt) only the murderer is punished for the crime and not the whole society. Why then does Allah (swt) accuse the entire nation of murder in this ayah? Why should the entire society be held responsible for the evil of one person? The only time this would be true is when the evil of that one person is caused by the evil of the entire society. A society that is unjust and evil tends to breed people who are unjust and evil. This is not to say that all people who come out of such societies are evil, even the Prophet (saw) who was the best of creation, came from a very corrupt society. But often times the society can have such a deep impact on the heart of a human being, and the evil of the society can filter into the human being to such an extent that you will find many evil people coming forth from such societies. So if there is a society that teaches it's people that all that matters in life is maximizing one's pleasure and hoarding as much

material wealth as possible, then what can one expect about the kind of people that such a society produces? This was the kind of society that the children of Israil created for themselves. That is why Allah (swt) accuses the entire community of the children of Israil with this crime even though only one among them had committed it.

Notice also that Allah (swt) does not say that they killed a man, but He (swt) says that they killed a soul. This shows the worth that Allah (swt) has placed on human life and how great a sin murder is. The human being is not an animal like some would say, nor is the human a machine like others would say. The human is first and foremost a soul. Something that is far greater and far more valuable than the body of flesh and blood in which it resides. So we see the enormity of their crime in that it was not simply a human body that they killed, but it was a soul. Such was the greatness of the crime that they committed.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and you disagreed amongst yourselves concerning it**". Here Allah (swt) tells us how the children of Israil had disputed with each other concerning the murder. After they had discovered that a man among them had been killed, they started arguing with each other as to who the killer was. Some of them started to accuse others of them. They all knew that it was wrong to accuse one's Muslim brother or sister without evidence, but they did it anyway. Shaitan controlled their hearts, and so they saw themselves as pure and innocent and they saw everyone as evil and guilty. That is how Shaitan works in that he always tries to make you put all of the blame on others. Instead of working together to find a solution to their problem, they were arguing and fighting with each other. The lesson that we can take from this is that when someone in our group commits an evil, we should not be quick to blame everyone unless we first have evidence. We must always remember that disputations and arguments between Muslims are from Shaitan. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**and Allah brought out all that you were hiding**". Here Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) brought out all that they were hiding. Allah (swt) exposed the killer that was hiding among them. Insha Allah, we will see the exact way in which the killer was exposed in the next ayah. However from this ayah the lesson that we can

take is that whenever we try to hide something, we can be certain that Allah (swt) will bring it out. There are no secrets from Allah (swt), He (swt) Sees and Hears and Knows all things. No one among the children of Israil knew the identity of the killer. Only the killer himself among them had this knowledge. But Allah (swt) brought out that knowledge out of the depths of the killer's heart and into the open for all to see. Notice even the word that Allah (swt) uses, He (swt) does not say that He (swt) told them who the killer was, but He (swt) says that He (swt) brought out that which they were hiding. Look at the beauty of the language here! There was at least one person among the children of Israil who knew who the killer was, but this knowledge was hidden from everyone. Allah (swt) brought out this knowledge like He (swt) brings the plants out from the ground. That is what Allah (swt) will do with all of the evil that men try to hide in their souls. Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran that He (swt) Knows what we reveal and what we hide. How then can we ever hope of hiding anything from Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) always make us remember that He (swt) Knows every single thing about us! There is no action that we do nor thought that we have that Allah (swt) does not Know about. Even the smallest of actions and the most fleeting of thoughts are in the complete Knowledge of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) guide us to strive to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure, knowing well that there is no action that we can do that He (swt) does not Know about! For the evil that we have done, may Allah (swt) forgive us for it and hide for us in this life and in the next life! For the good that we have done may we find the reward with our Lord and may it be a reward that we are pleased with!

فَقُلْنَا ٱضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُحْىِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَيُرِيكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. And We said "Strike him with a part of it". That is how Allah gives life to the dead and shows you His Signs so that you may understand.

Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) said that He (swt) brought out the identity of the murdered man. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how the identity of the murdered man was revealed. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) told the children of Israil to strike him with a part of it. The word "him" in this ayah refers to the corpse of the man who had been killed and the word "it" refers to a part of the cow that had been slaughtered. So Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil to strike the corpse of the murdered man with a part of the slaughtered cow. Some people have tried to guess which part of the cow it was, but for our purposes it is not important. Allah (swt) did not tell us which part of the cow it was because there was no benefit for us in that knowledge. We should always ask Allah (swt) for the knowledge that benefits us, and knowledge of exactly which part of the cow it was will not benefit us. In other words for us to receive the guidance from this ayah it is not necessary to know which part of the cow that was actually used.

When the murdered man was struck by the part of the cow, he came back to life. He came back to life long enough to tell everyone who his murderer was and then he passed away again. So now we see the wisdom of Allah (swt) in the command to sacrifice the cow. Allah (swt) had decreed that it was through the flesh of the slaughtered cow that the murdered man could be brought back to life. If the children of Israil had recognized this benefit at the beginning they would not have been so reluctant to sacrifice the cow. But they had no trust in the Wisdom of Allah (swt). They wanted to see the benefit and the advantage for each of Allah (swt)'s commands before they carried out those commands. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like them!

The lesson here for us is that there is wisdom in each and every one of the commands of Allah (swt). Sometimes we may not be aware of this wisdom, but we must know that the wisdom is there. So we should never hesitate to carry out the commandments of Allah (swt). Rather whenever Allah (swt) or the Prophet (saw) commands us to do something then we should realize that this command comes from Allah (swt) and we should never hesitate in implementing it. For example some people may wonder why we have to pray five times a day. What is the wisdom is that? We have to realize that there is a wisdom in it even if we are not aware of it. We have to realize that our knowledge is very limited, and that the Knowledge and Wisdom of Allah (swt) has no limits. So even if we do not see the wisdom in the commands of Allah (swt), we must still carry it out. We should carry it out because we know that there is a wisdom there that we do not know about. We should follow these commands first and foremost because they are from Allah (swt) and we are His (swt)'s servants, so our duty is not to question His (swt)'s commands or to look for the benefit in them but simply to carry them out. But we must also know that there is great wisdom in each and every command because they are from the Most Wise. This is so even if we may not immediately realize that wisdom when the command reaches us.

Some people may question as to why Allah (swt) had decreed that the murdered man needed to be struck with a piece of the slaughtered cow to be brought back to life, they would ask why Allah (swt) did not bring the murdered man back to life immediately. Why did He (swt) bring the man back to life through the flesh of the slaughtered cow? There are at least two reasons for this. One reason is the same reason why Allah (swt) told Musa (as) to strike the sea with his staff before the waters parted and why Allah (swt) told Musa (as) to strike the rock with his staff before the water flowed out from it. It is to demonstrate to the people, the important concept of "cause and effect". Insha Allah please refer to ayah 61 for a more detailed discussion of this concept. The other reason is because as we mentioned the children of Israil had a special love for cows. In their history they had already tried to worship the golden calf. At the very least they saw the cow as a creature of blessing that gave them many benefits. So they could not see

any benefit to killing a cow and that is why they were so reluctant to do the sacrifice that Allah (swt) had commanded them to. Thus in this ayah Allah (swt) demonstrates to them that there is a benefit to slaughtering the cow. Allah (swt) is showing them that the cow and all the blessings that it brings are from Him (swt). So Allah (swt) is telling them in this ayah that they should not respect and revere the cow, but they should respect and revere it's Creator and Sustainer. The cow is a blessed animal because of its Creator and Sustainer, so it does not deserve the worship and veneration but rather its Creator does.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says to us that this is how He (swt) gives life to the dead and this is how He (swt) shows us His (swt)'s Signs so that we may understand. What do you think about Allah (swt) and how He (swt) is Able to give life to the dead? You should realize from this that Allah (swt) can give life to whatever and whomever He (swt) pleases. Life is from Allah (swt). When life has left a body and it becomes dead, only Allah (swt) can bring that body back to life. This is one of the great Signs of Allah (swt) that we must always reflect on. The fact that only Allah (swt) can give life demonstrates the Power and Ability of Allah (swt) and it demonstrates the weakness and inability of the human being. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that this is one of His (swt)'s Signs that He (swt) shows us so that we can reflect on it. Through this reflection we may understand that all Might and all Power is only with Allah (swt). So we should never fear losing our lives because our life will only leave us when Allah (swt) decrees it so. We should also reflect and understand that since Allah (swt) was Able to bring the dead back to life here, Allah (swt) is also Able to bring us all back to life on the Day of Judgment. That is what Allah (swt) wants us to reflect on and to realize from this ayah. As Allah (swt) demonstrates for us in this ayah, it was not the flesh of the cow that brought the dead man back to life, but it was He (swt).

People today value their lives so much that they do not realize that life is only from Allah (swt). Allah (swt) can give life to the dead when He (swt) pleases and He (swt) can take life from the living when He (swt) pleases. So what we should value and revere is not this life that we have now but we should value and revere the One Who gave us this life. This life that we are

living, these experiences that we are having, these thoughts that we have, are all possible only because of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gave us this life that we have, and Allah (swt) can take this life away whenever He (swt) pleases, and Allah (swt) can then give life back to us if He (swt) pleases. Why then should we worship our own lives when we should worshipping the One Who gave us our life? Our life is only from Allah (swt), so our thoughts and our hearts must always be on the One Who gave us this life. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَهِىَ كَٱلْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ
مِنَ ٱلْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ
ٱلْمَآءُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

٧٤

75. Then your hearts hardened after that. Then they became as hard stones or harder than that. For surely from the stones there are some from which rivers gush forth, and surely there are some which split asunder and water comes out from them, and surely there are some that fall down from fear of Allah, and Allah is not unaware of what you do.

How many are the Signs that Allah (swt) has shown for the children of Israil so far? They were saved from the clutches of the powerful Firaun. They literally saw the sea part in two directly in front of their eyes. They walked the path on the sea floor as giant walls of water were on both sides of them. After they had crossed over safely they saw Allah (swt) drown the powerful army of Firaun. All the soldiers and chariots and horses were crushed by the tremendous waves of the sea as it came down upon them. Despite seeing this clear miracle they took the golden calf for worship instead of Allah (swt). They did this when they knew that it was Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who had saved them. But even after this great sin, Allah (swt)

pardoned them and accepted their repentance. The children of Israil then saw a mountain literally hovering over them when they took the covenant from Allah (swt). And in the previous ayahs we saw how Allah (swt) had brought a murdered man back to life right in front of their eyes. So how many are the miracles that Allah (swt) had shown these people? Could they then have any doubt in Allah (swt) and in what He (swt) had revealed onto them?

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what happened to the children of Israil after they had been shown these signs. Allah (swt) tells us that their hearts hardened. Their hearts hardened so much that they became like stones. For some of them their hearts became as hard as stones, and for others among them their hearts became even harder than stones. What then does it mean for one's heart to become as hard as stone? To understand this, we must first understand what Allah (swt) means by heart. Allah (swt) does not simply mean the piece of flesh in our ribcage that pumps blood. As we mentioned the heart is the seat of comprehension and intellect. Our heart is where we contemplate on the Signs of Allah (swt) and it is where we reach to knowledge and certainty about Allah (swt). We journey to Allah (swt) and we draw closer to Allah (swt) through our heart. The Prophet (saw) has said that in the body there is a piece of flesh and if it is sound then the whole body is sound and if it is diseased then the whole body is diseased. He (saw) then said that truly it is the heart. So what does Allah (swt) mean when He (swt) says that their hearts became hard as stone or harder? What does it mean for a heart to become hard? It means the heart is dead. What does it mean for the heart to be dead? It means it can no longer perceive and comprehend the Signs of Allah (swt). It means it can no longer reflect and remember Allah (swt). It means that it can no longer reach Allah (swt). Is there anything worse that can happen to a person than for their heart to die? What can you say about a person who does not realize Allah (swt)? Who does not remember Allah (swt)? Is there any good in them? For such people no matter how many signs they see they will not believe. What enables them to perceive and recognize this Message is their hearts, and since their hearts are dead they will never receive this Message. So we see in this ayah that even though the children of Israil had been shown so many signs, they did not submit to this Message completely because their hearts

had become hardened. Their ability to perceive and realize the Truth of this Message had been removed.

So what is it that causes the hardening of the hearts? Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) have both told us that it is nothing but sins and the desire for this world that causes the hardening of hearts. It is nothing but the failure to remember Allah (swt) that causes the hardening of hearts. Allah (swt) has given every human a test. Every human knows that they have been created. Any human who ponders on the signs in the universe around him will know that there is only Allah (swt) Who created him and Who created the universe around him. Many of these humans also receive a Message from Allah (swt). In this Message Allah (swt) tells them that they have to dedicate their lives to worshipping and serving Him (swt). Those who are sincere and of a pure heart, they accept this Message and follow it. Those who would rather follow their desires and have a love for the life of this world, they will find some excuse to reject this Message. The ones who reject this Message are the ones whose hearts becomes hard. Soon they cannot even perceive the Signs of Allah (swt) around them.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that the more desire we have for this world, and the more that we are willing to submit to our passions and desires, the greater the chance is that our hearts will harden. The only way to prevent our hearts from becoming hard is to always remember Allah (swt). We must always remember that everything in this world will soon fade away and only Allah (swt) will remain. This is what will make our hearts tender to receive the Signs of Allah (swt), and this is when Allah (swt) will guide us Insha Allah. So we should strive to connect our hearts to Allah (swt) and we must strive to fight those desires and feelings that are not in accordance with the Law of Allah (swt)! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to always remember Him (swt) and may Allah (swt) make our hearts soft to receive His (swt)'s guidance!

So we see that the hearts of many of the children of Israil had become so hard that they had become like rocks, or even harder than rocks. In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us that even rocks have benefits to them. These are benefits that these people

whose hearts have become hard do not possess. There are some rocks from which springs gush forth, and there are some rocks that split asunder and water gushes out from them, and there are some rocks that fall down out of fear of Allah (swt). These are all different kinds of rocks but they all provide some kinds of benefits. Some rocks produce water, there are many streams that flow out of mountains and there are many geysers that gush forth from stone. Some rocks even break into pieces, and when they break they produce water for the people. Other rocks fall down out of fear of Allah (swt). Who is to say that rocks cannot have fear of Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) created all things and if He (swt) willed He (swt) could create rocks that fear Him (swt). We know from Surah Hashar where Allah (swt) tells us that if He (swt) would have revealed this Quran on a mountain, we would seen it humbled and destroyed from the fear of Allah (swt). When we think about the Power of Allah (swt) and how He (swt) could do whatever He (swt) pleases, how then could we not be terrified of Him (swt)? Is it surprising that even the rocks fear Allah (swt)? So we see from this part of the ayah that even rocks have some benefit to them, they may bring forth water or they may have fear of Allah (swt). But what can we say about the children of Israil whom Allah (swt) describes in this ayah? Once they have allowed their hearts to harden and forget Allah (swt) is there then any good in them? No of course not, even rocks are better than such people.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is not unaware of what we do. Now of course this means that Allah (swt) is indeed very much Aware of what we do. This ayah is addressed to the children of Israil but there is a lesson that we can take from it as well. To the children of Israil Allah (swt) is telling them that He (swt) is Aware of the fact that they have been shown so many signs and miracles, and that they have still turned away from this Message. In choosing between Allah (swt) and their lusts they have chosen their lusts. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) is Aware of this terrible choice that they made. However this ayah also contains a very important lesson for us as well. Never for one second should we ever think that Allah (swt) is not Aware of anything that we do. On the contrary, Allah (swt) is Aware of every single thing that we do, both the good and the evil. Because of this fact, we must

never think of any good deed as insignificant and we must never think of any sin as too small. Allah (swt) is Aware of all of our actions, and we do not know which action it is that we do or that we do not do that will be the difference between Allah (swt) being pleased with us and He (swt) opening our hearts to receive the guidance from this Message. So we should always be thinking that even the smallest of good deeds or the smallest of sins that we do can make the difference between Allah (swt) guiding us or not. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember this fact! May Allah (swt) make us remember that He (swt) is always Aware of each and every one of our actions! May Allah (swt) make our hearts tender to receive the guidance form this Message!

All praise and thanks belongs to Allah (swt), our tafsir of the first part Surah Baqarah ends here.

Please look for part two on Quran-Tafsir.org

Quran-Tafsir.org

Surah Al-Baqarah

Part 2 (Ayahs 76-142)

By
Abdur Raheem As-Saranbi

۞ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ
ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76. Do you have any hope that they will believe in you when surely a group from them used to hear the Words of Allah, then they would change it knowingly after having understood it?

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the children of Israil. The nation from whom the Jews and Christians descended. The nation who was responsible to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind before us. The nation who walked on the exact same path that we are walking on today. We saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) had related to us the events that happened in their history. From what happened to them when they took the covenant from Allah (swt) to the time their hearts grew hard and unreceptive to the Truth. They were shown many signs, one after another. Signs that would have convinced any rational person. But they had such a desire for the life of this world, and they were so unwilling to release their pride and their jealousy, and they were so proud of themselves and so self-contented that they refused to submit in this Message despite all of the signs that they had seen. Allah (swt) showed them sign after sign, and they still refused to believe. They could not bring themselves to submit to the Creator that they knew was there. They could not bring themselves to accept the Message that had reached them. They knew that this Message was the Truth but they did could not submit to it. They were not able to bring themselves to make this effort. Because of their love for themselves and their love for this world they were not able to bring themselves to submit to this Message that they knew was the Truth. In time because of their constant rejection of this Message their hearts hardened and they became unreceptive to the Truth of this Message. That was the long history of the children of Israil that Allah (swt) communicated to us in the previous ayahs. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what should be our relationship with such people.

Regarding these people, Allah (swt) asks us "**Do you have any hope that they will believe in you when a group of them used to hear the Words of Allah, and they would**

change it knowingly after having understood it?". This ayah is a question that Allah (swt) is asking. Of course Allah (swt) Knows the answer to this question. But the purpose of asking it is to make us think and reflect. Here Allah (swt) describes an action that some among the children of Israil used to do. They would change His Words. Allah (swt), the Creator and Sustainer of all things, the Lord and Master of the universe, sends a Message to a people. What then do these people do with such a Message? They change it to suit their whims and desires. They change the words of the Creator only to suit their lusts and desires. Can you imagine an act that is more evil than this? They are changing the Words of Allah (swt)! They are telling the people that Allah (swt) said something when He (swt) did not say it and they are hiding from the people what Allah (swt) has said to them. Allah (swt) is asking us here if we should have any hope in such people to believe in this Message. What hope can we have from such people? In other words when a group of people are so evil that they would change the very words of their Creator, then what hope can we have of their believing in this Message?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must not be surprised when many people whom we carry dawah to do not accept this Message. We must not even be surprised when people go as far as to change the Words of Allah (swt). We should not think that what has Allah (swt) related to us in this ayah is only talking about the actions of a few Jewish rabbis who changed the Tawrah. This ayah is not only telling us about them but it is general for all who would seek to alter the Words of Allah (swt). This is the nature of the human being when the devil takes over his heart and he forgets about Allah (swt). Many people have the potential to do what these Jewish Rabbis did because their hearts have been so seduced by Shaitan. When we see many people who are not believing in this Message we have to remember that that the issue is not that they have not seen the signs. Many of them may be ignorant to the evidences of this Message, but many of them might not be. Allah (swt) Knows best what is in their hearts! However what Allah (swt) is showing us in this ayah is that there are people among mankind who are so evil that they would reject His (swt)'s Message even when they know that it is the Truth. They are so evil and their hearts are so hard that they will change the Words of Allah (swt) after they have understood it. They know that these are the Words of Allah (swt) and they know what a great sin

to even slightly distort the Message of Allah (swt), and they will still do it. Despite their knowledge that it is wrong they will still do it. This is how evil a people can be when they are seduced by their desires and seduced by the life of this world. So why are you so surprised that many of them do not believe in the Message that was sent to the Prophet (saw)?

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see what a great sin it is to change the Words of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is not pleased with anyone who changes His (swt)'s Words in any way. Now to "change" here does not necessarily mean that you literally change the Words themselves. Even if you distort the interpretation of the Words in such a way that you present a meaning that the Words do not give then you are guilty of changing it. So anyone who willfully changes the Words of Allah (swt) or anyone who willfully changes the meaning given by the Words of Allah (swt) has committed a great sin. As we can see, Allah (swt) is most displeased with such people and He (swt) tells not to have any hope in them. Now Allah (swt) has promised us that He (swt) will preserve the Quran, and this means that He (swt) will also preserve the Sunnah that is required to understand the Quran as well. So the danger for us today is not someone changing the Words of the Quran. The Quran is a Miracle that cannot be reproduced by anyone. No one is capable is of bringing even one ayah like the Quran, so the danger for us is not in someone producing an ayah of Quran for themselves. No one today can add even one word to the Quran or take one word away from it without being easily discovered. Similarly in the hadith, our scholars of hadith have done an excellent job of preserving and collecting all of the hadith from the Prophet (saw). Not only have they identified which hadith were spoken by the Prophet (saw) and which were not, but they even have different grades of authenticity for the hadith. Thus not only do we know if the Prophet (saw) spoke a particular hadith or not but we even know what is the likelihood that he (saw) spoke those words. So unlike the children of Israil where the rabbis would change the Tawrah whenever they wanted, that danger does not really exist for us. No one today can change the Quran or the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) has protected the sacred text of this Din from all those who would seek to corrupt it.

However the danger that exists for us today is that people can change the interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah. Rather than changing the wordings of the Quran and

Sunnah they can change the meanings that those words give. They can come with an opinion or a ruling that never exists in the text. Or even worse is that they can hide and cover the clear rulings that are in the text. Now we know that there are times when an ayah or a hadith can give more than one meaning, and that is why differences of opinion exist among our scholars. These differences of opinion are acceptable and there is evidence for this from the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) approved of such differences of opinion among the Sahabah. What is not acceptable and where the danger lies is when people bring opinions that are not given in the Quran and Sunnah, and then they say that these opinions are from the Quran and Sunnah. In other words they are bringing a ruling that is not supported by the text. The people who do this are as worse as the Jewish rabbis who changed the Word of Allah (swt), because like them, these people are also willfully misinterpreting the Message of Allah (swt). They are speaking to the people on behalf of the Lord and Master of the universe and they are misrepresenting Him (swt). How great is such evil? It is not that they made a sincere attempt to understand the Message and they came to wrong conclusion, on the contrary these people had a real objective to twist and play with the Words of Allah (swt) so that they can derive from them the meaning that suits their desires. These people already know what the correct meaning is but they give a different meaning because it serves their interests. In other words they already had the conclusion of the ruling that they wanted, and they twisted and played around with the Quran and Sunnah to reach this conclusion.

An example of this would be the so called “scholars” who say that it is permissible to live without the Islamic State and who say that the establishment of the State is not an obligation. These people would claim that such an opinion is valid according to the Quran and Sunnah. They would even bring evidences for their position from the Quran and Sunnah. Such as citing when Yusuf (as) was given power in Egypt or the Prophet (saw) saying that he (saw) would accept the pact of *Hilf-ul-Fudhul*. They know that these evidences are not valid. They know the Truth. They know that it is indeed an obligation for all Muslims to live under the Islamic State. But they want to bring a ruling that is contrary to this. A ruling to serve their desires. If we study what they say we see that their evidences are meaningless. Yusuf (as) never held a position of legislative authority in Egypt, please see our tafsir of Surah Yusuf for the details on this. Furthermore Yusuf (as) is not

our prophet so we cannot derive legislation from his (as)'s actions. As for *Hilf-ul-Fudhul*, it was not a system of government but only a pact made by the chiefs of Quraysh. Participating in *Hilf-ul-Fudhul* is not the same as participating in a system of government that does not rule by Islam. These people who come with such an opinion also ignore the hundreds of ayahs of the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (saw) that give the meaning that only Allah (swt) can legislate the Law for our lives and the only government that is acceptable to Allah (swt) is the Islamic State. The only reason that so called "Muslim scholars" come with such an opinion is so that they can please their puppet masters in the West. So that they can trick the Muslims into stopping the effort to restore the Islamic State. So that they can fool the Muslim masses into thinking that those who work for the restoration of the Islamic State are ignorant fanatics. So that they can present to the people a watered down version of Islam that is only restricted to the masjid and that has no impact on the lives of people at all. The ones who distort the Message of Allah (swt) in this way are just as guilty as those among the children of Israil who changed the Words of Allah (swt). They are both changing the meaning that is given in the Message of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is telling the people one thing and they are saying the opposite of this. Allah (swt) is telling us to live by His (swt)'s Law and they are telling us to live by our desires. Thus they are committing one of the greatest of sins by speaking on behalf of Allah (swt) with words that they know are false. The problem is not that they are ignorant. Just look at the words that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah to describe their situation. They know that what they are doing is wrong and they are still doing it. They know that the Quran and Sunnah say one thing and that they are saying something else, and they are still saying it. Can you even begin to imagine how evil are such people? How they can show such arrogance and insolence before their Lord and Master. May Allah (swt) save us all from their evil! May Allah (swt) allow this Ummah to learn the Truth concerning His (swt)'s Law!

وَإِذَا لَقُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قَالُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ
بَعْضٍ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوكُم بِهِۦ
عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77. And when they meet those who believe, they say "We believe" but when they are in private some of them say to others "Will you inform them of (the knowledge) that Allah has disclosed to you so that they may use it as an argument against you with your Rabb". Do you not think?

We have seen that in the previous ayahs Allah (swt) has told us about the history of the children of Israil. We have seen all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them, and we have seen all of the signs and evidences that He (swt) had shown them. After seeing all of this, there should have been no reason for them to reject the Prophet (saw) when they knew that he (saw) was the true messenger from Allah (swt). But many among them did indeed reject him (saw). Such was the kind of people that they were. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us more about such people. Allah (swt) is warning us about their thinking and their behavior so that we can be aware of them, and also so that Insha Allah we do not become like them.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us about a group among them who pretended to be Muslims. There was actually a group from among the Jews in Madinah who went to the Prophet (saw) and falsely claimed to believe. Perhaps they pretended to be Muslims in order to capture some of the spoils of war from the Muslim victories for themselves. Or perhaps they pretended to be Muslims to find out the secrets of the Muslim army so that they can disclose them to the enemies of this Message. Allah (swt) Knows best why they pretended to believe, but what we do know is that they did pretend. Thus they were hypocrites among the Muslims claiming to believe in the Prophet (saw), when in their hearts they had no desire to submit to this Message or to worship and serve Allah (swt). So these Jews, when they are with the Muslims they would say that they believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) but when they go back to their own people they would renounce this belief. It was all hypocrisy and deception.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that when they are in private with each other, some of them say to others "**Will you inform them of (the knowledge) that Allah has disclosed to you so that they may use it as an argument against you with your Rabb?"**. The meaning of this part of the ayah is that when those Jews who pretended to be Muslims were with the Muslims they would tell the Muslims about the knowledge that Allah (swt) had given them in the Tawrah. For example they would tell the Muslims about the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that Allah (swt) had revealed to them in the Tawrah. As we know, there are several clear descriptions of the Prophet (saw) in the Tawrah. Allah (swt) had told them that the final messenger would come to the area that is now known as Madinah. That is why many of them had left their homeland in Philistine and settled in Arabia, they were awaiting this messenger. So the Jews at the time of Prophet (saw) had clear text describing this messenger that would come to them. The Prophet (saw) matched these descriptions perfectly. But as we also know, most of the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) rejected this clear evidence that they had. They tried their best to hide and conceal the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were in the Tawrah. Now the problem was that sometimes the Jews who had pretended to be Muslims would tell the Muslims about these descriptions of the Prophet (saw) in the Tawrah. When they had pretended to be Muslims they disclosed to the Muslims this knowledge of the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that was in the Tawrah. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that when these Jews were alone with each other, they would reprimand each other for disclosing this information to the Muslims. They would tell each other not to tell the Muslims of this knowledge that Allah (swt) had given them. Not to tell the Muslims about the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that are in the Tawrah.

Now look at their reason for telling each other not to disclose this information. They say that it is because "**they may use it as an argument against you with your Rabb**", the word "they" here refers to the Muslims. So the Jews are telling each other not to disclose the descriptions about the Prophet (saw) that are in the Tawrah because if they do, then the Muslims would use that information against them with Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. They are afraid that the Muslims would tell Allah (swt) what they told the Muslims about the Prophet (saw) being mentioned in the Tawrah, and then they will be in trouble with Allah (swt) because of that. See

how foolish their thinking is. They do not realize that it is not matter if they tell the Muslims this information about the Prophet (saw) or not, Allah (swt) Knows what is in their hearts. If these Jews knew that the Prophet (saw) was really the messenger of Allah (swt) because of his (saw)'s descriptions that are in the Tawrah, and they still did not believe in him (saw), then it does not matter if they disclose this knowledge to the Muslims or not. Allah (swt) already Knows of their rejection of this Message. Allah (swt) will hold them to account for not believing in this Message when they knew that it was the Truth. Whether or not they disclosed this information to the Muslims is irrelevant. There are no secrets from Allah (swt), He (swt) Knows what they say with their tongues and what they have hidden in their hearts. So there was no point to their reprimanding each other over their disclosing this knowledge to the Muslims. Allah (swt) does not need the Muslims to tell Him (swt) about the rejection of these Jews. He (swt) Knows about it anyway. Does He (swt) not Know Who created and He (swt) is the Aware and the Knower of Subtleties?

It is for this reason that Allah (swt) ends this ayah with a question "**Do you not think?**". Allah (swt) addresses this question to both the Jews and the Muslims. To the Jews, Allah (swt) is telling them to think and realize Who He (swt) IS. Allah (swt) is not One from Whom they can hide anything. If they know that the Prophet (saw) is really the messenger and they did know, then they should accept this Message and follow him (saw). It does not matter if they disclose this information to the Muslims or not. Allah (swt) does not need the Muslims to tell Him (swt) of the rejection of the Jews, Allah (swt) Knows it anyway because He (swt) Knows what is secret and what is open.

Allah (swt) also addressed this question to the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) because He (swt) wanted to make them think and to realize what kind of people these Jews were. To see how much was the corruption in their thinking towards Allah (swt). They actually thought that they could deceive Allah (swt) by keeping their rejection of this Message a secret in their hearts and not telling the Muslims about it. They did not know Allah (swt) at all. Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing so there is nothing that is outside the realm of His Knowledge. How much hope then could the Muslims have had of such people accepting this Message when even their perception

of Allah (swt) was so corrupted? They thought that by simply keeping the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were in the Tawrah a secret among themselves, they could escape punishment from Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. They did not realize that Allah (swt) Knows what is in their hearts. That was how twisted and perverted their knowledge of Allah (swt) was. So what could the Muslims expect from such people in terms of their willingness to accept this Message?

An important lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always have the correct knowledge about Allah (swt). These Jews forgot that Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing. In their Aqeedah they had a corrupted perception of Allah (swt), they actually thought that they could hide secrets from Allah (swt). They actually thought that He (swt) was limited in His Knowledge. They thought Allah (swt) to be a creation like them! We must make sure that the same does not happen to us. We must make sure that we do not come to view Allah (swt) to be like the creation in any way. So we must know our Lord. We must know all of His Perfect Names, and we must always remember how He (swt) is without any flaw or weakness. There is nothing that is outside the Knowledge of Allah (swt) and there is nothing that Allah (swt) cannot do. Allah (swt) Knows all that we disclose and all that we keep hidden to ourselves. There is absolutely nothing that we can keep hidden from Allah (swt). There is absolutely nothing that Allah (swt) cannot do. Only when we think about Allah (swt) in this way can we prevent Shaitan from tricking us about our Rabb like he tricked these Jews.

Unfortunately there are some among the Muslims today who want to place limitations on Allah (swt). They want to liken Him (swt) to the creation. Based on a misunderstanding of some text this group claims that Allah (swt) has hands and feet, and that He (swt) is limited to a particular location. This is clear anthromorphism and such an opinion has never been held by any of the classical scholars of ‘Aqeedah. This group claims to be following the early Muslims but in reality they are following an innovation. We see from this ayah the danger in the thoughts that they are carrying. If we follow them then we can become like these Jews who were so corrupted in their thinking about the Creator. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) save us from these innovators!

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. Do they know that Allah Knows what they conceal and what they proclaim?

In the previous ayah we saw that there were a group among the Jews who pretended to be Muslims. They would even tell the Muslims how the Prophet (saw) is described in the Tawrah and how Allah (swt) had ordered them to follow the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) comes to them. But we also saw that when they are alone with other Jews, the other Jews would tell them not to disclose this information to the Muslims. They would tell them not to speak to the Muslims about the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that are in the Tawrah. Their reasoning for this was because they were afraid that the Muslims would tell Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment that the Jews really knew about the Prophet (saw). These Jews did not realize that it does not matter if the Muslims told Allah (swt) or not, He (swt) Knows what they are hiding and what they show to others. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the foolishness of such thinking.

Allah (swt) asks this question, "**Do they know that Allah Knows what they conceal and what they proclaim?"**. Are they not aware that there are no secrets from Allah (swt)? Do they not realize that Allah (swt) Knows everything they say out loud and everything they keep hidden in their hearts? The language of the ayah expresses surprise and shock to make us reflect on the thinking of these people. To make us realize how foolish is such thinking. How could a people not realize the fact that Allah (swt) Knows all that they conceal and all that they reveal? How can a people possibly think that they can hide anything from Allah (swt)? So we see with the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw), not only did they stubbornly reject this Message when they knew that it was the truth, but they also had a very corrupted perception about Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

How could the Aqeedah of these people have become so corrupted? When we think about Allah (swt), we know that He (swt) has to be Perfect. There has to be no deficiency or no weakness in Him (swt). We learned from our tafsir of Surah Fatihah that even the name of "Allah" means the "One Who has all the Perfect Names". Even when we think about this universe and how it has been created, could anyone less than the Perfect One have brought about such a

wonderful creation? Even this very universe testifies to the fact that Allah (swt) is Perfect in every way and that He (swt) has no limitations or weaknesses whatsoever. So how then could the Jews have corrupted their Aqeedah so much that they place these limitations on Allah (swt)? How could they think that there are limits on the Knowledge of Allah (swt)? Any human who studies the universe around him will realize that it has been created by Allah (swt) and that Allah (swt) is Perfect. So how could a human place any limitations on Allah (swt), especially on the Knowledge of Allah (swt)? Many scholars have said that the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is the Most Perfect of His (swt)'s Names and the Name because of which He (swt) is the most deserving of worship and servitude. For what is greater and more sublime than Knowledge?

The only explanation is that they placed these limitations on Allah (swt) themselves because they wanted to. They wanted to follow their desires and they wanted to commit sins. They know that if they deceived themselves into thinking that Allah (swt) has some limitations, then they could commit the sins that their desires were prompting them towards. For example if you convince yourself that Allah (swt) does not know what you do in private, then this self-deception gives you freedom to commit all the sins that you want when you are in private. You think to yourself that you can escape Allah (swt) like you would escape the authorities in this world. How utterly foolish is such thinking? How could anyone compare Allah (swt) with humans? So these Jews convinced themselves and convinced their people that Allah (swt) does not know everything. This then gave them the free mind to commit all the sins that they wanted foolishly thinking that their sins escape the Knowledge of the All-Knowing.

This ayah reminds us once again of how fortunate we are that we have such a pure understanding of Allah (swt) and all of the Perfect Names of Allah (swt). For example we know that Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing. We know that nothing escapes the Knowledge of Allah (swt). We know that Allah (swt) Knows every single word that we speak out loud and every single word we say to ourselves in our hearts. We know that Allah (swt) Knows every single act that we do in public and every single act that we do in private. We know that Allah (swt) even Knows our innermost thoughts. We know that Allah (swt) Knows the past and that He (swt) Knows the future, and that He (swt) does not make any mistakes because of the Perfection of His Knowledge. This

sound understanding that we have been given about the Creator should then make us increase in our efforts to worship and serve Him (swt). Since we know that Allah (swt) Knows everything about us, then we should know that there is no escaping from Him (swt). What we should do instead is to strive to worship and serve Him (swt) with our actions and our thoughts. If Shaitan puts a dark thought in our heart then we should immediately destroy that thought. Even this struggle in our hearts to purify our souls and free ourselves of these doubts and reservations is something that Allah (swt) Knows about. He (swt) Knows those of His (swt)'s servants who strive in His (swt)'s cause and those who become lazy and complacent. So we must never become lazy in our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). We should always remember that Allah (swt) Knows everything that we keep secret in our hearts and everything that we disclose. So there is no good deed that we do or good thought that we have seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt) with it, that He (swt) is not Aware of. These Jews tricked themselves into believing that Allah (swt) does not know what they do in secret. We must prevent ourselves from becoming like them at all costs. We should always be grateful to Allah (swt) that He (swt) has given us such a pure understanding of Him (swt). For every moment of our lives, we always have to remind ourselves about Allah (swt) and how He (swt) Knows everything that we do. Of course this difficult, but it is an ideal that we should always be trying to achieve. If we fall short of this ideal, then we must remember that Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful. So we know that Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing and we constantly strive to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure because we know since He (swt) is the All-Knowing then there will be no part of our struggle that will be wasted. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember this! May Allah (swt) allow us to always remember Him (swt) and to be grateful for what He (swt) has taught us about Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) make us always remember that He (swt) Knows all that we conceal and all that we show! May Allah (swt) be pleased with us in what we show and may He (swt) be more pleased with us in what we hide! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that nothing matters in this life except that we worship and serve Him (swt)! All of our thoughts and all of our actions should be dedicated to Him (swt), and not one good deed or one good action will be lost because He (swt) Knows all things!

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

79. And from them there are unlettered people who do not know the Book, they only trust on false desires and they only guess.

In the previous ayah we saw that Allah (swt) began to give us a description of how the children of Israil were. We learned how they were a people who had a very corrupted Aqeedah, how they thought that if they kept something in private in between themselves then Allah (swt) would never find out about it. In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to tell us about these people. We should also note that while the ayahs in the first part of Surah Baqarah focused more on the children of Israil who lived in history, these ayahs that we are studying now describe those among them who were contemporaries of the Prophet (saw). These were the Jews who lived at the same time of the Prophet (saw), and Allah (swt) describes them to us here to warn us about them and more importantly to prevent us from becoming like them.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us that from among the Jews "**there are unlettered people who do not know the Book**". This means that there were those among them who could read or write. Because of this they could not read what was in the Tawrah and so they had no knowledge of it. About such people Allah (swt) says, "**they only trust on false desires and they only guess**". They have no real knowledge of what Allah (swt) has said in the Tawrah, so they place their trust on false desires and they guess. They have no knowledge and they do not *want* to know. They only want to follow their desires. So they make up the content of the Tawrah in their own minds. They guess and make conjectures as to what Allah (swt) has said. They tell themselves what they want to hear. They tell themselves that there is no test for them on this earth. They tell themselves that Allah (swt) loves them no matter what they do. They tell themselves that Allah (swt) does not know all that they do. These thoughts are nothing but conjectures and it is in these false desires that they place their trust and their hope. They convince themselves that they are free to commit all the sins that they want without being held accountable for them. They convince themselves that they are not required to have patience in

the face of adversity and that they are not required to show gratitude for all of the blessings that Allah (swt) has given them. In their minds they do see as Allah (swt) as the Creator because they know that this universe needs a Creator. They also know that Allah (swt) is their Creator Who created them from nothing and they know that He (swt) is their Sustainer Who keeps them alive at every moment of their lives. But at the same time they see no responsibility to worship and serve this Creator. They do not see why they have to dedicate their lives to Allah (swt). They simply convince themselves that Allah (swt) will love them no matter what they do or they convince themselves that Allah (swt) does not know what they do in private or they convince themselves of some other excuse to commit the sins that they want. They do not have the knowledge that Allah (swt) has told them in the Tawrah that the purpose of their lives is to worship and serve Him (swt). Rather they just believe what they have convinced themselves of. Now it is not simply a matter of ignorance on their part because it is not that they do not know, the truth of the matter is that they do not *want* to know. They are happy in their ignorance and so they do not want to know the Truth. They are ignorant on how they should serve Allah (swt) and they do not make the effort to gain this knowledge. They do not make the effort to cure themselves of their ignorance. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

So in this ayah we have seen that Allah (swt) has described some of the Jews as an unlettered people who do not know their Book. In his tafsir of this ayah Ibn Abbass (ra) tells us that they were still able to recite their Book. They recited their Book and they memorized their Book, but they did not have any understanding of what the Book is. They convinced themselves as to what was in the Book and they simply followed these desires. So they became a people who recite their Book but have no proper understanding of it. Who does this remind you of?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how important it is to gain knowledge about our Din. Allah (swt) criticizes the Jews in this ayah for living in ignorance. As Mawdudi said, all that we really have of Islam is our knowledge of it. So the more knowledge that we have, the more Islam that we have. Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran that only those with knowledge fear Him (swt). Some scholars have even said from this ayah that it is only those with knowledge who will be admitted into the Garden. This is because you cannot go

the Garden unless you fear Allah (swt) and you will not fear Allah (swt) if you do not know Him (swt). There are also many hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has praised those who seek knowledge and he (saw) has told us about the great reward that Allah (swt) will give to those who seek knowledge. There are just so many hadith that we cannot go into all of them here. Insha Allah if you search for them in the book s of hadith, you will find them. We also recommend the first chapter of "The Book of Knowledge" by Imam Ghazzali (ra) where you will find many hadith of the Prophet (saw) and the early Sahabah stressing the importance of knowledge. The importance of striving to gain knowledge in Islam cannot be stressed enough. After Allah (swt) has given us this clear warning in this ayah, if we continue to live in ignorance then we do so at the risk of our Hereafter. This knowledge can save you from the Fire, how much then should you strive to attain it? May Allah (swt) make us among those who are constantly striving to gain knowledge! May He (swt) make the knowledge that we gain as a means of coming closer to Him!

However one important rule that we have to bear in mind is that when we seek knowledge, we have to be sure that knowledge that we gain is a means for us to better worship and serve Allah (swt). Our intention in gaining that knowledge, just like our intention in all of our actions, should only be getting the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So the knowledge that we gain should be knowledge that helps to better worship and serve Allah (swt). It has to be knowledge that increases our faith and certitude in Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) always used to pray to Allah (swt) for the knowledge that will benefit him (saw) and he (saw) used to pray to Allah (swt) to protect him (saw) from knowledge that will not benefit him (saw). The knowledge that does not benefit is the knowledge that does not help us to better worship and serve Allah (swt). If we are finding that the knowledge that we are gaining is not bringing us close to Allah (swt) then we have to leave such knowledge. We have to sincerely pray to Allah (swt) to give us the knowledge that will benefit us and to protect us from the knowledge that is harmful to us. Anything that does not in some way bring us closer to Allah (swt) is a waste and it is also dangerous. We should keep away from such things, and we should always pray to Allah (swt) to guide us. May Allah (swt) help us in our efforts and may He (swt) give us the knowledge that will benefit us!

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَٰذَا مِنْ
عِندِ ٱللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80. So *Wail* for the ones who write the Book with their hands, and they say "this is from Allah". So they purchase with it a small price. So *Wail* for them for what their hands have written and *Wail* on them for what they have earned.

This ayah continues with the description of the children of Israil that Allah (swt) has began in the previous ayahs. The description of the ones that we are trying our best to avoid becoming. Recall in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) told us about the unlettered among them and how they only follow their desires and they only make conjecture as to what is in the Sacred Books. Because they wanted to follow their desires they made assumptions as to what it is that they thought Allah (swt) has said. They assumed for themselves what they wanted to hear. This was the case of the commoners among the children of Israil. But what about the scholars and the learned among them? What about the ones who did have knowledge of the Book of Allah (swt)? What did they do? Recall the ayah where Allah (swt) told us that only the scholars fear Him (swt). Can we then expect a behavior that is better from the scholars among the children of Israil? Has their knowledge lead them to fear Allah (swt) and to dedicate their lives to Him (swt)? Has their knowledge helped them at all? In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about the scholars among the children of Israil, the Jewish Rabbis.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "***Wail* for the ones who write the Book with their hands, and they say, 'this is from Allah'** ". There are several meaning possible for the word ***Wail*** that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah. One meaning is "pain and destruction", another meaning is "curse and rejection" and other meaning is "a valley in the Fire". All of these meanings actually fit in the context of this ayah. Allah (swt) curses these people who write the Book with their hands, then He (swt) promises them destruction and a painful punishment. That punishment is a valley in the Hellfire. This valley is so deep that if a stone is dropped into it, it will take over

forty years for that stone to reach the bottom. Now we know that the pain in the Fire gets worse the deeper that one goes into it. So we cannot even begin to imagine the kind of pain that these people will feel when they are in that valley. They will be destroyed over and over again, and the torment of each destruction will only be more painful than the last. This is because they have been cursed and rejected by Allah (swt). That is what it means for *Wail* to be on them.

So what is it that these people have done that they deserve such a terrible punishment? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they used to "**write the Book with their hands, and they say, 'this is from Allah'** ". The Book in this ayah refers to the Tawrah that Allah (swt) revealed to Musa (as). This was their Holy Scripture, their Divine Guidance and their Sacred Law. They used to write in this Book with their own hands. This means that they used to change what was in this Book. There are many ways in which they changed the Book of Allah (swt). One way in which they changed it was that they would make as permissible what Allah (swt) had forbidden, and they would make as forbidden what Allah (swt) had made permissible. It was not only on one occasion that they would make such a change but they would do it again and again. Once you commit a great sin for the first time, it becomes easier the second time. Soon you do it frequently and you do not think much of it. So it was not only on one occasion that these Jewish Rabbis changed the contents of the Tawrah, but it was on multiple occasions. Their only intention in doing this was to serve their own self-interests. They forgot that the purpose of their lives should be to worship and serve Allah (swt). They thought they live only to serve their own desires. They had deceived themselves about Allah (swt), and they thought He (swt) was not aware of what they did in private. So for example they would change the Book so that they can permit the taking of interest and they removed the harsh punishment of stoning for adultery. The only reason they did this is because they themselves wanted to exploit the people and take interest from them, and they themselves wanted to covet their neighbor's wife. So they changed the Law of Allah (swt) to serve their greed and their lusts. Can you even begin to realize the enormity of the crime that they have committed? Once you realize Allah (swt) and you realize what we owe to Him (swt) in obedience and slave hood then you will realize the enormity of their sin. They thought themselves to be legislators besides Allah (swt). They thought themselves to be gods besides Him (swt).

But did their evil end simply in changing the Law of Allah (swt)? Was this the only way in which they changed the Tawrah? No, they even changed the narrations of the previous prophets that were in the Tawrah. So for example they would change the narrations in the Tawrah so that Nuh (as) was a drunkard and that Lut (as) committed incest with his daughters. See the evil of these people? They wanted to commit these heinous crimes for themselves and so they portray their prophets as committing them. The prophets after all are the role models who they are supposed to be following. So if the prophet does some great evil, then is not excusable for them do the same evil as well? That is why they changed the Tawrah and put in it these fabrications where the prophets of Allah (swt) commit these great sins.

Did their evil end here? Is this all that they changed of the Book of Allah (swt)? No, perhaps the greatest of their transgressions was that they removed the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were in the Tawrah. For many centuries, Allah (swt) had chosen the children of Israil as the nation that would carry this dawah to mankind. Allah (swt) had sent them many prophets and messengers to guide them and to lead them on this mission to carry this Message to mankind. However Allah (swt) had also told them that He (swt) would sent them a Final Messenger. This Messenger would complete the Message and the Law of the previous prophets and messengers. They knew that this Messenger would bear the last revelation that Allah (swt) sends for mankind, and that this Messenger would bring the perfected and completed Law of Allah (swt) for all mankind. So they were eagerly awaiting the arrival of this Messenger for centuries. However when they discovered that this messenger (saw) had come from the Arabs and not from the Jews, they could not bring themselves to accept him (saw). They were so proud of their own race, and they used to look down on all mankind who was not from their race. So that when the Final Messenger came from a people that was not theirs, they could not accept him (saw). Instead they found some reason to reject him (saw). But we see in this ayah that not only did they themselves reject the Prophet (saw) but they also changed the Tawrah to remove the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that it contained. So not only did they choose misguidance over guidance for themselves, but they also made sure that none of their children would be guided to the Truth of this Message as well. Thus the greatest of their evil in changing the Book of Allah

(swt) was in their removing the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that it contained. In doing so they not only misguided themselves and their own people, but all of the generations of Jews and Christians who would come after them. How evil then are such people?

That is why Allah (swt) says that *Wail* is for them because of what they have written in the Book with their hands and because they have said that it is from Allah (swt) when they know that it is not. They are writing in Allah (swt)'s Book with their own hands and they are telling the people that this is from Allah (swt). Who is more unjust and more evil than one who dares to speak on behalf of the Lord and Master of the universe? That is why Allah (swt) has cursed them and that is why they have been promised such a painful punishment.

In the next portion of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**So they purchase with it a small price**". They have earned for themselves the Wrath of their Creator and they have earned for themselves the most painful of punishments. But what did they get in return from this trade that they made? For what did they make such a trade where they ended up with curse of Allah (swt) and a painful punishment? They got nothing but the short life of this world. Nothing but the temporary and fleeting pleasures in the life of this world. That is what they got for themselves when they gave up their Hereafter and they gave up the Pleasure of their Creator. So you see what a small price they received for the enormous thing that they gave up.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us once again "**So *Wail* for them for what their hands have written and *Wail* for them for what they have earned**". This is to emphasize and reiterate the horrible punishment that they will receive because of the great sin that they have committed. *Wail* for them because of what their hands have written and *Wail* for them because of what they have earned. They are punished both for what they have written and for what they have earned. We know what they have written but what is it that they have earned? They have earned sin and they have earned the Wrath of Allah (swt). Not only did they change the Book, but once they changed it, they knowingly committed the forbidden actions that Allah (swt) had forbidden them in the Book. For example they changed the Book of Allah (swt) to give themselves permission to commit adultery and then they themselves committed adultery. They committed it time and time again and they did not think much of it. So they are being punished both for their

lack of respect and reverence for the Book of Allah (swt), and also for the sins that they committed once they changed the Book. Thus double is the evil that they did, and double is the punishment that they receive for it. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from the terrible fate that awaits them!

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize once again what a terrible sin it is to change the Book of Allah (swt) in any way. As we have mentioned, the danger for Muslims today is not so much in someone changing the Quran, but the real danger is in people bringing interpretations of the Quran that Allah (swt) never gave. In people bringing meanings to the Quran that Allah (swt) never gave. Unfortunately this is exactly what is happening in the Muslim Ummah today. There are so-called Muslim "scholars" who are claiming that homosexuality is permissible, that taking interest is permissible and that ruling by other than what Allah (swt) has revealed is permissible. All of these opinions are false and they are contradicted by clear ayahs of the Quran. But since many among the Muslims today are ignorant as to what is in the Quran these so called scholars are able to deceive them. What is the difference then between these so-called Muslim scholars who are coming with these opinions and the Jewish Rabbis that Allah (swt) is cursing in this ayah? There are also Muslims today who read the Quran in the way that they want to read it and then they commit adultery and they drink beer. They say that they have their own "special understanding" of the Quran that gives them permission to commit these sins. Do not be surprised, there are real people today who are like this and who are claming to be Muslims. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like these people! May Allah (swt) allow us to always sincerely search for the Truth that is in the Quran and Sunnah, and may Allah (swt) protect us from following our desires and our lusts! May we always give the Quran and the Sunnah the respect and the reverence that they deserve as being the revelation of Allah (swt)! The words of our Creator and Sustainer, the Lord and Master of the universe, whom we strive to worship and serve in everything that we do!

وَقَالُوا۟ لَن تَمَسَّنَا ٱلنَّارُ إِلَّآ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً ۚ قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ
عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ ٱللَّهُ عَهْدَهُۥٓ ۖ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81. And they say "The Fire will not touch us except for counted days". Say "Have you taken with Allah a promise so that Allah will not break His promise? Or do you say of Allah what you do not know".

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate to us the behavior and the thinking of the Jews. Remember that these ayahs serve two purposes. One is to inform us about the kind of people that these Jews are and another is to prevent us from becoming like them. Once again we have to emphasize that not all Jews are like this. Rather these ayahs are specifically talking about those Jews who knew that this Message is the Truth but they still chose to reject it. So as we read these ayahs we should know who are our enemies are so that we can be aware of them and we should also know about their thinking and their behavior so that we can avoid becoming like them. These are two of the main purposes and two of the main sources of guidance that we can derive from these ayahs. Insha Allah we should always bear this in mind as we read these ayahs where Allah (swt) tells us about the children of Israil.

In the previous ayahs we saw that there were some among the Jews who were illiterate, they had no knowledge about Allah (swt) and what He (swt) revealed and instead they only followed their desires. They made assumptions as to what was in the Book of Allah (swt), assumptions to suit their whims and desires. These were the commoners and the lay people among them. But what about the scholars and the learned among them? Allah (swt) told us how they changed His (swt)'s Book with their own hands. Did these people not fear Allah (swt) when they did what they did? Were they not aware of the fact that Allah (swt) had prepared the Fire for those who were disobedient to Him (swt)? Did they not realize the sheer reality of the Fire? In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us the attitude of these people towards the Fire. Allah (swt) tells us what was their attitude towards the Punishment that He (swt) had prepared for those who are disobedient to Him (swt). Allah (swt) created Hell as a Mercy for mankind. So that we would be

terrified of it. So that it would make us run to Him (swt). But see here the attitude of these people towards it.

Allah (swt) tells us that they say "**The Fire will not touch us except for counted days**". They are saying that they will only be in the Fire for a set number of days. Some scholars say that they said for forty days and other scholars say that they said only three days, which is the number of days for which they worshipped the calf. However for us what is important here is not the number of days for which they claimed that they will be in the Fire, but what is important for us is to look at their attitude towards the Punishment of Allah (swt). Simply look at how foolish their statement is. Do they not realize how terrible it would be to be in the Fire for even one second? To be in the Fire for three days or even three seconds is something that we should do everything that we can to avoid. It is something that we should fear with all our hearts. Such is the sheer pain and suffering that one experiences in the Fire. Anyone who does not realize this fact has underestimated Allah (swt). The Fire is the Punishment of Allah (swt), and He (swt) has prepared it for those who are disobedient to Him (swt). There is no one who can have patience in it even for a second. May Allah (swt) save us from it! May Allah (swt) save us from it!

This is how terrified each and every one of us should be of the Fire. Now look at the attitude of these people towards it. They say that they will only be in it for a few days, a short time. This shows how they do not care too much for it at all. They do not care too much for it because they do not realize the sheer reality of it. They do not realize the pain that they will feel in it. So instead of having fear of the Fire that Allah (swt) created for mankind to fear, they take it very lightly. Once again we see that this is pure self-deception. There is a reality that is coming towards them, and they are simply choosing not to take this reality seriously. They are ignoring it and living this life almost as if there is no such punishment or as if it is something trivial. See then how heedless they have become of Allah (swt). How they think that they can live in such utter disobedience to Him (swt) and still not be held accountable. Instead of taking the punishment of Allah (swt) seriously, they dismiss it away by saying "**The Fire will not touch us except for counted days**". May Allah (swt) save us from having this attitude towards His (swt)'s Punishment! May Allah (swt) always help us to realize Him (swt) and what we owe to Him (swt!

So we see that the attitude of these Jews is that they were thinking that they would only be in the Fire for a few days, and after that they would go straight to Paradise. They thought that they were entitled to this because of who they were. They deluded themselves into thinking that they are the favored nation of Allah (swt) simply because of who they were, or because of who their ancestors were. What they forgot was that you do not become the favored nation of Allah (swt) simply by who you are or by who your ancestors were, but it is by what you do. It is through your actions, your striving to worship and serve Allah (swt), that you become the favored nation of Allah (swt). That is why we believe that we are the favored nation of Allah (swt) only when we as a nation strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). These Jews however thought that they would be the favorites of Allah (swt) no matter what they did. They thought that they could commit all the sins that they wanted. They thought that they could reject all of the messengers that they wanted, and they would still be Allah (swt)'s favorites. They deluded themselves into thinking that no matter what they did they would only be in the Fire for a few days and then they would go to Paradise. May Allah (swt) save us from such twisted thinking!

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always have a dreadful fear of the Fire. Allah (swt) has told us about the Fire and in that this there is actually a great Mercy for us. How many sins have you prevented yourself from doing because of the fear of the Fire that you have? You love Allah (swt) and you know that it is wrong to be disobedient to Him (swt). You feel terrible when you commit sins because you have betrayed your trust to your beloved. So you would like to do everything possible to prevent yourselves from committing sins. Sometimes however when the desire to commit sins flares within you so strong, then the love of Allah (swt) alone may not be enough to prevent you from committing that sin at the moment that the desire is flaring. But when you think of the Fire and the pain that you will feel therein, the fear and dread that is generated within you helps you to prevent yourself from committing the sin. Thus the knowledge of the Fire that Allah (swt) has given us helps us in remaining obedient to Him (swt). So it is indeed a great Mercy for us from Allah (swt). But this Mercy is conditional upon us taking the Fire seriously. We have to realize it for the reality that it is, and consequently we have to have great fear and dread of it. Once you realize that it is real then you will fear it.

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that to be in the Fire for even a few days is something that we should be terrified of. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that anyone who believes only in Allah (swt) and who believes in the messenger that was sent to them will not stay in the Fire forever. So we know that if we believe in Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) then we are a guaranteed that we will eventually go to the Garden. No matter how many sins one commits, and no matter how great are the sins, anyone who believes in Allah (swt) and the Message that reaches them will eventually go to the Garden. Some Muslims have used this fact to convince themselves that they can commit all of the sins that they want. They think to themselves that at worst they will be in the Fire for only a few days. However we see from this ayah that this is exactly the thinking that the Jews had, and Allah (swt) criticizes the Jews for this thinking. So it is wrong for us to console ourselves with the thought that we would only be in the Fire for a few days. We should be terrified of spending even one second in the Fire! Allah (swt) has told us that the Fire is the place that He (swt) has created to punish those who earn His (swt)'s Wrath, so how can we not be terrified of such a place? Furthermore how can we be certain that it is only a few days that we will be in the Fire? How do we know that we will not be in there for hundreds and hundreds of years? We know that all sinners are liable to be touched by the Fire, but we do not know for how long it will be. So we see from this ayah that it is wrong for us to adopt the thinking that we would only be in the Fire for a few days and think that somehow gives us permission to commit all of the sins that we want. We should fear Allah (swt) and we should fear the Fire. Even one second in the Fire is far worse than we can possible even imagine. May Allah (swt) save us!

In response to this claim Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to ask the Jews "**Have you taken with Allah a promise so that Allah will not break His promise? Or do you say of Allah what you do not know**". The first thing to note about this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) does not address the Jews directly. We saw in the previous ayahs that Allah (swt) would call out directly to the children of Israil. But in this ayah here, Allah (swt) does not speak to them directly rather He (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to ask them this question. This shows how the Wrath of Allah (swt) is on these people, that He (swt) would not even address them directly. Now look at

the question that Allah (swt) asks them. They say that they will be only in the Fire for a few days, Allah (swt) immediately asks them for their proof or evidence for such a belief. Any belief or any thought that we have must be based on an evidence. If there is no evidence for a thought that we have, then it is only wishful thinking on our part. So every thought or idea that we have must be based on an evidence. The evidence that these Jews would require for this thought of being saved from the Fire is that they should have is a promise from Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who never breaks a promise, so the only way for these people to believe and be certain that they will be saved from the Fire is if Allah (swt) promises them that they would be. Only if they have a promise from Allah (swt) can they make such a claim. So Allah (swt) asks these people to produce for themselves the proof for this idea that they had they will only be in the Fire for a few days. Of course we know that they had no such promise.

Allah (swt) asks them if any of them had such a promise and then He (swt) tells them "**Or do you say of Allah what you do not know**". If they do not have such a promise, then are they daring to speak about Allah (swt) what they do not know? They know that Allah (swt) is the Master of the Day of Judgment and the Final Judge. They know that only Allah (swt) can place someone in the Fire and they know that only He (swt) can take someone out from it. So for them to say that they will be in the Fire for only a few days, they need a promise from Allah (swt) that it will be so. If they have no such promise then they are actually claiming to speak on behalf of Allah (swt). They are saying about Allah (swt) what they have no knowledge of. Who are they to dare to claim that they will be taken out of the Fire when Allah (swt) is the Master of the Day of Judgment? Do you now see their sheer arrogance before the Lord and Master of the universe?

The Fire is the punishment of Allah (swt) and only He (swt) decides who will be in it and for how long. Anyone who claims that they will be taken out of the Fire when they do not have a promise from Allah (swt) for this is speaking on behalf of Allah (swt) without knowledge and without right. How arrogant and how evil are such people who claim that they can speak for Allah (swt)? How arrogant and evil are a people who claim that they can pass judgment on behalf Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from such arrogance!

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must never speak for Allah (swt) that which we do not know. Whenever we speak to anyone about Islam, we have to remember that we are speaking about the Din of Allah (swt). This is the way of life that Allah (swt) has sent down for mankind on how they should worship and serve Him (swt). On how they should live their lives. So there should be nothing that is more important in anyone's life than this Din. So when we tell people about Islam we have to remember that we are telling them about the purpose of their existence, we are telling them about their connection with Allah (swt). Bearing this in mind, we should be extremely careful of what we say. While we do have an obligation to carry dawah and to teach people, we also have to make certain that what we say is correct. What we tell people about Islam has to be based on evidence from the Quran or Sunnah. It is very dangerous to speak about Allah (swt) when we do not have an evidence for what we say from Quran and Sunnah. If we do, then we would be speaking about Allah (swt) about that which we have no knowledge and we would be as guilty as these Jews who claimed that they would only be in the Fire for a few days when Allah (swt) had never given them any promise of that. So if you have an idea or thought in Islam that you want to carry to other people, please make certain that there is an evidence for that idea in the Quran or Sunnah. Please make certain that there are reputable and known scholars who will support the thought or idea that you are telling other people about. Know that it is most displeasing to Allah (swt) for us to speak about matters for which we have no knowledge. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) save us from the torment and the punishment of the Fire! May Allah (swt) prevent us from spending even one second of our lives not dedicated to Him! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that every calamity and difficulty that we go through in the life of this world is part of His (swt)'s Mercy because it may remove our sins from us and in doing so it may save us from going to this damned place!

بَلَىٰ مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِۦ خَطِيٓـَٔتُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ
ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. *Bala*! Whoever earns evil and is surrounded by his sins, these are the companions of the Fire. They will be there forever.

This ayah contains the response of Allah (swt) to the claim of the Jews that they will be in the Fire for only a few days. First we see the word ***Bala*** which is used here as a tool of extreme negation. Allah (swt) is negating their claim that they will be in the Fire for only a few days. It is an extreme and complete negation, it destroys their thinking utterly. It is as if Allah (swt) is saying that there is no way at all, no way whatsoever, that such a claim of theirs could be true. Allah (swt) makes it clear that they are wrong to speak about Him (swt) where they have no knowledge and so they are wrong to say that they will be in the Fire for only a few days. All of this meaning is accomplished only with the use of the word ***Bala***.

Then Allah says in this ayah, "**Whoever earns evil and is surrounded by his sins, these are the companions of the Fire. They will be there forever**". So we see from this part of the ayah that there are people who will be companions of the Fire and they will stay therein forever. To be a *companion* of the Fire means that one is very close to the Fire, and the Fire is close to that person. The Fire will enter them and go into the innermost fiber of their being. The pain that they will feel is unimaginable. The only thing that will be worse for them than this pain that they feel is the knowledge that this pain will last forever. For any pain or discomfort that we feel in the life of this world, we are consoled by the fact that this pain will eventually end. But the companions of the Fire have no such consolation. In addition to the pain that they are suffering, they will always and forever be tormented by the fact that this pain will last forever. Such is a pain and torment that is beyond all human imagination. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

So what is it that they have done to deserve such a terrible punishment? Allah (swt) tells us that these are the people who earn evil. This means that these are the people who do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). Not only do they do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt) but they do so many of these actions that they become surrounded by their sins. What

does it mean to be surrounded by their sins? It means that there is no good in them. They are completely surrounded by evil. That is why the scholars have said that this ayah refers to the disbelievers. Because anyone who believes in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and they believe in the messenger that was sent to them, then there is some good in them. Even if they lived a lifetime full of sin, there is still some good in them because of their belief. But this ayah talks about those who earn evil, meaning that they commit sins, and they are surrounded by their sins. This means that they are surrounded by their sins and they are surrounded by their evil. For their whole lives they have not done even one action that is pleasing to Allah (swt). Even though they know of Allah (swt), even though they knew that He (swt) was their Lord and Master, even though they knew what they owed to Him (swt) in worship and servitude, they still did not even dedicate one action in their entire life to Him (swt). Rather they turned away from Him (swt) completely. So they are immersed and surrounded by evil, by acts of disobedience to Allah (swt). That is why these people are the companions of the Fire, and that is why they will stay there forever. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

This was exactly the condition of many of the Jews at that time who refused to follow the Prophet (saw). They knew that he (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), but they still chose to reject him (saw). The reason why they chose to reject him (saw) was so that they could live a life full of sin and evil. They wanted to live a life where they could completely forget about Allah (swt) and simply do whatever their desires and lusts prompted them to do. So they earned evil by these sins that they did and soon their evil surrounded them. There was no good to them whatsoever. They were a people who completely forgot about Allah (swt), and they completely forgot about the purpose of their existence. Allah (swt) should be everything in your life; every action that you do should be for Him (swt). This is because He (swt) is your Creator Who brought you into existence and your Sustainer Who is maintaining your existence for every second of your life. What then can you say about a people who will not even remember Allah (swt) for one second of their life? Who do not even do one action that is pleasing to Allah (swt), rather they spend their whole lives doing the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). What can be said about such people? All we can say is that they are the worst of people, and the worst of

creation. The punishment that Allah (swt) has given them in this ayah is the most fitting of punishments for such people. Just like the pain that they feel will be so great that it is beyond all human imagination, so too is the evil that they have done so great that is beyond all human imagination. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember that the only value and the only worth in our lives is if we dedicate our lives to Him (swt)! Every moment of our life that we spend where we are heedless of Allah (swt) is a moment that brings us closer to being like these people. Every moment that we spend where we remember Allah (swt) is a moment that brings further away from these people. We saw in this ayah what is the terrible fate that awaited them. So if we want to avoid being like them we can see that the best course of action for us to follow is to try and remember Allah (swt) more and more. When we remember Allah (swt) more, it will give us the motivation to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and it will give us strength to stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So the key to being saved from the Fire lies in remembering Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire!

وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡجَنَّةِۖ هُمۡ فِيهَا
خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. And the ones who believe and do good deeds, these are the companions of the Garden. They will be there forever.

In the previous ayah we saw what was the fate of those who chose to turn away from Allah (swt). The ones who reject this Message that has been sent to them by Allah (swt). The ones who live a life full of sin and evil. A life where they do not even remember Allah (swt) for one second of their life. Their fate was the Fire, and they were destined to stay therein forever. They were the companions of the Fire, can you imagine a more frightening future than that? The terror of it is far greater than any of us can even imagine. So anyone who read the previous ayah, and they were among those who were heedless of Allah (swt), they would be filled with fear when

they heard Allah (swt) say that such would be their future. Is there any hope for such people? Is there any way that they can escape being the companions of the Fire? Of course there is because Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful and the Most Loving.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the children of Israil and all of mankind where their salvation lies. Allah (swt) says "**And the ones who believe and do good deeds, these are the companions of the Garden. They will be there forever**". Not only will such people be saved from the torment of the Fire, but they will also be admitted into the Garden. To stay there in forever. The Garden is the opposite of the Fire in every single way. Instead of constant pain, there is constant pleasure. Instead of fear and anxiety, there is peace and serenity. Instead of sorrow, there is joy. The Garden is the manifestation of the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The Garden is the place where everybody would want to be in. Can you find one person among all of mankind that would not enjoy being in the Garden? Just imagine yourself there right now. The lush grass under your bare feet. The clean air in your nose. The gentle breeze on your skin. There are no diseases in the Garden. No one will ever get sick and suffer. The provisions in the garden are endless, you can have there in whatsoever that you desire and however much of it as you want. Time does not exist in the Garden. So you can do whatever you want for however long you want. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, the companions of the Garden will be there forever. They are the companions of the Garden because they are so close to it. They enjoy and partake in every corner and inch of it. And they never worry about anything finishing or their time running out.

This is what Allah (swt) is promising to those who believe in Him (swt), who believe in the Message that He (swt) has sent, and who do the actions that He (swt) has commanded them to do in that Message. How can you ever compare such a Garden to this world? There is a saying that "all good things must come to an end". This is true for the people of this world. They spend their whole lives chasing after the pleasures and joys of this world. Their craving for these pleasures causes them suffering, and even when they get these pleasures they are not truly happy, because deep down inside their hearts they know that it will come to an end. No matter how pleasurable it is and no matter how enjoyable it is, they are certain that it will come to an end. Thus they are always in misery and they are always in sorrow. So they are sad when they

yearn for the things of this world, they are sad when they partake in the things of this world, and they are sad when the things of this world finish. Such is the nature of this world. This world was not meant to be a place to take pleasure in but it was only meant to be a place of testing. The only place of pleasure, the only salvation for mankind, and the only true happiness for mankind is with Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Garden.

But how does one get this Garden? Allah (swt) tells us clearly here that it is through belief and good deeds. Correct belief and sound actions. These are the keys to the Garden. First and foremost is the belief. You must believe in the Existence of Allah (swt), in the Oneness of Allah (swt), and all His (swt)'s Perfect Names. You must believe that only Allah (swt) is worthy of worship and deserving of your prayers. So in your time of need you must not call out to anyone or anything but He (swt). You must also believe in the total Sovereignty of Allah (swt) over all of the creation. Just as you believe that He (swt) is the only God that must be worshipped you must also believe that He (swt) is the only Sovereign that must be obeyed. You must also believe that everything has been created and that everything is being sustained by Allah (swt) Alone, and thus everything owes to Allah (swt) complete submission and total obedience. Submission and obedience to Allah (swt) must come only by following the messenger that Allah (swt) has sent. For all of mankind today that messenger is the Prophet (saw), may Allah (swt) raise him (saw) to the highest stations of the Garden. You have to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). You have to believe in everything that he (saw) tells you as being from Allah (swt). You have to do everything that he (saw) commands you to do to the best of your ability and you have to stay away from all that he (saw) has forbidden. This is what it means to do good deeds. To do the actions with the intention of serving Allah (swt) and seeking His (swt)'s Pleasure, following the way of the Prophet (saw). For every action that we do, our intention must be the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and we must try to follow the Prophet (saw) to the best of our ability in that action. The Pleasure of Allah (swt) should be the only benefit that we seek from that action and we must follow the Prophet (saw) to the best of our ability in that action. We should try to reach the ideal where we are remembering Allah (swt) for every moment of our lives and we are dedicating every single one of our actions for Him (swt). Even the breath that we take is a breath

for Him (swt). Even if we never reach this station we should still try. This is how we can make ourselves worthy of the Love of Allah (swt). This is how we can get be admitted into the Garden. We humbly pray with all of our souls that Allah (swt) gives us the ability to do that!

So we see in these two ayahs that Allah (swt) has clearly distinguished between two kinds of people and two kinds of destinations. The beliefs that we have in the life of this world, and the actions that we take based on that belief determine which of these two groups we will be part of and which of these destinations we will end up in. The first thing that you have to do is to convince yourself of the sheer reality of these two places. The Garden is not a dream and the Fire is not a nightmare. They are real, and one day soon, you and everyone else will be in one of these places. To block out this reality from your mind and to try instead to enjoy yourself in this world as much as possible is the most foolish of things you can do. Because the Fire and Garden exist whether you choose to think about them or not. You will end up in one of these places whether you want to go there or not. But if you do remember them, then maybe this will motivate you to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). Remember that all that matters in this life is that we worship and serve Allah (swt). He (swt) has told of these places only as a Mercy. Only so that we would strive to excel in this task that we have been given. The one who dedicates himself completely to Allah (swt) is the one for whom is the Garden, and the one who turns away from Him (swt) is the one for whom is the Fire. The reward is commensurate with what each of these people have chosen. So realize that if you choose Allah (swt) then you have put yourself in a position where you, with the Mercy of Allah (swt), can be worthy of the Garden. On the other hand if you choose to turn away from Him (swt), to do what is displeasing to Him (swt), then you have brought yourself a step closer to the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us and our families from that! Thus in the end what matters is our relationship with Allah (swt). If we truly realized Allah (swt) then we would know why such a great reward has been promised for those who dedicate themselves to Him (swt) and why such a terrible punishment has been threatened for those who turn away from Him (swt). So if you want to escape the Fire and go to the Garden then strive at every moment of your life to remember Allah (swt) and do what is pleasing to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace because we cannot do it without Him (swt)!

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنكُمْ
وَأَنتُم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. And (remember the time) when We took a covenant from the children of Israil that you will not serve and worship any but Allah, that you will be the best to parents, to kindred, to orphans, to the *Miskeen*, and speak good to the people, and establish Salah and give Zakat. Then you turned away, except a few among you. And you were *Mo'ridoon*.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to a covenant that He (swt) took with the children of Israil. Although this is a contract between Allah (swt) and the children of Israil, each of its terms applies to our Ummah as well. This covenant is the same that Allah (swt) has taken with all of mankind. This was the promise that all prophets and messengers called their people towards. We saw from the previous ayah that the only ones who will be saved from the Fire and be allowed to enter the Garden are those who believe and do good deeds. We said that the righteous actions or the good deeds are those actions that are done only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and done following the method or the way of the Prophet (saw). But what exactly are those actions? Which are the deeds that are most pleasing to Allah (swt)? Which are the actions that the Prophet (saw) would most frequently do? These are the actions that Allah (swt) specified in this covenant that He (swt) took with the children of Israil. Let us now look at these actions one by one because these are in many ways the fundamentals of Islam. These are the actions that are the most pleasing to Allah (swt) and so these are the actions that we have to strive the hardest to do over the course of our lives. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

The first condition of this contract is "**that you will not serve and worship any but Allah**". In Arabic when you negate something and then affirm something else, it is the strongest form of affirmation. So notice here how Allah (swt) has first negated the worship and servitude to

anything other than Him (swt). Then Allah (swt) affirms the worship and servitude of Him (swt). We do not worship or serve anyone or anything, no one and nothing, except Allah (swt). Only Allah (swt) deserves all of the worship, all of the respect, all of the adoration and all of the obedience. This is *Tawhid* and it is the most important and most fundamental concept in all of Islam. It is the pillar upon which all of Islam is built. If there are cracks or any weaknesses in this pillar, then Islam cannot stand.

The word *ibadah* denotes both worship and servitude, the two are connected so strongly with each other that it is almost as if they are one. We recognize Allah (swt) as the Perfect One, the One Who is Pure, without flaw and weakness. Because Allah (swt) is so Perfect, so Pure, so Great, so Magnificent, so Tremendous, He (swt) deserves all of our worship. Nothing else deserves that we bow down and prostrate before it. No one else deserves that we call out to them in our time of need. All of our worship , respect and prayers should be only for Allah (swt). In addition to being the Perfect One and the Pure One deserving of all worship, we also recognize Allah(swt) as our Creator Who brought us into existence and our Sustainer Who keeps us alive at every second of our lives. Because of this, in addition to our worship, we also owe to Allah (swt) our complete servitude. In other words since Allah (swt) is your Creator and Sustainer, that also makes Him (swt) your Lord and Master. So not only do you need to bow down and prostrate yourself before Allah (swt), but in fact every action that you take must be for Him (swt). This is because you exist because of Allah (swt), and if not for Him (swt), you would cease to be. Thus you must strive to dedicate every moment of your life for Him (swt) because without Him (swt) you would not even be. So the first condition of the covenant that Allah (swt) made with the children of Israil, and with us as well, is to worship and serve none but Him (swt). Just as we should not bow down and pray to anyone except Him (swt), we should also not serve and obey anyone except Him (swt). Just as we should not call out in our time of need to any but He (swt), we should also not live our lives according to any law except His Law. This is what *ibadah* means, and this was the very first condition in the covenant that Allah (swt) took with the children of Israil. The recognition that complete obedience and worship must be for Allah (swt) Alone.

So the first part of our covenant with Allah (swt) is that we pray only to Him (swt) and that we obey none but Him (swt). Unfortunately how many Muslims in the Ummah today fail to live up to even this very first condition of the covenant? There are so called Muslims today who worship idols, and who believe in other gods besides Allah (swt). There are so called Muslims who follow “saints and holy men”, bowing down before them and kissing their fingers. There are so called Muslims who worship the dead and decomposing bodies in graves, supplicating to the supposedly pious men who have passed away. There are so called Muslims who live in countries that do not rule by the Law of Allah (swt) and they see no problem with that. They see no problem with obeying a king, or a president or a parliament instead of Allah (swt). There are so called Muslims who have made their wealth or their children the priority in their lives, and they often forget about Allah (swt) in order to take care of these and they do not see a problem with that. These so called Muslims should read this ayah again and again, and listen to what Allah (swt) is telling them. They should read the two ayahs before this to see what is the fate of those who earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and those who do not.

The next condition of the contract is to be the best with parents. Notice how this condition comes right after the condition to establish Tawhid. This shows how important this command is. The command to be the best with parents has been left general, so it means to be the best with them in every way. In every possible you have to strive to make them pleased. You have to be kind and respectful to them. You have to support them and look after them and you have to provide for them whatever it is that they need from you. You have to do whatever makes them happy and you have to refrain from doing what makes them displeased with you. In fact you have to give them your total obedience, and the only command that they give you that you cannot obey is a command that goes against the Law of Allah (swt). Your life should be to please them, and through pleasing them, you would please Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has said that “Paradise lies at the feet of your mothers” and he (saw) said “In the pleasure of a father is the pleasure of Allah, and in the displeasure of a father is the displeasure of Allah”. Just as many Muslims neglect the first part of the covenant to establish Tawhid, they also neglect this second part to be the best with parents. Try to make up for that by striving to be better with your parents.

After Allah (swt) tells us to be good with our parents, He (swt) tells us to be good with our kindred. Though not at the same level as parents, our relatives also need good treatment from us. First our relatives need for us to maintain our relationships with them. We should always try to be in contact with them as much as possible. We have to visit them whenever we can. If they are in any kind of trouble then we have a responsibility to help them. The scholars have even said that when we give charity, the first ones who are privileged to that wealth are our family members who are in need. This command from Allah (swt) to be good with relatives also shows the great importance that He (swt) has placed on family. The family is the foundation of the society, and if the families in the society are strong, then the society will be strong. It can start with your family, and spread to the rest of the families in this Ummah. So try your best to do as Allah (swt) commanded and be good with your kindred.

The next category of people whom Allah (swt) commands us to be good to are the orphans. Of all the people in a society, the ones who need to be cared for the most are the orphans. What can be more important and more necessary for a young child than his or her parents? Young children are helpless and they are weak, and they are innocent and they are ignorant. So a child without parents needs for the society to look after him or her. They need to be supported and helped more than anyone else. When Allah (swt) has decreed that a child should be without parents, then it is up to the Islamic State to be the parent of that child. The Islamic State has the responsibility to provide for that child in every way that a parent would. Today while we can all do what we can to help the orphans in the world, there will always be many more orphans than we can possibly ever help on our own. That is why we need to work to bring the Islamic State. Only on the organized level of a powerful political entity like the Islamic State can enough resources be gathered to help all of the orphans of the world. Only the State has the infrastructure and the organization to see that all of the child's needs are met. So for the Muslims living in the Ummah today, this command to be good to the orphans is really a command to work to bring back the Islamic State. The Prophet (saw) has commanded us that when we do something we should do it in the best way possible, and the best way to help all of the orphans of the world today is through the Islamic State.

The next category of people whom Allah (swt) commands us to be good to are the ***Miskeen***. These are those who are extremely poor. These are the people who find it hard to find food to eat, to find shelter to protect them, and to find clothes to wear. Just like the orphans these are the people who are always in need. They are the forgotten and the lost of the society. For us who have a home to go to, and who have food to eat, and who have clothes to wear, we cannot even imagine the kind of life that such people have to life. Every day of their lives. They live in such poverty that everyday for them is filled with anxiety and fear, as well as despair and sadness. We can all do what we can to help such people, but we have to remember once again that only the Islamic State can provide for all of the ***Miskeen*** of this earth. Today Capitalism and the greed that fuels it have taken over every part of this world. So the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. There is no system in place today that will fairly distribute all of the wealth of this earth to the human beings that live on it. There will always be those few who have much more than they need it, and who waste extravagantly, and there will be those many who have nothing. Only the Islamic State can bring a system where the wealth of the world is fairly distributed. Only the Islamic State can turn the hearts of men away from hoarding the wealth of this world and towards Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to bring back the State so that all of the people in need can be taken care of once again!

Then Allah (swt) commands us to speak with the people a “good word”. The scholars have given two meanings for this command. One is that we have to speak with the people in a kind and respectful manner. We must never shout at them or be harsh with them. Another meaning is that we have to carry dawah to the people. We have to call them to Allah (swt), we have to remind them of the purpose of their existence. Both of these meanings are what is meant when Allah (swt) commands us to speak with the people a “good word”. It is kindness and respect in the manner that we talk them, and it is inviting them to Allah (swt). Notice also that Allah (swt) does not say “believers” but He (swt) says “people”. This reminds us once again that we have a responsibility to behave in the best way possible towards all people. We have to speak with them the best of words and we have to say to them what will please them. Even our behavior with non-Muslims is a part of our worship of Allah (swt). A part of our dawah.

Then Allah (swt) tells us to establish Salah and pay the Zakat. Insha Allah we have already discussed the great importance of these two actions in our tafsir of the fourth ayah of this Surah. Salah is our connection with Allah (swt) and it also our connection with each other. We as a Muslim community come together in Jammah to worship Allah (swt) together. So in this act we connect with Allah (swt), and we also connect with each other. Zakat is the foundation of the Islamic Economic system. It is the means by which the wealth of the Islamic State is distributed among all its citizens. As the Prophet (saw) has told us, these two actions are the pillars that support all of Islam. Through our Salah we strengthen our connection with Allah (swt) and with each other, and through the Zakat we ensure that all of the people in the Islamic State are taken care of. That is why Allah (swt) specifically mentions these two actions in this ayah.

These are the conditions of the contract that the children of Israil were required to fulfill, and it is what we are required to fulfill as well. But did they fulfill this contract? Allah (swt) tells them, "**Then you turned away, except a few among you**". Most of them failed to live up to the requirements of this contract. Allah (swt) showed the Straight Path that lead to His (swt)'s Pleasure. The Path of worshipping and serving Him (swt). The Path of the deeds that He (swt) is pleased with. But they chose to turn away from this Path. For the seconds, and the minutes, and the hours and the days of their lives they chose to serve their desires and their own selves instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). There were only few among them who chose Allah (swt). There were only few of them who lived up to the requirements of this contract.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says that they were among the "***Mo'ridoon***". These are the people who go back on a promise after having made it. They are the ones who break a covenant after having established it. So it was not simply a matter of the children of Israil failing to live up to this contract, but this contract was a promise to Allah (swt) that they failed to keep. Can you imagine how evil are a people who would break a promise that they made to the Lord and Master of the universe? It is for this that Allah (swt) is criticizing them in this ayah. It is for this that they have earned the Wrath of Allah (swt). This is a very important fact for us to bear in mind as well because like them we have already made this contract with Allah (swt). By the simple fact that we are Muslims, we have already made this covenant with Allah (swt). Now we

have to fulfill the actions that Allah (swt) has told us to in this ayah, it is a promise that is binding on us. In return Allah (swt) will give us His (swt)'s Pleasure and His (swt)'s Garden. How wonderful is that? Is that not the best of bargains? May Allah (swt) help us to fulfill our end of this agreement! We know that we are too weak and we are not able to complete it on our own.

So we have seen in this short ayah how Allah (swt) covers all of the foundations and the fundamentals of Islam. The Din of Allah (swt) is vast because it is a complete way of life for all human beings and for all time. But we also see from this ayah that there are certain foundations or pillars upon which Islam is built. These include Salah, Zakat, being good to parents, keeping relationships with relatives, looking after the orphans and the ***Miskeen*** in the society, and speaking good to the people and carrying this Message to them. However the most important foundation which supports all of these is Tawhid. This is the belief that no one deserves to be worshipped and no one deserves servitude except Allah (swt). Once these foundations are established we have the pillars that hold up Islam. But how can we ever expect to raise up Islam as a way of life when we ourselves do not implement one of its pillars?

So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that this contract applies to us just as much as it applied to the children of Israil. We have to strive and try our best to implement each and every one of the conditions of this contract in our life. We must not see it as optional but we must see it as a promise that we have made with Allah (swt). We must see these actions as the foundations of our Din, and the implementation of our entire Din rests on the implementation of these pillars. The children of Israil knew that these were the pillars of their Din as well, and still they failed to implement it. Not only did they fail to implement it but in doing so they actually broke a promise that they had made with Allah (swt) Himself. So this shows us that it is not enough for us to merely realize the importance of these actions, but we must also strive to implement them in our lives. We must always think of these actions as a contract that is on our necks that is binding all the time. May Allah (swt) guide to fulfill each and every one of these conditions in our life!

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَآءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن
دِيَٰرِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And (remember the time) when We took a covenant from you will not shed your own blood, and you will not drive yourselves out of your land. Then you confirmed it and you were a witness to it.

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to another contract that He (swt) took with the children of Israil. Once again as we read these ayahs we have to remind ourselves that this contract applies to us today just as much as it applied to the children of Israil then. Allah (swt) tells them, as He (swt) tells us, "**you will not shed your own blood, and you will not drive yourselves out of your land**". In the previous ayah we saw the terms of the contract that established the foundation of the Din. But the Din is always implemented by people. The people come together to make up the community. It is the strength of the bond between the members that determines the strength of the community. The strength of the Din itself rests on the strength of the bond between the members of the community. That is why it is imperative that there not be violence of any kind between members of the community. They must not hurt each other, they must not kill each other, and they must not drive each other out of the land. They must not cause injustice to each other in any way whatsoever. In addition they must also all see each other as part of one body. If one member of the community is injured or hurt, everyone must feel the sorrow and the pain because of that. This is the attitude between the members of the Muslim community that Allah (swt) commands to be established in this ayah. As we read about this covenant , we should think about how we can implement this in our community.

First Allah (swt) says "**you will not shed your own blood**". The scholars have given two interpretations for the meaning of this part of the ayah. One opinion is that this is a command not to commit suicide or to injure oneself for no reason. Allah (swt) is telling you here not to shed your own blood for no reason. Every moment that you have in this world is precious. It is an opportunity for you to praise Allah (swt) and to glorify Allah (swt). It is your chance to earn the

Pleasure and the Contentment of Allah (swt). So why would you want to throw this opportunity away by killing yourself? Even if your life is terrible, you can have patience for the sake of Allah (swt) and through that earn His (swt)'s Pleasure. Patience is an action for which you can have perpetual reward. For every moment that you are patient you are being rewarded. Just like you should not kill yourself, you should also not hurt yourself for no reason either. Your body is a trust that Allah (swt) has given you, and when you hurt your body for no reason, then you are breaking that trust. So the first part of this covenant is that you must not shed your own blood in any way without there being a just reason for it. That reason also has to be defined by the Law of Allah (swt). In fact the only time when you are allowed to harm yourself in the Law of Allah (swt) is when you are fighting in the cause of Allah (swt) or when you are accepting one of the punishments of Allah (swt) to be implemented on your for a sin that you committed. Other than that, you have no other reason to cause your body undue or unnecessary harm. So the next time that you feel like hurting yourself, remember these words of your Creator "**you will not shed your own blood**".

The second opinion that scholars give for this ayah is that this is a command not to kill or hurt members of your own community. So for us this would be a command not kill or hurt our Muslim brothers and sisters. This is because the members of the Muslim community are like one body. As we know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he said, "The Muslim Ummah is like one body. If one part of it is in pain, the rest of the body suffers from sleeplessness and sorrow". So if we kill another Muslim, or even if we hurt another Muslim, it is not only a great sin, but it is like we are killing or hurting our own selves. Not only must we not hurt them with our hands but we must also not hurt them with our tongues.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**and you will not drive yourselves out of your land**". Just like we are forbidden to kill members of our community, or to hurt them, we are also forbidden from driving them out of the land. This earth belongs to Allah (swt) and He (swt) gives to whomsoever that He (swt) pleases from it. So it is wrong for us to chase people out of a land that Allah (swt) has given them, especially if they are our own Muslim brothers or sisters. These are the ones about whom Allah (swt) has said that our Iman will not be perfected until we love for them what

we love for ourselves. So how can we be loving them when we are chasing them out of their land? The Islamic State, the land over which the flag of the Prophet (saw) flies, was established by the blood of Muslims. So how can any Muslim then chase any other Muslim out of this land? It is the land of Allah that He (swt) has given to the followers of His (swt)'s beloved Messenger. For any Muslim to chase any other Muslim out of this land for no reason would be great sin.

So we see how in this first part of the ayah alone, Allah (swt) has already given us five commands. First Allah (swt) commanded us not to commit suicide, then He (swt) commanded us not to hurt our bodies for no reason, then He (swt) told us not to kill our Muslim brothers and sisters, then He (swt) told us not to in any way hurt or injure our Muslim brothers and sisters, and finally He (swt) told us not to drive our Muslim brothers and sisters out of their land. Then in addition Allah (swt) told us that we should perceive our Muslim brothers and sisters as belonging to one body that we are also a part of. We are like one body where if we kill each other it would be like killing ourselves, if we hurt or injure each other it would be like hurting ourselves, and if we drive each other out of the land it would be like driving our own selves out of the land. Instead of killing or hurting our Muslim brothers and sisters, we should be striving to help them. Instead of driving them out of the land, we should be trying to give all of them a home. All of this meaning is conveyed in this ayah. Simply see how much deep meaning Allah (swt) has placed in one small ayah, and we are still not done with the ayah!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**Then you confirmed it and you were a witness to it**". Here Allah (swt) makes it clear to us that the children of Israil confirmed this contract and they were a witness to it. They made a promise to Allah (swt) to abide by this contract and they were a witness to themselves making this promise. Once again this shows the enormity of the sin that they committed. They went back on a promise to Allah (swt)! This is the truly shocking part; they made this promise and they confirmed it with their own tongues. They were a witness to it with their own eyes and their own ears. Still they went back on it. They knew that Allah (swt) sees all that they do and that He (swt) hears everything that they say, and they still went back on their promise. This behavior on their part is totally unacceptable. They knew what their responsibilities were, so they should have been on their guard. When you make a contract, when you confirm it

with your tongue, then you have to always be aware of your responsibilities. You have put yourself in a position of responsibility by making this contract with Allah (swt) and so it is something that you always have to be aware of.

We have to always remember that this is a contract that we have entered into with Allah (swt) as well. Do not ever let Shaitan fool you into thinking that this contract was only for the children of Israil. The Quran is not a book of history but it is a book of guidance. So there is a guidance for your life in every single ayah of the Quran. Remember Who Allah (swt) IS. Remind yourself of the terms of this covenant and ask yourself how you can work to fulfill all of them. How many Muslims do we find today who are going back on this covenant? There are Muslims today who are killing themselves, they are committing suicide and giving up this precious life that Allah (swt) has given them. They are very depressed with their lives and they hate themselves. They do not realize the honor and the privilege that they have in being a servant of Allah (swt) and in being a part of the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). There were great messengers, like Musa (as), who wished that they were a part of this Ummah. So why do not these Muslims wake up and realize the glory and honor there lies in being a part of this Ummah?

In addition to Muslims killing themselves, there are also Muslims today who are killing other Muslims. Today we can see this happening in Iraq, Philistine, Afghanistan and in many other parts of the Muslim world. There are also Muslims today who are driving other Muslims out of their land like in Darfur. Are the Muslims who are committing these atrocities not aware of this covenant that Allah (swt) has taken with them in His (swt)'s Book? Are they not aware that they are killing their own brothers? Are they not aware that they are killing their own selves? Do they not realize how much of the Wrath of Allah (swt) they are bringing down on themselves by killing a soul that believes in Allah (swt) as its Lord and the Prophet (saw) as its Messenger?

In this regard, the problem with our Ummah today is not simply a lack of knowledge. Who is there in the Ummah today that does not know that it is wrong to kill a Muslim? Who is there in the Ummah today that does not know that it is wrong to drive out a Muslim from their homeland? But there is just an arrogance that overtakes our hearts which prevents us from striving to fulfill our covenant with Allah (swt). We forget Who Allah (swt) IS, we only think about

our own selves, we see our selves as the most important thing in our lives, and so we simply follow our desires and our emotions instead of striving to worship and serve Allah (swt). We were created for Allah (swt). We were created to know Him (swt) and to live our lives striving to please Him (swt). But how far have we come from this ideal if we do not even establish the most basic of commands that He (swt) has given us? We are becoming like the children of Israil and if we do not wake up and read what Allah (swt) is telling us in the Quran, then it may be too late.

So for those of us who find ourselves far from Allah (swt), we have to start with these fundamentals. We have to return to these fundamentals and use these as the first step in the journey back to our Rabb. We have to start with our prayer and our Zakat and our being good to our parents and our behavior with the people in the best of ways. Then we have to work in whatever way we can to bring back the Islamic State. If we want to do dawah, if we want to make sure that all of mankind properly receives this Message, then there is no better way to do it than bringing back the vehicle that will carry this Message to mankind. Only the Islamic State can remove all of the obstacles in the dawah to make certain that all of humanity properly receives this Message. It has always been the case, even at the time of the Prophet (saw), that only when the political authority of Islam is established in the land, did the people start to enter the Din in large numbers. If the political authority is not present then the number of people entering will be few and even their practice of the Din will be very weak. Similarly if we want to help our brethren in the Ummah and our brethren in humanity to survive in this world. If we want to feed the poor, and look after the orphans, then there is no better way to do this than by working to restore the State. This is what we must do. No one is asking us to bring back the State tomorrow. If all that we can do is simply tell other Muslims about the State and about the real nature of Islam then that is what we must do. May Allah (swt) help us! May Allah (swt) guide us to fulfilling all of the terms of this contract! May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from this wrong track down which it is heading!

ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِهِمْ
تَظَٰهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَٰرَىٰ تُفَٰدُوهُمْ
وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ ۚ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ
بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْىٌ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ
ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَشَدِّ ٱلْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ
عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. Then here you are, killing yourselves, and driving out a part of you from their land, ganging up against them in sin and transgression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their expulsion itself was forbidden for you. Would you believe in one part of the Book and reject the other? What then is the repayment for the one who does that from among you except disgrace in the life of this world and on the Day of Judgment they will be brought back to the most severe punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

In the previous ayah, we saw the children of Israil accept a covenant from Allah (swt) where they promised that they would not kill members of their own community and that they would not drive members of their community out of their land. All of their subsequent generations knew about this covenant very well. It was one of the most basic and fundamental of all commands that Allah (swt) has given them. So every single one of them knew of this promise that they had given to Allah (swt). More than anything else they knew that the unity of the community had to be preserved, and that violence must not be done against other members of the community. They knew that they should not kill each other and that they should not drive each other from the land. But do you think they kept this covenant? This was a promise that they had made with Allah (swt) Himself, but do you think that they kept this promise?

Here in this ayah Allah (swt) describes to us the condition that they were in when the Prophet (saw) was sent to them. Look at them carefully here because they resemble a nation that you know well. We know that before the Prophet (saw) came to Madinah the two main Arab tribes of that city, who were known as the Aws and Khazaraj, were always in constant conflict with each other. These two tribes had been fighting against each other for years upon years. Both the Aws and Khazaraj had allies among the Jewish tribes of Madinah that would help and support them in their battles with each other. The Aws were supported by Jewish tribes of Banu Quraydah and Banu Nadir, while the Khazaraj were supported by the Jewish tribe of Banu Qainuqa. Now these Jewish tribes not only offered their Arab allies military and financial support, but they also fought alongside with them as well. Thus those Jews who were allied with the Aws would fight against those Jews who were allied with the Khazaraj. So among the Jews you would have Jews fighting against other Jews. You would have Jews killing other Jews, and you would Jews expelling other Jews from their land. You can see how this is a direct violation of the covenant that Allah (swt) had taken with them in the previous ayah.

That is why Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Then here you are, killing yourselves, and driving out a part of you from their land**". They had made the covenant with Allah (swt) not to kill each other and not to expel each other, but now at the time when the Quran was revealed they were doing exactly what they had promised they would not do. They would side with pagan Arabs who worshipped idols and who knew nothing about the Tawrah, and fight alongside with them against their own brethren. Killing their brothers, hurting their brothers, and driving their brothers out of their land. They are fighting along side idol worshippers and killing souls that worship Allah (swt). See here the extent to which they went back on a promise that they made with Allah (swt)! See how evil they are!

Then Allah (swt) says that they were "**ganging up against them in sin and transgression**". This part of the ayah expresses how the Jewish tribes of Madinah were ganging up on each other. Each tribe among them would side with the pagan Arabs, and along with their pagan allies they would attack each other. Not only would they attack each other, but they would overcome and overpower each other with the help of their pagan allies. Allah (swt) uses the

words “**sin and transgression**” to give the meaning that they showed no mercy to each other when they fought each other. Each tribe would try it’s best to overcome the other, and they did not care how many of the other they had to kill. As they killed their own brothers and sisters, and drove their own brothers and sisters out of their land, did they realize how much of the Law of Allah (swt), their Lord and Master, that they were transgressing against? Did they realize how much sin they were earning? So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us how not only did the children of Israil fight with each other but they also showed no mercy to each other. They had completely forgotten that they were fighting against their Muslim brothers.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says “**And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their expulsion itself was forbidden for you**”. The Law of Allah told the children of Israil that they were forbidden to kill each other, they were forbidden to drive each other from the land, and they were forbidden to keep each other as prisoners. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that they fulfilled the third of these requirements but they ignored the first two. Whenever some of Jewish prisoners of war were captured, the Jews would always ransom them away. When their Arab allies asked them why they were doing this, they replied by saying that they were required by the Tawrah not to keep any prisoners of war who are Jewish, and instead they had to free them. So only in this one aspect of ransoming the prisoners did they follow the Law of Allah (swt) but in everything else they did not. Allah (swt) told them not to kill each other and not to expel each other; they ignore these commands and follow only the command where Allah (swt) told them not to hold prisoners. Thus they pick and choose which part of the Law of Allah (swt) that they want to follow.

That is why Allah (swt) tells them in the next part of the ayah “**Would you believe in one part of the Book and reject the other?**”. They would ransom the Jewish prisoners that they had captured because Allah (swt) had forbidden them from holding each other as hostage, but they would not prevent themselves from killing each other and they would not prevent themselves from expelling each other. Whenever a command in the Law of Allah (swt) was easy to follow, they would implement it, but if the command was in any difficult for them to implement they would find some excuse not to follow it. They were forgetting that the Law as a whole is from Allah (swt)

and so it was not up to them to pick and choose which commands they wanted to follow and which ones they did not. They had to accept the Sacred Law in totality.

There is a very important lesson for us as Muslims to take from this part of the ayah. How many Muslims do we find today who would follow one part of the Book of Allah (swt) and turn away from the other part? For example, there are Muslims who are very careful about the meat that they eat, making certain that it was killed in an Islamic way. At the same time these Muslims would see no problem with taking interest, or not having their women cover themselves, or not establishing a government that rules by the Law of Allah (swt). Many of them do not even make their five daily prayers. They pick and choose which of the laws of Allah (swt) that they want to follow. So they only follow the laws that are easy for them, the ones that suit their desires, and they ignore all of the other commandments of Allah (swt). They forget that all of these laws are from Allah (swt) and that they are obligated to accept all of them without question. So we have to always remember that the Quran and Sunnah are from Allah (swt), our Creator and our Sustainer, the One to Whom we have an obligation to serve and worship. Nothing else should matter in our lives except the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The All-Knowing and the All-Wise, the One Who we know that whatever He (swt) decrees for us, it is for the best for us. Even if we cannot see the apparent wisdom in the Law of Allah (swt), and even if it may not suit our whims and desires, we still have to follow it. We follow it as a demonstration of our servitude and submission to Him (swt). We cannot pick and choose which parts of the Law of Allah (swt) that we are going to follow, but we must follow all of it, because it is all from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the guidance and ability to follow His (swt)'s Law completely.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) asks a question. He (swt) says "**What then is the repayment for the one who does that from you except disgrace in the life of this world and one the Day of Judgment they will be brought back to the most severe punishment?**". Do such people deserve anything less than this as a punishment? They broke the covenant of Allah (swt) that they had made and that they had witnessed. They also made a joke out of the Law of Allah (swt) following the parts that suited their desires and rejecting the parts that did not. So on the one hand they mocked and ridiculed Allah (swt) and on the other hand they broke a

solemn promise that they had made with Him (swt). They killed their own brothers and sisters when they had promised Allah (swt) that they would not do so. Their evil, and their sin, and their transgression seems to know no end. Who do these people think that they are and who do they think that Allah (swt) IS? They have not given to Allah (swt) the correct estimation. To break a promise that you have made with Allah (swt) and to ridicule the Law of Allah (swt) by choosing which parts you want to follow is no simple matter. It is a sin and a crime the enormity of which is greater than the heavens and the earth. Is there any repayment for people who commit such sins except disgrace and humiliation in the life of this world and a severe and painful punishment in the next world?

As Allah (swt) had promised these Jewish tribes did suffer humiliation and disgrace in this world. Banu Nadir and Banu Qainuqa were both exiled and banished from Madinah, and Banu Quraydah were executed. This was only their punishment in the life of this world, we can only imagine what awaits them in the next life. But what about the Muslims today? Have we also not broken our covenant with Allah (swt)? Are we also not picking and choosing which parts of the Quran and Sunnah that we want to follow? As a consequence of that, do we also not have the same fate that Allah (swt) has promised here? Do you not find the Muslim Ummah today in a state of disgrace and humiliation? Laughed at and mocked by the rest of the word and overcome by her enemies? Is this not because we have abandoned the Book of Allah (swt) and treated it like a joke? It is time for us to wake up and start implementing *all* of the commands of Allah (swt) in our life. We should stop picking and choosing which parts of the Law of Allah (swt) we want to follow. Otherwise if we continue along this path that we are on, where we only implement Islam partially, then we will continue to share the fate of these among the children of Israil in this life and we might even share their same fate in the next life. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to implement His (swt)'s Din as a whole!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is not unaware of what you do**". You say that you want to choose which of the laws of Allah (swt) that you are going to follow. You say that some of them are too difficult for you. You say that you would rather follow your lusts and desires instead of submitting to your Creator and your Sustainer. You say that you should

decide the purpose of your life instead of Allah (swt). If that is the case then you should think about what Allah (swt) says in this ayah. Allah (swt) is not at all ignorant of all that you do. On the contrary He (swt) is fully Aware of every single thing that you do. He (swt) Hears every word that you speak, He (swt) Sees every action that you take, and He (swt) Knows the thoughts that pass through the deepest recesses of your heart. If you do not live up to your obligation to worship and serve Him (swt) then do not think that He (swt) is heedless of it.

Allah (swt) has promised that He (swt) will not burden a soul more that it can bear, so you should know that all of the commands that He (swt) has given you are within your capacity to fulfill. You can do it if you truly realize Allah (swt) and you realize the importance of the obligation that you have to worship and serve Him (swt). If you truly realize Allah (swt) and you realize the importance of this obligation, then you would not see any of the commands of Allah (swt) as difficult, but instead you would look at yourself and see how inadequate you have been in humbling yourself before the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt). You know that Allah (swt) is the Greatest, and you know that there is nothing more important in your life than Him (swt). So now that you have this knowledge, you should strive and work hard to earn His (swt)'s Pleasure, and always remind yourself of the fact that "**Allah is not ignorant of what you do**". So do not belittle even the smallest of good deeds or the smallest of sin, but strive and persevere in your worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Know that Allah (swt) is Aware of every single action that you do and every single thought that you have and know that one Day soon you will return to Him (swt). Do not turn away from any command that reaches you in the Quran or Sunnah but rather strive to implement them all in your life. Know that these orders and prohibitions are from the Divine, thus give them the regard that they deserve. This is the only way that you can save yourself from being like those before you who took a part of their Book and rejected the rest of it. So try your best and know that Allah (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do try out very best in our worship and servitude of Him (swt)!

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. These are the ones who purchase the life of this world with the Hereafter. So their punishment will not be lightened for them and they will not be helped.

In the previous ayahs we saw how the children of Israil took a covenant with Allah (swt) that they will not shed each other's blood and that they will not drive each other out of the land. We saw how they confirmed this covenant that they made and how they promised to Allah (swt) to abide by it. Each generation among them told their children about this covenant and about the importance of abiding by it. But then at the time of the Prophet (saw), we saw the Jewish tribes fighting against each other. They were killing each other and they were driving each other out of their land. They were doing this even after their forefathers had specifically promised Allah (swt) that they and their children would not do this. We saw that they would also pick and choose which of the laws of Allah (swt) that they want to follow. They would implement the command that told them to free the prisoners of war, but they would forget about the commands that told them not to kill each other and not to expel each other. Not only would they kill each other and expel each other, but they would side with the pagan Arab tribes and gang up and surround each other. Because of such sin and transgression, Allah (swt) promised them disgrace and humiliation in the life of this world and a painful punishment in the next.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) describes the kind of people that they are. Allah (swt) says, "**These are the ones who purchase the life of this world with the Hereafter**". All humans have a place for themselves in the Hereafter. The Garden was created for Adam (as) and since we are his children, we all have a place for ourselves in the Garden. The life of this world is only a temporary place of test and trial that we have to pass through. It is a place in which we will stay for only a short time. The Prophet (saw) has said that the example of this world is like a short nap that you take on your journey before moving on. This hadith shows the extreme finiteness of the life of this world. So the Garden is the true home for all humans and this world is only a short

place of test and trial. But some people fall so much in love with the life of this world that they start preferring it to the eternal home that Allah (swt) has created for them in the Hereafter. They then start to commit sins and they start doing the acts that are displeasing to Allah (swt). Soon they begin to forget about Allah (swt), and they forget that they were created to worship and serve Allah (swt). They forget that they have been placed on this earth only as a test to see if they can conquer their lower selves and fulfill the purpose for which they were created. They come to see this world as their home. They think that they can find true happiness and fulfillment only in this world. They then start to love this world, and they start to love sin and transgression. They see themselves as more important than Allah (swt). They see that the purpose of their life is following their desires and satisfying their lusts instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). These are the people who trade their Hereafter with the life of this world. They willingly and knowingly give up the Garden and get in exchange for it this miserable existence. What a horrible exchange it is that they have made? May Allah (swt) save us from ever making this trade!

That is why Allah (swt) says about such people that "**their punishment will not be lightened for them and they will not be helped**". Allah (swt) is clearly telling us in this ayah that if we make such a trade where we give up the Garden in exchange for the life of this world, then we should not expect any Mercy from Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful, but the people who make this trade are the worst of creation. They know that that they have been created by Allah (swt). They know that they are weak and imperfect; they know that they need Allah (swt) for every second of their life. They know that the universe around them was created for a purpose. They see the greatness and the vastness of this universe, and they know that it was not created simply for play and amusement. Yet despite all of this knowledge that they have when the Message from Allah (swt) reaches them they turn away from it. They follow their desires instead of hearkening to the call of their Creator and Sustainer. They think about themselves and they think about this world, instead of thinking about Allah (swt). This was the condition of many among the children of Israil when the Prophet (saw) was sent to them. They were a people who had turned away from Allah (swt) in preference to the life of this world. So when the Prophet (saw) presented to them the Message that their Lord had sent to them, they rejected it.

The rejection of these Jews was much worse than the rejection of the pagan Arabs because these Jews had already taken a promise from Allah (swt) that they would believe in the Message when it reaches them. They had made a promise to Allah (swt) that they will live their lives to worship and serve Him (swt). But then they turned away from this Message after having promised that they would follow it. So not only did they turn away from this Message, but they turned away from it after having accepted it. They promised that they would be the true and devoted servants of Allah (swt), and then they went back on that promise. Who is then worse than this? Who is a worse creature than one that promises to worship and serve Allah (swt) and then goes back on that promise?

However what is truly frightening is that today there are Muslims who are becoming just like these Jews. Today there are hypocrites among the Muslims who are behaving just like these the Jews were. These so called Muslims also broke their covenant with Allah (swt) after having made it. The similarity between the children of Israil whom Allah (swt) is describing in these ayahs and many among the Muslim community today is shocking. They are both a people who say with their words that they are the devoted servants of Allah (swt), but it does not reflect on their actions and it does not permeate into their hearts. They pick and choose which parts of the Law of Allah (swt) that they want to follow and they prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like such people!

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that these are the people whose punishment will not be lightened. They will be suffering as they burn in the great Fire. Their punishment will not be alleviated in any way. There is not one second or one moment for which their pain will decrease. Can you imagine that? They will be burning in the Fire and they will not even be given one moment of rest or respite. They will also not be helped in any way. There is no one who can come and save them from this torment that they are suffering. There will be no angels who will pull them out of the Fire. Can you imagine how frightening a concept this is? You are burning in the Fire, and the only thing that you are sure about is that your pain will never decrease and that you will not receive any help. This thought should send chills down your spine; there is nothing in this world that is more frightening than this. Whatever it is that you are frightened of from this

world now, you should realize there should be nothing that should terrify you more than this Fire. So always be aware of the covenant that you have made with Allah (swt) and always be afraid of going back on that promise. Know that by being a Muslim and by being a member of the Ummah of the Prophet (saw), you have already made this covenant. You are part of the community that is responsible for carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind until the Day of Judgment. You are part of the community that is responsible for establishing the Law of Allah (swt) on the earth. So always be fearful of this punishment and know that this punishment is directly connected to your turning away from this responsibility that Allah (swt) has given you. Honoring this contract and striving to worship and serve Allah (swt) is the only way that you can save yourself. May Allah (swt) give us all the enabling grace to fulfill this covenant that we have made with Him (swt)!

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ بِٱلرُّسُلِ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى
ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌۢ بِمَا لَا
تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُكُمُ ٱسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. And surely We gave Musa the Book and We made succession after him with Messengers. And We gave to 'Isa son of Maryam the Clear Signs and We strengthened and supported him with *Ruh-Al-Quddus*. Is it that whenever there came to you a Messenger with what you desired not for your selves, you became arrogant? Then you rejected some of them and killed some of them.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to address the children of Israil, calling them to the Truth of this Message, reminding them of the favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on them. Notice how Allah (swt) does not only use one way to call to them, but He (swt) uses many. For example Allah (swt) reminds them of the many ways in which they have failed in their obligation to this Message in the past, and how they have a duty to follow the Prophet (saw) now to make up for these misdeeds in the past. Allah (swt) also reminds them of the clear evidences

that they found in their own Book which tell them that the Prophet (saw) is indeed is His (swt)'s Messenger. Allah (swt) also reminds them of the favors and blessings that He (swt) had bestowed on them in the past, including sending them many prophets and choosing them to be the bearers of His (swt)'s Message. So in more than one way did Allah (swt) call on them to believe in this Message. Why then were they so stubborn? Why then did they continue to reject this Message when they know that it was the Truth?

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**surely We gave Musa the Book**". The Tawrah was the Book that Allah (swt) gave to Musa (as). It was the Law of Allah (swt) and it gave the children of Israil complete guidance in every aspect of their life. The human being recognizes from the universe around him that he has a Creator but unless he has a Book he does not know what his relationship with his Creator must be. He does not know why his Creator created him. The human mind cannot know on its own the correct way of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). We need guidance from our Creator to show us the way. That is why one of the greatest of blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on the children of Israil was that He (swt) sent to them Musa (as) and He (swt) gave to them the Book wherein is guidance on how to fulfill the purpose of their existence. The Book is the Law for them to live by. Both as individuals and as a society. It is how they could find peace and tranquility. It is how they could fulfill the purpose of their existence. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds them once again of this blessing and He (swt) calls on them to believe in the Prophet (saw) because of that blessing. They need to show gratitude to their Lord for this guidance that He (swt) has bestowed on them.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and We made succession after him with Messengers**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the children of Israil that He (swt) not only sent to them Musa (as) but He (swt) also sent them many other prophets and messengers after him (as). This was a special favor that was given only to children of Israil. After Musa (as) passed away, the children of Israil were ruled by prophets and messengers who followed him (as). Instead of being ruled by men, their Islamic State was ruled by messengers from Allah (swt). Examples of these messengers were Dawud (as), Sulaiman (as), and Yusha bin Nun. Allah (swt) not only sent them one or two messengers but He (swt) sent them a succession of messengers, each one following the other.

Each one with revelation from Allah (swt) on how the people can fulfill their role of worshipping and serving Him (swt). So the children of Israil knew very well about the messengers that Allah (swt) had sent to them, they knew the names of each of these messengers by heart. They were even proud of this blessing that Allah (swt) had given them. But they did not live up to this privilege. They did not show the proper gratitude for this gift. Despite the fact that they had the messengers of Allah (swt) in their midst they still turned away from this Message. They still did not do what Allah (swt) commanded them to do in this Message. Furthermore because they had been sent so many messengers in the past, why then did not follow the greatest of the messengers when he (saw) was sent to them?

Not only did Allah (swt) send the children of Israil many prophets and messengers, but He (swt) also sent them a messenger the like of which had never been sent to any people before. Allah (swt) says, "**We gave to 'Isa son of Maryam the Clear Signs**". There were many ways in which 'Isa (as) was special and different from all of the other messengers that were sent before him (as). As his name suggests, 'Isa (as) was born without a father. The fact that 'Isa (as) was born without a father was the first of many miracles that Allah (swt) gave to the children of Israil to prove to them that this man was indeed a messenger from Him (swt). This is why Allah (swt) describes 'Isa (as) in this ayah as being given the Clear Signs.

There were many signs that 'Isa (as) displayed for the people including the curing of the blind and the lepers, transforming clay birds into live ones, and even bringing the dead back to life. How could any one ask for signs that are clearer than this? To give life to that which did not have life is a feat that no mortal man can accomplish without the permission of Allah (swt). Even today with all of the advancements in science and technology that man has reached, he is still not able to understand the secret of life. He is still not able to give life to that which is dead. Yet 'Isa (as) did do it over two thousand years ago, because it was by the Will of Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) has Power over all things. So the fact that Allah (swt) had given the children of Israil this very special messenger who had such clear signs is another of the special favors and blessings that He (swt) bestowed on them. Why then did they not show gratitude for this blessing by following the Prophet (saw)?

Then Allah (swt) tells us about ‘Isa (as) that “**We strengthened and supported him with *Ruh-Al-Quddus***”. The scholars say that this refers to Gibreel (as). The Archangel Gibreel (as), the greatest of the angels and the leader of the angels, was sent along with ‘Isa (as) to strengthen him (as) and to support him (as). Just like this noble angel did for the Prophet (saw), Gibreel (as) would often accompany ‘Isa (as) and he (as) would support him (as) in his dawah. This further shows the Mercy of Allah (swt) to the children of Israil in that He (swt) sent to them a messenger who was always helped and supported with the greatest of angels. Why then could they not repay this favor by following the Prophet (saw) now?

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) asks the children of Israil a question “**Is it that whenever there came to you a Messenger with what you desired not for your selves, you became arrogant?**”. We have seen how Allah (swt) sent them many messengers, and these messengers brought to them the Law of Allah (swt). But often, there were many commands in the Law of Allah (swt) that was not to their liking. Their desires did not agree with these commands. For example, there were messengers that told them that Allah (swt) had forbidden the taking of interest but they wanted to take interest. There were messengers that told them not to socialize with women, but they enjoyed the company of women. So what was their reaction when these messengers came with commands that they did not like? They became arrogant and proud. They told the messengers “We do not need to listen to you? Who are you to tell us what to do?”. They did not realize that they were being led around by the devil, because arrogance is the prime characteristic of Shaitan and it is what he loves to inject into the son of Adam. In fact it is through arrogance and pride that Shaitan turns many of the children of Adam away from Allah (swt). Why should you not take interest, you deserve that wealth. Why should you not be with that woman, you deserve that woman. Such are the thoughts that he can corrupt us with if we do not protect ourselves from him. Of course the best protection against him is the remembrance of Allah (swt). So even though the children of Israil were sent many messengers, they became arrogant at these messengers whenever their messengers told them to do something that was not to their liking. Allah (swt) asks them here how they could be so arrogant to Him (swt) when they know that indeed He (swt) is their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master.

But did their evil end with simply with being arrogant at the messengers of Allah (swt)? No, Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah "**Then you rejected some of them and killed some of them**". Some of the messengers of Allah (swt) like 'Isa (as) they rejected completely. They knew that he (as) was indeed the messenger of Allah (swt), they had seen the clear signs and evidences that he (as) presented in front of them, but they still rejected him (as). They accused 'Isa (as) of being a sorcerer and they accused his noble and pure mother of unclean acts. All of this was because of their arrogance and their disdain for the commands of Allah (swt). They were so proud of themselves that they could not humble themselves to submit to the Law of Allah (swt) when it did not suit their desires and their lusts. At the end of the day, their priority was their own selves and their own lusts instead of Allah (swt). For other messengers like Yahya (as), not only did they reject him (as), but they also killed him (as). What can you say about a people who commit such a terrible crime? They would kill a man whom they know has been sent to them by Allah (swt). They would kill a man whom they knew has been sent to them by their Lord and Master, their Creator and Sustainer. They would kill a man who is calling them to return to the purpose for which they were created. They would kill a man who came to save them from the Fire and save them from a life of misery in this world. They would kill a man who came to take them who came to take them to the Garden and to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). How evil are such a people? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Also notice here how Allah (swt) uses the present tense even though these events happened in the past. So it is almost as if Allah (swt) is accusing the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) of rejecting and killing the messengers. Why is that? The Prophet (saw) said that the one who hears about an act of evil that was done, and he is not displeased with it, it is like he participated in that act of evil himself. So if you hear of an act of evil that was done by someone, and you are not displeased with what they have done, then it is like you participated in that evil alongside with them. It is obligatory upon you to hate the acts of disobedience that are done by others towards Allah (swt). Not only must you hate sins for yourself, but you must also hate it when others commit sins. These Jews who lived at the time of the Prophet (saw) were not displeased with what their ancestors had done. They did not see it as wrong for the messengers

of Allah (swt) to have been rejected and to have been killed. They were so proud of their ancestors that they thought that their ancestors could do no wrong. So because they were not displeased with what their ancestors had done it is like they themselves had rejected and killed the messengers. That is why Allah (swt) uses the present tense of the verbs for “reject” and “kill” even though these acts happened in the past. Allah (swt) Knows best! May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! As for our ancestors, may Allah (swt) make us pleased with those among them who were His (swt)’s true and dedicated servants, and may Allah (swt) make us hate those among them who failed in that duty! May Allah (swt) make us to always remember that we love and we hate only for His (swt)’s sake.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how fortunate we as a Muslim Ummah are to have the Prophet (saw). In him (saw) Allah (swt) has combined the best aspects of Musa (as) and of ‘Isa (as). Allah (swt) honored Musa (as) by giving him (as) the Book, which was the Tawrah, a complete guidance for all aspects of human life. Allah (swt) honored ‘Isa (as) by giving him (as) the Clear Signs and supporting him (as) with Gibreel (as). For the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) gave both the blessings that had been given to Musa (as) and the blessings that had been given to ‘Isa (as). The Prophet (saw) was given a Book wherein is a complete guidance for all spheres of human life. Everything from government to prayer to even the way in which we use the restroom has been detailed for us in this Message. A complete guidance for us from our Creator. The Prophet (saw) was also given Clear Signs; every ayah of the Quran is a Clear Sign that it could only be from Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) was also supported by Gibreel (as) who accompanied him (saw) and helped him (saw) on several occasions. A good example is the battle of Badr where Gibreel (as) led an army of angels supporting the Prophet (saw) and Muslims. So Allah (swt) blessed the Muslim Ummah in many ways by sending us the Prophet (saw). A messenger who had the best of all the previous prophets and messengers. So we should try our best to show gratitude for this blessing by striving to implement the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) in our lives and by carrying the Message that he (saw) brought to all mankind. May Allah (swt) grant us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from doing to the Prophet (saw) what the children of Israil did to their prophets!

وَقَالُواْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلۡفُۢۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُفۡرِهِمۡ فَقَلِيلٗا مَّا يُؤۡمِنُونَ ٨٨

89. And they say "Our hearts are *Ghulf*". No! But the curse of Allah is upon them because of their kufr, so little is that they believe.

So far we have seen Allah (swt) call on the children of Israil to accept the Message of the Prophet (saw) in many ways. Allah (swt) used many avenues and various reasons to make them accept the call of the Prophet (saw). For example they were reminded of the favors and blessings that we given to them in the past so that they can show gratitude for this by accepting the Message of the Prophet (saw). They were warned about their failures in the past so that they can save themselves from making the same mistake again by accepting this Message. They were reminded of the covenants and promises that they had made with Allah (swt) in the past so that they can fulfill these promises by accepting this Message. So many times did this call reach their ears and in so many ways, but they turned away from it again and again. Allah (swt) was so Merciful to them in that He (swt) invited to this Message in various ways and they were so arrogant and ungrateful to Him (swt) in their rejection of this Message. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was their excuse for not accepting this Message.

Allah (swt) says "**they say "Our hearts are *Ghulf*"**". There are two meanings that this word gives. One meaning is "covered". With this meaning the Jews are saying that their hearts are covered. They are saying that the reason why they are not accepting this Message is because they have a covering over their hearts. What is amazing is that they are not speaking about this as something negative, but it is something for them to be proud of. They are proud of the fact that there is a covering over their hearts that is preventing them from accepting this Message. This is because they did not want to accept this Message. The other meaning for ***Ghulf*** is "full". With this meaning they are saying that the reason why they are not accepting this Message is because their hearts are full of knowledge. They are saying that they already know all that there is to know about Allah (swt). They already know all that they need to know about the Hereafter and how they can save themselves on the Day of Judgment. But in reality they are only

fooling themselves into believing that they know everything. They have become arrogant from what little knowledge they have gotten in their Books. They are saying that they do not need to follow the Prophet (saw) and they do not need to hear what Allah (swt) says in the Quran. They think that they already know everything. They forgot that the knowledge that human beings have been given compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is very little. When we think about the Knowledge of Allah (swt) and when we think about all that we do not know then how can we ever claim that we know enough? We can never have enough knowledge and we must always strive to gain more knowledge. Knowledge that will help us to worship and serve Allah (swt) and gain His (swt)'s Pleasure by fulfilling the purpose of our existence. So in the first part of the ayah we see that the Jews are telling the Prophet (saw) that the reason why they are not accepting this Message is because their hearts are covered. They are boasting about how they themselves have put a seal over their hearts that prevents this Message from reaching them. They are stubborn in their rejection of this Message and they are proud of this fact that they are stubborn in the rejection of this Message. They are doing great evil by rejecting this Message that has come to them with clear evidences and undeniable arguments, but what is even worse is that they are even proud of the fact that they are doing this. They have willfully turned away from this Message and they are even proud of this fact. In addition they are also saying that the reason why they are rejecting this Message is because their hearts are full of knowledge. They are saying that they do not need to know anything more than what is in their Books. They say this even though they know that their Books are incomplete and that their Books tell of the Final Messenger (saw) who will complete this Message.

Thus we see that the bottom line in both of these meanings of the word "***Ghulf***" is the arrogance of these people towards the Message of Allah (swt). They are proud of the fact that they have put a covering over their hearts that prevents this Message from reaching them. This covering is nothing but their stubbornness in their rejection of this Message. They are stubborn and they are proud of the fact that they are stubborn. They have made themselves blind to this Message and they are proud of this fact. In addition they are also proud of the knowledge that they have been given. They think that the knowledge that they have will suffice them to reach the

Garden. They think that they do not need the Guidance of the Quran and the Guidance of the Prophet (saw). At the end of the day, it is nothing but pride and arrogance that makes them think in such a way. May Allah (swt) save us from our pride and may He (swt) save us from our arrogance! This is a disease that is in the deepest corners of our hearts that we must always strive to expel. May Allah (swt) help us!

In the second part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**No! But the curse of Allah is upon them because of their *kufr***". They were so proud of the fact that they were rejecting this Message because of the covering that they had placed on their hearts. But here Allah (swt) corrects such erroneous thinking and He (swt) shows us the reality of their situation. First He (swt) says "**No!**" to severely reject their claim that the reason why they are rejecting this Message is because of the ***Ghulf*** on their hearts. Then Allah (swt) tells us the reality of their situation, they are rejecting this Message because His (swt)'s curse is on them. That is the real reason why this Message is not reaching them. So we see that in reality what is preventing the Message from reaching them is not the covering that they placed on their hearts but it is because of the curse of Allah (swt) that is upon them. The curse of Allah (swt) is what is preventing this Message from reaching them. Why is it that they have this curse on them? Would Allah (swt) Who is the Most Just and the Most Merciful curse them for no reason?

The curse of Allah (swt) is upon them because of their ***kufr***. As we know the word ***kufr*** means "to cover". These Jews covered the Truth of this Message that they knew was the Truth in their hearts. In their hearts they knew that this Message was the Truth but with their words and their deeds they rejected it. They have willfully chosen to reject this Message and because of that Allah (swt) has cursed them. The curse of Allah (swt) is the covering on their hearts that prevents them from receiving this Message. They were proud of the fact that they themselves had placed a covering on their hearts, but we see here that it is actually the curse of Allah (swt). It is a punishment from Allah (swt) that is upon them that prevents this Message from reaching them. Allah (swt) cursed them for their rejection of this Message by putting a covering on their hearts. They have earned His (swt)'s Wrath to such an extent that He (swt) has forever barred them from His (swt)'s Mercy. From His (swt)'s Garden.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**So little is that they believe**". This is the consequence of the curse of Allah (swt) being upon them. They did not believe in this Message that has reached them from Allah (swt). They only believe in a little of what they find in their Books. Even in their own Books, they pick and choose as to what they want to believe in. So for example they will not believe in all of the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that are there even in their own Books. They even distort the stories of the previous prophets that are in their own books. They would change their books so that the prophets are doing acts of evil. This would be an excuse for them to commit the same acts of evil. They would also change many of the laws, and make what was forbidden as permissible and make what was permissible as forbidden. So even from their own Books, what they believed in was very little. They only believed in a very small portion of the Message of Allah (swt) and they rejected the rest of it.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to always have a fear of the curse of Allah (swt) coming down us. If we become arrogant and think that we do not need the guidance that is in the Quran, and if we become stubborn and not accept the Truth when it comes to us, then we must be afraid that the curse of Allah (swt) will descend on us as well. May Allah (swt) save us from that! As we can see from this ayah, the curse of Allah (swt) is a stubbornness and arrogance that appears in the heart that prevents us from accepting the Truth when it comes to us. When we clearly see the Truth, if we then choose not to accept it because of pride or arrogance then this is what the curse is.

So remember that your loyalty must always be to Allah (swt). If an idea is supported by clear evidence from the Quran and the Sunnah then you must adopt that idea even if it does not agree with your desires. If an idea comes to you that is not from your group or not from your scholars, but you see the clear evidence for it from the Quran and the Sunnah, then you must follow it. For every idea and every thought that exists in Islam, it rests only on the evidence. The evidence for us is the Quran and Sunnah. So when we see an idea as true according to the Quran and Sunnah, then we must follow it and not stubbornly hold on to what we know is false. If we do not do that, if we blindly follow our scholars, and we ignore the Truth when it comes to us, then we are in danger of the curse of Allah (swt) being upon us as well. When this happens we

will not be able to perceive the Truth anymore. We will only know the falsehood that we are stubbornly are clinging to. Furthermore if we are a people who have the curse of Allah (swt) in the life of this world, what then will be our fate in the next world? May Allah (swt) give us the ability and the humbleness to always submit to the Truth when we see it! May Allah (swt) save us from blindly following scholars and groups when we can see that the Truth is not with them!

Now we should note that this does not mean that we should ignore the scholars and try to derive laws from the Quran and Sunnah by ourselves. We do not have the knowledge to extract laws from the Quran and Sunnah by ourselves, so we need the scholars to derive the laws for us. But at the same time we must not blindly follow the scholars in everything that they say without asking them for their evidence from the Quran and Sunnah. Rather we need to ask them for the evidence for what they say. Furthermore when we are presented with an opinion that has evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, we must not ignore that opinion and cling to what our scholars are saying, especially when we are sure that opinion has a stronger evidence from Quran and Sunnah than what our scholar says or what we already know. If the Truth comes to you, and you are sure that it is the Truth from Quran and Sunnah, then you must follow it and not cling blindly to what your scholars have said or what you have grown up knowing. So for example there are many Muslims “scholars” today who will say that it is not an obligation upon us to work to restore the Islamic State, or they would say that Muslims can be content living in a secular country where the Law of Allah (swt) is not implemented. As you read this tafsir you can find hundreds of ayahs in the Quran alone that show that this opinion is not correct. That show that this opinion is complete garbage. So are you going to blindly follow them simply because they are “scholars” or are you going to follow the Book of Allah (swt)? In the end, you loyalty must always be to the evidence, to the Quran and Sunnah. Otherwise you risk becoming like these Jews who thought that they knew but did not. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to recognize the Truth and to turn away from falsehood!

وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ كِتَٰبٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟
مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم مَّا عَرَفُوا۟ كَفَرُوا۟
بِهِۦ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

90. And when there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what is with them, while they used to be before that wishing for victory against the disbelievers. But when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it. So the curse of Allah be on the disbelievers.

In this ayah Allah (swt) beautifully summarizes the situation of the children of Israil. We have given hints as to the true reality of their situation in several ayahs that preceded this one. We were shown how they were the perfect example of a people who had the clear guidance from Allah (swt) but were lead astray by Shaitan. They are the perfect example of the kind of people whom we should try to avoid if we want to stay on the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). They are a people who have the guidance from Allah (swt) and they know that is the Truth, but they choose to turn away from it. We saw in the previous ayah how they are even proud of the fact that there is a covering on their heart that prevents this Message from reaching them. They are proud of the fact that they are turning away from Allah (swt). Does this not then make them the worst of peoples? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! If this is your prayer, and it should be, then listen close to how Allah (swt) describes them in this ayah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And when there came to them a Book from Allah**". This ayah describes beautifully the situation that the Jews were in when the Quran came to them. The Quran came to them from Allah (swt). Allah (swt) sent this revelation from the highest reaches of the seven heavens into the blessed heart of the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) then came to Madinah where the Jews were living and they heard it being recited to them by his (saw)'s blessed tongue. When they heard the words of this Book they knew that it was from none other than Allah (swt). It was a Book that had been sent down from the Presence of

Allah (swt). These Jews knew that this Book was from Allah (swt) because it had words that no man among them could reproduce. It had narrations of events that no Arab could possibly have heard about. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us how they knew without a doubt that this Book was indeed from Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**confirming what is with them**". Not only was the Quran a Book that had been sent to the children of Israil from Allah (swt) but it also confirmed what was with them. Their own Books which they had with them confirmed the Truth of this Quran. Their own Books, which they had been reading for centuries foretold the sending of the Prophet (saw) with this Quran. Even though their own Books had been corrupted over the centuries, these Books still retained some of the original revelation from Allah (swt) in them. In these portions Allah (swt) clearly told them that the Final Messenger would be sent to the city in the Arabian Peninsula that is now known as Madinah. Allah (swt) described qualities about the Messenger such as the fact that he would accept gifts but he would not accept charity. Allah (swt) also told them about a birthmark that the Messenger would bare on his shoulders. Allah (swt) had also told them that this Messenger would be unlettered and that he would speak with the Word of Allah (swt). These descriptions fit the Prophet (saw) and fit the Quran perfectly. So the Quran was a Book that was confirmed by their own Books and borne by the Messenger they recognized well. Why then could they not have accepted it?

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**while they used to be before this wishing for victory against the disbelievers**". Not only were the Jews waiting for this Messenger and waiting for this Book, which Allah (swt) had promised would be sent to them, but they were also hoping and praying for victory over the disbelievers when this Messenger would come. At the time when the Quran was revealed, the Jewish nation was fragmented and weak. They did not have a land that they could call their own, but instead they were scattered throughout the earth. They had many enemies but they did not have the military strength to defeat any of them. So they had been praying to Allah (swt) for many years to send them a messenger that would lead their nation into victory. A messenger that would grant them victory above their enemies among the disbelievers. A messenger that would establish the Law of Allah

in the land once again. A messenger that would give them a homeland of their own. They had been hoping and praying for this messenger to be sent. But what did they do when this messenger was sent?

Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah, "**but when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it**". The Prophet (saw) came to them, the Quran came to them, and they recognized this as the Message from Allah (swt) that they had been waiting for. The Prophet (saw) had all of the descriptions that their own Books had prophesized. Even the time and place in which he (saw) came to them was exactly as Allah (swt) had mentioned before in their Books. The Jews also recognized the Quran as a Book that could only be from Allah (swt). Not only was the Quran a Miracle in that no one among them could reproduce it, but it also contained detailed narrations of the past prophets. Narrations that were only found in the books of the Jews and only known by a select few rabbis among them. They knew that this knowledge could never have reached the Prophet (saw) or any of the Arabs. But what did they do when there came to them that which they recognized very well? Allah (swt) tells us here that they disbelieved in it. They made *kufr* to it. They rejected it when they knew it was the Truth.

In his tafsir of this ayah Mawdudi cities a beautiful narration from Saffiyah (ra), who was one of the wives of the Prophet (saw). She was also the daughter of one of the prominent Jewish scholars of Madinah. In this narration she recounts a conversation that her father had with one of her uncles concerning the coming of the Prophet (saw). In this conversation, her father swore by Allah (swt) that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger that the Jews had been expecting for all these years. But when her uncle asked her father what he intended to do about it, her father replied by saying that he would oppose the Prophet (saw) as long as he lived and that he would not allow the call of the Prophet (saw) to prevail. So we see the kind of people that many of these Jews were. Although some of them were humble and they searched for the Truth like Saffiya (ra), most of them were arrogant and they rejected the Truth even when they saw it. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). They knew that the Prophet (saw) was the Messenger that they had been waiting for, the Messenger that they had

been praying for, the Messenger who would give them victory over their enemies, the Messenger who would establish them in the land. But they rejected the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) came to them only because of their pride and arrogance. They were so proud of their Jewish nation that they could not accept a messenger that came from any other nation even if they were certain that he was from Allah (swt).

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**So the curse of Allah be on the disbelievers**". Do they deserve anything less than this for what they have done? The language of the ayah gives the meaning that they have the curse of Allah (swt) on them because they have chosen to reject this Message. They have earned the curse of Allah (swt) because of their willful rejection of this Message. They knew the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), and still they rejected him (saw). Through this brought down the curse of Allah (swt) upon themselves. As we said in the previous ayah, the curse of Allah (swt) is a covering over their hearts that prevents them from perceiving the Truth of this Message. So because they have chosen to reject this Message, Allah (swt) placed a covering over their hearts. Now they will never be able recognize this Message even if they wanted to. This is not injustice on the part of Allah (swt) because they are the ones who first chose to reject this Message. But now because of this curse, no matter how many Signs they are shown, they will not believe. It is too late for them. Because of this curse, they will live until their deaths as disbelievers. We all know what is the horrible fate of disbelievers in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us

بِئۡسَمَا ٱشۡتَرَوۡاْ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمۡ أَن يَكۡفُرُواْ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ بَغۡيًا أَن يُنَزِّلَ
ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضۡلِهِۦ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦۖ فَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ عَلَىٰ
غَضَبٖۚ وَلِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٞ مُّهِينٞ ٩٠

91. Evil is what they have sold their souls for, because they disbelieve in what Allah has revealed out of insolence that Allah would reveal from His Grace onto whom He wishes from His servants, and they draw upon themselves Wrath upon Wrath, and for ones who do kufr is a humiliating punishment.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about what many of the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) had done. They rejected the Prophet (saw) and they opposed him (saw) even when they knew that he (saw) was truly the Messenger from Allah (swt). They refused to follow the Quran even though they knew that it was the Word of Allah (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was their condition and what was their situation because of what they had done. As you read this ayah, think about the evil that these people have done. Think about the evil that the human being is capable of. Think about the evil that you are capable. That is why you should always be turning to the Quran and you should always be pleading to Allah (swt) for assistance. To save yourself from becoming like them. The Quran is a Book of Guidance, in it Allah (swt) shows us the ways that we must follow and the ways that we must avoid. In these ayahs you have the example of the ways that you must avoid. So strive to the best of your ability to prevent yourself from becoming like these people and always pray to Allah (swt) to help you.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Evil is what they have sold their souls for**". Every morning every soul wakes up and it decides what it wants to do with itself. It can choose either to save itself or to sell itself. To save itself would be to fulfill the purpose for which it was created, that is in being a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt). To sell itself would be to turn away from this purpose. To sell itself would be to reject the Message that comes to it calling it to return to the purpose of its creation. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that the Jews who have

rejected the Message of the Prophet (saw) have sold their souls away. They have given their souls away; their souls are no longer theirs. And what is it that they have sold their souls for? It is nothing but evil. By their choosing to reject this Message they have sold their own souls for evil. Evil is arrogance and pride. Evil is turning away from the Message of Allah (swt) when you can see that it is the Truth. Evil is failing to fulfill the purpose for which you were created. Evil is following your lusts and your desires. Evil is a preference for your own worthless self over the Creator and Sustainer, the Lord and Master of the universe. How evil is that? Evil is what they have given their souls away for.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us exactly why what they have done is so evil. Allah (swt) says, "**because they disbelieve in what Allah has revealed out of insolence that Allah would reveal from His Grace onto whom He wishes from His servants**". This is the reason why they have disbelieved in this revelation. They have disbelieved in it out of insolence. They have forgotten their place in respect to Allah (swt). They have forgotten that Allah (swt) is the Creator and that they are the creation. They have forgotten that Allah (swt) is the Master and that they are the servant. They have forgotten that Allah (swt) is the Perfect One and that they are the limited and the weak. They think that they should be the ones to tell Allah (swt) onto whom this Message should be sent to. They think that they can choose the messenger. Why do they think in such a way? Because of pride and envy. They are so proud of their Jewish nation that they absolutely refuse to accept a Messenger from any other but their nation. If a messenger comes to them from another nation, their pride for their own nation and their envy for the nation to whom the messenger was sent forces them to reject this Message. They would reject the Message even when they are certain that it is carried by a true messenger. So we see that their real problem is not with the message or with the messenger, but their real problem is with Allah (swt). They have a problem with the choice of Allah (swt). They think that they know better than Allah (swt) onto whom this Message should be sent to. They think they should tell Allah (swt) on to whom He (swt) can bestow the Grace of Prophethood on. They forget their place in the creation and they forget the place of Allah (swt). What the human being has to realize is that he is insignificant and that Allah (swt) is Everything. This realization should make him humble before

Allah (swt) and this realization should help him to submit before Allah (swt). These Jews were unable to do that. They thought that they could tell Allah (swt) what to do. They thought that they could tell Allah (swt) whom the Messenger should be. They thought themselves to be even better than Allah (swt). They saw themselves and their own nation to be greater than Allah (swt). Can you even begin to imagine how evil such people are? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always accept Islam as it is presented to us from Allah (swt). It is not our place to tell our Lord and Master how we should worship and serve Him (swt), but rather He (swt) is the One Who should tell us how He (swt) should be served and worshipped. We must always remember that He (swt) is the Master and that we are the servants. Many Muslims today seem to have forgotten this fact. How many Muslims are there today who have a problem with some parts of Islam? How many Muslims today have a problem with the laws of Allah (swt)? Whether it is the command for jihad, or the command for women to cover, or the permissibility of marrying more than one wife. They question these laws and they forget Who it is from. They want to pick and choose which parts of Islam they want to follow. They forget that Islam as a whole is from Allah (swt) and they have no right to pick and choose based on their desires. It is only from their disgusting arrogance and their failure to recognize the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) that they think in such a way. To prevent ourselves from becoming like them we have to accept this Din as a whole as it has been given to us from Allah (swt). We have to always remember that Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise. Compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt), we know nothing, so it is not our place to question any of His (swt)'s laws. Even if what Allah (swt) has revealed does not agree with our feelings, and even if what Allah (swt) has revealed is not acceptable by the society in which we live, that does not give us the right to question His Law. In accordance with the real nature of things, it is the human that must submit to the Divine and not the Divine to the human. Part of our submission and humility to the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt) is that we yield our desires to His (swt)'s commandments. We have to remember that this is part of the test that Allah (swt) has given us in the life of this world. A test to see if we are proud and arrogant and we do what we

please, or if we are humble and submissive before the Awesomeness of the Creator and Maintainer, the Lord and Master of the universe. To see if we can submit our desires to His (swt)'s Will. To pass this test we have to strive to the best of our ability to implement each and every one of the commandments of Allah (swt) regardless of if we like it or not. May Allah (swt) guide us to pass this test!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**they draw upon themselves Wrath upon Wrath**". This is Wrath from Allah (swt)! Through their rejection and through their arrogance, they are bringing down upon themselves Wrath from Allah (swt). One reason why they are bringing down the Wrath of Allah (swt) on themselves is because of their rejection of this Message that they know is the Truth. They know that they have been created to worship and serve Allah (swt). They know that in this Message Allah (swt) shows them how to worship and serve Him (swt). They know that they have a responsibility to follow this Message in order to fulfill the purpose of their creation. But they still turn away from this Message. They know that it is the Truth but they turn away from it. So the Wrath of Allah (swt) is upon them because of this. Another reason why they bring the Wrath of Allah (swt) upon themselves is because of their pride and arrogance towards Allah (swt). They are so proud of themselves and their nation that they think they can tell Allah (swt) what to do. They think they can tell Him (swt) who should be their messenger. They think that they know better than Allah (swt). Just look at the arrogance of these people. Who do they think they are? How could they not realize Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) is the Most Loving and Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful. But these people are so evil that they are earning the Wrath of the One Who is the Most Loving. How evil do a people have to be to earn the Wrath of the One Who is the Most Merciful? Can you even begin to imagine the kind of punishment that Allah (swt) will inflict upon them? How will be the manifestations of such Wrath both in this life and in the Hereafter? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) enable us to always conquer our pride and submit to this Message!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**for the ones who do kufr is a humiliating punishment**". For those who choose to do kufr, for those who choose to reject Allah (swt) as their Lord and Master even when they are certain that He (swt) IS, for those who refuse

to show gratitude to Allah (swt) for all of the favors and bounties that He (swt) has bestowed on them, for such people is the humiliating punishment. So they will be burning in the Fire of hell, and at the same time they will feel the shame of having failed in the test that their Creator has given them. Their Lord had sent them a Message and they had rejected this Message. Thus they had failed the test for which they had been created. They had failed the test for which they existed. Can you imagine the shame that they will feel at this time? This is humiliation that they must suffer in addition to the pain that they are feeling. This is because they rejected the Message that Allah (swt) sent them when they knew that it was the Truth. This is for their arrogance.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must never be proud and we must never be arrogant. When we reflect on the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt), and we realize how insignificant we are, we realize that we have no right whatsoever to be proud or arrogant in any way. There are many narrations where the Prophet (saw) has warned us about the dangers of being arrogant. The only ones who become arrogant are those who forget about Allah (swt). However the one who always has his thoughts on his Lord and he always reflects on his Lord will never become arrogant. So our task is to try and inculcate within us the constant remembrance of Allah (swt). The more that you remember Allah (swt), the less chance there is of you becoming proud and arrogant. The less proud you are, the less that you think of yourself as the most important person in the world, the less chance you focus on yourself, the less chance there is of you being disobedient to Allah (swt). So to save yourself from pride comes down to the constant remembrance of Allah (swt) and reflecting on His (swt)'s Perfect Names. This can be clearly demonstrated by looking at the case of the children of Israil that Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah. Allah (swt) gave these people a humiliating punishment in the Hereafter because of their arrogance and pride in the life of this world. They thought that they were the highest of the high, but in the Hereafter Allah (swt) made them into the lowest of the low. So to save yourself from that, you should humble yourself. You should humble yourselves before the Greatness and Majesty of your Creator and your Master. If you do so with sincerity then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will raise your rank both in this life and the next.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ
بِمَا وَرَآءَهُۥ وَهُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنۢبِيَآءَ
ٱللَّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. And when it is said to them "Believe in what Allah has revealed", they say "We believe in what has been revealed onto us". And they disbelieve in everything besides that. But it (this Quran) is the Truth confirming that which is with them. Say "Why then did you kill the prophets of Allah before, if you are truly believers".

We saw in the previous ayah how the children of Israil refused to believe in this Message even though they were certain that it was the Truth from Allah (swt). Because of that they drew upon themselves Wrath upon Wrath from Allah (swt). They were also promised the most humiliating and painful of punishments in the Hereafter because of their rejection and because of their arrogance. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe to us their attitude towards the His (swt)'s revelation. Their problem lies not simply in their attitude towards revelation from Allah (swt), but it is in fact their attitude towards Allah (swt) Himself. As we read these ayahs it is important that we try to look for traces of this kind of behavior within ourselves. Because one of the main purposes of these ayahs is how we can look at the behavior of these people and try to avoid it for ourselves. Always remember that in every ayah of Quran there is guidance for you from your Creator. It is up to you to find that guidance.

First Allah (swt) tells us about these people that "**when it is said to them "Believe in what Allah has revealed", they say "We believe in what has been revealed onto us**". Here Allah (swt) shows us what was the response of many among the Jews when the call of Islam was presented to them. They were called on to believe in this Message that Allah (swt) had sent. They were clearly and openly presented with this Message. They were shown its signs and evidences. But did they believe in it? Allah (swt) tells us that their response was "**We believe in what has been revealed onto us**". Their own revelation suffices for them, they do not need any other revelation from Allah (swt). Even though they knew that the Quran was from Allah (swt), even

though they knew that their own Books were incomplete, even though they knew that their own Books had been corrupted, they still said that they did not need the Quran and that they were content with the revelation they had been given. Do you think they really thought that they were doing the right thing in ignoring the Quran and holding on to their revelation? Of course not, but the truth is that they did not want to accept the Quran so this claim was just an excuse for their rejection. They knew that what they had was incomplete but they did not care because they did not care about Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) tells us how "**they disbelieve in everything besides that**". These Jews believe in the Tawrah that they have but they disbelieve in everything besides that. They refused to believe in the Injeel that was given to 'Isa (as) and they refused to believe in the Quran that was given to the Prophet (saw). They have their Book and they are content with it. Once again we see their arrogance before Allah (swt). They have their own Book and they stubbornly cling to it, even though the Truth has reached them from Allah (swt) in the Quran. Even though they now know that the Quran has abrogated their Book. Even though they know that their own Book calls them to believe in the Quran. They still refuse to accept this Message that has reached them from their Creator. The bottom line is that they know the Truth but they do not want to submit it. They only want to hold on to their Book and reject everything else. We can see that even their loyalty to their Book is not based on a loyalty to Allah (swt), but it is based on their loyalty to their tribe. This was the Book of their tribe, and that is why they cling to it even though they know that it has now been replaced by the Quran. If they were truly sincere, they would have accepted this Message from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like such people who only care about "our group" rather than about the Truth!

Then Allah (swt) once again tells us "**But it (this Quran) is the Truth confirming that which is with them**". This is to once again emphasize that this Quran is the Truth and it is the confirmation and the continuation of the Books that are with them. The Quran is not a new revelation that they had never heard of. But it is a Book that they had been expecting from a messenger that they had been waiting for. Even the name of the messenger and the fact that the Quran is the Word of Allah (swt) had been mentioned in their own Books. Their own Books

confirm and validate this Quran. So once again we see that their loyalty to their Books was not sincere, but rather their rejection was based on arrogance and pride. When the Quran came to them and their own Books confirmed that it was the Word of Allah (swt), they still chose not to accept it. So we see that even their claim to believe in their own Books is a false one, because their own Books tell them that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). Thus if they truly believed in their Book they would have believed in the Prophet (saw). May Allah (swt) save us from being like such people! May Allah (swt) always make us humble enough to accept the Truth from Him (swt) when it comes to us! Nothing else should matter in our life except that we try to spend as many moments in it as possible in worship and servitude to our Rabb.

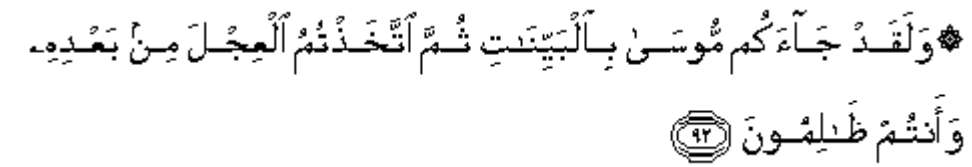
So in this ayah we see that the Jews claim to be believers, but they say that they will believe only in the Book that was revealed to them. They think that they are believers only because of the fact they believe in their Book. They think that if they reject every single other Message from Allah (swt) that reaches them, as long as they believe in the Tawrah they are still believers. In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) asks them a question that should make them reflect if they are true believers or not, Allah (swt) says "**Why then did you kill the prophets of Allah before, if you are truly believers?**". These were a people who were so proud of their nation and they could not see their nation as doing any wrong. It was in fact their pride for their nation that made them reject this Message when they knew that it was the Truth. They saw their nation as always correct and as a nation of believers. If that was the case, then why did their nation kill the prophets of Allah (swt) before? Zakkariyah (as) and Yahya (as) were only a few of the prophets that they had killed. They had in fact killed many more prophets than these two. They had even boasted about killing 'Isa (as). They had even tried to kill the Prophet (saw). These noble men were the messengers of Allah (swt) calling to the Truth, calling to Allah (swt), calling to the fulfillment of existence, calling to salvation and bliss, and these Jews had killed them only because they wanted to succumb to their lusts and satisfy their greed instead of worshipping and serving their Creator. If they were so righteous, and they were a nation of believers, then why did they kill the prophets of Allah (swt)? What could be a greater crime than to kill a man who is spending his life to call you to salvation in the next life and peace and tranquility in this life? So

we see that their claim to be true believers is totally false. There was no way they could answer Allah (swt)'s question in this ayah. There was nothing that had made them kill the messengers except their evil and the fact that they were not true believers. This is because to be a true believer is not simply to believe in the Message, but it is to submit to it. That is what these Jews in their arrogance were unwilling to do. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

We can also note once again how Allah (swt) uses the present tense of the verb "to kill". He (swt) does this even though the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) had not killed any prophets but it was their forefathers who had done such a terrible sin. However the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) had accepted what their forefathers had done, they did not see any problem with it. They were so proud of their forefathers that they could not see their forefathers as doing any wrong. So as we know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw), the one who hears of an evil but he is not at all displeased with it, then it is like he participated in it. Because these Jews had accepted the fact that their forefathers had killed the prophets and in their hearts they did not see any problem with this sin, it is like they themselves had participated in this great sin. That is why Allah (swt) uses the present tense of the verb "to kill" in this ayah even though this happened in the past. The people of the present had accepted the action of those from the past, so it was like they themselves had done this sin. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from following our forefathers and our family when we can see that they are wrong!

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always make certain that our belief is reflected in our actions. Notice how Allah (swt) linked the action of slaying the messengers directly with their claim to be true believers. It is as if Allah (swt) is asking them that if they were true believers, then why did they commit this horrible sin? A true believer would not be capable of such an action. Do you think someone who truly believes in and submits to Allah (swt) would kill a man that they know is the messenger of Allah (swt)? Their belief was not reflected in their actions. So for us it is not enough for us to simply say that we believe in our words, we must strive to implement that belief with our actions. By doing what Allah (swt) has commanded us to do to the best of our ability, and by staying away from all that Allah (swt) has

forbidden. Many scholars have said that our Iman increases with every single deed that we do which is pleasing to Allah (swt) and it decreases with every single deed that we do which is displeasing to Him (swt). So it is not enough that we console ourselves with the fact that we are believers and think that we are guaranteed the Garden because of this. Rather in order to strengthen our belief and even to protect our belief we have to strive to do the actions that are pleasing to our Lord and Master. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from becoming the people who say with their tongues that they believe but who do the actions that are not pleasing to Him (swt)!



93. And surely Musa came to you with Clear Signs, then you took the calf (for worship) after him and you were *Dhalimoon*.

In the previous ayah we saw how the many Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) were claiming to be believers even though they had rejected the Quran and they rejected had the Prophet (saw). Not only did they reject the Prophet (saw) but they also rejected many of the other prophets that had been sent to them before the Prophet (saw). In their past they had even killed some of the prophets, knowing that these men were prophets, and after that they still claimed to be true believers. They claimed to be true believers only on the claim that they followed the Tawrah and they believed in Musa (as). In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was their relationship with Musa (as). Allah (swt) shows us that even their relationship to Musa (as) was not one of true believers.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**And surely Musa came to you with Clear Signs**". Here Allah (swt) stresses and emphasizes the fact that Musa (as) came to the children of Israil with Clear Signs. Musa (as) was given several Clear Signs to prove to them that he (as) was indeed a messenger from Allah (swt). First there were the Clear Signs that were shown to Firaun. These include the turning of the stick into a live snake, the turning of Musa (as)'s hand into pure

light, the turning of the water of the Nile into blood, the swarm of locusts that plagued Egypt, and many others. Even though these Signs were presented to Firaun, the children of Israil had seen these Clear Signs with their own eyes. They saw how these Signs came when Musa (as) called for them and how they left when Musa (as) prayed for them to leave. Then they had seen even more Signs when they left Egypt. They saw the sea part into two, they saw the Manna and the Salwa come down to them whenever they wanted, they say the twelve springs of water gush forth from stone. They knew it was Allah (swt) who had given Musa (as) these Clear Signs, and so they were certain that Musa (as) was indeed the messenger of Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) reminds them in this ayah that Musa (as) did indeed come to them with Clear Signs.

But after seeing these Clear Signs did they then become true and sincere believers? Did they do the actions that were required of their belief? Did they worship and serve Allah (swt), and did they stay on that path as they had promised? No as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah "**then you took the calf (for worship) after him**". When Musa (as) left them for only a short period of forty nights, they took the calf for worship in his (as)'s absence. Where is their claim of being true believers now? They had seen all these Clear Signs and they still turned away. Allah (swt) had been preparing them for many years for being the bearers of His (swt)'s Message by showing them these Signs and by putting them through trials. Yet despite all this preparation, and despite all the Signs they had been shown, they still slid back into Shirk. They became the worst of people by worshipping other than Allah (swt) even after they had been shown so many Clear Signs. Where is their claim of being believers now?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that to come close to Allah (swt) is a journey that takes a long time. For many it is a lifelong struggle. But to backslide and go into sin, and go into Shirk is very easy. As we mentioned for several years Allah (swt) had given the children of Israil the preparation that was needed to be the bearers of this Message. They had gone through several severe trials, and they had been shown so many Signs. For many years, they were being trained to be the bearers of this Message, for many years they were bring brought near to Allah (swt). Yet within a matter of only days, Shaitan had brought them back down to the level of idol worshippers. After being so high, they allowed the devil to bring them

down so low. That is why we must constantly be vigilant. No matter how much knowledge we gain, and no matter how much worship that we do, no matter how much we may have accomplished, we must never feel safe from Shaitan. At any moment he can deceive us. He can take us back to being sinners. Take us back to being disobedient to Allah (swt). So we must never consider ourselves to be close enough to Allah (swt), we can always be closer. For us who are not prophets, for us who are vulnerable to sin, there is always room for improvement. There is always more that we can do to come closer to Allah (swt). So every night before you go to sleep, you should judge yourself on how much you have done. How many actions have you done purely for the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? Every day you should try to improve on the day before, and you should be especially careful that you not do less than the day before. This may seem difficult but remember the one to whom you are journeying. This constant striving and this constant struggle to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is really all that this life is about. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize that and may Allah (swt) help us all to remember that!

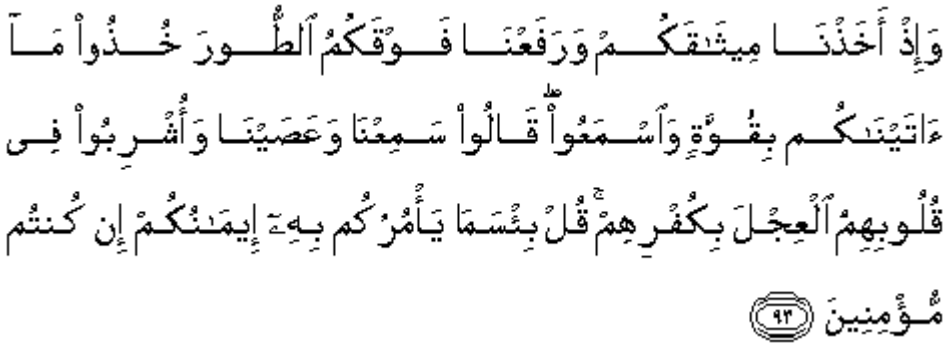
Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that to come closer to Allah (swt) is not simply a matter of seeing Clear Signs. It is not simply a matter of being convinced of the proofs and evidences. The children of Israil were shown several Clear Signs but they still worshipped the calf. The Signs do point us to Allah (swt) and the Signs do show us Truthfulness of the messenger of Allah (swt), but they are not enough by themselves. We ourselves must have a willingness in our hearts to accept these Signs. We must be sincerely searching for the Truth, and we must not allow our desires and our lusts to affect our decision of whether or not to follow these Signs. We must have the humbleness to submit to the Truth when we see it. We have to strive to remove from our hearts of all traces of arrogance. When we recognize that Allah (swt) is our Lord and Master then we cannot allow our own pride to prevent us from submitting ourselves to Him (swt). Arrogance will take us away from the Truth even if it is shown to us as clearly as night and day. So it not just a matter of seeing the Signs, we also need to humble ourselves before the Glory and Majesty of Allah (swt). Even though we make the effort it is Allah (swt) Who guides and He (swt) will only guide those whom He (swt) is pleased with. Those whose hearts are not filled with arrogance and pride. Those who humble before Him (swt).

Yet another benefit that we can take from this ayah is to realize that once we see the Signs and we recognize this Message as the Truth then we must demonstrate that certainty of our belief in our actions and in our emotions. If we do not make this connection between our belief and our actions and between our belief and our emotions, then we are in danger of losing that belief as this case of the children of Israil clearly demonstrates. They saw the Clear Signs. They knew that Musa (as) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). But they did not then take the next step. They did not strive to implement their belief in their actions and in their emotions. So they were deceived by Shaitan, he made them forget the certain belief that they had reached when they saw the waters of the sea split. They forgot about Allah (swt), and they saw only their desires and they saw only the calf. That is why doubts entered their hearts after there had once been certainty. May Allah (swt) prevent this from happening to us! May Allah (swt) allow the belief in our hearts be translated into actions!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and you were *Dhalimoon***". This was the real situation of the children of Israil. They claimed to be true believers but they were really ***Dhalimoon***. Among the meanings given by this word are "the unjust", "the evil ones", and "the transgressors". How else can you describe a people who would bow down before a golden calf after they had been sent a messenger like Musa (as) and after they had been shown so many Clear Signs? They had been shown so many ways to come towards Allah (swt) and they had turned away from all of them. Is this not the greatest of evil? What could be a greater evil than turning away from Allah (swt), the Real and the True? The Source of all existence. Allah (swt) calls them ***Dhalimoon*** in this ayah because they turned away from this Message even after they were certain that it was the Truth. Nothing made them do this except their arrogance and pride.

But their evil and their transgression did not end there. As we mentioned once they started worshipping the calf what they were really worshipping was their desires and their lusts. The calf was just a manifestation of their lusts and desires, so even though they were bowing down before it they were really serving their desires. They knew that the calf could not speak so it could not give them a Law to live by. That was why they chose it for worship. But the law that they followed was their desires. What was permissible was whatever it is that they desired and

what was forbidden was whatever it is that they did not desire. So we see that the worshipping of the calf made them forget completely about Allah (swt), and so it opened the door for them to commit many sins. Fornication, drinking, killing, incest, and sodomy are just a few of the many sins that they may have committed. One can only imagine the great sins that man is capable of when he forgets Allah (swt) and starts to worship his desires. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) always help us to recognize *Dhulm* as all that does not earn His (swt)'s Pleasure and may Allah (swt) help us to stay away from it!



93. And (remember the time) when We took the covenant from you and We raised the mountain over you (saying) "take all that We give you with power and listen". They said, "We hear and we disobey". And they were made to drink the love of the calf into their hearts because of their kufr. Say "Evil is what your belief commands you to do if you are believers".

In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention back to the event when the mountain was raised above the children of Israil and the covenant was taken from them. Recall from the previous ayahs how the children of Israil were claiming to be believers even though they rejected the Message that Allah (swt) sent through the Prophet (saw). They rejected it even when they knew it was the Truth. They claimed to be believers only because they believed in the Tawrah and only because they followed Musa (as). They claimed that it was enough for them only to follow Musa (as) and only to believe in the Tawrah in order to be considered believers. However in the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us how worthless is the belief that they even claim to have in Musa (as). When he (as) left for only forty days, they took the calf for worship in his

absence. This shows us the kind of belief that these people have. Even in Musa (as) and the Tawrah this shows us the kind of belief that they had. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the "belief" of these people. Allah (swt) shows us how they have no sincerity to the Truth whatsoever, and how their claim to be believers is only lip service that is not reflected in their actions or in their hearts. May Allah (swt) save us from ever having this kind of "belief"!

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by reminding us of the event when the mountain was hovered of the heads of the children of Israil. Allah (swt) says "**And (remember the time) when We took the covenant from you and We raised the mountain over you, saying "take all that We give you with power and listen"** ". Just imagine this awesome sight of the mountain hanging over their heads. They were shown the clearest of Signs right before their very eyes. Could you have any doubt if you literally saw a mountain hovering above you? As the mountain was floating above them Allah (swt) told them to take all that they were given with power and to listen. They should listen to the commandments that were in the Tawrah and they should try to follow these commandments to the best of their ability. The word "power" in this ayah emphasizes the struggle and the striving that they must exert in following these laws. Some of the commands of Allah (swt) like fasting, jihad and lowering the gaze may involve difficulty but they need to be done nonetheless. We must take the commands of our Lord with power and not timidly.

But what was the response of the children of Israil to this command. They only said, "**We hear and we disobey**". They heard the command, the problem here was not that they did not hear the command. They heard it loud and clear. But they chose out of their own will, and because of their own arrogance and pride, not to follow this command. Now we know from ayah 64 that they did indeed accept the covenant when the mountain was above their heads. So some scholars say that the second part of this statement where they said "**we disobey**" was actually uttered later on when the mountain was no longer above their heads. These scholars say that it was only later on when they were given the responsibility of implementing what they had promised that they would do, did they go back on their promise and said that they would "**disobey**" instead of obey. Other scholars like Sayyid Qutb say that they did not actually utter the statement "**we disobey**" but such a statement was expressed in their actions. So although they

took the covenant from Allah (swt) with their tongues, and they promised that they would abide by it, they did not live up to it in their actions. In other words their tongues said “we obey” but their actions said “we disobey”. This shows us that words are meaningless unless they are backed by actions, and sometimes our actions speak louder than words. So it was through their actions that they said “**we disobey**”. In both of these opinions however the main lesson in the ayah is still there and that is that they went back on their covenant after making it. They told Allah (swt) that they would abide by all of the laws that in the Tawrah but they did not. Allah (swt) Knows best.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says “**And they were made to drink the love of the calf into their hearts because of their kufr**”. Here Allah (swt) describes to us how the love of the calf was made to permeate throughout their entire body. It was like a drug that they drank and it seeped into every vein in their body. They were consumed by their love for the calf and it was all that they could think about. Sayyid Qutb tells us how the use of metaphors such as this is an example of the Miracle of the Quran. It is how Allah (swt) uses the most of fitting of expressions to describe a particular reality. The reality is that these people were overwhelmed and overcome by their love for the calf. Allah (swt) describes this as drinking the love of the calf into their hearts. It is the expression that most accurately describes the reality of their situation. Notice also how Allah (swt) tells us that they were made to drink the love of the calf *because* of their *kufr*. So it was their deliberate rejection of this Message when they knew it was the Truth that put them into this condition. They rejected this Message when they knew that it was the Truth, and so Allah (swt) punished them by making them drink the love of this calf into their hearts. Thus Allah (swt) did not do any injustice to them but they did injustice to themselves.

The consequence of their drinking the love of the calf into their hearts was that they could not fulfill this covenant even if they wanted to. They chose to disobey Allah (swt), they chose to reject this Message, and so this love of the calf that they were made to drink was their punishment. The love for the calf also includes within it the love for sin and the love for disobedience to the Law of Allah (swt). So they fell in love with sin, and that is why they did not fulfill the covenant of Allah (swt) that they had taken under the mountain. Once again we have to remember that the blame lies completely on these people, because Allah (swt) tells us that they

were made to drink the love of the calf into their hearts because of their *kufr*. So if they would not have rejected this Message in the first place, then they would not be in this situation where they had fallen in love with the calf and fallen in love with sin to the point where they can no longer obey Allah (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize how dangerous the love for the life of this world can be. The calf in many ways symbolizes this world. It is made of gold, which is one of the materials of this world that many people covet. It is also a cow, which is one of the most beneficial animals for man in this world. So we can even say that what they were made to drink into their hearts was the love for this world. We must not let the same happen to us. We must be careful that the love of this world does not consume us. The Prophet (saw) warned us about this world many times. For example he (saw) said "Truly, the world is sweet and alluring. Truly, Allah is going to make you successors in it. So look to how you behave in it. Beware of this world, and beware of women. Truly the first trial that inflicted the children of Israil was concerning women." So we see here that the Prophet (saw) has warned about this world and he (saw) has warned us about women. He (saw) has told us that this is what made the children of Israil fail in their duty to Allah (swt). This is what we must always strive to save ourselves from. Our hearts must always be attached to Allah (swt), and we must always strive to try and do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). The life of this world, and especially members of the opposite sex in this world, will come and try to distract us in this effort. We have to strive to turn our focus away from them and towards Allah (swt). Shaitan's favorite weapons that he uses to turn us away from Allah (swt) are our love for the material things of this world and our love for members of the opposite sex. So we must struggle against him with every ounce of strength that we have. This struggle that we exert to combat these forces will be what we will be rewarded for on the Day of Judgment. By no means is such a task is easy but if you are sincere and you pray to Allah (swt), then He (swt) just might give you the strength and the patience to do it. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to fare well on this test! May Allah (swt) save us from the temptations of this world! There is no might nor power except with Allah (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say "**Evil is what your belief commands you to do if you are believers**". This is sarcasm that brings a powerful attack on the stance of the Jews. They claimed to be true believers by believing in Musa (as) as the messenger of Allah (swt) and by following the Law of Allah (swt) in the Tawrah. But we saw from this ayah what kind of "belief" this is. If they truly believed in Musa (as) as the Messenger of Allah (swt), then why did they worship the calf when Musa (as) specifically forbade them not to? If they truly claimed to be following the Law of Allah (swt) in the Tawrah then why is it that they allowed themselves to be intoxicated by their love for the calf and their love for the life of this world? How could they say that they believe and then do what contradicts their belief? What kind of "belief" is this? Allah (swt) tells us clearly in this ayah that this is a "belief" that commands them to evil. It is not a belief where they believe that the purpose of their existence is to worship and serve Allah (swt). Rather it is a belief where they believe that they live only to maximize their pleasures and satisfy their lusts. It is a belief that commands nothing but evil. That is the true nature of their belief. They believe that they should live for themselves instead of living for Allah (swt) even though He (swt) is the Real and the True. With this statement, Allah (swt) exposes the true reality of their hearts and shows us how what they say does not reflect in what is in their hearts. They say with their tongues that they believe in Allah (swt) and in the Message that He (swt) has sent but in their hearts they have a belief that is pure evil. A belief that commands them to do evil. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them! May Allah (swt) always make our actions reflect the belief that we have in our hearts! May Allah (swt) give us the pure belief that will lead to the righteous actions! All success and all victory are from Allah (swt) and we humbly supplicate to Him (swt) to grant us victory in this life and success in the Hereafter!

قُلْ إِن كَانَتْ لَكُمُ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْآخِرَةُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ
ٱلنَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا۟ ٱلْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. Say "If it is that the Home of the Hereafter with Allah is only for you, to the exclusion of all mankind, then wish for death if you are truthful".

What a beautiful ayah is this! See how Allah (swt) challenges the Jews and cuts right to the very heart of the matter. They were a people who were in love with the life of this world. They committed whatever sin they felt like, they followed their lusts and their desires wherever it lead them. They did not check themselves at all because they thought that they were the favorites of Allah (swt). They thought that the Garden was reserved only for them, and they thought that they were entitled to it only because they are Jews. They thought that they could do whatever they wished and still be guaranteed the Garden. Even though they turned their back on the covenant with Allah (swt) several times, they still considered themselves to be believers. Even though they had worshipped the calf and killed the messengers of Allah (swt), they still thought that Allah (swt) loved them and that the Garden was just for them. In this ayah Allah (swt) destroys such foolish thinking.

Once again we see that Allah (swt) does not address them directly, this shows how distant these Jews were from Him (swt). So the ones who claimed that the Garden is only for them and that they will be close to Allah (swt) are on the contrary so far from Allah (swt) that He (swt) will not even address them directly. Instead Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to say to them "**If it is that the Home of the Hereafter with Allah is only for you, to the exclusion of all mankind, then wish for death if you are truthful**". If they are sure of what they claim, if they are certain that Allah (swt) will forgive them no matter how many sins that they commit, then why do they not wish for death now? Is not the Garden a much better place to be than this world filled with poverty, suffering and disease? If they are truthful in what they say, then why are they trying to enjoy themselves in this world? Why do they not enjoy themselves in the Garden, which is the place that was made for enjoyment and pleasures? If they are certain that they will go straight to

the Garden then why do they not wish for death? Of course these Jews had no good answers to any of these questions. The truth of the matter is that they were not sincere in what they say. They only *claim* that the Garden is only for them and that they are guaranteed it no matter what they do. Such a claim is an utter lie that they speak with their tongues and do not believe in their hearts. In fact it was only their pride and arrogance that made them say such a statement. They always wanted to think of themselves as the best in everything. They always wanted to be above others. So made this claim even when they knew that it was not true. Even if some of them did believe it, it was only something that they had deceived themselves into believing. There is no evidence for such a belief whatsoever. There is no prophet or messenger who has ever said that they are free to commit all of the sins that they want and be guaranteed a place in the Garden. If Allah (swt) has never sent a messenger to support such a claim then what right do they have to make it? This is a wishful thought that they made up in their minds to give themselves permission to follow their desires and their lusts. Deep down inside even they knew it is a lie. That is why they did not answer this call. The narrations tell us that when this ayah was revealed, none of the Jews came forward and prayed for death like Allah (swt) challenged them to. They all knew that if they did then they would die and they would find themselves in the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire!

Notice also how Allah (swt) ends the ayah by saying "**if you are truthful**". This means if they were truthful in their claim that the Garden and closeness to Allah (swt) was only for them, then they should make this wish for death. Allah (swt) connected their wishing for death to this statement they made that the Garden is only for them, such that if their statement is true then they should wish for death, and if they do not wish for death then that demonstrates that their statement is not true. If they at all truthful in what they say then they should come forward and wish for their death. They did not come forward and wish for death, and that clearly demonstrates to all that their claim was not true. Not only does it demonstrate to everyone that their claim is not true but it also shows everyone that they knew what they were claiming was not true. They knew that such a claim as stating that the Garden is only for them and that being near to Allah (swt) is only for them is not true, but they said it anyway. How great is something like this to lie about?

How evil are the people who make up such a lie? May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) make us only speak the truth when we speak about Him (swt) and when we speak about this Din!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must never be certain that the Garden is guaranteed for us. If the angel of death came to any of us right now, will any of us agree to go? Is there any among us who is free of sin? Is there any among us who thinks that they have properly fulfilled the purpose of their existence in serving and worshipping Allah (swt)? So we should always remind ourselves of our shortcomings and we must never think that we are guaranteed the garden. This was the arrogance and self-deception that these Jews had and it is what allowed them to commit so many sins. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

At the same time we must not think that we will never be given the Garden. No matter how many sins we have committed, we must never give up hope on the Mercy of Allah (swt). We must always picture ourselves in between the Garden and the Fire. As Ibn al-Qayyim has said, we must always two wings. One is a wing of hope for the Mercy of Allah (swt) and the other is a wing of fear from the Wrath of Allah (swt). Only when these two wings are correctly balanced can the bird fly. So we must always have an equal amount of hope and fear. We must always think that one moment more of remembering Allah (swt), one more good deed, or one less bad deed could be the difference between the Garden and the Fire for us. But we must never think that we are guaranteed the Garden. We must especially not let this thinking lead us into committing all of the sins that we want. This is what these Jews did. They fooled themselves into thinking that they were guaranteed the Garden only because they were Jews, and so they thought that they are then free to do all the evil that they want. How many Muslims today have this exact same thinking? How can they learn of the wrong path down which they are headed unless they open their Quran? May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that the Garden and being near to Him (swt) only comes from His (swt)'s Mercy! May Allah (swt) make us remember that we can only hope to receive His (swt)'s Mercy by striving to remember Him (swt) all the time and striving to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) enable us all to do that!

وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًۢا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. But never will they long for it, because of what their hands have sent forth. And Allah Knows well the *Dhalimoon*.

This ayah continues on the previous ayah. Recall in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) had commanded the Jews to wish for death if they were sincere in their claim to be His (swt)'s favorites, the ones who were guaranteed closeness to Him (swt) and the ones who were guaranteed the Garden no matter how much evil that they do. They thought that they were safe from the Fire only because of who they were. They thought that because of the fact that they were Jewish then the Garden was only for them, and that all of the rest of mankind would be in the Fire. They thought that it was because of the tribe that you are born into and not the actions that you do that determines whether you will be in the Garden or not. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what was the response of the Jews to such a challenge.

Allah (swt) says "**But never will they long for it**". They will never wish for death, they will never pray for death, they will never long for death. Then Allah (swt) tells us the reason why that is so, it is "**because of what their hands have sent forth**". What their hands have sent forth is the evil actions that they have done. Most of the evil that a man does like stealing, killing, taking interest, committing adultery, drinking alcohol, and so on are done with his hands. The Jews knew that they had done such evil actions. Their hands had sent forth the evil of these actions into the Hereafter. Every time your hands do an action that is forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt), a sin is created. That sin is then sent forth into the Hereafter. If Allah (swt) does not forgive you for that disobedience then you will then find that sin on your scale on the Day of Judgment. May Allah (swt) save us from our sins! So these Jews knew that their hands had created great evil, and they knew that if they die then they would wake up on the Day of Judgment and have to face the consequences of these sins. So because of the evil that their hands have sent forth, because of the punishment that they had earned for themselves on account of these sins, Allah (swt) tells us that they will never long for death. They will never even wish for death let alone pray for it. This is the extent to which they have become distant from the Divine.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Knows the Dhalimoon**". The *Dhalimoon* are the ones who commit *Dhulm*, they are the unjust, the criminals, the evildoers. Dhulm is the worst form of injustice and evil. In reality however there is no English word that fully describes the injustice and the evil of these people. Just think for a moment about what they have done. They have committed so much evil, done so many sins, they have denied so many of the messengers of Allah (swt), they have killed so many of the messengers of Allah (swt), and they have even rejected and they have tried to kill the Prophet (saw), the beloved of Allah (swt) and the leader of mankind. Even after all of this they claim that they are the favorites of Allah (swt) and that the Garden and closeness to Allah (swt) is only for them. They claim that they are going to be in the Garden, and that all of the rest of mankind will be in the Fire. See how much evil that these people have done, both with their actions and with their words. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) Knows them well. They have done an ocean's amount of evil, but Allah (swt) Knows well all of the evil that they have done. They have done great evil, but they cannot escape Allah (swt). The Knowledge of Allah (swt) covers all of the evil that they have done and they are one Day soon going to return Him (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this final part of the ayah is to realize that Allah (swt) Knows *Dhulm* well. On the one hand this fact should give us a consolation that no matter how much evil is committed on this world, it will not escape the justice of Allah (swt). On the Day of Judgment Allah (swt) will settle all scores and give everyone what they deserve for whatever they have done in this life. No matter how much Dhulm man may have done, even if he escapes justice in the life of this world, he will not escape from Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. So we should have contentment in the fact that in the end justice will be done for all. Even the worst of sinners and criminals.

On the other hand the fact that Allah (swt) Knows the *Dhalimoon* very well should also be a warning against us not to commit *Dhulm* . Allah (swt) Knows well all kinds of *Dhulm*, the largest of *Dhulm* and the smallest of *Dhulm*. We have to realize and we have to remember that even the smallest of evil actions that we do is known by Allah (swt). Allah (swt) Knows what is in our hearts when we do evil and He (swt) also Knows how much we resisted or fought ourselves

from doing that evil. So whenever our souls prompt us to do some evil, we must always remember Allah (swt) and we must always remember that Allah (swt) Knows well of the evildoers. Remember that the worst of injustice, the worst of crime, the greatest evil, is that which you do against Allah (swt).Anytime you violate His (swt)'s Law, anytime you neglect one of His (swt)'s obligations, you are in fact doing Dhulm. So even if you look with lust at a member of the opposite sex it is *Dhulm* because you are violating the Law of your Creator and thereby being ungrateful to Him (swt). Anytime you miss a prayer or talk about another Muslim it is also Dhulm. Even this Dhulm does not escape the Knowledge of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make us always remember this fact! May Allah (swt) save us from all of the *Dhulm* that we may do!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must always be careful of what our hands send forth. These Jews send forth great evil from their hands, and they knew of the punishment that awaited them in the Hereafter on account of this evil. That is why they did not wish for death even when Allah (swt) called on them to. So we must try our best not to be like them. We must try out best to refrain our hands from committing any sin, from doing anything that is displeasing to Allah (swt). Instead we should use our hands to only do that which is pleasing to Allah (swt). Our hands are one of the blessings that Allah (swt) has given us for which we can never truly repay Him (swt). Just look at your hands now and think of how many are the benefits that you derive from your hands. You owe Allah (swt) for each of these blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on you. So from your hands you should only send forth that which is good. Your hands should only do the actions that are pleasing to your Lord and Master. It is the only way that you can repay Him (swt) for giving them to you. May Allah (swt) enable us to use our hands only for good!

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ ٱلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ
لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ أَن يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

97. And you will certainly find them the greediest of mankind for this world, even greedier than the ones who ascribe partners (to Allah). Each of them wishes to live for a thousand years. But being granted such a life would never save them from the punishment even a little. And Allah Sees all that they do.

So far we have seen that when the Prophet (saw) called on the Jews to believe in this Message that has been sent to them by Allah (swt), they replied by saying that the Tawrah was sufficient for them. Despite the fact that they had rejected the Prophet (saw), they still claimed to be true believers. They claimed to be believers only because their ancestors had believed in the Tawrah and they had followed Musa (as). Even this belief was not a true and sincere belief on the part of many of them. Allah (swt) showed us what kind of "belief" this was by reminding us how they had worshipped the calf and how they had gone back on their covenant and how they had killed the messengers of Allah (swt). Despite all of this evil that they had done, not only did they claim that they were true believers but they also claimed that they were the favorites of Allah (swt) and that the Garden was only for them. Allah (swt) then challenged all of them to wish for death if such a claim was true. Of course not one of them came forward and answered this challenge. None of them had the courage to back up with actions what they said with their tongues. They were a people whose hearts were empty. They only cared for the creation and not the Creator. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us why that was so. In this ayah Allah (swt) describes to us the reality of their situation. Allah (swt) shows us the kind of people that they really are. Once again pay very close attention to the description of these people, and see if you can see any of what Allah (swt) is describing in yourself. Insha Allah, if you are able to recognize any of this kind of behavior with yourself, then there is a greater chance that you can cleanse yourself of it. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying that "**you will certainly find them the greediest of mankind for this world**". These Jews were the ones who loved the life of this world more than anyone else. Of all the different peoples who lived in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (saw), these Jews were the ones who loved the life of this world the most. They loved to enjoy themselves and to take as much pleasure as possible from this world. They loved to gather and hoard as much wealth as possible from this world. Of all the different people, they had the greatest desire for the life of this world.

Once again you have to remind yourself that Allah (swt) is not speaking here about all Jews. This is specifically in reference to the Jews who were rejecting and opposing the Message that Allah (swt) sent through the Prophet (saw). This is in fact one of the reasons why they were so opposed to this Message. They loved this world and they knew that if they were to have followed the Prophet (saw) then they would have to give up some of what they love for the sake of Allah (swt). For example they knew that the Law of Allah (swt) obligates them to pay Zakat and prevents them from taking interest. So their excessive love and greed for the life of this world was also one of the reasons why they were refused to believe in the Message that was sent to the Prophet (saw). Their love for this world was also one of the reasons why they refused to wish for death even when Allah (swt) challenged them to.

Allah (swt) then says "**even greedier than the ones who ascribe partners (to Allah)**". Their greed for the life of this world is even greater than the ones who worship idols instead of Allah (swt). See what a powerful statement Allah (swt) is making here and see the comparison that is being drawn. The idol worshippers were a people who did not have a Book from Allah (swt). They did not know about the Hereafter. They did not know about the Day of Judgment, they did not know about the Fire, and they did not know about the Garden. While these Jews had a Book from Allah (swt) and they knew about the Hereafter. Despite this knowledge they still had a greater love for the life of this world than the idol worshippers. They had the knowledge but still behaved in a way that was contrary to the knowledge that they had. Their behavior was even worse than that of those who had no knowledge whatsoever. So it was not ignorance that made them behave in this way but rather it was sheer arrogance and pride.

How can you still chase after this world when you know about the Garden? How can you still commit sins for the sake of this world when you know about the Fire? How can you live only for this moment when you know that the Day of Judgment is so close? This shows the nature of these people and it shows their distance from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**Each of them wishes to live for a thousand years**". This is how much they love the life of this world. They want to stay here for as long as possible. They want to avert death and put it off to the best of their ability. They want to get the most that they can from this world. This is because they know where they are headed for in the Hereafter. They know the sins that they have done and they know the punishment that they have earned as consequence of those sins. So they want to delay the punishment in the Hereafter for as long as possible. They love this world so much that they wish they could live here for a thousand years if not longer than that.

However even if they are given a thousand years to live in this world or even if they are given two thousand years, would it make a difference? Allah (swt) says "**But being granted such a life would never save them from the punishment even a little**". Allah (swt) clearly tells us that even if they are allowed to live in this world for a thousand years or even longer, it would not make a difference. In the end, for no matter how long they live in this world they still have to leave it. Everything in this world is temporary and fleeting, nothing in this world lasts forever. Such is the nature of this world. So for no matter how long they are allowed to stay in the life of this world, they will eventually have to leave it. Once they do, Allah (swt) tells us that they still have to face their punishment. Their punishment will be not be lightened even a bit, and unlike the life of this world the punishment in the Hereafter is not temporary. Furthermore even if they had been living on the earth for a thousand years, that would not reduce their punishment even a little. Regardless for how long they live here, they are going to face the same punishment. So the bottom line is that even if they go to the Fire tomorrow or they go to the Fire after a thousand years it is still the same Fire. They will still receive the same punishment so it does not matter. The only difference is that in the Fire will know nothing but pain for all eternity.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to look and see how much our Muslim community has been afflicted with this disease of love for the life for this world as well. Can you not see so many Muslims who are so greedy for the life of this world that they seem to desire it even more than the disbelievers? They are willing to sacrifice their Din, their Hereafter and their relationship with Allah (swt) in order to get this world. How wrong is such thinking? We are Muslims. We should realize the temporary and fleeting nature of this world. We should know that the Garden that Allah (swt) has promised us is much better than this world. So what are we doing chasing after this world? This is in fact a disease that Shaitan has placed into our hearts. We are the chosen servants of Allah (swt), and Shaitan hates us because of this fact, that is why he will try to take us away from the mission that Allah (swt) has given us. He will double and redouble his efforts when it comes to this Ummah. He knows that one of the easiest ways to take Muslims away from the path of dawah is to distract them by the life of this world. How many are the dawah callers who have left this path to chase after the life of this world? It is not that they were not sincere in wanting to serve Allah (swt) but it is just that they became so seduced by the life of this world. May Allah (swt) save us from this ever happening to us! May Allah (swt) help us to recognize this world for what it is!

So we ask Allah (swt) to help us to recognize the life of this world for the reality that it is and to turn our attention away from it and towards Him (swt). Although we desire the Garden, what we truly yearn for is the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s Love. We love Allah (swt) and the manifestation of our love is our obedience to Him (swt). Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will love us and the manifestation of His (swt)'s Love is the Garden. When Allah (swt) loves us, He (swt) will give us all that will make us happy and this is the Garden. But the greatest of all achievements is the Pleasure of Allah (swt)! May Allah (swt) enable us to always work for it!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Sees all that they do**". The ones who prefer the life of this world to the next are the ones who have forgotten the purpose of their existence. They have forgotten why they are even in this world in the first place. They have forgotten that Allah (swt) created them only to worship and serve Him (swt). They foolishly think that they can just spend their days in this world serving themselves and serving their desires. For

those who think in such a way, Allah (swt) reminds them of this undeniable fact. Allah (swt) is the One Who Sees every single thing that they do. There is not one action that they do which escapes the Gaze of their Lord. So they cannot escape Allah (swt). If they want to forget about Allah (swt) and commit all kinds of evil then they should know that their actions are Seen by their Master. Then He (swt) will take them to account for all that they did. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) See from us only the actions that He (swt) is pleased with!

قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُۥ نَزَّلَهُۥ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

98. Say "Whoever has been an enemy to Gibreel, for surely he brings down onto your heart (this Quran) by the permission of Allah, confirming that which came before it, and a guidance, and good news for the believers".

So far in this Surah we have seen the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) bringing one excuse after another for why they did not want to believe in this final revelation that has come to them from Allah (swt). The Muslims at that time may have found it surprising that a people who have scripture and a people who are learned would be so hostile to this Message. Allah (swt) shows us in these ayahs why such obstinate rejection should be not surprising from these people. We have seen that they are a people who have an enmity to the Truth, whose actions do not reflect their words, who have an excessive love for the life of this world, who are overflowing with pride and arrogance, and who are totally heedless to the reality of the universe. But worst of all is that they are a people who have forgotten about Allah (swt), the Real and the True, the purpose and the cause for all things. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! In this ayah Allah (swt) brings to our attention to yet another aspect of their hypocritical nature and their perverted thinking and that is their attitude towards the angels of Allah (swt). They were corrupted even in how they came to view the angels of Allah (swt).

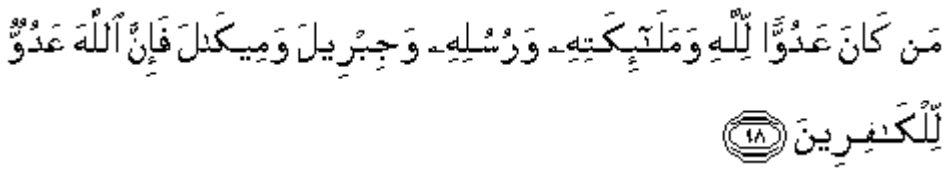
Allah (swt) begins this ayah by commanding the Prophet (saw) to say "**Whoever has been an enemy to Gibreel**". Qurtubi says that this ayah was revealed when the Jews asked the Prophet (swt) who was the angel that brought the revelation from Allah (swt) to his heart. When the Prophet (saw) told them that it was Gibreel (as), the Jews claimed that Gibreel (as) was the one who brings war and fighting, and so he is their enemy. They said that if the Quran had been brought down by Mikhail (as) then they would have believed in it, because he is the angel of rain and fertility. See how twisted and perverted the thinking of these people is. They know that the angels are only messengers. They know that the angels only do as Allah (swt) has commanded them to do. So there is no reason for any human being to be an enemy for any angel because an angel would not disobey the command of Allah (swt). The angel is only the agent of Allah (swt). Thus if a people have a problem with an angel then they really have a problem with Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah yet another excuse that these people are bringing for not believing in this Message. They are claiming to have a problem with the angel who has brought down this revelation. In reality however this is yet another manifestation of their pride and their arrogance. They are just looking for some reason, some excuse to reject this Message that they know is the Truth. This reason that they are bringing now is in fact that the stupidest of all their excuses. They are finding a problem with the angel who brings down this Message when the angel is nothing but a messenger, an agent of Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) describes Gibreel (as) for the Prophet (saw) by saying "**for surely he brings down onto your heart (this Quran) by the permission of Allah**". Here Allah (swt) shows us that Gibreel (as) is merely an angel and messenger. Not only that but he (as) also has the most noble of purposes. Among the angels and among the various tasks that Allah (swt) has appointed for each of them, none has a more noble purpose than that of Gibreel (as). This noble angel and this leader of the angels is the one who brings down the revelation of Allah (swt) into the hearts of the prophets. So here Allah (swt) reminds everyone that Gibreel is the messenger that brings down the Quran into the heart of the Prophet (saw). He (as) brings down the very words of Allah (swt) into the blessed heart of the Prophet (saw). So how noble and distinguished an angel is he (as)? But even though he (as) has this important task, Gibreel (as) is still no more

than a messenger who always follows the command of Allah (swt). So there is no reason why anyone should be an enemy with him (as). Notice also that Allah (swt) says that Gibreel (as) brings down the Quran "**by the permission of Allah**". So even this sending down of the Quran was only done with the permission of Allah (swt), Gibreel (as) does not do anything of his own accord. He (as) is a humble and obedient servant of Allah (swt). He (as) only does as he (as) has been commanded.

Then Allah (swt) describes for us the Quran. He (swt) tells us of the benefits and blessings of this Quran. Because Gibreel (as) is the angel that brought down this Quran for us we have to love him (as) and not be an enemy to him (as). Part of our gratitude for having this Quran is loving the pure messenger who brought it down for us. Allah (swt) says about the Quran that it is "**confirming that which came before it, and a guidance, and good news for the believers**". The Quran confirms and completes the Books that came before. It is the fulfillment of all of the previous revelations that Allah (swt) has ever sent. Even the Tawrah that the Jews have speaks of the Quran and it speaks of the Final Messenger (saw) that would bring it. So do many of the other previous scriptures that Allah (swt) has revealed. Thus the Quran is the culmination, the completion, and the perfection of all of the previous revelations that Allah (swt) has ever sent down for mankind. As we have discussed, the Quran is also a guidance. It shows man the way on how to fulfill the purpose of his existence. It is a guide to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). It teaches us how to live our lives in constant remembrance of Allah (swt). For every action that we can take there is a guidance in this Book that Allah (swt) has sent us. It shows us how we can worship and serve our Creator and thus fulfill the purpose for which He (swt) created us. For the ones who do this, the Quran is also a good news. It gives them good news of the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the Garden that they will receive for their belief and for their striving in the life of this world. It reminds them that Allah (swt) is always with them if they remember Him (swt). It reminds them that Allah (swt) will give them peace and tranquility in the life of this world, and that He (swt) will provide for them their sustenance and keep them safe, if only they put their trust in Him (swt) and they strive to please Him (swt). When Gibreel (as) is the angel that brought down this Book which has all these many blessings, then how could anyone be an enemy with such a noble creature?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how much love we must have for Gibreel (as). We must love all of the angels of Allah (swt) because they are the obedient servants of our Lord, but we must have a special love in our hearts for Gibreel (as). More than the other angels we must love him (as). This is because he (as) is the angel that brought down from the heavens to us our most valuable possession and that is the Quran. Would you trade the Quran that is in your heart for all of the riches of this world? Of course not, then remember and love the noble angel that brought this Quran down to you.



99. Anyone who has been an enemy to Allah and to His angels and to His messengers and to Gibreel and Mikhail, then surely Allah is an enemy to the Kafiroon.

In the previous ayah we saw how the Jews were bringing their latest excuse for not accepting this Message from Allah (swt). They said that Gibreel (as) was their enemy and they could not follow this Message because he (as) was the angel who brought it down. They said that if this Message had been brought down by any other angel then they would have accepted it., Allah (swt) showed us the stupidity of their excuse. He (swt) showed us how Gibreel (as) was only a messenger. Gibreel (as) was only an obedient servant who only does what his Lord commands him. He (as) does not do anything of his own will and pleasure but rather he (as) exists only to serve Allah (swt). Furthermore he (as) also is the one who brought down this Quran, a Book full of blessings, onto mankind. So how can anyone be an enemy with him? This enmity that these Jews had with Gibreel (as) was only an excuse, it is only a façade. Their real enmity was with Allah (swt). Their real problem was that they did not want to live their lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as they were created to do. They did not want to do what they knew they were created to do. So their complaint about Gibreel (as) was only an excuse because they did not want to accept this Message from their Creator. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what is the situation of those who choose to be enemies with Him (swt) and with His (swt)'s dedicated servants. What is their fate? What is the reality of their existence? Allah (swt) says "**Anyone who has been an enemy to Allah and to His angels and to His messengers and to Gibreel and Mikhail, then surely Allah is an enemy to the Kafiroon**". These people should know that if they take the angels of Allah (swt) as enemies, if they take the messengers of Allah (swt) as enemies, then they should know that they are really enemies with Allah (swt). If they take Allah (swt) as an enemy then they should know that Allah (swt) takes them as an enemy. What does it mean for Allah (swt) to take you as an enemy? It means that the Lord and Master of the universe has taken you as an enemy. Can you imagine the Power of the One Who is now against you? Can you imagine what a horrible and desperate situation that you are in? Is there anyone that can help you in that situation? You know the Power of Allah (swt), so how frightening is it if He (swt) is your enemy? If you truly realized Him (swt) then you would prefer the most horrible creature from the worst of nightmares to be against you rather than to have Him (swt) as an enemy. But this is exactly the position that the Jews had put themselves by taking Gibreel (as) as an enemy. This is exactly the position that they had put themselves in by refusing to worship Allah (swt). This is exactly the position that they had put themselves in by rejecting this Message that they knew is the Truth. They have rejected the Message that Allah (swt) has sent to them and as a consequence of that rejection they have made Allah (swt) into their enemy. Because of that they have put themselves into the worst of positions that a human being can be in, and that is to have as an enemy Allah (swt).

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that it is possible for Allah (swt) to take a human being as an enemy. Just that possibility should make us terrified of it. We should do everything that we can to avoid being in this situation. We all know the hadith qudsi where Allah (swt) has told us that if we take a close friend of Allah (swt) as an enemy, then Allah (swt) will take us as an enemy. Gibreel (as) was a close friend of Allah (swt), and since the Jews took him (as) as their enemy, Allah (swt) took them as His (swt)'s enemy. Can you then imagine the kind of punishment and humiliation that descended on them both in this world and in the Hereafter because of that?

So we should do whatever we can do to prevent Allah (swt) from taking us as His (swt)'s enemy. We know from the hadith that Allah (swt) will take as an enemy anyone who takes His (swt)'s close friends for enemies. So the way to save ourselves from having Allah (swt) as an enemy is not to take any of His (swt)'s close friends as enemies. We must try our best not to antagonize any of the close friends of Allah (swt). Now do we know who are the close friends of Allah (swt)? Of course not, we cannot read people's hearts. We have no way of knowing how close to Allah (swt) someone is. We do not know how much someone remembers Him (swt) or how much they strive to please Him (swt). So as long as a Muslim is practicing, as long as they believe in Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw), then we should always think that he or she could be a friend of Allah (swt). We are not with a person twenty four hours a day so we do not know the great acts of worship and servitude that they may do when we are not with them. We also do not know what is in their hearts, it could be that they love Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) much more than we do. So we should not have any animosity or hatred towards them. Even if we do not always agree with them, even if they may be from a different group or school of thought that we do not agree with, we still cannot take them as an enemy. Because if we do then Allah (swt) may take us as an enemy and we all know the consequences of that. Even if they may have done any wrong to us, then we should always remember that Allah (swt) can deal with their injustice much better than us. For our part must strive to build within ourselves good feelings and love for all our Muslim brothers and sisters. We must always think good of them and we must dismiss any negative thoughts that come into our hearts because of them. Because if we do not, if we have any hatred or bad feelings towards them, then we leave an opening for Shaitan to put malice and hatred in our hearts towards them. Then there is the chance, that if this Muslim brother or sister is a friend of Allah (swt), then Allah (swt) will take us an enemy. How horrible and terrible would that be? May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) enable us to love and respect all of our Muslim brothers and sisters so that we save ourselves from Him (swt) taking us as an enemy!

وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ءَايَـٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَـٰتٍ ۖ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَآ إِلَّا ٱلْفَـٰسِقُونَ



100. And most surely We have sent down to you Clear Signs, none disbelieves in it except the *Fasiqoon*.

In the previous ayah we saw the extent to which the Jews would go to deny this Message. They would even have animosity towards Gibreel (as) who is the noble messenger of Allah (swt). The one who brings down the Quran and who does only what Allah (swt) commands him (as) to do. Then we saw how through that animosity towards Gibreel (as) they had made Allah (swt) into their enemy. This is the great lengths that they would go to in order to find an excuse to reject this Message. But was their rejection of this Message in any way valid? Was their any valid reason for them to turn away from this Message? Is there any reason for them to have doubts in this Message? In this ayah Allah (swt) answers this question.

Allah (swt) tells us that "**most surely We have sent down to you Clear Signs**". Notice the emphasis with which Allah (swt) stresses this point. This Message has been sent with clear and undeniable signs. This Message has been sent with unbreakable proofs that clearly demonstrate that it is indeed from Allah (swt). There is no sincere person who is searching for the Truth who can deny that this Message is from Allah (swt). This is the extent of the strength of the evidences that support it. Notice how Allah (swt) uses the words "send down" to refer to the Clear Signs. These are the same words that He (swt) uses to refer to the revelation of the Quran. This shows us that the Clear Signs are the ayahs of the Quran themselves. The Quran is the Miracle and the Quran is the Proof. The Quran has been sent down by Allah (swt) and it in and of itself is a proof that it is from Allah (swt).

The scholars say that this ayah was revealed when a Jew by the name of Ibn Surya said to the Prophet (saw), "You have not brought us anything". This man was telling the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) has not shown them any sign or evidence to indicate that he (saw) was truly a messenger from Allah (swt). This ayah is a response to such a claim. As we see, Allah (swt)

clearly demonstrates how the Quran itself is the Clear Sign that proves that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). Insha Allah please see our tafsir of ayah 24 where we demonstrate how exactly the Quran is a Miracle which no human being can reproduce.

If the Quran truly was a Miracle, then why were people like Ibn Surya not able to perceive it? Why did they not perceive this Miracle? In this ayah, Allah (swt) answers this question as well. Allah (swt) says "**none disbelieves in it except the *Fasiqoon***". There is only one kind of people who will disbelieve in this Message after they have seen the clear evidences for it, and these are the ***Fasiqoon***. These are the sinners, the evildoers, the ones who prefer to serve their desires over serving Allah (swt). These are a people who are so in love with the life of this world that they are a slave of their passions and their desires. They are also a people who are unwilling to overcome their pride and their arrogance. Because of this they just cannot bring themselves to accept this Message. They know that this Message is the Truth but they do not want to perceive the Truth of this Message. They know that if they accept the Truth of this Message, then they would no longer be able to live a life where they serve their lusts and desires. So they look for whatever excuse that they can to reject this Message. Even if they witness the Signs of this Message so clearly like they did when the sea parted for them, or when the mountain was over them, or when the Quran was recited to them, they still will not believe. This is because these are a people who are given to sin and corruption. All they care about is satisfying their desires and being satisfied in their pride, so no matter how many signs come to them, they do not want to believe. Not only do they themselves not want to believe in this Message, but because of theirs sins and their arrogance, Allah (swt) removes their ability to perceive the Truth of this Message. Their senses are covered and their heart is sealed. That is why they are unable to perceive the Miracle of the Quran. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from our desires and our sins that may make us blind to perceiving the Signs of Allah (swt) that are in the Quran!

أَوَكُلَّمَا عَٰهَدُوا۟ عَهْدًا نَّبَذَهُۥ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101. Is it not the case that whenever they make a covenant, a group of them throws it away? *Bal* !, most of them do not believe.

One of the main themes of the ayahs that we have looked at so far is the complete and utter rejection of the Jews to this Message. How through arrogance and pride they have turned away from Allah (swt) time and time again. They are so desperate to reject this Message that they would even find faults with the angel that brings it down from the heavens. They are the perfect example of the kind of people that we should avoid being like. Instead of constantly turning away from Allah (swt), we have to be among those who are constantly turning towards Him (swt). Instead of rejecting the Truth when we see it, we must follow it. Instead of being proud and arrogant, we have to humble ourselves before Allah (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to another aspect of their behavior that we must strive to avoid and that is their constant breaking of covenants.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by asking a question "**Is it not the case that whenever they make a covenant, a group of them throws it away?**". This is a question that should make us think and reflect on the kind of people that these Jews were. They were the ones who would always break the covenants and promises that they made. This ayah should make us look at ourselves to see if we have this propensity to break covenants within ourselves. There were many covenants that the Jews made that they later went back on. For example there is the covenant that they made with Allah (swt) under the mountain where they said they would abide by the Law of Allah (swt). They went back on this promise when they disobeyed the Law of Allah (swt). Then later on they even changed their own Books to remove the parts of the Law of Allah (swt) that did not agree with their desires. There is also the covenant that they took where they said they would believe in the messengers that Allah (swt) would send after Musa (as). They broke this covenant when they rejected 'Isa (as) and they rejected the Prophet (saw). Finally

there were the military and political covenants that they had made with the Islamic State where they had promised the Prophet (saw) that they would offer military assistance to the Islamic State and they had promised that they would not support the enemies of the State. They went back on these covenants as well when they not only supported the enemies of the Islamic State but they were the ones who even encouraged the enemies to attack the State. So in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to their long and sad history of breaking every single covenant and promise that they made.

Notice also how Allah (swt) says that they "threw away" their covenant. So not only did they simply break their promise but they threw it away, they denied that it even existed. For example when Allah (swt) called on them to believe in and to support the Prophet (saw) like they had promised that they would do, they did not say that they are not going to keep their promise, instead they denied that they had ever made such a promise. They denied making this promise knowing all to well that they had indeed made such a promise. This shows us the kind of people that they are. They have no honesty and integrity to them whatsoever. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Also notice how Allah (swt) said in the ayah that it was a "group of them" who had thrown away the covenant. So it was not all of the Jews who would go back on a covenant but it was a section of them. This tells us two things. First is that there were some among the Jews who did stay true to their covenants. There were some descendants of the children of Israil who had lived up to the promises that their ancestors had made. For example Saffiya (ra) and Abdullah ibn Salam (ra) believed in the Prophet (saw) like their fathers had promised they would do. They knew that he (saw) was truly the Messenger from Allah (swt), and they knew that since they were from the children of Israil they had a promise binding on their necks to believe in, support and follow him (saw). They knew that they had a responsibility to help and support him (saw) to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. This was the promise that their forefathers had given to Allah (swt). So the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that not all of the children of Israil were evil but only a group among them.

Another benefit that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that since a group of the Jews like Sayyifa (ra) and Abdullah bin Salam (ra) did honor the covenant then this shows that it was indeed a genuine covenant. If this covenant never existed like those who threw it away had claimed, then there would not have been anyone who would have honored it. But just the fact that there were some good people among the Jews who did honor the covenant shows that it was indeed a valid covenant. It was a true promise that their entire nation had made with Allah (swt). The example that we gave here was the covenant to believe in and follow the Prophet (saw), but this is also true for all of the covenants that they had made with Allah (swt). There was always a group of them who honored the contract and there was a group of them who threw it away. Unfortunately the ones who threw it away were always the larger of these two groups.

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) answers the question that He (swt) had asked in the first part. Why is it that every time they make a covenant, they go back on it? Allah (swt) says "***Bal*!, most of them do not believe**". Recall how we said that the word *Bal* is used for extreme negation. So first Allah (swt) utterly rejects their behavior of going back on their promises. To make a promise and then to break it is a behavior that is despicable for any human being and it is most displeasing to the Creator. We can see how the enemies of this Message are not only evil because they are rejecting this Message that has come to them from their Creator but they are also evil because of the hateful actions that they do such as going back on a promise when they make it. So after Allah (swt) condemns them for breaking their covenant, He (swt) reveals to us the reality of their situation and the reason why they have gone back on their covenant; "**most of them do not believe**". Most of them do *kufr* to this Message. They reject it when they know that it is the Truth from their Creator. What good can you hope for from a people who would reject a Message that reaches them from their Creator when they know that it is the Truth? Is there any good in them? What do they think is the purpose of their existence? Do they truly believe that they are only on this world for play and amusement? For a people who think in such a way, do you expect them to be true to their covenants? This is the reason why most of them did not honor their covenants; it is because they are a people who do not believe. When a people will not believe in and remain true to Allah (swt), what will they believe in after that?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how important it is to honor our contracts and obligations. As a Muslim, when we make a promise to do something then we must do it. The most important contract that we have to honor is our contract with Allah (swt) where we promised that we would live our lives only to worship and serve Him (swt). Before any of us came to this world we all promised Allah (swt) that we would live on this world as His (swt)'s servants. But most of us have forgotten this promise that we have made. So the first and foremost of contracts that we must fulfill is our promise to Allah (swt). To fulfill this contract we must strive to the best of our ability to do all that is pleasing to Him (swt) and we must stay away from all that is displeasing to Him (swt).

After we have fulfilled our covenant with Allah (swt) then we must also look to the contracts that we have made with the people in this world. If we make any kind of promise or if we have any kind of responsibility or duty, then we must try our best to fulfill it. To be a believer is not simply believing in this Message that Allah (swt) has sent us. It is also in striving to be the best human being that we can be. The perfection of creation was the Prophet (saw), and he (saw) always kept all of his (saw)'s promises and obligations. Even before he (saw) became the Messenger he (saw) was known for this throughout his community. How then can we be following the Sunnah if we are among those who do not keep our promises or if we are among those who break our oaths? Simply look in this ayah as to how Allah (swt) has linked the keeping of promises and oaths to Iman. It is clearly showing that if Iman is present in the heart then the person will try his best to honor all of his promises. These Jews about whom the ayah speaks always broke their promises because they did not have the firm belief in their hearts. They did not think that they would have to return to Allah (swt) and answer for what they have done. These are the people who we are trying to save ourselves from becoming. Is not then important that we try to fulfill all of our contracts and obligations? Is it not important that we try to keep every promise that we make? May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to fulfill all our covenants and promises!

وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ كِتَـٰبَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَآءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

102. And when there has come to them a Messenger from Allah confirming that which is with them, a group from those who were given the Book throw the Book of Allah behind their backs, and they act as if they do not know.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us how the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) broke every covenant and promise that they made. They were a people who had no honesty and integrity. They were a people who did not remember Allah (swt). They were a people who forgot that Allah (swt) was Aware of each and every one of their actions. They did not realize how great a sin it was to break a promise that one makes to Allah (swt). After showing us how these were a people who broke all of their covenants, in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us what is their attitude towards the Book that He (swt) has revealed to them. They were a people who had been given the Book of Allah (swt), what then is their attitude towards the Book of their Lord and Master? Remember that their Book clearly foretold the coming of the Prophet (saw). In their Book Allah (swt) had told them clearly that at this time and at this place the Final Messenger would come. The Messenger whom they had been waiting for. The Messenger who would lead the believers into victory and to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land. So if they truly saw themselves as believers, if they saw themselves first as the servants of Allah (swt) before they saw themselves as Jews, would they have turned away from this Message?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And when there has come to them a Messenger from Allah confirming that which is with them**". Here of course Allah (swt) speaks of the Prophet (saw). He (saw) is a Messenger from Allah (swt). A man who is bringing a communication for all mankind from their Lord and Master. Just the fact that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt) should give him (saw) a place of honor and respect among all mankind. But for the Jews, he (saw) was much more than a Messenger from Allah (swt), he (saw) was the one for whom they had been waiting and anticipating for centuries. The one who would grant them deliverance. The one who would give them victory. The one whom all of their Books

had told them would come. That is why Allah (swt) does not simply refer to him (saw) as a messenger but Allah (swt) calls him (saw) a messenger who is "**confirming that which is with them**". What is with them are their Books which speak of the coming of the Prophet (saw). In these Books Allah (swt) clearly tells them that the Messenger will come and that they have a duty and an obligation to help and to support him when he comes. So they have to help and support the Prophet (saw) in establishing Allah (swt)'s Law in the land and in carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. But what did they do? They did exactly the opposite of what they were supposed to. They opposed the Prophet (saw) and tried to kill him (saw) and they prevented this Message from reaching mankind. They tried to destroy the Islamic State which they knew was the Kingdom of Allah (swt) on this earth. They even told the idol worshippers that what they were doing in worshipping idols was better than what the Prophet (saw) calls them to. They said that it was better to rule by the desires rather than to rule by the Divine Law. Just look at the evil of these people. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

Then Allah (swt) tells us "**a group from those who were given the Book throw the Book of Allah behind their backs**". Here Allah (swt) tells us what was the attitude of these Jews towards the Book that they had been given. They throw the Book of Allah (swt) behind their back! Just look at their disobedience and their insolence! See how Merciful Allah (swt) IS and see how cruel and evil the human being is. The scholars say that the phrase "throw behind their backs" means that they completely ignored what was in it. Allah (swt) told them in their Books to follow the Prophet (saw), but they completely ignored what their Lord and Master had told them. They took this Book that Allah (swt) has sent them and they threw it behind their backs by their ignoring what Allah (swt) told them in it. Notice how Allah (swt) mentions the "**Book of Allah**" twice in this ayah. The pronoun "it" in this ayah would have been a perfectly acceptable use of the language, but Allah (swt) still chooses to explicitly mention the "**Book of Allah**" instead of using the pronoun. This is to emphasize that it is not simply any Book that they threw behind their backs but it was the Book of Allah (swt). They threw the Book of Allah (swt) behind their backs. They failed to implement the Law of this Book in their land. They refused to follow the Messenger that it told them to follow. May Allah (swt) save us from ever behaving in this towards our Book!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**they act as if they do not know**". This was their attitude after they had thrown away their Book. They acted as if they did not even know what was in it. They indeed knew what was in it but they acted as if they did not. They pretended as if they did not know who the Prophet (saw) was. Even though they recognized him (saw) more than they recognized their own children, they still pretended as if they did not know. They pretended like the Quran is not a Miracle. Even though they could never produce even a single Surah from it like Allah (swt) had challenged them to do, they still convinced themselves that it was not from Allah (swt). We can see that they are fooling no one but themselves. They know the Truth but they are purposely hiding it. Do they not remember how they have to face Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to ensure that we do not do to the Quran what these Jews did to their Book. As we said what Allah (swt) means by them throwing the Book behind their backs is not the literal meaning, but it means that they neglected and ignored their Book. The scholars have said that they used to decorate their Book with gold and jewels. They would give so much respect for the Book itself, which is the paper and the binds around it, but they would never respect what Allah (swt) had said within the Book. They would never do what Allah (swt) had told them to do in it. They would never allow it to be a guide for their lives and the lives of their community as Allah (swt) had sent it down to be.

Does this not remind you about how our community is treating the Quran today? We have to always remember that these ayahs were not revealed for us to look down and despise the Jews, these ayahs were revealed as a warning for us so that we do not become like them. We have to allow the Quran to be the Light and the Healing and the Guide that Allah (swt) has sent it down to be. We have to remember that we have no greater treasure and no greater possession than this Quran. We have to make our best efforts to memorize the Quran, to study the Quran, to read the Quran, and to reflect on it's meanings. This Quran is the Word of Allah (swt), so could the human being possibly find a better use of his or her time than to spend it with this Quran? If we only read this Quran in Ramadan or when someone passes away, and we do not even try to discover what Allah (swt) is telling us in this Quran, then how are we in any way

different from these Jews? Is it not time that our hearts become humble at this Reminder that Allah (swt) has sent us? We know that we are limited beings who will soon die. We know that we will wake up in the Hereafter to meet Allah (swt). Is there anything better with which we can prepare ourselves for that meeting than with the Word of Allah (swt)? We have to let the Quran be a complete guide in every aspect of our life. It should become the central focus of our life. We should never allow a day to come and go on us without us touching the Quran in some way. Either by reading it, listening to it, learning the tafsir, or contemplating on its meaning. Throughout the course of our lives we have to maintain this connection with the Book of our Lord. The moment that you distance yourself from revelation that is when you will start to increase in the sins that you do. That is when you will start to focus only on this world. That is when you will think about Allah (swt) less over the course of your day. To save ourselves from this fate we have to make the Quran as the central focus of our lives. Our profession in life should take a secondary role to learning the Quran and coming closer to it. So before we are a doctor, or a businessman, or a teacher, or a programmer, or a housewife, we are first and foremost a student of the Quran. Every day we should try to spend more and more of the moments of our life with the Book of our Lord. But it most not simply be an academic exercise. Rather the Quran should have an effect in our lives. It should motivate us to live our lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as He (swt) has created us to do. It should motivate us to work for the cause of Allah (swt). This is the only way that we can prevent ourselves from becoming like these Jews who threw their Book behind their backs and acted like they did not know. Contrary to them we have to put the Quran at the forefront of our lives and try to gain from it all of the beneficial knowledge that we can. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like those people who threw their Book behind their backs!

وَٱتَّبَعُواْ مَا تَتْلُواْ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَٰنَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَٰنُ وَلَٰكِنَّ
ٱلشَّيَٰطِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ ٱلسِّحْرَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَى ٱلْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ
هَٰرُوتَ وَمَٰرُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَآ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ
فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِۦ بَيْنَ ٱلْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِۦ ۚ
وَمَا هُم بِضَآرِّينَ بِهِۦ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ
وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُواْ لَمَنِ ٱشْتَرَىٰهُ مَا لَهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَٰقٍ ۚ

وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْاْ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۚ لَوْ كَانُواْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. And they follow what the Shaitans learned during the kingdom of Sulaiman. And Sulaiman did not disbelieve but the Shaitans disbelieved and they taught the people the Magic and (they taught the people) what was revealed to the two angels of Babylon Harut and Marut. They (the two angels) did not teach it to anyone until they told them "We are only a trial so do not disbelieve". So they (the people) learned from these two what can separate a man from his wife. And they cannot harm anyone by it except with Allah's permission. And they learned what harmed them and what did not profit them. And certainly they knew that the one who bought this had no share of good in the Hereafter. And evil is that for which they have sold their souls. If only they knew.

In the previous ayah we saw how the Jews had thrown the Book of Allah (swt) behind their backs. This was only because in their Book they found laws that were difficult for them to practice and they found the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) whom they were too proud to follow. So they threw the Book of Allah (swt) behind their backs by not listening to what it has to say to them. Now a question to ask is what Book did these Jews follow since they had thrown away the Tawrah and they had refused to follow the Quran? The scholars say that many of the

Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) followed the book of *Asaf*. This was a book of sorcery from the time of Sulaiman (as). It contained all kinds of evil and dark magic. By showing us how the Jews followed this book, Allah (swt) brings our attention to another facet of their corruption, and that is their propensity to magic and superstition. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And they follow what the Shaitans taught during the kingdom of Sulaiman**". The word **Shaitans** in this ayah could refer to evil men or evil jinn. In either case they are evil ones who lived during the time of the reign of Sulaiman (as). They learned this dark magic and recorded it in the book of Asaf. Although these evil ones lived at the time of Sulaiman (as), Sulaiman (as) himself never practiced magic and he (as) was no sorcerer, as Allah (swt) clearly tells us in this ayah "**And Sulaiman did not disbelieve but the Shaitans disbelieved**". The scholars say that to disbelieve here is to practice magic, and Sulaiman (as) never practiced magic but it was the evil ones who lived in his time who did. Not only is the act of practicing magic a great sin, but when you practice magic you falsely believe that there is some power in you or that there is some power in your magic. This is clearly *kufr* because as we know there is no might or power except with Allah (swt). Many of the Jews at the time of Prophet (saw) accused Sulaiman (as) of being a sorcerer but Allah (swt) clearly absolves him (as) of that allegation in this ayah. The power that Sulaiman (as) had to control the birds, the jinn and the wind was a Miracle that had been given to him (as) by Allah (swt) because he (as) was a prophet. So this power was not from magic but it was from Allah (swt). So the Jews were wrong in accusing him (as) of being a sorcerer. It was only the evil ones who lived at his time who practiced this dark magic. They practiced it and they recorded it in the Book of Asaf.

Now here in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us how many of the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) would practice magic just like the evil ones did at the time of the prophet Sulaiman (as). They learned the Book of Asaf and they practiced the dark magic that it contained. These Jews would also accuse Sulaiman (as) of being a sorcerer when in reality they were the ones who were practicing this dark magic. So the only sorcerers were these Jews and the evil ones from the time of Sulaiman who wrote the book of Asaf. They were the ones who would practice this dark magic that was clearly forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) tells us about these evil ones that "**they taught the people the magic and what was revealed to the two angels of Babylon Harut and Marut**". So we see from here that these evil ones whom the Jews followed had taught the people magic. They taught the people a special kind of magic. This was the magic that was revealed to two angels that were sent to Babylon. These two angels were named Harut and Marut. Allah (swt) sent these two angels to the children of Israil who were living in the city of Babylon. The scholars say that these two angels came in the form of men who taught magic. They were angels who appeared in the form of men and they taught the people magic.

Now some people may question as to why Allah (swt) would send angels to teach the people magic when we know that magic is clearly forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) answers this question clearly in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) says "**They (the two angels) did not teach it to anyone until they told them "We are only a trial so do not disbelieve"**". These angels were a test for the people. They did not force the people to learn magic from them. They even told the people that they are trial, and they told the people "**do not disbelieve**". This means that the two angels told the people not to ask them about this knowledge that they have. So Allah (swt) sent these two angels to the children of Israil who were in Babylon as a test. They told the people not to learn magic from them. They had knowledge of magic but they told the children of Israil that this knowledge was a test and so they should not take this knowledge from them. But did the children of Israil listen to this warning or did they fail in this test that Allah (swt) had given them?

Allah (swt) tells us "**So they learned from these two what can separate a man from his wife**". Even though Harut and Marut clearly told the children of Israil that they were a test for them from Allah (swt). Even though they told the people not to disbelieve by asking about this knowledge that they have, we see in this ayah that some among the children of Israil failed in this test that Allah (swt) had given them. Some of them did learn this magic that they knew was forbidden for them to learn. They insisted to the angels that they be taught this knowledge despite the warning that they had been given. So they learned this dark magic. What did they do with this magic? They used it to separate a man from his wife. Could there be a more evil use of magic

than this? What could be more evil than using magic to cause a husband and wife to separate? What could be more evil than to use magic to break a family? We already learned from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that the first of trials to afflict the children of Israil was concerning women. These evil men among them who learned this magic used it to drive into their arms women whom they lusted after, even if these women were already married. What could be more evil than this? On the one hand you are using magic which Allah (swt) has forbidden you to, and on top of that you are using that magic to commit adultery with your brother's wife which Allah (swt) has also forbidden you to. They perform sin upon sin, and they incur Wrath upon Wrath. When we see such evil it should truly humble us. These men were humans like us, and if they can sink to such a low level, we have to think that we have the potential to sink to such a level as well. That is why we must always beg and pray to Allah (swt) to keep us on the Straight Path. The Prophet (saw) always used to pray to Allah (swt) to not leave him (saw) alone to himself (saw) for even a moment. The Prophet (saw) knew how lost the human can be without Allah (swt). How low the human can sink and what evil he can do. These men from among the children of Israil in Babylon learned the worst kind of knowledge and that is magic, and they used that knowledge to perform the worst of actions and that is adultery. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) help us to always remember Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that it is in His (swt)'s remembrance that the evil ones flee!

We need to emphasize once again that these two angels Harut and Marut were not in any way evil. Although they taught the people this magic, they first warned the people that this magic was forbidden and they even told them that the use of this magic leads to disbelief. After such a clear warning, it was the fault of the people for insisting on taking this knowledge from them. So these angels were only agents that Allah (swt) sent to test the people. The ones who kept away from these angels and did not ask for the dark knowledge that they possessed had passed the test, and the ones who went to the angels and insisted on gaining this knowledge even though they knew that it was forbidden for them failed this test. So it was not the angels who were evil but it was the people who learned magic from them. The angels were only a trial. May Allah (swt) save us from such trials!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And they cannot harm anyone by it except with Allah's permission**". This is a general statement that is true for all those who practice magic. They cannot harm anyone with their magic unless it be with the permission of Allah (swt). There is no might nor power except with Allah (swt), and only those whom Allah (swt) allows to be harmed with magic will be harmed by it. So even for the evil men in Babylon who learned magic from Harut and Marut, and for the evil ones who did magic in the kingdom of Sulaiman and for the Jews who did magic at the time of Prophet (saw), all of them could not do anything except with the permission of Allah (swt). Their magic has no power whatsoever over the Decree and Will of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah that all Might and all Power are with Him (swt), and not with these fools and evil ones who do magic. Rather than fearing them, we should only fear Allah (swt) and we should seek refuge only in Him (swt). They cannot harm anyone except with the permission of Allah (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) tells us about those who learn magic that "**they learned what harmed them and what did not profit them**". This is the nature of magic and the knowledge of magic. There is only evil in it and there is no good in whatsoever. It does not benefit or help but it only brings harm and pain. The first way in which it harms is that it is one of the greatest of sins, and so the one who learns it and practices it incurs the Wrath of Allah (swt). Thus such a person will be degraded and humiliated in the life of this world, and in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful punishment. May Allah (swt) save us from that! The second way in which it harms is that it reduces the rank of the person in front of all people. Who has respect for a sorcerer who delves in magic? Any Muslim would see that person as the most despicable and contemptible of all human beings. How can someone's heart be so empty of Allah (swt) that they would delve into magic and seek power other than in the All Powerful? So their magic does absolutely nothing for them, it only hurts them in more ways than they can ever realize.

As Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah, not only does their magic harm them but it also does not profit them in any way. What can they possibly gain from their magic? Even if their magic has any real power to it, what is the best that they can gain except a temporary and fleeting portion of the life of this world? A night with a beautiful woman, a handful of gold or some

authority over a group of people. This is the best that they can get. But what is this when compared to what they have lost? They have lost the Hereafter, they have lost their place in the Garden but most importantly they have lost the Pleasure and Contentment of their Lord and Master. When you compare what they have gained with what they have lost, you see that they have not gained anything. So we see that those who learned and practiced magic did not profit themselves in any way but they only brought upon themselves pain and harm.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**And certainly they knew that the one who bought this had no share of good in the Hereafter**". Allah (swt) reminds us once again that this was the main consequence of their action. They knew certainly and without a doubt that the one who bought this knowledge of magic had given up all their share of good in the Hereafter. It is a trade. By learning and practicing this magic, they are trading away the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and their place in the Garden for the small price of this world. Allah (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah that this is not something that they did out of ignorance, they knew very well how wrong and evil what they were doing was. They knew the consequences in the Hereafter for what they had done. But they still did it. They still did it despite their knowledge that it was wrong. How evil are such people? May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

Then Allah (swt) tells us "**And evil is that for which they have sold their souls**". This confirms and emphasizes what Allah (swt) told us in the previous part of the ayah. They have made this trade where they have given away their souls and bought the trifling and fleeting pleasures of the life of this world. All human beings are faced with a choice. Harut and Marut came to the children of Israil in Babylon and gave them a choice. They could either learn this magic that the angels had or they could turn away from this temptation as Allah (swt) had commanded them to do, and continue to worship and serve Allah (swt) as they were created to do. The Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) were also faced with a choice. They could follow the Prophet (saw) as Allah (swt) had commanded them to do in the Tawrah or they could turn away from him (saw) and follow the book of Asaf, which had the knowledge of magic in it. It is a choice that every human makes. It is a choice between Allah (swt) and their own selves. The evil ones whom Allah (swt) tells us about in this ayah chose themselves over Him (swt). Because of

this choice that they made they sold away their own souls. What is it that they have sold their souls for? Nothing but evil. Evil is choosing to serve one's desires instead of serving Allah (swt). Evil is earning the Wrath of Allah (swt). Evil is being denied the Mercy of Allah (swt) and the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Evil is the burning and searing pain of the Fire. Evil is being far from the peace and pleasure of the Garden. May Allah (swt) save us from it! Allah (swt) save us from it!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**If only they knew**". Recall in the previous part of the ayah how Allah (swt) told us that these people surely knew that what they were doing was forbidden. How they knew that what they were doing was earning the Wrath of Allah (swt) and a severe punishment in the Hereafter. So why then does Allah (swt) say in this part of the ayah "**If only they knew**"? In other words if these people already knew that what they were doing was wrong then why does Allah (swt) says here "**If only they knew**". It is because when one does not act on the knowledge that one has then one does not really have knowledge. These people knew that what they were doing was wrong, but they did it anyway. So what good was their knowledge where they knew that what they were doing was wrong? It is as if they had no knowledge in the first place. If only they would have acted on the knowledge that they had and stayed away from this magic, then they would have been worthy of this knowledge that they had been given. But because they chose to ignore this knowledge that they had it was like they had no knowledge at all. That is why Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**If only they knew**".

There are many lessons that we can take from this beautiful ayah. One lesson is that we must be wary of magic. Many scholars say that those who practice magic and those who believe that there is power in their magic have left the fold of Islam. To believe that there is power in magic is to believe that there is power that is not with Allah (swt). This is clear kufr and it is a belief that no Muslim should have. Just as we must believe that there is no power in magic, we must also believe that there is no power in amulets, charms, and other similar superstitions. How many Muslims are there today who wear various charms around their necks thinking that this in some way protects them from harm or it brings them good luck? Is this kind of thinking all that far from the magic that Harut and Marut taught the children of Israil? Magic is only a trick by Shaitan to distract you from the true purpose of your life and that is Allah (swt). We must try to spend as

many moments of our life remembering Allah (swt), thanking Allah (swt) and glorifying Allah (swt). When we start thinking about a magical charm or amulet that we believe will protect us, it is one less moment that we give to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to be wary of the many tests and trials that are awaiting us in the life of this world. Harut and Marut were sent to the children of Israil in Babylon only to test them. Every moment of our lives, Allah (swt) gives us different trials to test us in various ways. But the choice in all of these tests is clear. Do we choose Allah (swt) and win His (swt)'s Pleasure and the Garden or do we choose ourselves and earn His (swt)'s Wrath and the Fire? May Allah (swt) guide and support all of the good and sincere people in this world to make the right choice in this test!

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱتَّقَوْا۟ لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ خَيْرٌ ۖ لَّوْ كَانُوا۟ يَعْلَمُونَ

١٠٣

104. And if only they had believed, and had Taqwa, their reward with Allah would have been the best. If only they knew.

In the previous ayah we saw that the human being is always tested in various ways. Allah (swt) gives each of us a test to see if we choose Him (swt) or we choose ourselves and our desires. The Prophet (saw) was a test for the Jews, Harut and Marut were a test for the children of Israil in Babylon, and every human is also faced with a similar test. It is for this test that we have been created and it is how we fare on this test that we will be judged when we leave this world. In the previous ayahs we saw how the Jews failed in this test by throwing the Tawrah behind their backs, ignoring the command to follow the Prophet (saw) that was contained within it, and by following the sorcery book of Asaf instead. They failed just like many of their ancestors had failed when they had been seduced by the magic that was offered by the two angels. They failed in this test, and we know what was their destination as a result of failing in this test. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what have would happen if they would have passed in this test.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**if only they had believed, and had Taqwa**". These are the two conditions that they needed to fulfill in order to pass the test. They needed to believe and they needed to have Taqwa. To believe means to believe in Allah (swt). To believe in Him (swt) with utmost certainty and conviction. To believe in all of His (swt)'s Perfect Names. To believe that He (swt) is the only Creator and Sustainer as well as the only Lord and Master. It is then to believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). It is to see this man as one's connection and link with Allah (swt). It is to believe in everything that he (saw) says as being from Allah (swt). To believe in all this with the utmost conviction and to have this belief reflected in one's actions and emotions. This was the belief that they should have built within themselves. If they would have had this belief then they would have been successful.

The next condition is that they must have Taqwa. This means to have a constant awareness of Allah (swt). It is the striving and the effort to be aware of Allah (swt) for as many moments of your life as possible. When you are sure that Allah (swt) Sees and Hears all of your actions and your words and even your thoughts, and then you strive to do, speak and think in a way that is pleasing to Him (swt), then that is Taqwa. So you should strive to learn as much of the Quran and Sunnah as you possibly can in order to find out what is pleasing to your Lord and then you must implement what you learn in your life. Such is Taqwa. Allah (swt) tells us here that if only these among the children of Israil would have believed and they would have had Taqwa, then they would have passed the test that Allah (swt) had given them.

What would have happened to them if they had passed the test? Allah (swt) says "**their reward with Allah would have been the best**". The best reward with Allah (swt) is His (swt)'s Pleasure. It is the knowledge that your Creator and your Sustainer, your Lord and your Master is pleased with you. Could there be anything better in the entire world than this? Is there anything better than to know that Originator of the heavens and the earth is pleased with you? Could there be anything better than to know that the One Who brought you into existence is pleased with you? Because Allah (swt) is pleased with you, and because Allah (swt) Loves you, He (swt) will give you what will make you happy. That is the most beautiful of gardens under which rivers flow. To stay therein forever and to have therein whatever that you desire.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**If only they knew**". This is the same way in which Allah (swt) ended the previous ayah. These Jews made the wrong choice, but this was not because they did not know. They knew that magic was forbidden. The angels even told them that it was forbidden. How could Allah (swt) have made it easier for them than that? Allah (swt) gave them all of the knowledge that was needed to pass this test. But they willfully chose to turn away from this Message, so what good did their knowledge do for them? It was as if they knew nothing. If only they had put their knowledge to good use. If only they had used their knowledge to help them and to motivate them to worship and serve Allah (swt), then they would not be in the position where they had found themselves. The knowledge which they had been given could have saved them if only they had acted upon it. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) allow us to benefit from the knowledge that we have!

One lesson that we can take from here is to realize the importance of knowledge in the Din. Allah (swt) twice makes the statement "**If only they knew**". This shows us that knowledge could have saved them from making the wrong decision. Because if they knew, and if they realized from their knowledge the Mercy and the Majesty and the Glory of Allah (swt) then they never would have wanted to dedicate a moment in their life to anything other than Him (swt). They would be longing for the moment when they can leave this world and meet Him (swt). So knowledge would have saved them but they chose to ignore the knowledge that they had.

We should also remind ourselves that knowledge is only beneficial if we gain that knowledge for the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and we only learn the knowledge that will bring us closer to Allah (swt). Harut and Marut taught knowledge as well, but it was not the kind of knowledge that brings one closer to Allah (swt). It was a dark knowledge that took the people away from Allah (swt). That is why in our quest for knowledge, we must always differentiate between the knowledge that is beneficial and the knowledge that is not beneficial. The knowledge that is beneficial is knowledge that teaches us how to worship and serve Allah (swt) or it is knowledge that motivates us to worship and serve Allah (swt). It is this knowledge that we must strive to acquire. It is this knowledge that we must pray to Allah (swt) to grant us. Any knowledge that does not serve this purpose is not to be sought.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَقُولُواْ رَٰعِنَا وَقُولُواْ ٱنظُرۡنَا وَٱسۡمَعُواْۗ وَلِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ١٠٤

105. Oh you who believe! Do not say "Rai'na" but say "Ondurna" and hear. And for the kafiroon is a painful punishment.

In this ayah Allah (swt) teaches the early Muslims how they should address the Prophet (saw). This command was given in order to prevent the Muslims from behaving like the Jews in the way that they addressed him (saw). In the previous ayahs, we saw the long list of transgressions and innovations that were committed by the Jews. They did everything from their taking the angels of Allah (swt) as enemies to using magic to satisfy their lusts and desires, they were corrupted in both belief and in action. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how they were also corrupted in speech. Even the words that they spoke were evil. Not only did they speak words of great evil but they spoke this evil when addressing the Beloved of Allah (swt). When could one's speech and one's words be more important than when one addresses the Prophet (saw)?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by calling out to the believers and telling them "**Do not say "Rai'na" but say "Ondurna" and hear**". This ayah was revealed when some of the Jews used to use the word "**Rai'na**" to address the Prophet (saw). When this word is used in Arabic it simply means "listen to us", but when it is used in Hebrew it actually means an insult. Now when some of the early Muslims had heard the Jews use this word to address the Prophet (saw), they started to use it as well not knowing the Hebrew meaning that this word gives. So Allah (swt) revealed this ayah telling all of the Muslims never to use this word to address the Prophet (saw). Instead of using this word "**Rai'na**", Allah (swt) commanded the Muslims to use the word "**Ondurna**" when addressing the Prophet (saw). "**Ondurna**" has a similar meaning to "**Rai'na**" in Arabic but it does not give a double meaning in any other language.

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And for the kafiroon is a painful punishment**". Who but a disbeliever would use such a word when addressing the Messenger of Allah (swt)? How could anyone show such disrespect to the best of creation and the beloved of

Allah (swt)? These Jews knew about the double meaning that the word "**Rai'na**" gives and they purposely used this word because of this fact. This shows their deep hatred and animosity towards the Messenger of Allah (swt). When a human hates the beloved of Allah (swt), do you think Allah (swt) would love that human? What could be a greater loss than to lose the Love of the Most Loving? What does one have when one has lost this? One only has a "**painful punishment**". There are many levels to the pain of their punishment. The most obvious of course is the pain of burning in the Fire. In the Fire, there is not only the pain of burning but everything else that causes pain is there as well. So there is the cutting of knives, the biting of animals, the disease of the body, and everything else that causes pain. Every way in which the human can possibly feel pain in the life of this world, he will feel in the Fire. But this physical pain that they are feeling is only the beginning of their chastisement, they also have to feel the pain of the humiliation of failing in the test that their Creator had given them. Allah (swt) created every single soul and gave each soul this test; to see if it can live a life of worship and servitude to Him (swt). The ones who find themselves in the Fire have failed this test. So in addition to suffering the physical pain, they will also suffer the humiliation of knowing that they have failed this test. In the life of this world, they were so proud but on that day they will find themselves among the lowest of the low. But perhaps the greatest of pain that they will feel is the deprivation of the Love and Mercy of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the goal of every soul, whether it realizes this fact or not, and to fail in reaching this goal is the real loss of each soul. To be forbidden the Love of Allah (swt) and the beholding of Allah (swt) is the greatest of loss for any soul. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) give all of us His (swt)'s Love and may Allah (swt) allow and enable us to love Him (swt)!

There are several lessons that we can take from this ayah. One lesson is that it once again shows us the true character of many of the Jews. They are evil, they are deceitful, and they are cowardly. They are evil in that they would insult the Messenger of Allah (swt). They would insult a man who is striving hard and sacrificing everything that he has in order to take them out of the Fire and guide them into the Garden. They would insult a man who has been sent to them by Allah (swt), their Creator and their Sustainer. They would insult a man who is the Messenger

that they and their ancestors had been anticipating for centuries. How can you be more evil than this? In addition to being evil, they are also deceitful in that they would use a word such as this to address him (saw). They purposely chose a word, which has a double meaning in order to trick the Muslims into using this word as well. They knew that many of the Muslims did not know the Hebrew meaning of this word and so they would inadvertently insult their own prophet by using this word. So these Jews wanted to trick the Muslims into insulting their own prophet. In addition to being deceitful, they are also cowardly in that they would never dare to insult the Prophet (saw) directly. They were too afraid of the Prophet (saw), and they were afraid of the Muslims who guarded the honor of the Prophet (saw) closely. They knew that they would be in big trouble if they came and insulted in the Prophet (saw) out in the open. So they used this word that has a double meaning in Hebrew to insult the Prophet (saw) indirectly. They were cowards, but in one way or another, they wanted to vent their hatred and their jealousy towards the Prophet (saw). Once again we have to remind ourselves that there were some among the Jews who believed in the Prophet (saw) and who loved him (saw), like his (saw)'s own wife Saffiya (ra). But there were also many among them who were hostile to him (saw) in this way. May the curse of Allah (swt) be on them for their hatred of the beloved of Allah (swt)!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how much Love Allah (swt) has for the Prophet (saw) and how Allah (swt) wants us to love and respect him (saw) as well. Notice how Allah (swt) would reveal an entire ayah of the Quran only to tell the Muslims not to use a word that has a slightly insulting meaning in Hebrew to address the Prophet (saw). It is an insignificant word in an insignificant language, but what is important is the Love that Allah (swt) has for His (swt)'s Messenger. He (swt) does not even want the least amount of disrespect to be shown to the Prophet (saw), even unintentionally. This is the Love that Allah (swt) has for the Prophet (saw). This was the attitude that the noble Sahabah had towards the Prophet (saw) as well. Once a noble companion was being tortured and he was about to be crucified, and crucifixion as we know is a slow and painful death. When he (ra) was about to be placed on the cross, he (ra) was then asked if he would like for the Prophet (saw) to be in his place at that moment. This noble companion, may Allah (swt) be pleased with him, replied by saying that if he

were given his freedom and be allowed to return to his family only for the Prophet (saw) getting pricked by a thorn, he would not make that trade. He would rather be crucified than have the Prophet (saw) get pricked by a thorn. That is the love that he had for the Prophet (saw). This is the love that we must inculcate within ourselves for the Prophet (saw) as well. To love the Prophet (saw) and to strive to love the Prophet (saw) is a way of worshipping Allah (swt). So even if we do not find this great love for the Prophet (saw) within ourselves now we must still strive to build this love within ourselves by learning more about him (saw) and also by contemplating on all that he (saw) has done for us. That Insha Allah will be a good deed for which we will be rewarded. May Allah (swt) allow all of us to love the Prophet (saw), and to fight and strive to defend his (saw)'s honor against all those evil ones who would seek to insult him (saw)! May Allah (swt) raise the Prophet (saw) to the highest station in the Garden! May Allah (swt) grant the Prophet (saw) every single thing that he (saw) desires and may Allah (swt) make him (saw) experience nothing but pleasure and joy for all eternity! The best deserves the best!

Now we also have to realize that the best way for us to show our love for the Prophet (saw) is not by celebrating his (saw)'s birthday or by singing songs about him (saw) but it is by us striving to continue the mission for which he (saw) lived. This is what he (saw) would have wanted from us. The Prophet (saw) lived only to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. This was the purpose of his (saw)'s life. Now if the Prophet (saw) was alive in the world today, do you think that he (saw) would be pleased with the way that the world is? A world where the Law of Allah (swt) is not being implemented and the Message of Allah (swt) is not being carried to mankind. Do you think that he (saw) would be pleased with the condition that our Ummah is in today? Of course he would not. So if we want to show our love for the Prophet (saw) then we have to work bring back the Islamic State. This is when the Law of Allah (swt) can rule the earth once again, and the Message of Allah (swt) can be properly carried to mankind once again and the Ummah can be saved from the humiliation and persecution that she is suffering now. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace! The Islamic State will only return when Allah (swt) Sees this Ummah to be worthy of it. All that we can do is our try our best and hope that Allah (swt) accepts our efforts!

مَّا يَوَدُّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۡ أَهۡلِ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَلَا ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيۡكُم
مِّنۡ خَيۡرٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَخۡتَصُّ بِرَحۡمَتِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلۡفَضۡلِ
ٱلۡعَظِيمِ ١٠٥

105. Never will those who do kufr from among the People of the Book and the idol worshippers like for any good to be send down to you from your Rabb. But Allah chooses for His Mercy whoever He wills. And Allah is of Immense Bounty and Grace.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues with the address to the believers that He (swt) began in the previous ayah. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) commanded the believers not to address the Prophet (saw) with the word "**Rai'na**" because it has an insulting meaning in the Hebrew language. The Muslims had only addressed the Prophet (saw) with this word because they had heard some of the Jews use this word to address him (saw). In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims why these Jews should never be copied in anything that they do and He (swt) shows us the kind of people that they really are. These Jews who rejected the Message of the Prophet (saw) were among those who did kufr, and in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us the true nature of those who do kufr. Allah (swt) shows us why they are a people whom we should never try to emulate. Allah (swt) reveals to us the true feelings that they have towards us. Look at the way in which Allah (swt) describes these people in this ayah and then ask yourself if we can always be on friendly terms with such people.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**Never will those who do kufr from among the People of the Book and the idol worshippers like for any good to be send down to you from your Rabb**". Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that those who do kufr from both from the People of the Book and from the idol worshippers will never like for anything good to be sent down to us from Him (swt). They hate to see any blessing coming down to us from Allah (swt). What is the greatest of blessings that Allah (swt) has conferred upon our nation? It is Islam. It is the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). The noble messenger who walked on this earth and the blessed Book from Allah (swt) that he (saw) recited to us. The Prophet (saw) was an

integral part of this great blessing that Allah (swt) has given upon us. These kufar hate the fact that Allah (swt) has given us the Prophet (saw). They are jealous of the fact that Allah (swt) has given us such a great blessing in him (saw). They do not want any good whatsoever to come to us, but they especially do not want for us to receive the guidance to Allah (swt). That is why they hate this Quran and they hate the noble Messenger (saw) who brought it to us. That is why they made the Muslims insult the Prophet (saw) by addressing him (saw) with the word "**Rai'na**". It was because of this pride and arrogance. This hatred and jealousy. Thus we see their true nature; they are an evil people who not only live a life of heedlessness to Allah (swt) and disobedience to the Law of Allah (swt), but they also hate it when the true and sincere servants of Allah (swt) live a life of worship and servitude to Him (swt). They want to cause misery and suffering to the believers in one way or another. Because of their jealousy and their evil nature, they hate for any good to come down to the believers from Allah (swt).

We should also note that Allah (swt) does not say that this is true for all the people from among the People of the Book and the idol worshippers. There are good people among them who have not yet correctly received the Message. So this does not apply to them. We can see this from the language of the ayah, note that Allah (swt) says "the **ones who do kufr** from among the People of the Book and the idol worshippers", so this refers to the ones among the People of the Book and idol worshippers who received the Message and then turned away from it knowing that it is the Truth. They are the ones who hate for any good to descend on the believers from Allah (swt). Since they have received the Message they know what a great Blessing and Mercy this Message is, and since they have turned away from it, they do not want anyone else to have it. That is why they have this animosity and hatred towards the true and sincere believers. That is why they do not want anything good to come to them from Allah (swt). As always Allah (swt) Knows best!

So we have seen that these disbelievers hate for any good to come down to the Muslims from Allah (swt), but will their hatred prevent the blessings of Allah (swt) from reaching the Muslims? Allah (swt) answers this question in the second part of the ayah when He (swt) says " **Allah chooses for His Mercy whom He wills**". The fact that the disbelievers hate for the

Muslims to receive any good from Allah (swt) will not prevent that good from descending down upon the Muslims. It is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who decides on whom to send down good. Allah (swt) chooses for His (swt)'s Mercy whomever He (swt) wants. There is no one who can stop or prevent the Will of Allah (swt) from being accomplished. Allah (swt) has chosen this Ummah to be the bearers of this Message. Allah (swt) has chosen this Ummah to have the Quran. Allah (swt) has chosen this Ummah to have His (swt)'s beloved (saw). Allah (swt) has chosen this Ummah to have the correct understanding of Him (swt). All of this is Mercy that has descended down upon us from Allah (swt) despite the fact that the disbelievers hate it. So we see that Allah (swt) sends down Mercy to whomever He (swt) pleases, and nothing that the disbelievers say or do can frustrate Him (swt).

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) describes Himself (swt) to us when He (swt) says "**Allah is of Immense Bounty and Grace**". One of the many blessings of the Quran is how many times Allah (swt) has told us about Himself (swt) in it. The greatness of this Book comes from the Greatness of the One Who it tells us about. So if we want to come closer to Allah (swt), if we have to know about Him (swt), then there is no better source to learn about Him (swt) than His (swt)'s Book. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is of Immense Bounty and Grace. This means that Allah (swt) gives and gives without measure. All of the blessings that come from Allah (swt) are so numerous that they cannot even be numbered. The disbelievers hate for Allah (swt) to send any blessings for this Ummah, but they forget that Allah (swt) **is of Immense Bounty and Grace**. There can be no limit to the Grace and Bounty that Allah (swt) can send down on this Ummah. Allah (swt) sends down more and more and no one prevents Him!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how fortunate we are that we have been blessed with this Din of Islam. Allah (swt) has created all humans to worship and serve Him (swt), but for us Allah (swt) has already placed us on the Straight Path of worshipping and serving Him (swt). Through one way or another Allah (swt) has made us to find the Straight Path. It is now up to us to stay on this Straight Path and not deviate. Allah (swt) has given us two sources of light that if we always hold on to, we will never lose our way. Of course this is the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). How fortunate are we then? Not only have we been

guided to the Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) but we have also been given the sources of guidance that will keep us on that Path. All that is left for us is to hold fast to these sources of light and not deviate from them. So in addition to realizing how fortunate we are in that Allah (swt) has given this blessing of Islam, we also have to realize how important it is to hold on to this blessing. Allah (swt) told us in this ayah that the enemies of this Message do not want any good to come to the Muslims. So they will try their best to seduce us away from our Din. They will offer us every alternative to a life of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). That is why it is extremely important that we realize that there is nothing better than Islam. As Allah (swt) has told us in this ayah He (swt) is of Immense Bounty and Grace, and the greatest of bounties that He (swt) has ever conferred on any of His (swt)'s creation is this Din of Islam. Allah (swt) chose our Ummah to have this Din, He (swt) gave this Din to you as the greatest of gifts, which is why we must not substitute it for anything else. Not capitalism, not socialism, not secularism, not anything else. If we should ever replace this Din with another way of life, then we would be turning away from the greatest of Allah (swt)'s gifts. How then would we ever return to Him (swt)?

How unfortunate it is then that we see so many Muslims turning away from this great blessing. We see Muslims adopting ideas and concepts from the West when they have this great blessing from Allah (swt) in the Quran and Sunnah. Allah (swt) told us in this ayah that the enemies of this Message hate for anything good to come down to this Ummah from Him (swt), but what is this Ummah doing today? The greatest of blessings has come to us form Allah (swt) and we have turned away from it just like they have wanted us to do. We are doing exactly what our enemies want for us to do. May Allah (swt) allow this Ummah to wake up from the slumber that she has been put under! May Allah (swt) make us realize what a great blessing that He (swt) has given us in this Din, and in the Quran and in the Prophet (saw)! May Allah (swt) make us realize that He (swt) has chosen our Ummah to receive this Message above all other nations! May Allah (swt) make us realize that the enemies of this Message are working night and day to take us away from it! May Allah (swt) make them fail in their efforts and may He (swt) give this Ummah success! May Allah (swt) make us return to the bounty that He (swt) has given us for surely He (swt) gives Bounty without measure!

۞مَا نَنسَخۡ مِنۡ ءَايَةٍ أَوۡ نُنسِهَا نَأۡتِ بِخَيۡرٖ مِّنۡهَآ أَوۡ مِثۡلِهَآۗ أَلَمۡ تَعۡلَمۡ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٌ ١٠٦

106. Whatever ayah We abrogate or We cause to be forgotten, We bring what is better or what is equal to it. Do you not know that Allah has Power over all things?

This ayah continues on the theme of responding to all of the intellectual attacks that the enemies of this Message may bring. We have already seen how Allah (swt) responded to the attacks by some of Jews against Gibreel (as) and we also saw how Allah (swt) responded to their subtle way of insulting the blessed Prophet (saw) by using the word "**Rai'na**" when they addressed him (saw). In this ayah Allah (swt) responds to another of the attacks that they brought and this is regarding abrogation. When Allah (swt) changed the qibla that the Muslims face in prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah, many of the Jews found a problem with this. They questioned why Allah (swt) would change the Divine Law? They said that if the Divine Law was perfect, then there should be no reason to change it. They said that if the Knowledge of Allah (swt) was Perfect then there would have been no need to change the Law. They began to ask such questions in order to raise doubts in the hearts of the Muslims. In order to destroy this Message. In this ayah Allah (swt) responds to such attacks.

Allah (swt) says "**Whatever ayah We abrogate or We cause to be forgotten, We bring what is better or what is equal to it**". Whenever Allah (swt) abrogates a Law, He (swt) brings one that is better or one that is equal to it. The Law of Allah (swt) is Perfect, and it is applicable for all places and all times. But the situation of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah was special. In their time, Allah (swt) was building a movement that would bring down the institutions of kufr and replace it with the Islamic State. So there were specific laws that were revealed for this movement which were no longer applicable after this movement accomplished it's goal. During such a period, there was a need for abrogation. For example with regards to the changing of the qibla from Jerusalem to Makkah, many scholars like Mawdudi say that this event symbolized the role of carrying dawah to mankind being transferred from the children of Israil to

the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). Up until the Islamic State was established in Madinah, while the Prophet (saw) and his (saw)'s movement was working towards that goal, symbolically the role of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind was still with the children of Israil, but when the Islamic State was established this role was transferred from the children of Israil to the Muslims. From that point onwards it was the task of the Muslim Ummah to carry this Message to all mankind. That was why Allah (swt) abrogated the command to pray towards Jerusalem with the command to pray towards Makkah, it was to symbolize the changing of office for this important role. As long as the children of Israil had this responsibility, the qibla was still towards Jerusalem, but once it had been given to the Muslims the qibla was changed to Makkah. So we see that there is a very important role for abrogation. Here it symbolized the changing of responsibilities for this important task of dawah.

As Allah (swt) tells us in the ayah whenever He (swt) abrogates a law, He (swt) brings one that is better than it or one that is equal to it. The new command to change the qibla towards Makkah for example was both better and equal to the previous command to face Jerusalem. It was better in that Muslims now have their own qibla and they now have been given the office of carrying this Message to mankind, and it was also equal in that still fulfilled the requirement of a direction to turn towards in prayer just like the previous command did. When the mission of the Prophet (saw) was over and the Islamic State was established, Allah (swt) told us that He (swt) has completed and perfected this Din for us (Surah Maidah, ayah 3). Before this ayah in Surah Maidah was revealed however, Allah (swt) was still forming and crystallizing this Din for us. It was during this period that there was a need for abrogation of laws. But from this point onwards, there was no longer the need for abrogation because the Din was complete. The Din was complete so there was no need to replace one law with another. So we see that the Jews had no reason to find faults with the new qibla of the Muslims, or the fact that Allah (swt) abrogates the Divine Law. They did not realize how Allah (swt) was molding and perfecting this Din for us and how during such a time abrogation was needed. They did not realize or they did not want to realize. They were just looking for an excuse to find fault with this Din. To justify their rejection of it. To mislead the sincere believers away from it.

If we look again to the text of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "**Whatever ayah We abrogate**". Although Allah (swt) uses the word "ayah" here, it not only refers to the ayahs of the Quran but it refers to all of the laws of Islam. This means that there were laws in the Sunnah that were abrogated as well. For example Allah (swt) told the Prophet (saw) to forbid the Muslims from visiting the graves but He (swt) later permitted it. This is an example of one law in the Sunnah that was abrogated with another law in the Sunnah. If we take this meaning some may question as to how a law found in the Sunnah could be referred to with the word "ayah". These people might ask as to why Allah (swt) refers to the hadith of the Prophet (saw) as "ayah" when we know that only the verses of Quran are miraculous. The answer to this question lies in the fact that although the laws of the Sunnah are not a Miracle like the ayahs of the Quran are, they are still a part of Islam and the Din of Islam as a whole is an evidence for the Truth of this Message. This Din is the Perfect way of life for human beings on both the individual and collective level, this fact alone should be enough to show that it is from Allah (swt). No system or way of life in the history of man has brought such peace, tranquility and progress to both the individuals and the society. This also is a sign that it could only be from the Creator and not from the mind of any man. That is how even the hadith of the Prophet (saw) which are a part of this Din can be referred to with the word "ayah". All of the laws in the Quran and all of the laws in the hadith are from Allah (swt) and He (swt) can abrogate some of them with others of them as He (swt) pleases.

Although abrogation can happen to the laws found in the Quran and those found in the Sunnah, the scholars agree that abrogation only happens to the legislative text and not those ayahs and hadith that contain news. In other words only the ayahs of the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that contain laws are subject to abrogation. If an ayah or hadith gives us some information or news, such as the ayah telling us that Allah (swt) is One or the hadith promising shade for seven types of people on the Day of Judgment, these text are not subject to abrogation. The information in these kinds of text are definitive and not subject to change. They are always true, and will never change. So only the ayahs and hadith that contain laws have been abrogated for other ayahs or other hadith that contain different laws.

We can also note in the ayah that Allah (swt) says "**We cause to be forgotten**". From this part of the ayah, we see that there are two ways for a law to be abrogated. One way is that the law could be abrogated, but the ayah or hadith, which contained that law could still remain. For example, Allah (swt) says in the Quran not to come to the Salah when you are drunk. This is a law in the ayah that permits drinking alcohol, and only prohibits it when one is about to pray. But later the law in this ayah was abrogated by an ayah that prohibited drinking alcohol at all times. However the original ayah that only prohibited drinking when one is approaching the Salah remained in the Quran, but it no longer had any legislative authority. This is an example of when Allah (swt) makes abrogation for a law but leaves the text with us. The other way in which Allah (swt) abrogates a law is when He (swt) causes the ayah of the Quran or the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that has that law to be forgotten. This latter case is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this part of the ayah. Allah (swt) would make abrogation by causing the ayahs or the hadith that contain the law to be forgotten by the Muslims and forgotten by the Prophet (saw) himself. Imam Qurtubi tells us of some ayahs in the Surah Ahzab that were abrogated in such a manner. The narrations tell us that Muslims would wake up to pray in the night, and as they would stand in prayer and try to recite from the Quran they would not be able to remember the ayahs. This would happen to not only one Muslim but it would happen to all of them, everyone who had memorized the ayahs would no longer be able to recite it. The ayahs had been wiped from their memory. When they all went to the Prophet (saw), he (saw) would tell them that these ayahs had been abrogated and Allah (swt) had caused these ayahs to be forgotten from all their hearts. So we see that there are two ways in which Allah (swt) abrogates laws from the Quran, either by leaving the ayah and simply removing the legislative effect of the ayah or by causing the ayah to be forgotten thus removing it from the Quran. Allah (swt) does as He (swt) pleases and Allah (swt) has Power over all things.

Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how abrogation not only applies for one law in Islam being replaced with another law, but it also applies to Islam as a whole abrogating the previous ways of life that Allah (swt) had revealed. So just as Allah (swt) replaces one law with another He (swt) also replaces one Message or one Din with another. Many of the Jews at the

time of the Prophet (saw) would question why Allah (swt) had replaced the Tawrah with the Quran, they would question why Allah (swt) had replaced their way of life with the way of life that was brought by the Prophet (saw). This ayah is an answer for such questions. Allah (swt) does not replace any Din except with another that is equal to it or better. The Din that was revealed to the Prophet (saw) was just as good, if not better, than the Din that was brought by Musa (as).

Deep down inside these Jews knew that their questions had no weight. They knew that their Book had been corrupted, and so the way of life that they had been following was not from Allah (swt), and they knew that Allah (swt) had promised to send them the Final Messenger. Had this Final Messenger been Jewish, they would have found no reason to reject him and they would not have been asking these foolish questions. But as we mentioned, these were a people who were looking for a reason to reject this Message, and these questions about abrogation were only another manifestation of that rejection. This was the latest excuse that they were bringing for their rejection of this Message. In addition to being an excuse for their rejection, they also wanted to mislead the sincere followers of this Message with their questioning. It was not enough for them to simply reject this Message themselves but they also wanted to turn away from it as many people as they could. So their questioning of why Allah (swt) uses abrogation was just another tool for them to misguide the Muslims. They wanted to confuse the Muslims and put doubts into their hearts. Allah (swt) responds to their foolish claims and tells them in this ayah that if He (swt) has replaced the way of life that they had been following with Islam, it is only because it is for the best for them. They had corrupted their way of life by changing the Book that Allah (swt) had sent to them, so Allah (swt) sent to them this pure and unadulterated Message. A far superior Din to the way of life that they had been living. They knew this fact, but because of their pride and arrogance they could not bring themselves to admit it.

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Do you not know that Allah has Power over all things?**". The Jews were claiming that abrogating one law with another was something that Allah (swt) could not do. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) responds to such a claim. Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) has Power over all things and that He (swt) does whatsoever He (swt) pleases. Simply look at even the way that Allah (swt) asks the question. The

fact that Allah (swt) has Power over all things is something that they should have known, it should have been obvious. So how could they question why Allah (swt) abrogates one law with another? Allah (swt) has Power over all things, and He (swt) does whatsoever He (swt) pleases. This Din belongs to Allah (swt), and we belong to Allah (swt), so He (swt) should be free to do with this Din whatever He (swt) pleases and He (swt) can do with us whatever He (swt) pleases. If Allah (swt) chooses to abrogate one law with another law or one Din with another Din then that is His (swt)'s right and He (swt) is not to be questioned. The role of the servant is only to submit and to obey. This is because Allah (swt) has Power over all things and we have no power whatsoever. It is only those who forget their place in the creation. Those who are arrogant and proud who would ask such questions. They did not realize that Allah (swt) is the One Who can do whatsoever that He (swt) pleases.

Thus we see that the abrogation of laws had a proper and rightful place in the Din of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) completed and perfected this Din for this Ummah. Allah (swt) raised a movement and transformed it into a State that represented what it means to worship and serve Him (swt). In this process, Allah (swt) legislated different laws for different stages in the development of this Din and the development of this society. Even when Allah (swt) gave the Muslims a certain law He (swt) Knew that He (swt) would later abrogate it with another law. It was all part of His (swt)'s plan to complete and perfect this Din for us. What we have to realize is that it is not our place to question, but rather our place is only to submit to whatsoever He (swt) decrees. This is a part of us knowing Who Allah (swt) IS and a part of us submitting to Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise and He (swt) has power over all things. Part of our servitude to Him (swt) is our submission to this fact.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

108. Do you not know that surely to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? And you have from below Allah no *Wali* or helper.

This ayah continues on the theme of the previous ayah. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) brought our attention to those who questioned the abrogation of some of the laws of this Din. We saw how the true reason for their questioning was only because they were looking for an excuse to reject this Message and they were looking to put doubts into the hearts of the Muslims. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) also told us that He (swt) has Power over all things and that if He (swt) wanted He (swt) could replace one law with another. Here Allah (swt) continues to describe Himself (swt) and He (swt) shows us how abrogation is a right that He (swt) has.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Do you not know that surely to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth?**". For those who questioned abrogation, who did they think that they were questioning? Do they know not that Allah (swt) is the Owner of the heavens and the earth? The Lord and Master of this entire universe. Allah (swt) is One that will question and He (swt) will not be questioned. This should be the bottom line for us with our Creator. This should be our relationship with Him (swt). We must always remember that He (swt) is the King and that He (swt) does as He (swt) pleases. We are all His (swt)'s property so we have no right to question anything that He (swt) does. How dare we, those who depend upon Him (swt) for every second of our lives and who are so weak and limited compared to Him (swt) question Him (swt) in any way. So when it comes abrogation or when it comes to any other part of this Din regarding which Shaitan puts doubt in our hearts, we have to know our place and we have to know the place of Allah (swt). This Din belongs to Allah (swt) just like this entire universe belongs to Him (swt) and just like we belong to Him (swt). So Allah (swt) can abrogate any law that He (swt) wants, whenever He (swt) wants and no one has the right to question what He (swt) does. The King is never to be questioned by those under His (swt)'s Dominion.

The fact that this universe belongs completely to Allah (swt) also demonstrates to us His (swt)'s complete and full Knowledge. Allah (swt) is not only the Master of this universe but also He (swt) Knows everything there is to know about it. This is yet another reason why we cannot question why He (swt) abrogates the Sacred Law. Who are we with knowledge so limited to question what Allah (swt) the Master of this entire universe can do? You know so little, and yet you think that you can question Allah (swt). Allah (swt) owns this entire universe, and He (swt) has full Knowledge of this entire universe. In His (swt)'s infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, He (swt) has decreed that there be abrogation. Who are we then to question the Judgment of the All Knowing and the All Wise? Rather we should realize the limitedness of our knowledge and Infiniteness of His (swt).

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us "**And you have from below Allah no *Wali* or helper**". The Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) had rejected the Message that Allah (swt) had sent them. Allah (swt) was calling on them to believe in His (swt)'s Messenger but they turned away from Him (swt). Allah (swt) was trying to communicate with them but they were running away from Him (swt). Not only did they turn away from this Message but they also attacked and insulted the Messenger (saw). Not only did they insult the Messenger (saw), but they also came up with many ways to attack this Message and put doubts into the hearts of its followers. They would question why Allah (swt) uses abrogation when they knew very well that this Din belongs to Allah (swt) and that He (swt) can do with it as He (swt) pleases. They knew very well that this universe belongs to Allah (swt) and that He (swt) has Power over all things. Yet they still bring these questions in order to put doubts into the hearts of the believers, and to justify their rejection of this Message. What then is the relationship that Allah (swt) would have with these people for such arrogance and such insolence? Allah (swt) reminds them in this ayah by telling them that "**you have from below Allah no *Wali* or helper**". If you want to question what Allah (swt) does, then you need to be aware of this fact. There is no real ***Wali*** or helper for all mankind except Allah (swt). ***Wali*** means "protector" and it also means "friend". If through your arrogance, and your questions, and your rejection you make Allah (swt) into your enemy, then you should know that you do not have any protector or any friend besides Him (swt). If Allah (swt)

is not your Protector and not your Friend then what kind of a situation have you placed yourself in? Who can protect you from Allah (swt)? What good will any of your friends do for you against Him (swt)? If Allah (swt) is not your protecting friend then you should know that you are in the worst of situations that any human being can possibly be in. So this part of the ayah is a subtle threat against the Jews. If they continue to reject this Message, if they continue to oppose this Message, if they continue to bring baseless questions and arguments against this Message, then they have taken themselves away from having Allah (swt) as their Wali. How terrible is the situation of such people? What hope do they have of being saved either in this world or the next?

Not only do they not have Allah (swt) as a Protector and a Friend but they also do not have Him (swt) as a Helper. If you are among those who want to question Allah (swt) then you should also know that you do not have besides Allah (swt) any helper. If all your friends and your family came together to help you against Allah (swt) they would not be able to. Even the entire creation combined together cannot help you for even the most fraction of an amount against Allah (swt). This is what these Jews need to realize if they want to start questioning why Allah (swt) abrogates the laws or if they want to start questioning anything that He (swt) does! They should realize that there is true no protector, nor friend nor helper besides Him (swt). They should realize how much all of creation is in need of the protection and the help of Allah (swt) for every moment of its existence. They should realize how terrible it would be for them to be denied the protection and help of Allah (swt). What kind of a dire situation they have put themselves in. May Allah (swt) save us from being like them! May Allah (swt) make us realize our place in the universe and not question what He (swt) does! May Allah (swt) make us to realize the place of abrogation in this Din! May Allah (swt) make us pleased with this Din as we have it! Allah (swt) is the Owner of the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and He (swt) does as He (swt) pleases!

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْـَٔلُوا۟ رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَن يَتَبَدَّلِ
ٱلْكُفْرَ بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾

109. Or do you wish to question your messenger just as Musa was questioned before? And whoever exchanges kufr for Iman, surely he has strayed from the plain road.

In the previous ayahs we saw how the Jews were questioning the Prophet (saw) as to why Allah (swt) had abrogated some laws in the Quran and why Allah (swt) had abrogated their way of life with Islam. We also saw how Allah (swt) responded to their questions by first letting them know that He (swt) has Power over all things, this means that Allah (swt) can do whatever He (swt) pleases. Knowing this fact that Allah (swt) has Power over all things, no one should then say that Allah (swt) cannot abrogate, because the fact that He (swt) has Power over all things gives Him (swt) the right to do whatsoever He (swt) pleases. Allah (swt) then told us how the entire kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs only to Him (swt). He (swt) is the complete Master and Lord of the universe. So no one can question Allah (swt) in anything that He (swt) does, even in abrogating some Divine Laws with others. The ones who question Allah (swt) in such a way are either totally ignorant or totally arrogant. They do not realize who they are, and they do not realize Who Allah (swt) IS. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe to us the nature of these people and exposes to us their perversion and their deviance. Once again we have to emphasize that as we read these ayahs we have to look for these traits and characteristics within ourselves and try to eliminate them. Just like Allah (swt) gave us the perfect model to follow in the Prophet (saw) and the righteous Muslims who came after him (saw), in these ayahs Allah (swt) gives us the model of those whom we should strive to avoid being like. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by asking "**Or do you wish to question your messenger just as Musa was questioned before?**". This question is addressed to all mankind for whom this Message was sent. The Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt) for all mankind. Allah (swt) makes all mankind ponder by this question that He (swt) asks them. This is a question that we

must be asking ourselves as well. Do you want to question your Messenger just as Musa (as) was questioned before? You know the kind of questions that were posed to Musa (as), you remember the incident with the sacrificing of the cow, you remember how the children of Israil asked Musa (as) to see Allah (swt) directly, are these the questions that you want to be asking your Messenger (saw)? The disobedient ones from the children of Israil were asking Musa (as) questions about matters that they should not have been asking. So we should always be careful of such questioning. There are matters which Allah (swt) Knows more about than us. In these matters all that we should do is listen and submit.

Now it is important to note that the questioning that Allah (swt) refers to in this ayah is the questioning based on perversion and arrogance. It is not the question of one who is sincerely searching for the Truth. It is the question of one who is looking for an excuse to reject this Message. Questions that are not based on sincerity but questions that are based on arrogance. Are these the kind of questions that you want to ask Allah (swt)? You know that this Message is the Truth; this is something that you have certainty of, so why do you want to then put doubts in your hearts by asking these questions. Remember how Allah (swt) ended the last ayah by saying that we have no Protector or Helper except in Him (swt). You need Allah (swt) for everything that you do, and you would be lost and vulnerable without Him (swt). So do not abandon Allah (swt), do not walk away from Him (swt). Do everything that you can possibly do to come closer to Him (swt) and stay away from everything that will distance you from Him (swt). One of the ways in which you put distance between you and Allah (swt) is by asking these questions. These questions put doubts in your hearts. These questions are the questions of those who want to reject this Message. So do not put yourself in the same category with these people. Think about what Allah (swt) is asking you in this ayah. Allah (swt) is giving you an example of a people whom you should avoid trying to be like. These people asked the Messenger of Allah (swt) regarding Allah (swt) and regarding the Din of Allah (swt) matters about which they had no knowledge and no right to ask. Are these the kind of questions that you want to bring about Allah (swt) or about the Din of Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) is Perfect and He (swt) revealed the perfect Din for us to live our lives by. If we have a sincere question about Allah (swt) or about the Din, then we should ask

these questions by all means. For example if we want to know the meanings of some of the Names of Allah (swt) or we want to know the proper way on how to make our prayer, we should always ask those with knowledge such questions. Such questions are not only permitted to ask but they are should be asked, because it is an obligation for us to know about our Creator and to know how to practice our Din correctly. But at the same you should avoid asking questions that question what Allah (swt) does, for example asking why does Allah (swt) abrogate laws. You should realize where the boundaries of your knowledge are and not question your Lord about that which you have no knowledge of.

You should always remember your place in the creation. You should always remember the purpose of your existence. You were created only to love Allah (swt) and to strive to please Him (swt). So even your questions, even your thinking, should be directed towards this goal. Shaitan wants to make you arrogant in your knowledge, he wants to make you think that you can ask whatever question that you want. But you have to fight him, you have to recognize the boundaries which you cannot cross and you have to humble yourself before Allah (swt). The bottom line comes down to your intention in asking such questions. Do you ask the questions that will help you to worship and serve Allah (swt) or do you want to ask questions out of arrogance or simply to satisfy some curiosity. Know that Allah (swt) is pleased with the first type of these questions but He (swt) is not pleased with the latter. So we must always check our intention when we feel like questioning any aspect of this Din. We must save ourselves from the questions that will distance us from our Lord. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) save us from ever asking about that which have no knowledge!

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how Allah (swt) has addressed every problem that this Ummah can possibly ever encounter. One of the biggest problems in the history of our Din has been people asking questions about which they have no knowledge. If these people had known the meaning of this ayah then they would have known not to ask such questions. Allah (swt) has warned this Ummah about every pitfall that we can fall into, but since we have ignored this Quran we have fell into them. Even the asking of baseless questions without knowledge has been warned against, but we have failed to heed this warning.

How much is the trial that has happened in our history because we started questioning matters that should not have been questioned. Why did we not refer back to this ayah? May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) allow this Quran to be a guide in our lives once again!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And whoever exchanges kufr for Iman, surely he has strayed from the plain road**". This is the situation of those who ask questions such as these. They have exchanged Iman for kufr. They have taken certain belief and exchanged it for rejection and doubt. What is the situation of those who do this? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they have strayed from the "plain road". The plain road is the Straight Path, it is the way that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). It is Islam. It is the road that leads to what all human beings should seek and that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So for the ones who forget their place in the universe and they forget the place of Allah (swt), for the ones who ask questions such as these about issues which they have no knowledge in, they are the ones who have traded Iman for kufr. The asking of such questions creates doubts in the heart of a person. It leads to arrogance and it leads one to believe that they can question Allah (swt). So we need to be aware of this connection that Allah (swt) makes in this ayah between baseless questions and the trading away of Iman for kufr. When you ask questions about those matters where you have no right to question Allah (swt) that is what you are doing. You are trading Iman for kufr. You are taking yourself off the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and you are putting yourself on another path. We all know where this other path leads. May Allah (swt) save us all from that!

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the dangers of asking questions regarding Allah (swt) or this Din that we should not be asking. Recall how Allah (swt) said in this ayah "**Or do you wish to question your messenger just as Musa was questioned before?**". This ayah tells us clearly that there are some questions that should not be asked. These are the kind of questions that ask why Allah (swt) does what He (swt) does. It is not the kind of questions where you sincerely want to seek knowledge, because these questions should be asked. But questions such as "why does Allah (swt) abrogate laws of the Quran" or "why does Allah (swt) order women to cover their whole bodies" or "what is the wisdom in jihad" or "why does Allah (swt) put people in the Fire forever". These are questions about matters which we

have no knowledge, it is questioning why Allah (swt) rules in a certain way. There are good answers to each of these questions, but because of the limitations of our knowledge we may not know these answers. So for these questions we have to realize that our knowledge is limited, and because of that we should realize that we cannot understand everything that Allah (swt) does. We have to remember that in this universe Allah (swt) is the Lord and Master and we are His (swt)'s slaves, so we do not have the right to question what Allah (swt) does. The scholars have said that when we approach Allah (swt) with our minds we have to approach Him (swt) with humbleness and awe just as we approach Him (swt) in our prayer. We have to realize the shortcomings in our knowledge, and we have to realize our position in the universe. We have to accept the fact that Allah (swt) is the Owner of the entire heavens and the earth, and He (swt) does as He (swt) pleases, and that He (swt) has Power over all things. We have to remember that He (swt) is the All-Knowing, the Most Wise and the Most Just. Can we then ever expect anything from Him (swt) that is not just?

Thus we should remember from this ayah the kind of people who asked of their messenger such unnecessary questions. They were not sincerely searching for the Truth but instead they were only looking for a way to reject this Message. They questioned their messenger about Allah (swt) and the Din of Allah (swt) with questions that they should not have been asking. They were controlled by their arrogance and pride and they forgot their place in the creation. With such questions their intention was never to come closer to Allah (swt) but their intention was only to find an excuse to reject this Message that their Creator has sent to them. Through these questions they traded away their Iman for kufr, and it lead them astray from the clear road. It is such thinking and such a mentality that we must strive to avoid. Allah (swt) has clearly given us their example in this ayah. What is there left for us to do now except implement the guidance that Allah (swt) has given us? May Allah (swt) save us from being like these people! May Allah (swt) make us remember the shortcomings in our knowledge and may Allah (swt) make us content with the knowledge that we He (swt) has given us. May Allah (swt) allow us to be humble and submissive before His (swt) 's Knowledge and not ask questions about matters of which we have no knowledge! All success is from Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Knows Best!

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَٰنِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا
مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۖ فَٱعْفُوا۟ وَٱصْفَحُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ
يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

110. And many from the People of the Book would love to make you do kufr after you have believed, (this is only because of) envy from within themselves after the Truth has become clear to them. So pardon them and overlook until Allah brings His command. Surely Allah has Power over all things.

In the previous ayah we saw an explicit command from Allah (swt) not to follow the way of the People of the Book. Allah (swt) showed us how the Jews had asked unnecessary questions to their messenger and how because of such questions they had traded away their Iman for kufr. Because of such questions they took themselves astray from the clear path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and they put themselves into the paths of doubt and hypocrisy. The paths that lead to being distant from Allah (swt) and the paths that leads to the Fire. They only asked these questions because of their arrogance and because of their unwillingness to accept the fact that they were the slaves of Allah (swt) and so they did not have any right to question Him (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe to us the nature of these people. Allah (swt) shows us the error of their ways and He (swt) exposes for us the kind of people who they really are. As we learn what Allah (swt) says we should realize who are our enemies are and we should realize how we can avoid becoming like them. May Allah (swt) protect us from them and may Allah (swt) save us from being like them!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us that "**many from the People of the Book would love to make you do kufr after you have believed**". This ayah is specifically addressed to the Ansar who were living with the Prophet (saw) in Madinah, and Allah (swt) is telling them about some of the Jews in Madinah who used to be their allies. Allah (swt) is telling the Ansar how these Jews hate the fact that they had become Muslims and how they would love it if the Ansar abandoned their Din. But we can also take a general meaning from this ayah that is

applicable for our time as well. Just as Allah (swt) is warning the Ansar about these Jews in Madinah, we can also say that Allah (swt) is warning all the Muslims today about many among the People of the Book in our time. This is because there are indeed many Jews and many Christians today who hate the fact that we are Muslims and they would love for us to abandon our Din and become Kufar like they are. These are the Jews and Christians who have recognized the Truth of this Message but who have turned away from it. Either because of their pride or because of their love for this world. They have their way and that is what they want to follow, they will not follow the Truth even when it becomes clear to them. The bottom line is that they do not want to live the life for which they were created, the life of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So they have chosen to turn away from their Creator, they have chosen to live a life of serving their lusts and their desires. But they are a people who are so corrupted that it is not enough for them to walk away from Allah (swt) themselves, they also hate to see other people worshipping and serving Allah (swt) while they are not. So they will try their best to take the Muslims out of their state of Iman and into the state of kufr. Allah (swt) brings the attention of the Ansar in Madinah to such people as He (swt) brings our attention to such people as well.

Now we are not saying that all Jews and Christians today are like this. There are many among them who are good people and who are simply ignorant of this Message. If only these people were carried the Message correctly, they would accept this Din. But at the same time there are also many of the Jews and Christians who know about this Message. They know that it is the Truth from Allah (swt) and still they have turned away from it. Not only have they turned away from it, but they want to turn others from it as well. They hate this Message because it represents all that they hate. It represents full submission and complete servitude to Allah (swt). They hate this because they are an arrogant people who do not want to submit or serve anyone. Not only do they not want to submit to Allah (swt) but they do not want anyone else to submit to Him (swt) as well. So we have to beware of them. Allah (swt) is telling us clearly in this ayah what their intention is, just think how terrible it would be for you if they made their intention into a reality, if they were able to turn you away from your Din. Can you even begin to comprehend what the consequences of that will be? May Allah (swt) save us!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**(this is only because of) envy from within themselves after the Truth has become clear to them**". This is the reason why they want to take us away from our Din. It is not because they are concerned about our welfare. It is not because they think Islam is evil and they want to rescue us from it. No, instead they know that this Din is the Truth. They know that the way of life that we follow is the correct path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). They know that the Quran is the Word of Allah (swt). They know that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, the Truth has become clear to them. The evidences for this Message are so strong that there is no way for them to deny it if they were truly sincere. But despite their certainty that this Message is true they deny it. Not only do they deny it but they also have this hatred and this jealousy in their hearts for those who do accept this Message. They have a deep envy for those who truly submit themselves and worship Allah (swt) sincerely. This once again shows us their evil nature. They are people who have forgotten Allah (swt) and they only care about themselves. They choose to forget that it was Allah (swt) Who created them and that it is Allah (swt) Who sustains them for every moment of their lives. They think only about themselves and they hate the fact that there are others among mankind who are fulfilling the purpose of creation while they are not. So we see how evil these people are; they know the Truth, they purposely turn away from the Truth and they hate the people who did not turn away like they did. But worst of all is that they are a people who do not remember, reflect and submit themselves to the Glory and Majesty of Allah (swt). Truly the worst of their crimes is their heedlessness to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from them and may Allah (swt) save us from ever being among them!

In the next part of this ayah Allah (swt) says, "**So pardon them and overlook until Allah brings His command**". These are a people who are so evil and who are working day and night to take us away from our Din. But what should our response towards them? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that our response must be patience. Patience for the sake of Allah (swt). Everything that we do is for the sake of Allah (swt). Even though these are the most vile of people and they have the most cruel of intentions, we cannot take revenge on them for our own sake. We are the servants of Allah (swt) and we exist only for Allah (swt), so anything that we do must

only be for Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) commands us in this ayah to have patience and to forgive them for what they have done and to overlook their evil until the command of Allah (swt) comes. There are three meanings possible as to when is the time when "**Allah brings His command**". The command of Allah (swt) could be the command to fight them, or it could be their deaths, or it could be the Day of Judgment. All of these three meanings are present in the ayah. So we must be patient until the Islamic State is reestablished so that the command to fight can be given again, or we must be patient until their deaths or the Day of Judgment comes and then Allah (swt) Himself will deal with them. They are the most evil of people, but we must be patient until the command of Allah (swt) comes. Even though they are the worst of people, Allah (swt) still commands us to pardon them and overlook their faults. This shows us how the believer must always submit to Allah (swt), and everything that he or she does must only be for Him (swt).

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us once again that He (swt) has Power over all things. Even though they are a people who are constantly working to turn us away from our Din and even though we must be wary of them, we do not need to fear them. This is because Allah (swt) will take care of them when He (swt) chooses to bring His (swt)'s command. They cannot in any way prevent the command of Allah (swt) because Allah (swt) has Power over all things. Because of their rejection and their pride, they have made themselves into the enemies of Allah (swt). Now they should know that they can never save themselves from Allah (swt) because He (swt) has Power over all things. The only way that they can save themselves from Allah (swt) is to return to worshipping and serving Him (swt) as they were created to do. So this final part of the ayah is both a consolation for the believers and a warning for the disbelievers. It is a threat to the enemies of the believers who are trying to take them away from their Iman. They should know that they can never frustrate Allah (swt). For the believers Allah (swt) lets them know that they should not fear. They should put their trust in Allah (swt) and have consolation in their hearts that no harm will come to them from their enemies. Even though these people are working night and day to take away from the believers their most prized possession, Allah (swt) still commands the believers to pardon these people and to overlook their evil. Allah (swt) will take care of them when He (swt) brings His (swt)'s command for He (swt) has Power over all things.

So we must be aware of these people among the Jews and Christians who are working to take us away from our Din. We have to remember that they will use every sinister plot and plan to take us away from Allah (swt). They have a great jealousy and hatred in their hearts for those who sincerely worship Allah (swt). Such is the heart that does not remember Allah (swt) and such is the heart that the devils haunt. They hate the believers and they will try their best to drive the believers away from Allah (swt). They will put doubts into the hearts of the believers about the Din of Allah (swt) and it's applicability in the "modern world". As the Prophet (saw) told us, the first part of our Din that they will take away from us is government and the last is Salah. They have already taken away the first part and they are now working their way towards the last part. What then will be left of our Iman once our Salah is gone? They will also attack our Iman with strange philosophical questions. They will ask questions about Allah (swt) that should not be asked. They will make us think about Allah (swt) in ways that we should not think about Him (swt). They will inject their concepts and values such as "freedoms", "secularism" and "feminism" into the minds of our youth so as to corrupt and pollute them. They will make up lies and fabrications about the true followers of this Din by calling them "terrorists", "fundamentalists", and "extremists". Their one goal behind all of this is to take us away from our Din, to take us away from Allah (swt). They want to make us just like them, pathetic and miserable creatures who chase after the life of this world and who forget their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master. But despite this, we do not need to fear them. We have to remember that Allah (swt) is on our side and that He (swt) has Power over all things. We only need to be wary of them and watch out for their plots. We have hold fast to the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). We also have to be careful that we do not adopt any ideas or concepts from their culture. We have to be patient until the command of Allah (swt) comes. This might be difficult but we must remember that the reward is equal to the effort. It is through our patience in such dark times that we can ever hope of being worthy of the Garden. At the same time we cannot get angry with these people. That is also a way in which Shaitan shifts our focus away from Allah (swt). He fills our hearts with hatred for such people. Instead of letting hatred for them consume our hearts, we have to strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). We have to strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt), to carry

this Message to mankind and to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land. We have to replace the anger that is in our hearts towards them with love for our Rabb. May Allah (swt) enable us to do that! May Allah (swt) protect us from their plots! There is no might nor power except in Allah (swt), and to Him (swt) do we humbly supplicate!

وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُواْ لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ
عِندَ ٱللَّهِۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

111. And establish the Salah and give the Zakat, and whatever you send forth for yourselves from good, you will find it with Allah. Surely Allah is with all your actions All-Seeing.

In the previous ayah we saw how there were many among the Jews and Christians who were working to take the Muslims away from Islam. Despite their plots, Allah (swt) told us to be patient and overlook their evil and pardon them for what they have done. Allah (swt) reminded us that He (swt) has Power over all things and that when His (swt)'s command comes, these people will be dealt with in one way or another. The command of Allah (swt) could be the Day of Judgment, the command of Allah (swt) could be the ending of the lifespan of these people, or the command of Allah (swt) could be the establishment of the Islamic State at which time we have the permission to fight against them. But what should we do until the command of Allah (swt) comes? We saw from the previous ayah that we must be patient, overlooking and forgiving them their faults and their evil. But is that all there is that we must do? No, in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what else we need to do.

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah to "**establish the Salah and give the Zakat**". Once again we see that Allah (swt) begins this wonderful ayah just like He (swt) began this wonderful Surah. Allah (swt) begins this ayah by reminding us of the pillars of this Din. Salah and Zakat is what no Muslim can dispense with. In fact our scholars even question if the person who

abandons these is even Muslim or not. Salah is our connection with Allah (swt) and our connection with others in our community. To "**establish"** the Salah means not just to pray but to pray with all of the necessary conditions, primary among these is an effort to maintain a conscious awareness of Allah (swt) during the prayer. Zakat is when we sacrifice a part of our wealth for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Zakat simultaneously purifies our wealth and it helps other Muslims in our community. Through Salah and Zakat we purify ourselves and our wealth. We use our bodies, our wealth and everything that we have to draw close to our Lord. So even though the enemies of this Message are working night and day to destroy our Din and to drive us away from our Iman, Allah (swt) commands us in this ayah to continue to fulfill our duties and obligations. Primary and foremost among these are Salah and Zakat. Allah (swt) will deal with our enemies when His (swt)'s command comes, but until then we have to be patient with them and continue to establish the pillars of our Din.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and whatever you send forth for yourselves from good, you will find it with Allah**". This means any good deed that you do, any righteous action that you do for the Pleasure of Allah (swt), this is what you have send forth from this present life into the Hereafter. You will find the reward for that good with Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. Look at the beauty of the way Allah (swt) describes this concept in the Quran. It is as if your good deed is something tangible, something that is made when that good is done, and it is then sent forth into the future, into the Hereafter, only to be found with Allah (swt). You can think of it as weight on the Scale. You know that Allah (swt) will set up the scales for you on the Day of Judgment. Every single good deed that you do now is created at this moment and it is sent to that scale. When that scale is filled with good deeds, when it is heavy with good deeds, that is when Allah (swt) is pleased with you. What we mean by "good deed" here is any action of the limbs or of the tongue or of the heart that is done only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So for example helping out your Muslim brother or sister is a good deed, seeking knowledge about this Din is a good deed, reading the Quran is a good deed, lowering your gaze from looking at what is forbidden is a good deed, freeing yourself from jealousy and hatred is a good deed, having patience with the Decree of Allah (swt) is a good deed. All of these are examples of good that you

can do in the life of this world. When you do this good now, you create this good that is sent forth into the Hereafter, and Insha Allah you will find it with your Rabb when you meet Him (swt).

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is with all your actions All-Seeing.**" The actions that you do, whatever action that you take, even the smallest of deeds that you do even in the slightest of moments, you have to always be certain that Allah (swt) Sees what you do. Just imagine right now that you are a slave and that you are being watched by your master. Imagine also that you are a lover and you are being watched by your beloved. You are being watched at this very moment. Now realize that this is not imagination but it is reality. It is not only true for this moment but it is true for every moment of your life. This is a certain fact that you must always strive to remember. It is not easy, Shaitan will always make you forget this fact, he will trick you into believing that there is no one watching you. But to remember Allah (swt) is also an effort that you must strive to do. One of the most beloved of actions that we can do for Allah (swt) is just to remember Him (swt). We have to make the effort. However the beautiful thing about remembering Allah (swt) is that the more that you remember Him (swt), the easier that it becomes for you. Allah (swt) is Hidden behind a veil which is the life of this world. But if you make even the slightest of effort to lift this veil then you will perceive the Majesty and Glory of your Rabb in your heart. May Allah (swt) give all of us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) help us to be constant in our Salah and be generous in Zakat! May Allah (swt) allow us to send forth as many good deeds as possible so that we can find it with Him (swt) in the Hereafter! May Allah (swt) help us to remember Him (swt) and help us to remember that He (swt) is All Seeing with all of our actions! Notice that whenever Allah (swt) tells us about any of His (swt)'s Perfect Names, He (swt) always uses the most appropriate of His (swt)'s Names for the situation that He (swt) is describing. In this ayah when Allah (swt) commanded us to establish the Salah and to give the Zakat and to do as many good deeds as possible while at the same time being patient with all that the enemies of this Message do, Allah (swt) then reminded us that He (swt) is the All-Seeing. Allah (swt) linked our actions with this Name of His (swt), so that whenever we do the actions we must always remember this Name. We always remember how Allah (swt) is the All-Seeing. May Allah (swt) See from us only that which He (swt) is pleased with!

وَقَالُوا۟ لَن يَدْخُلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ
هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَٰنَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

112. And they say "None shall enter the Garden except the one who is a Jew or a Christian". These are only their desires. Say "Bring your evidence if you are Truthful".

Many scholars have said that among the greatest of trials for the Muslim Ummah are the Jews and Christians. They are a trial for us because they are the most similar to us in that they also have received a Book from Allah (swt). So the greatest danger for us is that we would follow them in the wrong ways where they went astray. Just like the Prophet (saw) has warned us about, if we are going to error then we are going to error just as they did. If they walked on a path that lead to their destruction, thenwe would walk on the same path. In addition they are also a trial for us because as Allah (swt) told us in the previous ayah, there are many among them who have a hatred and jealousy towards us and they will try their best to seduce us away from our Din. That is why Allah (swt) gives us many ayahs of the Quran where He (swt) warns us about these kind of people. We saw from the previous ayahs how they are a people who are working to take us away from our Din. However Allah (swt) tells us to be patient with them, and overlook their evil and pardon them for all of the cruelty and the injustice they do to us. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe these people to us so that we can be aware of them and also so that we can save ourselves from becoming like them. Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to the hypocrisy in their words and their arrogance to speak on behalf of Allah (swt). They are a people who are so arrogant that they think that they can speak on behalf of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And they say "None shall enter the Garden except the one who is a Jew or a Christian"** ". This is a claim that many among the Jews and Christians used to make. The Jews would say that no one would enter the Garden except the Jews while the Christians would say that no one would enter the Garden except the Christians. Allah (swt) responds to such claims by telling us "**These are only their desires**". Allah (swt) tells us that it is only their desires which are speaking when they say that only people of their religion

will enter the Garden. What they say is a lie that they have made up in order to satisfy their desires. It is not just any lie but it is a lie where they dare to speak on behalf of Allah (swt). We know that Allah (swt) is the Master of the Day of Judgment, so who but Allah (swt) can decide who will enter the Garden. What right do they have to claim that only Jews will enter the Garden or that only Christians will enter the Garden? They say this especially after rejecting the Prophet (saw), the final Messenger and the beloved of Allah (swt). They reject the Prophet (saw), they try to kill the Prophet (saw), and then they say that only they will enter the Garden. How dare they have arrogance to make such a statement? They are a people who live to serve their desires and their passions. They do not think about Allah (swt), they do not worship Allah (swt) and they do not serve Allah (swt). What right then do they have to the Garden of Allah (swt)? What have they done to be worthy of this Garden? In fact saying such a blatant lie only takes them further away from the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and so further away from the Garden. So we see from this part of the ayah how there are many Jews and Christians who claim that the Garden is only for them. They make such a statement only because of their desires. They want to commit all of the sins that they lust for and live a life where they serve their desires. They want to be firm in their arrogance and rejection of this Message. Yet despite all of this they want to console themselves by saying that they will have the Garden anyway. The Jews think that they deserve the Garden because of who they are and not because of what they have done. They think they are the favorites of Allah (swt), they even call themselves the "children of Allah". Because of this fact, they think that they are guaranteed the Garden no matter what they do. They think that they will be in the Garden no matter how many sins they commit. The Christians on the other hand claim that 'Isa (as) went to the Fire for their sins and because he (as) is supposedly their savior they are guaranteed the Garden. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, this is all desires and wishful thinking. This is what they have made up in their minds in order to justify their rejection of this Message and in order to commit all the lewd sins that they want and in order to exult in their arrogance. They made up these ideas and thoughts in their minds without any evidence from Allah (swt).

In response to such foolishness Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say **"Bring your evidence if you are Truthful"** ". Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to tell

them to bring forth their evidence for what they say. Notice once again that Allah (swt) does not speak to them directly. This is because the statement that they made is so despicable that they do not deserve for Allah (swt) to speak to them directly. Rather Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to tell them to bring forth their evidence for what they say. The Day of Judgment is an event that happens in the future. No one knows what will happen on that Day except Allah (swt). No one knows if they will get the Garden on that Day except those whom Allah (swt) has promised will get the Garden. So for these Jews and Christians to claim that only they will have the Garden, they need to have an evidence from Allah (swt). They need to have a statement from a messenger from Allah (swt) stating what they claiming. Allah (swt) commands them to produce such a statement if what they say is true. Of course they would not be able to because no such statement exists. Allah (swt) never told any messenger that only Jews or only Christians will enter the Garden. But the purpose of this command was to bring our attention the utter falsehood of their claim. Allah (swt) shows us that the one thing that can bring truth to their claim is evidence from Him (swt), and they do not have that. So in reality they have nothing.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how what these Jews and Christians claim has no truth whatsoever. This is still a claim that many among them make even today. They say it for the same reason that their ancestors said it, because of their arrogance and because of their love for sin and disobedience to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) proved their claim to be wrong in the ayahs of the Quran and in this ayah He (swt) showed us what an utterly baseless statement this is. Allah (swt) showed us how they only say this because of their low desires. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from ever convincing ourselves that we will go straight to the Garden only because we are Muslims!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the importance of producing an evidence for everything that we say. When we make any statement about this Din we have to be certain that there is evidence from the Quran or Sunnah for what we are saying. These Jews and Christians made up for themselves the thought that they would enter the Garden only because of who they were. There was no evidence for what they said in any of their Books, this was simply a thought that they made in their minds. This is what we have to avoid doing at all

costs. If we are going to say anything about Islam, we need to certain that there is evidence for what we are saying in the Quran and Sunnah. We have to always remember that this is our Din and this is our life. We sacrifice everything that we have for our Din so we have to make certain that the knowledge that we have of it is sound. Just as this Din defines our life it also defines the lives of our Muslim brothers and sisters. So we should treat it with utmost seriousness. We should not say anything about it unless we are sure of the evidence of what we are saying from the Quran and Sunnah. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that!

Similarly just like we must always bring the evidence from the Quran and Sunnah for what we say, we also must ask others for their evidence from the Quran and Sunnah when they bring to us an idea and say that it is from Islam. We must not simply accept any idea from others even if they are scholars. We must respect our scholars and follow our scholars but we must also ask them for their evidence from the Quran and Sunnah for what they say. Because at the end of the day, the only difference between an idea that was made in the mind of a man and an idea that comes from Allah (swt) is the evidence in the Quran and Sunnah that supports that idea. That is why it is important for Muslims to ask our scholars for the evidence for any idea that they present to us. This is the only way that we can prevent ourselves from being mislead and taken off the Straight Path of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Unfortunately many Muslims today have forgotten what Allah (swt) is saying in this ayah. They are blindly accepting what their so-called "scholars" are telling them without asking for any kind of evidence. Sometimes these "scholars" tell them to do what is forbidden or even what is kufr, and they blindly follow them only because they claim that they are scholars. For example how many "scholars" in today's world call for voting and political participation? They call for this without bring any credible evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, and at the same time they ignore the hundreds of ayahs and hadith which teach us that sovereignty is only for Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) warned us that this day would come. This day when knowledge would be lifted and men would speak about this Din from their desires. The only way that we can save ourselves from them is to ask them for the evidence for what they are saying. This is the only for us to know what particular action would be pleasing to Allah (swt). What matters in life other than pleasing Allah (swt)?

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُۥ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُۥٓ أَجْرُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

113.*Bal*! Whoever submits his face to Allah and he is a *Muhsin*, then surely his reward is with his Rabb. And there will be no fear on them and they will not grieve.

Allah (swt) told us in the previous ayah about the Jews and Christians who claimed that only the ones from their religion will go the Garden. Allah (swt) exposed their statement for the lie that it was by commanding them to bring forth the evidence for what they are claiming. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us who are the people who will truly go to the Garden. Allah (swt) establishes the requirement that must be fulfilled by anyone who wants to enter the Garden. Pay very close attention to what this ayah is saying because if you can do what it says then Insha Allah you will be among those who will enter the Garden.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "***Bal*!**". As we said, this is a linguistic tool used to severely reject an idea or concept. Allah (swt) rejects their statement that only the Jews or only the Christians will enter the Garden. Not only is this statement completely false and baseless but it also one that dares to speak on behalf of Allah (swt). It is a statement that makes judgment on behalf of Allah (swt). Who but the vilest of people would presume to speak on behalf of Allah (swt)? The ones who make such a statement knowing that it is false have the Wrath of Allah (swt) upon them, may Allah (swt) save us from being like them!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**Whoever submits his face to Allah and he is a *Muhsin* then surely his reward is with his Rabb** ". This is the condition that those who wish to enter the Garden must fulfill. The expression of submitting the face to Allah (swt) means that one must submit oneself wholly and sincerely to Him (swt). The face really means the entire person because the face is the noblest part of the person, so when you submit your face to Allah (swt) you are really submitting your whole self to Allah (swt). Not only are you submitting your whole self to Allah (swt) but you are also doing so sincerely and with the purest of intentions. The ***Muhsin*** is the one who is always conscious of Allah (swt) and who is always careful to do only the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Try and make yourself to be like this kind of person. It

is not that difficult once you think about it. You want to worship and serve Allah (swt) because of your love, awe and fear of Him (swt). All of these emotions exist in you simultaneously and it creates a very unique and special relationship that you have with your Rabb. You realize that Allah (swt) is your Creator, who brought you from non-existence into existence. You also know that Allah (swt) is your Sustainer, sustaining you for every moment of your life, giving everything that you have. You know that your goal and your return is to Allah (swt). You also realize that everything else in this universe also needs Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) has no needs. You also see that Allah (swt) is the Perfect One, with no weakness or flaws, because of which He (swt) is the One Who deserves all the worship and the obedience. When you realize all of this it makes you want to submit to Allah (swt) completely, living your whole life only to worship and serve Him (swt). So the requirement that the one who wants to enter the Garden needs to fulfill is that he or she must realize Who Allah (swt) IS, and then they must submit completely and wholly to Him (swt) based on this realization. To submit to Allah (swt) is to surrender to Him (swt) completely. To give up everything for His (swt)'s sake. These are the people whose reward is with their Rabb, this reward is the Garden. The Garden is how Allah (swt)'s shows His (swt)'s Pleasure to His (swt)'s servants. It is everything that they could ever want and desire. May Allah (swt) make us among those who witness and experience this Garden!

Allah (swt) says about such people, "**there will be no fear on them and they will not grieve.**" This is a reward that the ones who submit themselves to Allah (swt) will receive in this world and in the Hereafter. They submit themselves wholly to Allah (swt) and this submission takes away their fear and their grief. How can the ones who have surrendered themselves completely to Allah (swt) have any fear or any sorrow? What can you be scared of when you know that Allah (swt) is with you? You know that no harm can come to you except by the permission of Allah (swt). You also know that your Lord will not harm you if you are sincere to Him (swt) and you try your best to please Him (swt). So you fear nothing and you fear no one except Allah (swt). Similarly grief comes when you lose something, but you know that you will only lose what Allah (swt) has decreed for you to lose. Since you have surrendered yourself to Allah (swt), you are content with whatever Allah (swt) has decreed for you to have and you are

content with whatever He (swt) has decreed for you to lose. The only thing that the Muslim should fear losing are the moments of life when he or she could be worshipping Allah (swt), serving Allah (swt), glorifying Allah (swt), and praising Allah (swt). As long as you sincerely please Allah (swt), and you have a hope that He (swt) might be pleased with you then this is all that should matter. Once you realize that nothing else matters in life except the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) then all of your fears and sorrows will be gone. The only fear that you will have is that of the Wrath of Allah (swt) and the only sorrow you will have is with your own sins and your own moments of heedlessness. Nothing of this world would ever cause you sorrow or grief. This is what it means to submit completely to Allah (swt). This is what it means to be among the ***Muhsin***. May Allah (swt) make us among those who have this peace and tranquility! May Allah (swt) make us among those who have this Garden in our hearts before we go to the Garden in the Hereafter!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the simple fact that the true success both in this life and the Hereafter come from total submission to Allah (swt). It comes when you simply give up all of your pride and all of your desires and you surrender yourself totally to Allah (swt). When you make prostration in prayer you are putting your face on the ground before Allah (swt). You should try to manifest the reality of that prostration in all areas of your life. Everything that you do, everything that you say, and even everything that you think should be for Allah (swt). Your life should be a reality of that prostration. It is as if your face is always on the ground and it never comes up. You desire something and Allah (swt) desires something else, and you submit what you desire for what He (swt) desires. This is in reality what you were created to do. So when you do this you will be fulfilling the purpose of your creation. Not only will you be fulfilling the purpose of your creation, but you will get tranquility and peace in this life, and salvation and bliss in the next life. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to live our lives in total submission to Him (swt)!

وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ ٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَقَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَـٰرَىٰ لَيْسَتِ
ٱلْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۚ فَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

١١٣

114. And the Jews say "the Christians stand on nothing" and the Christians say "The Jews stand on nothing" but they both recite the Book. The same words were said by those who had no knowledge. Allah will judge between them on the Day of Standing concerning that which they differ.

Ibn 'Abbas (ra) told us that this ayah was revealed when a delegation of Christians came to Madinah to speak with the Prophet (saw). While these Christians were sitting with the Prophet (saw), a group of the Jews from Madinah also came in. Soon the two groups starting arguing with each other in front of the Prophet (saw). One of the Jews then claimed that the Christians follow nothing and he rejected 'Isa (as). At this statement, a Christian man replied and said that the Jews do not follow anything and he rejected Musa (as). That is when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah to the Prophet (saw). In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe to us how these people are. These people who are the enemies of this Message. Allah (swt) shows us the evil and corruption in their thinking which includes their arrogance and their pride for their own group, their total lack of sincerity for the truth, and their complete heedlessness of Allah (swt). Does this remind you of anyone you know?

Notice that Allah (swt) begins the ayah with the word "**And**". This shows us that even though this ayah was revealed about a specific situation, which was this conversation between the Jews and the Christians, Allah (swt) still connected it with the theme of this section of the Surah. So this ayah is both specific for that particular incident and it is also general in that just like the other ayahs in this section it describes to us the corrupted thinking of many among the People of the Book. Allah (swt) connects this one incident with the overall theme of this part of the Surah. That is one of the aspects of the Miracle of the Quran in that the ayahs have a specific meaning

for the situation in which they were revealed and they also have a general meaning which is applicable for all times and which holds true for all times. You will find this to be true for all the ayahs of the Quran which were revealed about a specific incident. They all have a general meaning which fits with the overall Message of the Quran even though they were revealed for a specific incident. Who but Allah (swt) could have given such a Book?

Allah (swt) then brings our attention to this conversation that took place before the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) says "**And the Jews say "the Christians stand on nothing" and the Christians say "The Jews stand on nothing"**". The Jews were saying that the Christians have no basis for what they say, and they reject 'Isa (as) and the Christians were saying that the Jews have no basis for what they say, and they reject Musa (as). Then Allah (swt) says "**but they both recite the Book**". The Book here refers to both the Tawrah and the Injeel. The Tawrah and the Injeel were both parts of the same Book that were given to the children of Israil. It was the same Book but only parts of it had been given to different messengers. In this Book Allah (swt) had confirmed that both Musa (as) and 'Isa (as) are His (swt)'s messengers. So we see the statement of both the Jews and Christians contradicts what is in their own Book. What does this mean then? It means that they have no sincerity for what is in their own Book. They do not care about what Allah (swt) has told them. They only want to raise their own group up and put the other group down. They only care about themselves and showing that they are the best. They do not care for others, they do not care for the truth, and they do not care for Allah (swt). So we see how evil a people can become when they forget Allah (swt). How selfish and arrogant they can become. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

Then Allah (swt) says "**The same words were said by those who had no knowledge**". What these Jews and Christians were saying was the same that was said by those who have no knowledge. The ones who have no knowledge could refer to the pagan Arabs or it could refer to the people who have never received revelation before. In general it is people who have no revelation and no guidance from Allah (swt). The people who have no revelation from Allah (swt) used to say that the Jews and Christians each stand on nothing. They would reject both Musa (as) and 'Isa (as) as messengers from Allah (swt). Thus Allah (swt) is showing us how

these Jews and Christians were speaking just like those who had no knowledge spoke. They are totally ignoring the revelation that Allah (swt) had given them and they are speaking like pagans and ignorant people. How could anyone be more ungrateful than this? They have revelation from Allah (swt), yet they completely ignore this revelation and speak what is contradictory to this revelation. They speak just like those who have no knowledge spoke.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Allah will judge between them on the Day of Standing concerning that which they differ**". As always, Allah (swt) links everything that happens in the life of this world with the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) will judge between these two groups on the Day of Judgment regarding what they said. Regarding how they spoke falsely based on whims and desires. Allah (swt) also shows us here that He (swt) is the final arbitrator and judge in everything that they say. The Jews do not have the right to say that they are correct and the Christians do not have the right to say that they are correct and even the Prophet (saw) does not have the right to say which of the two of them is correct. The decision and the judgment is only with Allah (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the total lack of sincerity that these people had to the truth. They both had in very clear terms, statements from Allah (swt), in their own Book saying that Musa (as) was a messenger from Allah (swt) and that 'Isa (as) was a messenger from Allah (swt). Yet each group would deny what Allah (swt) has told them in their own Book only to put the other group down. This shows that they did not care Allah (swt) and they did not care for the Truth. This is what happens to a people when they forget about their Creator. Shaitan takes over their hearts and they start thinking only about themselves. All that matters for them is bringing themselves up and bringing other people down. This is pride, and this is arrogance and this is the key characteristic of Shaitan. So if ever you are in an argument or in a debate and all you can think about is proving yourself right and proving the other person wrong, even if it means ignoring the truth, then you must realize that at that moment Shaitan has taken over your heart. That is why you must strive to remember Allah (swt) at all times. You must strive to remember that you only exist to worship and to serve Allah (swt). Everything that you do and everything that you say must be for Him (swt)! When Iman Shafi (ra) used to debate with another

person, he would always pray to Allah (swt) to make the truth manifest to him in the tongue of his opponent. This shows the sincerity that this Imam had for the truth. This shows the sincerity that he had for Allah (swt).

Unfortunately many Muslims today do not have this sincerity, even those who are involved in the dawah. Many among the Muslims who are supposed to be working for Islam only care for their particular group or movement. They think that their group is right and all the groups are wrong. They think that their scholars have the true knowledge and all the other scholars are deviants and innovators. Some of them would even accuse this whole Ummah of kufr even though we all believe in the same Rabb, we follow the same Messenger, we read the same Book, we call to the same dawah, we pray to the same qiblah and we walk on the same path. These Muslims do not care for the Truth, they only care to show that their group is correct. Some of them go the extreme of where they will not even allow their students to sit with anyone whom they consider an innovator or a deviant. They will not even allow them to listen to what other people have to say. For these Muslims, even if you were to present them with the clear evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, they still would not follow you. They will stick to the opinion of their group and their scholars no matter what. They would do this even if their so-called “scholars” are very close to the governments who set up monarchies and who do not rule by the Law of Allah (swt). For them all that they care about is their group. They have already reached the conclusion that their group is correct before they even look at the evidence that they are being presented with. How different are these Muslims then from the Jews and Christians who Allah (swt) describes in this ayah? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that our sincerity must be only for Him (swt) and His Messenger (saw)! Everyone else is human. Everyone else can make mistakes.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ وَسَعَىٰ
فِى خَرَابِهَآ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَن يَدْخُلُوهَآ إِلَّا خَآئِفِينَ ۚ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا
خِزْىٌ وَلَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٤﴾

115. And who is more unjust than the one who prevents (the believers from) the *masajid* of Allah, that His Name should be remembered therein, and who strives for their ruin? These are the ones who will never enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace and in the Hereafter is a great punishment.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe to us those who have forgotten Him (swt). These are the people who we have to always strive to save ourselves from becoming. We saw what kind of people they were in the previous ayahs. They try to drive the Muslims away from their Din only because of jealousy of them. They claim that only they are going to enter the Garden to the exclusion of all of mankind. They ignore the words of Allah (swt) in their own Books and they deny the messengers of Allah (swt). Here Allah (swt) shows us another aspect of their evil. Here Allah (swt) shows us how they treat His (swt)'s houses.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by asking us "**And who is more unjust than the one who prevents (the believers from) the *masajid* of Allah, that His Name should be remembered therein, and who strive for their ruin?**". Is there anyone who is more unjust than those who block the Muslims from the masajid of Allah (swt)? The masajid of Allah (swt) are the houses of Allah (swt) where He (swt) is worshipped and glorified therein. How evil are a people who will prevent the believers from these masajid? They prevent Allah (swt)'s Name from being mentioned therein. They prevent Allah (swt) from being worshipped and glorified therein. Is there anyone who is more unjust than this? Of course the answer to this question is known. There is no one who is more unjust than the ones who prevent the believers from the masajid of Allah (swt). The masjid is the house of Allah (swt). It is a structure that has been built so that Allah (swt) can be worshipped therein, so that He (swt) can be glorified therein, so that He (swt) can be purified and thanked therein. Now think about a people who stop the worshippers of Allah (swt) from

coming to the houses of Allah (swt). Could a people be more evil than that? Could a people be more unjust that? They themselves were created only so that they can come to these houses and worship Allah (swt) in them, but not only are they not doing that but they are preventing others from doing it as well. So in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to those who bar the Muslims from the His (swt)'s houses and He (swt) shows us how evil and unjust these people are. This is the extent of evil that a person can do when he forgets Allah (swt).

Not only do these people prevent the believers from the masajid but they also " **strive for their ruin**". These people strive for the ruin for the masajid of Allah (swt). There are two meanings that we can take from this. One meaning is that they are actually working for the destruction of the masajid of Allah (swt). They are burning down, destroying or desecrating the buildings themselves. Another meaning is that they are ruining the masajid by preventing the believers from worshipping there. The purpose of the masjid is so that Allah (swt) can be remembered therein. But when the believers are prevented from worshipping in the masjid, then what purpose is there to the masjid? What is the masjid then other than a collection of bricks?

The scholars differ concerning whom this ayah was revealed. Some scholars say it was revealed about the Quraysh tribe when they prevented the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims from the Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah. Other scholars say it was revealed about the Christians from the Roman Empire who destroyed the masjid in Jerusalem. Yet other scholars say that this ayah is general to all those who bar the believers from the houses of Allah (swt) and all those who try to destroy the houses of Allah (swt). This last opinion is most likely the strongest, and Allah (swt) knows best. What all of these groups have in common is that they are a people who have forgotten Allah (swt). They have forgotten Allah (swt) and they hate the true believers who believe in the Message that He (swt) has sent. This is what has made them keep the believers away from the houses of Allah (swt) and this is what has made them to destroy such houses. They want to prevent Allah (swt) from being worshipped and they want to prevent His (swt)'s Message from spreading to mankind. See how evil they are! May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

Allah (swt) then tells us about such people, "**These are the ones who will never enter them except in fear**". This means that such people should be barred from the houses of Allah (swt) such that they will never enter them except in fear. The law should be that the enemy who is found in the masjid should either be expelled or killed. So the only time they enter the masjid is when they are in a state of fear of being discovered and killed or expelled. This ayah shows us that the disbelievers should not be allowed to enter the masajid of Allah (swt). This was the ruling that Iman Qurtubi gives in his tafsir of this ayah and as always Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**For them in this world is disgrace and in the Hereafter is a great punishment**". This is the punishment for such people for what they have done. They have barred the believers from the houses of Allah (swt) and they have even worked for the destruction of the houses of Allah (swt). What do such people deserve for the evil that they have done except humiliation and disgrace in the life of this world and a tremendous punishment in the Hereafter? Their sin is so great that Allah (swt) will punish them both in this life and in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

One lesson that we can take from here is to once again see the evil that a human can do when he forgets Allah (swt). These are a people who prevented the worshippers of Allah (swt) from coming to the houses of Allah (swt) and they destroyed and ruined the houses of Allah (swt). How can a person forget Allah (swt) to such an extent that he would do such evil? Does he not realize that Allah (swt) is Seeing all that he does? Does he not realize that Allah (swt) is his Creator and Sustainer? Does he not realize that his final return is to Allah (swt)? He failed to realize all of this. He forgot Allah (swt) and that is why he worked for the ruin of His (swt)'s houses. What then is his station with Allah (swt) in the Hereafter after all the evil that he has done? How sure can he be that he will be kept away from the Fire?

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize what a great sin it is to block Muslims from the houses of Allah (swt) and to destroy the houses of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) curses the people who do this by promising them disgrace in the life of this world and the great punishment in the Hereafter. This great punishment that Allah (swt) promises such people is none other than the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from it! So we see that to bar the believers in anyway

from the houses of Allah (swt) is a great evil. The masjid is a building that exists only so that Allah (swt)'s Name can be remembered therein, and so that He (swt) can be glorified therein. So those people who block the sincere Muslims from the masajid are preventing the worship of Allah (swt). They are preventing people from fulfilling the purpose of their creation. We have to save ourselves at all costs from becoming like such people.

So if you are in charge of a masjid do not prevent Muslims from coming there to worship Allah (swt). This worship of Allah (swt) could be Salah or it could be halaqahs and circles of knowledge where Allah (swt) is mentioned. The sittings were Islam is being discussed are just as beloved to Allah (swt) as the Salah is if not even more so. The Prophet (saw) has described such as circles of knowledge and dhikr to be like the meadows of paradise. How beloved then must they be to Allah (swt)? So the Muslims should not be prevented from these. If you are in charge of a masjid, then do not prevent the Muslims from coming to your masjid because of a fear that Shaitan puts in your heart of the enemies of this Message. Are you so scared that the authorities will close down your masjid or that they will arrest you that you will prevent the Name of Allah (swt) from being mentioned therein by sincere youth who only want to serve this Din? Allah (swt) is more deserving of your fear. If you prevent the believers from worshipping Allah (swt) in such a way, then you should realize from this ayah what a great sin you are committing. You should remember what Allah (swt) is promising you in this ayah. Realize that we are all on this mission to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. This Din is much more than Salah. We all have to do our part. So do not prevent the youth from coming to the masjid to learn knowledge. Do not prevent the youth from giving halaqahs in your masjid. May Allah (swt) save us from ever preventing any Muslim to worship in the House of Allah (swt)! As we can see from this ayah, He (swt) considers such people to the most unjust.

وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا۟ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ



116. And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you turn then there is the Face of Allah. Surely Allah is *Wasi,* All-Knowing.

The scholars say that this ayah was revealed when Allah (swt) changed the qibla that the Muslims face in prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us that wherever we face in prayer, we will find Him (swt) there. Now we know that many among the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) were always looking for some fault to find with this Message. Not only did they not accept the Message themselves, but they hated the ones who did. Out of jealousy and hatred they wanted to drive as many Muslims away from Allah (swt) as they could. So when Allah (swt) changed the qibla from Jerusalem to Makkah, they started questioning why Allah (swt) had done that. Jerusalem was their sacred city and they demanded that the Muslims should be praying facing that city as well. They said that if this Message had truly been from Allah (swt) then He (swt) would not have changed the direction like so. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings to light the foolishness of their claim and He (swt) gives us powerful arguments with which we can respond to such allegations.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**to Allah belongs the east and the west**". This means that the east and the west both belong to Allah (swt) and whatever is in the east and whatever is in the west also belongs to Him (swt) as well. All directions belong to Allah (swt). What does that mean for us? As Allah (swt) says it means that "**wherever you turn then there is the Face of Allah**". Whichever direction you turn towards you will find Allah (swt) there. So the Jews had no right to claim that Muslims could only pray towards Jerusalem. This whole universe belongs to Allah (swt) and He (swt) can set as the direction of prayer any place that He (swt) wants. Allah (swt) owns the east and the west, and so to whatever direction in which you turn you will find Him (swt) there. So the true qibla is wherever Allah (swt) decrees it to be. Human beings, like these Jews, had no right to question it.

Now one important thing to note is that the fact that we all face a common qibla when we pray does not mean that Allah (swt) is in that direction. Allah (swt) does not have a direction. The Face of Allah (swt) can be found in all directions. The reason why we pray towards one qibla is to show the unity of our community. So a Muslim in Somalia, and a Muslim in Russia, and a Muslim in India, and a Muslim in Mexico will all face towards the same qibla. This shows the unity of our community, it has nothing to do with Allah (swt) being in that particular direction. To think that Allah (swt) is in a particular location is to restrict Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is beyond all directions because He (swt) is the Creator of all directions.

When Allah (swt) says "**wherever you turn then there is the Face of Allah**", we have to realize that we cannot take the literal meaning of this. This part of the ayah is *mutashabiyat* in that its true interpretation is known only by Allah (swt). From such ayahs we cannot take the literal meaning. Rather we only take a general meaning and we say that the true meaning is known only to Allah (swt). It is an important part of our Aqeedah to realize that Allah (swt) is not limited or confined to a particular direction. Allah (swt) is the Creator of all directions and so Allah (swt) is transcendent beyond all directions. This means that there is not a particular place where Allah (swt) IS, but rather He (swt) is beyond being in a particular place. Allah (swt) is beyond being in a particular location because He (swt) created all locations. If this sounds somewhat confusing to you, do not worry it is. Insha Allah we will try to explain, and we pray to Allah (swt) for guidance. The first thing that we have to realize is that our minds are so limited that they can never truly understand Allah (swt) completely. What we can comprehend from our minds is that Allah (swt) is beyond all need for time and space. This is because Allah (swt) is beyond all limits, and to be a body occupying space is a limit. So we say that Allah (swt) is not a body occupying space but rather He (swt) is beyond time and space. Only if we say this can we say that He (swt) is beyond all limits. To say that Allah (swt) is confined to a particular location is to say that He (swt) has limits and this cannot be. So Allah (swt) is not in this universe in the physical or literal sense. Allah (swt) is beyond time and space, both of these are His (swt)'s creations. and He (swt) is beyond all limits and confinements. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this! May Allah (swt) make us content with this knowledge!

But what then does Allah (swt) mean when He (swt) says in the ayah; "**wherever you turn then there is the Face of Allah**". This means that although Allah (swt) is not here physically, Allah (swt) is here through His (swt)'s Knowledge. Allah (swt) Sees, Hears, and Knows everything that happens in the universe to the most minute of details. So Allah (swt) is with us through His (swt)'s Knowledge, even though the essence of Allah (swt) is beyond this universe. A question that might come in your head is "so where is Allah (swt) then if He (swt) is not in this universe?". The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) is beyond being at a particular place. Only the creation can be at a particular place so that you can say "where" it is. Allah (swt) is beyond time and space so He (swt) is not in a particular place. So the bottom line is that we know that Allah (swt) Exists from the signs in the universe around us, but our minds are limited that we cannot comprehend the Essence of Allah (swt). Since we cannot comprehend the Essence of Allah (swt) we cannot say "where" He (swt) is. What we can say is that He (swt) is beyond this created universe. Thus we know that Allah (swt) Exists but He (swt) is beyond being in a particular location in this universe. This is a knowledge that we have to make ourselves content with. Such also is part of our submission to Him (swt). Allah (swt) Knows Best!

Even though Allah (swt) is beyond this physical universe, we know that Allah (swt) is closer to us than our jugular vein through His (swt)'s Knowledge of us and through His (swt)'s complete control over us and our surroundings. So even though Allah (swt) is beyond space and beyond direction, He (swt) is still closer to us than we can possibly imagine. Allah (swt) is not in a particular place in this universe, sitting high up in a big chair like some people claim, may He (swt) be Glorified and Exalted above what they say! Allah (swt) is also not inside some people nor is He (swt) everywhere in the universe as others claim. Allah (swt) created this universe, and He (swt) is beyond this universe. The Creator and the creation are wholly different from each other and it is only from the weaknesses and the finiteness of the creation that we know the Creator. Allah (swt) Knows best! May Allah (swt) guide us to understanding Him (swt) correctly!

Some people may also question what Allah (swt) means by the "**Face of Allah**". Regarding expressions such as this we must remain silent and not try to interpret it. What we know for sure however is that Allah (swt) does not have a face because He (swt) does not

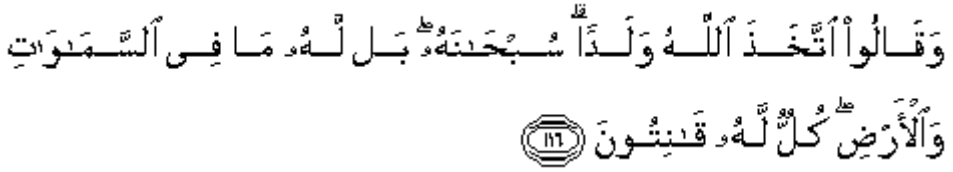
resemble the creation in any way. One general meaning that we can take from this part ayah is that the "Face of Allah" is Allah (swt) Himself. Notice that this expression has been used in connection with prayer and supplication. When you pray and supplicate, you are seeking the "face" of the person to whom you are praying. You are seeking the attention and the response to the person whom you are praying to. So when you pray towards Allah (swt) it can be said that you are seeking the Face of Allah (swt) but what you are really seeking is Allah (swt) Himself.

We must also remember that the people who read this ayah and who ask such questions such as "where is the face of Allah" are missing the point of the ayah. Once again we must remember that this is a mutashabiyat ayah. From the mutashabiyat ayah we take only the general meaning and we do not go into details concerning it. The general meaning that we can take from this ayah is that wherever you turn to pray, you will find Allah (swt) there. The point of the ayah is not for us to discuss if Allah (swt) has a "face" or not. The point of the ayah is not for us to question "where" Allah (swt) IS. The point of the ayah is to realize that wherever we turn we will find Allah (swt) there. It is not the essence of Allah (swt) that we will find, but He (swt) will be there through His Knowledge and His Hearing and His Sight of us. Whatever we say He (swt) Hears us and whatever we do He (swt) Sees us and He (swt) Knows us completely. That is the general meaning that we can take from this ayah without going into the details concerning it.

In the final portion of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is *Wasi* All-Knowing**". The word "***Wasi"*** means the All-Encompassing and the All-Surrounding. Notice that right after Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is ***Wasi,*** Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is All Knowing. So it is through His (swt)'s Knowledge that He (swt) encompasses and surrounds this entire universe. Allah (swt) is not in this universe in the literal sense but He (swt) encompasses this whole universe through His (swt)'s Knowledge.

Once again we have to remember that this is a mutashabiyat ayah, so we can never understand it fully. The general meaning that we can take from this ayah is that Allah (swt) is there wherever we turn. This general meaning is enough for us to worship and serve Allah (swt) correctly. Allah (swt) is not restricted to a particular place so you will find Him (swt) in whichever direction that you turn. This is the meaning that the Sahabah took from this ayah. They did not

ask unfounded questions. They merely used the knowledge that they gained from this ayah to bring them closer to their Creator instead of making them more distant from Him (swt). Insha Allah we also should have this same attitude. So know that wherever you are and whatever direction you are facing you will find Allah (swt) there. You can call on Allah (swt) wherever you are, and you know that He (swt) will Hear you. You can bow down and prostrate to Allah (swt) wherever you are, and you know that He (swt) can See you. You can love Allah (swt) wherever you are, and you know that He (swt) Knows your love for Him (swt). All success comes from Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Knows best!



117. And they say "Allah has taken a son". *Subahanu. Bal.* To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. And every single thing is to Him obedient.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to show us the errors of the people who came before us. The children of Israil were the nation that was charged with carrying this Message to mankind before us. They failed in that mission. In these ayahs that we are reading now, Allah (swt) brings to our attention all of the reasons for their failures. So that we can take a lesson. So that we can prevent ourselves from making their mistakes. In the previous ayahs we saw how the Jews and Christians both accused each other of standing on nothing, and how they both denied each other's prophets. We also saw how many of the Jews dared to speak on behalf of Allah (swt) and say that it was not appropriate to change the qibla that the Muslims face in prayer. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to another corruption in their thinking and that is how they ascribe children to Him (swt), may He (swt) be glorified and exalted above what they say.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by bringing our attention to their foul and corrupted speech when they say "**Allah has taken a son**". This was a claim that was made by the Jews, the Christians and all the pagans. They all used so speak such blasphemy. As Allah (swt) tells us in other ayahs of the Quran this is such an evil statement that the skies are about to fall down, the

earth is about to crack open and the mountains are about to burst because of the evil that is in these words. How can anyone speak such evil? Not only does such a statement contradict the reality completely, but it also a flagrant lie and the ones who speak it know that it is a lie. Why is that so? How is it that the ones who speak it know that it is a lie? Allah (swt) answers that question better than we could in the next part of the ayah.

Allah (swt) says "***Subahanu***". The literal meaning of this statement is "How Perfect and Pure is He". Allah (swt) is the Perfect One and that is why to ascribing children to Him (swt) is such a foolish concept. The Perfect One means that Allah (swt) has all of the perfect attributes and none of the negative attributes. Allah (swt) is the All Knowing, the All Hearing, the All Seeing, and the All Powerful. How then can any child or any partner share in these attributes? The very nature of such perfect attributes is that they can only exist in One. IF Allah (swt) were to share His (swt)'s perfect attributes with any partner or child then that would be a weakness in Him (swt). This as we know is impossible because He (swt) is the Perfect One with no weakness. Thus because Allah (swt) is so Perfect and so Pure that is why we can never ascribe any children or partners to Him (swt).

Another reason why we can never ascribe children or partners to Allah (swt) is because He (swt) is Self-Sufficient. This means that everything is in need of Allah (swt) and He (swt) does not need anything. How can Allah (swt) have a son when everything needs Him (swt)? Would not that "son" also be completely dependent on Allah (swt) for every moment of his existence just like all other creation? If that were so then could you call such a weak and dependent creature the "son of Allah"? Does not the son have to resemble the father? Allah (swt) is the One Who is free of all limits and free of all weaknesses. If Allah (swt) had a son then such a son would need Allah (swt) and if it needs Allah (swt) then it cannot be His (swt)'s son but it would be only a creation like everything else. The Creator is wholly different from the creation. Nothing can share in His attributes or be similar to Him (swt) in any way. Such is part of Who He (swt) IS. So if you say that Allah (swt) has a son then you are putting a limit on Him (swt), may He (swt) be Glorified and Exalted. You are saying that something shares in the Absolute Power and Authority and Perfection of Allah (swt). Of course we know that this can never be, that is why we can never

ascribe children to Allah (swt). ***Subahanu***. Allah (swt) is the Perfect and the Pure One, the One free of all limits and the One free of all needs. Everything in this universe is imperfect, limited and in need of Him (swt) and He (swt) is Perfect, without limits and in need of nothing and none. So how can anyone or anything be ascribed to Allah (swt) in any way?

In the next part of the ayah\ Allah (swt) says "***Bal*. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth**". Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the word "***Bal***". This word completely rejects and destroys their claim that Allah (swt) has taken a son. Then Allah (swt) shows us why their claim is so absurd. It is because the universe and everything in it belongs to Allah (swt) Alone. Allah (swt) created this universe and everything in this universe. Allah (swt) is also sustaining and maintaining this universe for every second of its existence. How then can Allah (swt) have a son? The Creator is One and the creation is everything else. All of the supposed "children" that they ascribe to Allah (swt) come from the creation. How then can the creation be the child of the Creator? The One is so different from all others, so how can the others be of the One? For example the Jews said that Ezra was the son and the Christians said that 'Isa (as) was the son while the Arab pagans said that the angels were the daughters. All of these "children" that they ascribe to Allah (swt) are from the creation. They are all limited beings. They were all created by Allah (swt). They all are in need of Allah (swt). So how can they be considered the same as Allah (swt)? There can be no comparison between Allah (swt) and 'Isa (as), there is no similarity between them whatsoever. So how can one be considered as the child of another? For example 'Isa (as) lived for a limited period of time, he needed water to drink, he needed food to eat, he needed air to breathe, he felt pain and he bled, he had struggle and strive hard in order to reach his goals, he made mistakes. This is what the human being does because the human being is a limited and weak creature. How then can you even compare such a being with Allah (swt)? How can such a being possibly be the son of Allah (swt)? So Allah (swt) demonstrates for us the utter foolishness of these people. They take something from the creation of Allah (swt) and ascribe it as a child to Him (swt), when in reality the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah (swt) and so does everything in it. Since everything belongs to Him (swt), everything is in need of Him (swt). How then can anything be of Him (swt)?

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And every single thing is to Him obedient**". Every single thing in this universe is completely under the Power of Allah (swt) for every moment of its existence. The vast majority of the creation is also completely obedient to Allah (swt). They are at every moment in a state of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). For every moment of their existence they are worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Not only are they worshipping and serving Allah (swt), but as Allah (swt) tells us in other ayahs of the Quran they are also constantly glorifying Him (swt) and making Tasbih for Him (swt). So the rock makes Tasbih for Allah (swt) by being a rock and fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. The mountain makes Tasbih for Allah (swt) by being a mountain and fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. Similarly the birds worship and serve Allah (swt) by going out in search of food, building nests and reproducing. So do all of the animals that crawl on this earth. There is not a single thing in this universe except that it is serving Allah (swt) and glorying Him (swt). The only exception to this rule are those among the human beings and the jinn, the ones who decide to turn away from the purpose of their existence. They are the only ones who are not completely obedient to Allah (swt). Everything else in the universe has submitted to Him (swt) completely. Even the humans and the jinn, whom Allah (swt) had given free will, are obedient to Allah (swt) in that they are completely under His (swt)'s Power. Allah (swt) can destroy them if He (swt) wanted to, He (swt) can guide them if He (swt) wanted to and He (swt) can allow them to stray if He (swt) wanted to. Every single thing is dependent on Allah (swt) for its existence and He (swt) is dependent on nothing. So how then could Allah (swt) have a son when every single thing in this universe is completely under His (swt)'s Power and every single thing is completely subservient to Him (swt)? Can any "son" ever make this claim?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize the dangers of Anthropomorphism. This term refers to the assigning of human characteristics and attributes to Allah (swt). This is one of the key differences in how we view Allah (swt) and in how the Jews and Christians view Allah (swt). They have assigned human attributes to Allah (swt), may He (swt) be Exalted and Glorified above what they have done! When they did this, the distinction between the Creator and the creation became blurred. They no longer saw Allah (swt) as completely and

wholly different from the human being. They started to view Him (swt) as somewhat human. So they started saying that God can forget and that He can make mistakes. They even said that He regretted creating some of mankind. Soon God for them was no longer the Lord and Master of the universe. Rather God became simply the "god of Israil" a human like being that lives in the heavens and who can make mistakes. Once they started viewing Allah (swt) in this way, it gave them the license to commit all of the sins that they wanted. After all "god" was imperfect in their minds, and so he could make mistakes. Maybe he was not aware of what they were doing, maybe he was not watching all their actions. Such thinking about Allah (swt) gave them the permission to commit all of the sins that they wanted. Because Allah (swt) was no longer that irresistible Power that they all had to submit to. Now that Allah (swt) was a no more than a man in their minds, they did not see a problem with ascribing to Him (swt) a son. After all they have sons so why should He (swt) not have a son, this was their twisted and perverted thinking. How cursed and perverted are they! All of this happened when Shaitan deceived them and told them to put the attributes of humans on Allah (swt). If they had always thought of Allah (swt) as He (swt) had described Him (swt) through the messengers; as Pure and One without limit or weakness, then this never would have happened. So the lesson for our community is that we must be careful not to assign to Allah (swt) any attributes that are not fitting for Him (swt). If we do then we will be opening the same door that these Jews and Christians opened, and we can see where they ended up when they opened this door. The danger is that there is a movement in our midst today who wants to do exactly this. They want to make Allah (swt) similar to human beings. They want to literally interpret the ayahs of the Quran where Allah (swt) speaks of "His Hand" and of His "ascending over the Throne". When they do this, they are opening the door for Anthropomorphism. This group even claims that Allah (swt) "has hands and feet"! May Allah (swt) save us from such blasphemy! May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from them and their corrupted Aqeedah! May Allah (swt) guide those among them who are sincere to the correct understanding of Him (swt)! All success comes from Allah (swt) and we pray to Him (swt) for guidance and support!

بَدِيعُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. Innovator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it "Be" and it is.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to describe Himself (swt) to us. In the process He (swt) shows us how foolish are those who claim that He (swt) has taken a son. This ayah is part of a section of ayahs where Allah (swt) shows us all of the ways in which the people who were given the Book before us went astray. One of the lessons that we can take from these ayahs is to look at the thinking and the behavior of such people and try to avoid it at all costs. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us the worst of their crimes and that was their claim that Allah (swt) had taken a son, may He (swt) be Glorified and Exalted above what they say. Allah (swt) showed us how foolish their claim was by reminding us that this entire universe belongs to Him (swt) and that everything in it is obedient to Him (swt). How then could anything in this universe even be comparable to Allah (swt) let alone be an offspring of Him (swt)? In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to yet another reason why it is so ludicrous to ascribe to Allah (swt) a son. Look how Allah (swt) completely destroys the corrupted Aqeedah of these people by bringing one argument after another.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by reminding us that He (swt) is the "**Innovator of the heavens and the earth**". The Name of Allah (swt) "**Innovator**" gives the meaning that Allah (swt) brought this universe into existence when nothing like it ever existed before. Allah (swt) was the One Who originated it. He (swt) was the First Cause. This is the meaning given by this ayah. There was a time when this entire universe did not exist, there was nothing of creation. Then Allah (swt) brought this universe into existence. Not only did Allah (swt) create this universe from nothing but He (swt) innovated this universe because there was nothing like it that existed before. This further goes to show us that Allah (swt) is wholly different from this universe. There is nothing like Allah (swt) in this universe and Allah (swt) is nothing like this universe. You cannot even compare them let along make any connection with them.

The fact that Allah (swt) originated the universe when there was nothing like it also shows His (swt)'s Power. Everything that the human being creates, he creates from something that was already there. So for example the human has made a car from the materials that already exist in the earth. But what can you say about Allah (swt) when He (swt) can create from nothing? Can you even begin to imagine the Power of such a Being? No you cannot. So how can you ascribe a son to Him (swt)?

Because Allah (swt) created this universe, everything in this universe is finite and limited. It only exists for a certain period of time. It only occupies a limited amount of space. It is limited in what it can do. For every single thing in the universe, there was a time in the past when it did not exist. Every single thing occupies only a fixed portion of the universe. Every single thing also cannot do everything because every single thing is limited in its power. So for example the fish cannot survive on land, the animal cannot fly, and you cannot see what is behind a wall. Everything is limited in some way. This is true for the angels, true for Ezra, and true for 'Isa (as). So how then could a limited and finite thing be the offspring of the Infinite and Eternal? When you think about the presumptions on which they base their arguments you can see how foolish and absurd they are.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**When He decrees a matter, He only says to it "Be" and it is.**". Such is the Power of Allah (swt). There is no effort or work involved when Allah (swt) wants to accomplish something. When Allah (swt) Wills for something to happen, it happens. Allah (swt) creates, sustains, directs and controls every single atom in this entire universe by Will alone. That is the Power of Allah (swt). How then could you ascribe a son who is only a man or a daughter who is only an angel to such a Being? Only the fools who do not truly understand Allah (swt) would ever say such a thing. This entire universe originated from Allah (swt) and the creation of it required no effort from Him (swt) whatsoever. Such is the Power and the Uniqueness of Allah (swt). From this we see the foolishness and the stupidity of those who would ascribe offspring from the universe to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is One and Only. This entire universe needs Him (swt) for every moment and He (swt) does not need anything. Glorified and Exalted be Allah (swt) above what they ascribe to Him (swt).

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ لَوۡلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا ٱللَّهُ أَوۡ تَأۡتِينَآ ءَايَةٞۗ كَذَٰلِكَ
قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِهِم مِّثۡلَ قَوۡلِهِمۡۘ تَشَٰبَهَتۡ قُلُوبُهُمۡۗ قَدۡ بَيَّنَّا ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ
لِقَوۡمٖ يُوقِنُونَ ١١٨

119. And the ones who have no knowledge say "why does not Allah speak to us or why are we not given a sign?". Just like these people spoke the ones who were before them; the same words. Their hearts are the same. Surely We have made the Signs clear for a people who are certain.

The Quran is a Book of guidance. In these ayahs that we are reading now we can see how Allah (swt) is guiding us away from the people whom we should avoid becoming. We always need role models. People who we can try to be like and people whom we should try to avoid being like. In these ayahs Allah (swt) gives us the clearest of descriptions of the children of Israil and of the mistakes that they made so that we do not become like them. So read these ayahs to yourself again and again. Memorize them and contemplate on them. Then try if you can see anything of the descriptions of these people in you, try to see if any of their behavior or their thinking exists in you. If you do find some of these undesirable traits within yourself, then you should pray to Allah (swt) to remove these traits from you and you should strive to remove them yourself. When you make the intention and the effort then Allah (swt) will complete your task for you. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And the ones who have no knowledge say "why does not Allah speak to us or why are we not given a sign?"** ". The first thing we can note is that Allah (swt) refers to such people as "**the ones who have no knowledge**". This tells us that such people are both ignorant and they are fools. They have no idea about the reality of this universe. They do not perceive the reality of this universe for what it really is. This universe is a reflection of Allah (swt). Everything single thing in this universe is a sign for Allah (swt). The ones who do not perceive these signs, the ones who do not want to perceive these signs are the ones whom Allah (swt) refers in this ayah as "**the ones who have no knowledge**".

These people say "**why does not Allah speak to us or why are we not given a sign?**". They claim that in order for them to believe in this Message they want Allah (swt) to speak to them directly or they want to be shown a sign. Allah (swt) responds to their claim by saying "**Just like these people spoke the ones who were before them; the same words**". The people to whom the messengers were sent before them also said the same thing. They also asked to speak with Allah (swt) directly and they also asked for a sign. What is the reason for this? Allah (swt) then tells us that **"their hearts are the same".** Both the people who were rejecting the Prophet (saw) in his (saw)'s dawah and those who had rejected Allah (swt)'s messengers from the past nations both have the same kind of heart. Finally Allah (swt) says "**Surely We have made the Signs clear for a people who are certain**". If they wanted Signs that this Message was the Truth, the Signs were already there. Allah (swt) was not telling them to believe in the Prophet (saw) on blind faith, on the contrary Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) with clear and undeniable signs. So why then did they not believe? Insha Allah we will try to answer this question in the remainder of our discussion of this ayah.

The first thing that Allah (swt) tells us after He (swt) told us their demands to speak with Him (swt) or be shown a sign was that "**Just like these people spoke the ones who were before them; the same words**". So these demands that the enemies of the Prophet (saw) were bringing to him (saw) was nothing new. These were the same doubts, objections and questions that were raised by every people to whom this Message was sent. From every people there were those who accepted this Message and those who rejected this Message. Now for the ones who rejected this Message, the question to be asked is whether or not they knew that this Message was the Truth? If you say that they did not know that this Message was the Truth, then you are saying that Allah (swt) would be punishing them for something that they are ignorant of. Such would be ascribing injustice to Allah (swt) and we know that is impossible. Furthermore Allah (swt) tells us clearly in the Quran that He (swt) will not punish a people until they have received the Message. So they had to have known that this Message was the Truth. If they knew that this Message was the Truth then why did they not believe in it? Allah (swt) answers that question as well in this ayah. Allah (swt) says "**their hearts are the same**". So it is a matter of the heart.

There is something wrong with their hearts that prevented them from accepting this Message when they knew that it was the Truth. So what was wrong with their hearts? We also know the answer to this question from the hadith of the Prophet (saw). It is the love of this world and it is pride and arrogance. These are a people who fell in love with the life of this world. They only cared about satisfying their lusts and their desires. Their pride and their arrogance was also a part of their lusts. It was the love that they had for themselves or the love that they hade for their tribe or nation. This was the disease in their hearts that prevented them from accepting this Message even when they clearly recognized that it was from their Creator.

This was common among all those who rejected the Message of the Prophet (saw) whether these were from the chieftains of Quraysh or the Jewish Rabbis in Madinah. They were such a short sighted people that they made the satisfaction of their desires the greatest priority in their lives. Because of this they turned away from the signs of Allah (swt) that were in the universe all around them. They turned away from the signs that were in the Quran. Everything in the universe and every ayah in the Quran points to Allah (swt) but they chose to turn away from all of this because of this love in their hearts for satisfying their desires. They knew that if they were to look at these signs, then they would have to accept this Message and then they could no longer live a life where they only existed to serve their desires. So as Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran this love for the world has created a disease in their hearts which makes them incapable of perceiving the signs of Allah (swt). It is important for us to remember that it was they themselves who put this covering on their hearts when they **chose** to turn away from these signs, when they **chose** themselves over Allah (swt). Allah (swt) did not do injustice to them but they did injustice to themselves. So this was the same for all mankind to whom this Message was sent since the time of Adam (as). Mankind divided themselves into two groups. The ones who chose Allah (swt) and chose to see His (swt)'s Signs, and chose to realize the Truth of His (swt)'s Message, and they became His (swt)'s worshippers and servants, and the other group were the ones who chose to turn away from Allah (swt), the ones who closed their eyes and their ears to the Signs of Allah (swt), and the ones who became servants of their desires. These are the two groups that mankind has always placed itself into. Which of these are you from?

So we see from this ayah that the issue never was that there were not enough signs to show that this Message was the Truth. Allah (swt) clearly tells us in this ayah "**Surely We have made the Signs clear for a people who are certain**". For a people who wanted to believe, for a people who wanted to submit themselves to Allah (swt), there were more than enough Signs. If you want to submit yourself to your Creator and your Sustainer then you will find more than enough Signs all around you. There are Signs in the physical world around you, there are Signs in the ayahs of the Quran, there are Signs in the life of the Prophet (saw), there are Signs in your own selves, there are Signs in your family and in your loved ones, and there are Signs everywhere and in everything. The Sufis used to say that to ask for proof for this Truth is like asking for a lamp to see the sunlight. The Signs are so obvious and so pervasive that there is no way that anyone could not see them. This entire universe is a blinding proof for Allah (swt). There are so many Signs that they are not only enough for you to know that this Message is the Truth but they are also enough for you to reach certainty in this Message. All that you have to do is stop for a moment to observe them and contemplate on them. So the issue here is not Signs or there not being enough Signs. The issue here is what you want. Do you want to be among the servants of Allah (swt) or do you want to be among the servants of Shaitan? Are you humble enough to submit to Allah (swt) or do you want to be lead around by your pride and your desires? The choice that you make is what decides if you perceive these Signs or not. If you choose to be a servant of your desires, then no matter how many Signs you see you will not believe. Your desires will place a veil over your eyes and a covering over your ears so that you will not perceive any of the signs of Allah (swt). But if you choose to be a servant of Allah (swt) then Allah (swt) will open the doors of understanding and comprehension for you. You will perceive and see the evidences for Allah (swt) everywhere that you turn. You will realize how this universe could not have been created except by Allah (swt) just as this Quran could not have been sent by anyone except Allah (swt). But ultimately the choice is yours. This is the test that Allah (swt) has given for all mankind. May Allah (swt) guide all the good and sincere people in this world to make the right decision in this test!

إِنَّآ أَرۡسَلۡنَٰكَ بِٱلۡحَقِّ بَشِيرٗا وَنَذِيرٗاۖ وَلَا تُسۡـَٔلُ عَنۡ أَصۡحَٰبِ ٱلۡجَحِيمِ ١١٩

120. Surely We have sent you with the Truth, as a bringer of good news and a Warner. And you will not be questioned about the companions of Hell.

In the previous ayah we saw the clear test that Allah (swt) had given all of mankind. Do they want to serve themselves and their desires or do they want to serve Allah (swt)? This test was presented before mankind in the form of this Message that was sent with the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) himself presented this Message to many different peoples including the Quraysh in Makkah and the Jews in Madinah. But the Prophet (saw) found that most of the people turned away from this Message. The vast majority of the Quraysh in Makkah, who were from his (saw)'s own tribe, turned away from this Message. They were experts in Arabic language and they were certain that the Quran could not have been composed by a human. They knew the Prophet (saw) for his (saw)'s whole life and they knew that he (saw) was not a liar or a charlatan. Despite this knowledge, they still turned away from this Message. Similarly for the Jews in Madinah; Allah (swt) tells us that they recognized him (saw) like they recognized their own children. That was how clear the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) were in their Books. Despite their certain knowledge that he (saw) was indeed the Messenger whom they had been waiting for and whom they had been commanded to help and support, they still rejected him (saw). So the Prophet (saw) saw that the people who should have been the first to accept him (saw) were rejecting him (saw). This must have been was draining on the blessed heart of the Prophet (saw), that was why Allah (swt) revealed this ayah to console him (saw).

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying to the Prophet (saw) "**Surely We have sent you with the Truth**". This part of the ayah reminds the Prophet (saw) of two important facts. The first was that he (saw) was sent by Allah (swt). He (saw) was not sent by any human being, but rather he (saw) was sent by the Lord and Master of the universe. This fact alone would uplift the heart of the Prophet (saw) because it would show him (saw) how noble his (saw)'s mission was. He (saw)

had been sent by the Lord and Master of the universe. The second fact from this statement to console the Prophet (saw) was that he (saw) was sent with the Truth. What he (saw) was calling the people towards was the Truth. It was not a lie that somebody had fabricated, but rather everything that he (saw) called the people towards was the Truth. The Prophet (saw) was calling the people to the True Reality and that was Allah (swt). He (saw) was reminding them of the true purpose of their existence, it was not to worship and serve their desires but it was to worship and serve their Creator and Sustainer. Could anyone have a nobler mission than this?

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) had been sent "**as a bringer of good news and a Warner**". The first task of the mission of the Prophet (saw) is to bring good news. The first part of this good news is guidance. The human being always needs guidance, without it he is lost and he does not know where to go. The human being does not know what is the purpose of his existence, he does not know why he has been placed on this earth and what he is supposed to do. So the first part of the good news that the Prophet (saw) brings is guidance. He (saw) shows the way to Allah (swt). Through him (saw), Allah (swt) reminds all of mankind why they have been created. Through the good news that the Prophet (saw) brought they now know what is the purpose of their lives. But does the good news end there? No, the Prophet (saw) also tells the people that if they live their lives as they had been created to do, then they will have a good and pure life in this world. They will have peace and tranquility, there will be no fear upon them and they will not grieve. That is because they know that this world is only a temporary adobe. They will only receive what Allah (swt) had decreed for them and no harm can come to them except what Allah (swt) permits. So there is no calamity or loss that causes them sorrow and they do not have any fear or anxiety from anything in this world. They also know that if they humbly worship and serve Allah (swt) as they were commanded to do, then Allah (swt) will provide for them and that He (swt) would help them out of every difficulty. Guidance, tranquility, the good life, provisions, and rescuing from difficulty is the good news that the Prophet (saw) brought for the believers in the life of this world. But the best part of the news that he (saw) brings to them is in the life after this. The Prophet (saw) brings to the believers the good news of the Garden and the good news of the Pleasure of Allah (swt). If

the believers only fulfill the purpose for which they were created by worshipping and serving Allah (swt) then they will be admitted into Gardens of eternal pleasure and joy. But what is even better than the Garden is that they will receive the Pleasure of Allah (swt). What could be better than to know that your Lord and Master, your Creator and your Sustainer is pleased with you? Every moment of your life is because of Him (swt) so is there anyone whose acceptance should be of greater importance to you? So for the Hereafter the Prophet (saw) brings the believers the good news that they will receive the Garden and the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

In addition to bringing good news for the believers the Prophet (saw) has also been sent as a Warner. He (saw) brings to the people the warning of the consequences of not believing in and accepting this Message that has come to them from Allah (swt). For the ones whom this Message reaches and they do not accept it, they will face suffering and humiliation in the life of this world. They will live a humiliating life where they exist only for the satisfaction of their lusts and desires. They will feel the constriction and narrowness of the life of this world as they feel every second that passes only brings them closer to their deaths. After their deaths, they will perceive the true reality of this universe that they were unwilling to acknowledge in the life of this world. At the moment of their deaths when their test is over and when they leave this world, they will see the true reality. From that moment on, they will know nothing but suffering. From the time that their soul is violently ripped out from their body, to the punishment they go through in the grave, to the terror they wake up on the Day of Resurrection, to the burning of the Fire. This is the terrible fate that awaits all of mankind if they do not return to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from it! The Prophet (saw) brings warning of this punishment. The Prophet (saw) is mankind's savior in that in following him (saw) we can save ourselves from this punishment. So we see that in this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) of the important role that he (saw) has. For all of mankind, the Prophet (saw) brings the best of good news and the gravest of warnings. Who among all humanity has had a greater role than this? Now do you see why he (saw) is the best of mankind? Now do you see why he (saw) is the leader of mankind? Why then can you not give him (saw) the respect and love that he (saw) deserves?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) "**And you will not be questioned about the companions of Hell**". Despite the great and important role that the Prophet (saw) had to play, he (saw) still saw many among mankind turn away from this Message. As we noted among them were the Quraysh who were his (saw)'s own tribe and the Jews of Madinah who were a people that were supposed to have been expecting him (saw) and who were supposed to have helped him (saw). Such rejection must have weighed down heavy on the heart of the Prophet (saw), so Allah (swt) comforts the Prophet (saw) by telling him (saw) "**you will not be questioned about the companions of Hell**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that their rejection of this Message is not his (saw)'s fault. The Prophet (saw) did his (saw)'s job; he (saw) carried the Message of Allah (swt) to them to the best of his (saw)'s ability. He (saw) presented to them the Quran and they knew that it was the Truth. They knew that a human could never bring a Book like this. He (saw) gave them the good news and the warning. But these people themselves **chose** to turn away from this Message. So how could the Prophet (saw) be blamed for this? Thus we see that Allah (swt) comforts the Prophet (saw) by telling him (saw) that it was not his (saw)'s fault that these people turned away from the Message. It was their decision and they made their choice, the Prophet (saw) had done his (saw)'s best to warn them but they turned away from him (saw). Now they find themselves in the burning Fires of Hell as a result of their rejection and their arrogance. But the Prophet (saw) will never be questioned about them or their horrible fate, he (saw) will in no way be held responsible for their rejection. "**you will not be questioned about the companions of Hell".** Just imagine hearing these words from Allah (swt), how much of a consolation must this have been for the Prophet (saw)?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how we should measure success. The Prophet (saw) was distraught because so many people had turned away from this Message that he (saw) had brought to them from Allah (swt). He (saw) was bringing them good news and warning and they were turning away from him (saw). How sad must the Prophet (saw) have been? But in this ayah Allah (swt) consoles the Prophet (saw) by telling him (saw) not to worry about those who had turned away from this Message. Allah (swt) shows the Prophet (saw) that true success does not come from converting the most number of people to Islam but true success

comes from being a sincere and devoted servant of Allah (swt). True success comes from fulfilling the purpose of your creation by worshipping and serving Allah (swt). True success comes from sincerely working for the sake of Allah (swt) to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. If the number of people whom you convert does matter then Allah (swt) would have chastised the Prophet (saw) for even one person going to the Fire. But He (swt) does not, rather He (swt) clearly tells the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) will not be questioned about the people of the Fire. So it does not matter how many people you convert and it does not matter if the people listen to you or not when you present the Message to them. As long you are working for the sake of Allah (swt) and you are striving for Allah (swt) then it does not matter how much of your task you complete. Just by the fact that you are working for Allah (swt) and you are trying your best, then Insha Allah you have already gained His (swt) Pleasure and that is the true success.

So in any work that we do for Islam we must always keep our intention for Allah (swt). If we do then we have already achieved success just by doing the work to the best of our ability and by keeping our intention for Allah (swt). So even if you are not able convert one person, or you are never able to bring back the Islamic State, or you are never able to stop your brother from doing the haram, you should still know that you have succeeded by doing these tasks for the sake of Allah (swt). All actions are by intentions and Allah (swt) will judge you more by the intention of your actions then He (swt) will for the result of your action. Now you must still try your best and you must never allow yourself to become lazy because you are working for Allah (swt) and He (swt) has commanded excellence in all actions. But if you do meet with failure, despite your best efforts, then you must not become distraught and you must never give up. Know that just by striving for the sake of Allah (swt), you have already gained His (swt)'s Pleasure and so you have already succeeded. See how Merciful and Bountiful your Rabb is! May Allah (swt) enable everyone in this Ummah to work sincerely for His (swt)' s Pleasure!

وَلَن تَرْضَىٰ عَنكَ ٱلْيَهُودُ وَلَا ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ
إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ ۗ وَلَئِنِ ٱتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم بَعْدَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ
مَا لَكَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

121. And the Jews and the Christians will not be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say "Surely the guidance of Allah is the guidance". And if you were to follow their desires after there has to you from the Knowledge, then you will not have against Allah neither Wali nor helper.

In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) has warned our Ummah about the Jews and Christians in several ways. We have seen how they are a people who had received the guidance from Allah (swt) but they had still gone astray despite this guidance that they had. Because of this fact, their example is the perfect example of those whom we should avoid. We should strive in every way possible not to be like them. So far in this Surah we have seen all of the ways in which they had gone astray, we have seen all of the mistakes that they made. All praise and thanks be to Allah (swt) because He (swt) has given us so many examples of the thinking and behavior of these people. We now have no excuse before Allah (swt) now if we end up following them. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what these people want from us, and He (swt) also tells us what He (swt) will to us if we do what they want.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**And the Jews and the Christians will not be pleased with you until you follow their religion**". Notice the Arabic "*wa of ataf"* with which Allah (swt) begins this ayah. This shows that this ayah is continuing on the theme of the previous ayah. So we cannot understand this ayah independently but it must be understood in the context of the previous ayahs. In the previous ayahs we saw how there were many among the Jews and Christians who were working to destroy Islam. How they were a people who would never believe in this Message no matter how many Signs they were shown. How they were a people filled with love of this world and full of pride and arrogance in themselves. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) and tells us as well that these people will not be pleased with us until we follow

their religion. They will not be happy with us until we give up Islam and follow their way. This is what they want from us and this is the goal that they are working towards.

What should be our response to their evil? What should we say to them when they try to tempt us away from Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) teaches us in this ayah to "**Say "Surely the guidance of Allah is the guidance"**". The guidance of Allah (swt) is Islam. It is the Quran and Sunnah. This is the real guidance. The goal and the destination of every single human should be Allah (swt) and the Quran and Sunnah are the only lights and maps that lead to this destination. That is why the true guidance is the guidance of Allah (swt). The Quran and the Sunnah light the path that we should all be following, everything else is going astray. Islam is the right path that all mankind was created to walk on. Every other path is one of error. So our response to these Jews and Christians is to tell them that the guidance that we are following is the correct guidance. This is the Straight Path and we are certain that it is correct. So no matter what they do and no matter what they say we will never deviate from it. We will never substitute the guidance of Allah (swt) for the misguidance that they are following. The misguidance that they are calling us towards. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to be firm in holding to the guidance that He (swt) has given us! May Allah (swt) make all Muslims realize that only the Quran and the Sunnah are the true sources for guidance for our Ummah!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) and to the Muslim community as a whole;" **And if you were to follow their desires after there has to you from the knowledge, you will not have against Allah neither *Wali* nor helper**". Notice here how Allah (swt) says "**if you were to follow their desires**", and He (swt) does not say "if you were to follow their religion". This shows us that what the Jews and Christians are following is nothing but desires. Their "religion" is nothing but their desires. They have twisted and changed their religion so that it allows them to succumb to their desires. The Jews say that they are the chosen people of Allah (swt), they even claim that they are the children of Allah (swt). Because of such a perverted thinking, they have convinced themselves that they are the favorites of Allah (swt). They believe that He (swt) will never punish them no matter what they do. They think that they are free to commit all of the sins they want, they can follow all their passions and their desires,

and never receive any punishment from Allah (swt). The Christians have also changed their religion in a similar way so that they can give themselves the permission to commit all the sins that they want. Some Christians claim that “god’s language is love and that he will forgive all sins”, others claim that ‘Isa (as) went to the Fire for all the sins of man and that one only needs to accept him as a savior to be pardoned for all sins. The end result for both of these corrupted ways of thinking is that they give themselves permission to commit all of the sins that they want. They can just go wherever their desires lead them and they never have to check themselves or control themselves in anything. Was there any evidence for what these Jews and Christians believed? Did any of these beliefs ever come from the words of a Messenger? Did any of these beliefs come from Allah (swt)? Of course not. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, these are simply their desires that they are following. They want to follow their desires instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). They would rather submit to their desires than submit to their Creator and Sustainer, their Lord and Master. So they change their religion to justify following their desires. They change the words that their Messengers told them and put in their place their own imagination and their own fancies. Their religion for them has become a joke. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

We can still see this thinking and the behavior that results from this thinking in the Jews and Christians today. The great sins such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality and usury are accepted and commonplace in their societies. These are sins that have been great sins since the time of Adam (as), but now they are accepted and commonplace in Western Society. Not only are they accepted, but they are encouraged and their practice is defended. All in the name of “freedom”, a disease that the devil has put in their hearts. All of this immoral behavior results from such perverted and corrupted thinking. To think that you are the favorites of Allah (swt) and that you are saved from punishment no matter how much evil you do is not based on any evidence from Allah (swt) and furthermore it is utter foolishness. What then is the purpose of the creation of the human being if he will not go through these trials and tests where he restrains himself and his desires for the sake of his Lord? How are you then in any way different from an ape? These people fail to realize this fact. That is why in their ideology they see the human as only an ape.

What is even more unfortunate than the fact that such baseless thinking and such perverted behavior has permeated through the lands of the West is that today such thinking and such behavior is also being adopted by the Muslims. How many Muslims are there today who think that they are guaranteed the Garden only because of the fact that they are Muslims? While it is true that anyone who believes in the Oneness of Allah (swt) will eventually go to the Garden even if they commit many sins, it is still foolish to place all one's hope in this fact. To have a false hope in this fact and then commit all of the sins that one wants is totally against the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) who himself (saw) was terrified of the Fire. The pain of the Fire is beyond imagination and to spend even fraction of a second in the Fire is something that we should all dread. The Prophet (saw) told us that if we were to spend even one moment in the Fire we would then forget all of the pleasures and joys that we enjoyed in the life of this world. The Fire is what Allah (swt) created to punish those who earn His (swt)'s Wrath so it is something that we should be terrified of. If we are not scared of it and if we are not doing everything that we can to avoid it then we have truly underestimated Allah (swt). Even more important is that if we are thinking in this way where we believe that we are the best only because we are Muslims, and that we do not need to strive to seek the Mercy of Allah (swt), then we can see which people we are following. We can see who we are becoming like. Allah (swt) had told us in Surah Fatihah that the ones whom we should pray to Allah (swt) to prevent us from imitating are the Jews and the Christians, and then Allah (swt) gave us ayah after ayah in Surah Baqarah and Surah Imran to show us how wrong these people were. How then can we earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) if we still end up following these people in their thinking and their behavior? How will we look in the Sight of our Creator? So it is very important for us to realize that what the Jews and Christians are following is not guidance from Allah (swt), rather they are only following their desires. This path that they are walking on will never lead to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Thus we must strive to our utmost never to become like them. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

We can also note from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) says "**after there has to you from the Knowledge**". From this part of the ayah we can see that Muslims today are in a very unique situation that no other people are in. We have **the Knowledge** that has come to us

from Allah (swt). This knowledge is the knowledge that has come to us in the Quran and Sunnah. We have the Quran, the only Book that Allah (swt) has ever revealed which is in itself a Miracle. This Book is the Speech of Allah (swt) and the Speech of Allah (swt) comes from the Knowledge of Allah (swt), and the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is **The Knowledge**. This Quran is what is True and everything else besides it is false. It gives the complete guidance on every aspect of our lives on how we can reach the Pleasure of Allah (swt). How we can fulfill the purpose of our existence. So how will we be if we allow ourselves to be misguided after we have this Book from Allah (swt)? When we have been given this clear Knowledge from Allah (swt) and then we throw it away to follow the ways of the Jews and Christians how will we be then? What will be our status in front of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment? Do you think that Allah (swt) will be pleased with us? May Allah (swt) save us from ourselves! We will be lost and astray without Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that if we were to follow the ways of the Jews and the Christians after we have this Knowledge that has come to us from Him (swt) then we "**will not have against Allah neither *Wali* nor helper**". Allah (swt) has given us the guidance in the Quran and Sunnah, and then we turn away from that guidance to follow the path of the devils, then how will we be in front of Allah (swt)? What will be our situation with Allah (swt)? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, we would then have no *Wali* or helper against Him (swt). As we know the word Wali means protector and it means friend. If we were to follow their ways after the guidance has come to us, then there will be no one to be our friend, no one to protect us and no one to help us against Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is telling us that if we were to follow their ways and throw away the guidance and the knowledge that He (swt) has given us, then we would earn His Wrath and there will be no one to protect us or help us against Him (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) save us from following their ways! May Allah (swt) enable us to hold fast to the Quran and Sunnah with every fiber of strength that we have!

This is one of the most important of ayahs for the situation that the Muslim Ummah is facing today and there are many lessons that we can take from it. One lesson of course is for us to realize that the Jews and Christians will never be pleased with us until we follow their ways. Now to follow their religion does not mean to believe in their Aqeedah, it does not mean we

should believe in ‘Isa (as) as “the son of god” or to believe in Ezra as “the son of god”. Allah (swt) clearly tells us in this ayah that they changed their religion so that their religion is nothing more than following their desires. So what Allah (swt) is warning us here against is not that we should become a Jew or a Christian, rather what Allah (swt) is warning us here against is giving up the Law of Allah (swt) and following our desires instead. Allah (swt) is warning us here against dismantling the Islamic State and restricting our Din only to the worship rituals. Allah (swt) is warning us here against adopting secularism and capitalism as our ideology and replacing Islam with these false and man made ways of life. This is what it means to follow the way of the Jews and Christians because this is what they have done. Their religion in reality is secularism, a way of life where they have restricted “god” only to the church on Sunday. This is their way of life and this is what they are calling our Ummah towards. They will not be pleased with us, they will not be satisfied, until we follow this way as well. They are using every way and means possible to make us adopt this way of life. They will sugarcoat this poison and give it nice names such as “freedom” and “democracy” in order to make the Ummah drink it. But what they are making us drink is poison. What they are making us drink is what will bring upon us the Wrath of Allah (swt). We need to wake up and look around to what is going in the world around us. There is only the path of Allah (swt) and the path of Shaitan, there is nothing in between the two. Till the Day of Judgment there will be this struggle between those who want to submit to Allah (swt) completely and those who want less than this. Which of these two camps do you want to be a part of? May Allah (swt) guide us! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that our only salvation is in Islam, in the full implementation of Islam at the individual, social, political and economic level! Anything less would not be worthy of Allah (swt)!

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيۡنَٰهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ يَتۡلُونَهُۥ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِۦٓ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ يُؤۡمِنُونَ بِهِۦۗ
وَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِهِۦ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡخَٰسِرُونَ ١٢١

121. The ones who have been given the Book read it with the true reading. These believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, then these are the losers.

So far we have seen Allah (swt) describe to us those among the Jews and Christians who received the Message from Him (swt) but who have turned away from it. These are the ones who rejected the Message even when they were certain that it was the Truth. These were a people who were slaves of their passions and desires. That is why they changed their Books with their own hands so that they could allow themselves to commit all the sins that they want. They did not follow the Truth but they only followed their vain desires. Allah (swt) warned us that they will never be pleased with us until we follow their ways, they will never be pleased until we compromise on our Din like they did on theirs. It was not enough for them to forget Allah (swt) themselves, but they also wanted to take as many people as they could away from Him (swt). That is how much of an evil people they were. But were they all like this? Did all of the Jews and Christians reject the Message of the Prophet (saw) when it reached them? Were there any good and sincere people among them? In this ayah Allah (swt) answers these questions.

Allah (swt) says "**The ones who have been given the Book read it with the true reading. These believe in it**". So we see from this part of the ayah that there was a group from among the People of the Book who did believe. Allah (swt) says about such people "**The ones who have been given the Book read it with the true reading**". These were the ones who read their Book as it should be read. They read it with sincerity and a pure heart that was seeking only Allah (swt). They saw all the Signs of Allah (swt) in the world all around them, and they recognized that they were created with a purpose. They knew that they existed only to worship and serve Allah (swt), so they were waiting and expecting the Message that Allah (swt) had promised would come to them in their Books. So when the Message from the Final Messenger reached them, they believed in it. They did not turn away from it and they did not reject it like

many others from their people, but they followed it because they saw that it was the Truth. Examples of such people from the lifetime of the Prophet (saw) are Abdullah bin Salam (ra), Saffiya (ra) the wife of the Prophet (saw), and Aday bin Hatim (ra). These righteous men and women were Jews or Christians but they were not like many others from their people, rather they saw the Truth of this Message and they followed the Prophet (saw). They had a sincere desire to serve their Lord and Master as they knew that they were created to do. So as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah they read their Book with a true reading. When Allah (swt) told them in their Book to follow the Final Messenger that He (swt) would send, they listened and obeyed. They did not reject the command of Allah (swt) or come up with excuses. They read their Book with a sincerity to serve their Lord and they believed in it. May Allah (swt) accept their efforts and reward them!

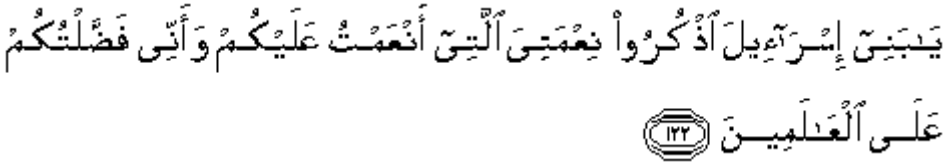
In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells to us "**And whoever disbelieves in it, then these are the losers**". Now Allah (swt) brings our attention back to those who reject this Message. So we see that Allah (swt) divides the People of the Book into two groups. The ones who read their Book sincerely and who then obey what Allah (swt) tells them in their Book, especially the command to follow the Prophet (saw), and the ones who ignore what Allah (swt) commands them in the Book and so they disbelieve in the Prophet (saw). The first of these groups has earned the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the second of these groups are the losers. They have lost everything, both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. In the life of this world they have lost everything that they would have gained if they had only followed this Message. This includes the peace and tranquility that comes from submitting to Allah (swt). This includes the removal of fear and grief. This includes the good and pure life. This includes help and support from Allah (swt). All of this is what they have lost in the life of this world. But what they have lost in the Hereafter is much worse. They have lost their place in the Garden, and we know that there is only one place that one can go to if they lose their place in the Garden. They are in the Fire and so they have lost being in even one moment without pain and suffering. They have lost their wealth, and their position, and their family and they have lost all that gave them pleasure in the life of this world. They have lost their pride and arrogance because we know that on the Day of Judgment they will be resurrected as the size of ants and all of mankind will trample on them. But

worst of all is that they have lost the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Just imagine how terrible it is to know that your Creator and your Sustainer, your Lord and your Master is displeased with you? Once a human being truly realizes Allah (swt) then they will realize how painful this is. Not only have they lost the Pleasure of Allah (swt) but they have also lost the Sight of Allah (swt). We know that the greatest of pleasures for the people of the Garden is that they will be able to behold Allah (swt). These people have lost this greatest of joys. They have lost all of this because they turned away from this Message when they knew that it was the Truth.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that there are no people who are inherently evil. There may be some persons among a people who are evil but the nation as a whole cannot be evil. We see that even among the children of Israil there were those who read the Tawrah correctly, and so believed in and followed the Prophet (saw) as it commanded them to do. They helped and supported the Prophet (saw) and in doing so they sacrificed their lives and their wealth for Allah (swt). They were better Muslims than you and me. So we see that there is nothing in the race that a person comes from or his religious background that would make him reject this Message. Allah (swt) sent this Message with clear signs for all people regardless of their race, gender or nationality. Allah (swt) has given all humans the free will to choose to accept this Message or not, and as we see from this ayah even from the children of Israil there were those who accepted this Message and who believed in and supported the Prophet (saw). For the ones who did not follow the Message Allah (swt) clearly tells us that they are the ones who are have lost everything. So we see that Allah (swt) gave the clearest of Messages and the clearest of warnings and among every nation there were those accepted this Message and those who turned away from it. There were good and bad people in every nation.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is the importance of reading the Book of Allah (swt) with the true reading. The true reading means that you read it with sincerity knowing that it is the Book of Allah (swt). The Jews and Christians who read their Books with the true reading are the ones who benefited from it. We see that Allah (swt) does not refer to them in this ayah as “Jew” or “Christians” but He (swt) refers to them as “**The ones who have been given the Book**”. This shows that they benefited and made use of this guidance that Allah (swt) had

given them. They have used their Book to come closer to Allah (swt) and to fulfill the purpose of their existence. Similarly for us we must read the Quran with the true reading. We must read the Quran knowing that it is Book of Allah (swt) and the Word of Allah (swt). Whenever Allah (swt) gives us some information in it then we must believe in it with utmost certainty. Whenever Allah (swt) gives us a command in it then we must rush to carry it out. Whenever Allah (swt) forbids us from something in it then we must avoid it at all costs. Whenever Allah (swt) gives us a lesson in it then we must learn from that lesson. Whenever Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)'s punishment then we must be shaken with fear. Whenever Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)'s Mercy and reward then we must be filled with hope and longing. This is what it means to read the Book of Allah (swt) with the true reading. It means to read the Book of Allah (swt) with sincerity and with the hope of coming closer to Him (swt) with it! May Allah (swt) enable us all to do that! May Allah (swt) allow us to read His (swt)'s Book with the true reading!



123. O children of Israil, remember the favor the one that I bestowed on you, and I favored you above all nations.

The scholars have said that with this ayah and the one after this, Allah (swt) ends the section of the Surah dealing with the history of the children of Israil. In these ayahs we have learned much about the children of Israil, the ones who bore this Message before us. We have learned many lessons from what they did. We saw that there were righteous ones among them who read the Book as it should have been read and these are the ones who believed in the Message sent to the Prophet (saw). We also saw that there were among them the deviant and the corrupted, those who would change the Book of Allah (swt) with their own hands, those who would call mankind to righteousness but fail to practice it themselves and worst of all those who reject the Message sent with the Prophet (saw). Not only would they reject Islam, but they also

hate the ones who do submit themselves to Allah (swt). They work night and day to take the Muslims away from their Din and they will never be pleased with the Muslims until they can turn us away from Allah (swt). So in the children of Israil we saw that there were some among them who were the perfect example for us to follow and there were others among them who were the perfect example for us to avoid. Thus there are so many benefits that we as a community can derive from these ayahs, but at the same time we must remember that these ayahs are a call for the children of Israil to accept the dawah of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) is calling on all the Jews and the Christians to heed the Message that He (swt) has sent though the Prophet (saw). In this ayah Allah (swt) once again calls on them accept this Message that He (swt) has sent to them by reminding them of the favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on them and also by reminding them of the Day of Judgment when they will have to face the consequences of turning away from this Message. Thus this section of the Surah serves two purposes. It is a lesson and guidance for us and it is a call to them. These two ayahs with which Allah (swt) ends this section are the same two ayah with which Allah (swt) began these section. This shows us the great importance of these two ayahs, especially in the call to the children of Israil. Insha Allah since we already discussed the meanings of these ayahs in detail in ayahs 48 and 49 of this Surah, so we will not go into detail of them here. Please refer to the tafsir of these ayahs in the first part of Surah Baqarah if their meaning is not clear for you. Let us reflect instead about why Allah (swt) repeats these same two ayahs once again in the Surah.

The scholars say that these two ayahs summarize the entire section of Surah Baqarah that has the call to the children of Israil. In this ayah Allah (swt) calls on the children of Israil to accept this Message by reminding them of all the favors and blessings that He (swt) had bestowed on them. Over the course of the Surah that we have studied so far we have seen the many favors that Allah (swt) bestowed on them. For example Allah (swt) chose them to be the nation that would carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Allah (swt) also favored them by delivering them from the people of Firaun who were placing over them great oppression and torment. Allah (swt) also sent them Musa (as) who was a messenger to whom He Himself (swt) spoke. Allah then (swt) favored them by sending them many prophets and messengers after

Musa (as). All of this was because they had the privilege of carrying this Message to mankind. What could be a greater favor than being chosen to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind? This is the favor and the blessing that Allah (swt) reminds them of this in this ayah. This is the favor and blessing that they should worship and serve Allah (swt) to show gratitude for.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that we are the children of Israil today. We are the ones who have been tasked to carry this Message to mankind. We are in the same situation that they were in. So we have to try to read this part of Surah Baqarah again and again to search for the lessons and guidance that is in it for us. We have to look to the mistakes that they made and constantly check ourselves to see if we also are making the same ones. For example we saw that they were an arrogant people, they fell in love with the life of this world, they did not recognize all of the favors and bounties of Allah (swt) upon them, they did not realize the right that Allah (swt) had over them to be obeyed. All of these were mistakes that they made and so all of these are what we should strive to avoid for ourselves. We have to remember that this Message that Allah (swt) has given us and told us to convey to mankind is a great blessing and favor that He (swt) has bestowed on us. When we inculcate the teachings of this Message in our lives and we then carry it to others, we are experiencing the greatest of blessing that Allah (swt) ever bestowed on any of the creation. This is when we remember Allah (swt) and we realize that at that moment of our lives we are worshipping and serving our Creator. We are at that moment fulfilling the purpose for which we were created and we are fulfilling the purpose for which we are being sustained. Allah (swt) gave us the guidance in these ayahs on how we can stay on this Straight Path of always worshipping and serving Him (swt). Allah (swt) also gave us the example of those who went astray, so the path that is correct has been made abundantly clear and the path that is wrong has been made abundantly clear. What excuse do we then have before our Lord if we end up following the wrong path? If we make any of the mistakes that they made then what excuse do we have before Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us to avoid it! May Allah (swt) help us to remember all of the favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed on us! Countless as they are we must still try to remember them and try to strive for Allah (swt) to show gratitude for them!

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا لَّا تَجْزِى نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنفَعُهَا شَفَٰعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

124. And have *Taqwa* of the Day when one soul will not be able to stand for another at all, nor shall ransom be accepted for it ,nor will intercession be accepted on it's behalf, nor shall they be helped.

Once again Allah (swt) repeats this same ayah to remind the children of Israil about the Day of Judgment. So we see from this ayah and the previous one that there are two parts of the dawah of Islam. One is to remind the people of the countless favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them and the other is to warn about the Day when the return is to Him (swt). The purpose of all mankind is to worship and serve Allah (swt). This is why we were all created. These are two reasons why we should fulfill this purpose. One is to show gratitude to Allah (swt) and the other is to prepare for this Day. So as we live in this world we must always remember where we came and where we are going. We came from Allah (swt) so we have to show gratitude to Him (swt) for our existence, and we are also going to return to Him (swt) so we have to prepare for that return. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to this second part of the dawah; the reminder of that inevitable Day when all mankind must return to Him (swt). We should contemplate on these descriptions that Allah (swt) has given of this Day and ask ourselves what we would do when it comes.

This is the Day when "**one soul will not be able to stand for another at all**". The Day on which one person cannot stand for another during the Judgment by Allah (swt). It is also the Day when for each soul no "**intercession be accepted on it's behalf**". One person cannot come in and intercede for another during the Judgment. The only intercession will be with the permission of Allah (swt). It is also the Day when for each soul no "**ransom shall be accepted for it**". No one can pay any price or any reward to escape the Judgment. No matter how wealthy you are, no ransom whatsoever will be accepted from you. There is nothing that you can give to save yourself on that Day. It is also the Day when each soul "**will not be helped**". No one can

find anyone to help them against Allah (swt). The common theme that each part of this ayah gives is that all of us have Individual Responsibility. On that Day each soul will be responsible only for itself. On that Day each person will be judged only for what they did. Could there be any better incentive for you to strive for the Pleasure of Allah (swt) than that? For every second of your life you strive to get the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and on the Day of Judgment you will return to Him (swt) and He (swt) will bring to your attention each second of your life that you spent in this world and He (swt) will show you if you used that moment for Him (swt) or not. So this shows us the extreme importance of the Day of Judgment. May Allah (swt) give each of us the ability to prepare for that Day to the best of our ability!

۞ وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ
قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

125. And (remember the time) when Ibrahim was tested by His Rabb with words which he fulfilled. He said "I will make you an Imam for mankind". He said "what of my progeny?". He said "My covenant does not extend to the Dhalimoon".

Having completed the dawah to the children of Israil, Allah (swt) begins with this ayah a new section of Surah Baqarah that serves a special purpose. Recall that in addition to being a dawah to the children of Israil to accept this Message, the previous section also taught us how they had failed in the mission that Allah (swt) had given them. Thus it also served as a lesson for us not to follow in their ways. So in that way that section served the purpose of preparing this Ummah for taking up the mission that was given to them. The mission of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to all mankind. So in this section of the Surah Allah (swt) begins that transition where He (swt) is addressing the children of Israil to where He (swt) is addressing our Ummah and teaching us how to carry this Message to mankind. Now in this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the man who was the common link between the children of Israil and our Ummah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And (remember the time) when Ibrahim was tested by His Rabb with words which he fulfilled**". This part of the ayah tells us about some tests that Allah (swt) gave to Ibrahim (as). The scholars differ about the exact nature of these tests. What we can be certain of from the ayah was that it was a test with words. These words could be the words of the dawah. The words that Ibrahim (as) was commanded by Allah (swt) to propagate to his people declaring the Oneness of Allah (swt) and the falsehood of the idols that they worshipped. We know that as a result of these powerful words, Ibrahim (as) was rejected by his own people and he (as) was even rejected by his own father. In addition to that, they also oppressed him (as) by capturing him (as) and throwing him (as) into a great fire. This was a tremendous trial that Ibrahim (as) had to face because of the words that he (as) conveyed to his people. So some of the scholars were of the opinion that these words with which Allah (swt) tested Ibrahim (as) were the words of dawah that he (as) had to convey. The words of dawah were a test because of the difficulty that the dawah entails. Other scholars say that the words with which Ibrahim (as) was tested were the commands that Allah (swt) gave to him (as) to fulfill. These words are the orders to fulfill the duties of Allah (swt), and if we take this meaning then they are also a test because of the effort and the difficulty involved in fulfilling these duties. Examples of such duties that Imam Qurtubi quotes in his tafsir of this ayah include being humble in prayer, avoiding useless talk and guarding one's chastity. These are all tasks that require a great deal of striving and effort, and so they were a test for Ibrahim (as). Allah (swt) Knows best what these words were and how they were a test for Ibrahim (as), and it is very possible that both opinions that we have given here are correct.

But the lesson in the ayah comes when Allah (swt) tells us "**which he fulfilled**". We should always look for the lesson and the guidance in the ayah instead of delving into the details that are not known to us. The lesson in this ayah is not what the specific words were or how they were a test, but the lesson is that Ibrahim (as) passed this test. Ibrahim (as) was a great man and a noble prophet, and he (as) fulfilled the test that Allah (swt) had given him. So we must strive to emulate Ibrahim (as), and that is the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah. Whatever test that Allah (swt) gives us we must strive to complete and earn His (swt)'s Pleasure through it.

What was the consequence of Ibrahim (as) fulfilling the test that Allah (swt) had given him (as)? Allah (swt) tells us in the second part of the ayah how He (swt) said to Ibrahim (as) " **I will make you an Imam for mankind**". There are two meanings that the word **Imam** gives in this ayah and they are both correct. One meaning is that of leader and the other meaning is that of role model. Allah (swt) made Ibrahim (as) a leader and a role model for all mankind. Ibrahim (as) lived at a time when idol worship was prevalent and widespread, many of the tribes and nations had forgotten about Allah (swt). They had taken up the worship of idols and they did not rule by the Law of Allah (swt). Ibrahim (as) was a beacon of light amongst all this darkness. In all this corruption, Ibrahim (as) called people to the Oneness of Allah (swt), he (as) called people to dedicate their lives to worship and serve Allah (swt) alone. So Ibrahim (as) was both a leader and role model for all mankind to follow and emulate. All those who take up the dawah to Allah (swt) after the time of Ibrahim (as) are his followers, and in their dawah they are treading the path that he (as) had made. Being appointed a leader and role model for all mankind was a special privilege that Allah (swt) had conferred upon Ibrahim (as) because he (as) had passed the tests that Allah (swt) had given him (as).

When Allah (swt) told Ibrahim (as) that he (as) had this special role to carry His Message to mankind and to be their leader and role model, Ibrahim (as) then asked Allah (swt) a question, he (as) said "**what of my progeny?**". Here Ibrahim (as) is asking Allah (swt) as to what will be the fate of his children, of his descendants. Because of the time in which Ibrahim (as) grew up, he (as) saw the corruption and the decadence all around him. He (as) saw how people had forgotten about Allah (swt) and how they worshipped idols and served their desires. Ibrahim (as) had seen how Shaitan could trick the human being and take him away from the Straight Path of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So his first question to Allah (swt) was regarding his children. He (as) knew now that he himself would be an Imam for all mankind, but he was not concerned only with himself. Rather he (as) also wanted to know what would be the fate of his children. He (as) was worried that his children would be lead astray like he (as) had seen many around him been lead astray. So Ibrahim (as) asks Allah (swt) in this part of the ayah as to what will be the fate of his descendants.

Look at the beautiful response that Allah (swt) gave. Allah (swt) says "**My covenant does not extend to the Dhalimoon** ". The covenant that Allah (swt) refers to in this ayah is the responsibility of carrying this Message to mankind. As we know from Surah Asr, the path of dawah is the only path that will lead to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This covenant of Allah (swt) is the path of dawah. Fulfilling this covenant by working in the Path of Allah (swt) leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s Garden. Walking in this path means that you try to the best of your ability to call the people to Allah (swt) and to that which is pleasing to Him (swt). So here Allah (swt) told Ibrahim (as) and He (swt) tells us as well that this covenant does not extend to those who are Dhalimoon. As we mentioned the Dhalimoon are the evil and unjust people. They are the ones who have forgotten Allah (swt), and who live a life of worshipping and serving their desires. So those who chose their desires over Allah (swt) will not be allowed to work in the path of dawah and they will not be given any reward in the Hereafter.

This response from Allah (swt) also tells us that there will be Dhalimoon from among the children of Ibrahim (as). Now it does not mean that everyone from among them will be Dhalimoon, because we know that among the most righteous of all human beings will be from Ibrahim (as)'s descendants. Who is more righteous than Musa (as), 'Isa (as), Yusuf (as) or the Prophet (saw)? But as Allah (swt) tells Ibrahim (as) in this part of the ayah, not all of his progeny will be as righteous as these noble men and prophets. There will be many among them who will be unjust and evil.

Note how beautifully this ayah attacks the pagan Arabs and the disbelieves among the Jews who thought that they were righteous and who thought they would be saved on the Day of Judgment only because of the fact that they were the descendants of Ibrahim (as). They thought that only by being the children of Ibrahim (as) they were the best of creation. Now in this ayah, Allah (swt) shows them how wrong such thinking is. Allah (swt) shows them how it is not your ancestor or your father or your family that decides how righteous you are, but it is your own actions and your own heart. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) reminded us about the Day of Judgment and how it will be a day when each soul will have Individual Responsibility. So it does not matter how righteous your father or your grandfather was. On the Day when you will

stand before Allah (swt), they will not be able to help you or intercede for you or stand in your place for judgment. You will be judged only on how well you yourself submitted to Allah (swt) and how much you strove to worship and serve Allah (swt). Allah (swt) created you to be His (swt)'s servant just like He (swt) created them, now they fulfilled the purpose of their creation but what about you? So in this ayah, Allah (swt) drives home this point to both the Quraysh in Makkah and the Jews in Madinah who were rejecting the dawah of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) tells them not to think that they will be saved only because they are the children of Ibrahim (as). Each of them will have to strive for themselves to serve and worship Allah (swt), each of them will be required to release their pride and their arrogance and submit themselves to Allah (swt). If they do not then they will be among the Dhalimoon. The Dhalimoon are those who have denied themselves the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and thus they have denied themselves the Mercy of Allah (swt) and thus they have denied themselves the Garden. Where can your soul go on that Day if it is not going to the Garden? May Allah (swt) save us from ever being among the Dhalimoon!

5 Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that just because the parents are righteous this does not mean that the children will necessarily be also. Look at how close to Allah (swt) Ibrahim (as) was. Yet Allah (swt) is promising him (as) in this ayah that from among his children there will be those who are Dhalimoon. Now if someone as righteous as Ibrahim (as) can have evil ones among his progeny then how safe can we feel for our children? Where is the guarantee that they will be among those who worship and serve Allah (swt) properly? There is no such guarantee. That is why we must always pray to Allah (swt) to grant us righteous children and we ourselves must work to the best of our ability to bring them close to Allah (swt). Especially in the society in which we live today, we have to double and redouble our efforts. May Allah (swt) grant all the sincere believers children whom He (swt) is pleased with!

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا ٱلْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَٱتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ
وَعَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْعَٰكِفِينَ
وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾

126. And (remember the time) when We made the House a place of return for mankind and a place of safety. Take the place where Ibrahim stood as a place of prayer. And We took a covenant with Ibrahim and Ismail to purify My House for those who go round it, for those who stay in it, and for those bow and prostrate.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) completed the call to the children of Israil, and He (swt) began the transition in the address to call out to the followers of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) reminded us about what happened to them in order to prepare us to take up the responsibility that they had been given. We saw that Allah (swt) makes this transition from the children of Israil to the followers of the Prophet (saw) by bringing our attention to the father of both these nations who was Ibrahim (as). In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to tell us about this noble prophet, specifically in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to what could be Ibrahim (as) most significant achievement and that is the Kabbah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And (remember the time) when We made the House a place of return for mankind and a place of safety**". The House in this ayah refers to the Kabbah, the sacred house of worship in Makkah. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the time when Ibrahim (as) built the Kabbah. Allah (swt) describes that event of Ibrahim (as) building the Kabbah as the time when He (swt) **made the House a place of return for mankind and a place of safety**. This shows us that even though it was Ibrahim (as) who built the house, it was Allah (swt) Who blessed the Kabbah and gave it its importance and its significance. How did Allah (swt) bless the House? As Allah (swt) tells us in the ayah, He (swt) made it a place of return for mankind and a place of safety. We were all created to worship and serve Allah (swt). When we return to the Kabbah we are returning to the place where we can most purely fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Worship is the purest of forms in which we serve Allah (swt)

because we are doing the act of worship purely for Allah (swt) and we do not get any benefits from that action in this world at all. And of all the places of worship, the purest place of worship is the Kabbah. It is a blessed house on a blessed land that was built especially for the worship of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) calls the Kabbah a "place of return" in this ayah because it is the place to which all mankind can return to fulfill the role for which they were created. The Kabbah is the House of Allah (swt), and we as mankind were created to be worshippers of Allah (swt), so the Kabbah is the place of return to which we can go back in order fulfill the purpose of our creation. So we perform Hajj and Umrah where we visit the House of Allah (swt), and it is place to which we want to return again and again. When we go to the Kabbah we feel like we are going to the natural place where we were meant to be and that is with our Rabb.

Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah that He (swt) made the Kabbah a place of safety. Since the time when it was built, the Kabbah has always been a place of safety for all those who would visit it. Allah (swt) has blessed the Kabbah by making it into a place of peace and security for all who come near it. Even the Quraysh who desecrated the Kabbah by placing idols all around round it, still recognized the sanctity of the House of Allah (swt). So they did not kill anyone, hurt anyone or shed any blood whatsoever in the precincts of the Kabbah. They did not even kill or harm any of the insects and small animals near the Kabbah. This was because Allah (swt) had decreed that it be a place of peace and security.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) gives us a command, He (swt) says "**Take the place where Ibrahim stood as a place of prayer**". In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb says that the place where Ibrahim (as) stood was the entire area surrounding the Kabbah. Other scholars have said it is the area behind the stone where people pray today when they complete the *Tawaf* of Arrival. The scholars say that this was the stone on which Ibrahim (as) was standing when he (as) built the Kabbah. The exact location is a matter of fiqh that we will not delve into here. However the benefit that we can take from this is to see how Ibrahim (as) is a leader and a role model for us to follow. In this ritual of worship, Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) and all Muslims to follow the way of Ibrahim (as) and to take the place where he (as) stood as a place of prayer.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**And We took a covenant with Ibrahim and Ismail to purify My House for those who go round it, for those who stay in it, and for those bow and prostrate**". So after telling us how the Kabbah had been made as a place of return for mankind and a place of safety, and after commanding us to take the place of Ibrahim (as) as a place of prayer, Allah (swt) then tells us about a covenant that He (swt) took with Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as). As we know it was Ibrahim (as) and his son Ismail (as) who built the Kabbah, this was a duty that was imposed on them by Allah (swt). We see from this ayah that Allah (swt) not only placed upon them the duty of building the Kabbah, but He (swt) also made them promise that they would to purify it. Purification here refers to both the physical purification where all impurities and unclean things are removed from it, and it also refers to the spiritual purification where idols and all manner of immoral acts are removed from it. Thus we can see how this part of the ayah was a direct attack to the Quraysh. They would boast about being the descendants of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) and how because of this lineage they are the most noble of Arab tribes and how it gave them the right of taking care of the Kabbah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Quraysh of how He (swt) had taken a covenant from Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) that they would purify His (swt)'s House. Now these Quraysh who were boasting about being the children of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were desecrating the Kabbah by placing all kinds of idols around it and also by having men and women walk naked around it and also by allowing lewd and indecent sexual acts to be performed near it. What would Ibrahim (as) think of his children if he saw them doing this after he (as) had taken a promise from his Lord to purify the House of his Lord? Do Ibrahim (as)'s children not realize that his promise extends to them as well? Since they are the guardians of the Kabbah they have a duty to purify it as well, but instead they have desecrated it in every way possible.

Then Allah (swt) mentions why the Kabbah needs to be purified. It should be purified for "**those who go round it, those who stay in it, and those bow and prostrate**". So the reason why the Kabbah should be purified is so that it could be a place of worship. From this our scholars have said that all masajid and all places of worship need to be purified as well. There are three rituals of worship that Allah (swt) mentions specifically in this ayah. One is going around

the Kabbah. This of course is the Tawaf that we all know where we walk in a circle around the Kabbah. Then Allah (swt) mentions “staying in it”. There are two meanings for this part of the ayah. One is that it refers to those who stay around the Kabbah for meditation and contemplation. It is referring to people who sit around the Kabbah and mediate on the Majesty of Allah (swt) or contemplate and ponder over the Names of Allah (swt) or the Signs of Allah (swt). Just as there is great reward in worshipping Allah (swt) in His (swt)’s House there is also great reward in contemplating on the Signs of Allah (swt) or remembering the Majesty of Allah (swt) in His (swt)’s House. The other meaning of “staying in it” is that it refers to those who actually live and take up residences near the Kabbah in the holy city of Makkah. Makkah is the holy city that houses the Kabbah and just as the Kabbah needs to be purified for those who worship near it, Makkah needs to be purified for those who live in it. Should not the city that has the House of Allah (swt) in it be purified of all things that are unclean?

Finally Allah (swt) mentions “**those who bow and prostrate**”. Of course this refers to the Salah. In this part of the ayah also we see at least two meanings. One meaning is that it refers to those who actually make Salah in the vicinity of the Kabbah. We know that any place in which we pray needs to be purified, and of all those places of prayer what is more important to be purified than the Kabbah? So one meaning of this part of the ayah is that the Kabbah needs to be purified for those who pray around it. Another meaning for this part of the ayah is that the Kabbah also needs to be purified for those who pray towards it from all over the world. Because after all, every one of us turns towards the Kabbah in our prayer. So just as the Kabbah needs to be purified for those who pray near it in Makkah it also needs to be purified for those who pray towards from all around the world. No matter where you are in the world, would you want to pray towards the Kabbah if you knew that it had idols in it? Of course not. So Allah (swt) orders the Kabbah to be purified for all those people who would pray towards it from all over the world.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the extreme importance of the House of Allah (swt). It has been blessed in that it has been made as a place of return for all mankind, a place where we return to fulfill the most pure of our acts of servitude to our Master. We return to the Kabbah to worship Allah (swt), and no matter how many times we go to it, we

always want to return to it again and again. It has also been blessed in that it has been made a place of safety and security. The scholars say that a man would see the killer of his own father near the Kabbah but he would not take revenge on him there, although he would have anywhere else in the world. It has also been purified for those who pray, for those who stay near it, and for those who make Tawaf around it. We must always honor and revere the Kabbah and the city of Makkah around it. The reverence that we show for the House of Allah (swt) is really the reverence that we show for Allah (swt) Himself. May Allah (swt) help us to recognize the sanctity of this blessed House and may Allah (swt) give us the ability to thank Him (swt) for it by worshipping and serving Him (swt)!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is the importance of purifying the Houses of Allah (swt). Although Allah (swt) here specifically mentions the Kabbah as the House of Allah (swt) that should be purified, we have to remember that all masajid are the houses of Allah (swt). So we have to strive to purify our masajid as well. Purifying our masajid means that they should be kept neat and orderly and they should not have any impurities or najas in them. But even more importantly within the masjid we must not do any action or have any object that would be displeasing to Allah (swt). So men must be careful not to shout or use foul language, women must be careful to lower their voices and not display their charms, and children must be kept from making too much noise or causing mischief. There must also not be any pictures or flyers in the masjid, or any other marketing tools. The masjid has to be clean and pure from everything that is displeasing to Allah (swt). We have to always remember that we were created to worship and serve Allah (swt), and our Salah is the purest form of our worship and the masjid is the best of places to make our Salah. So when Allah (swt) commands us to purify our masajid we have to strive to purify them in the best way that we can. We have to remember that all that matters in life is that we worship and serve Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has to be everything in our life. So why then can we not keep the houses of Allah (swt) in the manner that He (swt) wants them to be in? May Allah (swt) give all of us the ability to do that!

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ ٱجْعَلْ هَٰذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَٱرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ
مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُم بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۖ قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُۥ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ
أَضْطَرُّهُۥٓ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾

127. And (remember the time) when Ibrahim said "My Rabb, make this land a place of security and peace and provide for its people fruits , for those among them who believe in Allah and the Last Day". He (Allah (swt)) said "And whoever does kufr, I will grant pleasure for a short while, then I shall compel him to the punishment of the Fire, what an evil journey's end".

In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) told us about Ibrahim (as) and He (swt) told us about the Kabbah. We saw how Ibrahim (as) was a noble prophet who passed the tests that Allah (swt) had given to him and how Allah (swt) had made him a leader and role model for all mankind. At a time when the whole world was consumed with the worship of idols and the serving of desires, Ibrahim (as) called out to the Oneness of Allah (swt) and called mankind to dedicate their entire lives to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) then commanded Ibrahim (as) to build the Kabbah and to purify it because it would be House of Allah (swt) where all mankind would return to worship Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about a prayer that Ibrahim (as) made to Allah (swt) when the Kabbah was built.

Allah (swt) says " **And (remember the time) when Ibrahim said "My Rabb, make this land a place of security and peace and provide for its people from the fruits (of your sustenance), for (those among them) who believes in Allah and the Last Day"**". This was the prayer that Ibrahim (as) made to Allah (swt) after he (as) had built the Kabbah. First of all we can see that Ibrahim (as) pleaded to Allah (swt) to make not only the Kabbah itself a place of peace and security but even the land around the Kabbah a place of peace and security as well. We know from the previous ayah that Allah (swt) did indeed answer the prayer of Ibrahim (as). Not only was the Kabbah a place of peace and security, but even the entire city of Makkah and the area surrounding it was a place that saw no violence or bloodshed. This was true despite the

fact that the people who lived around that area before Islam were a very barbaric and violent people. Despite their violent nature, these people still respected the sanctity of the Kabbah and they never shed any blood or hurt anyone near it. This is because Allah (swt) answered the prayer of Ibrahim (as) in this part of the ayah.

This also shows us how important peace and security is. Ibrahim (as), the noble prophet and messenger of Allah (swt), was praying to his Lord for peace and security. Only when there is peace and security can the people worship Allah (swt) properly. Only when there is peace and security can there be calmness and tranquility in the heart so that Allah (swt) can be contemplated and His (swt)'s Glory be exalted. Islam means peace and it brought peace wherever it went. Now of course warfare and fighting in the path of Allah (swt) needs to be employed against those who oppose this Message and against those who prevent the Law of Allah (swt) from being supreme in this land. But this method should only be used as a last resort and it should only be used to remove these undesirable people from power. Once the land has been established for Allah (swt), peace must be allowed to prevail. Peace is always better than war. So one lesson that we can take from this prayer of Ibrahim (as) is to see how peace and security must be allowed to prevail in the land so that Allah (swt) can be worshipped properly.

In the next part of the prayer Ibrahim (as) asks of Allah (swt); "**provide for its people fruits"**. The word "fruits" here can refer to all manner of sustenance that Allah (swt) can send down upon a people. It is food, it is drink, it is clothing, it is resources, it is transportation, and it is technology. It is whatever that Allah (swt) provides us with from the earth which we use and enjoy. Ibrahim (as) was a softhearted and kind man, even his name comes from the word "*rahma*" which means mercy. So in addition to being a person who was dedicated to Allah (swt), he (as) also cared for the people. Similarly when you love Allah (swt) and when you submit to Him (swt), you should find no jealousy or hatred to anyone in your heart. The only time that you should hate is when you hate for the sake of Allah (swt). So unless Allah (swt) tells you to hate a person, or unless you see a person doing open shirk or openly disobeying the Law of Allah (swt) and not feeling guilty about it, then you should try to find love and compassion in your heart for all of the creation of Allah (swt). Ibrahim (as) loved the people and he (as) cared for their well being, that is

why he (as) prays to Allah (swt) to provide them with sustenance so that they can eat, drink and be safe while they are worshipping Allah (swt).

Similar to the previous part of the ayah, we can see how Allah (swt) answered this part of the prayer as well. Before Ibrahim (as) came to the land where Makkah is, it was a barren desert, a dead land. There were no rivers there and there was no vegetation or fruits that grew there. But after this prayer of Ibrahim (as) we can see how from this dead land came the thriving city of Makkah. Even at the time when the Prophet (saw) was sent with his (saw)'s mission and the Arabs were a primitive people, the city of Makkah was still the wealthiest and most prosperous city in the whole Arabian Peninsula. Allah (swt) provided Makkah with sustenance from so many different sources. On the one hand there was the spring of Zamzam from which flowed fresh and pure water. On the other hand there was the Hajj and the many people that came from all over the world to Makkah to perform this ritual. This brought much sustenance and wealth for Makkah and it's people. This was all because of this prayer that Ibrahim (as) made to Allah (swt) to provide for the people of this land from His (swt)'s sustenance.

Even today we can see how Allah (swt) is still answering the prayer of Ibrahim (as). What is the most valuable resource on the planet today and where is it found? Of course the resource upon which this planet runs today is oil, and nowhere in the world is there more oil than in the land where Makkah is. All the cars, all the planes, all the electricity plants need this natural resource in order to function. The earth underneath Makkah is flowing with this resource, this is because of the prayer that Ibrahim (as) made to his Lord to provide for the people of Makkah from His (swt)'s sustenance. This oil that Allah (swt) has blessed that land with has also brought much wealth and development to this land. All this from the prayer of Ibrahim (as).

Now does Ibrahim (as) pray for provisions for all of the people of Makkah? Is it all of the people of this city who should be given these abundant fruits and resources? Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told Ibrahim (as) that there would be Dhalimoon from among his descendants. Does this mean that they are included in this prayer as well? No, because in the second part of the prayer we see that Ibrahim (as) says "**for those among them who believe in Allah and the Last Day**". These are the people whom Ibrahim (as) loves and these are the

people whom he (as) wants Allah (swt) to show Mercy on. The people who believe in Allah (swt) as the one and only illah that needs to be worshipped and served. The people who are always conscious of their actions because they know that one Day soon they will have to stand before Allah (swt) and be judged for all of their actions. The ones who are conscious of the time that is passing and the closer that they are coming to that Day. So they strive to do good to please their Lord and they strive to stay away from evil because of their fear of standing before their Lord on that Day and being accounted for all of their actions. So the ones whom Ibrahim (as) prayed to Allah (swt) to provide for are only the ones who truly believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day.

Now you might say that it is only a small portion of mankind who are like this. You might say that only a very small part of mankind are sincere and true believers like we have described here. To that we say that you should not judge peoples' hearts. This is the way that all mankind should be, because the belief in Allah (swt) and the Day of Accountability is a belief that is so natural for all humans to have. How can anyone not believe that there is a Creator and Sustainer for this universe? How can anyone not believe that there is a Day when justice and equity will be done for all mankind? There are true believers such as this among mankind, so why do you not make yourself one of them?

Thus we see that the believers are whom Ibrahim (as) loves and the believers are whom Allah (swt) loves. The good provisions that Allah (swt) provided for the people of Makkah were intended for the believers among them. We also saw that today the most valuable of provisions that Allah (swt) provided for the people of Makkah is oil. Is it fair then that the people who take the oil from this land today are not the believers? Ibrahim (as) prayed to Allah (swt) to provide for the believers from the sustenance in this land. Unfortunately today the ones who rule over this land take this precious resource that belongs to the Muslims and they give to the non-believers. They do this while there are Muslims all over the earth today who are starving and who in need. This is a great injustice and this goes completely against what Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah. These hypocrites who rule over this land today are the ones who helped the enemies of this Message to destroy the Islamic State. May Allah (swt) bring back the State so that these fools can be removed and so that the resources of this land can be returned to the believers!

In the second part of the ayah, we see the response of Allah (swt) to the prayer of Ibrahim (as). Recall that in the first part of the ayah Ibrahim (as) prayed to Allah (swt) to make Makkah a place of safety and to provide it's people with sustenance and provision. We can see from the reality that Allah (swt) did indeed answer the prayer of His (swt)'s beloved prophet. But Allah (swt) also tells Ibrahim (as) "**And whoever does kufr, I will grant pleasure for a short while, then I shall compel him to the punishment of the Fire, what an evil journey's end**". Allah (swt) Knows that among the people of Makkah there will be both believers and the ones who do kufr. Both the believers and the ones who do kufr will enjoy the provision that Allah (swt) gives. However Allah (swt) tells us here that the pleasure of the ones who do kufr will only be for a short time. They will receive the provisions of Makkah from the bounty that Allah (swt) has provided for this blessed city. But it will only be for a short time because all the pleasures of this world are meant only to last for a short time. They do kufr to the Message that Allah (swt) has sent, they refuse to submit themselves to Allah (swt), they do not want to serve Allah (swt) yet at the same time they enjoy from the bounties and the provisions that Allah (swt) gives them. So Allah (swt) promises them that this will only be for a short time. For a counted number of seconds, they will enjoy themselves. Can they feel their seconds running out? What will be their fate when their time finishes? Allah (swt) promises that "**I shall compel him to the punishment of the Fire, what an evil journey's end**". This is the fate of a person who chooses to deny Allah (swt). The fate of a person who refuses to submit to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) will not ask him if he wants to go the Fire but rather Allah (swt) will force him into the fire. The time in which he had free will and choice is over. Once he has made the choice to prefer kufr over iman, to prefer his desires over Allah (swt), he has to face the consequences of that decision. In the life of this world he enjoyed himself by eating and drinking from the provisions of Allah (swt), and while he was enjoying himself he never cared to show to gratitude to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) had given him. Now he will be forced into the Fire of hell, every moment in it he will know nothing but pain. May Allah (swt) save us from this terrible place! Our life is nothing but a journey. Allah (swt) says about the Fire "**what an evil journey's end**". The choices that we make in the life of this world determine where our journey will end. May Allah (swt) save us all from this terrible end in our journey!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that we must always be grateful to Allah (swt) for the peace and security that He (swt) has given in our lives and for the food and provisions that He (swt) has given us as well. The human being was created to worship and serve Allah (swt), but before he can worship Allah (swt) his basic needs must be fulfilled. He must have peace and security, he needs to know that no one will come and stab him in back while he is worshipping Allah (swt). He must have food and provisions as well, the human body needs a minimum amount of food so that it can get the energy to worship Allah (swt). If you are reading this then you are probably in a safe place and you probably have enough food. Many of your brothers and sisters do not. Many of them do not have peace and security and many of them do not have food and drink. So because Allah (swt) has blessed you with a safe place to live, and with enough food to eat, you must show gratitude to Allah (swt) even more. All of creation owes everything to Allah (swt), but you have an even greater debt to repay because your Lord has given you security and He (swt) has given you provisions. Allah (swt) did not give this great blessing to many of your brothers and sisters. They live in fear and they do not have enough food to eat. Allah (swt) has not blessed them with these provisions. Yet He (swt) gave it to you. You have everything that you need to worship Allah (swt), what then is preventing you from worshipping Him (swt) now? How can you allow the moments in your day to pass you by while you are heedless of Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us to worship Him (swt) with every second that we have! May Allah (swt) allow us to bring back the Islamic State so that everyone can have safety and everyone can have provisions! May Allah (swt) help us to remember all that He (swt) has given us and may He (swt) allow us to be grateful for it!

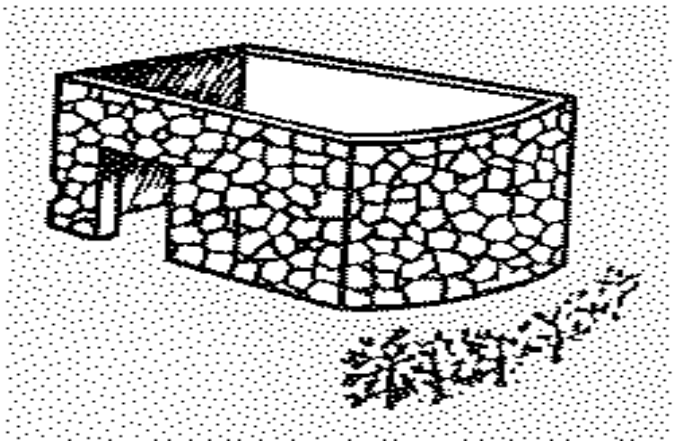
وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ ٱلْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّآ ۖ إِنَّكَ
أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾

128. And (remember the time) when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House with Ismail. "Our Rabb, accept this from us. Surely You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing".

In the previous ayah we saw the prayer that Ibrahim (as) made to Allah (swt) when he (as) built the Kabbah. Ibrahim (as) prayed to Allah (swt) to make the land around the Kabbah a place of peace and security so that the people who come to the Kabbah can focus on worshipping Him (swt). Ibrahim (as) also prayed to Allah (swt) to provide for the people of Makkah with provisions so that they can focus on worshipping Him (swt) as they were created to do. Because of the prayer of Ibrahim (as), the Kabbah was blessed and the land around it was blessed as well. Peace and security descended on this land, and provisions from all over came to it. But Allah (swt) also gave a warning to those who chose to be ungrateful, those who chose not to worship and serve Him (swt) alone, they would enjoy these provisions and blessings for a short time but soon they would return to Him (swt). Then they will be forced into the punishment of the Fire and there is nothing that they can do to save themselves from it. We seek refuge in Allah (swt) from such a fate. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about another prayer that Ibrahim (as) made when he (as) was building the Kabbah. Simply look at how Ibrahim (as) always had his thoughts on Allah (swt) and how everything that he (as) did was for Allah (swt). Look at how he (as) was always in a state of worship and supplication to Allah (swt). This is a role model that we must always strive to follow.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And (remember the time) when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House with Ismail**". Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to the time when Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) built the Kabbah. Imagine now the harsh desert of Arabia. An old man and his son alone are building a structure in this harsh desert environment. Remember that at that time they did not have the technology that we have today. They did not have caterpillars or bulldozers or cement mixers or any kind of machinery or tools to carry the

stones. Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) built the Kabbah in this harsh environment with their own hands. We do not have any narrations that tell us that they received help of any kind from anyone else, so it would be a safe assumption for us to believe that the two of them built the Kabbah their own. Here is a picture of what the Kabbah may have looked like when Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) first built it;



Just imagine the two of them working to pile the stones one upon the other as they built the House of Allah (swt). As you can see it was a simple structure with no fancy architecture or decorations, but given the environment in which they had to work and the lack of tools which they could use, we can only imagine how difficult such a structure was for them to build. Just imagine Ibrahim (as) lifting these heavy stones with his frail hands, just imagine how difficult it must have been with the hot desert sun on his head and with the blazing wind of the desert on his back. Allah (swt) describes Ibrahim (as) in this ayah as raising the foundations of the house. He (as) was lifting each stone and placing one above the other. It was an endeavor that the majority of Muslims today would not be able to perform. So we should all realize how difficult this was for Ibrahim (as).

Now when the Kabbah was finally built and Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) saw the structure in front of them, what did they say? Did they congratulate each other on successfully building the House of Allah (swt)? Did they exult in pride and glory at their accomplishment? No but as Allah (swt) tells us they only said "**Our Rabb, accept this from us. Surely You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing**". They were a people who knew what was the purpose of their

existence. They knew that they only existed to worship and serve Allah (swt) and everything that they did was for Him (swt). Despite all of the hardship and all of the effort that they had to go through to build the Kabbah, all of the pain and the sacrifice that they had to endure, they never once attributed this action to themselves. They never thanked themselves or praised themselves for what they had done. They knew that what they did was only for Allah (swt) and it was only because of Allah (swt) that they were able to accomplish their task. They knew that it was Allah (swt) who had given them their bodies, it was Allah (swt) who had given them the strength, even their actions of lifting the stone was done by Allah (swt). All they had done was make the intention to do the action and maintain the patience and steadfastness in doing that action. Even this sincere intention for Allah (swt) and this patience and steadfastness was only possible because Allah (swt) had given it to them. So instead of thanking themselves, Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) thank Allah (swt), instead of praising themselves they humbly pray to Allah (swt) to accept their efforts. This is the state of those who see the Divine before they see the world.

In the final part of this ayah Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) end their prayer to Allah (swt) by saying "**Surely You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing**". These are two of the most beautiful Names of Allah (swt) and they often come together in Quran. Each of these Names by themselves gives a beautiful meaning but when they come together they give an additional even more beautiful meaning. As they conclude their prayer asking Allah (swt) to accept their effort in building the Kabbah, Ibrahim (as) and Ismail both address Allah (swt) by these beautiful Names. They confirm with emphasis that Allah (swt) is indeed the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing. Allah (swt) is the All-Hearing in that He (swt) hears everything. He (swt) hears even the slightest of whispers. As you read this book, you are probably reading the words to yourself. You probably cannot hear the sound of the words that your tongue and lips make but Allah (swt) can hear them. You cannot hear the sound of your own breathing but Allah (swt) can hear it. Allah (swt) can hear your thoughts just like He (swt) can hear the thoughts of every person in this world. Allah (swt) can hear the faintest whisper of a fish that moves it's fin in the deepest of oceans. Allah (swt) can hear the sound of a star that collapses in the farthest of galaxies. Allah (swt) does not only hear sounds, but He (swt) also hears colors and images. The Hearing of Allah (swt) is nothing like the

hearing of man, it is the Perfect Hearing where He (swt) hears everything. He (swt) is not similar to us but we are similar to Him (swt). He (swt) has given us a tiny fraction of what He (swt) has.

Similarly the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is nothing like the knowledge of man. Allah (swt) Knows everything, there is nothing that is outside His (swt)'s Knowledge. It is a Perfect Knowledge that does not increase or decrease with time. Allah (swt) Knew everything that would happen in the creation even before it would happen. Allah (swt) Knows every single moment in your life better than you do even when you are experiencing that moment. Allah (swt) Knows everything. Once again He (swt) is not similar to us but we are similar to Him (swt). He (swt) has given us a tiny portion of the Knowledge that He (swt) has. Yet our knowledge compared to His Knowledge is like a molecule of water compared to the ocean.

It is by these two Names that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) call on Allah (swt). They want Allah (swt) to hear their prayer and they know that He (swt) hears it because He (swt) is the All-Hearing. They want Allah (swt) to Know that this did this act purely for Him (swt) and they know that He (swt) Knows because they know that He (swt) is the All-Knowing. So they know that He (swt) Knows their hearts and He (swt) Knows the sincerity that was in their hearts. All of their efforts and all of their striving is worthwhile because they know that He (swt) Knows it well. So they end their prayer by praising and extolling Allah (swt), humbly hoping that He (swt) will accept their effort.

There are many lessons that we can take from this ayah. One lesson is that our actions must be for Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) alone. No one else deserves that our actions be for them. Why do you want to serve the human being who is limited and weak when you can serve the Lord and Master of the human being? Why do you want to worship the sun when it has to set and it has a Master whom it must obey? Why do you want to serve yourself when you are such a pathetic creature who is weak and always falls to sin? You are a disgusting creature filled with nothing but flesh, bone and impurities. The only way in which your life can have any value at all is if you dedicate your life to Allah (swt). So just like Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) who dedicated their lives to Allah (swt) and built the Kabbah only for Allah (swt), you also must live only for Allah (swt) and do everything that you do for Allah (swt). Even your eating, even your drinking, even your

using your bathroom, and even your time with your spouse must be for Allah (swt). Your life should be nothing less than the constant striving to spend each and every moment in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Anything less would be undeserving of the Lord and Master of the universe. When you do this then do not praise yourself but rather pray to Allah (swt) to accept it from you. Realize that even your dedicating yourself completely to Allah (swt) was only possible because of Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do this!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the importance of the Names of Allah (swt). We saw the beautiful meaning that the Names of All-Hearing and All-Knowing gave in this ayah. When we think about Allah (swt) with these Names it reassures our hearts and it makes us want to come closer to Him (swt). Just like Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were praying to Allah (swt) with His (swt)'s Names for their efforts to be accepted, we also must call on Allah (swt) with these Names and hope that our prayers and our efforts are accepted. There are certain deviant groups in the Ummah today who would deny these Names of Allah (swt), they would deny all of Perfect Names of Allah (swt). This is totally wrong because as Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) say in this ayah, "**Surely You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing**". They affirm with emphasis that surely Allah (swt) has these Names, so how can anyone then come and deny Allah (swt) having these Names? Allah (swt) has blessed this Ummah in that He (swt) has told us so much about Himself (swt). The Names of Allah (swt) are how we can come closer to Him (swt) and how we can know more about Him (swt). Does it not make your heart feel better to know that Allah (swt) Hears everything that you say and that He (swt) Knows all of your thoughts? Does that not make you want to worship and serve Him (swt) more? So how then can anyone deny the Names of Allah (swt)? As we mentioned to say that Allah (swt) has these Names is not anthromorphism because these Names do not limit or restrict Allah (swt) in any way. The fact that we have some knowledge and a little bit of hearing does not make Allah (swt) similar to us but it makes us a little similar to Him (swt). This knowledge and hearing that we have are gifts from Allah (swt) that He (swt) gave to us. It makes us similar to Him (swt) but He (swt) is in no way similar to us. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this! May Allah (swt) guide all of us to know Him (swt) and worship Him (swt) correctly!

رَبَّنَا وَٱجۡعَلۡنَا مُسۡلِمَيۡنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ أُمَّةٗ مُّسۡلِمَةٗ لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا
وَتُبۡ عَلَيۡنَآۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ١٢٨

129. "Our Lord, make us both submit to you, and from our children a nation submitting to you, show us it's *Manasik*, and accept our Tawbah. Surely you are the Acceptor of Tawbah, the Most Merciful".

This ayah continues to relate to us the prayer that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) made when they built the Kabbah. The Quraysh and the Jews of Madinah were so proud of the fact that they were the descendants of Ibrahim (as). In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what Ibrahim (as) wanted through the prayer that he (as) made. Anyone who claims ancestry to Ibrahim (as) and anyone who is proud of the fact that they come from Ibrahim (as) should then live up to what Ibrahim (as) wants from his children. What Ibrahim (as) wants from his children is reflected in this prayer that he (as) made. Let us now look at each part of this prayer and remember that this is a prayer that we should be making ourselves.

Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) begin their prayer by saying "**Our Lord, make us both submit to you**". As we know the word Islam means "to submit" or "to surrender". You give up and you surrender to Allah (swt). You no longer live for your desires but you live for your Lord. Your desires are in a battle with the Law of Allah (swt) and you make your desires surrender to His (swt)'s Law. You do not care about the creation but you only care about the Creator. You give up everything for Allah (swt). You do not care if this whole world is against and if this whole world hates you, all you care about is Allah (swt) and His (swt) being pleased with you and His (swt) loving you. If you have gained the Pleasure of Allah (swt) then that is all that you need. Everything that you do is for Allah (swt). You strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). You love Allah (swt) and you love and hate for the sake of Allah (swt). You are pleased with whatever it is that Allah (swt) has decreed for you because you know that He (swt) is your Lord and Master and that He (swt) is the Controller of all your provisions. You rid yourself of all pride and arrogance,

and humble yourself before His Majesty and Glory. This is only the beginning of what it means to submit oneself to Allah (swt). Submission to Allah (swt) is a journey that you take throughout your life where you let yourself go and submit to Allah (swt) in every aspect of your life. For more and more moments of your life you try to do what you believe will be pleasing to your Lord rather than what is pleasing to yourself.

So we see that if want to be true Muslims, we also must strive to reach this station with our actions and our thoughts, and at the same time we also must pray to Allah (swt) to help us and guide us in this journey. Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) did their best to make themselves submit to Allah (swt) through their limbs by working and struggling hard to build the Kabbah and they made themselves submit to Allah (swt) with their hearts by not seeking any praise or recognition for what they had done. Even after they had done their best, and even after they had done all that, they still did not consider what they had done to be enough to make them among those who truly submit to Allah (swt). They still prayed to Allah (swt) for Him (swt) to make them submit to Him (swt) even more. They knew that despite their best efforts they would be lost if their Rabb did not guide them. So we see that if we want to truly submit to Allah (swt) then we have to try our best to submit to Him (swt) and we also have to pray to Him (swt) to help us to submit to Him (swt). The help and the success are only from Allah (swt) but He (swt) wants to see us take that first step. As the Prophet (saw) has told us, if we would only walk to Allah (swt), Allah (swt) will come towards us at speed. We have to make the effort and we have to call out to Him (swt).

In the next part of their prayer, Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) ask Allah (swt) to make "**from our children a nation submitting to you**". Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) did not only care about themselves, but like any parent they cared about their children as well. They knew that they were responsible for the guidance of their children. They had to show their children the way to Allah (swt). The word "children" here does not only refer to their immediate offspring but it refers to all their descendants. They want their descendants to submit to Allah (swt) just like they had done. What more could a parent want from their offspring except that they be true Muslims submitting their whole selves to Allah (swt)? Today parents want their children to be doctors, or to make a lot of money, or to be respected in the community. Now contrast this to the prayer that

Ibrahim (as) made for his children. What he (as) wanted first and foremost for his children is that they submit themselves completely to Allah (swt). Now there is nothing wrong with wanting your children to be blessed with wealth and respect, but remember that first of all you must desire of your children that they submit to Allah (swt). Because we know that if any child is given wealth or respect and he or she is not attached to Allah (swt), then this wealth or power will be a curse for them and it will lead them to the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us and save our children from that!

Notice also that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) did not identify their descendants as an "Arab nation" or a "nation of Jews" but they only described them only as a nation submitting to Allah (swt). This once again reminds us of the universality of this Din. This Ummah is one nation and being admitted into this nation does not depend on the color of your skin or the language you speak or the land where you were born. Anyone can be a member of this Ummah, anyone can be from the family of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as), all that they have to do is submit to Allah (swt). The Muslim Ummah and the Islamic State has never been reserved only for the Arabs or for those who come from the Middle East. This is the community and the country for every single human being who wants to submit to their Creator and Sustainer as they were created to do and as they are being sustained to do. How sad is it we as Muslims have forgotten this fact? We have divided ourselves upon racial and nationalistic boundaries, when the Prophet (saw) said that this was from the time of ignorance. May Allah (swt) make this Ummah wake up and realize the error of her ways! May Allah (swt) allow all the sincere people and all the good people to return to this community where they belong!

In the next part of this prayer that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) make to Allah (swt), they say "**show us it's *Manasik***". The word ***Manasik*** means "ways of worship". Some scholars have said that it means the rites of Hajj. They cite a narration that tells us how in response to this part of the prayer, Allah (swt) sent to Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) the angel Gibreel (as) who taught them how to perform the various rituals in the Hajj. Other scholars say that this word ***Manasik*** is general to include to all forms of worship. If we take this second meaning then Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) are praying to Allah (swt) to teach them how to worship Him (swt) correctly. Since the

second opinion includes the first opinion within it, because the Hajj is one of the ways in which we worship Allah (swt), it appears to be the stronger of the two opinions and Allah (swt) Knows best.

An important lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that it must be Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who can show us how to worship Him (swt). See here how Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) are praying to Allah (swt) and asking Him (swt) to show them how they could worship Him (swt). This is something that we must realize as well. We cannot make up the way to worship Allah (swt) in our minds. The Prophet (saw) has told us that every newly innovated way of worship is rejected and is a misguidance and is in the Fire. So if you make up the way to worship Allah (swt) in your own mind then you should know that your worship is rejected and you will be in the Fire because of what you innovated. May Allah (swt) save us all from that! Our goal is to please Allah (swt) but we do not know from our own selves how to do that. We need Allah (swt) to tell us in the Quran or in the words, actions or approvals of the Prophet (saw). If you are doing anything to come closer to Allah (swt) and it has not been established in the Quran and Sunnah, then you should be careful with that action. For example some deviant Sufi groups simply repeat the Name of Allah (swt) to themselves several times repeatedly and they think this brings them closer to Allah (swt). Others dance until they reach a state of ecstasy and they think this brings them closer to Allah (swt). Others claim that they can become literally one with Allah (swt). All this is deviation for which there is no ayah in the Quran or hadith of the Prophet (saw) to support it. So we should always be careful that every single act of worship that we do has it's source in the Quran or Sunnah and not in our own minds. We already have so many ways to worship Allah (swt) that the Prophet (saw) has taught us, so why do we need to look beyond that?

Finally Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) pray to Allah (swt) and say to Him (swt) "**accept our Tawbah**". Now we know that both Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were both prophets and all prophets are protected from sin. So why then do they ask Allah (swt) to accept their repentance? One reason could be because even the prophets can never truly worship and serve Allah (swt) enough to repay Him (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for them. Even the prophets cannot worship and serve Allah (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be worshipped and served. Allah (swt) has

told us in other ayahs of the Quran that if we were to try and number His (swt)'s favors and blessings we would not be able. Everything from our creation itself to the food that we eat to the water that we drink to the air that we breathe and even the accounting of deeds on the Day of Judgment in front of Allah (swt) is part of His (swt)'s Bounty and Mercy upon us for which we have done nothing to Allah (swt) to deserve. Even if we were dragged on our face for our entire lives and we did that in the path of Allah (swt), such an act would not even come close to repaying Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for us. So even though Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were prophets who were protected from sin they still made Tawbah to Allah (swt). They were still asking Him (swt) for forgiveness in the shortcomings of their servitude to Him (swt). These were prophets and they felt that they had failed in their duty to Allah (swt), how then should we feel? When we think about all of the sins that we have done then much should we be making Tawbah to Allah (swt) and begging our Lord to accept our repentance?

At the conclusion of this prayer, Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) call on Allah (swt) by another two of His (swt) most beautiful Names. Notice again the Arabic word *enna* which means "surely" and "certainly". In fact some scholars have even said that there is no word in the English that denotes as much as certainty as the Arabic word *enna*. Then notice that the pronoun "you" which Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) use to call Allah (swt) appears twice for further emphasis and certainty. Then the two Names appear. How then could anyone deny the Names of Allah (swt) when He (swt) has affirmed them in His (swt)'s Book with so much emphasis and certainty?

The two Names that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) call Allah (swt) with in this ayah are *At-Tawab* and *Ar-Raheem*. As we said with the Names of Allah (swt), they each give a beautiful and powerful meaning by themselves but when they come together in a specific combination they give an even more beautiful and even more powerful meaning. *At-Tawab* means the One Who accepts the Tawbah, the One Who accepts the Repentance. This Name gives the meaning that Allah (swt) will always accept the Tawbah of those of His (swt)'s servants who sincerely make Tawbah to Him (swt). So no matter how many times you sin, you should know that Allah (swt) will accept your repentance if you sincerely turn to Him (swt). If you have sincere regret for the sin that you did, if you stop doing that sin, and you plead for Allah (swt)'s Forgiveness for that sin,

and you sincerely promise never to do that sin again then this Name gives the meaning that Allah (swt) will forgive you. Even if you fall back into that sin after some time, He (swt) would still forgive you as long as you sincerely make Tawbah to Him (swt). As long as you make Tawbah sincerely to Allah (swt) you should know that He (swt) will always be there to accept your Tawbah.

Ar-Raheem is the One Who shows Mercy. We learned in Surah Fatihah about the difference between Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem. Ar-Rahman describes how Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful in that is Who He (swt) IS, and Ar-Raheem describes the specific acts of Mercy that He (swt) DOES. So you could say that Ar-Rahman describes how Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful in that being part of His (swt)'s Essence and part of His (swt)'s Nature and Ar-Raheem describes how Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful in what He (swt) does. Because of this fact Allah (swt) is Ar-Rahman in that He (swt) is Merciful to all of the creation, but He (swt) is Ar-Raheem only to the believers, only those of His (swt)' servants that He (swt) is pleased with. Because this is a special Mercy that Allah (swt) shows only to the believers. Whereas all of the creation receives the Mercy that comes from Ar-Rahman only the believers receive the Mercy that comes from Ar-Raheem. This Mercy is part of what He (swt) does. No one else and nothing else in all creation has a share in this special Mercy of Allah (swt).

We also know the hadith where Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) has divided Mercy into hundred pieces and only one did He (swt) send down for all creation. So even the mercy that every mother has for her young is part of this one piece of mercy and even the great mercy that the Prophet (saw) had for this Ummah is part of this one piece of mercy. Ninety-Nine pieces of that Mercy Allah (swt) has kept reserved with Him (swt) for the believers in the Hereafter. The Garden is part of these ninety-nine pieces, the happiness that we receive from the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is part of these ninety-nine pieces, the indescribable pleasure and joy that we will experience when beholding of Allah (swt) is part of these ninety-nine pieces. This is the special Mercy that comes from the name of Ar-Raheem that is only for the believers. When we realize that Allah (swt) can be so Merciful to those of His (swt)'s servants whom He (swt) chooses then how can we ever turn away from Him (swt). May Allah (swt) make us among those who will receive this Mercy for surely He (swt) is the All-Merciful!

So Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) call on Allah (swt) by these two Names. They are asking Allah (swt) to accept their Tawbah and they know that when He (swt) accepts their Tawbah then His (swt)'s Mercy will descend upon them. To make Tawbah to Allah (swt) is to return to being a true and humble servant of Allah (swt). Only when you are being a true and humble servant of Allah (swt) will the Mercy of Allah (swt) descend upon you. So to hope to receive the Mercy of Allah (swt) you have to return from a state of sin and a state of arrogance to a state of submission to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow all of us to return to Him (swt), may He (swt) accept us when we return to Him (swt) and may Allah (swt) shower down upon us from His (swt)'s Mercy! We are all in desperate need of the Mercy of Allah (swt)!

رَبَّنَا وَٱبۡعَثۡ فِيهِمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنۡهُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ءَايَٰتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ
وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمۡۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ١٢٩

130. Our Lord, and raise in their midst a messenger from among them who will recite onto them Your Signs and will teach them the Book and the *Hikmah* and will purify them. Surely You are the All-Mighty, All-Wise.

This ayah continues on the prayer that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) made to Allah (swt) in the previous ayahs. In each ayah, Allah (swt) brings to our attention a different aspect of their prayer. Once again we have to remind ourselves that this prayer is of the utmost importance because Ibrahim (as) was given the title of "Friend of Allah (swt)". That means Allah (swt) loves Ibrahim (as). So we have to study the life of Ibrahim (as) very closely. We have to study the heart of Ibrahim (as) that Allah (swt) opens for us in this ayah. We have to love what Ibrahim (as) loves and we have to yearn for what Ibrahim (as) yearns for. If we do so then Insha Allah we can be the friends of Allah (swt) as well. Just like Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) we must also always be making dua to Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us "dua is ibadah". Our supplication is one of the purest forms of worship that we have. It is a simultaneous acknowledgment of both our weakness and inability and of the Power and Ability of Allah (swt). So just like Ibrahim (as) we always have to make dua to Allah (swt) for everything that we need.

In the previous ayah we saw that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail prayed to Allah (swt) to make them submit to Him (swt) and also to make among their descendants a nation that is submitting to Him (swt). Now any nation needs a prophet or a messenger to guide it. Human beings by themselves do not know how to worship Allah (swt), they do not know what are the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). So any people who want to submit to Allah (swt), any people who want to fulfill the purpose of their creation need a prophet or messenger from Allah (swt) that will guide them and teach them. Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) knew this fact and this is exactly what they prayed for in this ayah. They asked Allah (swt) to give their children a guide who will show them the way to Him (swt).

So they began this prayer by saying "**Our Lord, and raise in their midst a messenger from among them**". First notice the word "and" which shows that this prayer is a continuation of the prayer that they began in the previous ayah. These noble prophets were always praying to Allah (swt). For their whole lives they were always turning to their Lord and supplicating to Him (swt). They knew that this life was nothing but a journey to Allah (swt) where we are constantly turning to Allah (swt) and asking Him (swt) to fulfill our needs and to take care of us. So we see how these noble prophets were always making one prayer after another.

Notice also that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) do not simply ask Allah (swt) to send to their descendants a messenger. They ask Allah (swt) to raise among their descendants a messenger from their own midst. So the messenger must be one of them, he must not be an outsider. The messenger must be one whom they know very well, whose family they know very well, whose family has been among them for generations. This description fits the Prophet (saw) perfectly. The Prophet (saw) was not only among the Arabs who were the descendants of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as), but he (saw) was from the tribe of Quraysh which was the specific tribe from among the Arabs that settled in Makkah. Not only was he (saw) from among the Quraysh, who were the noblest and most well respected of Arab tribes, but he (saw) was also from the family of Banu Hashim which was the most noble and well respected of families in Quraysh. So Allah (swt) answered the prayer of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) by making as the messenger a man who was from the very heart and very core of the many descendants that they would have. Because the

messenger was someone who was from among them and someone whom they knew very well, they should have had no reason to doubt him or be suspicious. For the Quraysh, they knew the Prophet (saw) better than they knew their own children and they knew that he (saw) was not a liar or charlatan. He (saw) was their brother and his (saw)'s family was one of them for generations. Despite all of this, they still rejected him (saw) because they wanted to follow their desires and they did not want to give up their power to Allah (swt).

We can also note that the time span from when Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) made this dua to the time when the Prophet (saw) was actually sent was a time span of over two thousand years. One lesson that we can take from this fact is that we must never give up on Allah (swt) answering our dua, even if for a long time it seems as if our dua is not answered. If we make our dua sincerely to Allah (swt), then He (swt) will answer it or He (swt) will save it for us in the Hereafter or He (swt) will prevent a harm similar to it from reaching us. This is something that we need to have certainty about. Allah (swt) created time and time does not apply to Him (swt). The past, the present and the future are all the same for Allah (swt). When Allah (swt) is ready, then He (swt) will answer our dua, just like He (swt) did for Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) when He (swt) sent to their descendants His (swt)'s Beloved (saw).

Now was it any kind of messenger that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were praying for? Was it simply any man that would bring them a message from Allah (swt)? No, as we see when we read the reminder of the prayer, Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) were asking Allah (swt) for a very special messenger. One the like of whom had never been sent to mankind before. They begin this description of the messenger by saying that he must be one "**who will recite onto them Your Signs**". Here we see a reference to the Quran, which is the greatest of Miracles that was ever given to any prophet or messenger. Because this messenger will not simply show the people the Signs of Allah (swt), but he would **recite** the Signs of Allah (swt) onto them. The Quran was the only Sign of Allah (swt) that came in the form of a Book that was recited onto the people. This was how the Prophet (saw) was a very special messenger the like of which had never been seen before. The Miracle that the Prophet (saw) was sent with was the Book of Allah (swt) which would remain even after the Prophet (saw) left this world to be with his (saw)'s Lord.

We can see in the remaining parts of the ayah how Allah (swt) outlines the dawah of the Prophet (saw) in the prayer that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) make. First they ask that the messenger is one who will ""**who will recite onto them Your Signs**". When the Prophet (saw) would recite the Quran onto the people, he (saw) would present the Message of Islam to them and he (saw) would also show them the Miracle that proves this Message is indeed from Allah (swt). Every ayah of the Quran in one way or another calls the people to serve and worship Allah (swt) the One and Only, and that is the basic Message that Allah (swt) has sent through the Prophet (saw). The call to submit to Allah (swt) in every aspect of life. From worship to obedience to legislation. Similarly every ayah of the Quran is also a Sign to show that it could only be from Allah (swt). Anyone who opens the Quran and looks into this Book knows that it could only be from Allah (swt). Once the Prophet (saw) presented the Message of the Quran for the people and he (saw) recited to them the ayahs so that they recognized it coming from Allah (swt), those among them who were sincere accepted this Message and those among them who were arrogant turned away from it.

For the ones who accepted this Message, the Prophet (saw) carried to them the second level of the dawah and that second level is also outlined in the prayer of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as). They prayed that the messenger whom Allah (swt) sends will be one who "**will teach them the Book**". Just like the word "Signs" in the previous part of the prayer referred to the Quran, the word "Book" in this part of the prayer also refers to the Quran, but here it has a different meaning. The Messenger teaches the people the Book. This is the second level of the dawah of the Prophet (saw) and it is meant for those who accept this Message. The Quran is the foundation of this Din and it was taught to the Muslims before anything else. For the few Muslims that accepted the dawah of the Prophet (saw), he (saw) would gather them in the house of Al-Arqam and he (saw) would teach them the Quran. Before anything else, they learned the Quran because the Quran is the base of Islam. Through the Quran, the Prophet (saw) brought the early Muslims close to Allah (swt) and he (saw) made them dedicate their lives to Him (swt). The Quran gives the fundamental rules of Islam. The five commandments that the Prophet (saw) called the "pillars of Islam" are all given in the Quran. These five obligations are the base for all of the other

obligations of Al-Islam. These five obligations as we know are witnessing that there is no god except Allah (swt) and that the Prophet (saw) is the servant and messenger of Allah (swt), making the five daily prayers, paying a portion of our wealth in Zakat, making pilgrimage to the Kabbah if one is able to, and fasting in Ramadan. These are all given in the Quran. All of the major sins are also outlined in the Quran such as the prohibitions of murder, adultery and fornication, taking interest, practicing magic, drinking alcohol, showing disrespect to parents and others. So we see that in terms of laws, the Quran outlines the basic and most fundamental laws in Islam. These laws are taught before any of others, and these are laws that all Muslims even children should know very well. In addition to giving the most basic laws, the Quran also constantly reminds the believers of the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter. Many were the ayahs of the Quran that were revealed in Makkah which speak of the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter. The Muslims were constantly reminded of the Day when they will have to stand before Allah (swt) and they were reminded that based on how well they fared on that Day they could go to that most beautiful of places or that most terrible of places. These reminders helped the early Muslims to remain obedient to the Law of Allah (swt). It showed them that there was more to their existence than this life that they knew. There would come a day when they would be judged for all their actions.

But most importantly however, the Quran attached the hearts of the believers to Allah (swt). It reminded them how there should be nothing else more important in their lives than He (swt). It made them strive to come closer to Allah (swt) in order to win His (swt)'s Pleasure and His (swt)'s Love and Mercy. In the Quran Allah (swt) tells the believers how much He (swt) loves them by reminding them of all that He (swt) has done for them and He (swt) reminds them of all that He (swt) has prepared for them in the Hereafter. This made the believers become attached to Allah (swt) and be willing to sacrifice anything for Him (swt). This world faded away and they saw by the Light of the Divine. They lived only for Allah (swt). So we see that in the second phase of the dawah, the Prophet (saw) built the personalities of those who had accepted this Message by teaching the Quran to them. He (saw) gave them the basic laws in Islam, he (saw) reminded them of the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter, and most importantly he (saw) attached their hearts to Allah (swt) through the ayahs of the Quran.

There are many important lessons that we can take from the fact that Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) as teaching the Quran. One lesson is that it shows us that the Prophet (saw) is required to understand the Quran correctly. In other words in order to understand the Quran we have to look at the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). For example in the Quran, Allah (swt) commands us to pray but nowhere in the Quran does it show us how to make our Salah. Only in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) did he (saw) teach us exactly how to make our prayers. The Prophet (saw) taught us exactly how to make our prayers, including the times of our prayers, the number of prayers, the movements we make in our prayers and the words that we say in our prayers. Although these laws are still from Allah (swt), they are not found explicitly in the Quran. They were revealed to the Prophet (saw) and through him (saw) we learned them. All of these laws concerning the exact way in which we make our Salah can only be found in the Sunnah. So although the Salah is one of the fundamental commands of Islam that is obligated in the Quran, the proper way on how to perform the Salah can only be found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). This shows how the Sunnah is critical to properly understanding the Quran and properly implementing the commands in the Quran. Anyone who claims that the Muslim Ummah today can survive without the Sunnah is a fool.

The fact that the Sunnah is needed to properly understand the Quran also demonstrates to us that the Sunnah has been protected just like the Quran has. We know that Allah (swt) has promised us that He (swt) will protect the Quran. Some people claim that only the Quran has been protected from error, and that the Sunnah has been lost because Allah (swt) did not make a similar promise for the Sunnah as He (swt) did for the Quran. These fools claim that many of the ahadith of the Prophet (saw) were lost and many more that have reached us are fabricated and not from him (saw). But we see from this ayah that the Sunnah is needed to correctly understand the Quran, so this means that the Sunnah was protected as well. While it is true that some people have fabricated hadith in the past, our scholars have developed an entire science to verify the authenticity of ahadith. Allah (swt) preserved the Sunnah through the efforts of these great scholars like Bukhari and Muslim. Their efforts and the efforts of countless other great scholars made sure that all of the ahadith of the Prophet (saw) have reached us and they

made sure that we can know which hadith is from the Prophet (saw) and which has been fabricated. Most of us know the hadith books of Bukhari and Muslim, and others of us may have heard of the "famous six books of hadith", but there are really hundreds and hundreds of books with ahadith of the Prophet (saw). In the ahadith in these books, Allah (swt) has detailed our Din for us in every aspect possible. The Quran lays the foundations of our Din, and the Sunnah details it for us. Because without the Sunnah you cannot have the Quran just like you cannot have a book without it's teacher.

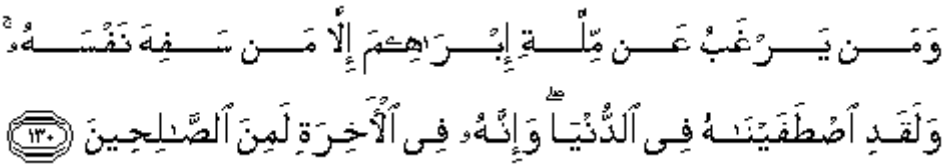
Then in the dua of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) we see the third part of the dawah of the Prophet (saw). This is when Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) say that the messenger must be one who will teach the people "**the *Hikmah***". Although the linguistic meaning of this word means "wisdom", in this ayah it refers to all of Islam that is not found explicitly in the Quran. This includes the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) and the way of the Righteous Khalifahs. The Prophet (saw) taught the Muslims **the *Hikmah*** just like he (saw) taught them the Quran. You can think of the Quran as the foundation and base of Islam, and the word ***Hikmah*** in this ayah refers to all of Islam that is above this base. The majority of the laws of Islam are either found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) or they have been derived from the consensus of the Sahabah or from analogy. Although these laws have their foundations in the Quran and they never contradict the Quran, these laws are not found explicitly in the Quran. For example the Quran gives a general command to perform Salah. But in the Sunnah, Allah (swt) has given us more detailed more commands such as the times when Salah is due and the number of rakahs each Salah consists of. The Quran gives a general command to fast in the month of Ramadan but in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) gave us the details on how the fast is to be performed such as how long the fast must last and what breaks the fast. Similarly the Quran gives a general command to establish a government that rules by the Law of Allah (swt) but in the Sunnah and through the actions of the Righteous Khalifahs we can find the exact political structure for this government. Thus we can see that the word ***Hikmah*** in this ayah refers to all of Islam that is beyond the Quran. Once the Prophet (saw) had implanted the Quran in the hearts of the Muslims, he (saw) then taught them this ***Hikmah***. To help you further understand this concept correctly you can

think of Islam as a tree and the Quran as the root and the strong stem of that tree. The ***Hikmah*** are the many branches and leaves that spring forth from that stem and root. The Prophet (saw) taught the Muslims the ***Hikmah*** just like he (saw) taught them the Quran. Notice also how the linguistic definition of the word ***Hikmah*** and the definition that Allah (swt) gave for it in this ayah matches exactly. Islam as a way of life is "wisdom" because it is the only way of life that brings peace and tranquility for the human being in the life of this world, and it is the only way of life through which the human can fulfill the purpose for which he was created and it is the only way of life that will bring happiness and joy in the next life. If anyone chooses a way of life other Islam, can there be any wisdom in that?

Now in this prayer of Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) we come to what could be called the fourth stage of the dawah of the Prophet (saw). If we look again at the prayer that they were making we see that they then said that the messenger must be one who will "**purify**" the people. Once the Muslims have heard the Quran being recited to them and they are fully convinced that it is from Allah (swt), and they then inculcate the Quran into their lives by practicing all of it's laws, always thinking of the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter, and being attached to Allah (swt), and they then learn the Hikmah which is all of Islam that is beyond the Quran, they must also purify themselves. Not only does this mean that they must purify themselves from physical impurities and dirt but this also means that they must purify themselves on the inside. They must rid their hearts of diseases such as pride, envy, greed, hatred and self-contentment. They must dedicate all of their actions and all of their thoughts purely for Allah (swt). When they do this, they will come close to being the perfect human being just like the Prophet (saw) was. That was one of the primary goals of the dawah of the Prophet (saw). To create a human being who had no evil inside or outside and who dedicated his entire life for Allah (swt). One who was a source of good for all those who were around him. This is the culmination of the dawah of the Prophet (saw) and this is what Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) prayed for in their dua to Allah (swt).

In the final part of their prayer Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) say to Allah (swt) that He (swt) is surely the "**All-Mighty, All-Wise**". Only Allah (swt) Who is the All-Mighty and the All-Wise could raise such a messenger. A messenger who would recite the Divine Words to the people so

that they can perceive the Miracle in these Words. A messenger who would teach the people the Book of Allah (swt) so that they can come closer to Him (swt) through it. A messenger who would teach the people the only wise way of life to lead. A messenger who would purify the people of all evil traits and actions so that they live purely for Allah (swt). A messenger who would completely transform the society and the world to which he was sent. Allah (swt) is All-Mighty in that He (swt) can place such traits and attributes in one human being and He (swt) is All-Wise in that He (swt) Knows the best human to choose for the task. It was only Allah (swt) Who could raise such a messenger because only Allah (swt) is the All-Mighty and the All-Wise. Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) affirm these two Names of Allah (swt) and they call upon Him (swt) by these two Names knowing that only the One possessing of these Names could raise the messenger that they asked to be raised for their people.



131. And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim except one who fools himself? Surely we chose him in the life of this world. And surely in the Hereafter he will be from the righteous.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) told us about the kind of person whom Ibrahim (as) was. He (as) was among those who submitted purely and completely to Allah (swt). Everything that he (as) did was only for Allah (swt). He (as) drew close to Allah (swt) with his actions and the sincerity in his actions. Through this he (as) became the friend of Allah (swt). This is what Allah (swt) created the human being to do, this is what it means to fulfill the purpose of your creation. Who would not want to walk in the same path as Ibrahim (as)? Who would turn away from the way of Ibrahim (as)? A way of worshipping and serving only Allah (swt). This is the question that Allah (swt) asks us in this ayah. Just think how painful it must have been for the Quraysh chiefs and the Jewish rabbis when they heard this ayah. They both knew that they had turned away from the way of Ibrahim (as) even though they claimed him to be their leader and their forefather.

Allah (swt) asks them "**And who turns away from the religion of Ibrahim except one who fools himself?** ". Everyone knows that the way of life of Ibrahim (as) is the true way of life because it is the way of life that the human being was created to live. The Quraysh and the Jews of Madinah knew this fact very well, and so their obvious answer to this question should have been that no one turns away from such a way of life. But that is exactly what they had done and they both knew it. They had both turned away from worshipping Allah (swt) Alone. They had both turned away from submitting to Allah (swt) Alone. They bowed down before idols and they allowed themselves to be ruled by other than the Law of Allah (swt). They even changed the Law of Allah (swt) to suit their whims and desires. Was this the way of Ibrahim (as)? Could this have been the behavior of a man had dedicated himself to Allah (swt)? So who turns away from this way of life except one who fools himself? A fool is someone who has no intellect or common sense. He claims he is walking down one path when in reality he is walking down on another path. This was exactly what many among the Quraysh and Jews were doing, claiming that they were walking on the path of Ibrahim (as) when in reality they were walking on the path of Shaitan. They were utter fools and Allah (swt) exposes them as such.

Then Allah (swt) tells us about Ibrahim (as) that "**Surely we chose him in the life of this world**". Allah (swt) shows us that Ibrahim (as) was not like these fools who were claiming to be following in his (as)'s path. Allah (swt) chose Ibrahim (as). He (as) was selected by Allah (swt) to receive the office of prophethood and to carry this Message of Tawhid. He (as) was also selected by Allah (swt) to be His (swt)'s Friend. Allah (swt) did not select Ibrahim (as) at random. Allah (swt) chose Ibrahim (as) because of the person whom he (as) was. First of all Ibrahim (as) had sincerity for the truth. He (as) did not blindly follow the ways of his forefathers. When he (as) saw that all of his people were worshipping idols including his own family and his own father, Ibrahim (as) did not blindly worship these idols as well. Ibrahim (as) knew that these idols could not create this universe that he (as) saw around him. Then he began to search for the truth. He looked to the sun, the moon and the stars and he realized that none of these could be the Creator. Notice once again his sincerity and his determination. Even though he left the religion of his people, he did not worship the first thing that he saw. It would have been very easy for him to

worship the sun instead of an idol. After all the sun is more powerful and more awe-inspiring than an idol, many were the pagans in the history of man who had taken the sun for worship. But Ibrahim (as) did not worship the sun nor did he worship the moon and the stars. He (as) only reflected to himself if these could be the Creator and the Sustainer when he was in deep contemplation. He soon realized the inherent weaknesses in these celestial bodies and he realized how they could not be the Creator. Ibrahim (as) then realized that the Creator has to be beyond this universe. The Creator cannot in any way be limited like the things of this world are limited. That was when Ibrahim (as) found Allah (swt), and Allah (swt) guided him (as) to Himself (swt). When Ibrahim (as) realized that Allah (swt) is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, he (as) also realized that Allah (swt) is the true Lord and Master of the universe. Because such a Creator demands nothing less than total submission. So Ibrahim (as) submitted himself completely to Allah (swt). That is why the Iman of Ibrahim (as) was so strong, because it was based on a deep reflection on the universe around him (as). Through this sincerity with which Ibrahim (as) looked at the universe, Allah (swt) guided him (as) to Him (swt).

Because of his sincerity and his humbleness and his willingness to submit, Allah (swt) chose Ibrahim (as) to be among those who will receive revelation from Him (swt). Allah (swt) chose him (as) to be a messenger who will carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. We know that Ibrahim (as) was not well received by his people when he (as) brought to them the Message of the Oneness of Allah (swt). The powerful among them did not want to give up their power, and they were content to leave the masses to worship idols instead of worshipping Allah (swt). They knew that when they acknowledge Allah (swt) as the Creator and Sustainer, then they must also acknowledge Allah (swt) as the Lord and Master. This would mean that they would lose all of their political power. So those in power tried to stop the dawah of Ibrahim (as) at all costs. They tortured and transgressed against Ibrahim (as). They kindled a great fire just for him (as). It has been said about this fire that if a bird flew over it, this bird would fall down dead because the fire's flames and heat reached the sky. They repeatedly told Ibrahim (as) to stop calling to the Oneness of Allah (swt) and when he (as) refused, they threw him (as) into the great fire. Of course we know that Allah (swt) saved Ibrahim (as) and made the fire cool for him. But because of the

patience, steadfastness and courage that Ibrahim (as) had on his mission, Allah (swt) chose him (as) to be His (swt)'s close friend. Allah (swt) chose him (as) to be His (swt)'s messenger. So we see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) chose Ibrahim (as) because of the kind of person that he (as) was. Ibrahim (as) was one of those who sincerely searched for the Truth, he (as) was one of those who submitted purely to Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) chose him (as). We all want to be close to Allah (swt), we all want Allah (swt) to choose us. Then we should look at these characteristics and qualities of Ibrahim (as) and try to inculcate them in ourselves. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us about Ibrahim (as) "**surely in the Hereafter he will be from the righteous**". This is something about which there can be no doubt. Ibrahim (as) was from among the righteous and in the Hereafter, he (as) will be where the righteous belong. The righteous are those who lived their lives to please Allah (swt). This is what Ibrahim (as) made as the purpose of his (as)'s life. This is what all the prophets of Allah (swt) made as the purpose of their lives. So in the Hereafter Ibrahim (as) would be united with his brothers who were prophets. Both the prophets from his past like Adam (as) and Nuh (as), and he (as) would also be united with the prophets from his children such as Ismail (as), Ishaq (as), Yaqoob (as), Yusuf (as), Musa (as), 'Isa (as) and of course the Prophet (saw). He would be united with the righteous from his family like Hajar (as) and Sarah (as). As well as with all the righteous souls, who like him, recognized the purpose of their creation and lived their lives in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). One of the greatest pleasure for us in the Garden is that we will, Insha Allah, be with those whom we love. We will be with Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw). We will be with the other prophets and messengers of Allah (swt) and we love all of them. We will be with the righteous companions of the Prophet (saw) like Abu Bakr (as) and Umar (ra), and we love all of them. We will be with those of our family and our friends who were devoted worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). This is one of the greatest of pleasures in the Garden and we ask Allah (swt) to grant it to us like He (swt) granted it to Ibrahim (as).

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥٓ أَسْلِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132. And (remember the time) when his Rabb said to him "Submit". He said "I have submitted to Rabb al-Alamin".

In his tafsir of this ayah Imam Qurtubi tells us how this ayah is strongly connected with the previous one. We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) chose Ibrahim (as) to be a prophet and He (swt) chose him (as) to be His (swt)'s friend. This was because of Ibrahim (as)'s sincerity and his submission. Imam Qurtubi tells us that this ayah relates what Allah (swt) said to Ibrahim (as) when He (swt) chose him (as). A messenger of Allah (swt) and a friend of Allah (swt) must be one who submits completely to Allah (swt). The Lord and Master of the universe demands that you submit to Him (swt) when you approach Him (swt). No one can draw close to Allah (swt) without submitting to Him (swt). So this ayah relates to us how Allah (swt) commanded Ibrahim (as) to submit when He (swt) chose him (as) to be a prophet.

Now look at the beautiful response of Ibrahim (as) "**I have submitted to Rabb al-Alamin**". Please see our tafsir of Surah Fatihah for an explanation of the this Name "**Rabb al-Alamin**". In summary, we said that it means the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists and the Lord and Master of all that exists and the King and Sovereign of all that exists. Allah (swt) is the one True Lord, Master, King, and Sovereign just like He (swt) is the one true Creator and Sustainer. The word **Rabb** also gives the meaning of "the Nurturer" and "the Maintainer"; the One who looks after and takes care of the creation just like a parent takes care of a child. This is Who Allah (swt) IS, and this is Who Ibrahim (as) submitted to. Allah (swt) is the only Rabb for all that exists and that is why He (swt) deserves for everything and everyone to submit to Him (swt) completely. Ibrahim (as) whom Allah (swt) chose to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind and whom He (swt) chose to draw close to Him (swt) came to this realization. So not only does he (as) tell us here that he (as) has submitted but he (as) also tells us why he (as) has submitted. When you know that there is a Being such as He (swt), a **Rabb al-Alamin**, how then can you not submit to Him (swt)? So if we want to be true Muslims, if we want to walk this path of dawah, then we also must submit completely. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَآ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعۡقُوبُ يَٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصۡطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسۡلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133. And this did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons and Yaqoob (as well saying) "O my children surely Allah has chosen for you The Din. So do not die except if you are Muslims".

In the previous ayah we saw that Ibrahim (as) was among those who submitted completely to Allah (swt). Because of this Allah (swt) chose him (as) to be a prophet and chose him (as) to be His (swt)'s friend. But as we learned, Ibrahim (as) was very kind and tenderhearted man. He (as) was not only concerned for himself (as) but he (as) was also concerned for others. Foremost among those whom Ibrahim (as) was concerned for were his children. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about some valuable advice that Ibrahim (as) told his children. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how Ibrahim (as) not only submitted himself to Allah (swt) but he (as) also commanded all of his children to submit to Allah (swt) as well. Allah (swt) shows us how Islam was passed on from Ibrahim (as) to his children and from them to their children. What excuse then could the Quraysh and the Jews, who claimed to be descendants of Ibrahim (as) and who claimed to be following the path of Ibrahim, have for turning away from Allah (swt)? What excuse could they have for rejecting the Message that called on them to submit to Allah (swt)?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And this did Ibrahim enjoin on his sons**". To understand what Allah (swt) means by the word "this" here, we have to look at the previous ayah. Recall from that ayah how Allah (swt) described to us how Ibrahim (as) had submitted to Him (swt). This complete and total submission is what Ibrahim (as) enjoins on his children in this ayah. What better gift can any parent give to their children other than to call them to the purpose of their creation? When you realize all of the blessings and tranquility that comes from submitting to Allah (swt), when you realize that when you are submitting to Allah (swt), then you do not need anything else in this world, that is the greatest of blessings and joys. Scholars have said that there is a paradise in the life of this world for the believers before they go to the paradise in the next life. That paradise is the peace, the tranquility and the freedom that comes from submitting to Allah (swt). When you are a true servant of Allah (swt) then you will have no fear, no sadness,

no worries and nothing and no one can displease you. All that you care about is serving your Creator. Allah (swt) fills your heart and all that you want to do is please Him (swt). This is the blessing from Allah (swt) that Ibrahim (as) invited his children to.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**and Yaqoob as well** ". Ishaq (as) was one of Ibrahim (as)'s sons and the son of Ishaq (as) was Yaqoob (as). Yaqoob (as) had twelve sons and from among them came the children of Israil. So just like Ibrahim (as) told his children to submit completely to Allah (swt), Yaqoob (as) told his children to submit as well. Yaqoob (as) told each and every one of his twelve children to submit to Allah (swt) completely just like his father Ishaq (as) had told him and just like Ibrahim (as) had told Ishaq (as). Now all of the Jews trace their ancestry to Yaqoob (as) and to these twelve sons. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that each of these children received the clear command from their father to submit to Him (swt). So what excuse then do these Jews have for turning away from Allah (swt)? How can they say that they are submitting to Allah (swt) when a messenger comes to them from Allah (swt) whom they are certain is a true messenger from Allah (swt) and yet they reject him? They see the Truth from Allah (swt) yet they turn away from this Truth to follow their desires. They reject this Messenger only because he is not from their tribe. Only because of their arrogance and pride. Is this what it means to submit completely to Allah (swt)? Is this what Yaqoob (as) taught his children? This is nothing but utter hypocrisy.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us exactly what both Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) told their children. Allah (swt) tells us that they told their children; "**O my children surely Allah has chosen for you The Din**". Both Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) reminded their children of the greatest of the blessings of Allah (swt). If we were to try and count the favors and blessings of Allah (swt), we would not be able to. But you must still try your best to remember these favors and blessings. The greatest of submission to Allah (swt) comes when you recognize all that He (swt) has done for you, and you love Him (swt) because of this, and this is what drives you to submit to Him (swt). In this ayah, Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) remind their children of the greatest of blessings that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them. They both remind their children how Allah (swt) has chosen for them "**The Din**".

So what is the connection between the two parts of this ayah? Why did Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) enjoin on their children to submit to Allah (swt) completely? It is because Allah (swt) had chosen them in the Din. Allah (swt) did not create us for anything less than dedicating our lives to Him (swt), and so this is the only way of life that is acceptable to Him (swt). For those of us who have received this Message, for those of us who have been given this gift of guidance, Allah (swt) expects of us that we submit to Him (swt) completely.

Once they have reminded their children about this blessed Din that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them, Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) tell their children "**So do not die except if you are Muslims**". This Din is submission to Allah (swt). This Din is doing everything in your life to please Allah (swt). This Din is a station where you believe in Allah (swt) with utmost conviction and you do everything that you can to please Him (swt). Here we see that both Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) give their children an explicit command not to die unless they are in this station. They should not die unless they have submitted to Allah (swt) completely. Now the truth is that none of us can control when we are going to die. Allah (swt) has already fixed our lifespan and there is nothing that we can do to change it. So since we cannot be certain when we are going to die we have to always think that we might die at the next moment. As Ibn Umar (ra) used to say "If you live till the morning do not expect to be alive in the evening" and "If you live till the evening then do not expect to be alive in the morning". So once we realize that death could come at any moment we see that what Ibrahim (as) and Yaqoob (as) are telling their children is that they must submit to Allah (swt) now. They are telling their children to be Muslims now. The total and complete submission to Allah (swt) is not something that can wait till tomorrow or till you are sixty-five but rather it must be done now.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize how fortunate and blessed we are that Islam is the Din that Allah (swt) that has chosen for us. We should feel honored, privileged and extremely grateful that we have been chosen. Through one way or another, either by being born Muslims or embracing Islam over the course of our life, we find ourselves in this Din of submission to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has guided us to this Din and He (swt) has chosen it for us. We did not win the privilege of being a part of this Din through any of our own actions but

Allah (swt) guided us to it and He (swt) chose us for it. We must then feel extremely grateful to Him (swt) that we are Muslims and we must strive hard to worship and serve Him (swt) in order to show our gratitude. Allah (swt) has told us in the Quran that we will only have what we strive for, so it is not enough that we simply profess to be Muslims with our tongue. If you have truly submitted to Allah (swt) then this fact will show in your actions. You recognize Allah (swt) as your Lord and Master so for every moment you try to do the actions that are pleasing to your Master. If you are lazy and you do not find yourself doing what your Master has obligated, or if you are weak and you find yourself falling into what your Master has prohibited, then how can you be considered a servant who has submitted completely to Allah (swt). Every night you should hold yourself to account, you should ask yourself how many moments of the day that has just finished did you dedicate purely to Allah (swt) and how many moments did you do the actions that were for yourself? Then you will see how good a Muslim you were, you will see if you are deserving of this title that Allah (swt) has given.

Now of course we know that we will not reach the level that Ibrahim (as) and the righteous prophets who came after him (as) were at. We will not reach that level where we submit to Allah (swt) completely at every moment of our lives. All of us will fall into sin at one moment or another. All of us will be among the heedless at moment or the other. So we should not feel distraught if we fall short of this ideal. We should always remember that our Lord is Forgiving and Merciful. But at the same time we should always be trying to reach this ideal that Allah (swt) has set for us. We should always be striving to reach the station of Ibrahim (as) and the Prophet (saw). Even if we know that we will never make it we should still try. The struggle that we make is what life is all about. If we are not able to submit to Allah (swt) completely we should still try to be among those who do. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace! May Allah (swt) allow all of us to submit to Him (swt) completely and to live our lives for Him (swt)!

أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا
تَعْبُدُونَ مِنۢ بَعْدِى قَالُوا۟ نَعْبُدُ إِلَٰهَكَ وَإِلَٰهَ ءَابَآئِكَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ
وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. Or we you witnesses when death came to Yaqoob, and when he said to his children "What will you serve after me"? They said, "We will serve your illah, the illah of your fathers Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq. One illah and to Him we are submitters".

In this ayah Allah (swt) asks us a question. Allah (swt) is the One with perfect Knowledge so the questions that He (swt) asks are only meant for us to ponder and reflect. We should all contemplate deeply on the meanings of the questions that Allah (swt) asks us. Often times the reason why Allah (swt) would ask a question is because the answer to it is obvious but we do not realize it and we are behaving to the contradictory. So Allah (swt) asks us this question as He (swt) asked the Quraysh and the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw). This question made them ponder and reflect on what Allah (swt) was asking them.

To begin this ayah, Allah (swt) asks us "**we you witnesses when death came to Yaqoob?** ". Although there is a lesson that we can all take from this question, we can see that it was specifically directed towards the Jews in Madinah who were living with the Prophet (saw). We have seen how they had continued to reject this Message despite all the evidences and proofs that Allah (swt) had brought to them. They were claiming that they were not obliged to follow the Prophet (saw) because he (saw) was not a Jew, because he (saw) was not from the children of Israil. In this ayah Allah (swt) asks them whether they were present when Yaqoob (as), who as we know was Israil, was passing away. Allah (swt) asks them if they were present at the moment of his death to hear what he (as) told his children as he (as) was passing away. Even though these Jews were convinced that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt) they still did not follow him (saw). They claimed that he (saw) was not their messenger and so they were not obliged to follow him (saw). They claimed that they were only obliged to follow the messengers that came from the children of Israil. What right do they have to make such a

statement? Did they hear it from the words of Yaqoob (as) himself? Did they find it in the Tawrah? Where is their evidence for such a claim? So we see that Allah (swt) exposes them for the liars and the hypocrites that they are by posing to them this question.

After Allah (swt) proves to the Jews that their father Yaqoob (as) did not tell them to follow only the prophets from his descendants, Allah (swt) brings their attention to exactly what it was that Yaqoob (as) did say to his children. As we see in the ayah Yaqoob (as) did not tell his children to be loyal to his nation and reject the messengers of Allah (swt) from other nations, rather when he (as) was dying he (as) only asked his children a simple question "**What will you serve after me?**". Notice that Yaqoob (as) says "What" and not "Who" because "What" is more general than "Who". Yaqoob (as) knows that many humans end up serving that which is not even sentient like wealth, prestige or one's own desires. All that Yaqoob (as) told his children as he (as) was passing away was to ask them this simple question. He (as) knew that they already know the answer, but he (as) wanted to remind them so that they will always remember and so that they will teach their children as well. So he (as) asks them this simple question.

Now look at the beautiful response that the children of Israil gave to their father. If only their descendants had remembered this. **They said, "We will serve your illah, the illah of your fathers Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq. One illah and to Him we are submitters"**. This was all that the children of Yaqoob (as) said to their father. They did not say that they were going to serve the nation of the Jews. They did not say that they were going to serve their desires. They did not say that they were going to serve their arrogance and pride. They only said that they would serve Allah (swt). Notice how they recognize and emphasize that Allah (swt) is the *illah* of their father. In Yaqoob (as) they had a model to follow, they had a teacher to teach them, and they had a guide to show them the way. Here they acknowledge this fact. Then they acknowledge that the only *illah* in their hearts is Allah (swt). The *illah* is that which occupies and fills your heart and it is what you dedicate your life to serve. Whatever it is that preoccupies your thoughts, whatever it is that is the purpose of your actions, that is your *illah*. The children of Yaqoob (as) acknowledge that their *illah* would only be the *illah* that their father taught them to have and that is Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is Whom they would dedicate their lives to, Allah (swt) is Whom they would serve like the

humblest of slaves serves the grandest of Masters. They would serve Allah (swt) out of the complete love and awe that fills their heart of Him (swt). This is a promise that each and every one of the children of Yaqoob (as) gave to their father. If only their descendants among the Jews had remembered this. If only the people today had remembered this.

Thus Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah what it really means to be among the children of Israil. It does not mean that you are loyal only to your tribe and when a messenger from Allah (swt) comes to you, you turn away from him because he is not from your tribe. On the contrary, it means exactly the opposite. It means that the loyalty and the servitude should not be for your tribe or for your pride for the greatness of your tribe, but your loyalty and servitude must be only for Allah (swt). So when a messenger comes to you from Allah (swt), and you are certain that he is the Messenger of Allah (swt), then you must follow him no matter what. Even if he is not from your tribe, and even if he is from a nation that your tribe looks down upon. None of that should matter. All that should matter is that you submit yourself to Allah (swt) completely, and that you release all of your pride and arrogance. You must release everything from your heart that is not Allah (swt). This is the advice that Yaqoob (as) gave to his sons and so this is what it should have meant to be part of the children of Israil. Anyone who claims to be part of the children of Israil should know that what it means to be from the sons of Yaqoob (as) is to live up to this promise that was given to him (as). But we see the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) thinking and behaving to the exact opposite of this ideal. They rejected the Prophet (saw) because he was not from their nation even when they were certain that he (saw) was the messenger of Allah (swt). After they had rejected him (saw), they were still proud of the fact that they were from the children of Yaqoob (as). They still claimed to be on the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt), even though they were waking in the opposite direction. This is how much they had forgotten about Allah (swt). This is how much their greed and their arrogance had consumed them. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them!

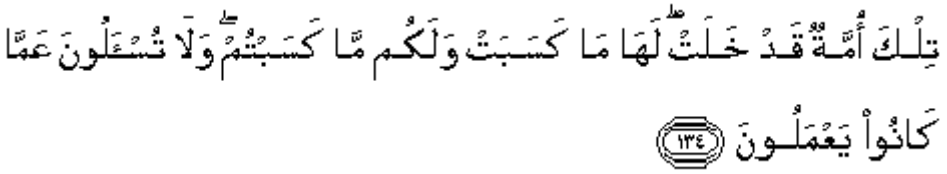
In this ayah we see that children of Yaqoob (as) also acknowledge that Allah (swt) was the illah of their grandfather as well as the illah of their great-grandfather when they say "**Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq"**. They realized that total submission to Allah (swt) was the way of the noble

men who came before them. It was not something new or something that had never been done before but it was the way of their fathers, the way of their family. To submit to Allah (swt) is the natural way of the human being, it was what he was created to do. So this was the way of many noble men who were among the chosen of Allah (swt).

In the final part of the ayah the children of Yaqoob (as) say "**One illah and to Him we are submitters**". Allah (swt) is One and Only. This is Tawhid. This is the most important principle in Islam that we must always keep in mind. Look at the beauty and wisdom in these words. The children of Yaqoob (as) first acknowledge that Allah (swt) is One and Only. Then they acknowledge that they submit **only** to Him (swt). Look at the direct link that they make between the Oneness of Allah (swt) and the purpose of their existence. They make it abundantly clear that they live only for Allah (swt), there is nothing else and no one else that matters in their life except Allah (swt). So we see that Tawhid is not simply an idea that we have in our minds or some words that we say with our tongues but it is a code of conduct with which we live every moment of our lives. Every moment of our lives should be for Allah (swt). It is like a thread that flows through our life where we do every single action for Allah (swt). We have to submit to Allah (swt) with every action that we do and even with every thought that we have. Not only must we as individuals submit only to Allah (swt) but the society in which we live must submit only to Him (swt) as well. The government that rules over us must be a realization of Tawhid where it rules only by the Law of Allah (swt). How many governments in the world today are like this? So just as the people submit to other than Allah (swt) so do the societies and the governments. We have all taken an illah besides Allah (swt) in one way or another when Allah (swt) has clearly told us in this ayah that He (swt) Alone is the one and only illah. May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) save us!

Ibrahim (as), Ismail (as), Ishaq (as), Yaqoob (as) all realized this fact that only Allah (swt) deserves all of the worship and servitude. They tried their best to teach this to their children. But many among their children forgot this fact, especially those Jews who lived at the time of the Prophet (saw). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) help us to live every moment of our life for Him (swt)! How can we as human beings be satisfied when we come down from a station where we live for Allah (swt), when He (swt) created us for Him (swt),

to a station where we live for anything other than that? How many humans today have forgotten this fact? How many Muslims today have forgotten this fact? How could we have brought down our guard so much that Shaitan has deceived us so? How could we have let the world tempt us away from Allah (swt)? In this ayah Allah (swt) has shown us the perfect model of what the human being should be. The human was created to be a worshipper and servant of Allah (swt). The human was created for Allah (swt), why then did he come down from this honorable and noble station to where he lives only for his desires and his pride? May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) save us!


تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا
كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135. They were a nation that has passed away, they will have what they earned and you will have what your earn. And you will not be questioned about what they used to do.

This ayah concludes the section of the Surah where Allah (swt) tells us about Ibrahim (as) and his righteous children. In this section there was a powerful lesson for both the Jews in Madinah and the Quraysh in Makkah, who were both claiming to be following Ibrahim (as) but they were behaving to the contrary. Allah (swt) showed them who Ibrahim (as) really was and who his righteous children were. Allah (swt) showed how different Ibrahim (as) and his children were from these Jews and pagans who had turned away from Him (swt). These Jews and these pagans were counting on the fact that since they were the descendants of Ibrahim (as), they would be saved on the Day of Judgment. They were so proud of the fact that they were the descendants of Ibrahim (as). They thought themselves to be so holy and so pure because of this. They thought that they are so pure that never would they face any punishment in the Hereafter. They could just live in this world in this world however they pleased and then be guaranteed salvation. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how wrong such thinking was.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**They were a nation that has passed away**". This is who Ibrahim (as), Ismail (as), Ishaq (as), Yaqoob (as) and the righteous among them were. They were only a nation that had passed away. The Jews of Madinah and the Quraysh were placing all their hopes on their ancestors. They were placing their entire Hereafter and their eternity on their pious forefathers. Allah (swt) shows them in this ayah what is the reality of their perception. Ibrahim (as) and his children were pious and righteous men, but no one should place their hopes and their trusts in them. This is because they were only a nation that has passed away. Their time has come and gone. What good could they do for anyone now? What good could they especially do in the Hereafter? They cannot save a single soul from Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. They lived their life, they worshipped and served Allah (swt) as they had been created to do, and now they are gone. How then could anyone hoped to be saved by a nation that has passed away? A people that are gone. So we see that with only a few words, Allah (swt) completely destroys their erroneous way of thinking. Allah (swt) completely destroys their foolish hope that they will be saved only by being the children of Ibrahim (as).

Then Allah (swt) says "**they will have what they earned and you will have what your earn**". Once again we see Allah (swt) reinforcing this concept of Individual Responsibility. On the Day of Judgment when every soul will stand before Allah (swt), every soul will stand alone. Allah (swt) clearly tells the Jews of Madinah and the Quraysh chiefs that they will not get anything from the pious works and the striving of their ancestors. All that Ibrahim (as) and his children did to strive hard to seek the pleasure of Allah (swt) was only for them. Their reward is only for them, and no one else has a share in their reward. Allah (swt) tells the Jews and the Quraysh that they will have only what they earn for themselves. Each one of them will only have what each one of the strived for. Nothing more, nothing less. Ibrahim (as) and his children will have their just reward and these Jews and pagans will have their just reward.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And you will not be questioned about what they used to do**". In this ayah Allah (swt) teaches us that just like we will not get the reward of any of the pious actions of our forefathers, we also will not be questioned about their sins and their shortcomings. Whatever sins or evil that they may have done are theirs and theirs alone and

we will not be held accountable for what they have. At the same time however they will not be able to carry our sins for us. Whatever evil that we may have done is something that we ourselves have to carry before Allah (swt). We cannot relieve this burden of sins onto anybody else. So we see that this part of the ayah also enforces the concept of Individual Responsibility. The Day of Judgment is a Day when we alone will be responsible for the actions that we have done. We will be rewarded for the good actions that we have done and we might be punished for the evil that we have done. We will not get the reward of the good of others, and we will not be questioned about the evil of others. And only Allah (swt) will Judge.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves again that the Day of Judgment is a Day on which we will all stand by ourselves. Each and every single one us will be judged individually by Allah (swt). In the life of this world we are used to depending on others to fulfill our needs. We think that there is always someone whom we can turn to whenever there is something that we need. That is why Allah (swt) reinforces the concept of Individual Responsibility for us. Do not expect anyone to help you on that Day. Do not expect anyone to stand for you on that Day. Allah (swt) will count the deeds that you have done on that Day, and you will not be able to take the deeds of anyone else. It is your deeds and your deeds alone that you have. Your good deeds are all that can save you on that Day so you think to yourself as to how heavy your scale of goods deeds is. How many actions have you done sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt) and following the way of the Prophet (saw)? This is all that you will have when you return to Allah (swt) on that Day. So this should be a motivation for you to do as many good deeds as you can for that Day. May Allah (swt) give us all the help and the guidance to prepare for that Day! May Allah (swt) help us all to remember that there will be no one whose good deeds we can take from and no one whom we can give our evil deeds to! Every single one of our good deeds will count for us and every single one of our evil deeds will count against us. The nations of the past have come and gone, we will not have the reward of the good that they have done and we will not be asked about the evil that they have done. We will have only what we ourselves strive for. May Allah (swt) help us all to remember this fact!

وَقَالُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا۟ ۗ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ حَنِيفًا ۖ وَمَا
كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

136. And they say "Be Jews or Christians and you will be guided". Say "No, we follow the way of Ibrahim Hanif, and he was not of the Mushrikoon".

We have seen so far that Allah (swt) has shown us two different groups of people. There was Ibrahim (as) and his children who submitted purely to Allah (swt) and then there were those who turned away from Allah (swt). The ones who turned away included Jews, Christians and pagans. We saw from the previous ayahs that not only had they turned away from Allah (swt) but they were also depending on those of their ancestors who had submitted to Allah (swt) to save them. Allah (swt) told them clearly in the previous ayah that Ibrahim (as) and his children were a nation that passed away. These Jews, Christians and pagans cannot take any of their good their deeds nor can they unload their evil deeds on these noble prophets. Every soul will have Individual Responsibility. However despite being clearly shown that the way of Ibrahim (as) was totally different from what these disbelievers claimed to be following, they still declared the contrary. They claimed to be following the way of Ibrahim, even though they were rejecting a Message that they were certain was from Allah (swt). How could you be following the way of one who submitted purely to Allah (swt) when you are rejecting Allah (swt)? Not only did they reject the Message of Allah (swt) while claiming to be following the way of Ibrahim (as), but they were also calling others to their path of rejection. In this ayah, Allah (swt) exposes their deception and He (swt) exposes the foolishness of their claims.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by clearly telling us what their stance was. Allah (swt) says, "**And they say "Be Jews or Christians and you will be guided"** ". Even before we look at the meaning of what they are saying, let us look at the methodology of dawah that the Quran uses. We can see that Allah (swt) did not tell us to simply believe in Him (swt) and not worry about others. Rather Allah (swt) tells us to call other people to this Din. Not only does Allah (swt) tell us to call others, but as we can see from this ayah that Allah (swt) even exposes for us the

errors of their beliefs and the falsehood of their statements. This fact should strengthen our arguments in calling others to the Oneness of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah how they were making the connection between being a Jew or a Christian and being rightly guided. We have to ask ourselves is this a valid connection to make? Is there any truth to such a statement? To answer this we have to understand what it means to be guided and what it means to be a Jew or a Christian. If guidance can be thought of as a goal then will being a Jew or a Christian lead to that goal? Now we know that guidance here refers to guidance to Allah (swt), guidance to the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and guidance to the Garden. These three are really the same. If you are seeking Allah (swt) then you should know that the only means of approaching Him (swt) is through His (swt)'s Pleasure and when you attain His (swt)'s Pleasure then He (swt) will give you the Garden.

Now let us see if the connection between being a Jew or a Christian and attaining this goal is valid. To be a Jew means that one has to consider oneself to be part of the tribe of Israil. One can accept some of the messengers of Allah (swt) like Ibrahim (as) and Musa (as) but one has to reject other messengers of Allah (swt) like 'Isa (as) and the Prophet (saw). One also has to accept the authority of the Jewish Rabbis to legislate laws when Allah (swt) has said that sovereignty is only with Him (swt). One also has to accept the superiority of the Jewish race above others and even look down on the rest of mankind while Allah (swt) has clearly said that all men were created equal and no man is higher than another because of his race. Similarly if one claims that they are Christian, they have to believe that god has a son or that god can become as a human when Allah (swt) has clearly said that He (swt) does not have children and that He (swt) is nothing like the creation. One also has to believe that if they accept "the son of god" as their savior, then all of their sins are forgiven and they will be saved when Allah (swt) has told us again and again that we will stand alone on the Day of Judgment and no human can save us on that Day. Now that we know what our goal is and we know what it means to be a Jew or a Christian, we can ask ourselves the question, "will being a Jew or a Christian help us to reach this goal?". The answer to this question should be obvious. So we can see from the ayah how Allah (swt) completely destroys their claim and exposes it for the falsehood that it is.

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) teaches us how to respond to these foolish statements. Allah (swt) tells us to say them; "**No, we follow the way of Ibrahim Hanif, and he was not of the Mushrikoon**". When they call us to Judaism or Christianity, our response to them should be that we follow the way of Ibrahim (as). Allah (swt) describes Ibrahim (as) as **Hanif** and He (swt) says that Ibrahim (as) was not of the **Mushrikoon**. These words are actually opposites of each other, the **Hanif** is the one who is not from the **Mushrikoon**. The **Hanif** is the one who worships and serves Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone without associating any partners with Him (swt). The **Mushrikoon** as we know are those who worship or serve something else along with Allah (swt), this could be idols, humans or their own desires. So Allah (swt) emphasizes for us here how Ibrahim (as) worshipped Him (swt) without making any associations in that worship whatsoever. A pure and complete submission to Allah (swt) Alone.

We can also see from this ayah how Allah (swt) considers both the Jews and Christians to be **Mushrikoon**. This is because in the ayah our response to their calling us to Judaism and Christianity is telling them that Ibrahim (as) was not from the **Mushrikoon**. Does not then that imply that Judaism and Christianity have some form of **shirk** within them? Are not the Jews and Christians in one way or another from the **Mushrikoon**? This is also obvious from what we have learned about these two religions. One of the many forms of shirk within Judaism is that they ascribe to Allah (swt) several anthropomorphic attributes. They say that god can forget and that he can make mistakes; these are attributes of the human being that they have ascribed to the Divine. They also do shirk when they allow their Rabbis to legislate laws for their community, when Allah (swt) has said that He (swt) should be the only Sovereign. They are also **Mushrikoon** because they place their race above the rest of mankind when Allah (swt) has said that all of creation is humble, weak and in need of Him (swt). There can be no race or community that can be greater than another simply because of who they are. All honor and glory is only with Allah (swt) and never can any human be above another except in their servitude to Allah (swt). Similarly the Christians are **Mushrikoon** because they believe that god has a son or that god can be human. Many of their sects also believe in the divinity of the saints and they even believe that their Pope receives revelation from the divine. This is all clear and open shirk and it is one of the

worst kind of shirk. So we see from this part of the ayah that both Judaism and Christianity are religions of shirk, and Allah (swt) has commanded us to turn away from them.

Mawdudi notes two important facts from his tafsir of this ayah. One is that it is clear that Ibrahim (as) was neither a Christian nor a Jew. Judaism and Christianity were religions that were invented after the time of Ibrahim (as). Judaism is a religion that revolves around one coming from the tribe of Israil, which as we said descended from the twelve sons of Yaqoob (as). Now since Yaqoob (as) was Ibrahim (as)'s grandson, how could Ibrahim (as) be counted as a member of this religion? Similarly Christianity revolves around believing in the divinity of 'Isa (as) and accepting him (as) as a savior, since Ibrahim (as) lived centuries before 'Isa (as) how could he (as) be considered a Christian? Mawdudi also notes that if we study the very scriptures of the Jews and Christians today they also describe Ibrahim (as) as one who worshipped only Allah (swt). Even in their own books, there is nothing to suggest that he (as) was a Christian or a Jew. Rather even their own Books show that Ibrahim (as) was a Muslim, a man who submitted purely to Allah (swt). From this we can see the utter foolishness of these Jews and Christians. On the one hand, they were claiming to be following Ibrahim (as) and they were calling the Muslims away from Islam and towards their religion. But on the other hand, even their own books and even their own beliefs attest to the fact that Ibrahim (as) was not from their religion, rather they show that he (as) was a Muslim submitting purely to Allah (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how foolish are those who claim that Judaism and Christianity is one and the same with Islam. Allah (swt) is telling us clearly in this ayah that these religions are shirk. They are religions of those who associate partners with Allah (swt). The difference between Islam and these religions is like the difference between day and night, like the difference between light and darkness. Those who want to make a connection between Islam and these false religions try to make the link with Ibrahim (as), and so they coin the term "the Abrahamic faiths". But we see clearly from this ayah that Ibrahim (as) had nothing to do with Judaism and Christianity. These are false religions that evil people invented after his time. The only way of life that is acceptable to Allah (swt) is Islam and that was the way of Ibrahim (as).

قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ
وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
وَمَآ أُوتِيَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ
مُسۡلِمُونَ ١٣٦

137. Say "We believe in Allah and what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqoob and *Al-Asbat*. And what was given to Musa and 'Isa and what was given to the prophets from their Rabb. We do not make any distinction between any of them. And to Him, we are submitters".

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) brought our attention to those who were calling us away from Islam and towards false religions. Allah (swt) exposed these false religions for the falsehood that they were. Their adherents may claim to be following the way of Ibrahim (as) but they were in reality nothing more than idol worshippers. They all in one way or another took divinity away from Allah (swt) and ascribed it to the creation. This is clear and open shirk. After showing us the falsehood of their ways in the previous ayahs, in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us what the Truth is. What is it that we as Muslims believe in.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives us a statement that contains the most basic tenets of our Aqeedah. This statement is one that all Muslims must know yet how many of us live our lives like we truly believe in it. This is why it is not enough that we just say it on our tongues, rather we must let it sink deep into the recesses of their hearts. Allah (swt) begins this statement of belief by commanding us to say "**We believe in Allah**". This is the cornerstone and foundation of our belief. Everything comes from our belief in Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the ultimate Reality and the ultimate Truth. This world is only an illusion when compared with Allah (swt). The Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. There is not a moment that passes us by except that Allah (swt) is the cause for that moment. Everything in our life happens only because of Allah (swt), and Allah (swt) has given us all that we have. Because of this fact, the Pleasure of Allah (swt) should be the purpose of all of our actions.

Not only do we believe in Allah (swt), but we believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) should be believed in. We believe in Allah (swt) as One and Only, without any partner, offspring or equal. There is no religion or thought in the world besides Islam that presents a belief in Allah (swt) so purely as this Aqeedah that Allah (swt) has given us. All other religions present a belief in Allah (swt) that is tainted with shirk of some kind. The foundation of our belief is a belief in Allah (swt) as the One and Only Creator, Sustainer, Lord, King and Master for the entire universe.

Then Allah (swt) says that we must believe in "**what was revealed to us**". This refers to what was revealed to the Prophet (saw). We must believe in all that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). We must believe in everything that is in the Quran and everything that is in the Sunnah. There should be nothing in the Quran and nothing in the Sunnah that we can have any doubts in. Even if some of what the Prophet (saw) has told us may be hard for us to believe, we must still believe it. For example the Prophet (saw) has told us about the events concerning the end of time, such as the appearance of the Dajjal and the tribes of Gog and Magog. Belief in these events may be difficult for some people to accept, but we know that these descriptions are the truth because they come from the Prophet (saw). Part of our submission to Allah (swt) is our belief in all that He (swt) has told us through the Prophet (saw).

Then Allah (swt) says that we must believe in "**what was revealed to Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqoob and *Al-Asbat***". This means that we believe in their Message. The essence of this Message was nothing but a call to believe in Allah (swt) as the One and Only. The One and only Who must be worshipped and Who must be served in all aspects of life. Ibrahim (as) taught this pure belief to his children Ismail (as) and Ishaq (as) and they carried to the people this same Message that was given to their father. Yaqoob (as) was the son of Ishaq (as), and ***Al-Asbat*** refers to the twelve sons of Yaqoob (as) and the twelve tribes that descended from them. The Message that was revealed to all of them was nothing more than a communication from Allah (swt) to believe His (swt)'s Oneness and to submit to Him (swt) completely. This is the Message that we believe in as well. Of all the people in the world, who truly believes in what was revealed to Ibrahim (as) and his children? Which religion follows what they preached?

Then Allah (swt) commands us to believe in "**what was given to Musa and 'Isa and what was given to the prophets from their Rabb**". Musa (as) and 'Isa (as) were two messengers of Allah (swt) who were sent to the children of Israil. They were given Divine Books by Allah (swt) and they called their people to the Oneness of Allah (swt). The essence of their Books just like the essence of the Quran is a call to believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and to submit to Him (swt) completely. It is this essence that we believe in as well. Their Books had a particular Law that was particular for them, and while we do not follow their Law we still believe in the essence of these Books. The essence of these Books is the call to Tawhid and the call to submit to the Allah (swt) in all aspects of life. Similar to the Books that were given to Musa (as) and 'Isa (as), Allah (swt) also revealed Books to other prophets and messengers. Similarly the particular Law in each of these Books was specific for the people to whom they were revealed, but the essence of all the Books was the same. The common theme among all of these revelations was a call for the people to believe in Allah (swt) as the One and Only, and to submit to Him (swt) completely. This is what Allah (swt) commands us to believe in as well in this ayah.

So what Allah (swt) is calling on us to believe in this ayah is not in the particular Books or the particular revelations that were given to the previous prophets and messengers, but it is the Truth that was common to all of these Books. What all of these revelations and all of these Books had in common was that they all called to the Oneness of Allah (swt) and they commanded total submission to Him (swt). This is what Allah (swt) commands us to believe in this ayah. This is the true belief because Allah (swt) is the Truth. All other beliefs call to associating partners with Allah (swt), but the Oneness of Allah (swt) is part of the Truth of Allah (swt). So all other beliefs do not have truth in them, while this belief is the Truth. This Aqeedah was what was given to all of the prophets and messengers of Allah (swt), and this is what Allah (swt) calls upon us to believe in.

Al-Qurtubi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how it was revealed when a group of Jews came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) as to which of the prophets and messengers he (saw) believes in. Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to tell them that we believe in all of the prophets and messengers of Allah (swt). Not only do we believe in all of them but we "**We do not make any distinction between any of them**". The Jews decided to pick and choose which

of the messengers of Allah (swt) they would to believe in. They decided to believe in Ibrahim (as) and Musa (as) but they decided to reject ‘Isa (as) and the Prophet (saw). This shows us that their sincerity was not for the Truth, they did not care for Allah (swt). Because they knew for certain that both the Prophet (saw) and ‘Isa (as) were messengers of Allah (swt). Both of these messengers had miracles that the Jews could not deny. But the bottom line is that they did not want to submit to Allah (swt) so they rejected these messengers, claiming that they were only men who had never received any revelation from Allah (swt). They said this even though they were certain to the contrary. Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah that we are not like them. We believe in all of the prophets and messengers of Allah (swt) and we do not make any distinction between any of them by picking and choosing which of them we want to believe in. This shows that our sincerity is to the Truth and not to our passions and desires.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) commands us to say, “**And to Him, we are submitters**”. This is the result of our belief. We believe in Allah (swt) as the One and Only Creator and Sustainer of this entire universe and everything in it. Everything that we have, from our very existence itself to every breath of air that we take to every morsel of food that we eat to every drop of water that we drink, is from Allah (swt). When we recognize this fact as the ultimate Truth, then what should be the result of this belief in our actions and in our behavior? How can anyone recognize this fact and then not submit completely to Allah (swt)? Only the most arrogant and the most evil of people could be so ungrateful that they would enjoy all of these bounties from Allah (swt) and not submit completely to Him (swt) in return. So we see that in this final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) commands us to affirm the manifestation of our belief in Him (swt) through our actions. Everything that we do must show our submission to Allah (swt). A pure and total submission. May Allah (swt) allow us all to reach this station!

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِمِثْلِ مَآ ءَامَنتُم بِهِۦ فَقَدِ ٱهْتَدَوا۟ ۖ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِى
شِقَاقٍ ۖ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

138. So if they believe in the same as what you believe in then surely they are guided. But if they turn away then they are only in opposition. Allah will suffice you against them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

In the previous ayahs, we had clearly seen that Allah (swt) has shown us the correct way and the wrong way. The path that leads to Him (swt) and the path that leads away from Him (swt). There was the path of believing only in Allah (swt) and submitting completely to Him (swt) and there was the path of associating partners with Allah (swt) and serving one's desires. One was the path of Ibrahim (as) and his righteous children, and the other was the path of those among his descendants who had turned away from Allah (swt). Among these corrupted descendants of Ibrahim (as) were many among the Jews and the Christians who were calling Muslims away from the Straight Path and towards their deviant paths. In the previous Allah (swt) clearly showed what the Straight Path is; it is to believe only in Allah (swt) and submit completely to Him (swt). It is total submission to Allah (swt) both in our thoughts and our actions. Allah (swt) also showed us that this was the way of all the previous prophets that He (swt) had sent, including the way of Ibrahim (as). Allah (swt) showed us the utter hypocrisy in the words of the Jews and Christians in that they were claiming to be following the way of Ibrahim (as) and they were calling us towards their way when it completely contradicts what Ibrahim (as) followed, and even their own Books attest to this fact. Now that we have seen their dawah to us, what should be our dawah towards them? What is their fate with Allah (swt)? Is there any hope for them? What should we be calling them towards?

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what should be our dawah towards the Jews and the Christians. Allah (swt) says, "**So if they believe in the same as what you believe in then surely they are guided**". As they call us towards Judaism and Christianity, we have to call them towards Islam. Because only when they believe in what we believe in will they be guided. They

have to believe in what we believe to be guided. Meaning they have to accept the Oneness of Allah (swt) and the Messengership of the Prophet (saw). To be guided here means to be guided to the Pleasure of Allah (swt), to be guided to the Garden, and to be guided to salvation from the Fire. If they do not have this guidance, then they are lost and they can never find the Straight Path. Notice the emphasis and the certainty with which Allah (swt) links believing in this Message to being correctly guided. How then could you have any hope for these people unless they accept this Message? Only Islam leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s Garden. Every other path leads to the Wrath of Allah (swt) and the Fire. So Allah (swt) tells us here that the only way for these people to be saved is if they believe in what we believe, in other words if they become Muslims.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the extreme importance of dawah and calling others to Islam. Only by calling the people to believe in what we believe can we ensure that they are guided, only when we are calling them to the Truth can they be saved from the blazing Fire. While we must all do what we can to carry dawah on an individual level to the non-Muslims that we know, we also have to remember that our goal must be to work for the reestablishment of the Islamic State. The State is the vehicle to carry this Message to all of the nations of the world. When the political authority is with Allah (swt) as it should be, that is when the justice of the Islamic State can be seen by all the people. That is also when the people can receive the clear and undistorted Message of Islam. The problem today is that since the government is not Islamic, it is impossible to practice Islam completely. So there are many laws of Islam that are not being implemented because the State is not present. In essence we are living an incomplete Islam, we are only living a small portion of Islam. So how can we invite others to Islam when we ourselves are not living Islam correctly? Not only is Islam not being practiced correctly today because of the lack of the State, but the kufr governments that control the world also make sure that the masses receive the wrong message about Islam. They will feed the people false propaganda about this way of life, so that they receive a distorted Message. The people will think, as they do today that this a backward religion of barbarians and terrorists. Thus no matter how many dawah tables you set up and no matter how many people you visit, your

results will be very limited. Dawah and jihad through the Islamic State was the way of the Prophet (saw) and the early companions and it is how the majority of people came into this Din. Only when we do the same will we see people entering this Din in large numbers once again. So we see from this ayah that we have to call people to Islam, it is the only way to ensure that they are guided to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). It is the only way to ensure that they are saved from the Fire. While there is nothing wrong with calling people on an individual level, our ultimate goal must be to work for the establishment of the Islamic State so that this Message could be carried on a mass level like it was by the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But if they turn away then they are only in opposition**". Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to those among the Jews and Christians who would turn away from this Message even after they are convinced that it is the Truth. What can you say about a people who turn away from the Truth even when they know it is the Truth? What could be their intentions? What is on their minds? Allah (swt) tells us the reality of such people. They are only in opposition. They see the Truth, they recognize the Truth but instead of submitting to the Truth they are in opposition to it. They are confronting the Truth and they are fighting against it. Who do they think that they are fighting against? It is only Allah (swt). When they choose to turn away from this Message that they know is the Truth then they have shown us their true nature. They have no sincerity to the Truth, they have no sincerity to their Creator and Sustainer, to their Lord and Master.

Even though these Jews and Christians are in opposition to Islam, Allah (swt) reassures us by telling us that "**Allah will suffice you against them**". Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah that He (swt) is enough for us against all of our enemies. If we have Allah (swt) on our side, who else do we then need? These people have already made up their minds that they are going to oppose this Message. Not only have they turned away from it, but they are in open opposition to it. They know that this Message is the Truth. They know that should this Message prevail and gain supremacy in the land then they will no longer be able to follow their desires and their passions. They know that this Message would establish itself in the land and outlaw all of the perverted things that they hold dear, it would make all mankind equal, it would

distribute the wealth of this world fairly and it would prevent them from cheating and exploiting the people. This is what they have to prevent at all costs. So they will use every means at their disposal to destroy this Message. Should we as Muslims then fear them? We can see even today how they control most of the wealth of this world. We can see how they have all of the resources and means at their disposal. Should we then be terrified of them? No, on the contrary Allah (swt) tells us clearly in this ayah that He (swt) is enough for us against them. No matter how much wealth and resources that they have, what chance do they have against the Lord and Master of the universe? What power is there against the All Powerful?

Now we have to note that this ayah does not give the meaning that all Jews and Christians are enemies of Islam. We have to understand the context in which these ayahs were revealed. These ayahs were revealed to the Prophet (saw) when he (saw) had clearly presented the Message of Islam to the Jews and Christians of his (saw)'s time. There were some among them who accepted the dawah of the Prophet (saw) and they became among the best of Muslims. However there were many who turned away from the Message knowing that it was the Truth, and it is these people that this ayah is addressing. They are the ones who ended becoming the enemies of this Message and who tried to oppose this Message at every opportunity. These are the Jews and Christians whom this ayah speaks about. Now today most of the Jews and Christians in the world are truly ignorant about the true Message of Islam and they are unaware of the Miracle of the Quran. They blindly follow the false propaganda that their leaders have fed them. So they are not who this ayah is in reference to. These people are not our enemies and we should not treat them as our enemies. In fact we should treat them with the utmost respect and kindness because they have not received this Message and so we are ambassadors of this Din for them. It may well be that in the Sight of Allah (swt) they are even better than us because we have received this Message and we still sin. So we have to realize that the vast majority of the people in the world today are not our enemies and we should not treat them as enemies.

However there are those among the Jews and Christians who are in power today who do recognize the Truth of this Message. They also recognize that this Message is a threat to their way of life. They are the ones who are working today to destroy this Din, and they are the ones

whom this ayah addresses in our time. They have all of the wealth and all of the resources, and they are working night and day to silence this Message that the Creator of the universe has sent for mankind. But we should know that Allah (swt) is telling us in this ayah that if we work sincerely in His (swt)'s cause then He (swt) will be on our side. What can our enemies to do us then? How can anyone harm us if Allah (swt) is with us? May Allah (swt) support and protect all those who sincerely work in this dawah to make His (swt)'s Law supreme and who work to establish the State to call the people to Him (swt)!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reassures us by reminding us that He (swt) is "**All-Hearing, All-Knowing**". Allah (swt) tells us about these two Names of His (swt) to reassure us that He (swt) is sufficient for us against all the plots and plans of our enemies. Even at this moment they are plotting and planning in their secret rooms and counsels to destroy this Message. Their think tanks are thinking day and night on how they can destroy this Din. Different groups among them are forming alliances and coming together because they have a common goal of destroying this Message. They are discussing amongst themselves as to what kind of lies and propaganda they can spread about the Din of Allah (swt). They are coming up with ways on how they can drive Muslims as well as their own people away from their Creator. Allah (swt) reminds us in this ayah that He (swt) Hears everything that they say. There is not one word that they speak which Allah (swt) does not Hear. Not only does Allah (swt) Hear everything that they are saying, but Allah (swt) also Knows. Allah (swt) Knows what they are going to do even before they do it. Whatever plan it is that they are hatching, Allah (swt) Knows how successful that plan will be and how far they will get in. Allah (swt) Knows all the possible outcomes of all of their plans. Furthermore Allah (swt) also Knows the evil that is in their hearts. He (swt) Knows that they are a people who are not sincere to the Truth. So all of their elaborate plots and plans will be of no avail to them on the Day of Judgment, in fact it will be a source of punishment for them. One Day soon they will return to the One Who Hears and Knows all of the evil that they did. Then they will be reckoned with a complete reckoning. May Allah (swt) save this Muslim Ummah from such people! May Allah (swt) save all the good people in the world from such people!

صِبۡغَةَ ٱللَّهِۖ وَمَنۡ أَحۡسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ صِبۡغَةٗۖ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ عَٰبِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

139. The coloring of Allah, and who is better at coloring than Allah? To Him we are slaves.

The scholars say this ayah was revealed about the Jewish and Christian concept of Baptism. This is a ritual bath that is given to converts and newborn babies to indoctrinate them into the religion. Basically the convert or the newborn is bathed in special water and after the bath they are said to be cleansed of all of their sins and they are said to have been made "pure for god". This was a practice that once existed in Judaism, and still exists today among many of the Christian sects. In this ayah, Allah (swt) responds to such a practice and demonstrates to everyone why we do not have such a practice in Islam. Before we go into the discussion of this ayah, notice once again how dynamic this Message is. Allah (swt) did not simply tell us to believe in Him (swt) and believe in the Message that He (swt) sent, but Allah (swt) demonstrates to us how the other beliefs are wrong and why Islam is correct. This demonstration should strengthen our faith in our Din and give us a firmer resolve to work in its service. This is because we see without a doubt that it is the correct way of life for all mankind. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to serve Him (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be served!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**The coloring of Allah**". When the Jews and Christians used to baptize, they used to dye the water in which the infant or the convert would bathe with a special coloring. The color from this dye that runs all over their body is supposed to signify their entering into the religion. What do Muslims have then when the Jews and Christians have this special color that they bathe themselves in? Allah (swt) responds to such people by telling them that the Muslims have "**The coloring of Allah**". The scholars agree that the **coloring of Allah** is a metaphor for the Din of Allah (swt). It means Islam, and this is what we have. We do not have a special bath with a special colored water. What we have is Islam, and when we accept this Din we are bathed in the coloring of Allah (swt). Just like a full bath permeates every part of our body, so do must this Din run all over us and affect every part of our lives. So for those of us who have come into the fold of Islam from a life of ignorance and sin, we should see the effect of Islam in every part of our lives. We should see a radical change in the person that we were from

the time before we entered Islam to the time after. If we do not see any such change, if we are basically the same person who only performs a few extra rituals, then we have to question how completely we have entered into this Din. Remember that Allah (swt) has commanded us to enter into this Din completely. So this Din must be like a bath that runs through us and changes every aspect of our lives, from our inward emotions and feelings to our outward actions and behavior. Every aspect of our personality must be affected by this Din. So we as Muslims do not have this special bath but we have something that is much better. We have the Din of Islam that runs completely through our lives and changes every aspect of it.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) asks the question "**and who is better at coloring than Allah?**". The Muslims have been bathed in the Din of Islam by Allah (swt) and who is better at giving a bath than Allah (swt)? If you would only study the lives of some of the early companions of the Prophet (saw) then you will see how much of a radical change Islam brought about in the lives of these people. For example you can see Umar (ra). A man who once killed his own daughter and a man who used to torture and beat the Muslims and a man who wanted to kill the Prophet (saw) and a man who once made an idol out of his dates and then he later ate that idol. This was the kind of person whom Umar (ra) used to be. But then look at how Islam changed him. He would become the leader of the most powerful empire that this world has ever seen and he still was not corrupted by this power. He still was of the most kind, most humble, most responsible, most knowledgeable and most helpful of rulers that the Islamic State had ever seen. The Prophet (saw) himself once said of Umar (ra) that if Allah (swt) were to send another messenger after him (saw) then it would be Umar (ra). The Prophet (saw) also said of Umar (ra) that when Shaitan sees Umar (ra) coming, he walks in a different direction. The Prophet (saw) also said of Umar (ra) that he (ra) was the barrier between this Ummah and the trials and tribulations. This was the kind of person that Umar (ra) was transformed into by Islam. See then how much of a radical change that Islam brought about in this noble man. What "special bath" of the Jews and Christians can do the same to any human being? So the bath of Allah (swt), the coloring of Allah (swt) is not a physical bath in colored water. It is an idea, a concept that is injected into the mind of a human being. It makes that human being recognize the unity and

purpose of this universe. It shows the human being that Allah (swt) is everything and that nothing else matters except the worship and servitude of Him (swt). It changes the entire outlook of that human towards life and it completely reorients him away from serving his desires and passions towards the total submission to Allah (swt). This is Islam and this is the coloring of Allah (swt). Now ask yourself who is better at coloring than Allah (swt)? While their baptism is just a bath in some colored water, our baptism is the subjugation of our desires and the love of Allah (swt) entering into the heart. Their religion is nothing more than a few rituals where the human being remains more or less the same person that they were before they entered it, ours is a complete transformation and realignment where the person before Islam and after are as different as night and day.

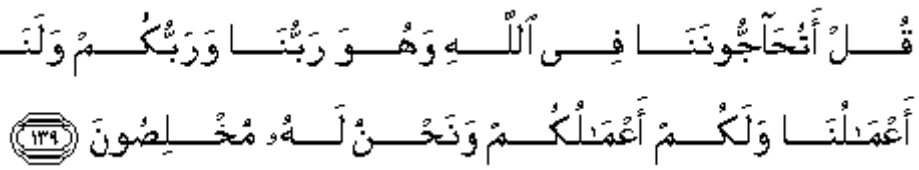
In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) commands the believers to say "**To Him we are slaves**". This is the effect of the baptism of Allah (swt). Once Allah (swt) bathes us in the Din of Islam, this should be the result. We should become the humble and sincere slaves of Allah (swt). This is a slavehood that comes from the love of Allah (swt). We recognize that Allah (swt) is our Creator and Sustainer Who has given us everything that we have. We also recognize Allah (swt) as the Perfect One with all the Names of Majesty and Beauty. So we love Allah (swt) from the depths of our hearts because of all that He (swt) has given us and all that He (swt) has done for us. We also love Allah (swt) because of Who He (swt) IS; the Perfect One with all the Names of Majesty and Beauty. This love in our hearts manifests itself in our actions as complete servitude and submission to Allah (swt). Every single thing that we do is only for Allah (swt). We only exist to please Him (swt). All of this is possible because of the bath that Allah (swt) gave us with the coloring of Islam. Allah (swt) bathed our hearts with love and submission to Him (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves once again of the complete transformation that Islam brings in the human. This in and of itself is enough of an evidence for the Truth of this Message. What other Din except the Din of Allah (swt) can bring about such a complete transformation in a human? Would anyone change their entire lives in such a way unless they were certain that this way of life is the truth? Would anyone be willing to be tortured and be killed for what this Message says unless they were certain that it was the from

the Creator? There has never been a thought or idea in the history of man that has created such a transformation within the human as this Message of Islam has. There has never been a cause that has created so many martyrs for it as this Message has. When a person is bathed in the Din of Allah (swt), it transforms him completely that he is willing to give his life for it, he is willing to be tortured and face all manner of hardships and suffering for it. He is willing to make all manner of sacrifices for it and he is even willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for it by giving up his life. This is the level of conviction that he has in it. The person is convinced that what this Message says is the Truth, the person is convinced that by following this Message he can arrive at the Pleasure of his Creator. So he gives everything that he has for what this Message says, does that not then tell you that this Message is the Truth? Do you think that Muslims like Umar (ra) would ever have existed if this Message was not the Truth? Do you think that such a complete transformation would have been possible if he (ra) had any doubts in this Message?

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that the Quran does indeed use metaphors. A few scholars have denied that the Quran has any metaphors at all. They say that every single ayah of the Quran has to be understood literally, without the use of any metaphors. They said this as a response to some deviant sects that claimed that the entire Quran is only metaphors. Both of these approaches are wrong. The correct way is in between these two extremes. In some ayahs Allah (swt) uses metaphors and in other ayahs Allah (swt) uses the literal meaning. Rather than making blanket statements and saying that the entire Quran has no metaphors, or saying that every ayah in the Quran is a metaphor, we should evaluate and study each ayah to see if the literal meaning is what is given or a metaphor is what is given. Priority should always be given to the apparent or literal meaning. Only when we can see that the literal meaning of an ayah is not possible should we then take a metaphorical meaning. For example in this ayah we can see that the literal meaning is "**coloring of Allah**" and that meaning makes no sense whatsoever. What does the "coloring of Allah" possibly mean? All of the scholars of tafsir, including Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn Kathir, agree that the literal meaning of this ayah cannot be taken. So this shows without a doubt that there are some ayahs of the Quran for which only the metaphorical meaning can be taken. Allah (swt)'s Book is Perfect and He (swt) uses metaphors

and He (swt) uses literal meanings when He (swt) pleases. Our task is only to study each ayah of the Book of our Lord to the best of our ability and try to find out the meaning in it. So that we can use that ayah to be guided to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!



140. Say "Would you argue with us concerning Allah when He is our Rabb and your Rabb. And to us are our actions and to you are your actions. And we are to Him *Mukhlisoon*".

This ayah was revealed to the Prophet (saw) when some among the Jews came and told him (saw) that they were the children of Allah (swt) and so they were His (swt)'s favorites. They used this point to argue with the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims. They said that since they were the favorites of Allah (swt), then their way was the correct way to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Since their way was the correct way they claimed that what the Muslims were following was a wrong path. They said that it was not a path that would lead the Pleasure of Allah (swt). These Jews claimed that they had the Pleasure of Allah (swt) only because of who they are. According to their perverted way of thinking, Allah (swt) is pleased with them just because of the fact that they were Jews. They think that they are the children of Allah (swt) so no matter what they do they believe that Allah (swt) loves them. Not only does such a twisted way of thinking give them the permission to commit all of the sins that they want, but it also makes them to be overflowing with pride and arrogance. This arrogance makes them completely blind to the Truth when the Truth comes to them. So when Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) to them in His (swt)'s Mercy to invite them back to Him (swt), they turned away from the Prophet (saw). Not only did they turn away but in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how they started to dispute and make arguments with the Prophet (saw) concerning Allah (swt). They would claim that they are on the right path only because of who they are. They saw themselves Allah (swt)'s favorites and so they thought that He (swt) must love them no matter what they do.

Allah (swt) teaches the Muslims to respond to such claims by saying to them "**Would you argue with us concerning Allah when He is our Rabb and your Rabb**". This statement shows the stupidity of their claim that they alone are Allah (swt)'s favorites. They are trying to say that Allah (swt) is only for themselves and that He (swt) is for no one else. Who are they to make such a claim? What right do they have to make such a claim? Allah (swt) says here that He (swt) is their Rabb and He (swt) is our Rabb as well. Recall that the word Rabb means "Creator" and "Sustainer". So how can Allah (swt) be the Rabb only for the Jews? Rather Allah (swt) is the Rabb for this entire universe. Everything in this universe has been created by Allah (swt) and everything needs Allah (swt) for every moment of its existence. Thus Allah (swt) is not exclusive for any group of people but He (swt) is for all of the creation. There is nothing that Allah (swt) loves just because of what it is because everything is His (swt)'s creation. So Allah (swt) cuts their argument right from its base. Their entire argument that they were on the correct path rests on the premise that they were Allah (swt)'s favorites and that He (swt) was "their god". Even their books speak of the "god of Israel". Allah (swt) destroys this claim by showing us that He (swt) is not exclusive for any people but rather He (swt) is the Rabb for all creation. He (swt) is the Rabb of the Muslims and the Rabb of the Jews, so they do not have any right to claim Him (swt) only for themselves. Thus we see how wrong they were in disputing with the Muslims about Allah (swt) when He (swt) is both their Rabb and our Rabb.

So if one cannot gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) because of who they are or by belonging to a particular nation or tribe, then what is it through which one can gain the His (swt)'s Pleasure? How does one become among the favorites of Allah (swt) like these Jews claimed they were a part of? Allah (swt) answers these questions in the next part of the ayah when He (swt) commands the Muslims to say "**And to us are our actions and to you are your actions**". This is the key to gaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt). It is by striving hard with our actions purely for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims to respond to the Jews in their arguments by telling them that the Muslims will have their actions and the Jews will have their actions. Actions are how one becomes closer to Allah (swt), and so the only thing that both the Jews and Muslims have to claim that either of them are Allah (swt)'s favorites are their actions.

The only way for you to become among the favorites of Allah (swt) is through your good deeds. So Allah (swt) tells each of them to look at the actions that they have done to see which of them have done the actions that bring one closer to Allah (swt). Which group is it that has rejected the messenger that Allah (swt) has sent and which group has accepted him (saw)? Which group among them has ascribed human traits to Allah (swt) and which among them believes that Allah (swt) is not at all like the creation? Which group among them legislates laws for themselves and which group believes that all sovereignty must only be for Allah (swt)? Which group among them has done the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and so which group among them is more entitled to be the favorites of Allah (swt)? Thus Allah (swt) shows us in this part of the ayah that if any group has the right to argue that they are Allah (swt)'s favorites it is the Muslims because they are the ones who have submitted to Allah (swt) and they are the ones that do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). It is not because of who we are that we claim to be Allah (swt)'s favorites but it is because of what we do. While the Jews only say that they are Allah (swt)'s favorites but at the same time they do the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). What basis do they then have for what they say? We as Muslims have to save ourselves at all costs from becoming like these people. We have to strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and we must hope that He (swt) accepts them from us and we hope that He (swt) is pleased with us. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like these people! May Allah (swt) save us from ever thinking that we will be saved only because of who we are! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that our good and sincere actions of our limbs and our hearts are the ways to approach Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to say "**And we are to Him *Mukhlisoon***". The word ***Mukhlisoon*** comes from the word *Ikhlas* which means "sincerity" and "purity". Among the meanings of this word is that which is so pure that is has no impurities mixed into it whatsoever. When you have a liquid that is so pure that nothing whatsoever has been mixed into it then you would use this word to describe that liquid. Another of the meanings of this word is the one who withdraws from other people. The one who is indifferent to what others may think or say. The one is dedicated purely and completely to Allah (swt). These are the

Mukhlisoon and these are the people whom Allah (swt) expects us to be. The ***Mukhlisoon*** are those who work and strive sincerely and purely for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). They do not care about anything else except Allah (swt). This is whom Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to be in this ayah. Allah (swt) teaches us not to worry about the arguments that the Jews or Christians might bring. Even if they claim that they are saved or that they are Allah (swt)'s favorites, their statements are only from their desires and not from the reality. For our part we must not allow ourselves to be distracted in their baseless arguments, but we must strive to get the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We must focus on Allah (swt) and make Him (swt) the goal that we strive to attain. The only way to get the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is to strive sincerely in His (swt)'s cause. So you must do each and every one of your actions only for Allah (swt). Your actions must be done to the best of your ability, with every drop of strength and perseverance that you have, and you must do them only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). In all of your actions you must try your best and in all of you actions you must have sincerity only to Allah (swt). Every single action that you do, every single thought that you have, every single breath that you breathe must only be for Allah (swt). This is the station of sincerity and purity that we must always be striving to reach. The great Sufi master Al-Junayd said, "Sincerity is a secret between Allah and the slave. An angel cannot know it to record it, nor can a devil corrupt it, nor can passion incline to it". This sincerity to Allah (swt) is what we must seek to build in all of our actions. We must always remember that Allah (swt) Knows all of our actions and He (swt) Knows what is in the deepest corners of our hearts. So we must always work to the best of our ability and not expect anything in return for what we do except the contentment of our Lord. We should strive to rid our hearts even of the feelings of self-satisfaction that we get from our works. Rather we should always remember that all of our good deeds were possible only because of Allah (swt) and so we should dedicate all of them completely to Him (swt). As we see from the ayah this is the key to get the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and to be among His (swt)'s favorites. Now it is true that this is a very high station to attain and many of us may never attain it, but we must still try. Just like reaching for a star we must still try. May Allah (swt) help us all to reach this station! May Allah (swt) help us all to realize that at the end of the day nothing matters except sincerity to Him (swt)!

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah about the strong connection that exists between this ayah and the previous one. Recall in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told us that the true Muslims are the ones who are colored by the Din of Allah (swt). So the result of this coloring is that they serve Allah (swt) sincerely out of love for Him (swt). The sincerity comes from the Din that Allah (swt) has bestowed us with. The belief and the actions of this Din teach us how to dedicate ourselves to Allah (swt) completely. Look at how this connection is established between this ayah and the previous one. In this ayah Allah (swt) taught us how to respond to those who argue with us concerning Him (swt). So the first ayah was a statement by Allah (swt) regarding who the true Muslims are; how they are colored by Him (swt) with the Din of Islam and how they serve Him (swt) sincerely in all that they do and the second ayah was a statement by the believers where they acknowledge that Allah (swt) is their Rabb and that they do all of their actions for Him (swt) sincerely. The second ayah that has the statement of the believers is in effect exactly what Allah (swt) had described in the first ayah. The meaning is almost the same, only in the first ayah it is the words of Allah (swt) and in the second ayah it is the statement of the believers. So in the second ayah the believers acknowledge that they are how their Rabb had described in the first ayah. It is hard for us to notice this flow of meaning between one ayah to the next when we are limited to only the English translation but in Arabic this flow and this beauty exists. The transition of meaning between the two ayahs flows so perfectly that it is almost as if it is one ayah. This is one of the unique ways in which Allah (swt) uses the Arabic language in the Quran that only those who are well versed in the Arabic language can appreciate. May Allah (swt) make us among those who become experts in the Arabic language so we can truly taste the beauty of the Quran just like Imam Shaheed Sayyid Qutb did! May Allah (swt) allow this knowledge to give us the conviction like it gave to him! May Allah (swt) accept his efforts and be pleased with him in the Hereafter!

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا۟
هُودًا أَوْ نَصَٰرَىٰ ۗ قُلْ ءَأَنتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَٰدَةً
عِندَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

141. (Say) "Or do you say that Ibrahim, Ismail, Yaqoob, and Al-Asbat were Jews or Christians". Say "Do you know or does Allah? And who does greater Dhulm than one who conceals the evidence that he has from Allah? And Allah is not unaware of what you".

This ayah is a continuation of the speech that Allah (swt) commanded the believers to say in the previous ayah. Recall in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) had commanded the Muslims to respond to the arguments of the Jews and Christians by saying that Allah (swt) is both our Rabb and their Rabb. We will have our actions and they will have their actions and we are among those submit sincerely to Him (swt). That is what we were commanded to say to the Jews and Christians in the previous ayah. It was a powerful intellectual argument that exposed the foolishness of their thinking. It showed them the reality of this universe in that human beings were created only to be tested for their actions and for the sincerity in their actions to Allah (swt). It did not matter what race they came from, what nation they belonged to, or what the color of their skin was. These are all fixed by Allah (swt) and they cannot be changed by the human being. All that the human being can control are his actions and the sincerity that he has in those actions for Allah (swt). This is what Allah (swt) will judge the human being for. This is the reality that was communicated to the Jews and Christians in the previous ayah. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues the intellectual attack on their ways of belief to expose the folly in them. Allah (swt) shows them how their thinking was based only on their whims and desires and not on any evidence that they have from Him (swt). They believed what they wanted to believe and not what they were convinced was the Truth. Allah (swt) admonishes them in this ayah and shows them how wrong that they were. We can only hope that perchance a few of them might listen and consider, then Insha Allah they might realize the Truth and come into the light of this Din.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by commanding the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims to say to the Jews and Christians; "**Or do you say that Ibrahim, Ismail, Yaqoob, and Al-Asbat were Jews or Christians**". This statement is the response to the argument that the Jews and Christians used for not accepting Islam. They used to say that Ibrahim (as) and his righteous children including Ismail (as), Ishaq (as), Yaqoob (as), and the righteous children from Al-Asbat were all either Jews or all Christians. The Jews would say that Ibrahim (as) and his righteous children were Jewish and the Christians would say that Ibrahim (as) and his righteous children were Christians. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to such a claim to see if it is valid or not. Now for anyone to make any claim it must be based on evidence. They must either have witnessed it themselves or they must have a Book from Allah (swt) stating that it is so. Now did these Jews and Christians have either of these to support their claim? Were they alive at the time of Ibrahim (as) and his children to see what religion it is that they followed? Or did they have a Book from Allah (swt) where He (swt) told them what religion it is that they followed? Of course none of the Jews and Christians at the time of the Prophet (saw) lived during of the Ibrahim (as). As for their Books, we have seen how their own Books stated clearly that Ibrahim (as) was a man who worshipped only Allah (swt), submitting sincerely to Him (swt). Is this Judaism or Christianity? What is the only way of life that calls on the people to worship and serve Allah (swt) as One and Only without ascribing any partners to Him (swt)?

After exposing the foolishness of their claim that Ibrahim (as) and his children were either Christians or Jews, Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims to ask of them "**Do you know or does Allah?**". Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing and He (swt) Knows better than them about Ibrahim (as) and his children. Allah (swt) tells them in the Quran that Ibrahim (as) was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Who are they then to come and claim otherwise? Do they presume to have more knowledge than Allah (swt)?

Then Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to ask them "**And who does greater Dhulm than one who conceals the evidence that he has from Allah?**". The scholars say that the"evidence" that this part of the ayah refers to are the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that are found in the Books of the Jews and Christians. The rabbis among the Jews and the priests

among the Christians knew very well about these descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were in their Books. Because of these descriptions, Allah (swt) tells us how they recognized the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) better than they recognized their own children. But what did they do with this knowledge that they had? Did they tell their people about this knowledge so that their people could be guided to Allah (swt)? No, on the contrary they hid this knowledge from their people. They told their people that the Prophet (saw) was a false prophet when they were certain to the contrary. They even changed their own Books to remove the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) from them. And what was their intention behind doing all of this evil? They knew that if the people realized that the Prophet (saw) is indeed the messenger of Allah (swt) then that would mean that Islam would be established in the land. Once Islam has become established, the sovereignty and the power would go to Allah (swt) where it belongs. This would mean that these rabbis and priests would lose their political power over their people. They would no longer be make whatever their laws that they wanted to. They would no longer be able to make laws that allow them to exploit the people and take all of their wealth. They would no longer be able to make laws that allow them to satisfy their lusts and passions. Furthermore specifically for the rabbis they knew that if they told their people that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), then they would have to acknowledge a messenger being sent from other than the Jewish nation. This would mean that their nation would lose the status of superiority that they had above the rest of mankind. They would have to acknowledge the truth that all of mankind is equal. So they made a conscious decision in their minds to follow their greed and follow their lusts and follow their pride and follow their arrogance instead of submitting to the Truth. So they hid these descriptions of the Prophet (saw) from the people, they even changed their Books to remove these descriptions, and they denied any mention of the Prophet (saw) in their Books. Did they realize that by doing this they were literally driving their people away from Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) the Creator and the Sustainer, the Lord and the Master of this entire universe has sent a Message to the people. This Message has in it what will give them peace and tranquility in the life of this world and what will save them from the Fire and admit them into the Garden in the next world. This Message has in it knowledge of the Creator, about His (swt)'s beautiful Names. This

Message has in it guidance on how to please the Creator and how to draw closer to Him (swt). This is what these priests and rabbis have hid from their people. This is what they have deprived their people of. Can you then even begin to comprehend the evil and injustice that these men are doing? That is why Allah (swt) commands us to ask them "**And who does greater Dhulm than who conceals the evidence that he has from Allah?**". There is no one who does greater Dhulm than these people. None of us can fully realize and understand the evil that they have done. Only Allah (swt) Knows their evil and He (swt) is the Best One to Judge them.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims to say to these Jewish rabbis and the Christian priests that "**Allah is not unaware of what you**". Allah (swt) is not ignorant to anything that they have been doing. They have committed such evil and such injustice by concealing the revelations from Allah (swt) that are in their Books. They know that Allah (swt) Exists and that He (swt) is their Lord and Master. They know that Allah (swt) will hold them to account for the evil that they do. But at that moment when they decided to cover the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) from their Books, they are behaving like they think Allah (swt) is ignorant of them. They think that Allah (swt) is not aware of the evil actions that they are doing and the evil thoughts that was in their hearts when they did these actions. It is so foolish to think in this way but this is how they were thinking when they did this evil. Allah (swt) corrects such foolish thinking. Allah (swt) reminds them here that He (swt) is not ignorant of what they did. This is actually a threat for them. Allah (swt) made us to fear Him (swt) and He (swt) made us to fear His (swt)'s punishment. This was only done in order that we may do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and to keep away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So here when Allah (swt) tells these Rabbis and priests that He (swt) is not unaware of their actions, He (swt) is in fact telling them to expect His (swt)'s punishment for what they had done. But in addition to being a threat, this statement is also a Mercy. Perchance some of them may realize that Allah (swt) is Aware of their evil and this might make them stop their evil. This might make them disclose the Truth about the Prophet (saw) that they had been hiding. This might then make them come into the Truth.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see what a great sin it is to cover the knowledge that we have been given by Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us that whoever covers the knowledge that they have been given will be covered with a rope of fire around their mouth. In order to save ourselves from this punishment we have to try and teach others the knowledge that we have. If we do not disclose this knowledge to others and if we do not call others to Allah (swt) with this knowledge then this knowledge will be an evidence against us on the Day of Judgment. So if you have some knowledge and you are certain of that knowledge, then you must teach it to others. The Prophet (saw) has told us to relate from him (saw) even if it is just one ayah. So we must all strive to spread to others whatever knowledge of this Din that we have. You can start with your family and then move on to your community. This way your knowledge will be a source of good not only for you but for others as well. Through it we can draw closer to our Lord and we can bring others close to Him (swt) as well.

If on the other hand we conceal the knowledge that we have. If we do not let others benefit from our knowledge. If it be the case that our knowledge may have brought someone closer to Allah (swt) but it did not because we chose to keep such knowledge hidden to ourselves. What then will be our station with Allah (swt) on the Last Day? How can we ever face Him (swt) on that Day? Allah (swt) gave you a Light with which the people could be drawn closer to Him (swt), with which the people could be guided to Him (swt), how do you think that He (swt) will like it if you kept that knowledge hidden to yourself? May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do carry to others all of the beneficial knowledge that we have learned!

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا۟
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾

142. "They were a nation that has passed away, they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn. And you will not be questioned about what they used to do".

This ayah continues with the powerful arguments that Allah (swt) brings against the Jews and Christians. We can see from this how our dawah to them must be one of confrontation and argumentation. It is not a dawah of "interfaith dialogues" and trying to find commonality between our religions. Our Din is the Truth and theirs is falsehood. This is what we must always be trying to show them. Here Allah (swt) is teaching us how to respond to those among them who claim that they are rightly guided only because their forefathers were guided. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us how the prophets that they claimed to be following like Ibrahim (as) were indeed Muslims just like the Prophet (saw) was. So these Jews and Christians had no right to argue and say that these prophets were from their respective religions. They had no evidence to make such a claim and it completely contradicts what Allah (swt) has told us in the Quran. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds them again of the reality of these previous prophets. Notice that the words in this ayah are the same as in ayah 135. In both ayahs, Allah (swt) is reminding the Jews and Christians not to place their hopes in the prophets of the past. They were a nation that has long since come and gone. They strived hard and sacrificed to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and so they will have their reward with Him (swt). But Allah (swt) created every single soul to have its own test before Him (swt). No soul can take the good works of another, nor will any soul be questioned about the evil of another. These Jews and Christians were placing all their hopes on the prophets of their past, and they think that only because of these prophets they will be saved. Allah (swt) tells them clearly in this ayah that they cannot do that. On the Day of Judgment none of these prophets from the past would be able to help them. Each soul will only have for it the good that it has done and against it will only be the evil that it has done. The nations and the people that have passed away will not be able to do anything for anyone else.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remind ourselves once again that this life is a journey to Allah (swt), but it is a journey that we must all undertake. We cannot expect any of our ancestors who have already reached Allah (swt) to bring us to Him (swt) without us making any effort for ourselves. Each and every one of us has to strive hard to make the journey to our Lord. No one else can take this trip for us. We make this journey to Allah (swt) by believing with certainty in Him (swt) and by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) with sincerity only for Him (swt). Only when we leave this world and find ourselves on the Day of Judgment will we know for sure how well we fared on this journey. Until then, every day of our lives, every moment of our lives is another step in this journey. We must never feel content that we have arrived at our destination but we must ceaselessly strive to the best of our ability to improve ourselves and to bring ourselves closer to Allah (swt). This is what this life is all about. There is a road that leads to Allah (swt) and this is the road that has the footprints of the Prophet (saw). Every other road leads to destruction and ruin. Life is nothing but a struggle but to keep our feet on this path of our beloved (saw). If our hearts are truly given to Allah (swt), then only when we are striving to keep ourselves on this road will we find happiness and tranquility. May Allah (swt) allow all the sincere and good people in this world to walk on the path of the Prophet (saw), the Straight Path that leads to His (swt)'s Pleasure!

All praise and thanks belongs to Allah (swt), our tafsir of the second part Surah Baqarah ends here.

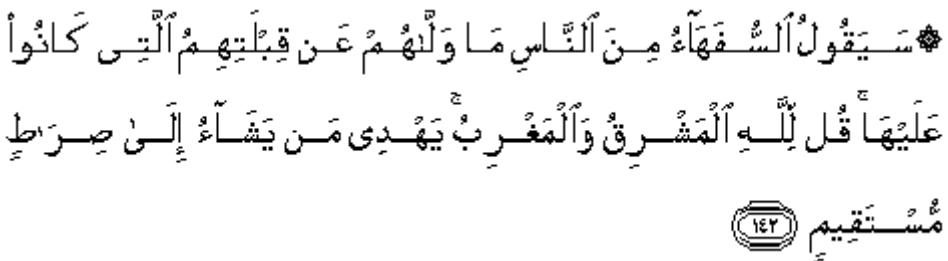
Please look for part three on Quran-Tafsir.org.

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Surah Al-Baqarah

Part 3 (Ayahs 143-208)

This is the third part of our tafsir of Surah Baqarah, Insha Allah please go to Quran-Tafsir.org for the first and second parts.



143. The foolish among the people say "What has turned them from the qibla that they had?" Say "To Allah alone belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the Straight Path."

This ayah was revealed when Allah (swt) changed the direction that the Muslims face in prayer from the direction of *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the direction of the Kabbah in Makkah. We know that when the Prophet (saw) first arrived in Madinah, Allah (swt) had ordered him (saw) and the Muslims to pray towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem. Although the Prophet (saw) had obeyed this command, he (saw) still longed to pray towards the Kabbah. So in order to ease the heart of the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) ordered that the qibla or prayer direction be changed from the direction of *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the direction of the Kabbah in Makkah. Another reason that some scholars have cited for the changing of the qibla from Jerusalem to Makkah is to signify the changing of the responsibility for the carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind from the Jewish nation to the nation of the Prophet (saw). After the qibla was changed, the mission of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind had officially been changed from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). Now when Allah (swt) changed the qibla, many among the Jews and the hypocrites used to question why it had been done. They asked why Allah (swt) would change the direction of prayer in such a way. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah in order to comfort the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims, and also to respond to the questions and accusations of these Jews and hypocrites.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**The foolish among the people say "What has turned them from the qibla that they had?"** ". This was what the hypocrites and the Jews said when Allah (swt) changed the qibla for the Muslims. They questioned for what reason Allah (swt) has changed the qibla. As we discussed when we went over the ayahs concerning abrogation, their real intention in questioning why the qibla was changed was to put doubts in the hearts of the Muslims. They did not really have any sincere questions as to why the qibla was changed. They did not care about the qibla or the prayer of the Muslims, they only wanted to create doubts in the hearts of the new Muslims in order to drive them away from Islam. Notice how Allah (swt) calls them "fools" in this ayah. This demonstrates the kind of people that they are. How bad can a people be when the Creator and Sustainer of the universe refers to them as "fools". They truly are fools in every sense of the word. They live only to serve their passions and their desires. They do not care about their Creator and Sustainer. They do not care about their fellow human beings. And they are working to take people away from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Who but a complete fool would do that? Allah (swt) Knows each and every one of their actions, and so what are they earning with such actions except punishment from Allah (swt)? How could anyone then be so foolish as to do the actions that are earning themselves pain and destruction in the eternity of the Hereafter only to get the transient pleasures of the life of this world? These are the fools who questioned the change of the qibla in such a way.

The response that Allah (swt) tells the Muslims to give for their questioning is to say "**To Allah alone belongs the east and the west**". With this statement, the attention is taken away from the qibla and towards Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One to Whom belongs this entire universe, the east and the west, the north and the south, wherever you turn that direction belongs to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is beyond being in a particular direction but every single direction belongs to Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who ordered that the qibla be changed from the direction of Jerusalem towards the direction of Makkah. Once Allah (swt) gives that order to change the direction of our prayer, it is not our place to question that order in any way. Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing and the Most Wise and He (swt) is our Lord and Master. Our task is only to submit to Him (swt) and to carry it our His (swt)'s commands. This was the important fact that all

those who were questioning the changing of the qibla could not realize. So the Muslims are being commanded to tell them that what is important is not the qibla, but what is important is Allah (swt). Allah (swt) owns the east and the west, and He (swt) is our Lord and Master. He (swt) can place as the qibla whatever direction He (swt) wants and it is not our place to question His (swt)'s command. We simply submit it to it like a slave would to his master.

Then Allah (swt) commands the believers to say "**He guides whom He wills to the Straight Path**". This is the ultimate truth and the ultimate reality that the hypocrites and the Jews failed to realize. As we mentioned, the Straight Path is the path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This is the path that every single human being was created to walk on and this is the path that every single human being should want to walk on. Only the fools would willingly turn away from this path. So we see that if anybody should be questioned it is these hypocrites and Jews. Why are they turning away from the Straight Path by their refusal to submit to Allah (swt) and their efforts to destroy Islam? Do they not realize that in this Straight Path lies their only hope for salvation? Do they not see that they were created to walk on this Straight Path? Allah (swt) is the One Who guides whom He (swt) wants to unto the Straight Path, but for their part should they not at least do their best to make themselves eligible for this guidance? Should they not strive to earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) so that He (swt) may love them and bless them with the light of guidance in their hearts? The guidance comes from Allah (swt) but they must do their best to seek that guidance by trying to please Allah (swt). Do they not realize that Allah (swt) will not guide those He (swt) is not pleased with? These are the questions that are being presented to the hypocrites and the Jews when Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) is the One Who guides to the Straight Path. This guidance is their only salvation both in this life and the next. By refusing to accept Islam and by their continued efforts to destroy Islam, they are taking themselves further and further away from this guidance. What then will be their station when the Day of Judgment comes? No matter how many times they are admonished and no matter how many times they are warned, will they not take heed? Allah (swt) guides whomsoever He (swt) pleases so should we not try to make ourselves among those? Only in the guidance from Allah (swt) does the salvation for man lie, why then does he not try to please Him (swt)?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that Allah (swt) is far more important than any particular direction of prayer. He (swt) is even more important than the Kabbah or the *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem. These places are sacred and special places only because Allah (swt) has made them special and sacred. If He (swt) wanted to, He (swt) could make any other place in the world as special and sacred as these places. So our reverence for these holy sites should really be reverence for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is our Creator and Sustainer and our Lord and Master. He (swt) is everything in our hearts. The Kabbah and the *Bayt al-Maqdis* are only symbols that Allah (swt) has appointed. The Kabbah for example serves as a common prayer direction for the entire Muslim community so that we can be united in our prayer to Allah (swt). No matter where they are, all Muslims take this house as their direction of prayer and this serves to unify our community and show that we are one. Furthermore the Kabbah is the first masjid that was build so that Allah (swt) can be worshipped in it. The reason why it was built is so that Allah (swt) can be worshipped in it. So we must not focus our hearts on the Kabbah itself but we must focus our hearts on Allah (swt). Were it not for Allah (swt) and the command of Allah (swt) telling us to revere the Kabbah, it would only be a simple house of bricks and stone. In this ayah we saw how Allah (swt) responded to the questioning of the Jews and hypocrites by taking their attention away from the places of qibla and focusing their attention towards Him (swt). Once a companion of the Prophet (saw) heard a man swear by the Kabbah, the companion corrected the man and told him to swear by the Lord of the Kabbah thus directing his attention away from the bricks and stone and towards the Lord of those bricks and stone. So too must we turn our hearts away from the symbols and towards the Most High and the Most Great. Our worship and veneration should always and only be for Allah (swt).

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how to respond to those who raise doubts or questions about any of the laws of our Din. Similar to the Jews and hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (saw), there are also many enemies for this Message today. In their efforts to destroy Islam they will try to find something wrong with this Message in order to raise doubts in the hearts of the Muslims. Of course there is nothing wrong with this Message, but they will play to the ignorance of the Muslims. They will tell the Muslims that there is indeed something

wrong with this Message in the hope that they can deceive the Muslims whose knowledge about this Din is very limited. One of the main ways in which they attack Islam today, especially their attack on the political sphere of Islam, is to attack the laws of Islam. They would question the laws of Islam and they would question their validity in the world today. For example they would question the laws that Allah (swt) has given for jihad, for the punishments, for the role of the woman, for the status of non-Muslims and so on. Now they do not have any sincere doubts about any of these laws. Their only intention is to create doubts in the hearts of the Muslims and drive them away from Islam. In this ayah, Allah (swt) teaches us how to respond to such questions and arguments. It is by always bringing the attention and the focus back to Him (swt). The laws are not what are important, but what is important is WHO these laws come from. So instead of debating with them about the validity of these laws, ask them if they believe in Allah (swt) or not. Present to them the clear and rational arguments that Islam has given to prove the existence of the Creator. Then present to them the clear and rational arguments that Islam has given to prove that the Prophet (saw) is indeed the messenger of that Creator. There is no rational and sane person who could deny these arguments. If someone still does deny this Message, then there are only three possible reasons for that person not accepting this Message. Either there is a problem with his mind in that he has some form of mental illness. This disease prevents him from understanding the Message properly. If this is the case, the person will Insha Allah be excused by Allah (swt). Another possibility for someone not accepting this Message could be because they were not presented with this Message correctly. The proofs for this Message can be very simple or very complex depending on the person to whom this Message is carried to. There are some people who may be need to shown in detail all of the different arguments and proofs that this Message has. If the person has not been shown all of these proofs, then they might not have accepted the Message because it has not been presented to them correctly. In this case also the person will Insha Allah be excused by Allah (swt) because the Message had not been conveyed to them correctly. Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) will never punish a people until they have been sent a messenger. The meaning is that Allah (swt) would never punish a people until they receive the Message correctly. So the people in the first two cases are excused for not accepting

the Message. This is because the Message did not reach them correctly. But the people in the third scenario are those who are not excused for not accepting this Message. They are the ones who receive the Message correctly, and they understand and comprehend that this Message is indeed from Allah (swt) and yet they reject it. Despite the knowledge they have that this Message is the Truth, they choose to turn away from it. They choose to deny it. They could choose to deny it because of pride or because of their desires or because of their personal hatred towards the one who is presenting the Message to them. These are the ones who cover the Truth that they know and so Allah (swt) calls such people *kufar* or "those who cover". It is for these people that Allah (swt) has reserved the painful and lasting punishment. Do such people deserve anything less than spending eternity in the Fire? If you truly realize the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt), you would realize what a great sin it is to deny Him (swt). If you truly recognize how Glorious Allah (swt) IS, you would see how evil are the people who would turn away from Him (swt). Then you would see that this in fact the most fitting punishment for them. So the core of every matter and affair is Allah (swt). When people bring stupid arguments and questions like these Jews and hypocrites brought when the qibla was changed, we must always bring their attention back to Allah (swt) and ask them why they are continuing to deny their Creator. That is the real issue here. We believe in all of the laws of Islam and we submit to them because we are certain that Allah (swt) revealed them. Once we know that these laws are from Allah (swt), we submit to them without reservation and hesitation. We do not find any problems with these laws because we know that these laws come from the One Who is the All-Knowing and the Most Wise. So even if we ourselves may not be able to see the wisdom in these laws because of our limited knowledge and our limited experiences, we know that these laws are what are best both for ourselves and for mankind. This is because their source is Allah (swt). So when people question you regarding the validity of the laws of Islam, or their justice or their "applicability to the modern world", always bring their attention back to Allah (swt). Once they realize that these laws come from Allah (swt), then they will not question them anymore. Your task is only to convince them of Allah (swt) and to convince them that this Message has been sent by Him (swt).

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلْقِبْلَةَ ٱلَّتِى كُنتَ
عَلَيْهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِن كَانَتْ
لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ
ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

144. And so did We make you (Muslims) a nation *wasata*, in order that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger may be a witness over you. And We did not appoint the qibla that you used to follow except so that it may be known who follows the Messenger from him who turns on his heels. Indeed that was truly difficult, except on those whom Allah has guided. And Allah will never allow your Iman to go to waste. Surely Allah is to mankind Full of Kindness and Most Merciful.

This is one of the most important ayahs for the Muslim Ummah today. It reminds us of our purpose in this world. This is a purpose that many among the Muslim community today have forgotten or are ignorant of. This is an ayah that we should all know and that we should all use to call our Muslim brothers and sisters to come back to the dawah. This is an ayah that teaches all Muslims that Islam is not simply about Salah and fasting in Ramadan. It reminds us that part of what it means to be a Muslim is that one must always be involved in the dawah. The dawah was the life of the Prophet (saw), and if you want to follow in his (saw)'s footsteps then the dawah must be your life as well. Such is part of what it means to be a believer.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And so did We make you (Muslims) a nation *wasata*, in order that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger may be a witness over you**". First of all we can notice that this ayah confirms what we said in the previous ayah. That is that one of the reasons why the qibla was changed was so that the responsibility of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind can be transferred from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). Since the time of Musa (as), Allah (swt) had given the responsibility

of carrying His (swt)'s Message to the children of Israil. They were the nation whose purpose was dawah and jihad. From their capital in Jerusalem, the armies of Allah (swt) went forth inviting the tribes and nations of this world to the Oneness of Allah (swt). Although at the beginning of their history, they carried this Message and they carried it well, they later became attached to the life of this world. They became lazy and materialistic. They chose to follow their lusts and desires rather than submit to the Law of Allah (swt). Their situation became so bad that by the time the Prophet (saw) was sent, they had all but given up on the dawah. They were no longer actively working to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. In fact they had allowed their enemies to conquer the Islamic State, and they became a separated and disunited people without a homeland. Does this not remind you of the Muslims today? This was the sorry state of the Jews when they Prophet (saw) was sent. After the Prophet (saw) established the new Islamic State in Madinah, Allah (swt) chose him (saw) and his Ummah to be the new bearers of His (swt)'s Message to mankind. This change of guard from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw) was symbolized by the change of qibla from the *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the Kabbah in Makkah. Now there was a new nation that would be responsible for carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. This nation would have this duty until the Day of Judgment. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) lets the Muslims know who they are and He (swt) tells them of the kind of Ummah that He (swt) expects them to be.

The first description that Allah (swt) gives for our Ummah is that He (swt) says that we are a "**nation *wasata***". There are several meanings given by this word ***wasata***. One of them is the "middle-most" and another is the "most just" and yet another is "the best". So we see that Allah (swt) refers to our Ummah in this ayah as the middle-most nation, and also as the most just and equitable nation, and also as the best and the foremost nation. All of these meanings come from the term ***wasata*** that Allah (swt) uses here to describe our Ummah.

As for the first meaning that this word gives, we can see many ways that our Ummah is the middle most and the central of all nations. This is only because of the Din or way of life that Allah (swt) has prescribed for us. Our scholars have identified several ways in which this Din has made our Ummah the middle most of all nations, we will cite only a few of those ways here.

One way in which Allah (swt) has made us the middle most nation is in the lifestyle that He (swt) has given us. There are some religions that call for extreme asceticism in that they preach a complete renunciation of all the pleasures of this world. Adherents to these religions say that to be truly happy and to reach a state of perfection, you must suppress and give up all of your desires. So you would see the followers of these religions never getting married, they eat only the smallest quantity of food, they sleep on hard floors. They do everything that they can to deny themselves every pleasure and comfort. On the other end of the spectrum you have the extreme materialism that is found in the West. The basic philosophy that is taught here is that man lives only to satisfy his pleasures. So life for them is nothing but a quest to get the most pleasure possible. These are two extreme lifestyles that exist in the world today. Our Ummah is a middle nation in that Allah (swt) has given us the perfect balance between these two extreme lifestyles. Allah (swt) has told us to enjoy ourselves from the good things of this world that He (swt) has provided for us. So the sweet and delicious foods have been made permissible for us, our wives have been made permissible for us, our soft beds and nice clothes have been made permissible for us. All of this is from the Mercy and Bounty from Allah (swt). On the other hand our purpose in life is not simply to live to get the most pleasure possible. We live to worship and serve Allah (swt), and as part of our servitude to Allah (swt) we are sometimes required to curb our desires and our passions. So we are not allowed to look at women who are not our wives with desire, and we must control ourselves from certain foods and alcohol, and in Ramadan we must fast for the entire month. These are certain restrictions that Allah (swt) has given us so that we may demonstrate our submission to Him (swt). But even where Allah (swt) asks us to control some of our desires, it is never to a level that is beyond our ability. It is merely to test our willpower and patience for His (swt)'s sake. So we see that in the balanced lifestyle Allah (swt) has given us, He (swt) has made us a middle nation between the extreme asceticism of the eastern religions and the uncontrolled materialism of the West.

Another way in which our nation has been made into a middle nation is in the Islamic Economic System that Allah (swt) has prescribed for us. The two most prevalent economic systems in the world today are Capitalism and Communism. Capitalism basically preaches

"survival of the fittest" as the goal of all the players in the economy. They say that the less that the government gets involved in the economy, the better it will be for everyone. They believe in an "invisible hand" that will regulate all of the affairs of the economy. They do not see it as the responsibility of the government to ensure that the wealth of the land is distributed fairly. If there are any people who for whatever reason cannot compete in the economy, then they are to be left behind. These people could not survive by contributing enough to the economy, so they should be allowed to die. True Capitalists would frown on the government offering any kind of assistance for these poor and underprivileged members of society. So the kind of society that they would seek to create is a society where most of the wealth is with a few people and the masses are living in debt or with very little wealth to call their own. This is the reality that much of the world finds itself in today. Communism is the extreme opposite of Capitalism where they believe that the government must regulate and control all aspects of the economy. They believe that it is the responsibility of the government to own all of the wealth and to distribute that wealth among the people as it sees fit. However because there is no free market and no competition, the economy becomes stagnant and there are no innovations and no striving to improve the economy. The people are also forbidden from owning anything because the government owns everything. This creates an economy filled with corruption and one in which everyone is lazy and complacent. Islam offers the correct balance between these two extremes. Islam allows private ownership of property and it has a free market where businesses can come in and compete with each other. This creates a lively economy where competition spawns innovation and better business models. But at the same time, the Islamic Economic System is also built around the principle of Zakat where it is the responsibility of the State to take care of each and every one it's citizens. Every single Muslim who has some degree of wealth must pay Zakat, it is one of the pillars of this Din. Similarly the non-Muslims of the State have to pay the Jizya, which is the equivalent of the Zakat that is levied on non-Muslims in the State. This money is then used to ensure all of the people in the State are taken care of. The Prophet (saw) said that the son of Adam has no greater right than that of food, shelter and clothing. So it is the responsibility of the Islamic State to provide all of the people living in it with at least these three basic necessities. There will never be a person in

the Islamic State who is without one of these basic needs. Contrast this to the West today where there are homeless, there are starving children, and there are people who do not even have the clothes to cover their backs. So we see that even in the Economic System that Allah (swt) has prescribed for us, He (swt) has made a middle nation between the extremes that we find in the world today.

Yet another way in which our nation is the middle most nation is in how we view war and peace. Islam itself means peace and peace is what this Din seeks to establish all over the world. But at the same time Allah (swt) also tells us that at times war is necessary. War is needed to defend the lives of the Muslims. War is needed to remove the obstacles in the dawah. War is needed to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land. These three reasons are the only reasons for which fighting is permissible. Even then it should only be done by the government of a proper Islamic State. Furthermore even the way in which war in Islam is conducted has its rules. We are not allowed to harm civilians or destroy property. We are not allowed to use any more force than is absolutely needed. And if the opposing side inclines towards peace then we must incline towards peace as well. So we are in between those extreme peoples who fight for any reason and who do not adhere to any rules of combat and those extremes who never fight even to defend themselves.

Yet another way in which our nation is the middle most is in our relationship with the Prophet (saw). Unlike the Christians, we did not extol him (saw) to such a degree that we made him (saw) into a god that was worshipped. And unlike the Jews we did not disgrace him (saw) by saying that he (saw) can commit sins like other men do. We consider the Prophet (saw) to be only a human being, but we love him (saw) more than we love our families, more than we love our possessions and even more than we love our own selves. We consider the Prophet (saw) to be the best of human beings and the best of all of the creation of Allah (swt). He (saw) is pure of all sin and wrongdoing. He (saw) is the model that we aspire to be like in all of our actions and emotions. So this is yet another way that Allah (swt) has prevented our nation from falling into the extremes that has plagued the other religions of the world. Even in our relationship to the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) has made us into a central and middle most nation.

The other meaning that the word ***wasata*** gives is the most just and the most equitable. This Ummah is one that has stood for justice and fairness in all the areas of life. In the Quran, Allah (swt) has commanded the judges to judge with justice even if it be against their own selves or against their own families. We have several narrations of the Sahabah where the judges among them would give rulings in favor of non-Muslims over Muslims. This is the level of justice that was practiced by this Ummah. Even in our business dealings we are not allowed to cheat our customers. Allah (swt) explicitly forbids not giving full measure when we sell something; we are always required to give our customers the full measure for what they paid for. Allah (swt) is always Seeing each and every one of our actions, and even the smallest of injustices that we do to anyone, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, is recorded and it will be brought before us on the Day of Judgment. This is so that this Ummah be a just nation that always deals with people fairly.

The word ***wasata*** also means "the best". We say that we are the best not because of who we are but because of what we do. In this Ummah there are people from various races and various lands. So there is nothing common among all of the members of our Ummah except the Iman that we have in our hearts. This is how we saw that we are the best. We are the best because we try to fulfill the purpose for which the human being was created. We believe in Allah (swt) as our Lord and Master and based on that belief we try to dedicate our lives to worshipping and serving Him (swt). What people could be better than those who strive to fulfill the purpose for which Allah (swt) created this entire universe? So we say that we are the best not because of who we are but because what we do. In the ideal Muslim community, every member of that community would dedicate every moment of their lives to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). That is why we are the best of nations among mankind, we are the group that fulfills the purpose for which mankind was created. Which nation in the world today among all of mankind fulfills this purpose for the Creator of the universe?

After describing our nation as Ummah ***wasata***, Allah (swt) then tells us the reason why we have been made so when He (swt) says "**in order that you may be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger may be a witness over you**". This is the reason why we have been made into the middle most, the most just and the best of all nations among mankind. It is so

that we can carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. We do not simply say that we are the best and then not invite others to be a part of our nation like some other nations do. Rather we say that we are the best, and we work tirelessly night and day to bring as many people from mankind into our nation. The only qualification that one must fulfill in order to be a citizen of the Islamic State is to take the Shahada. Every single Muslim man, woman and child regardless of their race, color, country of origin or language is a part of this nation and a citizen of the Islamic State. We as a nation exist to call others to Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) carried this Message from Allah (swt) to us, and now it is our job to carry this Message to the rest of mankind. That is why Allah (swt) made us into the honored nation that we are.

However we can see what has happened to the Muslim Ummah today now that we have given up this task of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. Umar (ra) once said that Allah (swt) honored this Ummah when He (swt) gave us Islam, and He (swt) will dishonor us when we abandon Islam. That is exactly what has happened to the Muslim Ummah today. The first way in which we have left Islam is that we have dismantled the Islamic State, we no longer rule by the Law of Allah (swt). There is no country today that is a proper Islamic State as the Shariah has defined to be. All countries today have some element of kufr mixed into their government. The second way in which we have left Islam is that we no longer fulfill our purpose of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. Today since we have given up this dawah, Allah (swt) has stripped us of our honor and He (swt) disgraced us. Today our community is the lowest and the most humiliated of all mankind. Our brothers are killed, our sisters are raped, our children are strived, our lands are conquered and our resources are plundered. Worst of all we find ourselves fighting amongst ourselves over the most trivial of issues. How will the rest of mankind enter the fold of Islam when Muslims are in such a pathetic situation? We as a nation need to wake up from the sleep and stupor that we are in. We have to build our relationship with Allah (swt) and come closer to Him (swt). We have to reestablish the Islamic State so that we rule ourselves by the Law of Allah (swt). We have to once again start dawah and jihad so that this Message can be carried to mankind. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Entire books can written on this part of the ayah alone, we are only touching on the tip of the iceberg of that meaning here. This part of the ayah shows us how it is the responsibility of every single Muslim to do what they can to take this Message to the non-Muslims. Remember that the non-Muslims in the world today are human beings just like you and me. They have feelings and emotions just like you and me. The vast majority of them are not evil people, but they are simply ignorant of this Message. There is no one to blame for their ignorance of this Message except you and me. How can you leave them in heedlessness to Allah (swt)? You should see yourself as responsible for all the darkness that they are entrenched in. You should feel responsible for their sufferings in this world. Mawdudi asks you to ask yourself this question; what were you were doing when the world was convulsed by storms of transgression, injustice and error? How is it that you were spending your time when the world was burning down? Once you realize the greatness of this responsibility, you also have to realize the greatness of the task that is ahead of you. It will by no means be easy, but at the same time it is a task that carries the greatest of reward with Allah (swt). This is because it was the task of the beloved of Allah (swt); the Prophet (saw). To carry this Message and to teach this Book was his (saw)'s mission in life, should it not then be yours as well? You should also realize that if you choose to be firm in this path, then Allah (swt) will help you and guide at every step of the way. So do not think that it is difficult, but always put your trust in Allah (swt) and put your trust in the fact that He (swt) will be with you if you choose to serve Him (swt) sincerely as He (swt) has promised that He (swt) will be. You have to trust that Allah (swt) will not abandon you if you are sincere to Him (swt) and you are sincere to His cause. You know of the difficulties and the hardships that the Prophet (saw) went through, and you know of the sacrifices that he (saw) had to make. You know how desperate the situation of the Prophet (saw) became, but he (saw) still pressed on. At the same time you know the station that the Prophet (saw) reached with Allah (swt) because of the efforts and the sacrifices that he (saw) made, and you know how Allah (swt) helped and supported him (saw). In the end the victory was for Islam! May Allah (swt) make all of us who are in his Ummah today remember this fact! May Allah (swt) make all of us who are in his Ummah today remember our purpose! May Allah (swt) help and support all of us today who are working in this dawah,

following the footsteps of the one (saw) whom we love the most out of all of the creation! May Allah (swt) accept our efforts and may Allah (swt) help us to keep our intention in everything that we do sincerely for Him (swt)! Nothing else matters except Allah (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us why He (swt) ordered that the qibla to be changed. Allah (swt) says "**And We did not appoint the qibla that you used to follow except so that it may be known who follows the Messenger from him who turns on his heels**". This was done as a test for the Muslims. Allah (swt) changed the qibla so that those who truly followed the Prophet (saw) may be distinguished from those who turn on their heels and leave this Din. Although the Prophet (saw) invited all the people to come into this Din, and although there were members of the Muslim community in Madinah who used to be Jewish, who came from Africa, and who came from Europe, the truth still remained that the vast majority of the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) were Arabs. Now the Arabs had a strong attachment to the Kabbah as a place of worship. It was a shrine that was associated with their national identity of being Arabs. At that time no other people except the Arabs made pilgrimage to the Kabbah. Because of this fact it was very difficult for many Muslims who were Arabs to turn away from the Kabbah and pray towards Jerusalem. It was very difficult for them to let go of their nationalism. In addition to this, there was the incessant questioning and arguments that were being raised by the hypocrites and the Jews. They were constantly questioning why the Muslims had to face Jerusalem in prayer when the Kabbah was the House of Allah (swt). All of this proved to be a severe test for the early Muslim community in Madinah. The test became so severe that some of the new Muslims became apostate and left the Din because of this issue with the qibla. However those who truly believed in Allah (swt) and who truly put their trust in Him (swt) held firm to the Prophet (saw) and they continued to pray with him (saw) towards Jerusalem. Even though it was very difficult for them to, they conquered their feelings of nationalistic pride because of their love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). Thus we see that the reason why the qibla was changed was to test the Muslims and to distinguish those among them whose hearts were truly attached to Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) from those whose hearts were attached their nationalistic identity. It was a purification process for the community where the weak elements were removed,

and only the true and sincere believers remained. Allah (swt) wanted to distinguish those who truly follow the Prophet (saw) from those who turn on their heels and walk away

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Indeed that was truly difficult, except on those whom Allah has guided**". The changing of the qibla was a test for the early Muslims and it was by no means an easy one. The Kabbah had a special place in the hearts of all the Muslims who used to be Arabs. For centuries their forefathers used to make pilgrimage to the House of Allah (swt). Whenever they thought about Allah (swt), they would immediately think about the Kabbah. Of all of the nations of the world, it was the nation of the Arabs that had the privilege of having the House of Allah (swt) in their land. Now they were being asked to turn their backs away from the Kabbah and pray facing a different direction. This was truly difficult for all of them, except for those among them who Allah (swt) had guided. This was the group that held firm to the Prophet (saw) and prayed with him (saw) towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem facing away from the Kabbah. This was the group that Allah (swt) guided and so this was the group that was successful. So from this we see that when you have the guidance from Allah (swt), then nothing becomes difficult for you. You realize that all that should matter for you is Allah (swt), and getting the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Not the Kabbah, not your tribe, not the Arabs, not your ancestors. None of that matters. All that you care about is your Lord and living your life to please Him (swt). This is the gift that Allah (swt) bestows on those whom He (swt) has guided. This is the gift that Allah (swt) gives to those who are sincere. May Allah (swt) make us among those whom He (swt) has guided!

Then Allah (swt) says to the Muslims "**Allah will never allow your Iman to go to waste**". The word Iman here gives two meanings. One meaning is the literal meaning of the word which as we know means "faith" or "deep conviction of belief". With this meaning, Allah (swt) is telling the believers that the strong faith that they had in Him (swt) through this trial will not go to waste. It is sometimes difficult to hold on to one's faith when doubts and questions are raised. It is difficult to hold on to one's faith when one is asked to give up something that one holds dear. Such doubts that the people pose and the trials that one has to endure are a test of one's faith. Only those whose Iman is strong will be able hold on to their convictions when people raise their

doubts and their questions, and when the difficulties and trials come. So Allah (swt) is telling those Muslims who held on to their Iman despite the questioning of the Jews and the hypocrites, and despite their love for the Kabbah and their yearning to pray towards it, that He (swt) will not let their Iman go to waste. Rather they will be rewarded for the strength and perseverance that they had in holding to their Iman. The other meaning that the word Iman gives in this ayah is Salah. With this meaning, Allah (swt) is also telling the believers that He (swt) will not let their prayer go to waste. When the qibla was changed, some Muslims thought that the Salah that they had made facing the previous qibla would be lost. They thought these prayers would be invalid. Here Allah (swt) reassures the Muslims by letting them know that their prayers would not be lost. They prayed towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* because it was the qibla that had been given to them by Allah (swt), and they did it out of sincerity to Allah (swt) and out of submission to Allah (swt). So He (swt) will reward them for their prayers towards this qibla, just like He (swt) will reward the Salah that is offered towards the Kabbah. We can also note the extreme importance of Salah because here Allah (swt) refers to it as "Iman". How then can anyone who leaves their prayers on purpose be considered a true and sincere believer?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is to mankind Full of Kindness and Most Merciful**". Notice that even though Allah (swt) has just said in the previous part of the ayah that He (swt) will not let the Iman of the believers go to waste, in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) says that He (swt) is Full of Kindness and Most Merciful to mankind. So Allah (swt) is Full of Kindness and Mercy not only to the believers, but also to all of mankind. But how is Allah (swt) Full of Kindness and Mercy to mankind? The main theme of this ayah as a whole is how Allah (swt) has raised our Ummah to be a nation that would serve as witnesses to all mankind. Allah (swt) has made this nation of the Prophet (saw) into a middle most nation, a just nation, and the best of nations so that we could carry the Message of Allah (swt) to all mankind. This is how Allah (swt) is Full of Kindness and the Most Merciful to mankind. The Kindness and Mercy of Allah (swt) to mankind is through the Message that our Ummah brings to them. We learned in Surah Fatihah how the Name Ar-Rahman means the Mercy of Allah (swt) that is part of His Being and part of Who He (swt) IS. But the Name of Ar-Raheem means the Mercy that comes

from Allah (swt) because of what He (swt) does. In other words the Mercy that comes from the Being of Allah (swt) and goes to all the creation is given by the Name of Ar-Rahman while the Mercy that comes from the actions of Allah (swt) and goes to whom He (swt) is pleased with is given by the Name of Ar-Raheem. So the Mercy and the Kindness that Allah (swt) describes in this ayah is a special Mercy that comes from this Message that He (swt) has sent. This Message of Islam is the Mercy of Allah (swt) to all mankind and it is how Allah (swt) is Full of Kindness to mankind. In this Message there is what will bring man peace and tranquility both at the individual level and that of the society. In this Message is the answer to man's most deepest and most fundamental of questions. This Message is what tells man his purpose in this creation. This Message is what will give him salvation from the punishment of the Fire and the torment of the grave. This Message is what will give man the eternal bliss of the Garden. This Message is how his Creator can be pleased with man. We as Muslims today are sitting on this Message instead of carrying to mankind. We have kept this Quran locked up in our homes on the highest shelves instead of showing it to the world. How will we stand before Allah (swt) because of what we have done? When will we wake up and realize the enormity of the task that lays ahead of us and the weight of the responsibility that is on our necks. Of all the nations of this world, Allah (swt) chose our nation to be the one nation that would carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Of all the people in this world, Allah (swt) chose you. Because of this fact, we have to believe that there is something inside all of us that makes us worthy to carry this Message. Even if we may not see it within ourselves, we must still remember who we are and who our Lord is, who our prophet is and what our Din is. This means that we do have the potential within ourselves if only we chose to believe in ourselves. May Allah (swt) help us to remember! May Allah (swt) give the help and guidance for this Ummah to return to the path of dawah once again!

قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَىٰهَا ۚ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ
شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ ۗ وَإِنَّ
ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

144. Surely We have seen you turn your face towards the sky. So surely We will turn you to a qibla that will please you. So turn your face in the direction of the Masjid Al-Haram. And wherever you are, turn your faces to it. And surely the ones who were given the Book know that it is the Truth from their Rabb. And Allah is not unaware of all that they do.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) addressed the fools among the Jews and the Christians who would find fault or raise questions with the change of qibla from *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the Kabbah in Makkah. Allah (swt) also told us how the change of qibla symbolized the important change in responsibility for the carrying of this Message from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). In this ayah is where the qibla is actually changed. This is the ayah that gives the command to pray towards the Kabbah. This is the ayah that sets the prayer direction for all Muslims until the Day of Judgment.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Surely We have seen you turn your face towards the sky**". This is a personal address from Allah (swt) to the Prophet (saw). When the Muslims were praying towards *Bayt al-Maqdis,* we know that this grieved the Prophet (saw) because he (saw) longed to pray towards the Kabbah. There was no one to whom the Kabbah was more beloved than the Prophet (saw). He (saw) longed to pray towards the House of Allah (swt), the House that was built by Ibrahim (as). The Prophet (saw) had grown up in the shade of the Kabbah, and he (saw) loved this House with all his (saw)'s heart. He (saw) knew the sacredness and the holiness of this place. Even though the Kabbah at that time was surrounded by idols, the Prophet (saw) still longed to pray towards it. He (saw) knew that behind all that filth and abominations was the House of Allah (swt). The House that Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) built with such sincerity to Allah (swt). So the Prophet (saw) would look up at the sky, hoping that he

(saw) would receive revelation from Allah (swt) allowing him to pray towards the Kabbah. It is to this longing of the Prophet (saw) that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) in this part of the ayah that He (swt) has seen him (saw) looking up at the sky and waiting for this revelation to be sent.

Then Allah (swt) says "**So surely We will turn you to a qibla that will please you**". Allah (swt) knew that the Prophet (saw) longed to face the Kabbah as a qibla. So Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) in this ayah that one of the reasons why He (swt) has changed the qibla is so as to please the Prophet (saw). Notice how Allah (swt) makes a direct connection between the changing of the qibla and the Prophet (saw)'s desire for the qibla to be changed. This shows that one of the reasons, not the only reason, but one of the reasons for the changing of the qibla was to please the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) in this ayah that He (swt) will turn the Prophet (saw) towards a qibla that will please him (saw). This of course is the Kabbah.

There are several lessons that we can take from this part of the ayah alone. One is that it shows the Love that Allah (swt) had for the Prophet (saw). Notice the words of nearness and tenderness that Allah (swt) uses to describe His (swt)'s relationship with the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) how He (swt) has **seen** the Prophet (saw) looking to the sky and how He (swt) will give the Prophet (saw) a qibla that will **please** him (saw). These are words that denote the Love and Mercy that Allah (swt) had for His (swt)'s beloved (saw). So from this we can take the lesson that anyone who loves the Prophet (saw) will be loved by Allah (swt) and anyone who hates the Prophet (saw) will be hated by Allah (swt). Think now as to what will be the fate of all those would slander the Prophet (saw), how will they fare when they meet Allah (swt) on the Last Day? May Allah (swt) save us from their fate! May Allah (swt) allow us to love the Prophet (saw) more than anyone else in this world!

Another lesson that we can take from this first part of the ayah is to see how it is a refutation of those who say that Allah (swt) is in the heavens or above the heavens. As we have established in previous ayahs, Allah (swt) is beyond time and space. Time and space are both the creation of Allah (swt) and He (swt) is beyond them. He (swt) is not contained by time nor is He (swt) limited to a particular location. When the Prophet (saw) was waiting for the revelation to

come, he (saw) was looking towards the sky. But he (saw) was not looking towards the sky because he (saw) thought that was where Allah (swt) was. Rather he (saw) was looking to the sky because he (saw) knew that Gibreel (as) brought the Quran down to earth from the heavens. The Quran is in the Preserved Tablet which is in the heavens. So the Prophet (saw) was looking towards the heavens was because he (saw) knew that it was from the heavens that Gibreel (as) descended. Another reason why the Prophet (saw) was looking at the sky was because it is a source of inspiration. The believers have always looked to the sky when they are longing for and searching for the divine. This does not mean that Allah (swt) is in the sky but the sky in its vastness and expanse reminds the believer of his weakness and it reminds him of the Greatness of Allah (swt). Because the sky gives us a sense of the Greatness of Allah (swt) that is why we have often looked towards it and turned towards it in our prayers. But by no means does it suggest or imply that Allah (swt) is literally in the sky or above it. As we can see from this ayah, even though the Prophet (saw) was looking towards the sky, Allah (swt) does not describe the Prophet (saw) as looking at Him (swt). If Allah (swt) was literally in the heavens or above the heavens and the Prophet (saw) was looking towards the heavens, then in the ayah Allah (swt) would have described the Prophet (saw) as looking at Him (swt). But the Prophet (saw) knew that Allah (swt) was not in the heavens or above the heavens. Allah (swt) is the One Free of all needs, and He (swt) does not need a space to be in like His (swt)'s creation do. Everything in the universe is a creation of His (swt) and He (swt) exists beyond the creation in a way that our minds cannot truly fathom. This has been the position of the vast majority of the scholars of *Ahl-as Sunnah wa Jammah,* and Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) "**So turn your face in the direction of the Masjid Al-Haram**". This part of the ayah is the command that fulfills the promise that Allah (swt) had made in the previous part of the ayah. Recall from the previous part of the ayah how Allah (swt) had told the Prophet (saw) that He (swt) would turn the Prophet (saw) towards a qibla that he (saw) would be pleased with. The **Masjid Al-Haram** is that qibla. The **Masjid Al-Haram** is the name given to the masjid that surrounds the Kabbah. Just like the Kabbah has been sacred, the masjid that surrounds it has been made sacred as well. It bears the

name of “Al-Haram” because fighting and bloodshed of all forms are forbidden in it and around it. Because of the prayer of Ibrahim (as), the Kabbah and the masjid that surrounds it have been made into a place of peace and security for all. This is the most sacred and the holiest of all masajid, and Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to turn towards it as a qibla for prayer.

Then Allah (swt) says “**And wherever you are, turn your faces to it**”. In the Arabic of the ayah, the use of the plural pronoun for the word “you” shows us that this command is directed to all the Muslims. So where the previous part of the ayah was for the Prophet (saw) this part of the ayah is for all Muslims. Allah (swt) tells all of us, that wherever we are, we must turn towards the **Masjid Al-Haram** when we make our Salah. According to the majority of scholars, facing the qibla is a necessary condition for the validity of our Salah. If we make our Salah facing any other direction besides the **Masjid Al-Haram** then that Salah will not be valid. This shows the great importance of the **Masjid Al-Haram** in our Din. It is the common direction of prayer for every single member of our community. Facing this masjid is an integral condition of the Salah of every single Muslim. This shows how important this masjid is in our Din and how important it is for everyone in our Ummah. Who is it that is taking care of this masjid today? Who is in charge of its protection and well-being? Is it a Khalifah who rules by the Book of Allah (swt) following the example of the Prophet (saw)? Or is it pretenders who rule with their desires? Hypocrites who take the wealth of this Ummah and give it to her enemies. Who do not even treat all Muslims as equals. These are questions that we must ask ourselves, and the answers to these questions tell us how important it is to work for the reestablishment of the Islamic State.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says “**And surely the ones who were given the Book know that it is the Truth from their Rabb**”. This is in reference to the Jews who started to complain and raise objections when the qibla was changed away from *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem and towards the Kabbah in the **Masjid Al-Haram**. For them and their nationalistic feelings, the *Bayt al-Maqdis* was the most important of masajid and Jerusalem was the most important of cities. So when the qibla was changed, they started to raise objections. They told the Muslims that they should still be praying towards *Bayt al-Maqdis*. They wanted the Muslims to pray towards their qibla in Jerusalem instead of the Kabbah. This desire was only from a feeling

of nationalistic pride. They did not care about what was truly the correct direction in which to pray, they only wanted the Muslims to continue to pray towards *Bayt al-Maqdis* because it was in Jerusalem and they saw Jerusalem as their holy city. In fact, as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, they knew that the Kabbah was the true direction towards which to pray. Notice how Allah (swt) describes them here as the ones who had been given the Book. They knew from this Book that the Kabbah was the qibla of Ibrahim (as). They knew that it was the House that their own father built and it was the direction to which he (as) prayed. Furthermore they also knew from the Book that the Prophet (saw) was truly the messenger of Allah (swt) and they knew that he (saw) received revelation from Allah (swt). So they knew that whatever the Prophet (saw) brought was the Truth. It was the Truth from Allah (swt), Who was the Rabb of the Muslims and Who was their Rabb as well.

So Allah (swt) exposes their knowledge of the Truth and He (swt) reminds us of the fact that He (swt) is their Rabb as well. They had no right to question the changing of the qibla because they knew that it was the Truth from their Lord and Master. Instead of questioning the Muslims and arguing with the Muslims, they should have been praying alongside the Muslims because Allah (swt) is their Rabb as well. To believe in the Prophet (saw) and follow him (saw) was a responsibility on their necks and they knew it. They knew that this qibla was the Truth from their Rabb because they knew that the Prophet (saw) was the Truth from their Rabb. But instead of following the Truth when they saw it, they turned away from it. Notice the emphasis and certainty with which Allah (swt) stresses the fact that these Jews knew that this qibla was indeed the Truth from Allah (swt). They knew the Truth beyond the shadow of a doubt, and they still opposed it. They still contented with the Muslims and told them to continue pray towards Jerusalem when they knew that the Kabbah was the true qibla.

So in the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is not unaware of all that they do**". They knew the Truth and they were turning away from it. Did they think that Allah (swt) is unaware of the evil that is in their hearts and that Allah (swt) is unaware of the knowledge that they are concealing? They know that the Prophet (saw) is the true messenger from Allah (swt), they know that the Kabbah is the true qibla for prayer, yet they conceal this knowledge and they

argue and debate with the Muslims because of feelings of nationalistic pride. Allah (swt) reminds them once again in this ayah that He (swt) is not unaware of what they do. Allah (swt) Knows very well of the evil intentions that are in their hearts and He (swt) Knows very well of the evil that they did when they dared to reject the Messenger of Allah (swt) and they dared to question the Law of Allah (swt). As we had mentioned previously, in this statement of Allah (swt) there is a threat for them. But in this statement there is also Mercy for them from Allah (swt). They are thinking like Allah (swt) is ignorant of their thoughts, and they are behaving like Allah (swt) is ignorant of their actions. In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds them that He (swt) is not ignorant. These Jews used to hear this ayah being repeated just like the Muslims did. Maybe this statement will make some of them wake up from the self-delusion that they are suffering. Maybe this will make them realize how Allah (swt) is Aware of every single action that they do and every single thought that they have. This fear in them might make some of them heed the call of the Prophet (saw) and return to worshipping and serving Allah (swt) as they were created to do. So in this part of the ayah there is both the threat of the punishment of Allah (swt) and there is also the Mercy of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) help us to always remember this fact as well! May this knowledge and this realization save us from ever doing anything that is displeasing to Allah (swt)!

So from this we are reminded once again that we must have a sincerity for the Truth. When we know that something is the Truth then we must follow it. We cannot allow anything to stand in between us and following the Truth. We especially cannot allow our pride to interfere. In the end all that matters is sincerity to Allah (swt). What we have to always remind ourselves of the Perfection and the Sublimity of the Knowledge of Allah (swt). There is nothing whatsoever that escapes His (swt)'s Knowledge. So if we swallow our pride and we are sincere for His sake, following the Truth when we recognize it, regardless of where it comes from, then we have to be certain that Allah (swt) Knows this well. If Allah (swt) Knows this and He (swt) is pleased with it, then this should be all that matters for us. This is the only way that we can save ourselves from becoming like these Jews who turned away from the Truth even when they were absolutely convinced of it. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to avoid their path!

وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِكُلِّ ءَايَةٍ مَّا تَبِعُوا۟ قِبْلَتَكَ ۚ وَمَآ أَنتَ
بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ ۚ وَمَا بَعْضُهُم بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَلَئِنِ ٱتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم
مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ ۙ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَّمِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

146. And even if you were to give those who were given the Book every single sign, they will never follow your qibla. And you will never follow their qibla. Nor will some of them follow the qibla of others. And if you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will surely be among the unjust.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) had told us about the Jews who had rejected the Message of the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) told us how they were certain that he (saw) was indeed the true messenger from their Lord, but they still rejected him (saw). They rejected him (saw) even though he (saw) was indeed the messenger that they had been waiting for. Allah (swt) also reminded us that He (swt) was not unaware of what they do. He (swt) Knew very well how they were turning away from this Message even when they were certain that it was the Truth. He (swt) Knew the evil desire that was in their hearts to take the Muslims away from their Din. He (swt) Knew very well how they were raising objections and questions to put doubts in the hearts of the Muslims. He (swt) Knew that only because of their pride for Jerusalem, they would want the Muslims to pray towards that qibla. In His (swt)'s infinite Knowledge He (swt) Knows all of this. But what was the reason for their rejection of this Message? What was the reason for their stubbornness? Is it simply that they had not been shown enough Signs to prove that that this Message was the Truth? In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the real reason for their rejection of this Message.

Allah (swt) says "**And even if you were to give those who were given the Book every single sign, they will never follow your qibla**". Allah (swt) clearly tells us in this ayah, that no matter how many signs these people are shown, they will never believe in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). To follow the qibla of the Prophet (saw) is to accept Islam and become Muslim. This is something that they will never do, no matter how many signs they

are shown. They have already had more than enough signs to be certain that the Prophet (saw) is indeed true. There was the Quran, which was a Book the like of which none of them could reproduce. Not only could they not reproduce it, but also they were certain that no one else could reproduce it either. In addition to the Miracle of the Quran, there were also the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) in their Books. Allah (swt) had clearly told the previous prophets that the Final Messenger would appear in Arabia, and Allah (swt) told them signs with which they could recognize him. The Prophet (saw) had all of these signs that their Books had spoken of. Every single one of them, even a birthmark on his (saw)'s back. But Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that all of these signs are not enough for them. Not only are these sig ns not enough for them, but even if they were shown more signs they still would not believe. Even if they literally saw the Prophet (saw) ascend on a staircase that goes into the heavens, they still would not believe.

This is because these are a people who are not searching for the Truth. They have no sincerity to worship and serve their Creator. They only care about their pride, their arrogance, and their desires. They were so proud of the Jewish nation that they would never accept a prophet from any other nation. They did not realize that it was not the nation of the prophet that mattered, but the evidences and the signs that he came with. They did not realize that it was Allah (swt) Who mattered, and not themselves. The Prophet (saw) had all of the signs to show that he (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). But how can all these signs convince a people who have turned off their senses and who blindly follow their desires? So here Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that no matter how many signs these people are shown, they will never believe in him (saw). Allah (swt) tells this to the Prophet (saw) so that he (saw) does not become disheartened. He (saw) had been carrying dawah to these Jews for months, but they had continuously been rejecting him (saw). Being the People of the Book, they should have been the first to believe in and support the Prophet (saw). Being the nation of dawah, they should have been the foremost in offering their aid to him (saw). But all but a few among them turned away from him (saw). Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that this behavior is to be expected on their part. They are a people who have succumbed to their desires and they are a people who are not able to conquer their pride. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that we should not always expect success in our dawah. There are many people who we will carry this Message to, but they will reject it. They will reject it even after they have been shown all of the signs and evidences and even after they themselves are convinced that it is the Truth. For some people it is not a matter of finding the Truth. They have already made up their minds that they would rather serve their desires than serve Allah (swt). So they will always find one excuse or another to turn away from any messenger that calls them to Allah (swt). Just like these Jews turned away from the Prophet (saw), you will find people who turn away from you. For such people, we have to try our best to carry this Message to them correctly and then we leave the end of their case up to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the Best of Judges, and He (swt) Knows well those who turned away from this Message even when they knew that it is the Truth and those who submit to it sincerely. What we can be certain of is that Allah (swt) will judge each and every person fairly so our only task should be to convey the Message clearly.

Then Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (saw) "**And you will never follow their qibla**". This part of the ayah shows us that the Kabbah will be the final qibla for the Muslims until the Day of Judgment. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) and the Muslims will never go back to facing *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Salah. Some of the Jews and the hypocrites may raise the question of what would happen if Allah (swt) should change the qibla again back to *Bayt al-Maqdis*. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) preempts such questions by telling the Muslims that they will never after this leave the Kabbah for the qibla of anyone else. We will certainly not pray towards the qibla of the Jews. Allah (swt) honored us by making us the best of nations and He (swt) gave us the best of qibla; the House of Allah (swt). So never will we turn in the direction of those who have turned away from Allah (swt).

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Nor will some of them follow the qibla of others**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah tells us how the Jews would not follow the qibla of the Christians and the Christians would not follow the qibla of the Jews. This shows us once again how their loyalty is not to the Truth. Each of them has the qibla of their nation, and they will stubbornly cling to it. This fact also serves to reassure the Prophet (saw). It shows the

Prophet (saw) how it is not only the qibla of the Muslims that the Jews and Christians refuse to turn towards, but they even refuse to turn towards each other's qibla. All that they care about is facing the qibla of their nation regardless of whether or not it is the true qibla. Thus their intention is not to choose the direction of prayer that Allah (swt) is pleased with, but only the direction of prayer that is of their nation. Thus their submission is to themselves and not to Allah (swt).

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And if you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will surely be among the unjust**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah is actually addressed to the Muslim Ummah and not to the Prophet (saw). This is because the Prophet (saw) would never be among those who would follow the desires of the Jews and Christians. Only the Muslim community might be susceptible to this. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims in this ayah to be firm on the qibla that He (swt) has given them and to be firm in following the Prophet (saw). The Jews and the Christians were trying in many ways to seduce the Muslims away from the Prophet (saw). To seduce them away from Islam. To seduce them away from Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) tells the Muslims in this ayah that if they were to follow the Jews and Christians after the clear evidence that has to come them, then they would an unjust and evil people. They would be guilty of the very same crime that the Jews and Christians had committed, and that is turning away from the Truth after you recognize it.

There is an important lesson in this part of the ayah for the Muslim community today. Notice that Allah (swt) is warning us against following the desires of the Jews and the Christians. What exactly does Allah (swt) mean in this ayah by "desires"? "Desires" is turning away from the Truth in order to satisfy the lusts of one's own soul. Many of the Jews and Christians today live a life where they only live to serve their desires. Their goal in life is to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. That is what they live for. In this ayah, Allah (swt) warns us against following this way of life. A way of life where one only lives to serve oneself. A way of life where one has become heedless of Allah (swt). A way of life where desires have the priority over the Law of Allah (swt). This is what the Jews and the Christians have done to their relationship with their Lord. They do not live to please Him (swt) anymore. They only worship Him (swt) when it is convenient for them to. Allah (swt) warns us in this ayah from becoming like them.

Unfortunately today many Muslims are doing exactly what Allah (swt) has warned us against in this ayah. There are many Muslims who no longer make the Pleasure of Allah (swt) as the priority in their lives. Rather they have made their own pleasure as the purpose of their lives. In their life their priority is serving themselves. Getting the most wealth and the most riches for themselves. Even the governments that the Muslims have formed are built around desires and not serving Allah (swt). Similar to what the Jews and Christians have done, they embrace concepts such as freedom and secularism. These corrupted concepts are nothing but a means for Shaitan to trick the people into succumbing to their lusts instead of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). So we should take heed from the warning that Allah (swt) gives us in this ayah. Furthermore if we as a Muslim Ummah go astray and start following our lusts and desires, our situation would be much worse than the Jews and Christians, this is because we have the clear knowledge from Allah (swt). We have the Quran and Sunnah. With these two sources of light to guide us to the Pleasure of Allah (swt), if we still choose to go astray then we will truly be unjust. So all Muslims who read this ayah should heed this clear warning from their Lord and Master; if you follow the desires of the Jews and Christians after the clear knowledge has come to you then you will be among the unjust and the evil. If you choose a life of serving your lusts and desires instead of serving your Creator and Sustainer, then you surely will be among the unjust and the evil. What then will be your station with Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment after that? What excuse will you give in the court of Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us and help all the sincere Muslims in this Ummah to remember that we have the knowledge from Him (swt)! May this knowledge save us from ever following the desires of the Jews and Christians!

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيۡنَٰهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ يَعۡرِفُونَهُۥ كَمَا يَعۡرِفُونَ أَبۡنَآءَهُمۡۖ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقٗا
مِّنۡهُمۡ لَيَكۡتُمُونَ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَهُمۡ يَعۡلَمُونَ ١٤٦

147. The ones to whom We have given the Book, recognize him as they recognize their own sons. But surely a group from them hides the Truth while they know it.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us about the true nature of many of the Jews and the Christians who lived at the time of the Prophet (saw). How they were a people who would not believe in this Message no matter how many signs and proofs they were shown. How they were a people who were not in search for the Truth but who were only seeking to satisfy their lusts and exult in their pride and arrogance. They cared more about their own selves than they did about Allah (swt) even though He (swt) is the Real and the True. These Jews knew without a doubt that the new qibla facing the Kabbah was a true command from Allah (swt), but they continued to argue and debate with the Muslims concerning it. They knew without a doubt that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt) but they continued to reject him (saw). In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to their true nature. Allah (swt) shows the extent to which they recognized the Truth of this Message.

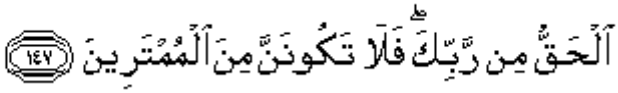
Allah (swt) begins this ayah by telling us "**The ones to whom We have given the Book, recognize him as they recognize their own sons**". Notice first that Allah (swt) refers to the Jews and Christians as "**The ones to whom We have given the Book**". This is to remind us and remind them of the special favor that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them by giving them revelation from Him (swt). They are a people who were blessed with having been sent prophets and messengers. At least for this they should have been grateful to Allah (swt), they should have rushed to the worship and servitude to Allah (swt) to show their thankfulness for being the recipients of divine revelation. Allah (swt) then tells us how they recognized the Prophet (saw) as well as they recognized their own sons. How well does a father recognize his own son, a child that has lived in his house for the whole of his life? They recognized the Prophet (saw) even better this. We even have narrations from the Jews at the time of the Prophet (saw) who would

admit to recognizing him (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) as well as they recognize their own children. This was the level to how much the Prophet (saw) fit the descriptions of the Final Messenger that was given in their Books. They had their Books that had passed on from generation to generation for centuries. Although these Books had been corrupted in many areas, there were still some elements of the Truth in them. These Books still had some of the original words of their prophets or messengers. In such words were clear descriptions of how the Final Messenger from Allah (swt) would be like and the Prophet (saw) fit these descriptions perfectly.

So these were a people who had the Books from Allah (swt). In these Books they had the clear descriptions of the Prophet (saw). They also had the commands from Allah (swt) in these Books telling them to follow and support the Final Messenger when he comes to them. But these Jews simply could not accept the fact that the Final Messenger turned out to be from the Arab nation. They had gotten so used to thinking of themselves as the best of mankind, the nation that Allah (swt) always chooses to send prophets and messengers to, such that when the Final Messenger came from among the Arabs it was a complete shock to them. In reality however it was a test for them from Allah (swt). It was a test to see if they could conquer their pride and overcome their feelings of arrogance to follow the Truth that they clearly saw. A few among them were able to pass this test, these believed in the Prophet (saw) and they became among the best Muslims. May Allah (swt) be pleased with them and may He (swt) admit them into the highest stations of paradise with the Prophet (saw). But most of them could not overcome their pride. They could not concede the fact that all humanity was indeed equal and that no nation was above another. They could not admit the fact that they were not better than others, so much was their pride and arrogance. What then did they do? As Allah (swt) tells us in the final part of this ayah; "**surely a group from them hides the Truth while they know it**".. The scholars among them did not tell the masses that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). They even removed the descriptions of the Final Messenger from their Books so that the future generations who came after them would not follow the Prophet (saw). So they misguided themselves, their people and all of their children for generations to come. They took them away from Allah (swt). Can you even begin to realize how evil is the crime that these people have committed?

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is to once again remind ourselves of the kind of human beings that these people are. We have to remind ourselves of how evil the human being can be, how ungrateful to his Creator he can be. These were a people who were blessed with having revelation from Allah (swt). They had been sent prophets and messengers to guide them on how to fulfill the purpose of their existence of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). They had been told that a Final Messenger would come to complete and perfect the revelations of all the prior prophets and messengers. This Final Messenger would bring a Message that would be a beacon of light for all humanity until the end of time. What then did they do when this Final Messenger came? They rejected him, they denied him, and they hid the Truth of his Messengership from the people. They even removed his descriptions from their Book. How could a people be so ungrateful to Allah (swt)? See here the extent to which Shaitan can misguide the human being. How far he can take us away from the purpose for which we were created. The human being was created to be a representative of Allah (swt) on this earth, but he ends up being an enemy to the Message of Allah (swt). That is how evil some people can become. There are at least three lessons that we can take from this fact. One is that we should not be surprised when we encounter people who are so evil and so unjust. Allah (swt) in His Mercy and His Justice has given the human being free will, and many humans have abused this free will to go as far away from Allah (swt) as possible. So do not be surprised if you hear of such people or if you meet such people. May Allah (swt) save you and me from such people! Another lesson that we can take from the fact that there are people who are as evil and unjust as this is that we can never question the punishment of Allah (swt) for such people. Allah (swt) has told us clearly that He (swt) did not do injustice to them when they were punished, but they did injustice to themselves. So because of their own evil and their own injustice to themselves, their own rejection of the Message of Allah (swt) that they knew was the Truth, they brought on themselves the punishment. The third lesson that we can take from the fact that there are people who are as evil as this is that we must save ourselves from becoming like them. If we are arrogant enough to believe that we are so righteous that will never become like them, then we have already started walking down their path. The only way in which we can save ourselves from becoming like them

is to first of all be aware of how evil the human being can become. To be aware of how far astray Shaitan can lead the human being. Then we must sincerely and earnestly pray to Allah (swt) to save us from becoming like them, and at the same time we must make our best effort to worship and serve Allah (swt). We must try to become as close to Allah (swt) as we can in the hope that this will take us as far away from these people as possible. These are just a few of the benefits from this ayah. May Allah (swt) help us to learn them and live by them! May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like these people!



148. The Truth from your Rabb, so do not be from the doubters.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us about the true nature of many of the Jews and Christians. How they were a people who rejected the Prophet (saw) when they were certain that he (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt). They recognized the Prophet (saw) more than they recognized their own children and still they turned away from him (saw). Not only did they reject him (saw), but they even hid the Truth they had concerning him (saw). They had revelation from Allah (swt) telling them that this man was indeed the Final Messenger of Allah (swt) whom they had been expecting. The man who came to save all of mankind from the Fire and take them to the Garden. But they hid the knowledge of him (saw) from the people and they removed the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) from their Books.

Now many of the Muslims who were with the Prophet (saw) may have become disheartened when they saw this behavior from these Jews. This was especially true for the new Muslims who had entered the fold of Islam in Madinah. Many of them used to be allied with the Jews and they knew how the Jews had been expecting a Final Messenger from Allah (swt) to be sent. Now when these new Muslims saw these same Jews rejecting the Prophet (saw), it may have been disheartening for them and it may even have lead some of them to question their Iman. We said in the previous ayah how the human being was capable of great evil, but for those whose hearts are pure and whom Allah (swt) has guided, it is hard for them to imagine how the

human could be so evil. It is hard to imagine how someone could turn away from Allah (swt) so. The Muslims who were with the Prophet (saw) were certain that this Message was the Truth from Allah (swt), but when they saw such behavior from the Jews, some of them may have become disheartened and some of them may even have had their faith shaken. This was the level to which these Jews rejected this Message after being so certain that it was the Truth. They even used to boast about how when the Final Messenger came, they would destroy the Arabs and establish their homeland once again. How disheartening must have it been for the Muslims then to see these same Jews now turning away from the Prophet (saw).

So in order to console the Muslims after they had seen such behavior from these Jews, Allah (swt) reassures them by telling them that this Message is "**The Truth from your Rabb**". This Message is the Truth. This Message is from the Rabb of the entire universe. These are two essential qualities of this Message that we can never forget. Everything in this Message is true beyond the shadow of a doubt, you have to believe in it more than you believe in the reality that you see before yourself. So look at the room that you are in now, you have to bring yourself to believe in what is in this Message more than you believe the room that you are in. This Message is the Truth because it is from the Rabb of the entire universe. Allah (swt) is the Rabb for every single thing in this universe; the Creator, the Sustainer, the Maintainer, the Nurturer, the Lord, the Master, the King and the Owner of every single thing in this universe. That is why this Message is the Truth. Would not the Rabb know the most about His rubbibiya? Would not the Creator know the most about His creation and the King know the most about His kingdom? So in this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims about the reality of this Message. It is the Truth from their Rabb.

After telling the believers about the reality of this Message, Allah (swt) commands the Muslims; "**do not be from the doubters**". Here Allah (swt) commands the believers to not be from those doubt and those who waver. This command applies both in terms of beliefs and in terms of actions. There should be no doubts in any of the beliefs that this Message has conveyed and there should be no lingering or wavering in any of the actions that this Message commands to be implemented. In this ayah, Allah (swt) completely cuts off any doubt or hesitation that may have arisen from some of the new Muslims who were with the Prophet (saw). The behavior of the

Jews in their rejection of this Message may have caused some of the new Muslims to have doubts in the Message. In this ayah, Allah (swt) wakes them up to that possibility. Allah (swt) clearly tells them that this Message is the Truth from their Rabb so they should not be from among the doubters. They should believe in everything that this Message tells them and they should do everything that this Message commands of them. They should strive to the best of their ability to remove any traces of doubt that appears in their heart. Once this Message is accepted then doubt is forbidden.

Notice how with this clear command, Allah (swt) saved the believers from Shaitan even before he can lay his clutches on them. Before the early Muslims even had the opportunity to doubt, Allah (swt) revealed this ayah and saved them from it. We have to remember this clear command that Allah (swt) gives us in our life as well. Doubt and hesitation, wavering and procrastination are all the paths of Shaitan with which he leads the believers astray. Allah (swt) has clearly shown us the paths of Shaitan and He (swt) has commanded us not to follow them. So we should not have doubts in any part of this Message and we should not hesitate to follow any of its commands. There should be no doubts in our beliefs and no laziness and hesitation in our actions. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

In this tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb tells us how unfortunate it is that today many of the Muslim youth are learning about this Din from the West. It is like you are going to the source of Evil to tell you about the Good. The Muslims have to realize that the powers that control the Western governments and the Western school systems and the Western media are the avowed enemies of Islam. They are the remnants of the Roman Empire whom the Prophet (saw) himself fought against. The jihad between Islam and this evil has existed since the time of the Prophet (saw). So how can you learn about Islam from them? Do you expect there to be any truth in anything that they say? There might be some portions of truth in what they say, but it will be mixed with exaggerations and falsehoods. In addition to these exaggerations they will also purposely leave out much of what is the Truth when they tell us our history. For example when they write history books about the time of trials during which the early Muslims fought each other, they will fail to mention that it was the hypocrites and the enemies of this Message who had

instigated this fighting. Instead they will try their best to portray the Sahabah (raa) as evil people. They will give this false image even though it is the furthest from the Truth. Many of the Muslim youth however are so ignorant about Islam that they cannot distinguish between what is true and what is false. So they end up believing in everything that they learn from the West. What is the result of this knowledge that they learn? They break the clear command that Allah (swt) has given in this ayah. They begin to doubt Islam. They begin to doubt the validity of the laws of Islam for the "modern world". They begin to hesitate and linger in performing all of the obligations and duties of Islam. They even begin to have doubts in the Aqeedah of Islam. So just as these Jewish intellectuals tried to lead ignorant Muslims astray from this Din at the time of the Prophet (saw), they are doing it today as well.

So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must be extremely careful about whom we learn our Din from. We should be especially careful of the West and of the Orientalist writers and thinkers. We have to remember that they already have an agenda and a plan to destroy Islam. Whenever they speak about Islam, we cannot be certain that they will be unbiased in what they say. They may very well distort the information that they are feeding us so as to create doubts in our hearts. Allah (swt) has already shown us how evil the human being can be, so how can you expect anything less from these people? How can you be so sure that the knowledge which they are giving you is correct? So always remember the command that your Lord has given you in this ayah. Be aware of these people and their plots against Islam. Remember how limited your knowledge about this Din is. Just because something in Islam does not sound right to you does not mean that it is not right. There is a good explanation for everything if only you would take the time to learn your Din. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from the plots and machinations of her enemies! May Allah (swt) give the youth in this Ummah only the knowledge that is good and pure! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that every single piece of knowledge that we learn should bring us closer to Him (swt) and not take us away from Him (swt)!

وَلِكُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا
يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

149. And for every direction there is one who turns to it, so compete with each other in good deeds. Wherever you may be Allah will bring you all together. Surely Allah has Power over all things.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) had told us how the Jews and the Christians would never take our qibla and that we would never take their qibla. They will not follow our way and we would not follow their way. We should always remember however that we are talking here about those Jews and Christians who refused to accept the Prophet (saw) even when they were certain that he (saw) was the true messenger from Allah (swt). This does not apply to the Jews and Christians for whom the Message has not been correctly presented. For these, there is still a chance that Allah (swt) may guide them to this Din. So we have no enmity or hatred towards them and we should always try to treat them in the best way possible. But for those who saw the signs and evidences, and they still turned away knowing that this Message was the Truth, for them we can be certain that they will never take our qibla. They have decided to serve their desires instead of Allah (swt). For these Jews and Christians we should have nothing to do with them because they truly recognized Allah (swt) and they still turned away from Him (swt). In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) told us about the nature of such people, they would reject the Truth even when they saw it plainly. There can be no hope for such people ever finding the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Should we then ever try to be like them in anything? Should we ever try to copy them or imitate them? In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us how every group and every nation has a qibla or a direction towards which it turns. But of all of these directions, there is only one that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And for every direction there is one who turns to it**". There are two meanings possible in this ayah for the word "direction". One meaning of the word "direction" here is that it refers to a qibla. If we take this meaning then in this ayah Allah (swt) is telling us that every nation or every religion has a direction towards which it turns in

prayer. As Muslims, we have the Kabbah as our qibla. The Jews had the *Bayt al-Maqdis* and the Christians had their qibla as well. Even the idol worshippers face towards their idols when they make their prayer. For these fools, these idols are both their qibla and the destination of their prayer. So every religion has a qibla towards which it faces in prayer, this is one meaning of the word "direction" in this ayah.

However another more general meaning of the word "direction" in this ayah is that it means every person has a direction towards which he or she turns. Every person has a direction towards which they orient their lives and focus their attention. Every person has a certain viewpoint that they have in life. Some people turn towards their desires, some people turn towards wealth, some people turn towards their family, some people turn towards power, some people turn towards sex, some people turn towards fame and recognition, and some people are constantly turning in different directions for every day of their lives. Everyone's life has a direction and they are constantly turning towards that direction. However in this ayah Allah (swt) is telling us that the one true direction for everyone should be Him (swt). He (swt) should be the goal of our lives. He (swt) should be the destination that we are traveling towards. But how can we do that? How is that we should turn to Allah (swt)? How is it that we should approach Him (swt)? He (swt) explains this in the next part of the ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**so compete with each other in good deeds**". Every nation has a direction of prayer and every person has a direction in life. For us as a Muslim community, our direction of prayer is the Kabbah but the direction in life for us is Allah (swt). Each and every one of us should set Allah (swt) as our goal and we should journey towards Him (swt). How is it that we travel towards Allah (swt)? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, it is by striving with each other in good deeds. We should be competing with each other in doing the deeds that are pleasing to Allah (swt). This is how we journey towards Allah (swt). By competing with each other in trying to do more and more of the deeds that Allah (swt) is pleased with. This should not be a competition of jealousy but it should be a competition of love. Our focus should not be on each other, but it must be on Allah (swt). For every moment of our lives, we must strive to remember Allah (swt) and to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). This is the way in which we journey towards

Him (swt). So from this first part of the ayah we see that the direction of the Kabbah as a qibla is how our community is identified, but more importantly the "direction" of Allah (swt) is how each of our lives are defined. We are constantly journeying towards Him (swt) through the good deeds that we perform for His (swt)'s sake. We must always remember that this journey will only end on the Day of Judgment when we meet Allah (swt), until that Day comes we must be striving to reach Him (swt). Allah (swt) is our destination and our life is a journey towards Him (swt) through the good deeds that we do.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you all together**". We should compete with each other to do the deeds that Allah (swt) is pleased because we know that He (swt) is our Lord and Master and we are certain that we will one Day soon return to Him (swt). Notice how immediately after Allah (swt) gives us the command to do good deeds, He (swt) links those good deeds with the Day of Judgment. The Day on which Allah (swt) will gather all mankind together. This serves to remind us once again, how every single action that we do, every single moment that we pass, is a preparation for that Day. Allah (swt) will bring us all together for that Day. Wherever in the universe that a human being might be in, Allah (swt) will still bring him to the gathering for the Day for judgment. There is no place in this universe where man can go where he can hide from Allah (swt). Wherever you go, you should be certain that Allah (swt) will find you. So instead of running away from Allah (swt) and trying to hide from Him (swt), you have to run towards Allah (swt) by striving to do as many of the deeds that He (swt) is pleased with.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah has Power over all things**". We saw in the previous part of the ayah how different people have different directions for their lives. When the true direction for all people should be Allah (swt). The true orientation in all our lives should be towards striving to do the good deeds that Allah (swt) is pleased with. Once we have set Allah (swt) as the goal, we approach Him (swt) with the good deeds that we do. Every action that we do for Allah (swt) while following the guidance of the Prophet (saw) is a good deed with which we can approach Him (swt). With such good deeds Insha Allah we can save ourselves from the Day on which all of mankind will be gathered before Allah (swt). On that Day each and every single human being will be brought before Allah (swt). No matter where they have

may died in this entire universe, they will find themselves before Allah (swt) on that Day. Even if they died in the farthest corner of the earth, even if they died and then they were cremated with the ashes scattered all over the oceans, even if they died in the depths of outer space, wherever they may be, Allah (swt) will gather them and bring them to Him (swt) on that Day. This is because "**Surely Allah has Power over all things**". There is nothing that Allah (swt) cannot do. Everything is within His (swt)'s Power. For our own selves, we can enumerate the tasks that we can accomplish based on the limited power that we have. But for Allah (swt), there is nothing that He (swt) cannot do. Allah (swt) IS Power and He (swt) has Power over every single thing. He (swt) can destroy this universe and create it over again and again, and that would require no effort at all for Him (swt). The Power of Allah (swt) is that He (swt) only Wills and it is. So know that wherever your die, Allah (swt) will still bring you back to Him (swt). Then what will you have to show Him (swt) except the good deeds that you did in the life of this world? May Allah (swt) guide us all to the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt), so that He (swt) may be pleased with us!

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَلْحَقُّ مِن
رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

150. And from whatever place you come forth turn your face towards the Masjid Al-Haram. And it is surely the Truth from your Rabb. And Allah is not unaware of all that you do.

As we can see from these ayahs, there is a deeper meaning present here than simply the changing of the qibla. Although the qibla is one of the important issues that Allah (swt) brings to our attention in these ayahs, Allah (swt) also tells us about how our entire orientation and direction must be towards Him (swt). Our community has a unique qibla in that we all turn towards the Kabbah in prayer, but in addition every member of our community is also turning towards Allah (swt). Just like we have a unique direction towards which we turn in prayer, we also have a unique direction in what we make as the purpose of our lives. In both of these ways, we are unique community, unlike any other.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to emphasize how we have our direction and how we must turn towards it. Allah (swt) begins by saying "**And from whatever place you come forth turn your face towards the Masjid Al-Haram**". In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that from wherever in the earth that we may come forth from, we should always turn our faces towards in **Masjid Al-Haram** in our Salah. So it does not matter in which corner of the world that you are in, wherever you are, you should turn towards **Masjid Al-Haram** when you make your Salah.

Some may question as to why Allah (swt) repeats the same command to face the Kabbah as qibla again in this ayah. We have already seen the command to face the Kabbah in the previous ayahs, so why does Allah (swt) repeat this command? In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) explains why when He (swt) says "**And it is surely the Truth from your Rabb**". There were many among the Jews in Madinah, the idol worshippers in Makkah, and the hypocrites among the ranks of the Muslims who used to raise doubts and put forward questions regarding the change of qibla. These doubts and questions were indeed a great test for many of the new Muslims in Madinah. As we mentioned, the fools posing these questions had no sincere doubts about the qibla. Their only goal was to drive the Muslims away from their Din. To drive the true worshippers and servants of Allah (swt) away from Him (swt). So to support the Muslims, to reassure the Muslims, and to save the Muslims in their Din and their Iman, Allah (swt) tells them that this Message, this messenger and this qibla is indeed the Truth from their Rabb. If the Muslims would only remember this fact all of the time, then no amount of doubts and questions raised by the enemies of this Message can take them away from their Iman. Once the believer accepts this fact, and adheres to it with the conviction that is due to it, then what effect can the questions and objections raised by the enemies of this Message have on him? They cannot harm him because he is certain in what he believes. We too must always strive to remember this ayah "**it is surely the Truth from your Rabb**". Regardless of what anyone says we are convinced of the Truth of this Message. It is the Truth that has come to us from our Lord. Allah (swt) emphasizes for us that this qibla is true by reminding us of it again here and also reminding us of the Truth of it.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is not unaware of all that you do**". The Muslims know that this Message is indeed the Truth from their Rabb. They have seen the proofs and evidences that establish this fact beyond the shadow of a doubt. Now after this certain knowledge has come to them, if they then follow their desires, if they then succumb to the doubts and questions raised by the enemies of this Message, then they need to know that Allah (swt) is not unaware of what they do. Allah (swt) knows the level of conviction that you had regarding this Message. If you then left this Truth that you know to follow the doubts and questions raised by the enemies of this Message, then you should realize that Allah (swt) is not unaware of what you do. The enemies of this Message are a people who have decided to follow their lusts and their desires. This is what they are calling you to do as well. They do this with the doubts and questions that they raise. They want you to follow your desires, and live a life where you serve your lusts instead of a life where you serve Allah (swt). If you want to follow them, if you really do see serving your desires and your lusts as more important than worshipping and serving Allah (swt), then you will start seeing what they say as true. You will start thinking that what they are saying is true even though you were once certain to the contrary. You know the Truth, but if you turn away from it to follow your lusts and desires, by giving credence to the doubts raised by the enemies of this Message, then you should know that Allah (swt) is not unaware of what you do. Allah (swt) is Aware of how you turned away from Him (swt) to follow your lusts, how you turned away from the Truth to follow falsehood, how you turned away from the Light to follow the darkness. In this warning there is both a threat and Mercy. Allah (swt) is telling you not to follow their doubts to get the fleeting pleasures of this world. Allah (swt) is reminding you of Him (swt) and how He (swt) is with you at every moment of your life. How then can you choose this world over Him (swt)? All that we have to do is try to spend as many moments of our life in this world trying to please Allah (swt)! Then Insha Allah we will not have any doubts concerning the Truth of this Message. Then Insha Allah Shaitan will not be able to deceive us like he deceived them. May Allah (swt) help all of us to remember this fact! May Allah (swt) guide us to the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) save us from hypocrisy and doubts!

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۖ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ
فَوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَٱخْشَوْنِى وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِى عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

151. And from whatever place you come forth turn your face towards the Masjid Al-Haram. And wherever you are, turn your face towards it, this is so that the people will have no argument against you, except those of them who do Dhulm. So do not fear them but fear Me. So that I may complete my favor upon you in order that you may be guided.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to stress the importance of the qibla. The importance of our community being united on a common direction in prayer. A common purpose in life. The emphasis that Allah (swt) places on the qibla in these ayahs shows us the central place that it has for our community. The qibla also shows us the importance of Salah, it shows the importance of being united, and most importantly it shows us how we should surrender all of our desires and preferences and submit to Allah (swt). How many of us today realize this fact? How many of us today come to think of our Din in this way?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And from whatever place you come forth turn your face towards the Masjid Al-Haram**". Once again we see that Allah (swt) repeats the command to turn towards the Masjid Al-Haram. This shows us how important the qibla is to our Salah and it also shows us the importance of Masjid Al-Haram. Our Salah is the most important of actions that we can do for Allah (swt), and the Masjid Al-Haram is the most important of masajid in our Din because it houses the Kabbah, the first structure ever built for the worship of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) brings our attention to both of these in this ayah. He (swt) commands to make our Salah facing the Masjid Al-Haram, thus showing how beloved both of these are to Him (swt). So the next time that you pray remember this ayah. Remember the blessed act that you are performing. Remember the blessed house towards which you are praying. Remember how important it is that you face the correct direction.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And wherever you are, turn your face towards it**". This is the same command as in the previous part of the ayah, the only difference is that the plural of the word "you" is now used. This shows that this part of the ayah is addressed to the entire Muslim community. So while the first part of the ayah was addressing the Prophet (saw) alone, this part addresses the whole Muslim community. Here Allah (swt) reminds us once again that wherever we are in the world we should face the Kabbah as our qibla. Allah (swt) gives a separate command to the Prophet (saw) and a separate command to the believers for facing the qibla as a direction in prayer. Often times when Allah (swt) gives a command to the Prophet (saw), it can be applied to the general Muslim community as well. But for the command to face the Masjid Al-Haram as a qibla we can see that a separate command is given to the Prophet (saw) and a separate command for the Muslims. One reason for this could be to stress the importance of this command. It could be to show us how important it is that we face the Masjid Al-Haram as our qibla in Salah. Another reason could be to once again demonstrate the Love and closeness that Allah (swt) has for the Prophet (saw). Recall from the previous ayahs how one of the reasons why Allah (swt) changed the qibla was to please the Prophet (saw). So by giving the Prophet (saw) a separate command to face the Kabbah in Salah, Allah (swt) once again shows His (swt) Love and closeness to the Prophet (saw). How blessed and fortunate was he (saw) to be the beloved of One so Majestic and Sublime.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us why it is so important for us to face the Masjid Al-Haram as our qibla. Allah (swt) says "**this is so that the people will have no argument against you**". When the qibla was changed, all of the enemies of this Message brought their arguments against Islam. This was the first time that a divine command was ever abrogated and so they all used this opportunity to attack the Message of Islam and to attack the Prophet (saw). In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims to take Masjid Al-Haram as their qibla so that the people would not be able to argue with them anymore. All of those who dared to attack Islam knew that the Masjid Al-Haram was indeed the true qibla for the true worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). The Masjid Al-Haram had the Kabbah which was the first house ever built for the worship of Allah (swt). Even the Jews and the Christians admitted to this fact. They all

even had to admit that it was Ibrahim (as), the one whom they all acknowledged as the Friend of Allah (swt) and one of the most noble of prophets, who built the Kabbah. So what other masjid on this earth could serve as a better qibla than this? If all believers were to face a certain direction in prayer then what direction could be a better direction than this? Allah (swt) is beyond time and space so He (swt) is not confined to a particular location, but if we were to face a particular direction when addressing Him (swt) what direction could be better than the Kabbah? So the reason why we must be steadfast on the Kabbah as our qibla is so that the people will have no arguments against us whatsoever. Allah (swt) has given us the best of directions for prayer and there is nothing that they can say after that.

There is only one group among all of mankind who will continue to bring objections and raise arguments if we hold fast to our qibla. Allah (swt) describes them as "**except those of them who do Dhulm**". **Dhulm** as we know means oppression and injustice. The people who do **Dhulm** are those who will continue to oppose us even after we take the Masjid al-Haram as our qibla. These are the people who have an agenda to destroy Islam. They know that Masjid Al-Haram is indeed the true qibla but they do not care. They have chosen to turn away from Allah (swt) and follow their desires, but this is not enough for them. They know that if Islam becomes dominant then they will never be able to have the life that they want. A life of satisfying their lusts without any limits or checks and of exploiting and depriving the people of all of their wealth. So they will continue to attack this Message in every way that they can. They will look for every opportunity they can to attack this Message and create doubt in the hearts of it's followers. As we mentioned, it is always to the ignorance of the Muslims to which they will play. They will look for the Muslims who are ignorant and naïve and they will use every opportunity that they can to create doubts in their hearts. They would do this even when they know that this Message has been sent by the Lord and Master of the universe. Allah (swt) is their Creator, Allah (swt) is their Sustainer, but they will still be so ungrateful to Him (swt) that they would betray Him (swt) in this way. They will take the people away from Allah (swt). They will take the people away from the Garden and towards the Fire. Just as Allah (swt) has described, we see how unjust and evil a people they are. May Allah (swt) save this Muslim Ummah from them!

Then we see that Allah (swt) tells us "**So do not fear them but fear Me**". These are a people who have all of the resources and all of the wealth of this planet. These are a people who are working to destroy this Message every hour of every night and day. These are a people whose sole objective is to take you away from your Rabb. They see you and they know that you are a threat. In you, they see a movement that will bring back the Islamic State. In this Ummah, they see a nation that will carry the flag of the Prophet (saw) to every corner of this world. So they will plot and plan and use every means at their disposal to destroy you. Does this mean that you should fear them? Does this mean then that you should give up this dawah? Does this mean that you should give up the work to establish the Law of Allah (swt) and be content with living the life of these people? Should we leave the dawah for the nine to five job and the house with the white picket fence? If you do think in this way, then read to yourself again and again what Allah (swt) is telling you in this ayah. Think to yourself what they can to do you, and then think what Allah (swt) can to do you. Then you will realize Who is more worthy of your fear.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us why we should remain firm on our qibla and why we should fear only Him (swt). Allah (swt) says "**So that I may complete my favor upon you in order that you may be guided**". Allah (swt) has chosen us to be a part of this Muslim Ummah. Allah (swt) desires that He (swt) bestows on this Ummah His (swt)'s favor and His (swt)'s blessing. This favor and this blessing is the Message of Islam. The greatest bounty and the most wonderful of gifts that Allah (swt) has ever bestowed on any of His (swt)'s creation. This Message is the Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the Path that leads to the beholding of Allah (swt). Could there be any gift that is greater than this? Could there be any goal that is worth striving for other than this? So Allah (swt) tells the Muslims to hold firm on the direction that He (swt) has set us for us, to hold firm to the qibla that He (swt) has given, and to have fear of only Him (swt). This is what Muslims need to do, and in return Allah (swt) will perfect and complete Islam upon us. What then will be the result when Islam is completed and perfected upon us? As Allah (swt) tells us, the result is that we will be guided. We will be put on that Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We will be placed on the Path that every human should want to be on. That is the result of the Din of Islam being perfected and completed

for us. We would live every moment only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). At every moment, every action that we take would only be an action that seeks the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We would submit to Allah (swt) both as individuals and also collectively as a Muslim Ummah. We would be able to implement all of the laws of the Quran and Sunnah in our lives and in our society. We would be able to properly carry this Message to mankind like the Prophet (saw) and the early companions did. All of this depends on us being firm on our qibla and of us having fear of only Allah (swt). Part of being firm in our qibla means that we must be constant in our Salah, we must never miss any of our prayers and we must strive to pray each prayer like it is our last. Part of being firm on our qibla also means that we must stand united as one Muslim Ummah and not divide ourselves into groups and factions based on nationalism, language or the blind following of scholars and movements. Just like we make the Masjid Al-Haram the direction of our Salah, we also have to make the Pleasure of Allah (swt) the direction behind our actions. This has to be the common goal that unites us. When we do any action the goal and the motive that we must be seeking with that action is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We must also have fear of only Allah (swt). Nothing in all of the creation can harm us except if Allah (swt) wills it to harm us, and even if it harms us, it can only hurt us in this temporary and fleeting world. Then our return will be to Allah (swt) where He (swt) will send us to our final and permanent home. Who then should we fear? So we must be constant in our qibla and we must have fear of only Allah (swt). This is what is required of us if we want to have the blessing of the Message of Islam being completed and perfected upon us. We have to be steadfast on this goal if we want the Mercy of Allah (swt) to descend upon us. May Allah (swt) allow all of us to accomplish this! May Allah (swt) complete and perfect His (swt)'s blessing and favor on this Ummah so that we may be guided to Him (swt) and so that mankind can be guided to Him (swt) as well!

كَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنكُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا
وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ
تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ ١٥١

152. Even as We sent among you a Messenger from you, reciting on you our Signs and purifying you and teaching you the Book and Al-Hikmah, and teaching you that which you did not know.

In this ayah Allah (swt) concludes the section that discusses the change in qibla. The Arabic word *ka-ma* that begins this ayah links it directly with the previous ayah. Recall in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told us that we must be firm in our qibla and that we must have fear of only Him (swt). If we can do this then Allah (swt) promised us that He (swt) would complete and perfect His (swt) blessing and favor upon us. We said that this means Allah (swt) would complete this Din of Islam upon us. Allah (swt) will guide us by showing us how to live every moment of our lives according to the Din that He (swt) has revealed for us. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us how He (swt) will do that. How He (swt) will guide us to live according to this Din. We see that it is through His (swt)'s beloved and our beloved (saw).

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) links following the Prophet (saw) to receiving the guidance from Him (swt). The only chance for the success of this Ummah is to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (saw). This is because Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw) as the role model that we must follow. We have to put our foot in his (saw)'s footprints and walk in the exact same path that he (saw) did in everything that we do. The Prophet (saw) was the one who remembered Allah (swt) the most and the Prophet (saw) was the one who loved Allah (swt) the most and the Prophet (saw) was the one who feared Allah (swt) the most and the Prophet (saw) was the one who did each and every one of his actions for Allah (swt). So if we want to come close to Him (swt) then we must follow the beloved (saw). We have to follow in his footsteps by modeling him (saw) in everything that we do and in doing all of our actions only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

We can notice that in this ayah Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) exactly as Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as) prayed to Allah (swt) for the Messenger to be. The three basic and fundamental duties of the Messenger are outlined in this ayah. To walk in the footsteps of the Prophet (saw), we have to learn these three basic duties and try to carry them out ourselves. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Even as We sent among you a Messenger from you**". This part of the ayah is specifically addressed to the Sahabah and the early Muslims who lived with the Prophet (saw). The Jews in Madinah and the hypocrites within their ranks were continuously attacking Islam in the most subtle and diabolical ways. Before any of them may consider leaving the Prophet (saw), before they might consider abandoning Islam, Allah (swt) reminds them of the greatest of blessings that He (swt) gave them by sending the Prophet (saw) to them. Not only was the Final Messenger of Allah (swt) sent to them, but also he (saw) was sent from among them. He (saw) was not a stranger from a far away land, but he (saw) was one of them. He (saw) was Arab just like they were. He (saw) was even from their land and their family. The Prophet (saw) was related to the Ansar of Madinah just like he (saw) was related to the Muhajiroon of Makkah. How then could they ever think of leaving him (saw)? How ungrateful to Allah (swt) would they be if they left the Final Messenger to all mankind that Allah (swt) sent from among them?

In his tafsir of this part of the ayah, Sayyid Qutb asks us to look at how insignificant and worthless a people the Arabs were before Allah (swt) sent to them the Prophet (saw). They had absolutely nothing to offer mankind. They were looked down upon by all of the other nations and empires of the world. But by sending the Arabs the Prophet (saw) with this Message, Allah (swt) transformed these worthless people into the greatest civilization that mankind has ever seen. How fortunate were they then? It was only because the Prophet (saw) was sent to them that they changed from what they used to be to what they became. So before any of the early Muslims could have even thought of leaving the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) reminds them of the great favor that He (swt) did for them in sending them the Prophet (saw).

Then Allah (swt) outlines the three basic duties of the Messenger when He (swt) describes the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) says that the Prophet (saw) is "**reciting on you our Signs and purifying you and teaching you the Book and Al-Hikmah**". First the Prophet (saw) recites onto the people the Signs of Allah (swt). This of course refers to the ayahs of the Quran. They are words just like our words, but their Miracle lies in the depth of the meaning that they convey and the way in which they are structured and presented. There is no scholar or poet, no matter how well versed he might be in the Arabic language, who can convey the same amount of meaning and who can structure the words in the same way as Allah (swt) has done. Every single ayah and every Surah is at the peak of the Arabic language, it is at the top and it never comes down. This was the Miracle of the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) recited for the people.

So for us to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (saw), we first have to learn the Miracle of the Quran. Part of learning the Miracle of the Quran is to familiarize ourselves with the meanings of the Quran and part of learning the Miracle is to learn the Arabic language. A problem with a large portion of the Ummah today is that they do not have the conviction in this Message that the early Muslims had. They do not see what the Quran tells them as a sheer reality like the early Muslims did. To fix this problem we have to show the Muslims once again how this Quran cannot be from anyone except Allah (swt). Once you have the conviction that this Quran could only be from Allah (swt), then Insha Allah you will see everything in it as true beyond the shadow of a doubt. You will see Paradise and Hell as true beyond the shadow of a doubt. This then will give you the motivation to strive with your utmost for Allah (swt) and to sacrifice everything for Him (swt). Just think how motivated a Muslim would be if he knew for certain that tomorrow was the Day of Judgment. But this will not happen until you see the verses of Quran as Signs from Allah (swt). In order to see the verses of the Quran as Signs we have to study classical Arabic and we have to study the meanings of the Quran. Only then will the Quran become our flesh and blood like it did for the early Muslims. Only then can we come to the complete and full realization that this Book can only be from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give the ability for all of the Muslims in this Ummah to see the Miracle of the Quran!

Then Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) to the Muslims as one who is "**purifying you**". It is not enough to simply learn the Quran and be convinced that it is indeed a Miracle. There are many diseases of the heart that plague the human being from which he must be purified. Although the word "purification" in this ayah is general and so it includes all kinds of purification, one of the most important aspects of this purification is to cleanse the human being of all the diseases of the heart. If these diseases are not removed, the human will never become the perfect slave of Allah (swt). This will be so no matter how convinced he may be about the Miracle of the Quran. By removing these diseases, the Muslim is taught what it means to submit completely to Allah (swt). A few of these diseases of the heart include pride, anger, jealousy, greed, sloth and miserliness. You must strive to remove all of these diseases from yourself. These diseases are deeply rooted in every human being and they are all obstacles that prevent you from reaching Allah (swt). So for the Muslim who wants to work in the path of Allah (swt), it is not enough for him to be convinced of the Miracle of the Quran. He must also work on purifying his heart of these diseases. May Allah (swt) help and guide all the Muslims in this Ummah to purify their hearts of all diseases and of all evil!

Then Allah (swt) describes the Prophet (saw) to the Muslims as one who is "**teaching you the Book and Al-Hikmah**". The Book here refers to the Quran and the Hikmah here refers to the Sunnah. Both of these are Islam. All of Islam is derived from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). Islam itself consists of beliefs and actions. We have to believe in Allah (swt), in the Hereafter, in the angels, in the previous prophets and nations, and in everything else that Allah (swt) has told us about in the Quran and everything else that the Prophet (saw) has told us about in the Sunnah. We also have to carry out all of the actions that Allah (swt) has commanded us to do in the Quran and the actions that the Prophet (saw) has commanded us to do in the Sunnah. Of course even what the Prophet (saw) says in the Sunnah is from Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) only taught to us what he (saw) was given from Allah (swt). So in addition to learning about the Miracle of the Quran and purifying our hearts of all diseases, we also have to learn about this Din. We have to learn about all of the beliefs that are required of us, and we have to perform the actions that are required of us. Exactly which beliefs we must learn first and which

actions we must perform first is a deep subject that is beyond the scope of our tafsir. Insha Allah, we invite you to learn this subject for yourself and find out for yourself what should be the priority in your life. Always remember however that the final goal and result in everything that you do must be Pleasure of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to learn this Din! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to teach others and to practice in our own lives all that we learn!

Finally Allah (swt) tells us about the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) is one who "**teaches you that which you did not know**". The human being's knowledge is very limited. It is said that Khidr (as) once told Musa (as) that his knowledge compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is like the few drops of water that a bird drinks from the ocean compared to the water of the ocean. Can you even begin to understand this comparison? The few drops of water in the beak of a small bird compared to all the water in an ocean? That is the knowledge of the most learned of human being compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt). We gain knowledge from what we sense of the world around us, and what we are taught by others. The best of teachers to give us knowledge is the Prophet (saw) because the knowledge that he (saw) teaches us comes from Allah (swt). Who better to take knowledge from other than the All-Knowing? The knowledge that the Prophet (saw) taught us was a reality that we were previously unaware of. This is knowledge that we would never have come to with our senses. So this part of the ayah is a general summary of the previous portions of the ayah. The Signs of Allah (swt) in the Quran, the identification and the removal of the diseases that plague our heart, and the knowledge of Islam is what the Prophet (saw) taught us. All of these were pieces of knowledge that we did not know about before he (saw) was sent to us. This knowledge is the best of knowledge because this knowledge is what we can be certain of beyond the shadow of a doubt. This knowledge is knowledge from the One Who is the All-Knowing. This knowledge is knowledge of the true reality of this universe. This knowledge is the knowledge that will bring us closer to our Creator and help us to fulfill the purpose of our creation. What knowledge could be a greater knowledge than this? May Allah (swt) help all those in this Ummah to learn this knowledge and may He (swt) let this knowledge be a means of approaching Him (swt) and gaining His (swt)'s Pleasure!

فَٱذْكُرُونِىٓ أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لِى وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. So remember Me and I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and do not be ungrateful.

The meaning of this ayah is so simple and so straightforward that it hardly seems to need any explanation. Yet this ayah gives us the foundation of our Din and on this ayah alone, one could write volumes and volumes of books. Our Din when it comes down to it is nothing but the remembrance of Allah (swt). You and the universe around you were created by Allah (swt). You and the universe around you are being sustained at this moment by Allah (swt). Everything that happens for every moment of your life is only because of Allah (swt). But Allah (swt) is hidden behind this world that we see around us. We can see His (swt)'s Signs in everything around us, but we cannot perceive Him (swt) directly. So how then can we know of Him (swt), how then can we come closer to Him (swt), how then can we remember Him (swt) all the time.

This Din is what helps us to remember Allah (swt) all of the time. Allah (swt) sent this Din to us to help us to remember Him (swt). Fourteen hundred years ago, Allah (swt) sent an angel to a man in Arabia. Allah (swt) gave this man a Message to give to all mankind. This Message is a code of living that if any human being would live it properly, he would be remembering Allah (swt) all of the time. In doing so that human being would be fulfilling the existence for which Allah (swt) created him. The Prophet (saw) was the one who was always remembering Allah (swt) all of the time. He (saw) remembered Allah (swt) with every step that he walked and with every breath that he (saw) took. He (saw) was the perfect example of the code of life that this Message teaches to mankind. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) commands us to remember Him (swt). The way that we remember Him (swt) is by living this Message that He (swt) gave us. The way that we remember Him (swt) is by following the Messenger that He (swt) sent to us. The way we that We remember Him (swt) is by thinking about Him (swt) in our hearts, by mentioning Him (swt) with our tongues, and we remember Him (swt) with our limbs by doing the actions that He (swt) is pleased with and staying away from the actions He (swt) is displeased with. This is the command that Allah (swt) gives us in this ayah. The most simple of commands. Just to remember Him (swt). To live our entire lives in remembrance of Him (swt).

What is it that we will get in return if we remember Allah (swt)? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, He (swt) will remember us. Allah (swt) will remember you. Can you even begin to imagine how wonderful that would be? What Allah (swt) means by remembering you is that He (swt) will look after you. He (swt) will keep you safe wherever you go. He (swt) will provide for you from His (swt)'s sustenance. He (swt) will take care of your family and your wealth. But most importantly He (swt) will guide you closer to Him (swt). He (swt) will make you love Him (swt) and fear Him (swt) even more. All of this is what you will get in the short life of this world, but in the Hereafter Allah (swt) will reward you by saving you from the blazing Fire, by admitting you into the Garden full of pleasures, by allowing you to behold Him (swt) and by giving you His (swt)'s Contentment. What could be more wonderful than that? Allah (swt) created us to know Him (swt), if we can do that then He (swt) will give us fulfillment for the purpose of our existence.

In the second part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us to be grateful to Him (swt). This command is directly connected with the command in the previous part of the ayah to remember Allah (swt). Part of being grateful to Allah (swt) is constantly striving to remember Him (swt). Now some fools may raise the question as to why we need to remember Allah (swt)? Why is it so important that you remember Allah (swt)? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, it only so that you could be grateful to Him (swt). As Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran, if we were to try and count the number of favors and blessings that He (swt) has bestowed upon us we would not be able to. Just imagine, if you locked yourself in a room and all that you did with your time was to count the favors of Allah (swt) one by one. Even if you spent your whole life doing this, you will not be able to number all of the favors of Allah (swt). Even if you lived the longest life that a human could live. This is the extent to which your Lord has favored and blessed you. Should you then not even try to show your gratitude to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given you? Of course you will not be able to, but Allah (swt) has been **so** Generous to you that you should at least try. That is the very least that you can do. If you do not, then you are the worst of creation. You are a creature that is deserving of the Fire. The worst of creation are the ungrateful that is why Allah (swt) tells us clearly that we should be grateful to Him (swt) and that we should not be among the ungrateful. May Allah (swt) allow us all to thank Him (swt) as best we can!

In his tafsir of this ayah Sayyid Qutb asks us to note how when the Muslim Ummah as a whole has remembered Allah (swt), He (swt) has remembered us, and when we have forgotten Allah (swt), He (swt) has neglected and abandoned us. When the Muslim Ummah dedicated their lives to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt), when they gave all of their time, their energy, their talents and their resources for the sake of Allah (swt), He (swt) raised them in status and made them the leaders of mankind. They were the greatest civilization in the world, and all the other nations in the world looked up to them. They remembered Allah (swt) so He (swt) remembered them. But now we have forgotten Allah (swt). We no longer rule our lands by the Law of Allah (swt), we ourselves neglect many of the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt) and we no longer make Allah (swt) as the purpose in our lives. We chase after the life of this world and we exist only to please the disbelievers. Now look at our situation because of that. Look at what we have become because we have stopped remembering our Lord. For example look at our brothers and sisters of Turkish descent. When they held on to Islam, Allah (swt) honored them by making them the leaders of the Islamic State. They were the greatest empire in the world and they were feared by all their enemies. The armies of Muhammad Al-Fath conquered the prize of the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople, a stronghold city that was built specifically to withstand any invasion force. This city was so well built and so well defended that none among the West who ever thought that it would fall. But Allah (swt) had blessed the Muslims to such an extent and they were given such power that they were even able to conquer this impenetrable fortress of a city. That is the extent to which Allah (swt) blessed our Muslim brothers when they remembered Him (swt) and they kept their duty to Him (swt). But look at their status today now that they have left Islam. They are going and begging the West to allow them to join their “union”. Instead of looking at them with fear and respect, the West now looks at them with pity and disdain. May Allah (swt) make them realize the folly of their ways! May Allah (swt) help them and help all Muslims return to remembering Him (swt)! Only in the remembrance of Allah (swt) do we have any chance for success!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱسۡتَعِينُواْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ

١٥٣

154. O you who believe, seek help with Sabr and Salah. Surely Allah is with the Sabireen.

In the previous ayahs we have seen Allah (swt) remind us of the great blessing and favor that He (swt) bestowed on us when He (swt) sent to us the Prophet (saw) with this Message of Islam. Allah (swt) also commanded us to remember Him (swt) and to be grateful to Him (swt) for this great bounty and blessing. But the striving to always remember Allah (swt) and to always be grateful to Allah (swt) is by no means an easy task. We need Allah (swt)'s help to accomplish this task. In other words, we cannot even remember Allah (swt) without His (swt)'s help. If you recall from Surah Fatihah, we prayed to Allah (swt) and told Him (swt) that we will worship and serve only Him (swt) and we asked for His (swt)'s help to accomplish this task. So we need the help of Allah (swt) to remember Him (swt), we need the help of Allah (swt) to correctly worship and serve Him (swt). How then do we get the help of Allah (swt)? Our Lord, most High and Blessed, answers that question for us in this ayah.

Allah (swt) tells us "**O you who believe, seek help with Sabr and Salah**". So in order to remember Allah (swt) and to be grateful to Him (swt), we need His (swt)'s help. How do we get His (swt)'s help? In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that we can get His (swt)'s help through Sabr and Salah. So we need to have Sabr, and we need to make our Salah. If we can do both of these, then Allah (swt) will give us His (swt)'s help. The help to remember Him (swt) and the help to be grateful to Him (swt). Once we remember Allah (swt) and we show our gratitude to Him (swt) then Insha Allah we would be fulfilling the purpose of our creation. We would also receive the highest and most sublime of rewards in the Hereafter. So our task now should be to discover what it means to have Sabr and how we can perfect our Salah.

So how exactly do we have Sabr? The scholars have told us that there are three ways in which we have Sabr. One is to constantly strive to do the duties and actions that are required of us, no matter how difficult these actions may be. So you wake up for Fajr and you fast in Ramadan, no matter how difficult these actions are for you. Another way to have Sabr is to

restrain ourselves from what is forbidden to us, no matter how much we may desire it. So you lower your gaze and you prevent your tongue from speaking of others no matter how much you may want to. Finally to have Sabr is to show patience and fortitude for all of the calamities and difficulties that we encounter in life. When you encounter any difficulty, you have patience for the sake of Allah (swt). You tolerate and bear all of the pain and the discomfort that you feel only for Allah (swt). This is what it means to have Sabr for Allah (swt). All of these three are by no means an easy task, but these three are the only ways in which we can hope to make ourselves worthy of the great reward that Allah (swt) has promised in the Hereafter. Just imagine you will be beholding Allah (swt), the Creator of all, how hard do you have to strive to even approach such a station? How hard do you have to strive to be worthy of such a reward?

Salah is the second means by which we can get the help of Allah (swt). Our Salah is our connection with Allah (swt). It is the moments in our lives when we submit our whole bodies for Him (swt). Even the actions that are permissible during the regular course of our lives such as eating, drinking, walking and talking are forbidden during the moments of our Salah. Our whole bodies have submitted to Allah (swt). We call out to Him (swt) with the prayer that He (swt) taught us in Surah Fatihah, and we read to ourselves the words from His (swt)'s Book. We bow down before His (swt)'s Greatness and we prostrate ourselves before His (swt)'s Majesty and Perfection. When we do this, we remember Allah (swt) and we show our gratitude to Him (swt). Our striving in our Salah should not just be to make the Salah on time and to perform it correctly, but our striving must also be to try and remember Allah (swt) throughout it. May Allah (swt) help us all in being constant in establishing our Salah!

In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb asks to note how Salah is meant to be a comfort for us from all the difficulties that we encounter in our striving to worship and serve Allah (swt). Part of our remembrance of Allah (swt) and our showing gratitude to Him (swt) is our striving to worship and serve Him (swt). But this striving is by no means easy. It requires constant effort and it requires many sacrifices. So one of the tools that Allah (swt) has given us from which we can take strength and which is a source of comfort and relief is our Salah. When the Prophet (saw) used to ask Bilal (ra) to make the adhan for Salah, he (saw) used to say "Bring us it's comfort".

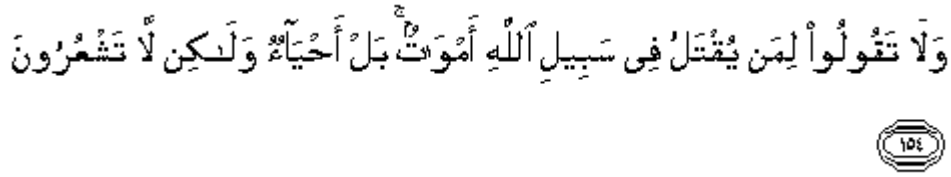
So there is a comfort and relief in the Salah, and it is one of the means in which we seek help from Allah (swt) in all of the duties and obligations that we have in serving Him (swt). How unfortunate it is then that today many Muslims view their Salah as a difficult burden that they must perform? They dread the times when Salah comes in, and they rush through their Salah to finish it as quickly as possible. They just want to get it over with so that they can go back to whatever else it is that they were doing. Such people take nothing from their Salah except the fact that they moved their bodies up and down. How can you bring back the Islamic State if you cannot even make your Salah properly? All we can say for those brothers is that if you want to reach the level where you can make the amount of sacrifices that Imam Shaheed Sayyid Qutb made for this Din, then you have to change your outlook towards your Salah. You have to be among those who are constantly working for the cause of Allah (swt) such that your Salah is a break time for you. The problem is that many Muslims today spend their lives enjoying themselves and the only times in which they worship Allah (swt) is in their Salah. That is why they want to rush through their prayers so that they can go back to enjoying themselves. They can go back to their worldly life and to make money. These so-called Muslims do not even realize what it means to be part of the nation of dawah and jihad. We should be among those who are constantly working to make the Word of Allah (swt) supreme such that our time for Salah is our time for rest. That was how it was for the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah. May Allah (swt) make it so for us as well!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that "**Surely Allah is with the Sabireen**". Allah (swt) is with those who have Sabr. Can you begin to understand how wonderful this is? How wonderful is it to have the Divine with you? To know that wherever you are your Lord is close by. Allah (swt) is with us in a way that we cannot even fully comprehend but we know that He (swt) is with us. Allah (swt) is not with us literally because He (swt) is beyond time and space. But He (swt) is with us in a different way. We do not know how it is so but we are certain that it is. His nearness to us is from on our nearness to Him (swt). The more that we remember Him (swt), the more that strive to please Him (swt), the closer to us that He (swt) will be. But none of this can be possible without Sabr. Allah (swt) is only with those who have Sabr.

The word Sabr literally means “restraint”. So when we have it we are restraining ourselves for the sake of Allah (swt). We are controlling what we feel like doing and instead we are doing what He (swt) is pleased with. Allah (swt) Sees our efforts. When He (swt) Sees this, do you not think then that He (swt) will be pleased with us? Not only will Allah (swt) give us the reward in the Hereafter for this effort on our part, but He (swt) will also reward in this world by helping us in the effort that we are making. It is as Allah (swt) has told us in the hadith of the Prophet (saw); if we only take one step towards Him (swt) then He (swt) will take many steps towards us. This means that if we make only the slightest effort to worship Allah (swt) then He (swt) will help and support us by completing and perfecting our worship of Him (swt). This is the reward that Allah (swt) gives for those who have Sabr in submitting to Him (swt). For the **Sabireen**, every single action that they take and every single action that they restrain themselves from, and even the patience that they have through the difficulties of life is only for the sake of their Rabb, their Rabb then helps them and supports them in completing that which they made the effort for. So your whole life is a striving for Allah (swt), your restraining yourself to do only that which is pleasing to Him (swt), but know that if only you can bring yourself to make the effort for the sake of Allah (swt), then He (swt) will give you His (swt)’s help and support. May Allah (swt) make us and make all the sincere Muslims of this Ummah among the **Sabireen**!

In his tafsir of this ayah, Mawdudi asks us to note that from this point onwards in this Surah Allah (swt) will begin to give us some of the most important commands and regulations in this Din. When this ayah was revealed this Ummah had now been given the responsibility of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. This duty had been transferred from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). In order to fulfill this responsibility, there were many commands and duties that needed to be implemented. In order to carry this Message, there were also many trials that needed to be faced. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that both Sabr and Salah are needed to carry out these commandments and face these trials. It is the only way that they will receive the help of Allah (swt), and it is only way that their mission will be successful. May Allah (swt) pour down upon us Sabr! May Allah (swt) make us constant in our Salah! May Allah (swt) grant us His (swt)’s help and may Allah (swt) grant us victory.

Sayyid Qutb also asks us to note that since Allah (swt) specifically mentioned that Sabr would be required to carry this Message to mankind, then we should never become tired of waiting for the help of Allah (swt) to come or for the victory to come. Even before Allah (swt) sets the Muslims on this great mission, Allah (swt) is telling them that they are going to need patience. This tells us that we should never become tired of waiting for this Din to be victorious. No matter how long it takes, we have to continue on the path of working for this Message. No matter how many times we meet with failure, we have to keep going. No matter how many sacrifices are required of us, we should never give up. This is because our Rabb had warned us even before He (swt) gave us this mission that patience would be required, so patience is what we must have. May Allah (swt) give us the Sabr that is required of us! We cannot do it without Him (swt)!



155. Do not speak of those who are killed in the Path of Allah as they are dead. No. They live but you perceive not.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) had told us about the great blessing that He (swt) had given our Ummah when He (swt) sent to us the Prophet (saw) to recite to us His (swt)'s Signs, to purify us and teach us the Quran and Sunnah. In return for this blessing, Allah (swt) told us to strive to remember Him (swt) all of the time and to strive to show our gratitude for Him (swt). Now even though this task is difficult, Allah (swt) told us to seek help from Him (swt) through having Sabr and through being constant in our Salah. These two are the pillars of the Muslim upon which his submission to Allah (swt) rests. We live our lives in submission and service to Allah (swt), and it is our Sabr and our Salah that support this life of submission. Now if Sabr and Salah can be thought of as the pillars of our life of Islam, then we know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that the pinnacle or apex of this life of submission is jihad. Jihad is the pinnacle of our submission to Allah (swt) because it is the moment in our life when we strive our utmost for

the sake of Allah (swt). Now one of the moments in which this striving becomes most salient is on the battlefield. This is what Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this part of the ayah. We know that Allah (swt) has commanded upon us different forms of jihad depending on which stage the dawah is in. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the form of jihad that takes place once the Islamic State is established and that is jihad with the sword.

After the Prophet (saw) established the Islamic State in Madinah, Allah (swt) gave the Muslims the permission to fight to defend themselves and the permission to fight in order to remove the obstacles to the dawah. These obstacles are the kufr governments, like the Quraysh chiefs who ruled over Makkah. The ones who block the call to Allah (swt) from reaching the hearts of the people. Islam is a Din of peace and these are the only times when fighting is permissible. To defend the lives and property of the Muslims and to remove those who prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people. Insha Allah we will discuss more about jihad in later ayahs of this tafsir.

Now we know that even at the time of the Prophet (saw), the Islamic State had enemies both outside and from within. The enemies within were the hypocrites who had only accepted Islam with their tongues but who in their hearts hated the Prophet (saw) and had no desire to follow this Message of Islam. Not only did they not want to submit to Allah (swt), but they also wanted to destroy the Islamic State so that no one else would submit to Him (swt) as well. They saw the Law of Allah (swt) as curbing their desires and preventing them from coming to power and ruling the people how they wanted. One of the ways in which these hypocrites tried to destroy the Islamic State and to frustrate the State's mission of dawah was to discourage the Muslims from joining the army. Ever since it's inception the Islamic State was opposed by all of the tribes and nations that surrounded it. They all saw the State as the societal and political manifestation of the submission to Allah (swt) and a threat to their very way of life. Given the fact that the Islamic State had so many enemies, the Prophet (saw) needed every last Muslim to be in the army both to protect the State from destruction and also to carry this Message to mankind by removing the obstacles to dawah. So while the Prophet (saw) and the sincere Muslims were encouraging the citizens to join the army, the hypocrites were discouraging them. They would tell

the people that if they joined the army then they would be killed in battle and they would lose all of their material comforts and pleasures. They put fear in the hearts of the people and tried to turn them away from their duty and responsibility to Allah (swt). These hypocrites would also say about those who had already been killed in battle that they are dead and now they can no longer enjoy the pleasures of life. Allah (swt) revealed this ayah in response to such allegations.

Allah (swt) says "**Do not speak of those who are killed in the Path of Allah as they are dead**". The hypocrites were saying that those who had fought in jihad in the army of the Islamic State and had been killed were dead. Allah (swt) commands the Muslims not to even speak of them in such a manner. Not to even think of them in such a manner. Notice that this ayah is first and foremost a command; for the Shuhadah you cannot even speak of them as if they dead. To speak of the Shuhadah as "dead" is a sin. May Allah (swt) save us from that! So the first lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must not even speak of those who are killed in the way of Allah (swt) as being "dead".

Then notice that Allah (swt) describes them as being "killed in the Path of Allah". So Allah (swt) recognizes and acknowledges the fact that they were not simply killed, but they were killed fighting in His (swt)'s Path. They were fighting to protect the Islamic State that Allah (swt) had ordered to be established and they were fighting to defend the lives of the Muslims. They were fighting to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind and to remove the obstacles to this dawah. Allah (swt) acknowledges that they were fighting for Him (swt). How wonderful must it have been for the families of the Shuhadah to hear Allah (swt) speak of their loved ones in this way? Allah (swt), the Creator and Sustainer, the Lord and Master, is not only acknowledging the sacrifice of the Shuhadah, but He (swt) is also acknowledging the fact that they fought and died for Him (swt). They walked on the path of Allah (swt). The path of dawah and jihad. The path of where they lived only for their Lord. The path of where they spent every waking moment striving to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure and striving to make His (swt)'s Word supreme. This is the path that we must strive to walk as well. As high as this station is, it is the station that we must always be striving to reach. Even if we never reach this station we must still try. This is what life is about.

Then Allah (swt) says "**No. They live**". First notice the statement "No". This powerful statement completely rejects and destroys the claims of the hypocrites. With this powerful word, Allah (swt) shows how it is a completely wrong and false claim to say that the Shuhadah are dead. Then Allah (swt) tells us the reality of their situation when He (swt) tells us that they "**They live**". They are alive. Even though you may have seen their bodies struck down and you may have seen their bodies fall to the ground, they are not dead. Rather they are alive. But how are they alive? Allah (swt) has told us how they are alive in the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has said, "The souls of the Shuhadah are inside green birds and they move about in Paradise wherever they wish". At the moment that their souls leave their bodies, the Shuhadah find themselves in Paradise. One moment they are on the battlefield and the very next moment they find themselves flying in Paradise. This is the reality of what it means to be a Shaheed. How foolish then are the hypocrites and those who said that they are dead? The Shuhadah are flying over Paradise and they are enjoying pleasures that these hypocrites cannot even dream of.

Finally Allah (swt) says "**but you perceive not**". We now know the reality of the Shuhadah. This is a reality that the hypocrites could not perceive and could not comprehend. We ourselves cannot sense this reality. But even though we cannot sense it, it is still real. The reality that the Shuhadah are experiencing is far more sublime and pleasurable than anything that this worldly realm can offer. So we the people who are in this world right now, cannot perceive their reality with our senses. But in His (swt)'s Mercy and Kindness, especially for the families of the Shuhadah, Allah (swt) tells us about the reality of their situation. They are alive even though we do not see them to be. Even though their reality lies beyond human perception, in this ayah tells us that they are alive and in the hadith explaining this ayah He (swt) tells where they really are. They are in a world beyond this world. A world far more pleasurable and far more salient that this dream world. We must believe in it because it is what Allah (swt) has told us. Anything that comes from the Quran and authentic hadith should be more real for us than the reality that we see around us. From what we can see, we see their bodies fallen on the earth before us. But Allah (swt) tells us here of the reality that we do not know about. The reality that we cannot perceive. This is part of the Mercy and Kindness of Allah (swt) for us.

Sayyid Qutb, who was a Shaheed himself, may Allah (swt) accept him, also asks us to note that another way in which the Shuhadah are alive is that the effects of their martyrdom remain in this world even after their souls have left it. The Shuhadah have left this world, and they are now in the heights of Paradise, but the effect of what they had done still remain in this world. Their martyrdom is an inspiration and motivation for those who want to follow in their path. It shows the Muslims that there are brothers and sisters who have such a deep conviction in this Message, that they are willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for it. It also shows the enemies of this Message, that this Din can never be defeated. No matter how powerful the enemies of this Din may be, this Message will never be defeated because it has followers that believe in it so strongly and with such conviction that they are willing to die for it. The level of conviction that the followers of this Message have, and the sweetness of faith that comes in their hearts because of it, is something that the enemies of this Message can never understand. So another way in which the Shuhadah are alive is that the effects of their sacrifice remain in this world even after they have left it. They are alive in the hearts of the sincere Muslims. The Muslims look to them as a source of inspiration and hope, and their sacrifice gives the Muslims the motivation in their own struggle to make this Message supreme. They are also alive in the hearts of the enemies of this Message but they look to them with fear. The enemies of this Message realize that they are up against a Din for which so many have given their lives. Would this fact not generate the greatest of fear in their hearts?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the special status that Allah (swt) has given for the Shuhadah. We can all be called Shuhadah in that we testify that there is no illah except Allah (swt) and that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger and servant of Allah (swt). But the real Shuhadah are those who give their lives as evidence to their testification. We all testify with our tongues but they have testified with their lives. They make the ultimate sacrifice for their Iman. They reached the pinnacle and the apex of submission to Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) acknowledges them and gives special mention for them in His (swt)'s Book. May Allah (swt) accept the sacrifice of all those who sincerely give their lives for His (swt)'s sake and may He (swt) grant them the promise that He (swt) has promised them!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that it is wrong for us to even think of the Shuhadah as dead. Allah (swt) has shown us in this ayah the many ways in which they are alive. Not only are their souls alive and flying over Paradise as green birds at this very moment, but they are also alive in the memories and the hearts of those whom they leave behind in the Muslim community. They are even alive in the fear that the enemies of this Message have of them. So not only must we not say that they are dead but we must not even **think** that they are dead. All praise is for Allah (swt), in some Muslim lands today Shahada is something that is celebrated. If a Muslim gives their life for the sake of Allah (swt), then their families know of this ayah and they know that their loved ones are really alive now with Allah (swt). So they have a celebration to commemorate this great event of their son or daughter leaving this world and entering paradise. May Allah (swt) give all Muslims this correct understanding to Shahada!

However Sayyid Qutb also tells us that the true Shaheed is the one who gives his life **only** for the sake of Allah (swt). It cannot be for ones who gave their life for personal fame and glory or for some nationalistic cause. The Prophet (saw) said, “Only the one who fights to keep Allah’s Word supreme, fights in Allah’s cause”. So the intention of the Shaheed must **only** be gaining the Pleasure Allah (swt), if he died for any other reason then his Shahada will not be accepted. That being said however, it is important that we always think the best of our Muslim brothers and sisters. When we see Muslim brothers and sisters giving their lives today, we should not dismiss what they have done only because we do not agree with the movement or the group that they may be working with. We should not say that so and so is a nationalistic group or that so and so movement is doing jihad when there is no Islamic State, and so their Shahada will not be accepted. Even if we do not agree with the group or movement with which they may be working, it is not for us to say that their martyrdom will not be accepted. Allah (swt) Knows best what is in their hearts, and He (swt) is the best of Judges. At worst we should say that their case is up to Allah (swt) and that He (swt) will judge them, but at best we should say that they were sincere Muslim brothers and sisters who thought that what they were doing was correct. They cannot be blamed because they were ignorant. Even if the methodology of their movement was not correct, we hope that they were sincere in what they did and that Allah (swt) accepts their sacrifice.

So for our part we have to sacrifice and struggle with the movement that we believe is correct. If we are not part of any movement then we should do the best that we can by ourselves. If all that we can do is speak the truth with our tongues and write the truth with our pens then this is what we must do. When we fight, we have to only fight when we believe that fighting is permissible and when fighting is only for the sake of Allah (swt). We must also observe all of the rules of jihad when we fight such as the command not to kill innocent non-combatants. So we have to strive and we have to fight in the way that we think is correct. Now today since there is no Islamic State, fighting is not permissible. Furthermore the way in which some Muslims are fighting today, by targeting civilians, is also not permissible. So we should not participate in the material struggle today and we should not support anyone who does. Jihad with the sword is only permissible when there is an Islamic State and even then it can never be against civilians.

However that being said, we must also not dismiss or curse any of our Muslim brothers or sisters who give their lives for Allah (swt). Because they are our Muslim brothers and sisters we should hope that they were sincere to Allah (swt) in what they did. Even if their group or movement was wrong, even if they did not observe all of the rules of jihad, we cannot curse them or say that Allah (swt) will not accept their Shahada. We do not know the kind of lives that they lived and we do not even know if they themselves were aware that what they were doing was wrong. Because they are our Muslim brothers and sisters, we have to believe that they were sincere to Allah (swt) in what they did. We have to hope for the best for them and we have to hope that Allah (swt) accepts them. We should remember the hadith where the Prophet (saw) told us that we should wish for our Muslim brother what we wish for ourselves. Do you not wish that Allah (swt) should forgive you and accept you despite all of the mistakes that you have made in your life? So you should wish that Allah (swt) would forgive and accept your Muslim brothers and sisters as well. All that should matter in your life is Allah (swt), so if anything you should love them and hope for the best for them for the sake of Allah (swt). No matter what they have done remember that they are your brothers and sisters who prostrate themselves before Allah (swt) just like you do. As always, Allah (swt) Knows best! May Allah (swt) accept the efforts of all those who sincerely strive and sacrifice for Him (swt).

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ
وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

156. And surely We will test you with some of fear, hunger, loss of wealth and lives and fruits. And give good news to As-Sabireen.

So far we have seen Allah (swt) preparing the Muslim Ummah for this great mission that He (swt) has given them. The task of carrying His Message has now been passed from the children of Israil to the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). In this ayah He (swt) continues to prepare this Ummah for her mission. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) reminded the Muslims that they have to be grateful to Him (swt) and that they must always strive to remember Him (swt). They should seek help in doing this through Salah and Sabr. They must also never think of those who give their lives for this Message as dead, but they must know that such Muslims are alive and they are experiencing pleasure and joy to a level that we cannot even imagine. Now to be a part of this Muslim Ummah is a great honor, even the best of past messengers like Musa (as) wished that they were part of the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). To be allowed into Paradise and to be granted a station in there with the Prophet (saw) is the greatest of gifts and blessings. But not everyone is worthy of such blessings and such honor. We know that even in Madinah at the time of the Prophet (saw), there were hypocrites among the ranks of the Muslims. There were also others whose faith was weak and who were not willing to make the sacrifices that were required to be a part of this Ummah. So in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention as to what it means to be a member of this Ummah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us of the various tests and trials that we would need to endure if we want to be a part of this Ummah. This is what makes us worthy of the great reward. The reward of being in the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). The reward of being near to Allah (swt). The reward of the Garden. Only those whose Iman is strong and who are completely attached to Allah (swt) would be able to bear these tests and trials. But for ones who do, Allah (swt) also shows us how even in these tests there is a great blessing and bounty.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And surely We will test you with some of fear**". This is the first test that those in this Ummah would need to endure. They will have to experience some degree of fear. Now Allah (swt) has told us in previous ayahs that those who follow this guidance would have no fear upon them. But this is a high level of Iman that many Muslims do not immediately attain. Before the Iman has seeped deep into your heart, you would have some fear from the things of this world. This is a natural fear that Allah (swt) has placed inside every human being. But once that Iman enters deeper and deeper into your heart, you begin to realize the true reality of this universe. You realize that there is none who can hurt you except by the permission of Allah (swt). You realize that only Allah (swt) is deserving of your fear. You also realize that only Allah (swt) can save you from everything else and everyone else that might cause you fear. So you turn to Allah (swt) because you know that He (swt) is your Guardian and your Protector. This is the perfection of Iman that you should always be striving to reach. But until you reach that level you will have some fear from the things of this world. Even though you are a believer, you will experience some degree of fear in the life of this world. When this happens, you should not think that your faith is weak. Rather you should realize that this is part of the test that Allah (swt) has given you, and you should turn to Him (swt) knowing that He (swt) can protect and safeguard from that which you fear. This is a test that Allah (swt) has given you. That thing which you fear is only a creation of His (swt). Strive to bring yourself to realize this fact and you will feel your Iman grow. Insha Allah it will grow to such an extent until your fear leaves you. You know that whatever it is that you fear cannot harm you, except by the permission of Allah (swt) and you know that Allah (swt) is your Protector and Guardian.

Then Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that He (swt) will test them with "**hunger**". How difficult and trying is the test of hunger? How painful is it when the body is deprived of food and water? We know how even the Prophet (saw) had to endure this test. We have heard of the narrations that have told us how he (saw) had to tie stones around his stomach because of the hunger that he (saw) was experiencing. If you have ever been truly hungry, you will realize how painful an experience it is. You body starts to feel weak, your limbs began to ache, your head starts spin, your mind seems to leave you, you feel as if they world around you is not even real.

These are just a few of the symptoms that those suffering from acute hunger will feel. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that of a surety they should be prepared to face this test if they want to be a part of this Ummah. Such is part of the test that Allah (swt) has given us in this life.

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how important it is that we learn to control our desires if we want to work for this dawah. Food and drink are among the most basic of human needs and no human can survive without these. There are other desires which are less than the need for food and drink that many Muslims today have trouble controlling. The desire for the opposite sex, the desire for money, the desire for power. If you cannot control your desires for these things, how can you control yourself from the desire for food and drink when the trial of hunger comes. You should pray to Allah (swt) that He (swt) does not send upon you a trial of hunger like He (swt) sent upon His beloved (saw) and the Sahabah. But at the same time you should be preparing yourself to bear such a trial, you should be learning to control your desires for the things of this world. If you do not then how will you be able to face trials that are even a fraction of those suffered by the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah? The only way is by learning to curb your passions and desires. The more attached the heart is to the pleasures of this world the more it is veiled from the Real and the True. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate!

When Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) will test us with hunger, we cannot take this to mean only the denial of food and drink. Although this is among its meanings, it also includes anything which you may desire that you are prevented from. There are many desires that the human being may have. There are many different desires that each and every one of us have. But we are not always able to satisfy these. Sometimes we have to curb ourselves for the sake of our Lord. Sometimes these will be denied to us because of the path that we have chosen to walk. Many people in the world today do not like practicing Muslims. When that happens, instead of becoming angry, instead of complaining, we have to remember that this is part of the test that our Rabb has given us. Because of our love for Him (swt) we have to bear patiently this trial. We have to convince ourselves that His (swt)'s approval of us and His (swt)'s contentment with us is much better than whatever it is that we may be desiring. What we desire of this world, but He (swt) is the Real and the True. How then could anything of this world ever compare to Him (swt)?

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) will test us with "**loss of wealth and lives and fruits**". The next test that Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will give us is a test of losing the things that we love. We love our wealth. We love the money that we worked hard to gain. We love the houses that we built. We love the property and the goods that we own. Allah (swt) may test us by making us lose some of this wealth and property. Then Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will test us through the loss of lives. The scholars say that lives here refers to the lives of our loved ones. Allah (swt) may test us by taking some of our loved ones away from us. How difficult is it to lose a loved one? This is a pain that many of us cannot even imagine. We love our family so much that we do not even want to think about losing them. But Allah (swt) warns us in this ayah that if we want to work for this Message, we should be prepared to bear even this loss. Then Allah (swt) says that He (swt) may test us through the loss of fruits. The fruits here refer to everything that we rely on for livelihood, such as farms and gardens. It also means loss of employment or business. So Allah (swt) may also test through the loss of that thing that we require for livelihood. We should be willing to face all of these tests in the way of Allah (swt).

But then Allah (swt) says "**And give good news to As-Sabireen**". Some people may ask as to what is the purpose of all these tests? If we are the nation that has been chosen to carry this Message to mankind, if we are the nation of the Prophet (saw) who was the beloved of Allah (swt), if we are the nation who have decided to dedicate our lives to worshipping and serving Allah (swt), then why does Allah (swt) want to give us such severe tests? For those who ask such questions, they should be reminded that it is wrong for us to question Allah (swt). We all are the complete property of Allah (swt) and He (swt) is free to do with us whatever He (swt) pleases. But here in His (swt)'s Mercy, Allah (swt) has told us the reason why the Muslims are put through such tests. It is so that they can have Sabr and so be among the Sabireen. In this ayah, Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to give good news to the Sabireen. What is this good news that Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to give to the Sabireen? The hadith of the Prophet (saw) tell us what is this good news that those who have Sabr will receive. First he (saw) has told us that when we are faced with some trial and we then show patience for Allah (swt) through that trial, then He (swt) will forgive us some of our sins because of the patience that we

have. Through the trials that we face and the patience that we show through those trials it is a means for which our sins will be lifted. Then the Prophet (saw) has told us that we are rewarded for the patience that we show through our trials. The patience that we show is an action of our heart. It is a good deed that we do for Allah (swt). It requires effort and determination, and when we do it for Allah (swt), He (swt) Sees the effort that we make for Him (swt). If Allah (swt) is pleased with the effort that we make and if we are sincere to Him (swt) then He (swt) will reward us. In fact we know the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has told us how patience is one of those actions that Allah (swt) would reward without limit. When you go through some hardship then for every moment in which you are patient is a moment in which you are rewarded. There is no limit to how much this reward can be. So we see that the reason why Allah (swt) gives us these tests is so that He (swt) may remove our sins and so that He (swt) can give us a chance to gain reward through the Sabr that we show. Thus Allah (swt) brings us closer to Him (swt) through these trials. This is the good news that Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to give to those who have Sabr. May Allah (swt) give us Sabr!

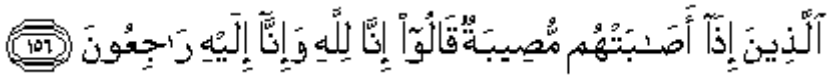
The lifting of sins and the reward in the Hereafter are two great benefits that we can receive from Allah (swt) if we have Sabr through the trials that He (swt) gives us. But the scholars have identified even further benefits for having patience for the sake of Allah (swt). Sayyid Qutb for example mentions how the Sabr is a demonstration of our Iman. If we are unable to have Sabr for Allah (swt), then what does that say about our Iman? How can someone who truly believes in Allah (swt) not be patient when some difficulty or trial in this world befalls him? Does he not believe that there is a life after this one? However when the trials and difficulties come and we have patience for our Rabb, it is a true demonstration and manifestation of our faith and conviction in Him (swt). Another benefit that Sayyid Qutb mentions for having Sabr through the different trials in life is that he notes how such trials bring out the best in people. You can live your entire life in a sleepy and melancholy way if you are not given trials that stir you and wake you up from this mundane existence. You can even think of the trials that you face as a spark that wakes you up to the reality of this existence. It reminds you that you are alive and that you have been created to strive for your Lord. So yet another benefit of trials and the Sabr that you can show

through these trials is that it brings out from within you the true spirit of the Muslim, it wakes you up from the daze of this worldly life. Yet another benefit of these trials and the Sabr that we can have through them is such can be a means for us to turn towards Allah (swt). There is no time in which we turn more earnestly towards Allah (swt) then during the times when we are in desperate need of Him (swt). When these trials come we must turn only to Allah (swt) to give us this Sabr. To ask Him (swt) for the strength to get through these trials. To ask Him (swt) also to relive this difficulty from us. Therein we demonstrate humbleness and our state of need before our Rabb. Allah (swt) loves for us to ask of Him (swt), so should we not like it when He (swt) puts us in a position where we are asking of Him (swt). Yet another benefit of these trials is that it prepares us for our mission. As we mentioned there is no task that is more difficult than calling to Allah (swt). There is no path that is harder for us to traverse than the one of dawah and jihad. Only the strongest will make it. These trials and the Sabr we have during them give us such strength. May Allah (swt) help us to remember all of these blessing when the calamites befall us!

Now the Muslim should never wish for these trails to befall him. Although there are so many benefits in such trials you should never wish for them. You never know if you will have the patience within you to be able to withstand them. The Prophet (saw) has told us of a time when the trials will come where they will be patches of darkest night. The Prophet (saw) has told us that these trails will be so difficult that a Muslim would even lose his Iman from the severity of these trials. So you should always beg and pray to Allah (swt) to keep you safe from such trials. You should pray to Allah (swt) that if He (swt) is going to send such a trail down to the earth that He (swt) takes your soul before this trial comes down. You never know how severe this trial could be. So you should always pray to Allah (swt) to keep you safe from every trial and difficulty. Just as there is much blessing and benefit in being patient during times of hardship there is also much benefit in being grateful in times of ease and peace. The believer experiences both in the life of this world and he is pleased with his Lord for whichever one he finds himself with.

However if you ever do find yourself facing a trial, be it large or small, you should remember this ayah. You should especially remember the end of this ayah where Allah (swt) commanded the Prophet (saw) to give good news the Sabireen. Remember that through these

trials, Allah (swt) could be lifting some of your sins, or He (swt) may be rewarding you for your patience, or He (swt) could be strengthening your Imam, or He (swt) may be making you into a stronger person, or He (swt) may be reminding you to turn to Him (swt). All of these are only a few of the benefits that come from having Sabr. Sabr is a proof for Iman and a key for victory. May Allah (swt) help us to realize this! May Allah (swt) save us all from the trials and tribulations of this life! If we do find ourselves in these trials, may Allah (swt) give us the Sabr to endure them! We all belong to Allah (swt) and to Him (swt) we return.



157. The ones who when a misfortune befalls them, they say "We belong to Allah and to Him we return".

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) warned the Muslim Ummah that they should be prepared for trials if they are going to walk this path of carrying this Message to mankind. They should be prepared to feel fear and hunger, they should be prepared to deal with the loss of wealth, and of loved ones, and of sources of income and employment. But Allah (swt) also promised us good news if we are among those who sincerely show Sabr for His (swt)'s sake. The Sabireen are those who will have their sins lifted, and will be rewarded because of their Sabr. This is whom we should all hope and pray to be like. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe such people.

Allah (swt) says about the Sabireen that they are "**the ones who when a misfortune befalls them, they say "We belong to Allah and to Him we return"** ". So we see that in this ayah, Allah (swt) is teaching us how we should deal with misfortunes and calamities. When any misfortune befalls you, no matter how large or small, you should say "We belong to Allah and to Him we return". See how much meaning in this short phrase. Mawdudi notes in his tafsir of this ayah that these words should not just be something that you say with your tongue, but rather you must realize the meaning of these words in your heart. Insha Allah let us explore the meaning of exactly what these words mean.

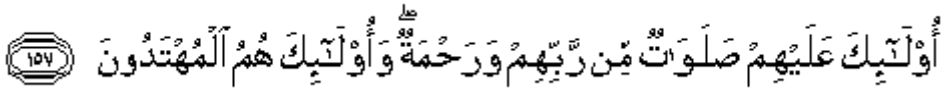
First of all when you say, "**We belong to Allah**", you are first and foremost affirming Tawhid. You are admitting that everything and everyone is the property of Allah (swt). He (swt) is the Owner and the Master and the Lord for this entire universe. Nothing else owns even a small portion of this universe. Then by acknowledging that you and everything that you have are really the property of Allah (swt), you are admitting that it is for Allah (swt) to take His (swt)'s property from you whenever He (swt) wishes and that you have no right to complain because of that. Everything is the property of Allah (swt) and He (swt) has the right to take away what belongs to Him (swt) at any moment of our lives.

So for anything that you lose, you have to always remember that it was never yours to begin with. Nothing of this world truly belongs to you. Not even your own body or your own health. Even a moment of peace that you have in this world really belongs to Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) can take away whatever He (swt) has given you and you have no right to question Him (swt) whatsoever. You are only the abject slave who has nothing and He (swt) is the complete Master and Owner Who has everything. Furthermore just as this helps you to realize the Lordship of Allah (swt) over you it should also help you to realize His (swt)'s Bounty. How many things do you have at this very moment that Allah (swt) has decided not to take away from you? The least of which is your mind and your health. How grateful then must you be to Him (swt) for all of this?

Then when you say, "**to Him we return**" you are acknowledging that this worldly life is only a temporary one. You are acknowledging the fact that you were only placed on this world for a short time. You are acknowledging that the purpose of this life is not to enjoy yourself and to gain as much of this world as possible. You are acknowledging that everything that you have in this world is something that you were bound to lose anyway. You are acknowledging that the only purpose of life is to strive to do as many good deeds as possible before you return to Allah (swt). When you acknowledge this fact, Insha Allah the trial becomes easier for you to bear. Whatever happens in this worldly life, in the end we will go back to Allah (swt).

The Prophet (saw) has told us of the benefits of saying these words when any calamity or misfortune befalls us. He (saw) used to say these words for even the smallest of difficulties such as when the strap of a shoe was broken or when the light of a lamp went out. He (saw) also

used to say it for huge calamities such as when his son Ibrahim passed away. The Prophet (saw) has said that whoever says these words when a calamity befalls them, then Allah (swt) will reward them by giving them what they lost or better than it either in this life or the next. So we see even in the Sunnah the importance of saying these words whenever any calamity or difficulty befalls us. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to say these words whenever any trial, small or big, comes to us! May Allah (swt) reward us with the reward that He (swt) has promised us from the words of His (swt)'s messenger (saw)!



158. These are the ones on whom descend blessings from their Rabb and Mercy, and these are the guided.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe the Sabireen. We saw from the previous ayahs that they were the ones who are able to have Sabr from the different trials that Allah (swt) warned might befall members of the Muslim community. They are the ones whom when any calamity of misfortune befalls them they say "We belong to Allah and to Him we return". Not only do they say these words with their tongues but they realize and know the meaning of these words in their hearts. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe the reward that He (swt) has kept in reserve for such people. May Allah (swt) make us among them!

Allah (swt) says that such people who are able to have Sabr through the different trials that befall them are "**the ones on whom descend blessings from their Rabb**". The scholars have given many meanings for the word Arabic *Salwat* that Allah (swt) used in this ayah. Most have said that it means blessings. If we take this meaning then Allah (swt) will send blessings on such people. Through these blessings they will be able to get the most out of their time, energy and wealth that they spend in the life of this world. When you have something that is blessed, it means that goodness keeps coming from it even if there is only a little of it. Ibn Kathir records a narration from Said ibn Jubayr where he says that *Salwat* means "safety from torment". Now by the word "torment" here he could have meant the punishment of the Fire in the next life, or the

various trials in this life, or he could have meant both of them. Allah (swt) Knows best. However the lesson that we can take is that if we strive to make ourselves among the Sabireen, and we say those words when trials come to us, then Allah (swt) will send down upon us His (swt)'s blessings. Through these blessings He (swt) will give us the strength to make it through this calamity and He (swt) will protect us from others. So any trial can be made easy, any trial is one which we can make it through, if we remember to say these words and have patience through them for the sake of our Lord.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) will send down upon the Sabireen His (swt)'s Mercy. Once again we have to understand this as a comprehensive use of the word "Mercy". This is Mercy both in this life and the next. So the lesson that we can take is that if we have Sabr for Allah (swt) in carrying out our obligations to Him (swt), in avoiding what He (swt) has prohibited, and in being patient through trials, then He (swt) will give us His (swt)'s Mercy. This Mercy of Allah (swt) is something that we are all in need of. You are in desperate need of the Mercy of Allah (swt) for every second of your existence. You need the Mercy of Allah (swt) for the breaths you are taking now, you need the Mercy of Allah (swt) for the beating of your heart, you need the Mercy of Allah (swt) to digest the food and drink that is in your stomach now. You need the Mercy of Allah (swt) to sustain the environment around you so that it is not too hot or too cold for you, so that the ground underneath remains firm, so that the gravity keeps you in place. You also need the Mercy of Allah (swt) to keep the trials and disasters of life from befalling you. We spoke in the previous ayah about how terrible these trials can be, and how they can even make the Muslim lose his Iman. You need the Mercy of Allah (swt) to keep you safe from such trials. You also need the Mercy of Allah (swt) to keep you protected from sin and for the enabling grace to do the righteous deeds. Were it not for the Mercy of Allah (swt) on all of us then none of us could do a single good deed and we would all constantly fall into all kinds of sins. Only the Mercy of Allah (swt) keeps us safe. These are only a few of the ways in which you need the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the life of this world, but you are even in greater need for the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. Just imagine yourself standing naked before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. There is nowhere you can go to hide. There is no one who can turn to for help. You are

absolutely powerless and helpless before the awesome Power and Majesty of Allah (swt). Do you not think that at that moment you would be in desperate need for the Mercy of Allah (swt)? Were it not for this Mercy then what hope would you have? In this ayah, Allah (swt) is promising you Mercy if only you would have Sabr for His (swt)'s sake. May Allah (swt) make us among those who have Sabr for His (swt)'s sake and may Allah (swt) make us among those who receive blessings and Mercy from Him (swt) both in this life and the next!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) describes the Sabireen as those that He (swt) has guided. This is that we are all seeking in the life of this world. We are all seeking guidance to Allah (swt). We all want to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We all want to know what are the actions that we can do that will earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). For every moment of our lives, we want to be guided to which action we can take to win the Pleasure of Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) promises us that if we are among those who have Sabr, then He (swt) will guide us to that Straight Path that leads to the His (swt)'s Pleasure. If we can have Sabr for Allah (swt) then He (swt) will give us the criterion by which we can know which are the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and which are not. What is more wonderful than that? What is better for us than the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? The key to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is guidance from Him (swt). The key to guidance from Him (swt) is Sabr.

So in whatever you are doing, try your best to have Sabr for the sake of Allah (swt). This is a command that Allah (swt) gave to the Prophet (saw) in very earliest Makkan Surahs. This shows us how critical Sabr is for the believer. Your Sabr is directly connected with your Iman. The more Iman that you have, the more Sabr that you will have. And the more Sabr that you show, the more that your Iman will increase. Remember that you are on a path and you are going towards a goal. No matter how difficult this path becomes, do not give up on it. Try your best to keep on it, and always pray to Allah (swt). If you do then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will guide you. There is nothing of value in this entire world except guidance to the Path of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) help all the good and sincere people in this world to attain it!

إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾

159. Surely *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwa* are among the signs of Allah, so whoever makes Hajj to the House or Umrah, there is no blame on him if he goes round them. Whoever does more good, then surely Allah is All-Appreciative All-Knowing.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to train the Muslim community on how they can fulfill their purpose of worshipping and serving Him (swt) and on carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Allah (swt) does this by bringing our attention to the ritual of *Sai*. We know that one of the rituals of the Hajj and Umrah is the *Sai* between *Safa* and *Marwa*. This is a part of the Hajj and Umrah where pilgrims run or walk briskly between the two hills of Safa and Marwa. Now this ritual was also practiced as a part of the Hajj in the time of Ignorance before the Prophet (saw) was sent. But the way the Sai was practiced at that time was not the same as it is done by Muslims today. Ibn Kathir records a narration from Ash-Shabi where he tells us that on the hill of Safa there was an idol called Isaf and on Marwa there was an idol called Nahila. At that time the pilgrims would not simply run between the hills like we do today, but at that time they would touch or kiss each of these idols as they reached each hill. They would run between the two hills and they would kiss the idol that is on each hill. So because the Sai between Safa and Marwa had become associated with these idols, many Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) were hesitant of practicing this ritual. Many of them thought that when they went on Hajj or Umrah, they should not perform the Sai because this practice has been associated with idols. We can notice here how much and how quickly these early Muslims had become averse to Shirk. Many of these Muslims used to be idol worshippers. But the Prophet (saw) had done such an excellent job of cleansing them of all forms of Shirk that in such a short time, they had gone from being idol worshippers to having a great and deep hatred for the worship of idols. They were even willing to leave some parts of the Hajj and Umrah because those acts had become associated with idols. They quickly recognized shirk and *bida* wherever they saw it. Where is this in the Ummah today?

In this ayah, Allah (swt) corrects this perception of the early Muslims towards the practice of *Sai* between Safa and Marwa. He (swt) says, "**Surely As-Safa and Al-Marwa are among the signs of Allah, so whoever makes Hajj to the House or Umrah, there is no blame on him if he goes round them**". Allah (swt) distinguishes between the hills and the idols that had been placed on those hills. The hills themselves are from the signs of Allah (swt), just like the entire natural world is. There is nothing evil about these hills. It is only the idols that had been placed on those hills that were corrupt and evil. There was also nothing evil about the ritual of Sai. The ritual of Sai dates back to the time of Hajar (as) when she ran between these two hills to find water for her infant. Hajar (as) was a righteous woman and at that time she was striving hard to take care of her child as it was her responsibility to do. When she could not find any food or water for her baby, she ran between the two hills in desperation hoping to find something to ease the suffering of her child. So to honor her struggle and her effort, Allah (swt) commanded all the people who perform the Hajj to run between these two hills just as she had done. Thus in the way that the Sai was revealed from Allah (swt), it had nothing to do with idols. It was a ritual following the practice of a righteous woman and it was done by running between two of the signs of Allah (swt). So there is nothing in this ritual itself that has anything to do with idols. The idols were only added later on by corrupted people who changed the way that Allah (swt) had ordered the Sai to be performed. Allah (swt) had originally revealed the Sai to be performed only as running between the two hills. Later on the people had added the innovation of the idols that were placed on each hill. The idols have nothing whatsoever to do with this blessed ritual. That is why Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that these two hills are from His Signs, and whoever makes Hajj or Umrah should not be blamed if they perform this ritual of Sai. The Sai itself is nothing but running or walking briskly between Safa and Marwa following what Hajar (as) did, it has nothing to do with the idols that the fools had placed on the hills. These two hills are from the signs of Allah (swt) and running between them does not constitute idol worship in any way. The Hajj and the Umrah, as Allah (swt) revealed them to be, have always been pure of these idols. It was only later on that they were added by corrupted people who wanted to worship something else besides the One True God. May Allah (swt) always save this Ummah from such innovators!

This ayah also shows us how we can not always look only at one ayah if we want to know the ruling of a particular issue. Allah (swt) says in this ayah that there is no blame on the person that performs the Sai. So if we read only this ayah then we might be lead to believe that there should also be no blame on the one who does not perform the Sai as well. In the text of the ayah, Allah (swt) only says that there is no blame on the one who performs the Sai. He (swt) does not tell us in this ayah that we are obliged to perform it. So from reading only this ayah some people might be lead to believe that the Sai is only an optional part of the Hajj, those who want to can perform it and those who do not want to can leave it. However such thinking would be completely incorrect. Anyone who thinks in such a way needs to be taught that it is impossible to draw laws and commands from only a single ayah in the Quran. Such people need to realize that only a *mujtahid*, who is a scholar specifically trained in the Law of Allah (swt), can extract laws from the Quran and Sunnah. Even the mujtahid needs to study all of the Quran and Sunnah before he brings a law. He cannot bring a law by looking at only one ayah and ignoring all of the other ayahs and ahadith. If we were to study the Sunnah, we would see that the Prophet (saw) has said to us "Perform Sai, for Allah has prescribed it on you". From this hadith, the majority of the scholars have said that the Sai is an obligation in the Hajj. So even though when you look at the ayah alone it may seem as if the Sai is merely optional, when we study all of the text, we see that the Sai is indeed an obligation of the Hajj. Thus this ayah teaches us an important lesson that only a mujtahid can derive laws from the Quran and Sunnah, and even the mujtahid needs to look at all of the text of the Quran and Sunnah before he or she can bring a law. Anyone who tries to derive a ruling in Sacred Law without looking at all of the text or without being qualified is a fool. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being among them!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Whoever does more good, then surely Allah is All-Appreciative All-Knowing**". Here Allah (swt) teaches the believers that they should strive to do good deeds. The good deeds are those deeds that Allah (swt) is pleased with. Any action that Allah (swt) is pleased with is a good deed. Even the smallest of actions can be a good deed. Even an intention can be a good deed. Allah (swt) encourages us here to strive to do more good deeds and then He (swt) links our doing good with two of His (swt)'s Names.

These two Names are the "**All-Appreciative All-Knowing**". These Names give the meaning that Allah (swt) Knows of even the smallest of good deeds that we do, and that He (swt) is Appreciative of those deeds. Allah (swt) is the All-Knowing in that He (swt) Knows every single good deed that we do and He (swt) is also the Most Appreciative in that He (swt) will reward us for every single good deed that we do. Just think how much it must have eased the hearts of those early Muslims when they heard these two Names of their Lord. They had hesitated to perform the Sai because they were afraid that it might be a form of idol worship. Here Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) Knows how they were hesitating to perform the Sai because of their fear of Him (swt) and He (swt) is Appreciative of that fact. They will get their reward for wanting to keep away from idol worship. Now however Allah (swt) tells them that there is no blame on them if they perform the Sai because Safa and Marwa are two of His Signs, and the idols on these hills are not part of the ritual. Now when they do the Sai in this way for Allah (swt), He (swt) Knows this and He (swt) will Appreciate their efforts. Thus Allah (swt) will grant them their reward both for refraining from the Sai before this ayah was revealed and then for rushing to perform it after this ayah was revealed. Similarly for any good that you do, you should also remember these Names of your Lord. For example you are reading this tafsir now for the sake of Allah (swt), you should know that Allah (swt) Knows the good that you are doing and He (swt) will reward you both for the time that you spent in reading it and also for the effort that you exerted in reading and understanding it. For any good that you do, you should know that Allah (swt) Knows of that good even more than you do. And He (swt) will reward you for it more than you ever thought possible.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that it reminds us of the dangers of shirk and innovation. Just look here at the behavior of the early Muslims who were the students of the Prophet (saw). They knew how displeasing idol worship and innovations were to Him (swt). When will we as an Ummah have this aversion? Today when both Shirk and Bidah have become rampant in the Ummah. To save ourselves we have to always remember that the worship and the sanctification are for Allah (swt), and we have to remember that the way this is done is by following the Messenger (saw). The path that leads to the Divine is the one that has the footprints of the Beloved (saw). All other paths will lead astray.

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلْهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا
بَيَّنَّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّٰعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

160. Surely the ones who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidences and of the guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, these are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) made clear for the Muslims how the Hajj was supposed to be performed. Many Muslims were hesitant to perform the important ritual of Sai because it had become associated with idols, but Allah (swt) showed them how the Sai itself was a special rite following the actions of Hajar (as) and it had nothing to do with idols. So we can see from this how important knowledge is to correctly worship Allah (swt). We as human beings cannot say from our own minds how is the correct way of worshipping Allah (swt). Rather we need Allah (swt) to tell us how He (swt) should be worshipped. Our worship of Allah (swt) always has to be correct and based on sound knowledge. Our worship should be from what Allah (swt) Himself has said. So given that knowledge is so important for the worship of Allah (swt), how evil then are a people who hide away the knowledge that they have been given? How evil are a people who conceal knowledge of this Din? In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to those who conceal knowledge and He (swt) tells us what their fate will be.

Allah (swt) says, "**Surely the ones who conceal what We have revealed of the clear evidences and of the guidance**". Remember that this ayah was revealed when Allah (swt) was preparing the Muslim Ummah for carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. One of the largest parts of this preparation was to bring our attention to the previous Ummah that was responsible for carrying this Message. Allah (swt) shows us the mistakes and errors that they made in the hope that we would avoid following in their errant path. One of the gravest errors that the Jews made was that they would hide away the knowledge that Allah (swt) had revealed from their people. We have already discussed how they had hid the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were found in their Books from their people. But the hiding of sacred knowledge that they had

received from Allah (swt) was not an uncommon phenomenon with them. The Jews had become a people where only the learned rabbis among them had knowledge of the Din. These rabbis were the ones who had the Books with them, and so only they had knowledge of what Allah (swt) had revealed. The masses did not have access to these Books and so they remained ignorant of what their Creator had told them. They depended on these rabbis to tell them about their own Din. But did these rabbis disclose all of the knowledge that they had? They did not, and it is to this fact that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. Allah (swt) describes them here as concealing the clear evidences and guidance that He (swt) had revealed for their people. These rabbis were so evil that they would hide the revelation of Allah (swt), a Message that Allah (swt) had sent as a Guidance and a Mercy from their own people. Who could be more evil than one who conceals the communications of Allah (swt) from the people?

One example of knowledge that these Jewish rabbis concealed from their people was the law concerning the stoning of the adulterer. When the Law of Allah (swt) was first revealed to the children of Israil, everyone knew that adultery was a terrible crime that was explicitly forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt). Everyone also knew that such a crime was so terrible that it was only punishable by death through stoning. However as time passed, Shaitan made adultery look appealing to the people and he made them forget about how it had been explicitly forbidden in their text. Shaitan made the people stop studying the text and being well versed in the Book of Allah (swt), he distracted their attention to the life of this world and to the most appealing portion of the life of this world which was the desire for members of the opposite sex. So slowly but surely the people became ignorant of what a terrible crime adultery was. Slowly but surely people became ignorant of the terrible punishment that the Law of Allah (swt) had mandated for such a crime. Slowly but surely, adultery became more commonplace in their society, and slowly but surely the severe punishment of stoning that Allah (swt) had prescribed for this horrible crime was not implemented. Soon most of the people even forgot that Allah (swt) had mandated this punishment for adultery, the people forgot how hateful this action was for Allah (swt). Only the rabbis and the few among them who were learned in the Book of Allah (swt) remembered this punishment. But most of them hid this knowledge from the people. The reason why they hid this

knowledge was because they themselves also wanted to commit this disgusting act. There were clear verses in the Tawrah where Allah (swt) had said that adultery was a terrible sin and that anyone who committed it had to be stoned to death. But these evil men hid these clear evidences from their people. That is why in this ayah Allah (swt) describes such people as concealing the clear evidence from the people. They had the evidence with them to show that adultery was a terrible sin and to show the great punishment mandated for it. But they were such slaves of their desires that they decided to hide this knowledge from their people.

These verses of their Book that they hid were also guidance for their people. If the people knew what a terrible sin adultery was, many of them would have stayed away from it even if their desires prompted them to commit it. But most of the people had forgotten how hateful adultery was in the Sight of their Creator. They committed it as if it were a commonplace action that everyone did. They saw a woman and they desired her. It did not matter to them that she had already been taken by another man through a contract over which the Name of Allah (swt) had been mentioned. Some men among them were so perverted that they would even share their wives with each other on purpose. Many of them would have "open marriages" where each partner knew that the other was sleeping around. They did not know what a terrible sin it was that their desires were prompting them towards, they did not know how hated it was by Allah (swt), so they did not restrain themselves. Thus in hiding these verses regarding stoning for the adulterer from their people, these rabbis were hiding the clear evidences and guidance that Allah (swt) had sent. They were allowing their people to commit many actions that were hated by Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**after We have made it clear for the people in the Book**". These verses concerning adultery and how it was a terrible sin were not something hidden or obscure. Allah (swt) had made it clear and plain for them in their Book. In their Book, it was clearly stated that adultery was forbidden, and that it was an act that was hated by Allah (swt), and that it was an act that carried a severe punishment in the next life, and it was an act that mandated a terrible and painful punishment in this life as well. The only way that the people would have been ignorant of such clear verses was if the rabbis had made a deliberate effort to hide this knowledge from the people. What then should be the fate of these rabbis?

Allah (swt) created the human being to worship and serve Him (swt), so those who hide the knowledge that He (swt) had revealed are in fact preventing the people from fulfilling this purpose for their existence. What then should be the fate of such evil men? Allah (swt) says that "**these are the ones cursed by Allah and cursed by the cursers**". The curse of Allah (swt) means to be removed far from the Mercy of Allah (swt). Al-Qurtubi tells us that the root meaning of the Arabic word for "curse" means to be put away and to drive away. So by their hiding the knowledge that Allah (swt) had revealed to them, these Rabbis were in fact putting themselves far away from the Mercy of Allah (swt). What does it mean to be far from the Mercy of Allah (swt)? Remember the Day when the Fire will be unleashed, and like a ravaging beast it will search and hunt for those who were disobedient to Allah (swt). The Fire on that Day will come to the plain on which mankind will be gathered. This monster will be set loose before all mankind. When these Rabbis see it on that Day then they will realize what it means to be far from Allah (swt)'s Mercy.

In addition to being cursed by Allah (swt), Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they will be cursed by the cursers. Some scholars have said that the "cursers" here refers to the believers and the angels, and other scholars said that it refers to the animals and the insects. This later group of scholars use as an evidence for their opinion a narration that tells us that when a drought or famine comes, the animals curse the children of Adam who committed sins. Allah (swt) Knows best, it seems to us that both opinions are correct. Since these people have been cursed by Allah (swt), they are also cursed by the angels, the believers, and even the animals and the insects. Since they are hated by Allah (swt), they are also hated by all of the sincere worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from hiding the sacred knowledge that He (swt) has given us!

Unfortunately we can see the exact same description that Allah (swt) has given here of the Jews happening to the Muslim community today. Is not the case today that the vast majority of the Muslim Ummah is unfamiliar with the meanings of the Quran and the Sunnah and they just blindly follow their scholars? They do not know for themselves which are the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and which are the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). They only know what their "scholars" tell them. They are completely ignorant to what their Creator has told

them in the sacred text that He (swt) has revealed to them. Now we are not saying here that every Muslim should go directly to the Quran and Sunnah and start bringing laws and start saying that this is forbidden and this is permissible. We mentioned in the previous ayah how dangerous that could be, and such an act would also not be showing the proper respect to the Sacred Law. However what we are saying is that more of the Muslim Ummah needs to take an interest in studying the Shariah. We cannot depend on a few scholars to have the knowledge of this Din. We cannot limit the knowledge only to a few scholars. Allah (swt) is not addressing only the scholars in the text of the Quran and the Sunnah, but He (swt) is addressing each and every Muslim. So we should all make an effort to study the Quran and the Sunnah, and we should all make an effort to gain the tools required to understand the Quran and the Sunnah. Foremost among these tools is the Arabic language and the opinions of the scholars regarding the text. We should all make an effort to acquire these tools so that we can gain an understanding of what Allah (swt) is saying in the Quran and Sunnah for ourselves instead of depending on the scholars. Only when we do this can a majority of the Ummah be able to understand the Quran and Sunnah. Only when do this can we save ourselves from having to rely only on our scholars to tell us about our Din. Only when we do this can we save ourselves from being deceived by our scholars like the children of Israil were deceived by their Rabbis.

We should all know the hadith where the Prophet (saw) has warned us about the time when Allah (swt) will remove knowledge from the earth by the passing away of the scholars. In this hadith he (saw) has told us that then there will come a time when there will be false scholars who will give a ruling in the Law of Allah (swt) that is only from their desires. The Prophet (saw) has told us how these evil men will lead many people astray. So in order to save ourselves from these men and to save ourselves from these times, we have to strive to gain knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. Whenever we look at the text, we must have sincerity to Allah (swt). We have to remember that our purpose in life is to worship and serve Allah (swt), and we have to think how each ayah of the Quran and each hadith of the Prophet (saw) can guide us to that goal. So we should all make an effort to be as familiar as we can with the knowledge of this Din. Even if we do not reach that level where we are qualified to extract laws from the Quran and Sunnah like a

mujtahid could, we can at least identify those opinions that have a valid basis in the Quran and Sunnah and those that do not. Then Insha Allah we can try and protect ourselves from these men who only give rulings from their desires.

Even today we can see examples of how our so-called “scholars” are hiding knowledge from the Muslims and they are giving rulings based on their desires. For example, how many are the ayahs in the Quran and the ahadith of the Prophet (saw) that tell us how we are strictly forbidden from having any system of government that does not rule by the Law of Allah (swt). Even the very second ayah of Surah Fatihah where Allah (swt) describes Himself as Rabb of all the worlds tells us that only He (swt) can legislate the laws for a society. There is not a single scholar who has even a drop of knowledge that does not know this fact. They all know that any system of government that does not rule by the Law of Allah (swt) is strictly forbidden. Most of the scholars also say that the system of government mandated by the Law of Allah (swt) must match exactly the system of government that the Prophet (saw) established in Madinah. Such a system of government has not existed in the Muslim world since the Islamic State was destroyed in 1924. What can we say then of all the governments that exist in the Muslim world today? What can we say about the so-called scholars who legitimize the existence of such governments? Are they any different from the rabbis who hid the ruling of Allah (swt) concerning stoning the adulterer? They have the knowledge with them that Allah (swt) had specifically and clearly commanded that Muslims can only live in an Islamic State, but they hide this knowledge away from the Muslims. They do this so that they can be pampered and taken care of by the illegitimate rulers of these Muslim lands. What then is the fate of such people? Only to follow their desires and to satisfy their lusts, they are keeping the Law of Allah (swt) away from the Muslims. Allah (swt) has established a system of government that the Muslim Ummah should live by. This system of government will take care of the people and will prevent evil and corruption from spreading in the Muslim lands. These devils hide this knowledge from the Muslims and they legitimize the governments that are set up in the Muslim world by the West. These false governments are based on concepts such as “freedoms”, “democracy” and “secularism”, ideas that are diametrically opposed to Islam. Such ideas and concepts make the Muslim believe that he is on

this world only to satisfy his pleasures and desires, instead of being on this world to worship and serve Allah (swt). They make the Muslim think that the only purpose to life is to accumulate as much wealth as possible. So these so-called scholars hide the obligation of the Khilafah and they legitimize these corrupt governments only for their selfish motives. What then will be their station with Allah (swt)? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, they are cursed by Allah (swt) and they are cursed by all those who curse. May Allah (swt) save us and save this Muslim Ummah from such evil men! May Allah (swt) allow the sincere and good people in this Ummah to learn the knowledge of this Din so that they can know how to properly worship and serve their Creator!

Another important lesson that we can learn from this ayah is to realize that we also have to be careful about from where we take our knowledge of our Din from. When it comes to whom we learn knowledge from, we have to remember that this is our Din. This is our life and this is our relationship with our Creator and Sustainer, our Lord and Master. So we should not take knowledge about this Din from simply any person. We have to make sure that the person whom we take knowledge from is someone who is well versed in the Quran and Sunnah. We also have to make sure that the person is trustworthy and that they have a fear of Allah (swt). We also should try to ask them for their evidence in the Quran and Sunnah for every single idea or ruling that they give us. Because after all, our job is only to worship and serve Allah (swt) and it is only in the Quran and Sunnah that Allah (swt) speaks to us. Allah (swt) does not speak to us on the tongues of our Shakyhs even if they may claim that He (swt) does. So instead of blindly following just anyone when it comes to our Din, we should only follow the trustworthy and pious scholars who have knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah. The ones who are humble, the ones who will provide the evidence when we ask for it. Only when we do this can we save ourselves from being deceived by the false scholars just like the children of Israil were deceived by their rabbis. May Allah (swt) guide us to the good and righteous scholars when we seek knowledge of this Din!

In addition to being careful as to where we take knowledge of the Din from we also have to be careful when we teach this Din to others. While it is very important for us to teach others and to spread the Message of Allah (swt), we also have to make sure that the knowledge that we give them is sound. We have to make sure that the idea or the ruling that we given them

is indeed from Allah (swt) and not an incorrect idea or an invalid ruling. Given the desperate situation that the Ummah is in today, and how there are so many people saying so many things, we have to make sure that the ideas which we have are correct. In this ayah, Allah (swt) is cursing those who do not give the people the correct Message from Him (swt). We have to be very careful that we do not become like this group whom Allah (swt) is cursing. So we always have to be careful about the knowledge that we teach others. We have to make sure that there is an evidence for that knowledge from the Quran and Sunnah. We have to be certain that there are qualified scholars who can verify the understanding of an ayah or hadith that we are teaching. Insha Allah this is the only way that we can save ourselves from being mislead in our Din and from misleading others. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) allow us to only take the knowledge that is good and pure and to only give the knowledge that is good and pure!

إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُواْ وَأَصۡلَحُواْ وَبَيَّنُواْ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾

161. Except those who make Tawbah, and do good, and make clear. So for these, I will accept their Tawbah. I am the At-Tawab, Ar-Raheem.

This ayah is a direct continuation of what Allah (swt) had told us in the previous ayah. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) had told us about those who hid the knowledge that He (swt) had revealed from the people. Allah (swt) had revealed clear laws and commands that taught the people how they could fulfill their purpose of worshipping and serving Him (swt), and these evil men hid these laws and commands from their people. Who could be more evil than the one who hides the Message of Allah (swt)? When this Message is what brings the people peace and tranquility in this life, and salvation and bliss in the next life, what could be worse than preventing this Message from reaching the people? What could be worse than denying the people a chance to know Allah (swt)? So we should realize the great evil that these people have done. Their utter insolence and disobedience before their Creator and Sustainer, before their Lord and Master. How could they be so ungrateful to Him (swt)? So unjust to Him (swt)?

However in this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us that even for a people who are as evil as this, He (swt) still shows them Mercy. Even a sin as terrible as this He (swt) is willing to pardon and forgive. There is no crime that is greater than hiding the knowledge that Allah (swt) has revealed. You have to think that if Allah (swt) is willing to pardon such people for a sin as terrible as this, then He (swt) can forgive you as well. All that you have to do is fulfill the conditions that He (swt) gives you in this ayah. So realize from this ayah the kind of Rabb that you have. How Merciful and Forgiving He (swt) is, how Loving and Compassionate He (swt) is. This is and of itself should be a reason for you to love Him (swt). For you to strive to worship Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**Except those who make *Tawbah***". Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) told us that the ones who concealed the guidance and clear evidences that He (swt) had revealed were cursed by Him (swt) and cursed by all those who curse. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us that there is an exception to this rule. There is a group of people who commit this terrible sin of hiding knowledge from Allah (swt) but they do not receive this curse. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us who such people are. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what is the condition that such people must fulfill. There are three conditions that need to be fulfilled and the first of those conditions is ***Tawbah***. ***Tawbah*** linguistically means "to return", and when Allah (swt) uses it here it means to return to the purpose of creation. It means to return from a state of disobedience and sin to a state of submission. To return to the purpose for which Allah (swt) created the human being. There are four conditions that are required for the correct Tawbah. First you have to stop the sin that you are committing. You cannot make Tawbah to Allah (swt) while you are still committing the sin. Then you must have a deep regret for the evil that you have done. You must feel remorseful for what you have done and you should wish that you would have never done it. Then you must beg and plead Allah (swt) for Forgiveness. You must get down on your knees and beg like a beggar for Allah (swt) to forgive you. Finally you have to resolve not to commit that evil again. The next time Shaitan prompts you to commit that sin you have to resolve to fight him with every ounce of strength that you have. This is what it means to make Tawbah. If you can do all of these four, then Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will accept your Tawbah. He (swt) will allow you to return to Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do good**". It is not enough that you make Tawbah and stop the evil that you were doing, but you must make up for the evil that you have done by doing good. The Prophet (saw) has told us to follow up a bad deed with a good deed, and that the good deed will wipe out the bad deed. But of course the level of the good that needs to be done needs to match the level of the evil that had been done. So the more evil that you have done, the more good that you need to do to make up for that evil. The scholars say that the good actions that you do shows that you were sincere in the Tawbah that you have made. Recall that Tawbah means to return to a life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). How can you be said to be living a life dedicated to Allah (swt) if you do not strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)?

Then Allah (swt) says "**and make clear**". This applies to those who had done the terrible sin of hiding the knowledge that Allah (swt) had revealed. Not only do they have to make Tawbah, and rush to do the deeds that are pleasing to Allah (swt), but in addition they must also make clear to the people the knowledge that they had been hiding. So for those so-called scholars today who are hiding the Law of Allah (swt) from the Muslims, if they want any hope for the curse of Allah (swt) upon them to be lifted then they need to clarify to the Muslims all of the lies that they had told them. They need to disclose to the Muslims the Truth that they had been hiding. This is the only way that they can be saved from the terrible punishment.

If these people who had hid the knowledge of Allah (swt) fulfill these three conditions of making Tawbah, of doing good deeds, and of making the Law of Allah (swt) clear for the people, then Allah (swt) says "**So for these, I will accept their Tawbah**". How Merciful is Allah (swt)? For men who would do such great evil as hiding His (swt)'s Message from the people, He (swt) still gives them a chance for His (swt)'s Mercy. He (swt) still gives them a chance to return to the purpose of their creation even though they themselves had been turned away from that purpose and they had turned away so many other people from that purpose as well. Allah (swt) tells us here that He (swt) will accept their Tawbah despite the enormity of the evil that they had done. So we see here the Tremendousness and the Sublimity of our Lord, that He (swt) can forgive such great sins that the son of Adam has done. Who but Allah (swt) can do this? Who but Allah (swt) can be so Forgiving! Glory and Praise be to He (swt)!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us why He (swt) will accept their Tawbah even though they had done such evil. It is because He (swt) is "**At-Tawab, Ar-Raheem**". These are two Beautiful Names of Allah (swt) that give the meaning Allah (swt) is always willing to accept Tawbah and give His (swt)'s Mercy. No matter how great the sin, no matter how many times it has been committed, there is always the hope of Tawbah and Mercy from Allah (swt). Not only will Allah (swt) accept your Tawbah but He (swt) loves when you sincerely make Tawbah to Him (swt). Once Allah (swt) accepts your Tawbah then He (swt) will send down upon you His (swt)'s Mercy. So it is not just that Allah (swt) is willing to pardon you for the evil that you have done. It is not just that Allah (swt) is willing to allow you to return your place of worshipping and serving Him (swt) even though you yourself had gone so far away from that place through your sins. But even after you have been pardoned and excused for the sins and the evil that you have done, Allah (swt) will send down upon you His (swt)'s Mercy. There is Mercy both in this life and the next. Mercy from Allah (swt) is being able to live a good and pure life after living a life of sin. Mercy from Allah (swt) is love for evil being replaced by love for good. Mercy from Allah (swt) is provisions and sustenance in the life of this world. Mercy from Allah (swt) is being saved from the Fire and being admitted into the Garden. Mercy from Allah (swt) is being granted a station near to Him (swt) and the peace and tranquility that comes from this station.

Once we see this connection between repenting to Allah (swt) and receiving Mercy from Him (swt) then what is preventing us from always repenting to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) Knows that we have all done our fair share of sins, He (swt) Knows that we have neglected our obligations so many times. So do we think that we are above seeking pardon from Him (swt)? Do we think that we do not need to turn to Him (swt) for forgiveness? No matter how much we journey to Allah (swt), we can always come closer. No matter how close we are to Him (swt) already we can always return to Him (swt). If He (swt) will allow sinners as great as these to return to Him (swt) then what makes you think that He (swt) will not allow you? If He (swt) will have mercy on such people because of their repentance to Him (swt) then what makes you think that He (swt) will not have mercy on you?

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمۡ كُفَّارٌ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ لَعۡنَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجۡمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

162. Surely the ones who do kufr and who die on kufr, these are the ones on whom is the curse of Allah and the angels and of mankind altogether.

In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) had told us about those hide the knowledge of the Din from the people. How they are the ones who have His (swt)'s curse upon them. The only ones who were excluded from having this terrible curse being on them were those who made Tawbah to Allah (swt). The ones who stopped the sin that they were doing and who begged Allah (swt) for pardon and for the chance to return to the state of worshipping and serving Him (swt). Then they rushed to do good deeds to make up for the evil that they have done, and they made clear to the people that which they had been hiding of the sacred knowledge. These are the only people who have a chance of escaping the curse of Allah (swt) being upon them. To conceal the Message that Allah (swt) has revealed is one of the greatest of crimes. It is a crime that warrants the curse of Allah (swt) coming down on a person. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us another great evil that deserves the curse of Allah (swt) being upon a person. This is the crime of kufr. Similar to hiding the knowledge that Allah (swt) had revealed, kufr is one of the greatest of evils that a person can do. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the fate of those who do kufr. May Allah (swt) save us from this fate!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Surely the ones who do kufr and who die on kufr**". First notice the Arabic word *inna* for emphasis and certainty. When Allah (swt) uses this word, we can be sure that the statement which follows is one in which there can be no doubt. We see that in this ayah is telling us about those who do kufr and who die on the kufr that they were doing. Allah (swt) tells us beyond a shadow of a doubt what their fate will be. Before we look at the fate that Allah (swt) promises such people, let us remind ourselves once again about what the word kufr means. We said that this word literally means to cover something. In the way that Allah (swt) uses it here, there are two meanings that are given. One meaning is to cover the Truth. So it refers to those people who know the Truth in their hearts but they cover it. The people who know

that Allah (swt) is One and Only, and that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt), but they cover this Truth that they know. Another meaning of the word kufr is to cover the favors and bounties that Allah (swt) has bestowed. So it also refers to those people who would cover the bounties and favors that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them. We as Muslims can feel safe that we would never fall into the first type of kufr, because we all affirm that Allah (swt) is One and Only and that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt), but can we feel safe that we would not fall into the second type? Can we really say that we have done enough to even try and show the proper gratitude to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given us? What is it that Allah (swt) has promised such people as do kufr and who die on this kufr that they are doing? That means they die rejecting the Truth that they know, or they die being ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for them. What will be the fate of such people?

Allah (swt) says "**these are the ones on whom is the curse of Allah and the angels and of mankind altogether**". The ones who do kufr and who die on this kufr that they have been doing are the ones who have the curse of Allah (swt) upon them! You cannot even begin to imagine how terrible and how frightening an idea this is. If you would realize what it means to have the curse of Allah (swt) on you, your body would tremble with dread and fear. The curse of Allah (swt) is to be far from the Mercy of Allah (swt), and to be far from the Mercy of Allah (swt) means that there is nothing to save you from the Fire on that Day. The Fire as we know is pain unimaginable and unspeakable. May Allah (swt) save us from His (swt)'s curse ever being on us! May Allah (swt) keep this Truth that we know always in our hearts! May Allah (swt) allow us to strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) so that we can show gratitude to Him (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for us! In addition to the curse of Allah (swt), upon such people is also the curse of the angels and the curse of mankind altogether. This only adds to the humiliation and degradation of such people, that even the angels and all of mankind curses them and despises them. May Allah (swt) save us from being among those who do kufr and who die on kufr!

خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

163. They will stay therein forever. The punishment will not be lightened for them and they will not be helped.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) had told us that those who do kufr and those who die on the kufr that they were doing are the ones on whom His (swt)'s curse is on. Here Allah (swt) continues to describe the situation of such people. Allah (swt) says "**They will stay therein forever**". As we mentioned the curse of Allah (swt) is to be far from the Mercy of Allah (swt). To be far from the Mercy of Allah (swt) means to have no protection or safety from the Fire. So when Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that they will be therein forever, He (swt) is telling us that they will be in the Fire forever. We have to remember however that the people for whom the Fire has been promised forever are the ones who knowingly conceal the Truth that they know about this Message. They know that Allah (swt) has sent this Message, they have seen the evidences and signs, and still they deny it. They are the ones who truly do not show any gratitude for all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) has bestowed on them. If they had even a drop of gratitude to Allah (swt) in their hearts, they would not have denied the Message in this way. If they cared at all for the One Who created them and the One Who sustains them they would not have rejected His (swt)'s Message in this way. Not only will they stay in the Fire forever, but Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah that "**The punishment will not be lightened for them and they will not be given respite**". Not even for one second will they get any relief from the burning. The pain will continue, and continue. It will not get any better, but it will get worse. Just imagine what it is like to have a Fire that surrounds you from all sides, and burns every inch of your body. You will know only pain. At first you will hope that there would be some relief, even for a moment when the Fire is not burning as fiercely as it is now. But you will soon realize that moment will never come. You soon realize that all you will ever know is pain and suffering. The psychological pain that comes from this realization is even more painful to you than the physical pain that you are feeling from the Fire. You know that there is no hope, you know that there is no moment when your pain would end. May Allah (swt) save us from this fate!

Some people may claim that such a punishment is too harsh. They would ask, “Is not Allah (swt) the Most Merciful? Why then is He (swt) bringing such a severe punishment?”. Such people cannot comprehend how Allah (swt) could condemn a soul into the Fire forever. The Truth is that the only people who ask questions such as these are the arrogant. The ones who are overflowing with arrogance. They do not know their place and the place of Allah (swt). They forget that Allah (swt) is the Master and they are the slave. They forget that Allah (swt) is the Creator and they are the creation. What right do such people have to question Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) has already told us in the Quran that He (swt) does not do injustice to anyone. You have to accept this fact. You have to realize your place and realize that it is not for you to question Allah (swt). You also have to realize the limitations of your knowledge. Your knowledge compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is like comparing a drop to an ocean. Based on the tiny amount of knowledge that you have you think that the punishment of Allah (swt) is unjust but if you had the Knowledge of Allah (swt) then you would see that this punishment is not unjust at all. Rather it is the most Just of punishments from the One Who is the Just. Only Allah (swt) Knows what true Justice is. Only Allah (swt) Knows who is deserving of which punishment. So how could anyone question Him (swt)? Can you even begin to comprehend Who Allah (swt) IS. Do you know what is the right that we all have upon Him (swt) to worship Him (swt) and serve Him (swt)? Can you realize then how evil are those who turn away from this purpose and who drive others from this purpose? So we should all realize our place in the creation, and we must realize the limitations of our knowledge. Then Insha Allah we would realize how we must be humble and how we must not question our Creator about that which we have no knowledge. We have to realize the kind of Lord that we have and realize how He (swt) is the very manifestation of justice and mercy. If these people were in any way of deserving of mercy then Allah (swt) would have showed them mercy. There is no one who has more mercy on the creation that H e(swt). May Allah (swt) help us all to come to this realization! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that He (swt) is the All-Knowing, the Most Wise, the Most Merciful, and the Most Just!

وَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. And your illah is one illah, there is not illah except He. Ar-Rahman. Ar-Raheem.

Recall from our tafsir of Surah Fatihah where we discussed the meaning of the word *illah*. We said that the literal meaning of this word was “god”, and it referred to anything that was worshipped. If we take this meaning then *illah* can by anything that is worshipped by the people such as idols, stars or other human beings. However we also said that there was a deeper meaning for this word, in addition to meaning “god” the word *illah* also means that which occupies your heart. Whatever it is that fills your thoughts and whatever it is that is the purpose behind all your actions. The one true illah for all of the creation is Allah (swt). This is because Allah (swt) is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Nurturer and the Maintainer for all that exists. So everything needs to dedicate its existence to Allah (swt). Every second in the existence of every single thing is only possible because of Allah (swt), so who else or what else can claim to be *illah* besides He (swt)? How can you make anyone or anything else besides Allah (swt) as your illah when He (swt) is the One Who created you and He (swt) is the One Who sustains for every second of your existence? Even if you tried to comprehend how dependent you are on Him (swt) you would never be able to. You can never understand how much you are in debt to Him (swt).

It is to this fact that Allah (swt) brings the attention of all of mankind when He (swt) says “**And your illah is one illah, there is no illah except He**”. Although people may have another illah besides Allah (swt) in their hearts, these are all false gods. Nothing deserves to be the illah except Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who deserves to be illah because He (swt) is the Creator and the Sustainer. Every single thing depends on Him (swt) and He (swt) depends on nothing. Allah (swt) also deserves to be the illah because He (swt) has all of the Perfect Names; He (swt) is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing, and the All-Powerful. Is there any among the creation whose hearing or vision or knowledge or power can compare with that of Allah (swt)? So how then could anything besides He (swt) be taken as illah? How does anything in the creation even begin to compare to Him (swt)? How can you give to the creation that is limited and weak the right which belongs only to Allah (swt) the Perfect and the Pure?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us again of two of His (swt)'s Most Beautiful Names. **Ar-Rahman. Ar-Raheem**. Both of these Names give the meaning of the extreme and overflowing Mercy of Allah (swt). There is no other Name that Allah (swt) stresses more in the Quran than His (swt)'s Mercy. There is no comparing the Mercy of Allah (swt) to anything in the creation. If you would know only one of Allah (swt)'s Names, then know His (swt)'s Mercy. Once you truly realize the Mercy of Allah (swt), then you will never know fear, you will never know sadness and you will never know pain. You will see the Mercy of Allah (swt) being manifest in everything. All that you would know is the Mercy of Allah (swt). You would realize how for every moment of your life, you are enveloped in this Mercy.

Notice how Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)'s Mercy in the very next ayah after He (swt) had told us about those who would be in the Fire forever. This is to emphasize and reiterate that He (swt) is truly the Most Merciful. Even the Fire is part of the Mercy of Allah (swt). The fear of the Fire keeps the believers away from sins in the life of this world. When the passions and lusts stir within you so strong, is not the fear of the Fire that keeps you from disobeying Allah (swt)? The Fire is also where all those who have been unjust and those who caused evil in the life of this world will get their due punishment. How much evil and how much suffering do men cause in the life of this world? Many of them escape in this world without getting any form of punishment for their evil. Is there justice in this for those they have wronged? Is there Mercy? Is there justice even for Allah (swt)? They knew that He (swt) was the Truth and they still turned away from Him (swt)? They knew that they owe Him (swt) everything and still they denied Him (swt). Every single moment of life is possible only because of Allah (swt), how evil then are a people who would not even acknowledge Him (swt). Just like the angels and just like the vast majority of the creation, the Fire also is a humble servant of Allah (swt). It only punishes those whom He (swt) desires to be punished. Even the Fire is a Mercy from Allah (swt). Everything is a Mercy from Him (swt). Your life at this moment is a Mercy from Him (swt). Every joy that you have is a Mercy. Every sorrow that you have is a Mercy. Even your knowing Him (swt) and your drawing closer to Him (swt) is Mercy from Him (swt). So if ever the fear of the Fire seems to overwhelm you then remember the Mercy of your Lord. Even the Fire should not make us despair if know this Mercy.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to remember once again who our illah is. The Prophet (saw) has promised us that anyone who realizes the fact that there is only one illah will be saved from the Fire. Anyone who believes in Allah (swt) as the only illah will be saved from the Fire no matter how many sins they have committed. That is how important it is to believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt). When all is said and done the difference between the one who spends all of eternity in the Garden and the one who spends all of eternity in the Fire is the belief in the Oneness of Allah (swt). So we should always remember that only Allah (swt) is our only illah. We should not respect, revere, sanctify or worship anyone besides Him (swt).

What value is there to the entire heavens and the earth if not for Allah (swt)? Would you even want to live in this universe if you could not know Allah (swt)? What is the purpose of life if it is not Allah (swt)? How can you know that there is Allah (swt) and not spend every moment of your life to come closer to Him (swt)? This striving to come closer to Allah (swt) by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt), by making Him (swt) as the illah in your heart, and by hoping for His (swt)'s Mercy is what this life is all about. May Allah (swt) help us all to remember this fact!

So this ayah teaches us Tawhid. Indeed that was the Message of the Prophet (saw). Now some people say that we should not talk about politics and the Islamic State and that we should rather focus on Tawhid. But these people do not seem to realize that the Islamic State is an integral part of Tawhid. Now it is true that part of Tawhid is that Allah (swt) must be the only God Who is worshipped and the only One Who is supplicated to and called on. And it is also true that many in the Ummah today call on others besides Allah (swt) and they sanctify and venerate others besides Him (swt). Yes this is a problem. But that is not our only problem. Is it not also a problem that we do not rule by the Law of Allah (swt) when Sovereignty is an integral part of Tawhid? Just as Allah (swt) is the only God Who is worshipped He (swt) must also be the only Sovereign Who is obeyed. So just as we work to remove the false gods that are worshipped besides Allah (swt) we must also see how we can remove the false rulers who are obeyed instead of Allah (swt). True Tawhid is when everything submits to Allah (swt) Alone. This is the reality which we should work to bring about Insha Allah!

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱخْتِلَٰفِ ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ
وَٱلْفُلْكِ ٱلَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي ٱلْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ وَمَآ أَنزَلَ
ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مِن مَّآءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ ٱلْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ
فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ ٱلرِّيَٰحِ وَٱلسَّحَابِ ٱلْمُسَخَّرِ
بَيْنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ لَءَايَٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

164. Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships that sail in the seas with that which benefits man, and in the water that Allah sends down from the sky, with which He gives life to the earth after it's death, and in the scattering in it of every moving creature, and in the changing of the winds, and in the clouds subjected into service between the heavens and the earth, (in all this) there are signs for a people who reflect.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) had told us about the terrible crime committed by those who turn away from Him (swt). Allah (swt) reminded such people, and He (swt) reminded us as well that He (swt) was the one true illah. There is nothing else that deserves to be illah except Him (swt). The crime of these people was that not only did they not make Allah (swt) as the illah in their hearts but they were actually opposing Him (swt) by driving the people away from Him (swt). How could such a people do this? Did they not realize that Allah (swt) was One and Only? Did they not realize that this entire creation was only possible because of Allah (swt)? Could they not realize Allah (swt) from this universe around them? We cannot sense Allah (swt) directly, He (swt) is hidden from us. But we know Him (swt) through the signs in the universe around us. As we said in our tafsir of Surah Fatihah, every single thing in this universe is a sign for Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the most important and most telling of the signs that He (swt) has placed in this creation. Through these we can know Him (swt). Through these Signs we can have certainty in Him (swt). Through these Signs we can journey to Him (swt). What is there to life other than the journey to Him (swt)?

These signs are there for everyone to see. One does not even have to read Quran to realize these signs. However what Allah (swt) does here in the Quran is to specifically mention some of these signs and to point them to us out so that we would notice them. This is part of His Mercy. He (swt) has placed these signs all across the universe so that man can see them, reflect on them, and know Him (swt) through them. But man has busied himself with the life of this world, and he has busied himself with satisfying his lusts and pleasures that he does not notice these signs. That is why Allah (swt) points out these signs for us in this ayah. So that we can take note of them and that we can draw closer to Him (swt) through them. So that we can know beyond the shadow of a doubt that He (swt) truly is there. So that we can strive to please Him (swt) and be steadfast for Him (swt) because of this conviction that we have. May Allah (swt) make us among those who see these Signs!

First Allah (swt) says "**Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth**". Notice once again the Arabic word *inna*, which denotes certainty and emphasis. These are signs about which no one can have any doubts. These signs are all true and if anyone should contemplate upon them, they will be lead to Allah (swt). The first of these signs that Allah (swt) tells us about is the creation of the heavens and the earth. What is meant by "the heavens and the earth" of course is this universe. This created universe that we see around is what Allah (swt) refers to as the "the heavens and the earth". So here Allah (swt) is saying that in the creation of this universe there are signs. In this created universe there are countless proofs for the Existence, the Unity and the total Sovereignty of Allah (swt). Everything in the universe testifies to the fact that it has been created and everything also testifies to the fact that it has been made subservient. Just look around the world you. Everything that you see around you is a proof for Allah (swt). Just try and find anything in the world around you that is not a creation and that is not a servant of Allah (swt). Every single thing in this universe clearly shows that it has been created. Just from the fact that it only exists for a certain period of time, this clearly demonstrates that it is a creation. Everything in the universe is also subject to laws and conditions, and this clearly shows that it is a slave of Allah (swt). Just look at yourself. Is it not true that you have only existed for a limited period of time? There was a time before your birthday when you did not exist, and this shows that you are

a creation. You are also subject to laws and conditions. There are so many things that you need and if you did not have these then you would die. For example you need air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat, your body needs a space in which to be, your eyes need light to see. These are all laws and conditions that have been fixed upon you which you cannot change. What is true for you is also true for everything else in this universe. Everything in this universe is limited for the time in which it exists and limited in the space that it occupies. Everything is also limited in that it is subject to laws and conditions. Thus everything in this universe is a creation. So the first sign for the Existence of Allah (swt), the Oneness of Allah (swt), and the Sovereignty of Allah (swt) is this universe itself and how everything in it demonstrates its creation.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and in the alternation of night and day**". As we mentioned above, everything in this universe demonstrates that it is a creation by the fact that it only exists for a certain period of time. Then we mentioned that everything also demonstrates it is a creation by the fact that it is always controlled and subservient to laws and conditions. One of these laws that control the universe that we all sense is the alternation of night and day. Night follows Day. Day follows Night. Night follows Day. This is a pattern that we can observe every day of our lives. Does not the fact that the world around you behaves in such a controlled manner show you that there is a Power behind the control that you see? Does not the fact that this pattern never breaks tell you that this Controller is One and Only and is the complete Lord and Master? If there were any weaknesses in this Power, if there was any lack of power or lack of control or lack of sovereignty, or if there were anyone else to share in this power, then we would see some flaws in the system, we would see some breaks in the pattern. But just look at the alternation of night and day, do you see any breaks in this pattern? Has there been even one day in the history of man when the night or the day has not come exactly when it was supposed to? No, both night and day come exact with absolute precision. The precision is so absolute that we set our clocks by it, and we run our entire lives by it. Could any but Allah (swt), the Perfect One, create and maintain such a system? How could such a perfect system result from a universe that was created from chaos and disorder? So see this universe and see the Hand of your Lord in every part of it.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Qurtubi also asks us to look at the difference between night and day. In addition to the meaning of "alternation", another meaning of the Arabic word *Ikhtilaf* that Allah (swt) uses in here is "difference". So in addition to bringing our attention to how night and day alternate, Allah (swt) is also bringing our attention to how different they are. Simply look and reflect on how different the night and day are. Even if you stay in the same place, just look at how the world around you changes between the night and the day. When you are standing in one spot during the day, and then the night comes, it is almost as if you have entered into another world. The sky above you changes color. The blazing and bright sun goes away only to be replaced by the twinkling star and perhaps a moon. The noises of the day are replaced by the still of the night. Even the air and the smell of the day is different from that of the night. Just think as to how the day has been made perfect for work and the night has been made perfect for rest. How Powerful and Awesome is such a Being that can create such a difference in the world around us in such a short time? In only the few moments of the dusk and the few moments of the dawn, Allah (swt) completely transforms the world around us. So the fact that the night and day are so different from each other is also a sign for us to know that they are being controlled.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and in the ships that sail in the seas with what benefits man**". The ships that sail in the oceans are the next sign that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. Allah (swt) refers to these ships as those that benefit mankind. You only need to think for a short time to realize how much benefit ships have been for mankind since they have been created. Through ships, man is able to transport people and goods over long distances. The sea has been made in such a way that no matter how large the ships are, and no matter how heavy they are, they are still able to sail over it. The seas and the ships have been made in such a way that they connect worlds and bring them together. Human civilization as we know it today would not have been possible if not for the oceans of the world and ships that sail over them. The sea and the ships have both been created in such a way that they complement each and they both bring many benefits to mankind. Who but Allah (swt) could have created them in such harmony? The fact that they have both been created in this way to bring such benefit for mankind is yet another sign for us to realize that there is more to this universe than meets the eye.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb mentions how he truly realized the beauty of this ayah when he was once on a ship in a large ocean. He described his experience on the ship as follows “Waves were hitting us from all sides while we were engulfed in almost surreal world of endless blue”. Just imagine how it must have been like to be in this small craft in such a vast ocean. Just imagine then how Allah (swt) looks after the ships of men that sail in the His (swt)’s seas. Each ship is like a small dot in the vastness of the ocean. The ocean is vast around the ship and it is deep underneath the ship. Yet this ocean does not engulf the ship, with the Mercy of Allah (swt) the ship stays afloat on the waters of the ocean and it even moves through the ocean as it goes towards it’s destination. Sayyid Qutb tells us how the people on ships realize that they are under the complete Power of Allah (swt), and that they depend completely and only on Him (swt) to carry them safely to land. When you are on a ship in the open water of the ocean you realize how weak and how vulnerable you are, and how there is not even one moment when you are not in complete reliance on Allah (swt). You do not even know what is directly beneath you. This is a fact that is true throughout your life, but when you are in the open water of the ocean this is a fact that becomes all the more real and salient. May Allah (swt) help us to realize what benefit and Mercy He (swt) gives us with our ships that sail on the ocean!

The meaning of this ayah also applies to the airplanes in the sky. Just like the ships in the ocean the planes in the sky are also only possible because of Allah (swt). He (swt) is the One Who has given man the knowledge on how to build these planes, and the materials with which to build them. Furthermore when the plane is in the sky there is nothing that keeps it from falling except He (swt). Allah (swt) has created both the sky and the plane in such a way that makes air travel possible. The wings of the plane have been designed in such a way so as to harness and use the wind in the sky. It is possible only because of Allah (swt). How much benefit then has man derived from air travel? How has it brought us together? Why is it that both the plane and the sky have been made in such a way that they are perfect for each other? Could this have been possible if this earth came about out of randomness and chaos? Do you not see the Perfection of the universe and how everything has been made with a purpose? How could all this have been possible were it not for Allah (swt)?

The next sign that Allah (swt) tells us about is the rain that He (swt) sends from the sky. This sign shows us how dependent and in need all of creation is. Is there any life whatsoever that can survive without water? Can you live without water? Can the animals? Can the plants? What would happen to the life on this planet if Allah (swt) were to deprive us of water? The fact that we are all in need of water shows that we are all in need of Allah (swt). It shows that we ourselves cannot exist on our own. Life needs Allah (swt) to exist, and since we can see that life exists in the world around us, does not then that tell us that Allah (swt) Exists as well? If we were not in desperate need of Allah (swt) for every moment of our existence then why it is that we are so dependent on such a simple substance like water? The fact that we are dependent on the water that Allah (swt) sends down shows us how much we need Him (swt). It shows us how we are nothing more than His (swt)'s slaves. So the water that Allah (swt) sends down shows us how much we need Him (swt) and so it is also a Sign for us that points to Him (swt).

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to what He (swt) does with the water that He (swt) sends down. Allah (swt) says , "**with which He gives life to the earth after it's death**". Picture in your mind a land that is dead and barren. The soil is rough and dry, there are no plants that can grow on it whatsoever. There is no life in it. Then Allah (swt) sends the rainwater down on this land. Then you can see the transformation of this land that was once dead into one that is filled with life. The soil becomes moist and damp. The plants start to grow out from it. One by one the tiny herbs and flowers spring forth from underneath the soil. The land that you observe after the rainwater has spilled on it is completely different to the land that was before the rain. That is how Allah (swt) gives life to the dead earth with the water that He (swt) sends down. So similar to how Allah (swt) transforms the world around us when He (swt) changes night into day and day into night, He (swt) also completely transforms the dead earth into one that is filled with life with the rain that He (swt) sends down. Thus Allah (swt) is showing us how the world around us is constantly changing so that we realize that there is a Power behind this change. Is there anyone or any thing in the creation that can bring such change? That can give life to that which is dead? Can even the most brilliant scientist or doctor give life to which was dead? Frankenstein is and will always remain as a fictional tale.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and the scattering in it of every moving creature**". This refers to the different animals that are scattered all across this world. Each and every one of these animals is also a sign for Allah (swt). How many are the different kinds of animals that Allah (swt) has placed on this earth? Scientists still have not even identified all of the different species of animals that are there on the earth. New species are still being discovered. How different do these animals look, from the tiniest of ants to the largest of whales? Even within the same species of animals, there are so many varieties. Not only do they look different but in how many different ways do they behave, some are aggressive and some are cowardly. Some are predators and some are prey. Could any but Allah (swt) be capable of such a vast creation? So in this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) turns our vision to the various kinds of animals on this earth and tells us to reflect on how they also are a sign for Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and the changing of the winds**". Here Allah (swt) shows us how even the changing of the winds is a Sign for Him (swt). What everyone can notice about the winds is that they are dynamic, they are always changing. Sometimes the winds blow fiercely, and sometimes they are only a breeze. The wind can be so gentle that it is soft and relaxing as it passes over your skin, and at same time the wind can blow so fiercely that it can even break down the tallest and sturdiest of buildings. The wind also changes direction all of the time. One moment it blows from the east, and then it blows from the west. The wind also changes in temperature, sometimes it is hot and blazing wind and sometimes it is cold and bitter wind. This changing of the wind, in it's strength, direction and temperature is also a sign for Allah (swt). Through these winds also, Allah (swt) shows us that this universe is not static. This universe is dynamic and it is always changing. This reminds us that there is a Power behind this universe. The One Who is changing this universe is Allah (swt). He (swt) changes the winds in any way that He (swt) wants. Sometimes Allah (swt) sends the wind as bearers of good news before the Mercy of His (swt)'s rain comes, and sometimes Allah (swt) sends the wind as a punishment to completely destroy and ravage those who turned away from Him (swt). So we see that in the winds and the way in which they change is also is a sign for Allah (swt). Who but Allah (swt) the One Who has Power over all things could be changing the winds so?

The final sign that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah are the clouds. Allah (swt) says "**and the clouds subjected into service between the heavens and the earth**". The clouds are always subservient to Allah (swt), this is something that anyone can see if they only care to look at the sky above them. The clouds are moving, but they always follow the course that Allah (swt) has ordained them. They never break from this course that they are following. Like obedient slaves following a master, the clouds always go in the direction that Allah (swt) has sent them. Have you ever seen clouds going in a random direction, have you ever seen them floating towards one direction and then suddenly go in a different direction? No, they always go in one direction. They always follow the command of Allah (swt). This is because they have been made subservient to Allah (swt). More than any of the other signs that Allah (swt) has shown us in this ayah, this is the sign that shows how Allah (swt) not only Exists, but also that He (swt) is the complete Master and the Sovereign. The clouds are a perfect example of a creation that is completely subservient to Allah (swt), and this subjection can clearly be seen by everyone. The clouds always go where Allah (swt) commands them to go. In reality however all creation are just like these clouds. Everything is a slave and Allah (swt) is the Master. In fact it is a central and core part of our Aqeedah to believe that Allah (swt) is the only Lord and Sovereign, the only Master and King, how many Muslims today have forgotten this fact?

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by telling us how all of these "**are signs for a people who reflect**". These signs are there for every single person on this planet. But how many people realize these signs? How many people use these signs to lead them to Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that these signs are for those who reflect. So even though these signs are there for everyone to see, only the ones who reflect and ponder will benefit from these signs. Of all of the wonderful creations that Allah (swt) has created, there is no creation that is more amazing than the human mind. It is the human mind that reflects on this creation, and it uses this creation to discover Allah (swt). It then realizes that nothing else matters in this entire universe except Allah (swt). It realizes that it must spend every moment of its life in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Yet how many people today make use of their minds in this way? How many people use their minds to observe these signs and discover Allah (swt)? How many people

actually reflect on these signs like Allah (swt) has commanded us to do in this ayah? Most people today use their minds for every single purpose except bringing them to Allah (swt). They use their minds to get more and more of this world. To bring them further and further away from their Lord. When in fact the mind was created for the exact opposite of this. But there a few people who use their minds to come closer to Allah (swt), and it is these people whom Allah (swt) tells us about in this part of the ayah. They are the ones who can conquer their desires for the life of this world, and they can conquer the pride and arrogance within themselves, they can conquer that desire within themselves that does not want to be a servant to Allah (swt). They humble themselves before the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt) and He (swt) opens the doors of understanding into their hearts. They realize and see Allah (swt) in the signs that He (swt) has told us about in this ayah, and in all the signs all over the universe. With each sign they come closer to Him (swt) and the veils to Him (swt) are lifted. May Allah (swt) make us among such!

Sayyid Qutb tells us how for such people, their Iman in Allah (swt) is renewed every moment of their lives. All that they have to do is look anywhere in the world around them, and they will see the signs of their Lord. Everything that they see around them reminds them of Him. Everything that you see in the world around you has the attributes of creation in that it is dependent and limited, this shows without a doubt that it has been created and it is being controlled and maintained for every moment of it's existence. This shows without a doubt that Allah (swt) Exists and that He (swt) is One and Only and that He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master of this universe. This is the point that Allah (swt) brings for us in this ayah. To make us realize how every single thing in this universe is a sign for Him (swt). This is what the scholars have called *Minhaj al-Quran fi Jiddal* or "the Quran's way of argumentation". It is where Allah (swt) establishes the Aqeedah of the Muslim by using the sensible evidences that are in the world around him. Allah (swt) does not make us believe on blind faith and He (swt) does not use complex logical arguments. Rather He (swt) simply turns our attention to the world around us and asks us to consider if the reality that we see around us could ever have been without Him (swt). What we see is how everything in the world points to Allah (swt), and anyone can find Allah (swt) by looking at the world around them and by looking at themselves.

This ayah also shows us how our Iman must be established on rational conviction and not on blind faith. We must know that Allah (swt) is there rather than just believe what someone else says. Only when the belief is established on conviction will it be a strong belief. A belief that will not break when others try to present it with doubts and arguments. A belief that will result in action. Only when the believer believes with absolute conviction in Allah (swt) will he then be willing to make the sacrifices that this Din requires of him. That is why our belief must be based on rational conviction. It must be a belief that we arrived at through our intellect. How many Muslims today have forgotten this fact? How many Muslims claim that the way of proving the Aqeedah rationally is the way of the Mutazilla and the deviant sects? How can this be the way of deviation when there are ayahs in Quran such as this? Is not the meaning of this ayah that we must come to our belief based on our intellect? Based on observing the universe around us and then coming to the realization from what we can sense? How can you deny the role of the mind when it comes to the Aqeedah when there are countless ayahs such as this in the Quran? So we see from here that it is wrong for us to take our Iman based on blind faith. Rather we should observe the universe around us and know with certainty that our Lord Exists and that He (swt) is One and Only. This is the way of the Quran. This is the way that leads to conviction and certainty. How then can you choose a way other than this?

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ إِذْ يَرَوْنَ ٱلْعَذَابَ أَنَّ ٱلْقُوَّةَ
لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾

166. And from mankind is one who takes from below Allah partners, loving them as they should love Allah. But the ones who believe are stronger in their love for Allah. And if only those who did Dhulm could realize how when they see punishment that surely the power is only for Allah completely. And that Allah is strong in punishment.

We saw in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) showed us many of the evidences that exist in the world all around us that prove His (swt)'s Existence, His (swt)'s Oneness and His (swt)'s Sovereignty. After seeing all of these signs, how could anyone deny Allah (swt)? How could anyone claim another illah besides Allah (swt)? What can you say about a person who has seen all of these signs but who did not draw closer to Allah (swt) because of them. Allah (swt) has been so Merciful in that He (swt) has placed so many signs. How could people see so many of these signs and still not surrender themselves completely to Allah (swt)? How could they see so many signs and still turn away from them. Once again it is important for us to know about such a people so that we do not become like them.

Allah (swt) begins the description of such people by saying "**And from mankind is one who takes from below Allah partners, loving them as they should love Allah**". The first thing we can notice about this description that our Rabb gives us concerning these people is that He (swt) says that they are from mankind. They are from mankind and we are from mankind. They are among our kind, and so if they have fallen into such great evil then there is a chance that we would fall into such evil as well. May Allah (swt) save us! Then Allah (swt) tells us that they have taken from below Him (swt) partners whom they love as they should have loved Him (swt). To understand what this means we have to go back to our definition of the word illah. As we said your illah is what occupies your heart, fills your thoughts and is the purpose behind all of your actions. Allah (swt) is the One True illah for all of the creation. Allah (swt) should be the illah for

every single thing in the universe. Every object, every plant, every animal, every Jinn, every angel, and every human should have Allah (swt) as their illah. But there are some fools among Jinn and men who have taken others besides Allah (swt) as their illah. Whatever it is that they have taken besides Allah (swt) as their illah that is what Allah (swt) describes in this ayah as "partner". It is something besides Allah (swt) that occupies a person's heart. For some people it is their money, for others it is their family, for others it is some human being, for others it is an idol or a star, and for others it is their own desires. All of these occupy the hearts of the people when the hearts of the people were created only for Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that these people have made such things as a partner to Him (swt). How is that they have made these as a partner to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) tells us that it is because these people are "**loving them as they should love Allah**". The true Muslim is a humble slave of Allah (swt), he strives to submit to Allah (swt) in all his thoughts and actions. But why does he do this? What is the motivating factor behind his drive to submit himself before his Creator? As we see in this ayah, the foundation and the cause of the servitude and worship to Allah (swt) is the love of Allah (swt). If there is one relationship that a person can have with his illah, it is a relationship of love. Allah (swt) criticizes those people who have taken an illah besides Him (swt) because they love these things as they should have loved Allah (swt). So look into your heart and find out what it is that you love the most, is it Allah (swt)? If you find that it may not be Allah (swt), then you should remember that your heart was created for Allah (swt). Nothing else deserves that place in your heart except He (swt). You should then strive to make Allah (swt) as the illah in your hearts by continuously reflecting on Him (swt) and all that He (swt) has done for you. Think about Allah (swt), think about how Glorious and Majestic is He (swt), think how Perfect is He (swt), how then can you not love Him (swt) with all your heart? Furthermore think about all that He (swt) has done for you. Your life and every single that you have in your life is only because of Allah (swt). He (swt) has given you everything that you have and He (swt) continues to give you more and more even though you have not done anything to repay Him (swt). So realize your Lord. Realize His Majesty and Perfection. Realize the countless gifts and bounties that He (swt) has given you. Then find the love for Him (swt) that He (swt) deserves.

Then Allah (swt) says "**But the ones who believe are stronger in their love for Allah**". Human beings have a love inside of them that no other creature has. This love is unlike any other and it can be so strong that a human can even give his life for the object of this love. Allah (swt) created this love within the human being for Himself. Allah (swt) should be the true object of this love. We saw in the previous part of the ayah how many people have diverted this love that should have been for Allah (swt) to others in the creation. They took something from the creation of Allah (swt) and gave it the love that should have been only for Allah (swt). But the believers are those who give their love only for Allah (swt). They realize who the true object of their love must be. That is why their love for Allah (swt) is stronger than the love that these people give to their false gods. The believers are willing to sacrifice for Allah (swt) more than what these people would ever sacrifice for their gods. This is because the believers are those who truly know Allah (swt) and when they truly know Allah (swt) then they realize that they must love Him (swt) in this way. May Allah (swt) place within us that level of Iman in Him (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And if only those who did Dhulm could realize how when they see the punishment that surely the power is only for Allah completely**". In the previous part of the ayah, we saw that only the worst of people would knowingly turn away from Allah (swt) and place something else as the illah in their hearts. We also said that the worst kind of Dhulm or injustice was to take another illah besides Allah (swt). What could be a greater sin or a greater evil than worshipping other than Allah (swt)? What could be more unjust than giving the love that was meant for Allah (swt) to those among His (swt)'s creation? Allah (swt) describes for us in this ayah what will be the fate of those who commit this evil. Allah (swt) tells us that if only they could see the punishment on that Day, if only they could realize what it would be like. If only now in the life of this world, they could truly comprehend what it would be like on the Day of Judgment. They have taken all of these false gods in the hope that these gods would save them, but if only they could see what would be the value of these gods on the Day of Judgment. If only they could see this fact today. These false gods would not be able to help them at all because as Allah (swt) says in this ayah that all power is only with Him (swt). On the Day of Judgment they would realize this fact with utmost clarity. On that Day they would

realize that only Allah (swt) has all of the power, but if only they could realize that fact today. If only they truly realized and comprehend today that all power is with Allah (swt), and that only Allah (swt) can save them from the punishment on that Day, would they then take these false gods? Of course they would not. So why have they not come to this realization today? It is because they have not used their mind and their senses to observe the many signs of Allah (swt), and they have not used these signs to lead them to Him (swt). They have been deceived by the life of this world and so all that they care about is satisfying their desires and accumulating as many material goods as possible. May Allah (swt) save us from ever become like such people!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is strong in punishment**". These people have deliberately turned away from all of the signs that Allah (swt) has placed all over the universe. They have deliberately turned away from the messenger that Allah (swt) has sent. They have put something besides Allah (swt) as the illah in their hearts when they know that it was Allah (swt) Who created them and Who gave them everything that they have. Allah (swt) is the Most Kind and Most Merciful, but such people also need to remember this other Name of His (swt). That He (swt) is strong in punishment. Just think about the meaning of this Name, can you even begin to realize how much fear this Name must invoke within you. The pain and suffering that Allah (swt) can inflict on those whom He (swt) is displeased with is beyond description in words. So just as we should always be rushing towards the Mercy of Allah (swt), we should also be running away from the punishment of Allah (swt). Insha Allah we can do this by avoiding the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt) and striving our best to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Insha Allah we can do this by making Him (swt) the illah in our hearts. By making Him (swt) the One Who we dedicate ourselves to. May Allah (swt) help us to do that!

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتُّبِعُواْ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُواْ وَرَأَوُاْ ٱلْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ ٱلْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾

167. When those who were followed will disown those who followed them, and they will see the punishment and their ties will be cut off.

This ayah is a direct continuation of the previous ayah. In that ayah Allah (swt) told us what would be the fate of those who knowingly took another illah besides Him (swt). When they see the punishment on that Day then they would realize that their illah has no power to help them. They would realize that all power is only with Allah (swt). Their illah was the object of all of their love. Their illah was the purpose behind all of their actions. Their illah was whom they followed in everything that they did. On that Day, they will see that this illah which they held so dear and this illah which they obeyed in everything that they did would not be able to help them. They would realize that all of the power is only with Allah (swt) and that only He (swt) can save them from the severe punishment. But not only will they realize that their false gods will not be able to help them, in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to what these false gods will do to them.

Allah (swt) says, "**When those who were followed will disown those who followed them**". This is what will happen on the Day of Judgment. These false gods will completely disown those who followed them. They will say to them "go away from me, I have nothing to do with you". This is a general rule that applies to all those who lead others astray from Allah (swt) in the life of this world. The purpose of the life of this world is to dedicate oneself to Allah (swt). However there are many forces that will try to pull the slave away from his Lord. The extent to which the slave fights these forces and remains true in his worship and servitude of his Rabb is the reward that he will receive when he leaves this world. All of these forces that are trying to pull you away from Allah (swt) are a test for you. All of these are trying to be your illah and trying to take the place that has been reserved in your heart for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has reserved this place in the heart of all human beings for Him (swt). Allah (swt) has also given every single human being the free will to choose whether or not they want to allow another besides Him (swt) to take this place in their hearts.

The ones who choose to allow another besides Allah (swt) to be the illah in their hearts in reality give up all of the free will and choice that Allah (swt) has given them. Allah (swt) has given all humans the free will to choose, and those who allow another besides Allah (swt) to be the illah in their hearts give up this free will. Instead they become the servant and the follower of whatever is the illah in their hearts. Wherever their illah calls them they will go, whatever their illah tells them they will do. They have brought themselves down from the elevated position in which Allah (swt) has placed them and they have made themselves into slaves of their false gods. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us how these illahs or false gods will completely disown them on the Day of Judgment. These false gods will completely renounce their followers on that Day, they will break of any relationships or ties with them on that Day. They will claim that they cannot even recognize them, that they do not even know them. Such will be the status of all of the false gods, and all those people who worshipped or followed them instead of submitting to Allah (swt).

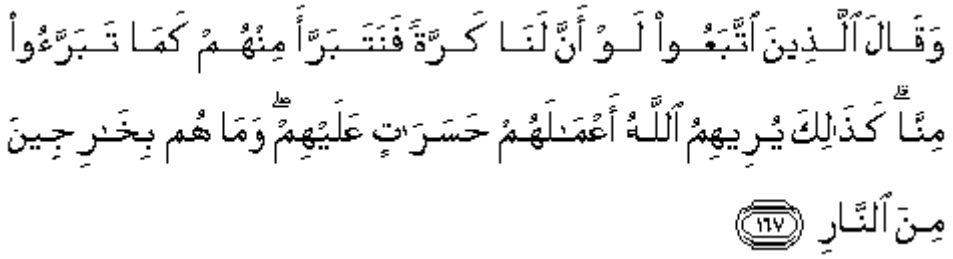
Now we have to bear in mind that these false gods could be almost anything. It does not even have to be something or someone that was worshipped, it could even have been someone that was followed or obeyed instead of Allah (swt). There are leaders who have such power over their people that they can take them away from Allah (swt). They convince people to serve them instead of serving Allah (swt). On the Day of Judgment, these leaders will completely disown themselves from their followers. They will completely break this relationship of leader and follower that they had established in the life of this world.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to remind ourselves once again that our hearts must be attached only to Allah (swt). Anybody else or anything else will not be able to save us on that Day. Although there are many signs that tell us that Allah (swt) Exists, that He (swt) is One and Only, and that He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master for all creation, at the same time there are also many forces that are working to take us away from Allah (swt). Allah (swt) created these forces as a test for the people, so that it can be known who was truly sincere to Him (swt) and who allowed themselves to be distracted away from Him (swt). Even though it is difficult to fight the temptations of these false gods, we still have to strive to remain true to Allah (swt). We have to always realize Who is worthy of our dedication.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and they will see the punishment and their ties will be cut off**". This is the reality that those who knowingly worshipped or followed another besides Allah (swt) will be faced with on that Day. First they will see the punishment, which is none other than the Fire. Then they will see their ties with those whom they followed or worshipped being cut off and severed. In the life of this world, they lived for their illah. Everything they did was for their illah. On that Day, they will see the relationship with their illah being broken. First their illah will break the relationship in front of Allah (swt), and then they themselves will break the relationship as well when they finally realize that there is no might nor power except with Allah (swt). They will realize how wrong they were in worshipping and serving this false god. This will be how their entire life of worship and servitude to their illah will end, this will be the end of all of their actions and striving. A complete waste. A thing totally destroyed and rent asunder on that Day. Do not feel pity for these people because they knew the Truth and they knowingly turned away from it. Allah (swt) gave them the free will in the life of this world, and they themselves made the wrong choice. This horrible reality that they are faced with is a result of their own actions. May Allah (swt) help to always remember this Day! May Allah (swt) help us to realize the absolute futility that will come from every moment in the life of this world that is not spent in the worship and servitude to Him (swt)! Insha Allah, those who are sincere to Allah (swt) will not find themselves facing this horrible reality on that Day.

But even those of us who have decided to dedicate our lives to Allah (swt) are vulnerable to Shaitan placing something else besides Allah (swt) as the illah in our hearts. To protect ourselves from this, we first have to pray to Allah (swt) and beg of Him (swt) to help us. Then we have to strive to always remember Allah (swt) and to reflect on His (swt)'s Perfection and to call to mind all that He (swt) has done for us. Then we have to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt), and we have to stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). We have to strive to reach a level where every single action that we do, and even every thought that we have is only for Allah (swt). This was where the Prophet (saw) was. The closer that we are to the station of the Prophet (saw), the further away we are from the station of the people whom Allah (swt) is describing for us in this ayah. So think of this life as a challenge, and

as a constant struggle and striving to come closer to the path of the Prophet (saw) and to go further away from the path of those who worship and serve others besides Allah (swt). Of course none of us will ever reach the station of the Prophet (saw). None of us will truly and sincerely be able to dedicate every single moment of our life for Allah (swt). But this is the ideal that we must always be trying to reach. Even though we will fall we must still try. Only then can we save ourselves from the fate of those whom Allah (swt) describes in this ayah. Think of their fate. Think of what these false gods will to do you if you choose them over Allah (swt). How they will abandon you and cut off all ties from you. May Allah (swt) help us to always remember, we are such forgetful creatures that we always need Allah (swt) to help us remember! May Allah (swt) allow us and allow all the good and sincere people to meet the challenge of striving to come closer to the station of the Prophet (saw)! May Allah (swt) save us from this reality that He (swt) is describing for us in this ayah! We do not ever want to be, even for one moment without our Rabb!



168. And those who were followed will say "If only we had a second chance, we would disown them as they had disowned us". Thus will Allah show their deeds to be a source of intense regret for them. And they will never leave the Fire.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us what would happen on the Day of Judgment to those who take another illah besides Him (swt). Allah (swt) showed us how whatever had been taken as an illah besides Him (swt) will completely disown any association with those who worshipped and served them. Even though in the life of this world such false gods may even have invited and called on people to worship them or follow them, on that Day they will completely disassociate themselves with those who worshipped or followed them. When this happens, what will be the reaction of those who worshipped and followed them? These are a people who had

dedicated their whole lives to these false gods. The life of this world is precious in one way because it is in the life of this world that we sow the seeds that we can reap in the eternal home of the Hereafter. In the Hereafter we will stay forever, and the pleasures of the Garden do not compare to the pleasures of this world, and the pain of the Fire does not compare to the pain of this world, but this world is important in that it is our actions in this world that determine where will end up in the Hereafter. So in that way every moment in the life of this world is extremely precious, but these people had given up their time in this world to serve their false gods. But now on the Day of Judgment their false gods had renounced them. What would these followers say on that Day when this happens? How would they react when they realize that they had wasted their life in this world? What would they do to their false gods whom they respected and adored so much in the life of this world? This is what Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. If you think that you have given anything or anyone the place in your heart that should only be given to your Lord then consider deeply the reality that Allah (swt) is describing here.

Allah (swt) tells us how the people who chose other than Him (swt) will say, "**If only we had a second chance, we would disown them as they had disowned us**". They are asking for a chance to be sent back to the life of this world. They are saying that if only they were given a second chance at life, they would disassociate themselves from these false gods just like they themselves had been disassociated. This shows us the hatred that they would have in their hearts towards their false gods on that Day. In the life of this world, they loved their illah, they would do anything for their illah, but on the Day of Judgment Allah (swt) shows us how they will have this deep hatred for their illah. They would feel betrayed by the ones whom they once looked at as their illah. They would want nothing more than to return to the life of this world and disassociate themselves from these false gods just like their false gods had done to them on the Day of Judgment. Of course they will not be given such an opportunity, they had more than enough time when they were in the life of this world. But they made the wrong choice, they made the wrong choice when they knew that it was the wrong choice. Now their fate is sealed. Now their test is over. All that they can do now is look back and regret. They would wish so dearly that they could go back and abandon their false gods but then it would be too late.

The lesson that we can take from their situation is to realize how precious the life of this world is in that it is in this world that we are being tested. Once our death comes, our test is over. We will never be able to return to this world no matter how much we may want to. So we should be very careful with the choices that we make in the life of this world. We know what is the true reality of this existence. We know that Allah (swt) is our Rabb and that the Prophet (saw) is our Messenger. These facts have been established with undeniable proofs and evidences. Deep in your heart you know that this is the Truth. So if you are aware of the reality then why are you not rushing to worship and serve Allah (swt) like you know that you should? That is what the Prophet (saw) taught you to do. So always remember that you will get this life only once, and the choices that you make in this life will determine your eternity. If you take ant false god instead of Allah (swt) in the life of this world then you will regret it for all eternity. You would wish that you could come back to this world and live your life in dedication to the True Lord and Master. But then it will be too late. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) help us all to make the correct choices!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Thus will Allah show their deeds to be a source of intense regret for them**". These are a people who dedicated all of their actions to their false gods. How will they feel about these actions when they see their false gods disowning them? What will they think about their life? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah how their whole life will be a source of intense regret for them. In his tafsir of this ayah, Al-Qurtubi explains how the word that Allah (swt) uses "*Hasara*" means the deepest and worst form of regret. It is derived from the word *hasir*, which means to completely exhaust a thing. Their regret on that Day will be completely exhausted. They will regret what they had done with every drop of remorse and despair in their hearts. This is because they knew very well what the Truth was and they turned away from it. They knew that their lives were meant for Allah (swt) and yet they chose to worship and serve other than Him (swt). Now when they see the reality of the Day of Judgment, when they see what their false gods have done to them, they will hate themselves for the lives they had lead, they will hate themselves for turning away Allah (swt).

Also notice that this *hasir* which have translated as intense regret is in the plural. This shows how they will not have one regret but rather they will have many regrets. They will regrets upon regrets. First they will regret their turning away from Allah (swt). Then they will regret their taking a false god besides Him (swt). Then they will regret all the moments in their life that they dedicated to this false god. Every single action that they did for this false. They will regret every moment in their life that they allowed to pass by without remembering Allah (swt). They will regret every Salah that they missed. They will regret every forbidden action that they indulged. They will regret every obligation and duty that they neglected. It will be regret upon regret until it consumes them and destroys them.

Finally Allah (swt) says "**And they will never leave the Fire**". This is the terrible fate of those who willfully turn away from Allah (swt). They would wish that they could return to the life of this world so that they can serve Allah (swt) as they had been created to do. They would wish that they could return to the life of this world so that they can disown their false gods. But they will never be allowed to leave the Fire. They had their chance. Every moment when they were in the life of this world was a chance for them to come back to Allah (swt). Was there even one moment in this world when the signs of Allah (swt) were not there for them to see? Was there even one moment when they did not benefit from the countless bounties and favors of Allah (swt)? Was their even one moment when the door of Tawbah was not open for them? Yet they chose to turn away from all of this and follow their false gods. Yet despite all of this Allah (swt) still sent them messenger after messenger who came with warning upon warning to remind them to come back to Him (swt). But did they accept the Message of these messengers? Did they heed their warning? No, despite being warned so many times, they still chose to turn away from Allah (swt). What should be the fate of such people? What should be the fate of a people who have been so unjust and so arrogant to Allah (swt)? For all eternity they had the intention to turn away from Allah (swt) so for all eternity they will burn. May Allah (swt) save us from this horrible fate! May Allah (swt) allow us to dedicate every moment of our lives for Him (swt)!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ كُلُوا۟ مِمَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ
ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

169. O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitan. Surely he is to you a clear enemy.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by calling out to all mankind. We are reminded of the universality of this Message by noting who Allah (swt) is calling out to in this ayah. It is not the Quraysh, it is not the Aws and Khazaraj, it is not even the Arabs, but rather it is all of mankind. Allah (swt), the Creator and Sustainer, the Lord and Master, is addressing every single man, woman and child in this Message. This Message is a communication from the Creator and Sustainer to all mankind. Recall from the previous ayahs, how Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) should be the only illah in our hearts. We should dedicate our whole lives to Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. Part of dedicating our lives to Allah (swt) is that it is only He (swt) Who can tell us what we can and what we cannot consume of the things of this world. This whole world has been made subservient to the human being, so the human being should not make himself subservient to the earth. Rather he must dedicate his life to his Creator and Sustainer, and he should look to his Creator to tell him what his relationship with this world must be. This is exactly what Allah (swt) does for us in this ayah of the Quran. Allah (swt) tells us what exactly should be our relationship with this earth on which we live.

Allah (swt) begins by saying "**O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and wholesome on the earth**". There are two meaning that the Arabic verb *kulu* gives in this ayah. One meaning is the literal meaning which means "to eat", and the other meaning is "to consume" or "to partake in". The second of these meanings includes the first one within it, but it is more comprehensive in that it includes more than food. Since the second meaning is more general than the first, and since it includes the first within it we will take the second meaning for our understanding of this ayah. So from this ayah we see that Allah (swt) is telling us to eat from the foods of this world, to drink from the drinks of this world, to use and consume the things of this world like clothing,

houses, cars, furniture, electronics and whatever else the earth produces for us. As we learned from ayah 30 of this Surah, Allah (swt) created every single thing on this earth for the human being, and in this ayah Allah (swt) commands us to partake in it, to consume that which He (swt) has created for us.

However we must note that Allah (swt) does put a condition on what is of the earth that we can consume. It can only be that which "lawful and good". By "lawful" we know that it means everything that has not been prohibited in the Law of Allah (swt). Concerning the word *tayyib* which we have translated here as "good", some scholars have said it is an emphasis of the word lawful since what is lawful is only what is good and what is good is only what is lawful. This is because only Allah (swt) Knows what is good, and He (swt) in His Mercy has made everything that is good as lawful for us. Other scholars have said it is those of the lawful things that we find appealing and that we desire. In other words tayyib means those lawful things that we desire. Both opinions give the same basic Message, Allah (swt) is telling us to eat and partake in those things that we desire from what He (swt) has made permissible for us. So for example, Allah (swt) has made seafood permissible. But not all of us may like seafood, so Allah (swt) is not telling us that we all have to eat seafood. We should only eat the foods that we like from what He (swt) has made permissible. Now of course from this ayah we can see that we cannot eat or partake in anything that is unlawful. We have to study the other text of the Quran and the Sunnah to find out what is it that is lawful for us and what is not. May Allah (swt) aid us in that! May Allah (swt) guide us to eat and consume only what He (swt) is pleased with us eating and consuming!

One lesson that we can take from this is to see how Merciful Allah (swt) has been with mankind. Allah (swt) has created so many things on this earth for the human being, and in this ayah He (swt) gives mankind the permission to eat and partake in all of these things that He (swt) has created. You can count and list what Allah (swt) has forbidden for mankind, but to enumerate all that He (swt) has permissible would take forever. This is part of the Mercy of Allah (swt) for all mankind. How then could human beings be so ungrateful to the Creator Who loves them so much and who has given them so much? For our part we must try our best to be grateful to Allah (swt), we should enjoy all of the things that He (swt) has made permissible for us in this earth and at the

same time while we are enjoying them we should remember the One Who has given us this pleasure. We should also remember this pleasure is only a small taste of what He (swt) has kept reserved for us if we pass the test that He (swt) has given us in this earth.

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitan**". Al-Qurtubi said this means "do not follow the actions of Shaitan". Recall from the previous part of the ayah how Allah (swt) commanded us to eat from the earth of what He (swt) had made lawful and good. There are two ways in which Shaitan tries to take us away from this command. One way is that he tells us to eat and consume that which is forbidden. There are only a few things of this world that Allah (swt) has made forbidden for us, but Shaitan always calls us to these forbidden things. So to partake in that which is forbidden, to drink wine to or to look at women who are not our wives with lust, is to walk in the footsteps of Shaitan. These are the actions that Allah (swt) has forbidden and this is what He (swt) is telling us here not to do. Another way in which Shaitan invites us to follow in his path is by forbidding for us that which Allah (swt) has made permissible for us. The scholars of tafsir tell us that this ayah was revealed concerning a custom of the Arabs where they would not eat certain camels that they had reserved for their idols. There were a certain kind of camels that they would dedicate to their gods, and they would not allow themselves to have these camels. These camels were supposed to be only for the idols. They would not even milk these camels or derive any kind of benefit from them whatsoever. These camels were reserved exclusively for the idols. They were completely forbidden for the people. Allah (swt) is showing us in this ayah how wrong this practice was. How much of a waste this was. Allah (swt) created camels and other animals for the benefit of the human being, and He (swt) had made them lawful for humans to use and to eat. So it is not right for us to forbid for ourselves that which Allah (swt) had made lawful for us. This is the second of the paths of Shaitan that we must avoid. When Allah (swt) has made something lawful for us, we should not forbid it for ourselves. Such an action would be being disobedient to Allah (swt), and it would also be being ungrateful to Allah (swt) for what He (swt) has provided for us. Would you like it if your servant throws away the gifts that you give him? May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) help us to avoid the paths of Shaitan!

Another lesson that we can take from this is to see how wastage is frowned upon in this Din. The pagan Arabs would allow these camels to consume the resources of the land but they would not derive any benefit from them whatsoever. Even if they were starving and they needed meat, they would not touch these camels that had been kept for their idols. Such thinking and behavior is wrong. Allah (swt) created everything on this earth for the benefit of the human being so we should try and derive a benefit from everything. Based on this principle, in the Islamic State if someone owns some land that they never use for any purpose for an extended period of time, then the government can take that land and put it to use. Nothing is wasted. Everything is used to take care of the people. Compare that situation with today when so much is wasted and squandered even when there are so many people in need. How can we ever face Allah (swt) on the Last Day when we have been so negligent of what He (swt) has given us in this world? May Allah (swt) save us from that fate! May Allah (swt) allow us to use for the benefit of mankind all that He (swt) has given us! May Allah (swt) bring back the system that will give the food of this earth back to its people!

We can also see from this part of the ayah how often times in the Quran we have to take the metaphorical meaning of the ayah and not the literal meaning. There are some people who say that we must always take the literal meaning from every ayah and we see from here how such an opinion is wrong. If we take the literal meaning here then Allah (swt) is saying that Shaitan has footprints and we are being told not to follow those footprints, this of course makes no sense whatsoever. Shaitan is a creature of the unseen and we cannot directly sense him or his footprints. Rather when we take the metaphorical meaning and say that the "footsteps of Shaitan" are the evil actions that he invites to, then this ayah makes perfect sense and it fits with the Message of the Quran. So we see that sometimes we have to take the metaphorical meaning of certain ayahs in the Quran where the literal meaning gives a meaning that is not acceptable. This was the opinion of the vast majority of the scholars of Ahl-as-Sunnah. As always Allah (swt) Knows best and we ask Him (swt) to guide us to the correct understanding of this Din.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely he is to you an clear enemy**". Contemplate for a moment on the adjective that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah to describe Shaitan.

Allah (swt) did not say that he was a “great enemy” or a “powerful enemy” or a “terrifying enemy”, but Allah (swt) said that he was a “clear enemy”. Many people like to think of the devil as a powerful and terrifying monster that needs to be feared. But this is not how Allah (swt) wants us to know him. We see in this ayah that what Allah (swt) wants us to know about Shaitan is that he is our enemy and not what kind of an enemy he is. Many people seem to forget that he is our enemy, and that he has a plan to lead us to our destruction. Shaitan wants to take us away from Allah (swt), and to take us away from Allah (swt) is to take us to our destruction. Many people seem to forget that there is such an enemy out there and so they let down their guard and allow themselves to be lead astray by him. May Allah (swt) save us from that fate!

Thus the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to realize that Shaitan is out there and he has a goal to take us away from Allah (swt). This means that we always have to be on our guard. The Prophet (saw) has described Shaitan for us as the one that flows through our veins like blood. So there are so many ways in which he can lead us astray from Allah (swt). There are so many tools and means that he can use. He will use our love of this world, our lower self, our anger, our jealousy, our miserliness, our lusts, he will use every means possible to take us away from the purpose of our existence, which is to worship and serve Allah (swt). So we must always be on our guard. First and foremost, we have to pray to Allah (swt) to protect us from Shaitan as the Prophet (saw) has commanded us to do. We should all be in the habit of saying “I seek refuge in Allah from Shaitan rejected”. Then we have to hold fast to the Quran and the Sunnah. These are the two sources of light where Allah (swt) has told us what He (swt) is pleased with and what He (swt) is displeased with. If we always strive to do what Allah (swt) is pleased with and strive to stay away from what He (swt) is displeased with, then Insha Allah we will be able protect ourselves from the one who is our open enemy. Those who are ignorant of the Law of Allah (swt) are the favorite targets of Shaitan because they serve their desires instead of serving their Creator. Now that we know that he is our open enemy and we know the means that he uses to get to us, we have to be especially on guard when it comes to these means. Then when a thought comes to our mind, Insha Allah, we will be able to identify that thought as coming from Shaitan. Once we recognize a thought as coming from Shaitan, then we know that we must

strive to destroy it. Of course this is by no means easy, but this is what we must strive to do. May Allah (swt) enable us to do that! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that Shaitan is an open and clear enemy for us! In every moment of our lives, may Allah (swt) help us to evaluate in each and every one of our actions and each and every one of our thoughts in the light of the Quran and Sunnah! This is the only way that we can save ourselves from this devil who seeks to take us away from the purpose of our existence. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلسُّوٓءِ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَن تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

١٦٩

170. He only commands you with evil and indecency, and to say about Allah what you do not know.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) commanded us not to follow the footsteps of Shaitan and He (swt) reminded us that Shaitan is an open and clear enemy for us. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us exactly what Shaitan does to us. Allah (swt) tells us exactly why Shaitan is an enemy for us. Allah (swt) says about him that he "**only commands you with evil and indecency**". This is what Shaitan does to us, he commands us to do that which is evil and he commands us to do that which is indecent and foul. The Arabic word *soo* that we have translated here as "evil" is all that is forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt). All of the actions, all of the thoughts, and all of the emotions that Allah (swt) has told us that He (swt) is displeased with. Shaitan has a goal to take us away from Allah (swt), and so this is what he invites us to do. He invites us to all that is displeasing to Allah (swt). The Arabic word *faksha* that we have translated here as "indecency" is a subset of what is evil that relates to all the sexual actions and thoughts that are displeasing to Allah (swt). Shaitan calls us to all kinds of evil, he calls us to all of what Allah (swt) has forbidden in the hope of taking us away from our Lord, but one the primary ways in which he does this is through our lusts and passions for the opposite sex. This is one of his favorite means of taking us away from Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) mentions these thoughts and actions specifically in this ayah with the word *faksha*.

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how Shaitan will command us to do that which is evil and that which is indecent, lewd and foul. We know that it displeases our Rabb for us to look at a woman who is showing her *awra* but Shaitan will command us to do it. He will specifically command us to do what is displeasing to Allah (swt). So we must recognize these thoughts that come in our mind as being the commands of our avowed enemy. He does not want anything good for us when he gives us these commands, rather he only wants our destruction by trying to drive us away from Allah (swt). By trying to drive us away from the purpose of our existence. We know from the previous ayah what will be our fate if we leave Allah (swt) for the false gods that he calls us towards. May Allah (swt) save us all from that!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) tells us that Shaitan also commands us "**to say about Allah what you do not know**". Shaitan always likes to make us forget how limited our knowledge is. He makes us think that we are so smart and that we know everything. Remember that the reason why he did not want to bow down before Adam (as) was because of his pride, now he will try to make us proud also just like he was proud. He will try to make us proud of the greatest gift that Allah (swt) has given us and that is our minds and our knowledge. Our minds and the knowledge that we gain from our minds are the greatest gift that Allah (swt) has given us. There are so many benefits that mankind has derived because of this gift that Allah (swt) has given us. But Shaitan will completely pervert the reason for which Allah (swt) has given us these gifts. Allah (swt) gave us our minds so that we can observe and reflect on His (swt)'s signs and thus use our minds to come closer to Him (swt). But Shaitan will make us proud of our minds and he will make us think that we know everything. He will make us forget how limited our knowledge is. He will make us think that we actually have enough knowledge to question Allah (swt)! So we must always remember that our minds and our knowledge are a great gift that Allah (swt) has given us but only if we use them to come closer to Him (swt). We must also remember that our knowledge compared to the Knowledge of Allah (swt) is like comparing a drop of water to an ocean. Once we realize this fact then we can never presume to question Allah (swt) on anything. We can never question the Law of Allah (swt) and think that we can bring a better law. We can never claim that we know what is best for us or what is best for mankind when already Allah (swt)

has told us what is best for us in His (swt)'s Law. We can never question the Judgment or the Ruling of Allah (swt) and think that it is not just. We cannot question anything that Allah (swt) does to us and think that it is unfair. What do we know? Who are we to speak against the Lord and the Master, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe? If such an evil thought ever comes to our mind, we know now from this ayah who is the source of that thought. Any thought that comes to our mind that questions Allah (swt) in any way is a thought from Shaitan. We must also realize that there are questions that we do not have the knowledge to answer. Questions that do not help us to worship and serve Allah (swt). Questions such as "Where is Allah (swt)" or "Is the Quran created or not". We have to realize that we do not have the knowledge to answer these questions and we have to realize that these questions are irrelevant to our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). It is only something that distracts us from the purpose of our existence. If we waste all of our time trying to answer these questions then we have to realize who it is that is making us persist in such unfruitful deliberation. May Allah (swt) save us from him! May Allah (swt) save us from such questions! May Allah (swt) save from ever saying about Him (swt) what we do not know! May Allah (swt) always make us remember that we know nothing except what He (swt) has taught us!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ٱتَّبِعُوا۟ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ
ءَابَآءَنَآ ۗ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ ءَابَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

171. And when it is said to them "Follow what Allah has revealed". They say, "No! We will follow what we found our forefathers on". What! Even though their fathers had no understanding and they were not guided.

In the previous ayah, we saw that Allah (swt) told us not to follow in the footsteps of Shaitan. Allah (swt) reminded us how Shaitan only commands us to do the actions that are forbidden in His (swt)'s Law, to do the actions that are displeasing Him (swt), to have the emotions that are displeasing to Him (swt), and to speak about Him (swt) that which we do not know. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to what will be our fate if we do follow the

footsteps of Shaitan. He (swt) shows the kind of people whom we will become. He (swt) shows us how Shaitan commands us to obey our desires and to turn off our minds, because he knows that if we use our minds to reflect on Allah (swt) and to remember Allah (swt) then we will never follow him. So Shaitan knows that if he can make the people to not think and reflect but rather to blindly follow their desires then he can control them.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And when it is said to them "Follow what Allah has revealed". They say, "No! We will follow what we found our forefathers on** ". This was the response that many of the Quraysh chiefs would give when the Prophet (saw) invited them to Islam. They knew that Islam was the Truth, they knew that no human mind could have produced the Quran and they knew that the Prophet (saw) was not a liar. But what was holding them back from accepting Islam even when they were certain that it was the Truth was because they knew that doing so would mean abandoning the religion of their forefathers. They had so much pride, respect and admiration for their ancestors that they were not willing to give up the gods that their ancestors worshipped. So this was the response that they gave to the Prophet (saw), he (saw) called on them to believe in what Allah (swt) had revealed and they replied by saying that they were going to adhere to what their forefathers had been following. Even though they knew that what the Prophet (saw) was calling them to was the Truth, even though they knew that they had an obligation to worship and serve their Creator, they still chose to turn away from the Truth because of their desire to follow their forefathers. For them their pride and their desires were more important to them than worshipping and serving Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) brings our attention to the foolishness of what they were doing when He (swt) says "**What! Even though their fathers had no understanding and they were not guided**". First notice the surprise and the shock that is present in the language. This shows the utter foolishness of what they were doing by blindly following their forefathers. Allah (swt) is not surprised but He (swt) wants us to be. How could a people be so misguided?! Allah (swt) shows us why they behavior is so foolish when He (swt) tells us how their forefathers had no understanding and they were not guided. Their forefathers had no understanding because they did not have any knowledge, and they were not guided because they did not have any guidance.

The human being has a purpose in life to worship and serve his Creator and Sustainer. But the human cannot know from his own mind how to worship the Creator; it is the Creator that must tell the human how the Creator should be served and worshipped. So the only way that the human can know how to worship and serve the Creator is if the Creator tells him through a Message that was sent through a prophet or messenger. Now these forefathers that the Quraysh chiefs were stubbornly following never received a messenger that taught them their religion. On the contrary, their entire way of life, from the idols that were worshipped to the corrupt social practices that were prevalent in their society to the unfair economic system that they lived by, had only been invented by the desires of men, in other words it was all from Shaitan. It was not based on any guidance or knowledge from Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) brings our attention in this ayah to how ignorant and misguided their ancestors were. They were a people who never received a Message from Allah (swt) and instead had only followed their desires when they made the religion and the system of life that they live by. Now when the Prophet (saw) came to them with the true guidance from their Creator, they turned away from it. They were turning away from the way of life prescribed by Allah (swt) for the way of life invented by the devils. How foolish are these people? Now when a clear Message reaches you from Allah (swt), you are saying that you want to reject this Message and follow the way of these forefathers. The knowledge and the guidance is what is in this Message, and if your forefathers did not have this Message, then what knowledge or guidance did they have? If this is your way of thinking how then can you ever hope to be saved on the Last Day?

Notice in this ayah how sternly Allah (swt) attacks both these fools among the Quraysh and their foolish forefathers. Allah (swt) insults them and He (swt) insults their forefathers. One lesson that we can take from this is that sometimes in the dawah, we have to be strong and forceful. At the beginning, we must always be kind and humble and we must approach those whom we carry dawah to with the utmost respect. We have to speak to them with soft and kind words like Allah (swt) has commanded us to. However if they continue to deny the Message, even after it has become clear to them that this Message is the Truth, then we must be forceful with them. We have to expose to them the foolishness of their ways and we have to show them

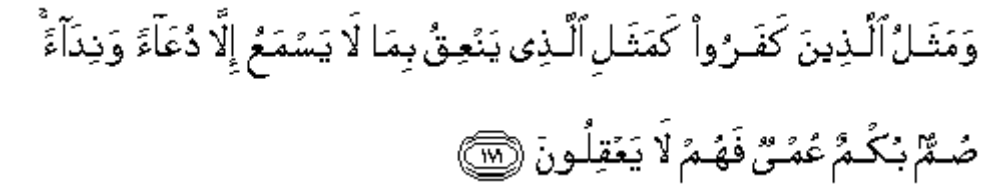
how they are being stubborn and how they are being mislead by Shaitan. We cannot always be weak and allow these fools to walk all over us. There is a time for mildness and a time for strength. May Allah (swt) guide us to the correct way on how to carry dawah to His (swt)'s Message! May Allah (swt) show us when to be kind and when to be strong!

We can clearly see from this ayah that these were a people who had turned off their minds and that was how they were allowing themselves to be blindly led around by Shaitan. They were following their desires instead of following the Truth that they clearly recognized. This is something that we must never allow ourselves to do. We have to use the mind that Allah (swt) gave us to come closer to Him (swt). We have to contemplate on His (swt)'s Signs and we have to think about all of the ways in which He (swt) has blessed us and favored us and sent down His (swt)' Mercy upon us. We have to always be using our minds to find out what Allah (swt) is pleased with us doing and then we must strive to do it. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! The remembrance of Allah (swt) is the best protection from Shaitan.

We can also see from this ayah the danger of blindly following our forefathers. We all have a tendency to look to our ancestors with respect and admiration; we sometimes even think that we are here now because of them. Of course such thinking is false, we are here now only because of Allah (swt). But many people are not able to overcome this love and admiration that they have for their forefathers, and they refuse to see their forefathers as ever doing anything wrong. They would even follow their fathers when it is clear that what their forefathers had done was not pleasing to Allah (swt). So even among the Muslims today there are many incorrect beliefs and practices. However when these errors are pointed out to such Muslims, they say that this was what their forefathers were doing and so they will continue to do it. Even though they know that it is wrong, even though they know that it is not from Islam, they will continue to do it only because their forefathers did it. For these people their forefathers and the pride of their family is more important than Allah (swt). We know already what will happen to such people on the Last Day.

An example of such blind following in many Muslim lands today is the dowry that is taken from the wife's family during a marriage. This is a practice that was never sanctioned by

Allah (swt) and so it is clearly an innovation. But it was a custom that was practiced for centuries by the Muslims in these lands. So when they are told that such a practice is wrong, they are hesitant to give it up because it was what their forefathers were following. This is an example of just one of the many innovations that Muslims continue to practice only because it was what their forefathers had done. What these Muslims need to be reminded of is that just because something was practiced by their forefathers does not make it pleasing to Allah (swt). What is pleasing to Allah (swt) is what is found in the Quran and Sunnah and not what is found in the practice of the forefathers. We have to always remember that everything in this world is a test for us from Allah (swt). Even our forefathers are a test for us from Allah (swt), a test to see if our ultimate loyalty and our deepest love and respect is for them or for Him (swt)? So when we see something as true according to the Quran and Sunnah, and we see the practice of our forefathers as contrary to this, then we must leave what our forefathers were doing, and we must do what Allah (swt) commanded do. We have already learned as to what will be our fate if we do not!



172. The example of those who do kufr is like the example of the one who shouts to that which does not hear except a call and a cry. Deaf, dumb and blind so they do not understand.

In the previous ayahs we saw the Truth and we saw the falsehood. We saw the Truth of Allah (swt) in all of the signs in the universe that testified to His (swt)'s Oneness and sovereignty. We also saw the falsehood and the evil one who calls to the path of falsehood. We saw that the way he calls his followers to the paths of falsehood is by making them turn off their minds and turn on their lusts and desires. We saw that one of the ways in which he turns people away from the Truth is by telling them to hold on to what was given to their forefathers, even if their forefathers had no knowledge and had no guidance. Even though Shaitan can be very

deceptive and very clever, ultimately it is the people who make a conscious decision to follow him. He has absolutely no authority over a people unless they let down their guard and give him that authority. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to such a people. The people whom Shaitan has lead astray. Allah (swt) gives us a beautiful example to illustrate for us the reality of their situation.

Allah (swt) says, "**The example of those who do kufr is like the example of the one who shouts to that which does not hear except a call and a cry. Deaf, dumb and blind so they do not understand**". The example that Allah (swt) gives us here is that of a herdsman calling out to a flock of cattle. The cattle only hear the call and the cry of the herdsman; they do not understand any of the words that he is saying. Similarly when the Prophet (saw) calls out to the Quraysh chiefs, they only hear the sound of what he (saw) is saying, but they have no understanding of what is being said. They only hear the sound of the Message but they do not comprehend what is being said. So speaking to them is like speaking to cattle. Cattle will only hear the sound of what you say but they do not understand what is being said. The same is the case with the people who have chosen to follow their desires and turn away from the Truth. They have turned off their senses to the Truth of this Message. They only hear noise but they have no comprehension.

Allah (swt) refers to such people as "Deaf" because they have turned off their hearing to the Truth of this Message. If they would only listen to the Quran with an ear of sincerity, they would realize that this Book cannot be from anyone except Allah (swt). But because they have chosen to turn away from this Quran and not pay attention to it, it is as if they have no hearing at all. That is why Allah (swt) refers to them in this ayah as the "Deaf". What good is your hearing if you will not use it to listen to the Book of your Lord? Allah (swt) also refers to them as "Blind" because if they had only looked at the universe around them with an eye of sincerity they would realize that this universe cannot be created and maintained by anyone except Allah (swt). But because they have turned away from all of these Signs, they have made themselves blind. They have chosen not to use their eyes to discover Allah (swt) so it is as if they have no eyes at all. Allah (swt) also calls them "Dumb" because they know the Truth in the deepest corners of their

hearts but they do not want to acknowledge it with their tongues, they would rather claim that this Message is false when their hearts are certain to the contrary. Because they cannot speak the Truth, it is almost as if they cannot speak at all. So they have turned away from this Message, and in doing so they have made themselves into cattle. They have thrown away the mind that Allah (swt) has given them, and they blindly follow their desires and they blindly follow Shaitan. Just like cattle being lead into the slaughterhouse, they blindly follow Shaitan as he takes them into their destruction. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**so they do not understand**". Simply look at how much meaning Allah (swt) has placed in these words "**so they do not understand**". Firstly they do not understand that they have a Creator and Sustainer, and that they have a responsibility to worship and serve Him (swt). Then they have turned away their mind and their senses from the Message that their Creator has sent them, and because of this they do not understand the Message, they do not recognize it for the Truth that it is. Finally they do not even understand what is the consequences of them turning away from this Message. They do not realize how Shaitan is leading them away from Allah (swt), how he is using their desires to pull them away from their Creator, and leading them into their destruction. They are devoid of understanding at all levels. They have thrown away the greatest of gifts that Allah (swt) has given to mankind, and they have made themselves into no better than cattle who only hear the shouting of the herdsman but do not comprehend anything. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقۡنَٰكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ إِيَّاهُ تَعۡبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

173. O you who believe, eat from the pure things that We have provided for you, and give thanks to Allah if it is Him that you serve.

In ayah 169, we saw that Allah commanded all of mankind to eat of what is lawful and good that He (swt) has provided from the earth. In this ayah, we see that Allah (swt) repeats the same command only here it is not addressed to all of mankind but it is addressed only to the believers. Once again we should remind ourselves that when Allah (swt) begins an ayah in this way, He (swt) is specifically addressing the Muslim community. So we should pay particularly close attention to what Allah (swt) says in these ayahs because of all of mankind, of all of the creation, Allah (swt) is specifically addressing our Ummah. How wonderful is it that the Lord of this entire universe is choosing our community for this intimate address? How privileged are you that He (swt) is speaking to you? That is why you have to give Him (swt) your utmost attention.

First we see that Allah (swt) says, "**O you who believe, eat from the pure things that We have provided for you**". Recall from our discussion of ayah 169 where we said that the word *kulu* means to consume, and we said that the word *tayyib* means that which is lawful and also that which is pure, pleasing and wholesome. So in this ayah we see that Allah (swt) is commanding us to consume all of the lawful and pure things that He (swt) has provided for us. The lesson that we can take from this is to remind ourselves once again how every single thing that we consume; every morsel of food, every drop of water, every breath of air, everything that we take in is provided for us by Allah (swt). Allah (swt), in His (swt)'s Mercy and His (swt)'s Generosity has given us these things. It was only Allah (swt) who has given it to us and no one else. So remember that even when your wife or your mother provides you with food you have to realize that she was only an agent, the real source of that food was Allah (swt). Allah (swt) created all this for you and here He (swt) gives you permission to eat from it. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember that every single thing in this world that we have is from Him (swt)! It is a manifestation of His (swt)'s Mercy for us.

Then Allah (swt) tells us to render thanks to Him (swt) if it is Him (swt) Whom we serve. Notice the beautiful connection between this part of the ayah and the previous part. In the previous part, Allah (swt) reminded us of all the good and pure things that He (swt) had provided us with. He (swt) told us to eat and partake of those bounties. Here He (swt) reminds us to give thanks to Him (swt) for those gifts. He (swt) tells us that it is incumbent upon us to give thanks to Him (swt) if it is Him (swt) that we serve. Allah (swt) created us to serve Him (swt). To dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). For those of us who recognize this purpose, then part of that servitude has to be the rendering of thanks for all of these blessings that He (swt) has bestowed us.

The first level of giving thanks to Allah (swt) is to acknowledge and remind ourselves that it was Allah (swt) who gave us that blessing. So when you are going to eat a delicious meal, remind yourself first and foremost that it was Allah (swt) Alone Who had given you this meal. Then you give thanks to Allah (swt) by praising Him (swt) with your tongue. You think of the blessing and the gift that He (swt) has given you and you declare with your words your gratitude for it. Finally you give thanks to Allah (swt) with your actions. You do the deeds that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and you stay away from the deeds that are displeasing to Him (swt). You use all that He (swt) has given you only in a way that is pleasing to Him (swt). This is how we render thanks to our Lord for all of the good and pure things that He (swt) has provided us with. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to thank Him (swt) for everything that He (swt) has given us!

The Prophet (saw) has told us that if we were to wake up in the morning and we find that we have a healthy body, a healthy mind, we are free of fear, and we have our daily provisions, then in fact we have the whole world. What else should the believer seek of this world other than this? Remember that we were not created for this world. We were created only for the Hereafter. This world is only a temporary resting place. So how grateful to Allah (swt) do we have to be that He (swt) has even given us this much of the world? Our health. Our provisions. Security. All praise and thanks be for Allah (swt), most of us wake up and we find that we have all of these. How many of our Muslim brothers and sisters in the world today do not have these? How many of our Muslim brothers and sisters in the world today live in fear? How many of them do not even have enough provisions to eat? Unlike them we have been blessed with safety and

provisions, and most of us have also been blessed with a healthy body and a sound mind. So we have to be eternally grateful to Allah (swt). You should have no doubt that Allah (swt) is going to question you for each and every one of the blessings that you were given in this world. There is nothing special about you that makes you deserve all of these blessings that Allah (swt) has bestowed on you, there is nothing that you have done to earn or warrant all of these blessings. You are a human being just like any other. Yet Allah (swt) has given you all of these blessings that He (swt) has not given to others of His (swt) servants. This is only so that you could be even more grateful to Allah (swt)! This is only so that you can strive even harder in your worship and servitude of Him (swt). So think about all that Allah (swt) has given you and let that motivate you to strive even harder in your servitude of Him (swt). Every time you eat some food think about how you are going to use the energy from that food. Anytime that you find yourself with spare time, ask yourself how best you can use this time to serve the Din of Allah (swt). Perhaps you can use that time to study Islam or to teach the people around you the Book of Allah (swt). This is the beginning of what it means to be grateful to Allah (swt). Gratitude to Allah (swt) is an obligation if it is Him (swt) that we serve. The more of this world that we have been given, the more is the onus upon us to show gratitude.

We were created only to be the slaves of Allah (swt). This is the only reason why we exist. This is the only reason why our existence in this world is being sustained. Now a Master does not owe to the slave anything while the slave owes to the Master everything. Allah (swt) is our complete Lord and Master. So just think that if He (swt) has provided us with all that we have then how grateful to Him (swt) do we have to be. He (swt) does not owe us anything so He (swt) does not need to give us anything. All that He (swt) has given us, down to every last breath of air that we take to every morsel of food that we eat to every drop of water that we drink is only from His Love and Compassion for us. How dare then do we be ungrateful? How dare then that we do not strive to show our thanks? Those who turn away from showing gratitude, are they not the absolute worst of creation? Is there anything more evil or more unjust than that? For all those non-Muslims today who have never received the Message, perhaps they will have an excuse. But what excuse do we as believers have?

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَيْتَةَ وَٱلدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ ٱلْخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِۦ لِغَيْرِ ٱللَّهِ
فَمَنِ ٱضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

174. He has only forbidden you the dead meat, the blood, the meat of swine, and that over which other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, and is not disobedient or transgressing the limits, then there is no blame on him. Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

In this previous ayah Allah (swt) commanded us to eat of the lawful and pure things that He (swt) has provided for us. In this ayah He (swt) tells of what is forbidden for us to eat. Before we explore this ayah we have to remind you once again that this is not a book of fiqh, and it is not even a tafsir that was written for the purpose of fiqh. So if you want to find out the rulings on what foods are permissible and what are forbidden, please do not only go by what is in this tafsir. Please look in the tafsirs of fiqh, and the fiqh books that have written by our scholars, or please speak with a scholar or person of knowledge that you trust. All success comes from Allah (swt) and we ask Allah (swt) for His (swt)'s help.

First and foremost we can see about this ayah how it shows that the Quran is a legal Book. . Contrary to what some may say, the Quran is not only a Book of Spirituality that helps us build our relationship with Allah (swt). Rather it is also a Legislative Book. A Book of Law. In the Quran Allah (swt) has given us detailed and practical laws with which we should live our lives. The Laws of the Quran should guide the behavior and the actions of every single Muslim, every day of their lives. It should be a practical manual that they should be constantly looking to. This Book is as much practical as it is spiritual, and we should use it as the guide for both our lives and the lives of our community. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**He has only forbidden you the dead meat, the blood, the meat of swine, and that over which other than Allah has been invoked**". Notice the Arabic word *inama* which is a tool of exclusiveness; this means that only these have forbidden and nothing else. Once again we see the Love and Mercy of Allah (swt) for this Ummah, He (swt) has permitted for us so many foods and only a few has He (swt) forbidden for

us. If Allah (swt) wanted to, He (swt) could have permitted only type of food and forbidden everything else. Such a judgment would not have been unjust or unfair from the One Who created us, Who sustains us, and Who owns us. But He (swt) is so Merciful that He (swt) did not do that, He (swt) only forbade for us these few listed here.

First Allah (swt) forbade for us "**dead meat**". This refers to any kind of meat that comes from an animal that has already been dead. Any carrion. So if you were to find a dead carcass you would be forbidden to eat from it. Anything that is rotting or has been dead for an extended period of time is forbidden to eat from. The only meat that we can eat is from an animal that was alive and had been slaughtered for consumption. Any meat from an animal that has already been dead is forbidden. In his tafsir of this ayah Al-Qurtubi says that the word "**dead meat**" in this ayah also includes all kinds of carnivores. So any animal that eats other animals is also forbidden to eat. Thus lions, hyenas, dogs, and even other humans are not permissible for us at all. Any creature that eats meat itself is forbidden for us. There is one exception to this rule and that is the food of the sea. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that all of the meat of the sea, including the dead meat and the meat of the carnivores of the sea, is permissible to eat. So all of the animals that live in the sea are permissible for us to eat. It is only the dead animals and the carnivores of the land that are forbidden. Allah (swt) Knows Best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**the blood**". This should be self-explanatory, any kind of blood is forbidden for you to drink, be it the blood of humans or animals. Then Allah (swt) says "**the meat of swine**". Of course we all know that any kind of meat that comes from pigs is absolutely forbidden to eat. Those of us who are living in the West need to be especially careful of this rule. It is not only in bacon, or ham, or pepperoni where you will find the meat of pigs, but you will also find it in many foods that you never even have thought of. Many common foods, including certain kind of chips and jello have pig fat mixed into them. So always remember to fear Allah (swt), and honor His (swt)'s prohibitions, and check carefully the food that you are eating. We should all be familiar with the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said that if forbidden food were to enter our bodies then our dua would not be answered for forty days. May Allah (swt) save us from that, we need Him (swt) to answer all our prayers!

Then Allah (swt) says "**that over which other than Allah has been invoked**". This refers to the meat of an animal that was sacrificed to other than Allah (swt). So any animal that was killed in the name of any idol or any human, anything other than Allah (swt) is also forbidden to eat. As Sayyid Qutb mentions in his tafsir of this ayah, the meat from such an animal has been tainted by spiritual impurity. So because of the fact that another name besides that of your Rabb has been mentioned over it, that fact alone should make this food as disgusting and reprehensible to you as the meat of dead animals or pork.

Many people claim that the reason why Allah (swt) has forbidden these foods is because they are unhealthy. Such thinking is wrong. If Allah (swt) did not tell us why He (swt) has given us a certain law, then it is not our place to put a reason where Allah (swt) did not give us a reason. Remember the limitation of our minds and our knowledge. Allah (swt) is the All Knowing and the Most Wise, only He (swt) Knows best why He (swt) legislated these Laws. So it is not our place to put a reason when Allah (swt) has not given us one. We simply listen and obey the Law of Allah (swt) because we know that it comes from our Lord and Master. The place of a good slave is only to listen and obey, and never to question. So the reason why we follow the Law of Allah (swt) is because it demonstrates our servitude and submission to Him (swt). It is not because of any benefit that the command may have. The only benefit that we can seek from following the commands of Allah (swt) is the reward that He (swt) gives us. In addition to showing a lack of submission to Allah (swt), looking for the benefit in the Law of Allah (swt) is also very dangerous. Say for example that you say that the reason why pork is forbidden is because the pig is an unclean animal and so many diseases can come from eating its meat. If that is your thinking, then if it can be shown to you that once pig meat is cooked properly then there is no chance of getting sick, you might be tempted to eat it. You will tell yourself that the reason why Allah (swt) had forbade it was because it caused sickness and since you are cooking it well and you will not get sick, then it must be permissible for you. So with such thinking you end up eating that which is forbidden, having been deceived by Shaitan and your own arrogance where you think you can dare to question the Law of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us that hell is more suited for a body that feeds itself on that which is forbidden.

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But he who is driven by necessity, and is not disobedient or transgressing the limits, then there is no blame on him**". In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) gives us an exception to the foods that were forbidden in the first part. Once again we see how this demonstrates the Love and Mercy of Allah (swt) for this Ummah. Allah (swt) tells us here that in times of extreme hardship and difficulty, the laws concerning the prohibition of these foods can be lifted. Allah (swt) describes the people in this extreme difficulty as the ones who are driven by necessity. The scholars say that this means if you are starving and there is no other food except the foods that Allah (swt) has forbidden in this ayah, then you may eat only as much as can keep you alive until you can find the foods that are permissible for you. The scholars have said that this also applies in the situation when you are being forced to eat these forbidden foods by someone else. So if someone is forcing you to eat these foods, and they are threatening you or your family, then you may eat this food to save yourself. Once again the key to remember is that you are only eating this food because of the desperate situation that you are in, and you wish more than anything that you would not have to eat these foods. As always, Allah (swt) Knows best, and we ask Him (swt) to guide us to that which He (swt) is pleased with us doing.

We should note however that the dispensation given here to eat the forbidden foods is only in times of great necessity. It cannot be used as an excuse to indulge in the forbidden. Only the corrupt and evil person would use this dispensation to satisfy his lusts and desires. In fact many scholars have said that when Allah (swt) gives you a dispensation, it is closer to Taqwa not to take the dispensation. It is closer to Taqwa to always strive to flee from what Allah (swt) has forbidden. So you should only take the dispensation in times of extreme need and desperation. Do not use this ayah as an excuse to violate the Law of Allah (swt) whenever you feel like. To make everything forbidden as permissible only to suit your desires. Telling yourself that you are in a situation of extreme need when you are not. Always remember that Allah (swt) Knows your heart and He (swt) Knows the intention in your heart. Remember that this life is a test and remember the great reward that Allah (swt) has given for those who pass this test.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". This is to remind those who took this dispensation and ate the forbidden foods in times of dire necessity that their Rabb is indeed the Most Forgiving and Most Merciful. The early Muslims were terrified of doing anything forbidden, so much was their love and awe for Allah (swt) and so much was their fear of His (swt)'s punishment. Even though Allah (swt) had given them this allowance, many of them still would have hesitated to eat these foods. They would prefer to have died of starvation. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us and them that He (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful. This is a dispensation that He (swt) has given you in times of dire need. So if you eat of these forbidden foods in such times, and your intention was never to displease your Rabb, then you can be sure that He (swt) is Forgiving, Merciful. Even though Allah (swt) could have punished you for even the smallest transgression of His (swt)'s Laws, He (swt) has chosen to be Forgiving and pardon you time and time again. Allah (swt) has also chosen to be Merciful and has given you many dispensations in His (swt)'s Law so that even the life of this world which was meant to be a great test does not become unbearable for you. Notice here the emphasis and the certainty with which He (swt) says that He (swt) is Forgiving and Merciful. Would we ever know? Would we ever realize? Praise be to Allah (swt) Who has given Himself such Beautiful Names and thus made it easy for us to love Him (swt)!

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَيَشۡتَرُونَ بِهِۦ ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلًاۙ
أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ مَا يَأۡكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمۡ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ وَلَا
يُزَكِّيهِمۡ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ١٧٤

174. Surely the ones who conceal what Allah has revealed from the Book and purchase with it a small price, these eat nothing into their bellies except Fire and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Standing, nor will He purify them, and for them is a painful punishment.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) established for this Ummah some of the foundations of His (swt)'s Law. We were told which were the foods that were permissible for us to eat and which we were not. These laws are part of the Message that Allah (swt) has sent down for all mankind. These laws are teaching mankind how they can fulfill the purpose of their creation. Although these laws were legislated for the Muslims, they were part of a Message that was intended for all mankind. These laws are part of the test that Allah (swt) has given mankind in this Message (swt) has sent to them. Those who accept this Message and are able to submit themselves to the Will of Allah (swt) by following these laws are the ones who have passed this test. But those who turn away from this Message and refuse to follow the laws in this Message are the ones who have failed this test. In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us of such people who have failed this test and who have turned away from Him (swt). Among all of the people who have turned away from this Message, there is one group among them who are particularly evil. They are the ones who were absolutely certain that this Message was the Truth because they had the prior revelation from Allah (swt) prophesizing the coming of this Message. So not only do they reject this Message but they conceal the knowledge of this Message that is with them. It is to such people that Allah (swt) brings our attention here. Once again we should remind ourselves to be aware of these people and we have to remind ourselves to ask Allah (swt) to save us from becoming these people.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Surely the ones who conceal what Allah has revealed from the Book and purchase with it a small price**". This refers to the Jews who had the knowledge about the Prophet (saw) in their Books but they chose to conceal this knowledge. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), it said so in the clearest of terms in their Books, but they chose to cover this knowledge from their people and from the Muslims. They knew that if they accepted the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt), then that meant that they would have to submit themselves to the Law of Allah (swt). They had all but thrown away the Sacred Law that Allah (swt) had revealed to Musa (as), and they had gotten used to a life of only following their desires. Now they knew that if they acknowledged the Prophet (saw), then they would have to follow the Sacred Law that he (saw) brought. This was something that they were not willing to do. So they covered and hid all of the descriptions of the Prophet (saw) that were in their Book. Allah (swt) describes such an action as "**purchasing with it a small price**". When they chose to deny the Prophet (saw), even though they were certain that he (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt), they made a transaction. They exchanged their Hereafter for the life of this world. They exchanged a few fleeting pleasures in the life of this world for the Pleasure of their Creator. Allah (swt) calls this a small price because the life of this world compared to the Hereafter will always be small. For a few small transient pleasures in the life of this world, they have bought for themselves eternal pain and torment in the Hereafter. How terrible is the transaction that they have made!

What is their fate for this exchange that they have made? Allah (swt) says "**these eat nothing into their bellies except Fire**". They desired so much the life of this world. They desired so much to satisfy themselves with everything in this world. They did not hold themselves back from anything. They did not control themselves at all. Now this will be their fate in the Hereafter because of all that they consumed in the life of this world. They loved to eat, they loved to satisfy themselves, they loved to hoard themselves on everything that they could find. But in the Hereafter they will be consuming nothing but Fire. This is their reward for failing to acknowledge the Message that Allah (swt) sent to them. This is their reward for failing to rule themselves by the Law of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Standing**". How much must be the Wrath of Allah (swt) with such a people that He (swt) would not even speak to them on the Day of Judgment? How embarrassing and depressing must it be when your Creator and your Sustainer, your Lord and your Master, will not even address you on that Day. Imagine yourself standing on the plain of Judgment with all of mankind, you want more than anything else to speak to Allah (swt) so that you can explain yourself to Him (swt). But He (swt) will not speak to you on that Day, how terrible would that be?

Then Allah (swt) says "**nor will He purify them**". This means that Allah (swt) will not purify them of the sins and the evils that they did in the life of this world. On the Day of Judgment Allah (swt) will purify the true believers of all of the sins that they have committed. Some of the believers may have their sins cleansed by Allah (swt) forgiving them completely, and some of them may have their sins cleansed by going through some trial or punishment on the Day of Judgment, and some of them may even have to enter the Fire for a period to have their sins cleansed if their sins are too many and too great, we seek refuge in Allah (swt) from the Fire! But all of the believers will eventually be purified of their sins and they will be allowed to enter the Garden forever. But for these people who turned away from the Message when they knew that it was the Truth, they will never be purified of all the evil and the filth that they had done. They will stay in the Fire forever, and their sins and their evil will be upon them forever. Because they chose to deny Allah (swt) and they would not even acknowledge Him (swt) He (swt) will have nothing to do with them on that Day. Finally Allah (swt) says "**and for them is a painful punishment**". This is what they have earned for themselves because of what they have done. They knew that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt), and still they covered the descriptions of him (saw) in their Books. Did they not realize that what they were covering was the Words of Allah (swt)? Did they not realize that they were earning the Wrath of Allah (swt) because of the evil that they were doing? Did they not realize that they were not only misguiding themselves but countless others as well? Even their own children and descendants. But such was the evil of these people. Such was how much they had allowed their pride and their desires to conquer them and such was how distant they had become from their Lord.

There is a strong lesson for us as well in this ayah. That is that we must not hide any of the knowledge of this Din from the people. All that we have of Islam is the knowledge of it, so when we hide knowledge from the people we are hiding Islam from them. So if we have knowledge of this Din, and we know that this knowledge will bring the people closer to Allah (swt) and we are certain that this knowledge is correct, then we must teach the people this knowledge that we have. We have to help to spread the light of this Message to others. As one scholar beautifully said, a candle no matter how brightly it burns is of no use to anyone if it is kept hidden away and it does not benefit others by its light. So no matter how much we know, our knowledge is useless unless we touch others that knowledge. The worth of our knowledge is how much we and those around us benefit from it. Thus we have to strive to teach others whatever knowledge that we have. We should teach our family and our friends these ayahs that we are learning. We have to strive to bring them closer to their Lord. We exist to worship and serve Allah (swt) and so nothing brings us greater joy than to see others worshipping and serving Him (swt) as well. If we are among those who have knowledge of the Din then we are more fortunate than so many other souls on this earth. Because we have with us the path that leads to the Garden, the path that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The path that leads to the Real and the True. So how evil and wretched a people would we be if we do not show all the other misguided souls in the world this path? So we have to strive to bring the people closer to Allah (swt) with the knowledge that we have. We have to strive to teach the people this Book. The Prophet (saw) told us that the best of us are the ones who learn the Quran and teach it. Insha Allah this is the only way that we can save ourselves from becoming like those whom Allah (swt) is describing in this ayah. The ones who hid the Book from their people. May Allah (swt) allow us to do that! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that this Book is what He (swt) has revealed, a Message from the Lord of all the worlds! What better use then could there be of our life other than learning this Book and teaching others? When Allah (swt) speaks to you on the Day of Judgment and asks you what you did with your life then you can tell Him (swt) that you showed the people to Him (swt).

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلضَّلَٰلَةَ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَٱلْعَذَابَ بِٱلْمَغْفِرَةِ ۚ فَمَآ أَصْبَرَهُمْ
عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾

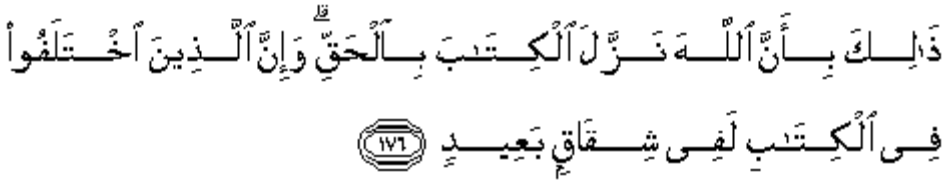
176. These are the ones who give away the Guidance for the misguidance, and give away the Forgiveness for the punishment, so how patient are they on the Fire.

This ayah is a direct continuation of the previous ayah. Recall in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) brought our attention to those people who would conceal and hide the revelation that they had received from Him (swt). They do it only so that they can get a small price in the life of this world. Allah (swt) promised them that He (swt) will not speak to them on the Day of Judgment, and that He (swt) will not purify them, and that for them is a painful punishment. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe to us such people. The descriptions of such people should put fear into us, it should motivate us to spread the knowledge of this Din to others, otherwise we must fear that we may eventually suffer a similar fate as well. May Allah (swt) save us!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by describing for us again the trade that such people have made. Allah (swt) says "**These are the ones who give away the Guidance for the misguidance**". They have the Guidance with them because they have the Book of Allah (swt). This Book is a guide on how to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). If they follow this guidance, then they will be fulfilling the purpose of their existence, they would find peace and tranquility in this world, and they would get the greatest of rewards in the next world. But they traded all of this way for misguidance. Misguidance is following one's desires and one's pride. It is the path that Shaitan invites to. This is the path that leads to the displeasure of Allah (swt), it leads to a miserable and wretched life in this world, and to a painful punishment in the Hereafter. So these people gave away the guidance that they had and they got in return the misguidance. How terrible is this exchange that they have made! What is even more frightening is that we might make this exchange as well if we are not careful. If we choose to ignore the Quran. If we choose not to learn it and teach it to others. May Allah (swt) save us!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and give away the Forgiveness for the punishment**". When the Prophet (saw) came to the Jews with the Final Message from Allah (swt), Allah (swt) was giving them yet another chance to attain His (swt)'s Forgiveness. Allah (swt) was giving them a chance to redeem themselves from all of the evil that they had done. But what Allah (swt) describes here is what they did when they rejected this Message that they knew was the Truth! They had a chance for forgiveness and they traded it away to get punishment. So see once again how Merciful and Loving Allah (swt) has been with His (swt)'s servants, giving them chance after chance to come back to Him (swt), and see how ungrateful and insolent the slaves have been with their Lord and Master. May Allah (swt) save us from ever behaving towards Him (swt) in such a way! May Allah (swt) save us from ever giving up His (swt)'s Forgiveness to get punishment! The Forgiveness of Allah (swt) is the only chance that any of us sinners have! If we give it up then there is nothing left for us except the Fire!

As a result of the trade that they made, they got nothing but Fire. Allah (swt) says "**so how patient are they on the Fire**". In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb tells us how Allah (swt) is employing sarcasm here. This is a question for which everyone should know the answer; there is no one who can have patience on the Fire. The pain is so severe and so intense that even the strongest and most enduring of people cannot bear it for even a second. So Allah (swt) sarcastically asks them here as to how they can have patience on this. Sayyid Qutb also tells us how they deserve such sarcasm because of the evil that they have done. They have earned this sarcasm from their Creator, and they have earned this punishment because of the evil that they had done. They knew that this Message was the Truth and still they concealed it from their people. They knew that Allah (swt) was their Lord and Master and still they turned away from Him (swt). They knew that the Prophet (saw) was their Messenger and still they ridiculed him (saw) and opposed him (saw). May Allah (swt) save us from ever doing that! May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire! No one can have patience on the Fire!



177. That is because Allah surely revealed the Book with the Truth. Surely those who disagree concerning the Book are far in schisms.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us how those who hid the Sacred Knowledge were destined for the Fire. The Fire for which no soul can have patience on for even one moment. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us why they were deserving of such a terrible punishment. Allah (swt) tells us that it is because He (swt) has sent down the Book with the Truth. This Book has the ultimate Truth in it. First and foremost because it leads the people to Allah (swt) and He (swt) is the Ultimate Reality and the Ultimate Truth. Allah (swt) should be the purpose of the life of every single human. So how evil are a people who hide this Message from the people? How evil are a people who prevent mankind from fulfilling the purpose of their existence? Do they not realize that when they cover this Message, they are covering the path that leads to Allah (swt)? How evil is one who would deny the people from knowing about their Creator? Do they deserve anything less than the Fire as punishment for such evil? Do they not realize that what they were hiding was the Book of Truth from the Lord and Master of the universe? So Allah (swt) had revealed this Book with the Truth, and the reason why these people became deserving of such a terrible punishment is because they concealed this Truth that they knew so well. They chose not to give this revelation the respect and reverence it deserves!

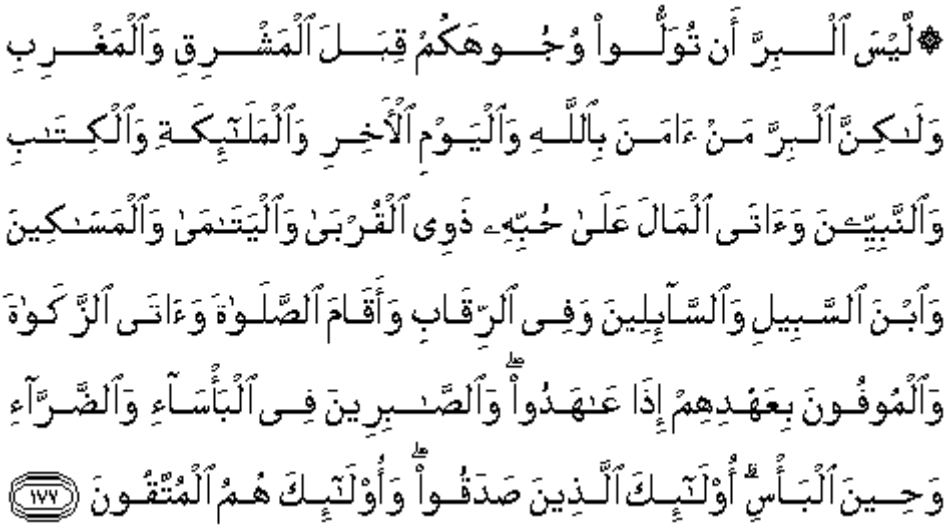
In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely those who disagree concerning the Book are far in schisms**". The ones who disagree concerning the Book are the ones who reject it when they are certain that it is the Truth. They are the ones who refuse to affirm the Truth that they know. Allah (swt) describes such people in this ayah as being far in schisms. The Book that Allah (swt) revealed is the Truth, and everything else other than it is falsehood. While there is only one Truth, there are many falsehoods. So those who deviate from the Truth will never agree on anything, they will always be in schisms and disagreement. When

you do not have one Truth to unite the people around, the people will always disagree on everything. This is because there is no single foundation that the people agree on that can serve to unite them. So people end up following their desires, and everyone has their own desires. The result is that everyone ends up looking out for only themselves. This is true for all the ideologies of falsehood. The only exception is our Din. Because ours is the Truth, been sent by the True.

Now it is true that Islam does have some differences, but look how much differences exist in other religions and ideologies. How many different sects and divisions they have broken into, how many different opinions they have on every single issue. This is the result of their rejecting the Book of Allah (swt). They have put themselves in constant argumentation and conflicts. They never know the Truth, they only know falsehood and so they will always have disputation and conflicts. As for Islam, there are areas where Allah (swt) has allowed differences of opinion, but on the foundations of this Din there can be no differences of opinion. The entire subject of *Ikhtilaf* or "differences of opinion in Islam" is a deep subject that we cannot go into here. But what we must know from this subject for our understanding of this ayah is that there are some areas where Islam does allow differences of opinion and other areas where Islam does not tolerate differences of opinion. The differences of opinion that Islam allows do not harm the Din or the Ummah. For example, where do we place our hands in our Salah, this is an area where Islam permits different opinions. But you can see that it is not a difference on a critical or fatal issue. Your prayer is just as valid if you put your hands on your stomach or on your chest. Both ways of praying have been narrated from the Prophet (saw), so both opinions are correct. But the foundations of this Din are where there can be no differences of opinion. The foundations are the core of this Din, and there can be no differences on it. Allah (swt) revealed this Din in such a way so that there is one Truth where this Ummah can come together and unite on. For example all Muslims agree on the Oneness of Allah (swt), and on the Prophet (saw) being the last messenger of Allah (swt), all Muslims agree in the existence of paradise and hellfire, all Muslims agree that Musa (as) and 'Isa (as) were messengers of Allah (swt), all Muslims agree on the obligation of Salah and Zakat. On the vast, vast majority of our beliefs and practices all Muslims are in agreement. Now compare this with how the many different sects of Christianity view 'Isa (as).

You can see how even on the very foundations of their belief they are in disagreement and argumentation. Some of them say that 'Isa (as) "is the Lord", others say that he (as) was the "son of god", and others say that he (as) was human who only became divine for a moment. They argue and disagree on even the most fundamental issues of their belief. Some of them even reject the idea of the Hereafter. This same example can be found in all religions. They will all disagree on even the most fundamental issues of their belief. This is not only true for other religions, but it is true for other ideologies as well. Look at the secular society of the West today, there is disagreement among the people on virtually every issue. On any issue that you can think of you will find different opinions that everyone has. Only in Islam is this problem not to be found. Only in Islam do we have consensus where all Muslims agree on all the foundations of our Din. Why is this? Why has our Ummah found the Truth and they have been so divided? The reason for this links back to what Allah (swt) said in the previous part of the ayah. Recall how Allah (swt) told us that He (swt) has revealed the Book with Truth. In the Book that Allah (swt) has revealed is the Truth that can unite the people. Now the Christians and all other nations have lost the Book that Allah (swt) has revealed to them. So they end up following their whims and desires. Whenever they have a dispute, they do not have a Book to return to so each of them follows what they think is correct. What their whims and desire lead them. But we have our Book as it was revealed to us by Allah (swt). So whenever we have any dispute, we can always go back to the Quran and Sunnah to see what Allah (swt) has said on that issue.

Now it is true that today there are some divisions that exist in the Ummah. But this is only because some Muslims have failed to go back to the Quran and Sunnah. For example some members of our community find fault with the Sahabah. How can they do this when there are so many ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) has praised the Sahabah? So many ahadith where the Prophet (saw) has praised his (saw)'s companions. If these people would only look to this then they would see how wrong they are in what they say. So the only time in which we will fall into divisions is when we abandon the Book that Allah (swt) has given us. But as long as we return to the Quran and Sunnah and allow it to be the final judge in what we say, then Insha Allah we can end all divisions and disputations. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that!



178. It is not *Al-Birr* that you turn your face towards the East or the West, but *Al-Birr* is one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the books and the prophets, and who gives wealth over his love for it to the near relations, and to the orphans, and to the *Miskeen*, and to the travelers, and to the ones who ask, and for the freeing of slaves, and who establishes Salah, and who gives Zakat, and who fulfill their trusts when they make a trust, and who are patient in hardship and in suffering and in times of panic, these are the Sadiqoon, these are the Muttaqoon.

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this one ayah summarizes all of Islam. When you call the people to Islam, this ayah is what you are calling them to. It is part of the Miracle of the Quran that Allah (swt) has placed so much meaning in so few words. In reality, entire books can be written on this ayah alone. However in this tafsir we are only going to scratch the surface in this ocean of meaning. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to tell us what He (swt) is pleased. Allah (swt) continues to guide us to Him (swt). Who is there then who will ponder and reflect on this ayah so that they can be guided to the purpose of their existence? In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us what ***Al-Birr*** is. ***Al-Birr*** could be linguistically defined as “righteousness” or “doing good”, but in reality it is fulfilling the purpose of your existence. It is fulfilling the reason why you were created, and why you are being sustained at this moment. That is for no other reason than to worship and serve Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**It is not *Al-Birr* that you turn your face towards the East or the West**". This part of the ayah is a response to the Jews and the hypocrites who were finding fault with the change of the qibla. Remember how they started complaining and raising objections when Allah (swt) changed the qibla from *Bayt al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the Kabbah in Makkah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) settles the dispute once and for all. Allah (swt) shows the Muslims how the contentions of these enemies of Islam were completely false and were not based on truth and sincerity. Allah (swt) shows the Muslims how **Al-Birr** does not come from facing a particular direction in prayer but it comes from being obedient and submissive to Allah (swt). That is exactly what Muslims were doing, when Allah (swt) commanded them to pray towards Jerusalem they prayed towards Jerusalem and when Allah (swt) commanded them to pray towards Makkah, they prayed towards Makkah. The Muslims did exactly what Allah (swt) commanded them to do. This is also exactly what the Jews and hypocrites were refusing to do. So who is it then that who had **Al-Birr** and who did not? What right then did these enemies of Islam have to question the changing of the qibla?

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that the intention behind the action is far more important than the physical performance of the action itself. Islam is not merely a set of rules. Islam is not merely a list of actions that you should do and a list of actions that you should not do. While Islam does have a very detailed Law that covers every single action that the human being can take, what is even more important is the intention that the human has in his heart when he or she does that action. Every single action that the human takes must be done with the intention of becoming closer to Allah (swt). Every single action must be done seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So even when you eat or sleep, you should eat and sleep with the intention that it will give you strength to worship Allah (swt). When you enjoy a delicious fruit or your spouse, you should take that enjoyment knowing that it was Allah (swt) Who made this pleasure lawful for you. So **Al-Birr** comes not from doing this action or doing that action, but it comes from the intention in your heart when you did that action. What matters is not the physical performance of the action or the formality of that action, what matters is the intention that you have for Allah (swt) when you did that action.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but Al-Birr is one who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the books and the prophets**". Now Allah (swt) begins to define what **Al-Birr** really is. First and foremost it is the Iman in your heart. All of your actions should come from this Iman. The most important part of this Iman is your belief in Allah (swt). Now to believe in Allah (swt) does not simply mean to believe in a Creator for this universe. The vast majority of people today do believe in a Creator for this universe. But you have to believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has described Himself in the Quran. This means you have to believe in Allah (swt) as the one and only *illah* in your heart. Remember how we said that your *illah* is the purpose of your existence, everything you do is for your *illah* and you *illah* is always on your mind. This is what it means to truly believe in Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us all to reach this station of Iman!

When all the people of a society have Allah (swt) as the *illah* in their hearts, then the society itself exists to worship and serve Allah (swt) just like all of the people within it do. Such a society is the Islamic State, where every single law, every single part of the government, every single way in which the affairs of the society is conducted has a basis in the Quran and Sunnah. The government and the land submit to Allah (swt) just like the people do. How could any believer who truly believes in Allah (swt) be content living in any other society but this one? How can you say that you truly believe in Allah (swt) and then not find any problem when the society around you is heedless of Him (swt) and in that society there exists that which displease Him (swt)? So the true belief in Allah (swt) not only mandates that the individual should submit to Allah (swt), but it also requires that the entire society submit itself to Him (swt) as well. The true belief in Allah (swt) is the belief that He (swt) must be everything in your life, in the lives of those around you, and in your society. When you truly believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) should be believed in then you realize His Majesty and Glory. You realize that anything less than total submission is not deserving of Him (swt). This is what you believe in and so this is what you work to bring about.

Then Allah (swt) tells us how **Al-Birr** is to believe in the Last Day. How will a human being not be righteous when he is certain that he will one Day soon return to Allah (swt) and be judged for each and every one of his actions? Each and every action. There is no action, no

matter how small or how insignificant that he will not be judged for. Every moment of his life has been accurately recorded. On that Day the records will be opened and the judgment will be passed. There is not even the smallest of actions that will be overlooked on that Day. Once the human being has the knowledge of this Day then he will strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). For each and every action that he takes, he can almost picture himself on the plain of Judgment being judged for that action by his Rabb. This is what motivates him to strive to serve his Lord. This is what motivates him to be righteous.

Then Allah (swt) says that **Al-Birr** is to believe in the angels. Allah (swt) has told us in the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that there trillions and trillions of angels. There are far more angels than human beings. In one hadith the Prophet (saw) even told us how the heavens above us are almost bursting because of the weight of the angels on them. Angels also have incredible powers. They can travel between the great distances between earth and the seven heavens in a very short time. They can move the earth and the planets. They can lift mountains. They can take a human soul from a body. These are just a few of the powers that we know about, we can be certain that they have even more powers that we do not know about. But even more amazing than their numbers and their powers is the fact that each and every single one of them is always obedient to Allah (swt). They never disobey Allah (swt), not even once. For every moment of their existence, they always perform the purpose of their creation by continuously worshipping and serving Allah (swt). When we know of such wonderful creatures, should we not want to try to be like them? Recall how Allah (swt) made them prostrate before our father Adam (as), how is it then that they can be obedient to Allah (swt) and we cannot? Allah (swt) has given us the opportunity to become even closer to Him (swt) than the angels so how then can we turn away from that opportunity? If these powerful and magnificent creatures can make themselves humble before Allah (swt) then why cannot we? We who are so disgusting and weak. So an important part of **Al-Birr** is to believe in the angels. No one can be considered righteous; no one can even be considered a Muslim unless they believe in the angels. Once we have arrived at certainty in these angels then we must use this knowledge of them to come even closer to Allah (swt). We should try to be obedient to Allah (swt) just like they are.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that **Al-Birr** is to believe in the books and the prophets. We have to believe that Allah (swt) sent guidance to mankind to guide them to Him (swt). We have to believe that the human being would be lost and in chaos without this guidance from Allah (swt). This guidance came in the form of books that were given to prophets and messengers. So **Al-Birr** is to believe with utmost certainty that humanity needs guidance from Allah (swt) on how to live and that such guidance has come in the form of messengers bearing books. When we have this belief in the books and the messengers, then we know that the Quran and the Prophet (saw) are indeed sources of guidance from Allah (swt). They only continue and culminate a long line of books and messengers that Allah (swt) has sent for the guidance of mankind. Such a belief will motivate us to follow our Book and our Prophet (saw), so that we can gain **Al-Birr**.

Then Allah (swt) tells us the one who has **Al-Birr** is "**who gives wealth over his love for it**". All human beings have a natural love for wealth. The Prophet (saw) said "if the son of Adam was given a valley of gold, he would want another one just like it". The thirst that the human being has for wealth can never be satisfied. But the ones who truly believe in Allah (swt) have a greater love for Him (swt) than they do for their wealth. So they give away their wealth despite their love for it because of their love for Allah (swt). They give away their wealth over their love for it. Their intention in giving their wealth is only to come closer to Allah (swt). Their love for Allah (swt) is far greater than their love for wealth. Their love for Allah (swt) rises over their love for wealth. So who is that they give their wealth to?

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that first and foremost, the wealth should be given to "**the near relations"**. So the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that the ones who are in need and who have the closest relation to you should have the first right to your wealth. From this we once again see the extreme importance that Allah (swt) places on taking care of the family. On supporting them and providing for them. It is from the strength of the Islamic family that the strength of the Islamic society comes. So the one who has **Al-Birr** will take care of and look after his family as Allah (swt) has commanded him to do. Despite his love for wealth, he will give to those of his family who are in need however much they need.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the one who has **Al-Birr** is the one who gives from his wealth to "**the orphans**". Is there anyone who is more in need than a child without parents or anyone to care for them? In any society, they are the most in need and they are often the most neglected because they are so weak both physically and intellectually. Often times they are ignorant to all the wrong that has been done to them. That is why after telling us to take care of our near family, Allah (swt) then tells us to take care of the orphans if we want to attain **Al-Birr**.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that in order to attain Al-Birr we also have to give our wealth to "**the *Miskeen***". These are the people in a society who are extremely poor. They are the ones who do not even have the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing. Those of us who have never lived a life like they have can never imagine how difficult it could be. Just imagine having to go days without decent food, or not having clothes to cover your back, or being out in the cold without a home to come to. Once you truly realize that you will see how grateful to Allah (swt) you must be. By making certain that such people are taken care of, Allah (swt) seeks to eliminate the presence of such people in a society. So a Muslim will not attain **Al-Birr** until he cares for those who are less fortunate than him, and he at least makes a best effort to help them.

The next category of people whom Allah (swt) mentions are **the travelers**. These could be guests who come to your home from a far away place or it could be the travelers in a city who came from a far away place but have nowhere to go. Allah (swt) encourages us in this part of the ayah to take care of both of these kinds of people. Travelers are also group who are very often in need, they have no home to go to and they do not know anyone in the strange land that they are in. So we have to try our best to make them feel at home and make them feel that they are at a place where they belong. Once again we see that to attain **Al-Birr** is to spend to on those in need including those who have come to your land from a far away place.

Then Allah (swt) mentions "**the ones who ask**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that we also need to give to anyone who comes to us and asks. We have to give them what is in our capacity to give them after we have taken care of the needs of our family. Once again we see in this ayah how Allah (swt) is building the perfect human being. The natural reaction of many people when others come to them for assistance is that they get angered and they feel a reluctance to let go of

their wealth or offer any help. Everyone to some degree has a desire to look out for themselves. Stinginess and selfishness is part of the base nature of the human being. However in this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) teaches us that if we want to attain **Al-Birr** we have to suppress our anger and our greed and we have to give to the one asking. We do not give to them so that we can have some power over them or so that we can later ask them for a favor, but we give to them only to attain the Pleasure of our Rabb. What is this life except giving up what we have and seeking Allah (swt) through it?

Then Allah (swt) tells us that the ones who attain Al-Birr are the ones who give their wealth for "**the freeing of slaves**". Slavery in Islam is nothing like slavery in the West. Slavery in Islam was never based on race like it has been in the West. An Arab can be a slave just like a non-Arab, and a white can be a slave just like a black. The way that slaves were treated in Islam is also very different from how they were treated in the West. During the time of slavery, the Europeans did not view their slaves as humans. The slaves were viewed like animals and their masters mistreated them in any way that they wanted. On the other hand, in Islam Allah (swt) has taught us that all humans are equal. The slave's relationship with his master is like that of an employee to an employer. So Allah (swt) has obligated that all slaves must be treated well. Islam recognizes that slavery is necessary as long as there is war. What else can you do with the prisoners and the civilians captured during war? Many slaves in Islam would have agreements with their master that if they work for a certain period of time, then they would be able to buy their own freedom. In addition, any master who mistreats a slave is answerable to Allah (swt). Then in addition to all this is the fact that Allah (swt) loves for us to free slaves as can be seen in this ayah. We see from this ayah that another way with which to attain **Al-Birr** is to spend your wealth to buy the freedom of slaves. In his tafsir of this ayah, Al-Qurtubi tells us how Imam Malik (ra) was of the opinion that one should use more and more of their wealth for the freeing of slaves. This is the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on spending wealth to free slaves. However once again the key in this action must be the intention. You must not free a slave so that he can then be your slave or so that you can demand a favor of him, rather you must free the slave seeking only the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

So we see from here that Al-Birr or righteousness is taking care of those who are less fortunate than you. Taking care of those in need. Now Allah (swt) has also commanded us that when we do something it should be done in the best way possible. So if our goal is to take care of all of the orphans, and all of the poor, and all of the oppressed, then what is the best way to do it? Is it simply by each of us giving charity and each of us trying to take care of them individually? While this might help a few among them, this would never be able to take care of them. Each of us by ourselves could never hope to take care of all of those in need if we each worked by ourselves. Rather it can clearly be seen that the best way to take care of these people is if there is a system in place to take care of them. This system must be far more powerful and have far more resources than individual charity organizations. Rather it must be a government. A government that exists to take care of the people. Of course that government is none other than the Islamic State. So if we want to obey the command that Allah (swt) has given us in this ayah then we must work in whatever capacity we can to return the political authority to Islam and to bring back the Islamic Economic system. The system that exists to take care of the people.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that in order to attain Al-Birr we have to be "**the one who establishes Salah, and the one who gives Zakat**". Insha Allah, we have already discussed the extreme importance of Salah and Zakat in previous ayahs of this Surah. We should once again remind ourselves how Allah (swt) is repeating these commands for us again and again to convey to us how important it is that we fulfill them. So just as your Rabb reminds you of these commands, you should look again to your Salah and your Zakat and see if they are in order. You will never attain Al-Birr until you are among those who perform their Salah properly and who always give their Zakat on time and the amount that is due. Before you even think about doing any kind of work for Islam, you have to make sure that you properly establish these pillars of our Din. If there is no Salah and Zakat in the life of a Muslim then there is no Islam.

Now we can also note that even for the commands of Salah and Zakat, the Islamic State needs to be present for it to be established properly. One of the main reasons today why many people do not pray is because they cannot take time off from their work or school. However when the Islamic State returns, then the law of the land will be that there can be no business

conducted during the times of prayer. All the shops and all of the offices will be closed during this time so that the people can go to the masjid for Salah. On top of this is the fact that there will also be a severe penalty imposed on those who are negligent of their prayers. So the Islamic State as a whole exists to ensure that the Salah is established. Until it returns we will continue to have this sorry state of affairs where the majority of Muslims do not even make their five daily prayers.

Even the Zakat needs the Islamic State to be present in order to be properly collected and distributed. How many are the wealthy Muslims today who do not pay Zakat? Even the so-called "amirs" and "shaykhs" in the oil rich Muslim lands try to find some loophole through which they can escape paying Zakat on the exuberant amount of wealth that they have. Instead of spending this wealth on the Muslim Ummah, they spend it on themselves. You would be shocked beyond belief if we told you about the extravagance and the decadence that they squander their wealth on. Only when the Islamic State returns can the Khalifah ensure that everyone pays their fair share of the Zakat. The Khalifah will also make sure that the ones who receive the Zakat are those who are most in need of it.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that in order to attain Al-Birr we need to be among those who "**who fulfill their trusts when they make a trust**". It is the responsibility of every Muslim that when he makes a promise that he should keep that promise. When you enter into a contract with someone, you should fulfill your end of that contract. When you have an obligation to perform towards someone, you should fulfill that obligation. Even if that person may be someone whom you do not like, even if that person has not been fair to you in the past, you still must fulfill the promise that you made with them because you are fulfilling that trust for the sake of Allah (swt) and not for their sake. You are one who lives for Allah (swt) and not for yourself or for them. That is why part of **Al-Birr** in the Sight of Allah (swt) is that you keep every promise that you make and fulfill every obligation that you have.

Then Allah (swt) tells us that in order to attain Al-Birr we have to be among those who are "**patient in hardship and in suffering and in times of panic**". The importance of patience in this Din cannot be stressed enough. Our scholars have said that patience is half of Iman and some scholars have even said that patience is Iman. Allah (swt) created us to worship and serve

Him (swt), if you truly believe this fact, if you are always cognizant of this fact, then you should know that any difficulty that you face is from Him (swt). You have to realize that it is a test that Allah (swt) has given you. So the stronger that your faith is in Allah (swt), the stronger you will be through the trials and difficulties that you have to go through. Allah (swt) specifically mentions three situations that can occur in the life of a Muslim for which he must have patience. The first is hardship and poverty. When you are deprived of wealth, when you do not have enough, when your needs are not being fulfilled. Even when there is something that you desire that you cannot have. You have to be patient through your time of depravation and need. This is the first instance where you must have patience in order to attain Al-Birr. You overcome your suffering by finding contentment in the Decree of Allah (swt). The fact that Allah (swt) is Aware of your need and the knowledge that He (swt) will soon provide for you gives you relief. You find solace in the fact that your Lord Knows about your hunger and your need even more than you do.

The second instance in which you need to have patience is in times of suffering and illness. When you feel pain, when your body does not feel right, when you have a disease, these are times when you must strive to remember Allah (swt). You know that Allah (swt) Knows your suffering at this moment even more than you know your own suffering. Allah (swt) Knows exactly how much pain and discomfort that you are feeling, How wonderful is it to know that your Lord Knows your pain? He (swt) Knows how much you are suffering even more than you do. This is for the largest of pains and the smallest of pains. You also know that if you can have patience at this moment then Allah (swt) will reward you for your strength and He (swt) will remove from you some of the sins that you have done. This patience through your illness and suffering is another way through which you can attain Al-Birr.

Finally you also have to be patient during times of panic. This refers to times of fear and uncertainty. Times when feelings of anxiety and fear try to enter into your heart. It could be during times of war when you are in a battle or it could be a time when the enemies of Islam are powerful and they are hunting the Muslims. There is a natural fear that comes into all human being at times such as these. Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that in order to attain Al-Birr they have to be patient for the His (swt)'s sake during such times.

So we see from these ayahs how Al-Birr is the journey to Allah (swt). It is coming closer to Allah (swt) by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). In this ayah Allah (swt) has listed for us some of those actions which are most pleasing to Him (swt). First we have to strive to increase our belief and our certainty in Allah (swt). We have to be sure that Allah (swt) is there and that He (swt) is with us. We must strive to increase our certainty in this fact, every day, every moment, of our lives. The great Sufi scholars have said that Allah (swt) is not veiled from us from something that exists apart from Him (swt) for nothing exists apart from Him (swt). Everything has been brought into existence by Him (swt) and everything is being sustained at every moment by Him (swt). Rather what veils us from Him (swt) is us imagining that something exists other than Him (swt).So we see only this world and we do not see Allah (swt) Who is the Reality behind this world. Sustaining it and maintaining it at every moment. We have to strive to increase our faith until we become conscious of this Reality. As we see from this ayah, it is an integral part of our Din, an integral part of righteousness, that we reach certainty in our Lord.

Then we have to increase our belief in the Last Day, the angels, and the books and the prophets. As we mentioned our belief in all of these has a direct impact on our actions. The angels and the prophets are the role models that we can always look up to. They are the ones who were conscious of Allah (swt) at every moment of their existence, and at every moment they were striving to their utmost to please Him (swt). Although we will never reach this ideal, it is still the far goal towards which we must be journeying throughout our lives. The way that we do this, the way that we seek to come closer to Allah (swt) is by following the guidance that was revealed in the books. We spend our lives studying the scripture, trying to implement the knowledge that we learn in our lives, and teaching others what we have learned. All of this is done in preparation for the Last Day. The Day on which we hope to return to our Lord.

After Allah (swt) told us the importance of belief, He (swt) told us of some of the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt), these are the actions that will help us to attain Al-Birr. We saw that first and foremost Allah (swt) loves when we spend our wealth despite our love for it. All human beings have a strong love for wealth, for money and the material goods of this world. But to overcome this love for wealth and this greed, to spend out from that which you love, is an action

that is so pleasing to Allah (swt) that He (swt) lists it here as the first of actions that must be performed in order to attain Al-Birr. Then Allah (swt) reminds us of the two pillars of this Din in Salah and Zakat. Then Allah (swt) tells us that we must honor our contracts, keep our promises and fulfill our trusts. We keep our promises with others not for their sake or for our sake but for the sake of Allah (swt). Then Allah (swt) commands us to be patient in times of hardship, in times of suffering, and in times of fear and uncertainty. Even though natural feelings of pain, fear or sloth may appear in the person during such times, Allah (swt) commands us to overcome these feelings and to be patient for His (swt)'s sake. So we see that Al-Birr is a station that we must all strive to attain. It is a station where one lives every moment of their lives for Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) concludes this ayah by describing those who attain Al-Birr as "**these are the Sadiqoon, these are the Muttaqoon**". The **Sadiqoon** are the ones who are true and sincere in their belief of Allah (swt). They are the ones who have the deepest conviction and the firmest belief in Allah (swt). The **Sadiqoon** are also the **Muttaqoon**. The **Muttaqoon** are those who are always aware and conscious of Allah (swt). They are always aware of Him (swt) so they are afraid to do anything that might displease Him (swt). Their certainty leads them to always take precautions in their actions. This is the station that we must all strive to attain. We have to build our belief so that we have the utmost conviction in Allah (swt) and in the meeting with Him (swt). As a consequence of such certainty we must fear Him (swt). This fear must be manifested in our striving to follow His Book and His Messenger (saw). In doing only the actions that He (swt) likes.

One question that we can ask ourselves before we conclude our discussion of this ayah is that why does Allah (swt) mention the **Sadiqoon** and the **Muttaqoon** after He (swt) describes to us what Al-Birr is. Why does Allah (swt) not mention them at the beginning of the ayah? Why at the end? The reason for this is because when you strive to attain Al-Birr, that is when you will become among the **Sadiqoon** and the **Muttaqoon**. In other words when you strive to do what Allah (swt) tells us you to do in this ayah, that is when you will become among the **Sadiqoon** and the **Muttaqoon**. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to do it! May Allah (swt) make us among those whom He (swt) is pleased with!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡقِصَاصُ فِي ٱلۡقَتۡلَىۖ ٱلۡحُرُّ بِٱلۡحُرِّ
وَٱلۡعَبۡدُ بِٱلۡعَبۡدِ وَٱلۡأُنثَىٰ بِٱلۡأُنثَىٰۚ فَمَنۡ عُفِيَ لَهُۥ مِنۡ أَخِيهِ شَيۡءٞ فَٱتِّبَاعُۢ
بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَأَدَآءٌ إِلَيۡهِ بِإِحۡسَٰنٖۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَخۡفِيفٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَرَحۡمَةٞۗ
فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ بَعۡدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُۥ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ١٧٨

179. O you who believe! Written for you is Al-Qisas in murder. The free man for the free man, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. But if one is pardoned for it by his brother, then the seeking of the blood money should be with goodness and it should be paid with *Ihsan*. This is an alleviation for you from your Lord and a Mercy. So whoever transgresses after this, for him is a painful punishment.

After establishing for us what righteousness is, Allah (swt) beings with this ayah a section of the Surah where He (swt) will give laws for our community. Righteousness can be obtained by following these laws. In this ayah Allah (swt) legislates for us laws concerning the retaliation for murder. What greater crime than there be than murder? To take another soul. To end life for another human being. Life is sacred in our Din. Because we believe that we are more than just the sum of our parts. We are more than just our bodies. We are more than even our minds, advanced as they may be. Unlike the West we believe that the human being is something more than just an intelligent ape on a lonely planet. We are ones who were created to know the Divine. To be His (swt)'s representatives on earth. So we value life much more than they do. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what must be done with the one who puts out this precious flame.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**O you who believe! Written for is Al-Qisas in murder**". **Al-Qisas** means equity or fairness. So Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that when the horrible crime of murder happens in an Islamic society then there must be equity and justice when the punishment is handed down. Even for a crime as horrible as murder, Allah (swt) still wants the Muslim community to be just and fair when we prosecute the killer. Should we then also not be just and fair for crimes and transgressions that are far less than murder? We should always strive to be just in all affairs and areas.

Then Allah (swt) says "**The free man for the free man, the slave for the slave, the female for the female**". Here Allah (swt) shows us one of the ways in which this fairness and equity must be achieved. If the court has reached a verdict that the killer must be executed, then they must be executed regardless of who they are. Regardless of if they are a free man, a slave or a woman. Mawdudi says that this ayah was revealed to destroy the corrupt and unfair customs of the pagan Arabs in the retaliation for murder. In that time of darkness when a noble man was killed, his family would kill in revenge not only the murderer but they would kill the murderer's entire family and friends as well. But when a slave or a poor man was killed, the murderer would often escape without any punishment. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds these people that there must be equity and justice in everything. Even if a nobleman was killed, the reprimand must be equal in kind. A life for a life. Only the killer is to be killed and no one else.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But if one is pardoned for it by his brother, then the seeking of the blood money should be with goodness and it should be paid with *Ihsan***". If someone kills another, then the killer's life is to be taken. This is the general rule. One exception to this rule is if the victim's family decides to pardon the killer. The victim's family has the right to forego the death penalty for the killer. This pardoning is what Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this part of the ayah.

Notice how Allah (swt) says "**if one is pardoned for it by his brother**". Allah (swt) uses the word "brother" to remind Muslims that they are still one brotherhood. See then how strong Allah (swt) would like this brotherhood between the Muslims to be. Even if a Muslim kills someone in your family, even for such a terrible crime, you must still see that person as your brother because he still believes in Allah (swt) as the Lord and Master and he still believes in the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). Despite this great crime that he has committed, he is still your brother. Because Allah (swt) refers to the killer as "brother" we can also see that Allah (swt) is telling us that while we have every right to demand that the killer be killed for his crime, it is better if we pardon him because he is still our brother. Despite the terrible crime that he has done the fact remains that he is still a Muslim. While we can demand justice if that is what our souls yearn for, it is still better to forgive. Only because he prostrates to Allah (swt).

So we see here that Allah (swt) is telling us that the ties of brotherhood in this Ummah must be maintained even if your brother committed a crime as horrendous as murdering one of your family members. How unfortunate it is then that today we see Muslims breaking the ties of brotherhood for crimes and transgressions that are far less than this? Remember that you live for Allah (swt). So no matter what your Muslim brother has done to you, try your best to forgive him and pardon him, not for his sake but for the sake of Allah (swt).

This part of the ayah is also an evidence that shows that committing the major sins does not take one outside of the fold of Islam. You do not become a kafir only by committing sins. You only become kafir when you decide in your heart not to believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt). So anyone who professes with their tongue that they believe must still be treated as a Muslim even if they commit the major sins like murder, adultery or missing the prayer. Now of course these are still great sins that earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). Any Muslim who commits these sins may have to face the punishment of Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment, and we know how terrible His (swt)'s punishment can be. So these sins are not to be taken lightly, and we should always fear committing these sins. At the same time though we should not break the ties of brotherhood with our brothers who have committed these sins. We should fear these crimes for ourselves and at the same time we should pardon our brothers when they commit them. The true believer pardons his brother but always holds himself to account. We can see from this very ayah Allah (swt) how refers to the murderer as "brother", this shows that the person is still a Muslim even though they have committed this terrible crime. So no matter how great a sin our brothers may have committed, we should still treat them as our brothers as long as they believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and the Messengership of the Prophet (saw).

After that, Allah (swt) says "**then the seeking of the blood money should be with goodness**". If the family of victim decides to pardon the murderer then they have the right to demand *Dhiyya* or "blood money" from the murderer or from his family. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that when we seek the blood money, it should be with goodness. We should not unreasonably demand from the killer more than he can afford to pay. Of course we should not

seek a small amount because this person is still a killer and he has to pay for his crime, but at the same time we should not be unreasonable and demand from him more than his capacity to pay. If we are forgiving him then we must forgive him for the sake of Allah (swt) and not try to extract vengeance by demanding an amount so high that it will put him in debt for the rest of his life. We should find out how much wealth he has, and demand an amount that is relative to how much wealth he possesses. The bottom line is that the amount that we demand has to be with goodness. We should have a sincerity to Allah (swt) when we seek the blood money. We should not demand more than the killer has the capacity to pay.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**it should be paid with *Ihsan***". Similar to how Allah (swt) said that the blood money should be sought with goodness, He (swt) also says that it must be paid with *Ihsan*. *Ihsan* means in the best way possible, and it also means when an action is done with consciousness of Allah (swt). When the killer or the killer's family pays the blood money, they should pay the amount that the victim's family asks for, or they should pay as much of it as they can to the best of their capacity. They should try their very best to meet the amount that the victim's family asks for, and they should always remember Allah (swt). They should consider the paying of this blood money as a part of their servitude to Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**This is an alleviation for your from your Lord and a mercy**". The scholars say that this refers to the permissibility of taking blood money. Such a permissibility is an alleviation and a mercy for the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). This is because such a permissibility was never legislated for the previous nations. The scholars tell us that the children of Israil were required to kill the killer, and this permissibility of pardoning the killer and taking blood money instead never existed for them. The scholars also tell us that the Christians were required to pardon the killer completely. They were not allowed to have him killed and they were not allowed to collect blood money. So we see how for our Ummah, Allah (swt) has legislated the most just and the most merciful of ways for dealing with the crime of murder. It is just in that if the family of victim should prefer that the murderer be killed, then he will be killed and there is justice in this for the family of the victim. It is merciful in that if the family of the victim should prefer that the killer be pardoned and blood money be collected, then this is what will happen. The fate of the

killer falls on the family of the victim. Recall how we said that the strength of the Islamic community comes from the strength of the Islamic families that make up that community, so who is it other than the family of the victim who should decide what should be done with the killer? They are the ones who are the closest to the victim, they are his blood, they are the ones who can truly feel the loss of the loved one. So they should be the rightful ones to decide the fate of the killer. They should be the ones to decide if justice should be done or if mercy should be shown. In either case, there is alleviation and mercy for both parties in the Law that Allah (swt) has legislated.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**So whoever transgresses after this, for him is a painful punishment**". This refers to what happens after blood money is collected and the killer is pardoned. It was a common practice among the Arabs during the time of Ignorance, that even after the blood money was collected, they would still kill the murderer anyway. Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah how wrong such a practice is. Once you have decided to pardon the killer, once you have collected the blood money, you no longer have a right to kill him after that. Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah, that if anyone does that, then they will have a painful punishment. This refers to the punishment in the Hereafter. If anyone kills the murderer after they have collected the blood money, then they should know that they have done an action that is displeasing to Allah (swt) and that they can expect a painful punishment in the Hereafter because of it. May Allah (swt) save us from such a fate!

It is also important for us to note before we conclude our discussion of this ayah that whenever Allah (swt) gives us a command in the Quran, we always have to look to the Sunnah of the Prophet (swt) to find out how that command is to be implemented. For example in the Quran, Allah (swt) has ordered us to make Salah, but as for the exact method on how the Salah is to be performed we have to look in the Sunnah. Nowhere in the Quran does it say that Dhuhr is 4 rakahs and Maghrib is 3 rakahs. Similarly in this ayah, Allah (swt) is teaching us how to implement the punishment when someone is killed. Because this is a Law from Allah (swt) just like Salah is, we have to look to the Sunnah on the exact details of how this punishment should be implemented. When we look to the Sunnah, we see that the Prophet (saw) never allowed

individual Muslims to carry out this punishment themselves. If a member of their family was killed, the family could not then go to the killer themselves to kill him or to demand blood money from him. Rather they had to bring their grievances to the Khalifah or his representative. Then it was the government that actually carried out the death penalty or collected the blood money and then gave it to the victim's family. Based on this we can see that this is yet another ruling in the Sacred Law that can only properly implemented with the Islamic State. Only through the Islamic State can this Law of Allah (swt) be correctly implemented. This is a command that would be impossible for individual Muslims to implement by themselves. So while we as an Ummah continue to live without a State, there are hundreds of commands similar to this that cannot be implemented correctly. How then can we be happy with the times in which we are living when the Law of Allah (swt) is being ignored in such a way? How can we answer to Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment when He (swt) asks why we did not work to bring the Islamic State that will allow His (swt)'s Law to be implemented? May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to reestablish the Islamic State so that all of His (swt)'s Laws can be implemented once again! May Allah (swt) allow justice, equity and mercy return to mankind once again through His (swt)'s Law! The Khilafah is the only hope for mankind who without it continues to drown in an ocean of injustice and misery.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how much better is the Divine Law of the Creator compared to the flawed laws of man. How much better is this Law of Al-Qisas compared to the punishment systems in the world today? Compared to the prison systems that are found by the world today? In these prisons are where most of the killers spend the rest of their lives. Day in and day out, they live a miserable and hopeless life. All the while these prisons are a burden on the state to finance and keep in operation. Furthermore the family of the victim has no say in what will be the fate of the killer. So in the end everyone ends up suffering. The killer, the government and the victim's family. Now some people may say that when capital punishment is implemented, innocent people are often killed by the state. Such people need to be reminded of the hearts of the Muslims in a proper Islamic society. They need to be reminded how the human soul can change when it is properly taught about the Divine.

Now it is true that there will always be evil people, even in an Islamic State. But for the most part, Muslims in the Islamic State will be people whose hearts are attached to Allah (swt). So if the victim's family can see that the person accused of killing their loved one is not really a killer or they can see that the person is not truly evil then they would not demand that he be killed. Rather they would pardon him for the sake of Allah (swt) and they will allow for the blood money to be paid. They know that they will soon be reunited with their loved in one in the Garden so they are willing to forgive the killer for the sake of Allah (swt). When you have a society in which the people are conscious of Allah (swt) for every moment of their lives, then even at this moment they remember their Lord. Even when it is time to decide the fate of the murderer of their loved one, they remember their Lord. They are not consumed by anger and vengeance. They remember that to forgive is more pleasing to Allah (swt). Furthermore the Islamic State builds people who are not attached to this world. Who do not have hatred and malice for their fellow Muslim. Thus even the crime of murder itself would be rare. Committed only by those few souls who are distant from their Lord. For these few people who truly are evil. Those who have the audacity to take the life of another human for no reason. They deserve to die. For these death is the fitting punishment. So we see here how the Law of Al-Qisas is far superior to the punishment system that is found in lands that do not rule by the Law of Allah (swt). The society that the Islamic State creates is far superior to the society of those who are heedless to Allah (swt),

Allah (swt) is the Creator and Sustainer of the human being so He (swt) Knows the laws that are the best for us. Would not the Creator of the human know better how the human should live? If Allah (swt) has legislated the Law of Al-Qisas it is only because this is what is best for mankind. Recall how Allah (swt) has already told us that He (swt) is Most Merciful and Most Kind to mankind. So would not then Allah (swt) legislate laws that are the best for us? He (swt) is the All-Knowing and the Most Wise so He (swt) is the One Who knows the laws that are the best for us. No society on this earth can ever be a utopia or a paradise, that is only in the next life. But the Islamic State is the closest to it because it comes from the Divine. May Allah (swt) allow mankind to return to ruling by His (swt)'s Law! May Allah (swt) save us from the Ignorance in which we live today!

وَلَكُمْ فِي ٱلْقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٌ يَٰٓأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ



180. And there is life for you in Al-Qisas o people of understanding, in order that you may have Taqwa.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us about Al-Qisas. This is the Law of Allah (swt) where the murderer must be killed for his crime. The only exception to this punishment is if the family of the victim decides to pardon the killer, in that case Allah (swt) allows for the blood money to be taken instead. Now some people may consider the law of Al-Qisas to be extremely harsh. They would say that any system of government where the state kills a human being is barbaric. Unfortunately many Muslims today who have been brainwashed by a secular, liberal and "humanist" education in the West think in such a way as well. Such Muslims find it hard to accept that Allah (swt) would legislate a law such as this. They would prefer Islam to be "purely spiritual" where the only purpose of the Din is worship and meditation. They do not realize that we as Muslims have to accept Islam as Allah (swt) has revealed it to us, we cannot pick and choose which parts of the Din we want to accept. Rather we have to submit to Allah (swt)'s Law with full submission whether we like it or not. Whatever Allah (swt) tells us to do we have to do. This is because He (swt) is the Creator and we are the creation and He (swt) is the Master and we are the slaves. So the fact that this Law comes from Allah (swt) should be enough of a reason for us to implement it. However in this ayah Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Mercy tells us what is the wisdom in Him (swt) legislating this Law of Al-Qisas.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And there is life for you in Al-Qisas**". In the law of Al-Qisas there is Life. Now you may question as to how is there life in Al-Qisas when the murderer is being killed? There is life in so many ways with this Law if you would only ponder on it. Firstly Al-Qisas is a powerful deterrent against the murder being committed in the first place. If someone knew that they were going to die if they killed another human being, then they will think twice about committing the crime of murder. The murder of another human being would not be a simple thing for them. They would realize from the punishment that Allah (swt) has legislated how

displeasing this act is to Him (swt) so they will think twice before they commit it. Not only would they be scared of the punishment in this life but they would also be scared of the even greater punishment in the Hereafter. If they knew that they would meet Allah (swt) with such a terrible sin as murder on their necks, they would again think twice about killing. Not only would it save the life of the victim but it would also save the life of the killer. We spoke in the previous ayah about the miserable existence which those who are in prison have to suffer through. Is this any kind of life? So the first way in which there is Life in the law of Al-Qisas is that it saves two lives. It saves the life of the victim and it saves the life of the killer as well.

The next way in which there is life in Al-Qisas is that prevents other people from being killed. The truth is that once a murder happens, it often does not end with only that one murder. In the days of Ignorance before Islam came, it was typical for entire blood feuds to start between tribes over a single murder. These feuds would often last for years and they would claim the lives of hundreds if not thousands of people. When the law of Al-Qisas was revealed, Allah (swt) mandated that only the murderer be killed and no one else. Once the murderer has been killed or the blood money has been paid, it would then be forbidden for the family of the victim to retaliate any further by killing anyone else. So because it prevents blood feuds and it because it prevents constant retaliation, this is another way in which there is Life in the law of Al-Qisas. This is the fact that Allah (swt) reminds the people of in this part of the ayah. Do not think that the Law of Allah (swt) takes human life, it may take the life of one evil man but it saves the lives of many others.

Then we see that Allah (swt) says "**o people of understanding**". Not everyone can understand how there is life in the law of Al-Qisas. Only those people who use their minds to ponder and think about this law will see the wisdom behind it. Those who look only on the surface of this law will see that a human being is killed by the state and they will not see how there is Life in the killing of this one person. They see only what happens on the surface. They do not realize all the ramifications and consequences. But those who ponder and reflect on this wisdom of this law will see the reasons that we listed above. They will realize that there is indeed Life in Al-Qisas as Allah (swt) told us that there would be.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**in order that you may have Taqwa**". This is the reason why Allah (swt) legislated this law of Al-Qisas. It is so that the Muslims can gain Taqwa. When the Muslims see that Allah (swt) has prescribed such a severe penalty for murder, they will realize how hateful this action is to Him (swt). So even more than fearing the death penalty in the life of this world, they would fear meeting Allah (swt) after their death. Once you know that this sin of murder is so hateful to Allah (swt), imagine having to meet Allah (swt) with this sin on the Day of Judgment. When you think about this possibility, you would do everything possible to avoid committing this sin. Even if truly hate and loathe a particular person, you would think twice about murdering him. You will remember that Allah (swt) is Aware of you committing the sin of murder. Allah (swt) is Seeing you kill that person, then you know that you will return to Him (swt) for Him (swt) to judge you. Then you will remember the Fire and you will remember how Allah (swt) is severe in punishment. This will make you think twice about killing that person, no matter how much you may hate him. This fear is Taqwa, and Allah (swt) tells us in this last part of the ayah that in legislating the law of Al-Qisas, He (swt) ensured that the Muslims would have Taqwa. More than anything else it is this Taqwa that will prevent Muslims from committing the crime of murder.

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that the number of capital punishments that were carried out at the time of the Prophet (saw) and the early Muslim rulers could be counted on your fingers. In all those years and in the vastness of the Islamic State, there were only a few capital punishments that were ever carried out by the State. This is because Muslims at that time lived for Allah (swt). They dreaded the punishment of Allah (swt) and the displeasure of Allah (swt) more than anything else. They dreaded having to stand before Allah (swt) with the sin of murder on their scales. They could almost see themselves in the Fire because of this. So no matter how much the urge may have flared within them to take the life of another human, their fear of Allah (swt) was much greater, so they restrained themselves. This is the Taqwa that comes within the human being when he is constantly reminded of Allah (swt). When he lives in a society where everywhere around him, he is reminded of his Creator. If you can build such a society, if you can have such individuals in that society, then the Taqwa of Allah (swt) itself would

be the primary deterrent against murder and violent crimes being committed. More than the authorities the people would fear the Lord Who they knew is always watching. This is how the Islamic State creates a society where the blood of humans is not spilled. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to work for this to be a reality again!

Al-Qurtubi says in his tafsir of this ayah that “Allah makes one firm in obedience through obedience”. This fear that you have of Allah (swt) will prevent you from committing the crime of murder. Once you have refrained yourself from this sin, you will find that you are able to refrain yourself from other sins as well. The general lesson is that you start by refraining yourself from the major sins and soon you are able to refrain yourself from the minor sins as well. The principle is the same for both major and minor sins. The fear that you have of meeting Allah (swt) helps you to control the urge of committing sins. For sins as great as murder or adultery, you should feel truly afraid. But once you have restrained yourself from these great sins, you can use the same principle to restrain yourself from lesser sins as well. Your fear of Allah (swt) should restrain you from the lesser sins as well. So we see that by prescribing the Law of Al-Qisas, Allah (swt) teaches this Ummah how Taqwa should be attained. Allah (swt) teaches this Ummah how they should fear Him (swt). Once this state of Taqwa has been achieved, it becomes easier for them to refrain themselves from the minor sins as well. Thus not only does the Law of Al-Qisas prevent the Muslims from committing the major sins like murder, it also prevents them from committing even the minor sins. They will think twice before they even harm another human being or before they even speak against another human being. This is how much Taqwa has permeated throughout their entire being. May Allah (swt) help us all to attain this Taqwa! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to remember Him (swt) at every moment of our lives and at every moment of lives to keep away from the actions that He (swt) has forbidden!

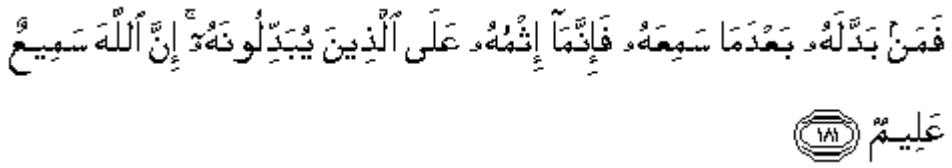
كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا ٱلْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ
وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

181. It has been prescribed for you that when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he make a will to parents and near relatives with goodness. This is a duty on the Muttaqoon.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the believers that when they are near death, they should make a will for their parents and near relations. The scholars tell us that this ayah was abrogated by other ayahs in the Quran that also dealt with the subject of inheritance. Those ayahs in Surah Nisa specified in detail the parties who receive inheritance and how much inheritance they should receive. So the ruling in this ayah was abrogated. Although the ruling in this ayah was abrogated, there are still many lessons that we can take from the ayah itself. One lesson is that we can once again see how the Quran is a legal book, it is not simply a book of beliefs and morals but it also has detailed laws on how Muslims and the Muslim society should conduct their lives. How many Muslims today view the Quran in this way? How many Muslims today turn to the Quran as a source of guidance in their lives? The Quran today has become a book to be kept on the shelf and read only in Ramadan or when someone passes away. It is not viewed as the manual of life for the Muslim that it was revealed to be, it is not viewed as the constitution for the Muslim society that it was revealed to be. Both individual Muslims and the Muslim governments no longer refer to it as a source of guidance. Can you even begin to realize how much of a tragedy this is? The Creator and Sustainer of the universe has given you a guidance to Him (swt) and you have just thrown it away like you throw away garbage. May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) forgive us!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on parents and family. Allah (swt) wants us to realize the importance of our parents and family, and the importance of taking care of them. Not only should we look after them when we are alive, but we must also make sure that they are taken care of when we leave this world. Notice how Allah (swt) said "**This is a duty on the Muttaqoon**", this shows us how before this ayah was abrogated it was an obligation for the early Muslims to prepare a will for parents

and near relations so that they would be taken care of. Just imagine the time when this ayah was revealed. The Islamic State had just been established. The Prophet (saw) was preparing the Muslims for their task of carrying this Message to mankind. The Muslims were surrounded by enemies from every side. All the Muslim men who were able to, had to be a part of the army. They all knew that death for them could come at any time. That is why Allah (swt) revealed this Law obligating them to make a will for their parents and relatives. So all of the Muslim men should have prepared a will to make sure that their parents and near relatives are taken care of before they went out in the path of dawah and jihad. This shows us that even when we are working in the path of dawah and jihad, even when we are carrying this Message to mankind, we still cannot forget about our parents and relatives. It is just as much an obligation for us to take care of and to provide for our families as it is to carry this Message to others. So just as we work in the dawah we also have to work to make sure that our families are provided for. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to perform both of these obligations!



182. Then for the one who changes it after he has heard it, the sin of it shall be on the one who changes it. Surely Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the will that had to be prepared for parents and relatives. In this ayah, He (swt) shows us how important it is that the will is not altered or changed in any. Allah (swt) says "**Then for the one who changes it after he has heard it, the sin of it shall be on the one who changes it**". From here was can see what a terrible sin it is to purposely alter or change a will. If any Muslim is a witness to the content of a will, and then he changes it or alters it is any way, then this would be a sin on him. This would count as an act of evil in his scale of deeds. He may have gotten for himself some temporary gain in the life of this world, but he has earned the displeasure of his Lord. How awful is the trade that he has made? We know what the displeasure of the Divine can translate to in the Hereafter.

This further demonstrates for us how important it is to take care of our parents and families. When the Islamic State was in its infancy, Allah (swt) obligated the Muslims to make a will to take care of their parents and close relatives, and then He (swt) reminded the Muslims of what a terrible sin it was to alter or change this will in any way. This shows the emphasis that Allah (swt) has placed on making sure families are taken care of. For anyone to change the will in any way and to deprive a Muslim family of what it deserves is an action that is most displeasing to Him (swt). This shows how much He (swt) loves for Muslim families to be looked after.

Notice also the extreme fairness and justice that Allah (swt) has placed in this law that He (swt) has prescribed. He (swt) says that the sin is only upon the one who changes the will after he has heard it. So the sin is only upon the one who does wrong when he knows that what he is doing is wrong. Allah (swt) emphasizes how the sin is only upon such a person. The sin is not upon anyone else except the one who does wrong while knowing that what they are doing is wrong. From this we are once again reminded of the justice of Allah (swt). He (swt) is the Most Just, and there is justice in everything that He (swt) does and in everything that He (swt) legislates. Justice is the pillar upon which this universe was established.

Allah (swt) concludes this ayah by reminding us that surely He (swt) is the Hearing and the Knowing. The Quran is a Book about Allah (swt). In this Book He (swt) tells us the actions that He (swt) is pleased with, the actions that He (swt) is displeased with and He (swt) tells us about Himself (swt). If anyone is tempted to change the will then they should remember that Allah (swt) is Hearing, Knowing. Allah (swt) Heard what the dying person said, and Allah (swt) Knows what the true contents of the will are. So if you take a trust from someone else, you should know that trust is not simply between the two of you. Your Lord hears that trust that was taken and He (swt) Knows all about it. If you in any way fail to live up to that promise then you should remember these two Names of your Master. If you forget these Names and do whatever you please how then can you ever return to Him (swt) on the Last Day? So remember every trust that you have taken, and remember that Allah (swt) Hears all, and He (swt) Knows all.

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِن مُّوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَآ
إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

183. But whoever fears from the recorder partiality or wrongdoing, and then he makes peace between them, then there is no sin on him. Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

This ayah continues to deal with the subject of wills that was begun in the previous two ayahs. We saw how Allah (swt) ordered that the early Muslims make a will if they are about to pass away and they are leaving behind some wealth. The will should specify how their wealth is to be divided between their parents and their near relatives. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) also told us what a terrible sin it was to change the contents of the will in way. If anyone changes the content of a will in any way then they would be carrying a sin for which they would have to answer before Allah (swt). So the general rule was that it was forbidden to alter the will in any way. However in this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to a special situation that could arise with the recording of the will. In this special circumstance, Allah (swt) does allow the contents of the will to be changed. In this situation the person who changes the will would not be sinning,

As you can see with every law and command that Allah (swt) gives us, He (swt) is very thorough and He (swt) covers every possibility and situation that we may face. Now supposing that the person who recorded the will made some mistake in recording it, or supposing that it was discovered that the recorder is a wrong doer and he had put some favoritism or partiality to one of the parties who was inheriting. It is for this special circumstance that Allah (swt) revealed this ayah when He (swt) says "**But whoever fears from the recorder partiality or wrongdoing and then he makes peace between them, then there is no sin on him**". So Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims that if they fear that the recorder of the will has shown undue partiality and favoritism to one of the parties or he made a mistake in recording it, then it is allowed for them to change the contents of the will if their intention is to bring peace between the parties. So in this special circumstance the judge in the Islamic State is allowed to change the will. This is when the judge is certain that a mistake was made in the recording of the will or if he is certain that this will is not what the dying person intended or if he is certain that the inheritance on the will does not conform

to the Law of Allah (swt), then Allah (swt) gives him permission in this ayah for the contents of the will to be altered. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that in such a case if the will is altered, then there is no sin on those who alter it.

One lesson that we can take from this is to realize once again how much Taqwa the early Muslims had. They were so terrified of committing sins. They would not alter the will even if they are certain that there was a mistake in it because of what Allah (swt) had said in the previous ayah about sin being on the one who alters the will. But here Allah (swt) alleviates their fear and allows them to alter the will if they are sure that there is some mistake in it or there has been wrongdoing in the recording of it. If Allah (swt) had not revealed this ayah then the Sahabah would not even have touched the will even if they were certain that there was a mistake in it. This was how much they feared being in the displeasure of their Lord.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how the Law of Allah (swt) covers every situation that could arise in the life of our community. Allah (swt) did not simply order the contents of the will to be recorded, but He (swt) also told the early Muslims what they should do in case there was a mistake in the recording of the will or if there was unfair partiality in the recording. So every situation that could arise both in the writing and the implementing of the will has been covered in the Law of Allah (swt). See then how comprehensive and complete the Law of Allah (swt) is. Why then have we abandoned this Divine Law for the desires of man?

Also note in this ayah how Allah (swt) says, "**then he makes peace between them**". The pronoun "he" refers to the person who changes the will. This person is a judge in the Islamic State. He is the one to whom the will is taken to when there is some mistake or discrepancy found in it. So this judge is the one who is given permission to alter the will if his only intention is to make peace between the parties. He should not be seeking to gain something for himself by altering the will, rather he should only be trying to make equity between the parties. It is only for such a person that Allah (swt) says "**then there is no sin on him**". So for the person who alters the will, only with the intention to correct it and bring peace between the inheriting parties, then there is no sin on him if he alters the contents of the will. If his intention is to make peace, to set things right between the people, then there is no sin upon him.

Then Allah (swt) reminds us once again "**Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) had told the Muslims how it was a great sin to willfully alter the contents of the will and He (swt) had also told them how He (swt) is All Hearing and All Knowing. When the Muslims had been told of this, they were filled with fear of Allah (swt) and fear of willfully altering the contents of a will. They were filled with fear to do anything that was displeasing to Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) reminds them in this ayah that He (swt) is also Forgiving and Merciful. When they hear these two Names of Allah (swt) they are reassured that they will not be punished if they changed the will when their intention was only to correct a wrong and to make peace between the parties involved. The dread and the fear that overcame them is alleviated and their hearts are at peace when they hear these two Beautiful Names of Allah (swt).

Just like these early Muslims, we as Muslims today always need to remember all of the Names of Allah (swt). We need to live our lives according to these Names. We must have fear when we are reminded that He (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. He (swt) Hears everything that we say and He (swt) Knows everything that we do. When our desires prompt us to sin then we must remember these two Names. At the same time we must also have hope when we know that Allah (swt) is also Forgiving and Merciful. Allah (swt) will never tire of granting us His (swt) Forgiveness as long as we never tire of asking Him (swt). Allah (swt) will continue to show us His (swt)'s Mercy for every second of our lives. May Allah (swt) help us to remember all of His (swt)'s Names and may He (swt) allow us to live our lives by them!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣

184. O you who believe. Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may have Taqwa.

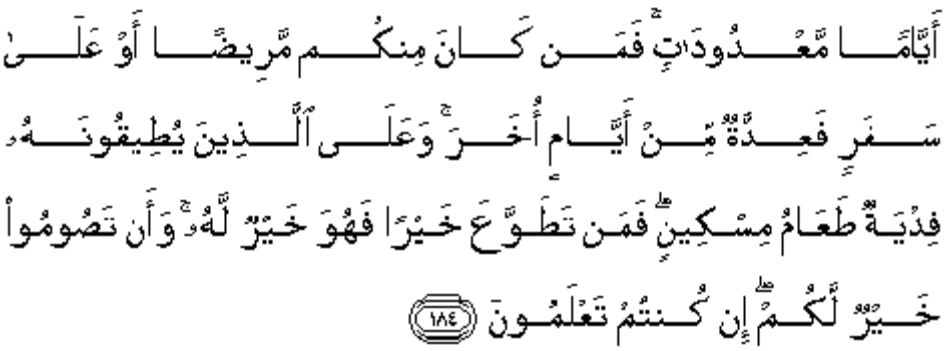
This is an ayah of the Quran that many of us should know very well. It is this ayah that makes fasting in the month of Ramadan obligatory for all Muslims. In this ayah, Allah (swt) addresses every Muslim; man, woman and child, and He (swt) tells them that fasting is obligatory on them. In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb asks us to note how Allah (swt) begins this ayah by addressing the Muslims through their quality of having Iman. Allah (swt) calls the Muslims by saying "o you the ones who have Iman", this shows us that how well we fulfill the command to fast in this ayah will demonstrate how much Iman we have. Fasting is by no means easy but when we do it such is a demonstration of how much faith we have.

Allah (swt) then tells us that fasting has been made an obligation on us just as it had been made as an obligation for those before us. This part of the ayah shows that fasting was prescribed for the previous nations who came before us as well. We are not the first nation whom Allah (swt) has obligated to fast. Fasting is so important to become closer to Allah (swt) that He (swt) had obligated to all of the previous nations that came before us to fast. Many scholars say that since the words "**those before you**" have been left general without specifying which nation this was referring to, then this shows us that it is in fact referring to all of the nations which preceded our Ummah. Thus fasting was an obligation for all of the nations to whom this Message was sent since the time of Adam (as). So the next time you are fasting, remember that the servants of Allah (swt) had been fasting for generations and generations before you.

In this ayah Allah (swt) also tells us the reason why we have to fast, it is not because fasting is healthy for us or because fasting lets us experience how the poor feel. While these all may be some benefits of fasting, they are not the reason why Allah (swt) legislated this law for us. As Allah (swt) tells us in the ayah, the reason why fasting was obligated for us was "**so that you may have Taqwa**". The reason for fasting is to gain Taqwa of Allah (swt). It is so that we would

remember Allah (swt) and we would avoid doing what is displeasing to Him (swt). That must be the objective of your fasting. When you are fasting, your body is deprived of it's needs. You can feel the hunger for food and the thirst for water. As the day in which you are fasting progresses, this feeling only becomes stronger. This feeling then reminds you of the reason why you fasting. This feeling reminds you of Allah (swt). So fasting is a way in which you can gain Taqwa, a way in which you can increase your remembrance of Allah (swt). Each time the pain of hunger or thirst strikes you, you will remember your Rabb for whom you are fasting. This will make you come into the habit of always remembering Allah (swt) which is what Taqwa is. This will then encourage you to do the deeds that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and it will help you to stay away from the deeds that are displeasing to Him (swt). This is because your whole body is always reminding you of Allah (swt) through your fasting. May Allah (swt) enable us all to derive this benefit from our fasts! May Allah (swt) enable us to increase our taqwa from our fasts!

Qurtubi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that the word *siyam* literally means to "refraining from something". So when you fast, you not only have to restrain yourself from food, drink and sexual activity but you must also refrain yourself from doing anything that is displeasing to Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has said of fasting that "If anyone does not abandon lying and acting by it, then Allah has no need of him abandoning food and drink". This hadith further demonstrates to us that the purpose of fasting is not simply the surrendering of our food or our drink or our time with our wives, but it is surrendering of all the acts of disobedience to Allah (swt). So if you find that you are still not lowering your gaze while you are fasting, or you are still talking about others while you are fasting, or you are still missing your prayer while you are fasting, then you have to realize that you have a serious problem. You have to question if Allah (swt) would even accept your fast. So fasting should not just be about refraining from food and drink but it must be about a conscious effort to live according to the Law of Allah (swt). While we are fasting we have to redouble our efforts to refrain ourselves from all that is displeasing to Allah (swt). Then once the month of Ramadan is over then this same spirit and this same determination should carry us over for the rest of the year. May Allah (swt) guide us to do this! May Allah (swt) save us from being among those who fast but who persist in sin and disobedience!



185. For a fixed number of days, but whoever from you is sick or on a journey then a counted number from other days. And for those who can only do so with difficulty, a ransom is the feeding of a poor person, and whoever volunteers to do more it is best for him. And if you fast it is better for you, if only you knew.

This ayah continues from the previous ayah. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) commanded us to fast. Allah (swt) made it an obligation for every single Muslim to fast. In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives a concession for some people who may not be able to make this fast. So once again we see the Mercy of Allah (swt) for this Ummah. He (swt) could have ended the topic of fasting with the previous ayah, but instead He (swt) revealed this ayah immediately after and He (swt) gave us allowances when we do not have to make the fast. How Merciful and Kind is our Rabb to us? Would we ever realize this?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**For a fixed number of days**". This shows that the obligation of fasting is not for 365 days in a year; it is only for a certain number of days that Allah (swt) has fixed. Insha Allah, we will find out from the next ayah that this fixed number of days are the days in the month of Ramadan. It is only for the days of Ramadan that the obligation of fasting exists. Another meaning of this part of the ayah that some scholars mention is "for a few number of days". With this meaning Allah (swt) is showing us that the obligation to fast is only for a few days. We should then have no excuse or hesitation to make this fast. Only one month of the year do we have to fast, there are eleven months when we have no obligation to fast. Should we then not all make this obligation? Should we not all make the fast of Ramadan to the best of our ability? What kind of servants would we be if we cannot even give up our animal desires in these few days of the year for our Lord?

Then Allah (swt) says "**but whoever from you is sick or on a journey then a counted number from other days**". This means if you are sick or if you are on journey, then the obligation to fast in the fixed days of Ramadan is lifted. As Allah (swt) tells us, the number of days in which you missed fasting has to be made up in "**a counted number from other days**". So for however many days you missed, you have to make up in the other days of the year once Ramadan is over. The scholars differ on the extent of the sickness or the length of the journey for which the obligation to fast is lifted. But the strongest opinion is that for any sickness or any journey you are allowed to break the fast. We say this because the language of the ayah is general and so it can be applied to any journey or any sickness. There is nothing in the language of the ayah or in any hadith that restricts it to a journey of great distance or an overwhelming sickness. This once again shows the Mercy and Kindness that Allah (swt) has for our Ummah. He (swt) does not want us to suffer. He does not want us to go through undue hardship.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And for those who can only do so with difficulty, a ransom is the feeding of a poor person**". For those whom the fast is difficult because of old age or because of a permanent illness or condition like diabetes or for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding the obligation to fast is lifted for them. Unlike the people whom Allah (swt) told us about in the previous part of the ayah, the people in this part of the ayah do not have to make up the missed days when Ramadan is over, instead these people have to feed a poor person. The scholars say that the dispensation for not fasting is that for each day of fasting that was missed one poor person must be fed for a day. Then Allah (swt) says "**and whoever volunteers for more it is better for him**". The minimum that one needs to do if one does not observe the fast because of a permanent illness or pregnancy or breastfeeding or old age is that one must feed a poor person for a day. However here Allah (swt) tells us that if one wants to do more than this. If one want to feed more than one person or if one wants to give the poor person more than food for a day then this is better for him. The more that one gives the better it is for him. Just look again at the Mercy of our Lord. For those people who cannot make the fast, Allah (swt) still allows them to get the blessings of Ramadan. He (swt) still allows them to get reward by feeding the poor. And the poor also receive mercy when they get fed and taken care of.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**And if you fast it is best for you, if only you**". This part of the ayah is not addressing the sick person, or the traveler or the one who can only make the fast with hardship. Rather it is addressing the one who is fully capable of making the fast but who still decides not to fast. The reason why we say this is because when Allah (swt) spoke in the previous part of the ayah about the one who is only able to make the fast with hardship, the one who must pay a ransom of feeding a poor person, Allah (swt) referred to him in the third person. But here Allah (swt) refers to speaking in the second person. This shows us that he is not the one being spoken of here. Because if it were then Allah (swt) would have said that to fast is "better for him", but since He (swt) said that to fast is "better for you" it shows that another group is being referred to. Who is that? It is the group whom Allah (swt) began the ayah with. Because remember that Allah (swt) began the ayah in the second person by saying "O you who believe". So the Muslims as a whole, for everyone in general, it is better for them to fast. If they fast then they will get the reward from Allah (swt) and they will also be saved from His Punishment. What could be better than pleasing the Divine and avoiding His Wrath? But for those who are not able to make the fast then Allah (swt) is Merciful with them. They may fast if they want to but if they chose not to then there is no blame on them whatsoever.

This being said whosoever is able to should keep the fast. Not only is fasting in Ramadan a source of great reward for us but there is also the hadith that many of us know where the Prophet (saw) has told that "Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan with Iman, and hoping for it's reward, shall have all of his previous sins forgiven for him". Just imagine how one month of fasting can wipe away all of the sins that we have done in the past. The only conditions are the fast has to be done with Iman, with the firm and sincere belief in Allah (swt), and it has to be done hoping for the reward of fasting in Ramadan. You should know of this promise from your Rabb, and you should fast hoping for the fulfillment of this promise. May Allah (swt) grant us that promise! May Allah (swt) make the month of Ramadan cleanse away all of our sins!

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلْقُرْءَانُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَٰتٍ مِّنَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ
وَٱلْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ ٱلشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُمُ ٱلْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ ٱلْعُسْرَ
وَلِتُكْمِلُوا۟ ٱلْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



186. The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance for mankind and clear signs for guidance and discrimination. So whoever of you is present in this month should fast. And who is sick or on journey, the prescribed number from other days. Allah desires for you the ease and He does not desire for you the hardship and He desires that you complete the days, and that you make *Takbir* to Allah because of Who you were guided and in order that you may give thanks.

This ayah continues with laying down the obligation of fasting in the month of Ramadan. Recall from the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) had told us that fasting had been prescribed for us as it had been prescribed for those before us so that we can gain Taqwa. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) had also told us that the obligation to fast only existed for a counted number of days. Now in this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what these days are.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Quran was revealed**". This tells us clearly why the month of Ramadan is so special. This is the month in which Allah (swt) changed the course of human history forever. This is the month in which the Book that would guide mankind till the Day of Judgment was revealed. This was the month in which the Final Message of the Creator was sent down to the creation. This was the month in which Allah (swt) showed humanity what was the purpose of their existence. This was the month in which the Light of Guidance was sent down with which humanity would be enlightened forever. That is why there is no more important month than the month of Ramadan. It is in the days of this month that fasting is obligatory upon us.

One question that some people may ask is that if the Quran was revealed over a period of twenty three years to the Prophet (saw), how is that Allah (swt) says here that the Quran was revealed in the month of Ramadan? The answer to this question is that Allah (swt) sent the entire Quran down from the Preserved Tablet to the lowest heaven in the month of Ramadan, and then over the twenty-three years Gibreel (as) took portions of the Quran from the lowest heaven to the Prophet (saw). This event of the entire Quran coming down from the Preserved Tablet to the lowest heaven happened in one night. That is the night that we know as *Laitul Qadr*. We are not certain when this night is, but we know that it is one of the nights of Ramadan. So Ramadan is special in that it was in this month that the Quran was taken from the domain of the heavens to the domain of the earth.

In his tafsir of this ayah Qurtubi says that the word *Ramadan* is derived from a word that means "burning". He says that there are several reasons why the month has this name. One reason is because it is the month of extreme heat. Of all of the months of the year, this month was especially known for its heat in the deserts of Arabia at the time of the Prophet (saw). Another reason for the month having this name is because the belly of the fasting person is burning with thirst. Yet another reason for this name is because the sins of the fasting person are being burned by the fast. So we see the many benefits of this month even in name. Now just imagine how difficult it must have been for the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah (ra) to fast in those hot days in the Arabian Desert. Not only did they have to fast in the heat of the desert but the very month in which they were fasting was known for its heat. So if there is any difficulty for you in fasting during this month, you should know that the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah (ra) whom you love also faced this same difficulty. You should also know that their fast was much more difficult than yours. In addition as you face this difficulty, and this hardship, you should know that if you keep your intention purely for Allah (swt), then He (swt) is pleased with you going through this difficulty for His (swt)'s sake, and He (swt) is forgiving you your sins. So for every moment of difficulty that you go through in your fast you should know that Allah (swt) Knows your difficulty and you should know that He (swt) is rewarding for your patience for His (swt)'s sake. How beautiful and blessed is this month!

So the significance of the month of Ramadan comes from the significance of the Quran. Why is the Quran so great? The first reason is because it is "**a guidance for mankind**". The Quran is first and foremost a Book of guidance. It shows the way to Allah (swt). The Real and the True. The One Who were all created to journey towards. This Book describes Him (swt) for us so that we may know Him (swt). It tells us the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) so that we may do them. It tells us the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt) so that we can refrain ourselves from them. The more that we learn of this Book, the closer to Him (swt) that we can become. So how precious is it? What kind of a place must it have in our lives? In addition to being a guidance, the Quran also has "**clear signs for guidance and discrimination**". The Quran is a Book of Signs, every ayah is a sign that shows how it could only be from Allah (swt). Every ayah has a depth of meaning and a beauty in style and expression that has been unmatched in human history. With these Signs, mankind can attain firm belief in the Truth of this Message and so be guided to their Creator. In addition to being signs for guidance, the Quran also has signs for discrimination. By this we mean that the Quran clearly distinguishes between what is truth and falsehood, and it clearly distinguishes between what it right and wrong. Both in terms of beliefs and in terms of actions, the Quran clearly distinguishes between what is right and wrong and what is good and bad. It shows us the Truth and it points out the falsehood. It tells us the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So the Quran has clear signs for the guidance of mankind and it is a clear discriminator between truth and falsehood and between good and bad. Can you then even begin to realize the worth of this Book?

Then Allah (swt) says "**So whoever of you is present in this month should fast**". If we connect this part of the ayah with the command to fast in the previous ayahs, we see clearly that the obligation to fast is in the days of Ramadan. Allah (swt) says that whoever is present in the month of Ramadan should fast. The scholars say that this means whoever lives to see the month of Ramadan come and they also have all of the preconditions that make them eligible for fasting, then they are the ones who should fast. The preconditions of course are that they are Muslim, they are sane, and they have passed the age of puberty. Anyone who has these conditions and who witnesses the month should fast.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And who is sick or on journey, the prescribed number from other days**". Insha Allah, this is what we discussed in previous ayah. Allah (swt) says here that whoever is sick or on a journey when the month of Ramadan comes, then they are not obligated to fast. Instead they can make up the days that they missed when Ramadan finishes.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Allah desires for you the ease and He does not desire for you the hardship**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah is not particular to fasting but it is general for the Din as a whole. The Prophet (saw) said "The din is ease, make things easy and do not make them difficult". Allah (swt) is the Most Kind and the Most Merciful, He (swt) Knows that we are weak and forgetful creatures. So Allah (swt) revealed a Din for us that is filled with ease and that has no hardships in it. Think about it for a second, our Salah is only five times a day instead of fifty, and our fasting is only for one month in the year where we have eleven months with no fasting. Now there are some commands in this Din that may seem difficult for you, but when you remember Allah (swt) and you remember all that He (swt) has done for you, Insha Allah you will then remember how grateful you should be to Allah (swt). You will remember how He (swt) deserves your worship and servitude. He (swt) deserves the utmost and the excellence in this servitude. Then Insha Allah none of the commands should be difficult. Instead you will do all of the commands with happiness and gratitude. It is only a matter of remembering Allah (swt), recollecting all of His (swt)'s favors and blessings, and contemplating on His (swt)'s Majesty and Perfection. This makes any command easy because you are doing it for your Lord. The One in your life Who means more than anyone else. The very purpose of your being. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to remember Him (swt) and may Allah (swt) make this Din easy for all us!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and He desires that you complete the days**". Here Allah (swt) addresses those who were unable to fast because they were sick or travelling. He (swt) tells them that He (swt) wants them to complete all of the days of fasting. Even if they are sick or on a journey where they are unable to fast, Allah (swt) still wants for them to complete the days. So even after Ramadan is over, whenever we are able to we must complete the fast of this month. We must make up all the days that we have missed. This is what Allah (swt) wants from us. This

once again shows us how Merciful Allah (swt) IS. There is so much reward for fasting each day of Ramadan, and fasting in each of the days removes so many sins, that Allah (swt) does not want us to miss this reward or this expiation of sins even if we are sick or we are on a journey. Even if we are sick or on a journey where we cannot fast, Allah (swt) still wants us to complete the fast and get the benefits of fasting in Ramadan even when Ramadan is over. How Merciful and Generous is Allah (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and that you make *Takbir* to Allah because of whom you were guided**". So in addition to completing the days, Allah (swt) also desires that we make *Takbir* to Him (swt) since it was because of Him (swt) that we were guided. Of course we should know that to make Takbir is to say "Allahu Akbar", which means "Allah is the Greatest". There is nothing greater than Allah (swt). When we think of the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt), everything else in the creation pales in comparison. What would you consider is great? The grandeur of a mountain, the bravery of a warrior, the sophistication of a supercomputer, the beauty of a woman. Know that all of these were only possible because of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who made these things great so the greatness should not be for these things but it must only be for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is far greater than anything else. This is what He (swt) wants us to declare. Allah (swt) wants us to make Takbir of Him (swt) not only because He (swt) is indeed the Greatest but more importantly because we were guided because of Him (swt). So we should magnify Him (swt) as a way of showing our gratitude. Just imagine where you would be now if not for this Din of Islam? Would you know what is the purpose of your life? Would you know what waited for you after death? No, rather your life would be a miserable existence trying in futility to hold on to every single moment as it passes you by. That is the miserable existence that Allah (swt) saved you from when He (swt) guided you to this Din. So you should proclaim the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) for Him (swt) having guided you to Him (swt). Allah (swt) is already the Greatest. He (swt) does not need for us to magnify Him (swt). But so great is the bounty that He (swt) has given us that this Takbir is the very least that we can do. None of us can ever magnify Allah (swt) as He (swt) truly deserves to be magnified, but may He (swt) give us all the ability to do so in the best of our capacity!

Now to make *Takbir* is not simply saying “Allahu Akbar” with our tongues. It is also to make Allah (swt) supreme in every way possible. Allah (swt) is already the Lord and Master of this universe, but we have to work to make Allah (swt) supreme in the land and in the hearts of the people. The way we make Allah (swt) supreme in the land is by working to establish the Islamic State so that the land is ruled by the Law of Allah (swt). We work so that only that which pleases Allah (swt) exists in the land and nothing which displeases Him (swt) can exist in the land. We also have to work to make Allah (swt) supreme in the hearts of the people. This means we have to carry dawah and invite the people to this Message. We have to remind them that they should only live for Allah (swt) and that He (swt) should be the purpose of their existence. This is how we make Allah (swt) supreme, it is not simply with words but it is by working to making the supremacy of Allah (swt) a reality in the land and in the hearts of the people. May Allah (swt) give us all the enabling grace to do that!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, “**in order that you may give thanks**”. This is in fact the purpose of the Din. Every action that we do with Allah (swt) as our intention is an act of gratitude. Our fasting, our Salah, our Hajj, our dawah, all of the actions of obedience that we perform and all of the actions of disobedience that we refrain from is all so that we can show our gratefulness to Allah (swt). Everything is only to show thanks to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has done for us. You know that even if you spent a lifetime you will not even be able to number the favors and blessings of Allah (swt) upon you, let alone show thanks for it. Still the very least that you can do is try. Try your best to spend every moment of your existence in worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as He (swt) created you to do. That would be only the beginning of trying to show thanks to Allah (swt), only the beginning. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

187. And when my servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near. I respond to the dua of every supplicant when He calls on Me. So they should also respond to My call and believe in Me that they may be led to the right way.

The scholars say that this ayah was revealed when a group of Muslims asked the Prophet (saw) if Allah (swt) was far from them and so they should shout out to Him (swt) in their prayers or if He (swt) was near to them so that they could speak to Him (swt) silently in their prayers. Allah (swt) responds to such an inquiry by saying to the Prophet (saw) "**And when my servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near**". So here Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) to tell these Muslims that He (swt) is indeed close to them.

The first lesson that we can take is to note how this ayah is an example of Allah (swt) responding to the inquires of the Muslims in the ayahs of the Quran. This shows how many of the ayahs in the Quran were revealed in response to the questions, situations and circumstances that arose in the dawah of the Prophet (saw). The Quran was not a static book that was independent of the environment in which it was revealed, rather the Quran was a dynamic book that directly addressed and responded to the environment in which it was revealed. This fact goes to further prove the Miracle of the Quran because not only is the Quran a Book that is at the height of the Arabic language, but it is also dynamic in that it responds to the situations of its environment. If the doubters have any credence when they say that the Quran was composed by humans, then they should realize that the only thing more difficult than composing words as profound and magnificent as the words of the Quran is to compose such words immediately and in response to questions and situations. Perfection takes time. Perfection takes revision. Obviously the author of the Quran did not have these. How then can the author be mortal? So the fact that such deep and beautiful words were revealed in response to questions and circumstances of the environment shows that they could only be from Allah (swt). No human could have composed such magnificent words so quickly and in response to the surrounding environment.

Ayahs such as these also show us the Knowledge of Allah (swt). Recall from a previous ayah where we said that the entire Quran was sent down in one night. That one blessed night in Ramadan was when the entire Quran was sent from the Guarded Tablet down to the lowest heaven. Now in this Quran that was sent down on that night were ayahs such as this. Ayahs that were addressing questions that would be brought to the Prophet (saw). Who but the All-Knowing could have known about these? Allah (swt) Knew even before He (swt) revealed the Quran all the events that would happen in the dawah of the Prophet (saw). He (swt) Knew the questions that the people would ask, He (swt) Knew the problems that needed to be addressed, He (swt) Knew the doubts that needed to be clarified. Such is He (swt). The past, the present, and the future are all the same for Him (swt). He (swt) encompasses all things in Knowledge.

We also have to note that when Allah (swt) says that He (swt) is near to us, this part of the ayah is *mutashabiyat*. Recall how we said that a *mutashabiyat* ayah is an ayah whose true meaning is known only to Allah (swt). From a *mutashabiyat* we only take a general meaning of it and we consign the true understanding of it to our Lord. Allah (swt) Himself has told us that there are such ayahs in the Quran, for a more detailed discussion of this please see our tafsir of ayah 8 in Surah Imran. The general meaning that we can take from this ayah is that Allah (swt) is close to us in that He (swt) will always hear our prayers. Allah (swt) is so close to us that even if we make our prayers in the deepest recesses of our hearts, He (swt) will still hear our prayers. So Allah (swt) will hear our dua when we make it out loud, when we make it in a whisper and when we make it to ourselves in our hearts. Any prayer that we make sincerely to Allah (swt), we can be sure that He (swt) will hear it. That is the general meaning of this ayah. That is the lesson and the benefit that we can take from this ayah. We must not go further than that and start questioning “how exactly is Allah (swt) close to us” or “where is Allah (swt)”. Such questions are dangerous and such questions cannot be answered by ones with such limited knowledge like us.

Regarding such questions all that we can say is that we are certain that Allah (swt) is transcendent beyond time and space. In other words, Allah (swt) is not confined to a particular location. This is something in which we must believe because to limit Allah (swt) to one place is to limit Allah (swt) by space, and we know that Allah (swt) is not limited by anything. Yet Allah (swt)

is closer to us than we can possibly imagine. While this may seem to some as a contradiction what we have to realize is that our knowledge is very limited. Because of the limitations in our knowledge, we cannot fully comprehend the essence of Allah (swt). What we do know is that Allah (swt) is beyond time and space, and so it would be wrong for us to say that the essence of Allah (swt) is on the throne over the seven heavens just as it would be wrong for us to say that Allah (swt) is everywhere. What we do know is that Allah (swt) is beyond time and space because Allah (swt) is beyond limits and beyond need. What we do know also is that Allah (swt) is extremely close to us. This all that we can be certain of concerning our Rabb. But before we allow our minds to go any further, we have to ask ourselves if we really need to know anymore than this. We have to remember that Allah (swt) created us to love Him (swt), to fear Him (swt) and to spend our lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt). He (swt) did not create us to know everything about Him (swt), He (swt) did not create us to fully understand His (swt)'s essence. When you know everything that there is to know about someone, then you have some power and control over that person. We have to remember that Allah (swt) is the Master and we are the slaves, and because He (swt) has this Power over us we will never be able to understand Him (swt) completely. The question of "where exactly is Allah (swt)" is a question that has plagued the theologians and philosophers in the history of our Din for centuries. We say that this is a question that cannot be answered by us because of the limitations of our knowledge. What we can be certain of is that Allah (swt) Exists, that He (swt) is beyond being in a particular location, and that He (swt) is still closer to us than our life vein. Is that much knowledge not enough for us to love Allah (swt), to fear Him (swt) and to live our life in worship and servitude to Him (swt)? Why do we need to know anymore? Instead of questioning further about that which we have no knowledge, we should humble ourselves and cease our questioning and calm our curiosity. Once we know all that there is to know about Allah (swt) through our senses and from what He (swt) has told us in the Quran and Sunnah, we should then divert our minds into how we can be of His (swt)'s righteous servants. We should think about what are the actions that we can do which will be pleasing to Him (swt). We should think about how we can avoid the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). We should think about all of His (swt)'s Beautiful Names and how Magnificent and

Glorious He (swt) IS! We should think about all that He (swt) has done for us and how much we are in debt to Him (swt)! This is how we should think about and reflect on our Rabb. We should think about Allah (swt) in a way that will increase our faith in Him (swt) and which will bring us closer to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) make us content with the knowledge that we have and may He (swt) save us from asking questions that will not help us in our worship and servitude of Him (swt)!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**I respond to the dua of every supplicant when He calls on Me**". Allah (swt) tells us here how He (swt) responds to every single person who calls on Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the All Powerful, He (swt) can do anything. In addition He (swt) is also the Most Loving and the Most Merciful. He (swt) loves to help those in distress. He (swt) loves to answer the prayer of those who call upon Him (swt). So if there is anything at all that you need you should ask of Him (swt) because you know from this ayah that He (swt) is close to you and you know that He (swt) will answer you. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that if a Muslim calls on Allah (swt) and asks of Him (swt) something, and as long as that thing is not forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt) and as long as it is not for the breaking of family ties, then Allah (swt) will either grant the supplicant what he asked for, or else Allah (swt) will reserve it for him in the Hereafter, or else Allah (swt) will prevent a harm equal to it from reaching him. You are guaranteed one of these three wonderful things. So you should constantly be asking Allah (swt) of whatever it is that you may need. As long as you are not asking Allah (swt) for something sinful, or you are not asking for a family to be broken, then you can be certain that Allah (swt) will answer your prayer. When you have this certainty what then is preventing you from supplicating to your Lord more and more. Allah (swt) is telling you in this ayah that He (swt) will respond to your dua. He (swt) says that He (swt) will respond to every dua. Why then do you not ask of Him (swt) for every single thing that you need? Is there any act that is more sublime and more beautiful that your asking of Him (swt)? How else can you realize your slavehood of Him (swt)? How else can you realize your utter need of Him (swt)? How else can you clean away all of your pride and sense of self? When you are in that state that is when the world disappears and the Divine becomes manifest.

Another important reason to make dua is because the Prophet (saw) has said “Dua is Ibadah”. So our supplication itself is an act of worship for which Allah (swt) will reward us. When you call on Allah (swt) to grant you something, you are demonstrating your weakness and your inability and you are acknowledging Allah (swt)’s Power and Ability. So He (swt) will reward you just for asking Him (swt). Just think about it, you are asking Allah (swt) for something that you need, and then Allah (swt) gives you what you ask for and then He (swt) even rewards you for asking Him (swt). So even if you may not immediately get what you are asking for, you are still being rewarded by Allah (swt) just for asking Him (swt). Even if you do not immediately get what you are asking for, the reward that Allah (swt) has kept for you just for asking Him (swt) is even better than whatever it is of this world that you may have been asking for. How Generous and how Bountiful is Allah (swt)! How easy has He (swt) made it to journey to Him (swt)?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, “**So they should also respond to My call and believe in Me that they may be led to the right way**”. Allah (swt) has already told us that He (swt) is indeed close to us and that He (swt) hears and responds to every sincere believer who calls on Him (swt). But why does Allah (swt) even do this? Who are we for the Lord of the heavens and the earth to even bother with us? What have we done to Him (swt) for Him (swt) to answer our prayers? In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us what we can do for Him (swt). Here He (swt) tells us how we can show our gratitude for Him (swt) answering our prayers. First of all we should realize that what He (swt) is asking of us is far less than what He (swt) has given us. Even if we never ever made dua to Him (swt). Even if we never asked Him (swt) for even one thing. We are already more in debt to Him (swt) than we could possibly ever imagine. Just His creating us. Just His sustaining us. Just His providing for us with everything that we have is more than we could ever hope to repay Him (swt). Then on top of this He (swt) answers our prayers. He (swt) gives us with what we ask of Him (swt). So we should never think that we are doing any kind of favor or help for Him (swt) when we do what He (swt) asks of us. Rather even when we ask of Him (swt) we are doing something for ourselves. We are the ones who benefit. We are the ones who reach a station of nearness to Him (swt) through our asking of Him (swt). And what is better than being close to the Divine? What is more sublime and pure than that?

So what is it that we need to do for Allah (swt)? First we have to respond to His Call. What is Allah (swt) calling us to? Allah (swt) is calling us to Islam. Allah (swt) is calling us to live our lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt). This is what He (swt) created us to do. After we respond to the call of Allah (swt) by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and by staying away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt), Allah (swt) reminds us once again that we must believe in Him (swt). Our belief in Allah (swt) is something that must always be renewed and refreshed. When you call on Allah (swt) and He (swt) answers your prayer, you should remember Him (swt) and remember that it was He (swt) Who answered your prayer. Do not simply feel content that you got what you asked for. Instead you should be telling yourself that this answer to your prayer which you received was only because of Allah (swt), were it not for Him (swt) you would not have what you asked for. Always make the connection between the blessings and favors in your life and Allah (swt). Insha Allah, this will help you to remember Him (swt) and to strengthen your belief in Him (swt). What would be the result if we respond to the call of Allah (swt) by living our lives according to His (swt)'s Din and by believing in Him (swt)? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that the result would be that we would "**be led to the right way**". If we strive to worship and serve Allah (swt), and we strive to remember Him (swt) and we strive to increase our Iman in Him (swt), then Allah (swt) has promised us in this ayah that He (swt) will guide us to Him (swt). What could be better that that? For every moment of our lives, if Allah (swt) would show us the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) then for every moment of our lives we would be guided. What could be better than that? What could be better than knowing exactly what to do at every moment? To know exactly what is pleasing to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) guide us all to Him (swt)!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to note how it comes in between the ayahs that tell us about fasting in Ramadan. Directly in between the ayahs which speak of fasting is where this ayah about Dua appears. This fact shows us how Ramadan is an excellent time to make Dua and the time of fasting is also an excellent time to make Dua. So you should increase your supplication in this blessed month and when you are fasting. Allah (swt) Knows that this Ummah is in need of the Dua of all of its members.

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ ٱلصِّيَامِ ٱلرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَآئِكُمْ ۚ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ
لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ ٱللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا
عَنكُمْ ۖ فَٱلْـَٰٔنَ بَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَٱبْتَغُوا۟ مَا كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَكُلُوا۟
وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ ٱلْخَيْطُ ٱلْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ ٱلْخَيْطِ ٱلْأَسْوَدِ
مِنَ ٱلْفَجْرِ ۖ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا۟ ٱلصِّيَامَ إِلَى ٱلَّيْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُبَٰشِرُوهُنَّ
وَأَنتُمْ عَٰكِفُونَ فِى ٱلْمَسَٰجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا ۗ

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

188. It has been made lawful for you to go to your wives in the nights of fasting. They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them. Allah Knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He has accepted your Tawbah and pardoned you. So now have sexual relations with them and seek what Allah has written for you. And eat and drink until the white thread is clear for you from the black thread of the dawn. Then complete the fast until night. Do not have sexual relations with your wives when you are in *I'tikaf* in the masajid. These are the limits of Allah, so do not come near them. That is how Allah makes clear His signs for mankind that they may have Taqwa.

This ayah continues to give us the rules for fasting in the month of Ramadan. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what we can and cannot do when fasting, and He (swt) also tells us the times of the fast. Once again we should note the extreme detail in the Law of Allah (swt). There is not one single aspect of how the fast is to be performed that has been left out. This shows us that this Divine Law is not something that we can follow in however way that we want, rather it has to be followed in the way that it was revealed. Allah (swt) did not reveal this Din to be difficult, on the other hand He (swt) also did not reveal it so that we could follow it whatever way that we want and make ourselves into the lords instead of Him (swt). He (swt) revealed this Din to be easy, but it is easy as He (swt) has revealed it. May Allah (swt) help us to realize this!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**It has been made lawful for you to go to your wives in the nights of fasting**". The scholars say that when the ruling for fasting in Ramadan was first legislated, Muslims were only allowed to eat, drink and be with their wives between Maghrib and 'Isha. So only in these few hours could the early Muslims have their food and drink and be with wives, after that time they had to resume their fast. Because of this many of the early Muslims were not able to eat a full meal because they had so little time. The narrations tell us of one of the early Muslims who actually fainted because he was not able to eat his meal the night before. Also many of the Muslims were not able to go to their wives at all. Many of them would not touch their wives during the entire month of Ramadan. This was difficult for many Muslims. During the entire month of Ramadan they could not eat a proper meal or be with their wives at all. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this part of the ayah as a Mercy and an allowance for the Muslims. Allah (swt) tells them in this part of the ayah that they do not need to keep away from their wives during the entire month of Ramadan, but during the nights they could be with them. Because they were able to be with their wives during the night, they were also allowed to eat and drink during. This is because the prohibition of sex is far greater than the prohibition of eating and drinking. When Allah (swt) made the former permissible, He (swt) made the latter permissible as well. So now the early Muslims were able to eat, drink and be with their wives for the entire night in Ramadan instead of only between Maghrib and 'Isha. Then Allah (swt) says "**They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them**". Here Allah (swt) makes the early Muslims to realize how wonderful is the gift that He (swt) gave to them in their wives. In the previous part of the ayah Allah (swt) made their wives permissible for them, and here He (swt) makes them realize what a tremendous blessing this is. Allah (swt) uses a metaphor here to illustrate the close relationship that a husband and a wife have with each other. They are like garments for each other. There are many meanings that we can see in this metaphor that Allah (swt) uses. First it denotes the intimacy and the closeness that the husband and the wife have with each other, especially in the late hours of the night. In their bed they are closer to each other than a garment. It also denotes how each of them is a protection for the other just like a garment is protection. Protection from zina and faksha; everything sexual that is displeasing to Allah (swt).

Because of the fact that a husband and a wife are a protection for each other, that shows us how important it is for young Muslim men and women to get married today. This is even more pressing when we consider the culture in which we have to live today. The culture of materialism. The culture of secularism. The culture of the West. This is a culture that is driven on sensual pleasures and immediate gratification. It is a culture where men love to look at women's bodies and women love to show their bodies to men. Unfortunately many Muslim countries are copying the West and there is a lot of indecency in the clothes that even Muslim women wear these days. We know that even to look at a member of the opposite sex with lust is a terrible sin in our Din. Once we realize this fact, and we see the kind of environment that we are forced to live in until the Islamic State can be established, then this shows us how important it is for us to get married. So marriage is an important way in which we can save ourselves from the displeasure of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow all of the young and sincere brothers and sisters in this Ummah to get married as early as possible with spouses who are worthy of them!

Now while it is true that we must all seek to get married as early as possible, we also need to remember what a huge responsibility marriage is. Once you get married, you are now responsible for the partner in life whom Allah (swt) has given you. You have to make sure that you are ready to shoulder that responsibility and that you are able to fulfill your obligations. If you do not, if you are not ready, then not only will you be doing injustice to your spouse but even worse is that you will be sinning in front of Allah (swt). So while it is extremely important for all of us to get married as early as possible, we also need to realize what a great responsibility marriage is and we have to make sure that we are prepared to shoulder that responsibility. So if you feel that you will not be able to provide for your wife all that she needs, or you feel that your character is such that you will not treat her kindly and with the respect she deserves, then you have to work on building yourself to reach that level before you take that large step of marriage. May Allah (swt) give us all the enabling grace to be the best spouses that we can be!

Then our Lord says to the early Muslims whom this ayah was first revealed to, "**Allah Knows that you used to deceive yourselves**". To have to spend the entire month of Ramadan without their wives was difficult for many of the early Muslims. So before Allah (swt) gave them

permission in this ayah, some of them used to spend the nights with their wives even though they knew that such an act was wrong. When they did that, as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, they were really deceiving themselves. When you commit a sin, you are really deceiving no one but yourself. You are fooling yourself into believing that a transient pleasure in the life of this world is worth earning the displeasure of Allah (swt). Of course it is not. Those few hours of pleasure are not worth the displeasure of Allah (swt). This is only a trick that Shaitan and your own lusts have played on you. If you could realize the kind of misery in the life of this world, and the kind of pain in the next world that the displeasure of Allah (swt) can translate into, then you will see how you are fooling yourselves if you think that a few hours of pleasure in the night is worth the displeasure of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) tells the early Muslims in this ayah that He (swt) Knows how they used to deceive themselves by going to their wives in the nights of Ramadan at a time when they were forbidden to. This part of the ayah also shows us how even the early Muslims who used to live with the Prophet (saw) did commit sins. Even the Sahabah committed sins. They were not angels, but they were human beings like you and me. They made mistakes, and they realized that to make mistakes and commit sins is part of the nature of the human being. It is how Allah (swt) reminds us of our weakness and so He (swt) also reminds us of His (swt)'s Perfection. This part of the ayah also shows us that the late hours of the night is a time when we are particularly susceptible to Shaitan and to our temptations. So we must all be careful during these late hours of the night. The night provides a covering and everything is dark around us. In the dark we think that we can hide our sins, but we should realize that we cannot hide ourselves from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from the late hours of the night! May Allah (swt) save us from the evil of our own selves!

Then Allah (swt) says to the early Muslims "**so He has accepted your Tawbah and pardoned you**". When the early hours of the morning came to these Muslims who had been with their wives during the nights of Ramadan, they knew that what they had done was wrong. So they rushed to make Tawbah to Allah (swt) for their sins. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells them that He (swt) has accepted their Tawbah and that He (swt) has pardoned for them what they have done. There is a lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah as well, we can remind

ourselves how Allah (swt) always accepts Tawbah and how He (swt) always pardons sins. The lust for members of the opposite sex is often very strong within us. Many times we fall into sin, and then we make Tawbah and ask for pardon only to fall into the same sin once again. While it is true that we must feel sad and we must feel remorse at times like this, we also need to remind ourselves that all hope is not lost. Allah (swt) has told us in this ayah how He (swt) accepts Tawbah and how He (swt) pardons sins. We also know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that Allah (swt) will never stop accepting Tawbah, but it is only we who give up on making Tawbah and asking Him (swt) for pardon. So even if you find yourself falling into the same sin again and again, always ask for Tawbah and ask for pardon from your Rabb, and remember that He (swt) is the One Who accepts Tawbah and He (swt) is the One Who pardons sins.

Then Allah (swt) says "**So now have sexual relations with them and seek what Allah has written for you**". Now that sexual relations in the nights of Ramadan have been made permissible, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that they are free to go and have sexual relations with their wives. This part of the ayah shows us how even having sexual relations with our wives is an action that is pleasing to Allah (swt), an action that He (swt) will reward. Allah (swt) does not want us to become monks. Allah (swt) created us and He (swt) Knows what we need more than we know ourselves. Allah (swt) Knows that we have desires and so He (swt) allows us to satisfy these desires with our wives. How Merciful and Gracious is He (swt) in that He (swt) gives us reward even in these pleasurable times!

Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah to seek what He (swt) has written for us. Most of the scholars say that this refers to children. When we go to our wives, Allah (swt) wants us to seek children to come from that union. So while there is nothing wrong from getting pleasure during the time that we spend with our spouses, we still have to remember that the purpose of our coming together is so that we can have children. That is the reason why Allah (swt) placed this desire for the opposite sex within us. It is so that we can come together and raise up children who will serve Allah (swt) just like we do. So even when we approach our wives, we have to remember Allah (swt). We have to seek the righteous children that Allah (swt) has written for us. May Allah (swt) bless all of the righteous Muslim couples in this Ummah with righteous children!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**So eat and drink until the white thread is clear for you from the black thread of the dawn**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims how long they can eat, drink and be with their wives until. It is until the "**the white thread is clear for you from the black thread of the dawn**". The scholars differ on when exactly is this time. Some scholars say it is the break of dawn and others say it is when the sky becomes bright just before sunrise. The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah however is to realize the Mercy and Compassion that Allah (swt) has for this Ummah. Allah (swt) Knew how the Muslims were suffering when the original command was to begin the fast after 'Isha, so in His (swt)'s Mercy, Allah (swt) allowed them to eat, drink and be with their wives until the night ends. How Merciful and Compassionate is our Lord? Why then are we so ungrateful to Him (swt)?

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Then complete the fast until night**". Here Allah (swt) tells us how long we have to fast until. We begin our fast when the white thread becomes clear from the black thread, and we end our fast at nightfall. As we know the exact time for ending the fast is at Maghrib Salah when the sun sets. So it is a day of fasting, when the sun is the sky we refrain ourselves from our most basic needs, until the sun leaves the sky. Allah (swt) created our body with certain needs, and we ourselves refrain from our needs for the sake of Allah (swt). This is to demonstrate our faith, our love and our submission to Allah (swt). This is also to show our gratitude for the blessed month of Ramadan when the Quran was revealed. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to complete our fasts that we keep for Him (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Do not have sexual relations with your wives when you are in *I'tikaf* in the masajid**". Now in the last ten nights of Ramadan, we know that the Prophet (saw) used to make ***I'tikaf*** in the masjid. Many of the Muslims also followed in this Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). For those who took to the masjid towards the end of Ramadan, Allah (swt) tells them in this ayah that they are not to have sexual relations with their wives. So although it was permissible to be with one's wife during the nights of Ramadan, if you are among those who made ***I'tikaf*** in the masjid, then you must restrain yourself from this. **I'tikaf** is a time of spiritual retreat when you seek to be close to Allah (swt). It is a time where you spend the night in

the masjid. It is a time in which you forget all of the distractions and temptations of this world, and your only goal is to be closer to your Rabb.

Then Allah (swt) says "**These are the limits of Allah, so do not come near them**". In this ayah, Allah (swt) has given us allowance and He (swt) has given us limits. We are allowed to eat, drink and be with our wives from sunset to dawn. But during the day when the sun is in the sky then we are not to approach our wives and we are not to have any food or drink. Also when we make ***I'tikaf*** in the masjid, we are not to go to our wives at that time as well. These are the limits set by Allah (swt). In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds you of these limits and He (swt) tells you not to transgress them. Imagine yourself to be a caged animal and the limits of Allah (swt) to be like a cage that surrounds you. If you come near that which Allah (swt) has prohibited, then you are approaching the fences of this cage. If you go outside this cage by falling into that which is prohibited then you have earned the displeasure of Allah (swt) and we know how terrible that can be. That is what Allah (swt) warns us against in this ayah. Allah (swt) has given us allowances and He (swt) has given us prohibitions. The prohibitions are His (swt)'s limits and we are not to come near them. Notice that Allah (swt) does not say that we should not cross His (swt)'s limits but rather He (swt) says that we are not to even come close to His (swt)'s limits. So the limits prescribed by Allah (swt) have to be observed very carefully, they should not even be approached. So it is not enough that we only refrain from what is forbidden, but we must not even come close to it. Realize that these are not the limits set by some master or some king. Rather they are the limits set by the True Master and the True King. So give them the respect and the fear that they deserve. Not only in the rules concerning fasting in Ramadan, but in all of the laws that He (swt) has legislated. May Allah (swt) allow us to do that! May Allah (swt) allow us all to respect His (swt)'s limits!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**That is how Allah makes clear His signs for mankind that they may have Taqwa**". These ayahs are the Message of Allah (swt) to the people. In these ayahs, Allah (swt) is telling the people what He (swt) is pleased with and what He (swt) is not pleased with. In these ayahs, Allah (swt) is telling the people how they can fulfill the purpose of their creation. Now are these ayahs in any way vague or unclear? Can

anyone come and say that they do not know the times in which to fast or how to perform the fast. No of course not, that is why here Allah (swt) reminds us that He (swt) has communicated this Message to us with utmost clarity. No one can come after this and say that the Message of the Quran is not clear. Look at this ayah for example, in this ayah Allah (swt) has told us exactly when we should fast and when we should break our fast. Allah (swt) has told exactly us what is means to fast, He (swt) has told us what it is that we need to abstain from. Allah (swt) has also told us that when we do **I'tikaf** in the masjid then that is a time when we must restrain from contact with our wives, but it is permissible for us to eat and drink. Allah (swt) has made the entire process of fasting in Ramadan perfectly clear for all of His (swt)'s servants. This is how all of the other rules in the Quran are as well. Allah (swt) has made them clear for all mankind to follow. Every single human being can know what is pleasing to their Creator. Every single human being can know how they can journey to Him (swt). The path that leads to the Divine. The path that leads to salvation both in this life and the next has been made perfectly clear. How then could anyone after this come and say that the Message of the Quran is not clear. Rather as we see from this ayah, the Message is very clear. It is only those people whose hearts are corrupted and who do not want to follow this Message who try to find some fault with it.

Finally Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah why He (swt) made the Message of the Quran very clear; it is so that mankind may have Taqwa. It is so that mankind may attain that consciousness of Allah (swt). It is so that mankind may protect themselves from His Wrath. In every action that they do, they would think about Allah (swt) and they would remember how their purpose in life is to worship and serve Him (swt). They would reach that state where they are conscious of their Lord for every moment. So they would do every action for Allah (swt) hoping for the reward of that deed and fearing the punishment. By knowing these rulings that Allah (swt) has made clear mankind can attain this consciousness. By following these rulings they can protect themselves from His Wrath. That is why Allah (swt) made the Message of the Quran clear for all mankind. Is there any from among mankind who will now take heed to this Message?

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوٓا۟ أَمْوَٰلَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِٱلْبَٰطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا۟ بِهَآ إِلَى
ٱلْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا۟ فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَٰلِ ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
١٨٨

189. Do not eat your wealth amongst yourselves by falsehood, and do not present it to the judges so that you may eat a portion of the wealth of men with sin while you know (that what you are doing is wrong).

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) told us about fasting. How we should abstain from food, drink and our wives for Him (swt). This is so that we can gain Taqwa, so that we can learn how to control our desires and our passions for Him (swt). The desires are what veil man from the Divine. Now one of the greatest of desires that all men have is the greed for money and wealth. The material things of this world can seduce a human being and he can spend his whole life trying to acquire as much of it as possible. This greed can be so great that if the human being does not have the guidance from Allah (swt), then he will not care from where he acquires his wealth. That is why in the previous ayahs as Allah (swt) taught us to abstain from our need for food, drink and sex, in this ayah He (swt) tells us to curb our desire for wealth. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) told us to have Taqwa in how we observe the rules of fasting and in this ayah He (swt) tells us to have Taqwa in the way that we acquire our wealth.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Do not eat your wealth amongst yourselves by falsehood**". To eat the wealth of your Muslim brother in falsehood is to acquire that wealth in an unlawful way. So if you gain money or property in any way that is forbidden by the Law of Allah (swt) then you eating that wealth in falsehood. All wealth belongs only to Allah (swt) and He (swt) has only given you the right to consume the portion of it that you acquired while abiding to His (swt)'s Law. If you in any way broke the Law of Allah (swt) to acquire some wealth then you should know that you have no right to that wealth. If you should then consume that wealth, then know that you would be consuming it in falsehood. That means you would be consuming it in sin and thus earning the displeasure of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Notice also how this one verse covers all of the illegal ways of acquiring wealth. It is a sin to acquire wealth through theft, through bribery, through extortion, through blackmailing, through cheating the scales and giving false measurement and all of the other illegitimate ways of gaining wealth. In addition it is also illegal to gain wealth through interest, just as it illegal to gain wealth through a transaction that is not valid in the Law of Allah (swt). So any transaction where the item being sold is forbidden, such as pork or wine, is also forbidden. As is any transaction where the item being sold is not known at the time of sale, such as insurance contracts. All of these are forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt), and if any wealth is acquired through these then that wealth is acquired in falsehood. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Also look at the beauty of the language in this ayah. Allah (swt) does not say not to consume someone else's wealth in falsehood but He (swt) says not to consume **your own** wealth in falsehood. This is because when you acquire wealth through illegitimate means, you are really cheating yourself and you are really depriving yourself. On the one hand you are breaking the Law of Allah (swt) and you are earning the Wrath of Allah (swt). On the other hand you are cheating and depriving your Muslim brother of wealth that really belongs to him. Furthermore you are encouraging such a practice in the society. When you acquire wealth through ways that are forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt) then your actions encourage others to do so as well. So if you cheat someone else and acquire some wealth unlawfully then you should know that it is only a matter of time before someone does it to you. As it is said what goes around eventually comes around. May Allah (swt) save us from all of the unfair means of acquiring wealth that exist in the society that we live! May Allah (swt) allow all of the wealth that we acquire to be through lawful means! This is so that our wealth will be a wealth that Allah (swt) will bless and that He (swt) will allow us to use to become closer to Him (swt) with it! May Allah (swt) also help us to realize the oceans of meanings and the subtleties of wisdom that are present in every ayah of the Quran!

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and do not present it to the judges so that you may eat a portion of the wealth of men with sin while you know (that what you are doing is wrong)**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah is telling us about bribing judges and officials in order to get a ruling in our favor. When Allah (swt) says "**do not present it to the**

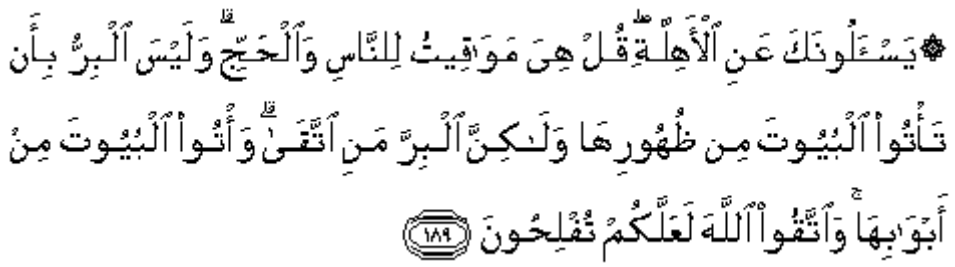
judges", He (swt) is telling us not to offer our wealth to the judges as bribes. The purpose of such bribes would be deception and injustice because Allah (swt) says "**so that you may eat a portion of the wealth of men with sin**". So it is forbidden to offer bribes to judges in order to steal the wealth of others. We see here that not only does Allah (swt) forbid giving bribes to judges, but He (swt) also forbids any injustice or deception in the courts whereby the wealth of others is taken wrongfully. So if you bribe a judge, or if you lie in court, or if you present false evidence, or if you conceal the truth, all with the intention of cheating others and taking their wealth, then you should know that you are directly violating the command that Allah (swt) has given in this ayah. No matter how you look at it, it is still stealing. We can also note in this ayah that Allah (swt) does not say "take the wealth of Muslims with sin" but He (swt) says take "**the wealth of men with sin**", so this includes all of mankind; both Muslims and non-Muslims. So any kind of injustice in the court where the wealth of another person is taken unjustly is a terrible sin for which one will earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In their tafsir of this ayah, the scholars have pointed out a hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said "I am only human. You present your cases before me, and some of you may be more eloquent and persuasive in presenting his argument, I might issue a judgment in his favor. So if I give a Muslim's right to another, I am really giving him a piece of the Fire, so he should not take it". Here we see even the Prophet (saw) warning us against injustice in the court. Just because a judge ruled in your favor does not make what you did as correct if you yourself know that what you did was wrong. That is why in the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**while you know (that what you are doing is wrong)**". So if you bribe the judge, or you cheat the judge with false evidence, or persuade the judge with eloquent arguments, and then the judge rules in your favor, that does not make what you did as correct. Even if that judge was the Prophet (saw) himself (saw) that does not make what you did as right. Because you know that what you did was wrong, and more importantly Allah (swt) Knows that what you did was wrong. So while you might get a temporary gain in the life of this world, you should remember that a terrible punishment is waiting for you in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

So the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always be fair and just, especially when we are in the court and in front of a judge. Any wealth that we get unlawfully through deception and lies, we should know that that there will be a punishment for us in the Hereafter because of that wealth. We should know that while we may be able to fool the judges in the life of this world we will never be able to fool the True Judge. Then the wealth that we took unlawfully will be a punishment for us. May Allah (swt) save us from that terrible punishment! May Allah (swt) save us from our greed for the material goods of this world! May Allah (swt) save us from taking even a half a date unlawfully!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that it shows us the many benefits of the Islamic Economic System. In this ayah alone, Allah (swt) has categorically forbidden all of the means through which wealth is earned unlawfully. From this ayah we can see how alll of the wealth that every person earns in the Islamic State must be fairly earned. The Islamic Economic System does not prohibit private ownership of property like the Communists do, but at the same it does make certain that all of the wealth is fairly and justly earned. It does not allow the oppression and the hoarding of wealth that we see in the Capitalist world. It is prohibits any one group of people from controlling all of the wealth. The system of Zakat ensures that all of the wealth of the land is fairly distributed among all of the people. It ensures that there are no people in poverty and in need. This is because one of the greatest injustices that can be done with wealth is to hoard it and not to give it others when you do not truly need it and they do. That is why the Islamic State seeks to create a society in which there is no one who is exuberantly wealthy and there is no one in abject poverty. Thus many of the problems that are found in the Capitalist economic system of the world today would not be found in the Islamic Economic System. You would not see an extremely wealthy class of people holding on to all of the wealth. You would not see poverty and deprivation among the masses. Rather what you would see is every human being given their fair chance to earn a livelihood. You would see a system where any illegal and unfair means of earning wealth to be forbidden. No one will be allowed to take the wealth of others in injustice and sin. No one will be allowed to control all of the wealth and no one would be allowed to cheat their way into making a fortune. We are not saying that the Islamic

Economic System will create a utopia because there will always be dishonest people. There will always be people who think more about themselves than they do of Allah (swt). But Islamic system will be a system in which dishonesty will not pay off and dishonesty will not be encouraged. Rather the people will be taught that the first and foremost of their duties is to worship and serve Allah (swt). Even their earning of wealth must be a way of serving Allah (swt). The State will work to build this Taqwa in the hearts of all its citizens. From a young age the children will be taught about Allah (swt) and they will be taught that their purpose in life should only be to worship and serve Allah (swt). They will be constantly reminded that Allah (swt) always Sees them and that He (swt) Knows all that they do, and that one day soon they will return to Him (swt) to be judged for each and every one of their actions. Insha Allah this will generate the Taqwa within the citizens of the Islamic State, because they have grown up knowing Allah (swt). Once they have this Taqwa, even the greediest of men will lean towards fairness instead of unfairness, and he will lean towards equity instead of injustice. This is because the system itself teaches you that your purpose is to worship and serve Allah (swt). How different is this from the Capitalist systems that we have today which teach everyone that their purpose in life is to gather as much wealth as possible? What do you expect from the people when this is what they are taught even at an early age? Is it then surprising at all that we see so much corruption and injustice in the economies of the West? So many people stealing from others? So many people cheating the wealth out of others? So many people using lies and deception in order to get their wealth? How much pain and misery has this caused in the hearts of so many people? Is this for any other reason other than because the people have turned away from Allah (swt)? The people have turned away from ruling by the Divine Law that the Creator has revealed and so they have turned away from the Creator Himself (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like such people! May Allah (swt) make mankind realize the Light of His (swt)'s Law and the darkness of the laws of men! May Allah (swt) give the enabling grace to this Muslim Ummah to reestablish the Islamic State so that mankind can be taken out of darkness and into Light!



190. They ask you concerning the crescent moons. Say "They are signs to mark time for mankind and for the Hajj". It is not Al-Birr that you enter houses from their backs but Al-Birr is from Taqwa. So enter houses from their doors and have Taqwa of Allah that you may be successful.

We can see how in this ayah Allah (swt) continues to give guidance to the Muslim community. This Ummah of the Prophet (saw) has now been chosen to carry this Message of Allah (swt) to mankind, and so Allah (swt) prepares this nation for their mission. He (swt) moulds both their thinking and their behavior so that they become His (swt)'s true worshippers and servants. Because only when one becomes a true servant of Allah (swt) can one be ready to propagate this Message to others. In order to carry this dawah you must be among those whose heart is attached completely to Allah (swt). So in this ayah Allah (swt) moulds the thinking of the Muslims by reminding them how everything in the universe is serving mankind so that mankind can serve Him (swt). Thus they are made to realize that their very existence on this planet must be to serve their Lord. Allah (swt) also corrects their behavior by showing them that Al-Birr is not religious customs that they invent in their own minds but it lies in fearing and being consciousness of Allah (swt). The Muslim Ummah today needs to resume their role of carrying this Message to mankind, but how many Muslims today look to this Book with which Allah (swt) prepared our nation for this monumental task?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**They ask you concerning the crescent moons**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah was revealed when some Muslims came and asked the Prophet (saw) why the moon goes through different phases. They noticed the sun always had the same shape, but the shape of the moon was always changing. They saw how it began as a crescent, then it was a half moon, then a full moon, then a half moon again, then a

crescent again, and finally it would disappear only to reappear as a crescent again. This was an interesting phenomenon that they observed in the night sky above them. They knew that it was Allah (swt) Who was doing this but they did not know for what purpose it was. The fact that they noticed such an occurrence also shows us that the early Muslims were always observing the universe around them as Allah (swt) had commanded them to. This ayah was revealed in Madinah, but we know that in the ayahs that were revealed prior to this in Makkah there had been several ayahs where Allah (swt) had told the Muslims to look at the universe around them and to ponder its creation. There is a lesson for us as well here, we also need to be among those who are always striving to observe the universe around us and reflecting on how marvelous the creation of our Rabb is. We should see the Hand of Allah (swt) in everything around us. From the changing of the moon, to the moving of the cloud, to the setting of a sun, and even in ourselves. This was how the Sahabah were. That was why they noticed this occurrence of the moon which they brought to the attention of the Prophet (saw).

So the early Muslims were wondering what was making the moon change in this way. Allah (swt) responds to their inquiry by commanding the Prophet (saw) to say to them that the different phases of the moon "**are signs to mark time for mankind and for the Hajj**". This is the purpose for the different phases of the moon. It is so that mankind can tell time. It is so that mankind can know when one month ends and the other month begins. It so that mankind can count the day, weeks, months and years. Remember at that time they did not have calendars or clocks. They counted time and they ran their lives only by the moon. It was from the different phases of the moon that they knew when was the time to sow the land, when was the time to fulfill business contracts, when was the time to pay back loans, how long was the waiting period for divorced or widowed women, and many other purposes. All of these were benefits that they could see came from the different phases of the moon. When they saw this, they realized how grateful to Allah (swt) they should be.

We can also notice that Allah (swt) specifically mentions the Hajj as one of the reasons for the different phases of the moon. Some scholars say that this was because the Hajj had so much religious significance even for the Arabs in pagan times. Even though these people

worshipped idols they still respected the Hajj. They knew that it dated all the way back to the time of Ibrahim (as) So if we take this meaning then Allah (swt) is showing them that even this religious rite of the Hajj that they revere so much is only possible because Allah (swt) changes the phases of the moon for them. If not for the different phases of the moon then they would never know when to begin or end the Hajj. Other scholars say that the reason Allah (swt) specifically mentioned the Hajj was to show how important the timing was for the Hajj. It is to show that the Hajj is one of those rituals that must be performed at the exact right time, otherwise it would not be valid Hajj. Not only does the Hajj have a specific time in which it must be performed but even the various rituals within the Hajj have a specific time. So another meaning of this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) is reminding the early Muslims that the Hajj has to be performed at set times. It seems to us that both of these opinions are correct. Allah (swt) specifically mentioned the Hajj as one of the reasons for the changing of the moon to remind the Muslims how the Hajj which they revered so much was dependent on the moon, and to let them know that to perform the Hajj correctly means that it must be performed at the correct time based on the sighting of the moon. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In his tafsir of this ayah, Sayyid Qutb asks us to note how Allah (swt) did not give a scientific explanation for the changing of the moon. When the early Muslims came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) to explain for them the reason why the moon was changing, Allah (swt) did not reveal a scientific explanation. He (swt) did not say that the phases of the moon was being caused by the orbit of the moon changing and how the light of the sun was reflecting from this changing. Rather He (swt) taught us what is the benefit that we can derive from the changing of the moon. This is because the Quran is not a book of science. Rather it is a Book of Guidance. Its purpose is not to explain how the universe works, rather its purpose is to show us our Creator in the universe. Now the Quran does encourage the human being to study the universe around him, and the Quran even encourages him to use science to better his stay on this planet, but the purpose of the Quran itself is not science. Science is something that the human being is free to pursue on his own. But to explain science was not the purpose of the Quran. When the human being looks to the Quran he will not find science rather he will find a guide to Allah (swt). He will

find a Book that reminds him how everything in this universe is serving mankind. Allah (swt) has made everything in this universe to serve mankind so that mankind can fulfill their purpose of serving Him (swt). That is why when the companions asked the Prophet (saw) about the changing of the moon; Allah (swt) did not give them the scientific explanation of why the shape of moon was changing. Of course Allah (swt) Knew the scientific explanation and He (swt) could have explained this to the Muslims. But since the Quran is a Book of Guidance and not a book of science, Allah (swt) linked the changing of the moon with the purpose of the creation of mankind. Allah (swt) told the Muslim that He (swt) made the moon change phases so that they could keep time, so that they can fulfill their purpose in life of worshipping and serving Him (swt). To spend one's life worshipping and serving Allah (swt) is all that matters in this life. This is why this entire universe was created and this is why this entire universe exists. Only so that we would discover our Lord and try our best to please Him (swt). May Allah (swt) help us all to remember this!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**It is not Al-Birr that you enter houses from their backs but Al-Birr is from Taqwa**". Allah (swt) ended the previous part of the ayah by reminding the Muslims how one of the main purposes for the changing of the moon was so that they could know when the season of Hajj came. Now we know that when one intends to do Hajj, one goes into a state of *ihram*. Now it was a custom of many of the Arabs that when they were in the state of *ihram* for the Hajj they would not enter their houses from their front door. While they were in the state of *ihram*, if they needed to enter their houses they would only enter their houses from the back entrances. The narrations even tell us of some of them making a hole in the wall of their house for this purpose. They considered it as an act of worship to Allah (swt) when they prevented themselves from entering their houses from the front door while in a state of ihram. Of course this was pure superstition and there was no basis for this practice whatsoever in any of the text that Allah (swt) had revealed. This practice of only entering one's house from the back while in a state of ihram was something that they themselves had invented. They invented this innovation and then they practiced it thinking that it was an ibadah to Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) corrects their behavior by letting them know that He (swt) never legislated such an act of worship. They thought that they that it was Al-Birr; they thought that they were doing a

righteous action for Allah (swt) when they entered their houses from the back door. Allah (swt) tells them in this ayah that such a deed is not Al-Birr. Rather Al-Birr is to have fear of Allah (swt). Only those actions that you do with the fear of Allah (swt), while remembering Him (swt), hoping for the reward from Him (swt), and fearing His (swt)'s punishment, only those actions are Al-Birr.

Now how will Allah (swt) be pleased with any act of worship that you invent in your mind? If you yourself invent a new way of worshipping Allah (swt) in your mind without there being any basis for that action in the Quran or the Sunnah, then how could that be an action that is pleasing to Him (swt)? Especially when He (swt) has given you clear acts of worship that His Messenger (saw) has taught you. So one lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how it is a condemnation of all forms of *Bidah* or innovation. Entering through the back door when in a state of ihram was an act of worship that the Arabs themselves invented. They thought that they were pleasing Allah (swt) when they did it, but as we can see from what Allah (swt) says in this ayah He (swt) was not pleased at all with this practice. Allah (swt) tells them that it is not Al-Birr at all; it is not in any way righteousness. Even if they may have done the action sincerely seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt), since it was not done following the way of the Prophet (saw), since it was not legislated by Allah (swt), they will not get any reward for that action. We should all know the hadith where the Prophet (saw) said "every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance is in the Fire". So instead of reward for their invented act of worship these people will actually gain punishment if they persist in such an innovation once they know that it is in fact displeasing to Allah (swt). Thus the lesson that we can take from this is that we as a Muslim Ummah need to be extremely careful of all kinds of innovation. Any act of worship that is not sanctioned by the Quran or Sunnah is an innovation and has to be avoided at all costs. Now it is true that there are so many different kinds of innovations in the Ummah today. But we believe that the absolute worst one today is how we rule ourselves. For the first time ever, we as Muslims are content living under a secular law. This was something that was never heard of in the past. All the scholars of the past agreed that we can only live under the Khilafah. Only today you have this innovation of Muslims living under kufr law and "scholars" who sanction this. Such is the absolute worst of innovations because it denies and destroys the Sacred Law.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**So enter houses from their doors and have Taqwa of Allah that you may be successful**". In the previous part of the ayah, Allah (swt) told the Muslims that it was not Al-Birr when they entered their houses from the rear; it was not an action that was pleasing to Him (swt). And here Allah (swt) tells them that they should enter their houses from the front door. Even when they are in a state of *ihram*, Allah (swt) says to them that they should still enter their houses from the front. See how Allah (swt) completely destroys the innovation that they had been practicing. In the previous part of the ayah Allah (swt) told them how such an action was not pleasing to Him (swt) and in this part of the ayah He (swt) tells them to do the action the exact opposite of that innovated action. All of this time they had been avoiding entering their houses from the front door and here Allah (swt) tells them to do exactly that. So now the Muslims know that they should never do this practice again because Allah (swt) Himself had told to enter their houses from the front door. Once the Lord and Master gives a command then it must be followed without question.

So what should the Muslims do now instead of this innovation? How can they earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? How can they fulfill the purpose of their creation? In the very next part of the ayah we see the words "**and have Taqwa of Allah that you may be successful**". This is how you attain success. This is how you fulfill the purpose of your creation. It is by having Taqwa of Allah (swt). For every moment of your life, try to remember Allah (swt). Try to be conscious of Allah (swt). Remember that for every moment of your life you are in the Sight and Hearing of Allah (swt). Once you remember Him (swt) in this way then you must rush to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and to stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). If you can do this, then you will gain success. And what is success? It is not the treasures of this world, it is not recognition in this world, but it is something far better and that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s garden. This is the true success. When you realize the reality on the Last Day then you will see how this indeed is the true success. What could be better than the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) allow all of us to reach this station of Taqwa in the life of this world! May Allah (swt) grant us all the reward that comes from this station in the next world!

وَقَٰتِلُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوٓا۟ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

191. And fight in the Path of Allah the ones who fight you and do not transgress. Surely Allah loves not the transgressors.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to prepare the Muslim Ummah for her task of carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind and establishing His (swt)'s Law on the earth. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) had legislated for the Muslims the ruling of fasting. Allah (swt) had also reminded them that the moon and the various phases that it goes through were among the blessings that He (swt) had given them so that they could count the months and keep time. Then Allah (swt) warned them against innovations in matters of worship and He (swt) reminded them how every action that they do for Him (swt) must be an action that is sanctioned by Him (swt).

Now in this ayah Allah (swt) addresses the issue of fighting. The mission of this Ummah is to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. Now of course this is a task that would require fighting in the Path of Allah (swt) because no king or ruler would want to give up their power willingly. Even though they know that only Allah (swt) has a right to Rule in the land, they will try to hold on to their power and they will fight to keep it. Not only will they fight to keep their power, but once they recognize that a State or a movement exists that threatens their power, then they will work to destroy that State or movement. This is why fighting is unavoidable for the nation that is chosen to establish the Din of Allah (swt) on the earth, and that is why He (swt) addresses that issue in this ayah.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**And fight in the path of Allah the ones who fight you**". The scholars agree that this was the ayah where Allah (swt) gave Muslims the permission to fight against those who fight against them. Prior to the revelation of this ayah fighting of all sorts was forbidden. In Makkah, the Muslims were persecuted, tortured and oppressed in many ways but Allah (swt) had not given them the permission to fight. Rather they had to endure patiently all that was done to them. They were not allowed to retaliate in any way.

Let us remind ourselves now how difficult this must have been for them. On the one hand there was the brotherhood of Islam which as we know is the strongest of bonds that can ever exist between human beings. They had to see their own brothers and sisters being tortured and killed by the enemies of this Message. Imagine how painful it must have been for them seeing this happening to their own brothers. Imagine if someone transgressed in this way against your own family. Would you be able to restrain yourself for the sake of Allah (swt) if He (swt) commanded you to? Then there was the fact that before Islam they used to be a very violent people. Before they became Muslim, they would fight for the most trivial of reasons. If anyone insulted them in any way then they would fight. This fact made it even harder for them to restrain themselves from fighting when they were in Makkah. Yet despite this difficulty they still restrained themselves. They never once raised arms in Makkah.

All of that however changed in Madinah with the revelation of this ayah. Now in this ayah, that permission to fight was finally given. However notice how Allah (swt) says that the permission to fight is given only against those who fight against the Muslims, so the fighting can only be in self-defense. Allah (swt) says to the Muslims that they are given permission to fight only against those who fight them. So in this ayah, the permission still has not been given for offensive jihad. Only the defensive jihad, where fighting is against those who fight the Muslims is given. We know that later on Allah (swt) gave Muslims the permission to wage an offensive jihad as well to spread His (swt)'s Message to mankind and to establish His (swt)'s Law on the earth. The ayah to wage an offensive jihad comes later in this Surah and Insha Allah we will discuss that ayah when we reach it.

However there is one meaning of this ayah that was not abrogated by any other ayah. That is that Muslims should only fight against soldiers and not against civilians. Because in this ayah Allah (swt) says to fight only those who fight against you. So the non-combatants like women, children, the elderly, the priests and monks, and the laborers should not be fought against and should not be killed. The fighting can only be against those who fight, meaning that it can only be against those who are soldiers or combatants. The only time women and the laborers can be fought is if they themselves fight. The only time they can be killed is if they themselves try

to kill the Muslims. There are also many narrations of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has instructed the Muslims whom he (saw) sent out in battle not to kill those who are non-combatants. The Prophet (saw) has specifically said that women, children and the monks are not to be killed. In addition Al-Qurtubi mentions a narration of Abu Bakr (ra) when he (ra) told his general whom he (ra) sent out in jihad that laborers are not to be killed as well. So we see from this ayah and these narrations that the only people who should be fought against and killed are those who actually fight against the Muslims. This is true even in the offensive jihad and this is the opinion of the majority of the scholars. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do not transgress**". This means do not fight against those who are non-combatants. Do not fight against those who do not fight against you. So transgression is to fight against those who do not fight against you. Transgression is to kill those who do not try to kill you. Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims in this ayah that while they have been given permission to fight, that permission is given only to those who fight against the Muslims. So to kill someone who is not fighting the Muslims or someone who is not oppressing the Muslims is an act of transgression. To kill innocent civilians and non-combatants is an act of transgression.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**Surely Allah loves not the transgressors**". Allah (swt) does not love those who kill innocent non-combatants. Allah (swt) does not love those who go beyond the limits that He (swt) has set. So we see from this ayah how fighting and killing is not an action that is pleasing to Allah (swt). Only when fighting and killing is absolutely necessary in order to defend the Muslims or to establish the Law of Allah (swt) and to spread the His (swt)'s Message should it be employed. Any fighting that is beyond what is absolutely necessary is transgression, and Allah (swt) tells us here that He (swt) does not love the transgressors. This is why our scholars say that every single war is an unjust war and act of transgression except fighting in the Way of Allah (swt). Only the war to establish the Din and to defend the believers is a just war. So if you fight and kill those who are not themselves fighting against you, you should know that you will be deprived of the Love of Allah (swt). What does it mean to be deprived of the Love of Allah (swt)? It means misery and suffering in the life of this world, and a terrible punishment in the next life. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In addition some scholars have also said that “transgression” in this ayah could refer to breaking the rules of warfare. It could refer to mutilating the bodies of the dead, it could refer to destroying the property of those you are fighting against, it could refer to plundering and stealing the wealth of your enemy; it could refer to any kind of undue chaos or disorder. Fighting for no reason is an action that is displeasing to Allah (swt), as is causing corruption and disorder in the land. Anytime that blood is spilled or something is destroyed or damaged, it must be done according to the Law of Allah (swt) and it must be done to please Allah (swt). The purpose of fighting should only be to defend the Muslims or to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to remove the obstacles in carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. These are the only instances when it is permissible to spill blood and destroy property. Even then the rules of warfare should be observed. Non-combatants are not to be killed, and the destruction of any property must be avoided unless absolutely necessary. So jihad is only permissible against those who seek to harm the Muslims and against the armies of a foreign power when that power refuses to yield political authority to Allah (swt). And even this is permissible only through the Islamic State. Only by order of the Khalifah whom the Ummah has given bayah to. This Khalifah will then order the Muslims to fight for those specific reasons that we identified. These are the only reasons when Allah (swt) has commanded us to fight. Anything above this, even the smallest of aggression against innocents, is an act of transgression and Allah (swt) does not love the transgressors. Allah (swt) does not love those who shed blood and cause destruction in a way that has not been prescribed in His (swt)’s Law. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being among those whom He (swt) does not love!

وَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُم مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ
أَشَدُّ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۚ وَلَا تُقَٰتِلُوهُمْ عِندَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ
يُقَٰتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۖ فَإِن قَٰتَلُوكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

١٩١

192. And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, for persecution is worse than killing. But do not fight them near the Masjid al-Haram until they fight you there. But if they fight you then slay them. Such is the recompense of the Kafiroon.

This is one of those ayahs that the enemies of Islam today use to attack this Message. They read only the translation of the beginning of this ayah, and then they draw conclusions based on this part of the ayah alone. They do not look to what Allah (swt) has said in the previous ayah, they do not look to what Allah (swt) says in the next ayah, they do not look at the context in which this ayah was revealed, and they do not look at all the other ayahs of the Quran. They only look at this one part of the ayahs where Allah (swt) says "**And kill them wherever you find them**", and from this they draw the conclusion that Allah (swt) has commanded the Muslims to kill the non-Muslims wherever they find them. Based on this they say that the Quran justifies the random and indiscriminate killing of innocents. They say that the Quran justifies acts of terrorism. Now we know that those who have even a basic understanding of this Message will know that such a statement could not be further from the Truth. Insha Allah we will try to explain here.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had given permission to the early Muslims to fight for the first time ever in this dawah. For thirteen years of the dawah, Allah (swt) had commanded the Muslims not to take up arms even though they were being brutally oppressed and tortured. For thirteen years they were ordered to stand down even though they had the power and the means to resist their enemies who were oppressing them. The Muslims as a political movement at that time had weapons and they had powerful men who could fight like Umar (ra) and Hamza (ra), but still Allah (swt) commanded them not to fight. Allah (swt) told them to bear in patience all that was

done to them. Now finally in the previous ayah Allah (swt) had given them the permission to fight. Since that permission to fight had been given after such a long time, many of the Muslims may have been hesitant to fight. They would have become used to laying down their arms, they would have become used to being patient and being pacifist. After such a long time of seeing their brothers and sisters tortured and killed right in front of their eyes and not being able to fight back, fighting must have seemed so foreign and so unnatural for them. This is the reason why in this ayah Allah (swt) gives the command to fight so strongly and with such emphasis when He (swt) says "**And kill them wherever you find them**". Notice the power and the force. Now that the Islamic State was established in Madinah, the Muslims were entering a new phase in the dawah. The time to sit back and wait silently was over. The time of jihad with ideas alone was over. The time of jihad with the sword had begun. Now finally after such a long time they had been given the permission to fight. This was why the language of the ayah was so strong. This was the force of words that was needed to wake the Muslims up after their swords had been sheathed for thirteen years. Allah (swt) needed to say this in order to stir them into action. So the reason why Allah (swt) uses Words such as these is to motivate the Muslims to take up arms after laying them down for so long. It was meant to shock them and wake them up. It does not mean that all non-Muslims should be killed anywhere they are found as the enemies of Islam today claim.

In the second part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "**and drive them out from where they drove you out**". At-Tabari tells us that this ayah is addressing the Muhajiroon, those Muslims who were driven out of Makkah by the Quraysh chiefs. In this ayah, Allah (swt) is telling them that they should drive out the Quraysh chiefs just like Quraysh chiefs had driven them out. So this also must be understood in the context in which it was revealed. Allah (swt) is not commanding the Muslims to chase all non-Muslims out of their homes and their land. Rather this ayah was specifically addressed to the Muhajiroon who as we know were driven out of their homes in Makkah. They are being told here to do to the enemies of this Message what had been done to them. They are being told here to retaliate in kind to what had been done to them. The Quraysh chiefs dared to drive out the believers from their homes and to usurp the sovereignty that belongs to Allah (swt). Do they deserve anything less than being driven out from power?

Then Allah (swt) says, "**for persecution is worse than killing**". Here Allah (swt) tells us the exact reason why the enemies of Islam should be killed wherever they are found and they should be driven out from their land. It is because they were responsible for the persecution of the Muslims. How great was their persecution against the Muslims? They did not allow the Muslims to worship Allah (swt), they did not allow the Muslims to fulfill the purpose of their existence! They brutally tortured and killed the Muslims who were not willing to give up their Din. They caused so much pain and suffering to the Muslims only because they worshipped Allah (swt) as they were created to do. Can you see how evil these people are? In addition to this they also subjected the Muslims to economic and social pressures by denying them business, food and any kind of social interaction. They also caused persecution by chasing the Muslims out from their homes and breaking their families. They did all of this only because the Muslims were refusing to turn away from Allah (swt) the Majestic and High. How evil then are such people? These are the people who should be fought against and these are the people who should be driven out.

Recall the prayer of Ibrahim (as) where he (as) had prayed for Makkah to be a place of safety and peace. Because of this dua Allah (swt) had decreed Makkah to be a place where there can be no violence or bloodshed whatsoever. Even the Quraysh who were idol worshippers respected this sanctity of the holy city that had the House of Allah (swt) in it. So here Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to respect the sanctity of Makkah as well. Allah (swt) tells them "**do not fight them near the Masjid al-Haram until they fight you there**". So unless the Quraysh themselves raise their arms against us, we were not allowed to fight them in the vicinity of the Masjid al-Haram. We can only fight in Makkah if we are fighting in self-defense.

Then Allah (swt) says "**But if they fight you then slay them**". From this part of the ayah we see the confirmation of the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) said "one drop of Muslim blood is more sacred than the Kabbah". If the Muslims find themselves attacked near the Masjid al-Haram, then they are given permission to fight in order to defend themselves. This is because the blood of a believing soul that prostrates itself before Allah (swt) and that glorifies Allah (swt) is more beloved to Him (swt) than even His (swt)'s House. The Muslims are given permission to fight and defend themselves and even to kill if they feel that their own lives are

threatened. They can fight and kill even next to the Kabbah itself! This is the importance that Allah (swt) has given to preserving the life of a Muslim. Why then do we as a Muslim Ummah become angered and become distraught when the enemies of this Message damage the masajid of Allah (swt) but when do not have the same reaction when the blood of our brothers and sisters is spilt? Where are the soldiers of Allah (swt) to defend these Muslims? May Allah (swt) bring back the Islamic State so that His soldiers can march through the lands once again! May He (swt) bring back the Islamic State so that the blood of a Muslim becomes sacred once again!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Such is the recompense of the Kafiroon**". Recall how we said that the word **Kafiroon** refers to those who knowingly conceal the Truth when they know it. This was who the Quraysh chiefs were; they were certain that the Prophet (saw) was indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt) and they were certain that this Message was indeed the Truth. They are the ones who had known the Prophet (saw) for his (saw)'s whole life and they knew that he (saw) was not capable of lying. They were also the ones who were the best in the Arabic language and so they recognized more than anyone else how the Quran could not be from anyone except Allah (swt). But despite this certain knowledge that they had in the Truth of this Message, they still turned away from it. They turned away from their Creator and Sustainer and their obligation to worship and serve Him (swt). They refused to acknowledge the Prophet (saw) as the Messenger of Allah (swt) and they refused to acknowledge the Quran as the Book of Allah (swt). Not only did they refuse to affirm this Message, but we know that they also actively worked against it. They persecuted, tortured and killed the followers of this Message, they made malicious lies and fabricated stories about this Message, and finally they drove the Messenger (saw) himself out of his (saw)'s land. They prevented the Sovereignty of Allah (swt) from being established on the earth even though they themselves knew that this was a right that belonged only to Him (swt). They prevented the people from receiving the Message of their Creator. These are the **Kafiroon**. They deny the Truth that they know in their hearts and they deny all that their Creator has done for them. These are the people who deserve to be fought and killed. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, that to be fought and killed and driven out of Makkah is the just recompense for such evil people.

Insha Allah this is the correct understanding of this ayah. So the next time that you hear the enemies of this Message quote a portion of this ayah and say that here the Quran orders Muslims to kill non-Muslims wherever they are found, you should know that such statements are only part of a vicious propaganda campaign. Jihad has it's time and place in Islam. It has its rules and it has it's objectives. It is not the indiscriminate killing of innocent people that the enemies of Islam would like you to believe that it is. Even if some Muslims may practice jihad in this way that does not make what they are doing correct. The religion as a whole should not be blamed for the actions of some misguided individuals. The only purpose of jihad in Islam is to defend the Muslims and to remove the obstacles in the dawah, those who stand in the way of the Message of the Creator from reaching the creation. Even then jihad has its rules and regulations on how it should be conducted, and one of the clearest of these rules is that civilians should not be harmed. May Allah (swt) give us all the correct understanding of this ruling in Islam! May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from the lies of her enemies!

فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوۡاْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ﴿١٩٢﴾

And if they cease, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) gave the early Muslims the permission to fight against the Quraysh chiefs who had oppressed them. Allah (swt) also told the Muhajiroon among the Muslims that they should drive out the Quraysh chiefs from Makkah just like the Quraysh chiefs had driven them out. So in the previous ayahs the battle lines between Islam and kufr had been clearly drawn. On one side of the battlefield were the soldiers of Allah (swt) and on the other side were the soldiers of kufr. But in this ayah, we see that this battle does not have to be a battle to the death. Allah (swt) in His (swt) Mercy gives those who had turned away from this Message a chance to come back to Him (swt). See then how Merciful and Compassionate is our Rabb! Even for a people who have done so much evil, who had turned away from this Message that is so clear, Allah (swt) still gives them a chance to come back to the Truth. How then can you not love Him (swt)? How then can you not strive to worship Him (swt)?

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And if they cease, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". The scholars say that the word "cease" here does not simply mean to cease in their fighting and oppression against the Muslims. It also means to cease in their rejection of this Message when they know that is the Truth. They are opposing the Truth that they know very well. They are fighting against the Truth that they recognize as clearly as night and day. If they will cease in their rejection of the Truth, if they will cease in their persecution of the Muslims, then they will find Allah (swt) to be Forgiving and Merciful. They will find that the Muslims will cease their hostiles towards them and more importantly they will find that their Lord is willing to accept them. Can you even begin to comprehend how Forgiving and Merciful Allah (swt) IS? When you realize the evil that these people have done, when you can see how far they have turned away from the Truth, then you will realize that only Allah (swt) can be so Forgiving and Merciful as to forgive and show mercy to such people. Notice in the language of the ayah the emphasis and certainty with which Allah (swt) presses the fact that He (swt) is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful. This is something about which there can be no doubt whatsoever. If only these people would stop opposing what they know to be the Truth, and if only they would submit to their Lord as they had been created to do, then they will find Him (swt) to be Most Forgiving and Full of Mercy. He (swt) will forgive them all that they had done in the past and He (swt) will grant them more and more of His (swt)'s Mercy. Now just think, if Allah (swt) is willing to forgive such people, after they had done such evil as to oppose this Message and torture the Muslims, do you not then think that He (swt) would forgive you as well no matter how much evil you have done? How then can any of us ever give up on the Mercy of our Lord?

وَقَٰتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۖ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوْا۟ فَلَا عُدْوَٰنَ
إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

194. And fight them until there is no *Fitna* and the *Din* is only for Allah. But if they cease, then let there no be aggression except against the Dhalimoon.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) gave the ruling for defensive jihad. Allah (swt) told the Muslims to fight those who fight them and to drive out the ones who had driven them out. In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives the ruling for offensive jihad. This ayah tells the Muslims that once the Islamic State is established then permission is given to fight against all those who oppose the Truth. All those who oppose Allah (swt). Now this ayah does not abrogate the previous ayah that legislated defensive jihad but it supplements it. The ruling for defensive jihad still exists, Muslims must still fight those who fight against them, but in this ayah Allah (swt) gives an additional ruling which is the command to wage an offensive jihad.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And fight them until there is no *Fitna* and the *Din* is only for Allah**". The key to understanding this ayah is understanding two words; one is "**Fitna**" and the other is "**Din**". Allah (swt) commands the Muslims in this ayah to fight the enemies of this Message until there is no more **Fitna** and the **Din** is only for Him (swt). Linguistically the word **Fitna** means a severe trial, but in this ayah it has a more comprehensive and a far deeper meaning. One meaning of the word Fitna here is that it refers to all kinds of persecution and oppression that is done against the Muslims in order to make them leave Islam. As we mentioned many of the early Muslims were being tortured and persecuted and they were being put through severe economic and social pressures in an attempt to force them to leave Islam. This is an example of one of the meanings of Fitna, and Allah (swt) commands the Muslims in this ayah to fight until this Fitna is no more. The Muslims must fight the enemies of this Message until these evil people stop trying to force Muslims to leave their Din. The Muslims must fight those who are trying to take them and their brothers away from Allah (swt). What is more important than the worship of Allah (swt)? Who then is more evil than those who would prevent this?

Another meaning of the word Fitna is all that the enemies of this Message put in place to prevent this Message from reaching mankind. The enemies of this Message are those who recognize that it is the Truth, but they turn away from it while knowing that it is the Truth. Not only do they reject this Message themselves, but they strive to ensure that this Message does not reach anyone else. They have turned away from this Message because they would rather live a life of serving their desires instead of serving Allah (swt). They would do this even though they know that Allah (swt) created them to serve Him (swt). They know that He (swt) is the True Sovereign. And they know that if this Message reaches the masses, and the people accept it, then this Message will gain supremacy in the land. This Message will establish a society that is submissive to Allah (swt). These people who have chosen to be slaves of their lusts and their desires will not want to live in such a society. So when they are in power they will strive to prevent this Message from reaching the people. We saw this at the time of the Prophet (saw) when the Quraysh spread all kinds of propaganda and lies among the masses about this Message. They said this was a Message that broke families, they said this was a Message from a sorcerer, they said this Message came from the devils. Their only intention with these lies was to lead as many people as they could away from the Prophet (saw). They knew that this Message was the Truth but still they spoke against it because they desired so much to prevent it from reaching its intended recipients. There are really no words to describe the evil that they had done. They were denying their people the Message that tells them what is their purpose in life. They were denying their people from knowing their Creator. There is no greater joy in this world for the human than to be close to the Divine and they were denying their people this bounty.

It is not only the Quraysh chiefs who have been guilty of this. All the kings and the tyrants who have usurped sovereignty away from Allah (swt) have spoken against this Message. They have tried to lead their people away from it because they knew that it came to return the sovereignty in the land to the One whom it belongs. In fact we see the same evil from the enemies of this Message today. The propaganda machine of the West has been relentless in their campaign against Islam They say that this Din is terror, they say that this Din has come to take away people's freedoms, they say that this Din oppresses women, they say this Din will take

the world back to the dark ages. All of these are lies from evil men whose hearts know nothing but darkness. Now do you think the common people in Western lands will come to Islam when these lies are all that they know about this Din? When they have been fed this garbage, do you think people will take the time in their busy lives to read this Quran or to study the life of the Prophet (saw)? All that they will know about Islam is the image of two towers burning and crumbling down. The enemies of this Message have made certain of this. So all these lies and deceptions that those in power put to turn the people away from Islam is another meaning of the word Fitna. The only way to remove these lies and deceptions is to remove those in power who are generating these lies. So just as Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to fight those who are oppressing and persecuting the Muslims, Allah (swt) also commands them to fight those who are preventing this Message from reaching mankind by spreading false propaganda and lies about it.

Yet another meaning of the word Fitna in this ayah is shirk or the worship of anything other than Allah (swt). When we take this meaning, we also see that Allah (swt) is commanding the Muslims to fight until there is no more shirk. This does not mean that people must be forced to become Muslims and they must be forced to abandon their false gods. We know from the famous ayah that there is no compulsion in religion, Allah (swt) has clearly told us that you cannot force anyone to be Muslim. Furthermore rationally it is something that cannot be done; you cannot change what is in someone's hearts even by force. That is something that only Allah (swt) can do. But the shirk that is meant in this ayah is the shirk that is out in the open and that is public. In the Islamic State, the non-Muslims were allowed to keep their religion and they were allowed to worship their gods, but it had to be inside their homes. They were not allowed to bring this shirk in the public, and they were not allowed to call others to their religion. So there could be no idols or symbols of their religion in the public. Their religion is wrong and if they choose to follow it over the Truth, then they must keep it confined to themselves. They must not be allowed to misguide anyone else with their falsehood. That is why the public areas must be free of all the symbols of shirk and there must not be anyone calling to this falsehood. When this was done, all of the people who were sincere realized the falsehood of their religion and they themselves left the falsehood of shirk to come to worship of Allah (swt), the One and Only. We also see from this that

the secular concept of “freedom of religion” is very different from the Islamic concept. While we also have freedom of religion in that the people can keep their beliefs and practice their religion in private, we do not allow them to call to their falsehood. To allow this would be a Fitna because these people would be calling to shirk. They would be calling the people away from Allah (swt). That is why this also is a Fitna that must be eradicated in order that Allah (swt) Alone be worshipped.

In addition to the shirk in worship where another god is worshipped besides Allah (swt), there is also the political shirk. This is where the political authority in the land belongs to another besides Allah (swt). As we established, it is a fundamental part of our Aqeedah to believe that only Allah (swt) has the right to legislate. Allah (swt) is the true Lord and King and anyone who usurps this right from Him (swt) has committed shirk. So the Muslims must also fight until this form of shirk is eliminated and the sovereignty and power returns to Allah (swt). This entire earth belongs to Allah (swt) and so only He (swt) has the right to rule over it. There must exist on it only that which is pleasing to Him (swt). Any form of government other than that which has been specially prescribed in the Shariah is shirk, and anyone who participates in such governments in any way has committed shirk. All of these different forms of shirk is yet another meaning that the word Fitna gives in this ayah. The Muslims must fight until all of this Fitna is removed.

As we have mentioned before, the Islamic State must be present before the Muslims can fight. Our scholars have said that it is not permissible for the Muslims to fight when there is no State. One of the preconditions for jihad is the Islamic State, just like wudu is a precondition for Salah. So this Ummah has an obligation to fight in order to remove all of the Fitna that is present in the world today. But in order to perform that obligation we first have to work towards the obligation of bringing back the State. Only when the obligation to bring back the Islamic State has been fulfilled can we then perform the obligation of fighting in order to remove the Fitna. So we see here how this is yet another ruling which needs the Islamic State in order to be implemented correctly. The Prophet (saw) has called jihad the apex of our Din. But today no believer can fulfill this obligation because the fundamental pillar which supports it is missing. May Allah (swt) help us to restore it!

What will be the result when all of this Fitna is removed? As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, the result will be that "**the *Din* is only for Allah**". The word **Din** here is also a comprehensive word with deep meaning. It is derived from a word that means a debt which needs to be paid. Of all the debts that we have to take care of which one is the most important. Of everyone whom we owe something to who do we owe the most to? Is it not Allah (swt)? So we see here how Din is not only the religion of the people that tells them what to worship and how to worship. Rather it is an entire way of life. It permeates every single aspect of the life the individual and the life of the society. It is the complete guidance from Allah (swt). For every moment of their lives, Muslims can find a guidance to Allah (swt) in this Din. This is true both for Muslims individually and collectively as a society. There are laws in this Shariah both for individual Muslims and the society as a whole. It shows us the purpose of our existence. It allows us to dedicate every moment of our lives for Him (swt) so that at every moment we can fulfill our debt. So only when all of the Fitna is removed, will the Din only be for Allah (swt). All of the people will be able to make Allah (swt) as the purpose of their lives as they were created to do. The people and the society as a whole will submit completely to Allah (swt). This is what it means for the Din to be only for Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make this ideal a reality in the world once again!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But if they cease, then let there no be aggression except against the Dhalimoon**". Islam means peace. This is a Din of peace and we are a people of peace. We not only love all of mankind, but we love all of creation. We hate to see any kind of destruction and we hate to see any kind of violence. We know that Allah (swt) has only called for violence and force to be used as the very last resort. When the Islamic State was present, the Prophet (saw) would first send emissaries and messengers to the emperors and kings to all of the neighboring states. First he (saw) would invite them to Islam. They could either become Muslim, and then they would be brothers to the Muslims, or they could keep their religion and pay the jizya. If they chose this option then they would receive the protection of the Islamic State. But always the political authority had to be with Allah (swt) where it belongs. Allah (swt) is the only True King and the only True Sovereign. This was the terms that the Prophet (saw) invited the kings and emperors to. Only if they absolutely refused these terms could the sword be raised

against them. So the Prophet (saw) only ordered that the sword be used as the very last resort when all other means have been exhausted. The Prophet (saw) was even merciful towards the Quraysh chiefs who had done so much evil to him (saw) and the Muslims. When Makkah was opened, the Prophet (saw) pardoned the Quraysh chiefs and gave them amnesty. This was how Allah (swt) had guided the Prophet (saw) to deal with even the worst enemies of this Message. Violence and bloodshed should only be used as an absolute last resort. If there was any way that the Fitna could be ended through peaceful means, then that is what must be sought. Furthermore as we see in this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**if they cease, then let there no be aggression except against the Dhalimoon**". If they cease in their Fitna. If they cease in their oppression and persecution of the Muslims. If they cease in preventing this Message from reaching their people. If they cease in holding on to the power that really belongs to Allah (swt). If they cease in calling the people to shirk and falsehood. If they cease in displaying the symbols of shirk and idolatry in the public. If they cease in spreading propaganda and lies about Islam and turning the people away from it. If they cease in all of this then there is to be no aggression to them. The only aggression that is permitted is against the Dhalimoon. The Dhalimoon as we know are those who do Dhulm. This means "oppression" and "injustice" and "evil". Only those who make Fitna and the ones who do Dhulm; the ones who do evil, the ones who oppress their people, the ones who hide from their people this Message that their Creator has sent them, the ones who prevent their people from fulfilling of their existence, the ones who usurp the sovereignty from the True Sovereign, these are the only ones against whom aggression is permitted. These are the ones who can be fought. These are the ones who *must* be fought if Mercy and Justice is to return to this world once again. May Allah (swt) bring back the Islamic State so that the true jihad resumes!

ٱلشَّهْرُ ٱلْحَرَامُ بِٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَٱلْحُرُمَٰتُ قِصَاصٌ ۚ فَمَنِ ٱعْتَدَىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ فَٱعْتَدُوا۟ عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا ٱعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ
وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

194. The sacred month is for the sacred month, and for the forbidden there is equal retaliation. So whoever transgresses against you, then you transgress against him the same as he did to you. And have Taqwa of Allah and know that surely Allah is with the Muttaqoon.

In the previous ayahs we saw that Allah (swt) finally gave the Muslims the permission to fight jihad against the enemies of this Message. We saw the command for defensive jihad where the Muslims were ordered to fight against those who fight them, and we saw the command for offensive jihad where the Muslims were ordered to fight against those cause **Fitna** in the land. Now in this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to give the Muslims rules on how jihad is to be conducted. From this we can see that jihad also is an act of worship just like prayer and fasting are. It is not simply indiscriminate killing and bloodshed like some would believe. If it is not conducted according to the rules that Allah (swt) has legislated, then how can we expect it to be accepted by Him (swt)? Even the times in which the Muslims can fight has its specific rules and regulations, that is what Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah.

During the time when this ayah was revealed, there were four months that were sacred in which fighting and killing of all sorts were forbidden. The Arabs were a nation of warriors who were always engaged in fighting, but even they respected the sanctity of these four months. Even they ceased hostilities during these periods. They knew that it was Allah (swt) Who had made these months sacred, Who had forbidden all fighting and aggression in these months, and they knew that to violate the sanctity of these months was to invite the Wrath of Allah (swt). Only the most evil and the most deceitful of the tribes dared to violate these months. These evil men found ways of getting around the prohibition to fight in the sacred months. What these tribes would do was a practice called *nasi* where they would attack another tribe during one of the sacred months,

and then they would make another non-sacred month sacred in the place of the month whose sanctity they had violated. Of course they had no right to do this; it was a practice that they had invented in order to shed blood in a month during which Allah (swt) had forbidden fighting.

Now when Allah (swt) legislated the command of jihad with the sword, many of the Muslims were concerned that the enemies of Islam might do this practice of *nasi* to them. They were afraid that the enemies of this Message might violate the sanctity of the sacred months and attack them during this time. What should the Muslims then do? Could they retaliate also in the sacred months? It was to alleviate this concern that Allah (swt) revealed this ayah. Allah (swt) says "**The sacred month is for the sacred month, and for the forbidden there is equal retaliation**". First we see that Allah (swt) confirms the sanctity of the sacred months and He (swt) confirms that fighting is not permissible in them. So if the enemies of Islam honor the sanctity of a sacred month then the Muslims must honor it as well. This is because the sacred month is for the sacred month. The sacred month is in which there is to be no fighting. But Allah (swt) also says "**and for the forbidden there is equal retaliation**". Allah (swt) explains this in the next part.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) explains exactly what He (swt) means by this when He (swt) says "**So whoever transgresses against you, then you transgress against him the same as he did to you**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if any of the enemies of this Message attack them during the sacred months, then they are permitted to respond in kind but no more. This means that they are allowed to fight and kill if necessary during the sacred months, but only in self-defense. They are not allowed to initiate an armed conflict during the sacred months like their enemies do. Only when someone transgresses against them, thus violating the sanctity of the sacred month, are the Muslims then allowed to return in kind. The scholars note that this ruling is similar to fighting and killing near the Masjid Al-Haram. The Muslims were forbidden from doing this, but if someone did it to them then and only then were they allowed to respond in kind.

Now that Allah (swt) had revealed this ayah, the Muslims should have had no fear or hesitation whatsoever about fighting back in the sacred months if the enemies of this Message attacked them during these months. If Allah (swt) had not revealed this ayah, the Muslims would

have been very hesitant to fight, even to fight to defend themselves in these sacred months. Unlike the enemies of this Message, the Muslims regarded the sanctity of the sacred months. They were so scared to violate the prohibitions of Allah (swt), even if it was for a good cause such as fighting the enemies of this Message or fighting to defend themselves. However now that Allah (swt) had revealed this ayah that fear had been removed. The Muslims knew that the One Who had made these months sacred in the first place, had now specifically given them the permission to fight in these months.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And have Taqwa of Allah and know that surely Allah is with the Muttaqoon**". In the previous part of the ayah, Allah (swt) had given the Muslims the permission to violate the sanctity of the sacred months. If they were attacked during the sacred months then they had the right to fight back and even to kill if necessary. However now that the permission to fight in the sacred months had been given, Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that they need to have Taqwa of Him (swt). Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims that this permission to fight in the sacred months does not give them the right to transgress against their enemies during these months. It does not give them the right to begin any unprovoked conflicts during this time. They only had the right to defend themselves if they were attacked. This Taqwa of Allah (swt), this awareness and fear of Allah (swt), prevented the Muslims from transgressing during the sacred months. Even during the heat of battle, even when they were fighting with their enemy, they still had to remember Allah (swt). They knew that they could not use this permission that Allah (swt) had given them to begin any new offensives or aggressions against their enemy during these sacred months. They knew that they could only retaliate and that retaliation must be equal to what was done to them. This was because, unlike their enemies, the Muslims still honored the sanctity of the sacred months. They knew that it was Allah (swt) Who had made these months sacred. They knew that Allah (swt) had only given them permission to defend themselves in these sacred months. Finally they knew that only if they had Taqwa would Allah (swt) then be with them. They knew that only when Allah (swt) was with them would they then gain victory. They knew that they themselves were weak. They themselves were nothing. If Allah (swt) was not with them, if Allah (swt) did not give His (swt)'s help and support,

then they knew that they had no chance against their enemy who was always more powerful in numbers and weapons. So they knew that they had to have Taqwa, it was the only way to ensure that Allah (swt) is with them, it was the only way to ensure victory. When you go out into battle, who else would you rather have with you than Allah (swt)? If Allah (swt) is with you, then there is no enemy that can overcome you. Remember from this ayah that the key to Allah (swt) being with you is for you to have Taqwa of Him (swt).

So for every moment of your life try to remember Allah (swt). Just like this promise held true for the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw), it holds true for us as well. If we have Taqwa of Allah (swt) then He (swt) will be with us. So when you remember Allah (swt), then He (swt) will be remember you. When you have Taqwa of Allah (swt), by doing what He (swt) has commanded you to do and by staying away from what He (swt) has commanded you to stay away from, then that Allah (swt) will be with you. If you guard the prohibitions and the obligations of your Lord then He (swt) will guard you. He (swt) will send His (swt)'s angels to be with you and to protect you. Allah (swt) Himself will be with you! Can you even begin to understand how wonderful that would be? How then will you ever feel sad or be afraid when you know that Allah (swt) is with you? What could be better for you in this entire world than for Allah (swt) to be with you? May Allah (swt) help us to have Taqwa of Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) be with us for every moment of our lives!

This part of the ayah is also a clear evidence to show that Allah (swt) is not in a fixed location above the seven heavens as some would claim. This ayah is an example of just one of the many ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) is **with** those whom He (swt) is pleased with. How then can He (swt) be above the heavens? Now those who claim that our Lord is above the heavens say that the meaning of this ayah is that Allah (swt) is with those whom He (swt) is pleased though His Knowledge of them. If such were the meaning of this ayah then why is it that Allah (swt) never says in the Quran that He (swt) is "with" the disbelievers or "with" those whom He (swt) is displeased with? Surely He (swt) is with them through His Knowledge as well. Just like He (swt) Knows what all the believers think and do, He (swt) also Knows what all that the disbelievers think and do as well. Yet never in the Quran does Allah (swt)

ever say that He (swt) is with the disbelievers or with the criminals. Perhaps the one exception to this rule is when He (swt) describes Himself as the being the Fourth among three or the Sixth among five in Surah Mumthaniha. But even in this Surah He (swt) does not explicitly describe Himself as Being with them, rather He (swt) says that He is the One Who makes even their odd number. He (swt) is the One Who knows all the evil plots that they make and He (swt) will prevent these plots from coming to fruition. But as for Allah (swt) saying that He (swt) is with someone, you will always find that He (swt) says that He (swt) is with those whom He (swt) is pleased with. This shows us that Allah (swt) is with the believers in more than simply His Knowledge of them. He (swt) is with them in a way that cannot be understood with the mind, it can only be understood with the heart. We can never describe it in words. It is something that must be experienced, something that must be tasted. So Insha Allah try your best to be among those who have Taqwa. Those who are conscious of Allah (swt) at every moment. Those who strive to always protect themselves from His Wrath and His displeasure. Then you will realize how it is that your Lord is with you. You will feel His Presence close to you. He (swt) will protect you and give you success in your affairs just like He (swt) did for the Sahabah (raa). What could be better for you in this world than to have the Divine with you? To have Him (swt) be so close to you. Wherever you go, wherever you may be, you will never be alone. Always there will be this magnificent and tremendous Being Who is with you. To watch over you and protect you. To keep you safe from all dangers. To protect you from all demons and temptations that might take you away from Him.

So the correct understanding of this concept is that Allah (swt) is close to us. Closer than we can possibly imagine. Not sitting far away on a giant throne somewhere above seven skies like the deviants would like us believe. Only those whose hearts are attached to this world make such a claim. They have never felt the Divine Presence. They simply take the literal meaning of everything without thinking or reflecting in any way. May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from their corruption! May Allah (swt) give us the correct understanding of Him (swt)!

وَأَنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا۟ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى ٱلتَّهْلُكَةِ ۛ وَأَحْسِنُوٓا۟ ۛ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

196. And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands, and do Ihsan, surely Allah loves the Mohsineen.

This ayah continues on the theme of jihad that Allah (swt) began a few ayahs ago. So far we have seen Allah (swt) give the command both for offensive jihad and for defensive jihad. We also saw how Allah (swt) told the early Muslims that they are only allowed to violate the sanctity of the sacred months if they are attacked during these months. If they are fought against then they can fight and if others try to kill them then they can kill. Thus we see how our Lord emphasizes for us that jihad is an act of worship and it must be performed according to its rules. Now Allah (swt) comes to another important aspect of jihad and that is spending for Him (swt) in order to finance the military campaign.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And spend in the way of Allah**". Notice the word "and" with which Allah (swt) begins this ayah. This word shows that this is not simply a general command to spend but it is directly connected to the commands given in the previous ayahs. We know that the commands given in the previous ayah were those for jihad in the path of Allah (swt), so the command to spend here is a command to spend for jihad. So this ayah must be understood in the context of jihad. Allah (swt) had told us previously about spending for our parents, for the orphans, for the needy, for the travelers, and for the freeing of slaves. But here Allah (swt) is telling us to spend for jihad. Insha Allah that is how we must understand this ayah.

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how this command was especially significant for the early Muslims when the Islamic State was first established and the ruling for jihad was first legislated. At that time the State did not have enough funds to finance the military campaigns on its own. Rather every soldier had to provide for his own weapons, armor and mount. Now many Muslims loved to go out in the path of Allah (swt) but they could not afford to buy the weapons, armor and mount that were necessary. So Allah (swt) urges all the believers

here to not only contribute for their own weapons, armor and mount but also for those of their brothers who could not afford these necessities of battle. Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that all of this wealth that they would be spending would be in His (swt)'s way, it would be money that they would be sacrificing for the sake of their Lord. This means that for every dinar and dirham that they give up, they would find their reward for it on the Day of Judgment.

What is the lesson that we as Muslims can take from this ayah today? We know that we cannot have jihad until the Islamic State is established, so how can we then spend in the path of Allah (swt) for jihad when there is no jihad? The answer to this question is simple. Since to spend for jihad requires jihad requires the Islamic State, you then have to spend to establish the Islamic State. Even if you are not part of a movement or group that is working to bring back the Khilafah, you can still spend to spread the word that it is an obligation and all Muslims must work for its establishment. In addition to that you can still spend to gain the knowledge and prepare yourself to be part of a group or even to start a group for this purpose. You can also spend on the students of knowledge who are studying Islam. There are many youth today who would love to work for Islam but they do not have the financial resources to support themselves and their families. It is up to you to find these youth, to motivate them to work for the Din and to support them. Insha Allah one of the youth on whom you spend will be the one who will one day raise a movement that will bring back the Islamic State. In the end what matters is that you have sincerity to Allah (swt) and you give your wealth hoping for His (swt)'s Pleasure. You give for Allah (swt) and you hope that He (swt) will be pleased with what you give. In the end what matters is the sincerity that you have for Allah (swt) when you spend. Know that surely Allah (swt) is always Seeing, Hearing and Knowing.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands**". There are several meanings that this part of the ayah gives. One meaning is that Allah (swt) is commanding the Muslims not to refrain themselves from spending in His (swt)'s cause. Because to refrain yourself from spending when Allah (swt) has given you the command to spend would be gaining the displeasure of Allah (swt), and that in essence would be throwing yourself into destruction. It would be destruction both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. In this

world, if you refrain yourself from spending for Allah (swt), then your wealth and money would be deprived of all blessings, and you would always find yourself in poverty and in need. Furthermore in the Hereafter you would find yourself in front of Allah (swt) having to answer for yourself as to why you did not spend when He (swt) had specifically ordered you to spend. Can you imagine the terror that you will feel at that moment? May Allah (swt) have Mercy on us!

Another meaning that the words "**do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands**" gives is not to give up in the jihad in the path of Allah (swt). Just as refusing to spend in the path of Allah (swt) would be throwing yourself into destruction, so too will be refusing to go to jihad for Him (swt). Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari (ra) said that to stay at home and tend to your wealth while neglecting jihad in the way of Allah (swt) would be throwing yourself into destruction. Similar to refusing to spend in the path of Allah (swt), refusing to go on jihad when the call to arms is sounded is also earning the displeasure of Allah (swt) and the displeasure of Allah (swt) is destruction. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Yet another meaning that these words give is that you should not spend all of your money on jihad in the way of Allah (swt) while not leaving any wealth to care for your family. You should leave some money to support yourself and your family because this also is an obligation from Allah (swt). Now some may ask about Abu Bakr (ra), did he (ra) not give away all of his wealth when the call was sounded to spend for Allah (swt)? It is true that this is what he (ra) did, but we have to remember that Abu Bakr (ra) had the Prophet (saw) as a son-in-law and so he (ra) knew that the Prophet (saw) would take care of him and his family. So it is not that Abu Bakr (ra) neglected and abandoned his family altogether rather he (ra) knew that the Prophet (saw) would take care of his family. That was why he (ra) replied that he (ra) had left "Allah and His Messenger" for him and his family. Our case is different. Most of us do not have someone blessed like the Prophet (saw) to take care of our families. In our case we have to give as much as we can for jihad and dawah, but we must also leave enough for our families. We have to remember that we have an obligation from Allah (swt) to take care of our families just as we have an obligation for dawah and jihad. IF we neglect our families then destruction is not only poverty in this world but Allah (swt)'s Wrath in the next.

Yet another meaning that these words give is that we must not give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt). This is because to give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt) would be to throw ourselves into destruction. No matter how great a sin you may have committed, you must never give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt) because to do so would be in fact a greater evil than whatever evil it is that you may have done. Some people may have done great evil, and they keep thinking about this evil that they have done and they tell themselves that they are doomed because Allah (swt) would never forgive them. Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that such thinking is wrong, we must never destroy ourselves by thinking that we are doomed, rather we must always have a hope in the Mercy of the Ar-Rahman. No matter how many sins we have committed we must never destroy ourselves by giving up on Allah (swt)'s Mercy. We must never destroy ourselves by continuing on the sin that we are doing while thinking that we will never be forgiven. Rather we must pray to Allah (swt) to guide us and we must make our best effort to refrain from the sin that we are doing. We can also note that one of the best ways to make up for the sins that you have done in the past is by spending your wealth in the way of Allah (swt). Because the Prophet (saw) has told us that charity is like water that puts outs the fire of our sins. So the more sins that you have done, the more the evil that you have done, the more that you must spend to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Think of every penny that you spend as another drop of water that is putting out the fire of your sins. If you do not have enough money to spend then you can spend from your time and your efforts. If you do not have even this then spend with your dua. Pray to Allah (swt) to bring back the Islamic State, to forgive the Muslims and have mercy on them, and to guide all the sincere people who not received the Message yet.

Yet another meaning that we can take from the words of our Lord "**do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands**" is that we must not commit suicide and we must not harm ourselves for no reason. Even our body is a trust that Allah (swt) has given us and we have a responsibility to look after that trust. So we should be careful about what we eat, we should get enough exercise, and we should not harm our body in any way for no reason. On the Day of Judgment, Allah (swt) will question us about everything that He (swt) has given us including our own bodies.

See then how much meaning our scholars have taken only from the words "**do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands**". One meaning is that you should not restrain yourself from spending in the cause of Allah (swt) when you are called on to spend, and another meaning is that you should not give up jihad in the path of Allah (swt), and another meaning is that you should not spend all your wealth that you neglect your family, and another meaning is that you must never give up on the mercy of Allah (swt), yet another meaning is that suicide is forbidden, and yet another meaning is that you must never harm your body for no reason and you must look after your body. There is an ocean of guidance for our community in only these few words. This is part of the Miracle of the Quran. Allah (swt) has placed so much meaning in so few words, so much benefits and lessons for our community, so much guidance and so much good counsel. The words in this Book are finite, but the meaning that can be derived from them is infinite. The guidance that comes from this Book has no end. But how many are the Muslims today who look to this Quran in order to get this guidance?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**do *Ihsan*, surely Allah loves the people of Ihsan**". There are two meaning that this word ***Ihsan*** gives. One meaning is to do an action for Allah (swt) with the certain knowledge that He (swt) is Seeing you do that action. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) where he (saw) has explained ***Ihsan*** to mean "to serve Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him then to know that He sees you". From this hadith, the scholars say that there are actually two levels to Ihsan. One level of Ihsan is where for every action that you do, you do it with the certain knowledge that Allah (swt) is Seeing you do that action. However an even higher level of Ihsan is to do every action as if you can see Allah (swt) while doing that action. Of course none of us can literally "see" Allah (swt), but it is a station where your conviction in your Rabb is so strong that it is as if you can see Him (swt). You "see" Him (swt) at every moment of your life and for every action that you do. Both of these are high stations of Ihsan that we must all strive to reach. Why should we strive to reach these stations? Because as Allah (swt) tells us here He (swt) loves the people of ***Ihsan***. How beautiful would it be if you could gain the Love of Allah (swt)? Is there any goal in your existence that is worth striving for other than this? How wonderful would it be if the Lord and Master of this universe loves you?

Another meaning of the word *Ihsan* is to do an action in the best way possible. This meaning of course is related to the previous because when you are aware that Allah (swt) is Seeing your actions, then not only will you do your actions for Him (swt) but you will do them in the best way possible. You know that at this moment Allah (swt) is Seeing you, and you know that your final return is to Him (swt). You also know that one Day soon, you will stand before Allah (swt) and He (swt) will be the Only One to decide whether you will spend eternity in pleasure or eternity in pain. Would you then not want to do all of our actions in the best way possible? You are doing all your actions for Allah (swt) and you are doing them in the best way possible, knowing that Allah (swt) is Seeing you do those actions. That is Ihsan. That is they key to gaining the Love of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make us among those who have Ihsan!

Now some may question as to how this high station of Ihsan can be obtained. The answer is that first of all you must pray to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who guides hearts. He (swt) Who gives us the enabling grace to do every single one of our good deeds. Even our remembering Him (swt). So you must pray to Him (swt) to make you among the **Mohsineen**, you must pray to Him (swt) to guide you to the Straight Path. There is no might nor power except with Allah (swt) and unless He (swt) Wills it so, you will not be among the righteous. Then after prayer the next step in this journey is by striving to do every action for Allah (swt). Ihsan is when you do every action for the sake of Allah (swt), so while you must call on Allah (swt) to help you to reach this station, you yourself must make the effort at the same time to reach this station. In everything that you do, try to remember Allah (swt), we know that it is difficult but you must still try. Always remember that the reward in the Hereafter is equal to the effort that you made in the life of this world. It is for this effort and this striving to remember Him (swt), that Allah (swt) will reward you and that Allah (swt) will Love you. So try to be conscious of Allah (swt) at every moment and try to do every action for Him (swt). No matter how difficult it is try your best, try to improve yourself each day. Insha Allah your Lord will guide you. Insha Allah He will love you. Finally you can reach this level of Ihsan by thinking and reflecting on the Majesty and Glory of Allah (swt). When you know that there is such a Being. When you realize Him (swt) in all of His Glory and Magnificence. Then how can you not dedicate yourself to Him (swt) completely.

Now some people have claimed that to reach this level of Ihsan should be the ultimate goal in the life of a Muslim. They say that our Din consists of Islam, Iman and Ihsan. By Islam they mean the actions that we do to please Allah (swt) and by Iman they mean the belief that we have in our hearts. They say that when these are perfected then the station of Ihsan can be reached. They say that this then is the goal of every believer. To reach the level of Ihsan. This is true to some extent but the ultimate goal for every believer is not this station of Ihsan in and of itself, rather the ultimate goal is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Everything that we do must be to obtain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). We want out Creator and our Sustainer to be pleased with us. This is the ultimate goal of life. However in order to reach this goal we do need to work towards that station of Ihsan because as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah He (swt) loves those who have Ihsan. So what such people say is true but it must always be put in the right perspective. This spiritual station of Ihsan is not a goal in and of itself but it is a goal in order to reach the ultimate goal and that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

When we bear this in mind then we see that the purpose of life cannot only be the reformation of our own selves but it must also be the reformation of others and of the society. Because the way to please Allah (swt) is not only by purifying ourselves but it also by working to purify others and to purify the society in which we live. What this means is that you must work on yourself and at the same time you have to work on others around you and you must work on the society. This must be a lifelong process. As you seek to fix yourself and bring yourself closer to Allah (swt) you are also trying to bring others closer to Allah (swt) and you are trying to bring the society closer to Allah (swt). So work on yourself, work on others, and work to bring back the Islamic State. Work in whatever capacity that you can. These are all steps that you can take to reach that station of Ihsan. These are all steps that you can take to be among the Mohsineen. As we see from this ayah, these are the people whom Allah (swt) loves. So these are the people who get the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The Pleasure of Allah (swt) is the one true goal for all of creation. Allah (swt) created us and our life is nothing but the journey back to Him (swt).

وَأَتِمُّوا۟ ٱلْحَجَّ وَٱلْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا ٱسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ ٱلْهَدْىِ ۖ
وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا۟ رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ ٱلْهَدْىُ مَحِلَّهُۥ ۚ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم
مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِۦٓ أَذًى مِّن رَّأْسِهِۦ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ
فَإِذَآ أَمِنتُمْ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِٱلْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى ٱلْحَجِّ فَمَا ٱسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ ٱلْهَدْىِ ۚ
فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَٰثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِى ٱلْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۗ
تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُۥ حَاضِرِى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۚ

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾

197. And complete the Hajj and Umrah only for Allah. But if you are prevented, then whatever offering is obtained with ease. And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. But for whoever of you is sick or has an ailment on his head, he should make a *Fidyah* by fasting, or charity, or sacrifice. Then when you are safe, whoever wants to take advantage with the Umrah to the Hajj, (should give) whatever offering is obtained with ease. But who is not able to find (one) should fast three days in the Hajj and seven when you return. These are ten complete. This is for the one whose family is not present near the Masjid Al-Haram. And have fear of Allah, and know that surely Allah is severe in punishment.

After giving the commandments for fasting and jihad in the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) gives the Muslims another important command in this ayah and this is the command to perform the Hajj and Umrah. Of course Salah and Zakat are the greatest of obligations in Islam and the commands for these obligations occur throughout the Quran. After those two obligations of Salah and Zakat, it is these three obligations that Allah (swt) has given in these ayahs that we can say are the most important and most pressing. Fasting in the month of Ramadan, jihad in the path of Allah (swt), and Hajj and Umrah to the House of Allah (swt). We can see from these ayahs

how Allah (swt) is building the foundation of the Muslim society by giving them the most important of obligations that they must perform. These obligations define what it means to be Muslim. To be a Muslim is to live a life of surrender and submission to Allah (swt). Now these actions that Allah (swt) has legislated here are a manifestation of that submission. To bow down your head five time a day in prayer, to give up a portion of your wealth, to surrender food and drink for an entire month, to go to battle in the path of Allah (swt), and to make pilgrimage to the House of Allah (swt). All of these actions demonstrate your total submission to Allah (swt).

Before we discuss this ayah and the rulings in it, we have to emphasize once again that this is not a tafsir of fiqh. If you are planning to go on Hajj or Umrah, please do not make your plans on what you read here. You should go to a scholar whom you trust to give you the detailed rulings on how Hajj and Umrah are to be performed. If you are not able to find a scholar, you should read at least read a fiqh book. It is not our intention here to show you how to perform Hajj and Umrah. What we are trying to do here is to give a brief explanation of what these ayahs mean and to seek the guidance that is contained in them, there will of course be many mistakes in what we say and we ask Allah (swt) for Forgiveness.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And complete the Hajj and Umrah only for Allah**". Here Allah (swt) is commanding the Muslims to make Hajj and Umrah for Him (swt). Note how Allah (swt) says that the Hajj and the Umrah must be done for Him (swt) and Him (swt) Alone. The intention when you perform both of these acts of worship must be only for Allah (swt). So you should not perform Hajj or Umrah to win praise among the people, to be known by the people as someone who had made Hajj, or for any other worldly reason. If you spoil your intentions by putting partners alongside Allah (swt) in your intention in this way, then you should know that you have violated the very first command that Allah (swt) has given you. As we can see from the first part of the ayah itself; one of the most fundamental parts of the Hajj and Umrah is that they must be done only for Allah (swt). How many of us today have forgotten this obligation of sincerity that must be present in the Hajj? How can such a Hajj be accepted? May Allah (swt) guide us to being purely for Him (swt)!

We can also note from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) does not simply command the Muslims to “perform” the Hajj and Umrah, but He (swt) commands them to “complete” the Hajj and Umrah. So it is not enough for you to merely to perform the Hajj and Umrah, but you must be certain that you complete them by performing all of the integrals that they are composed of. As we know there are many rituals that need to be performed. You have to be certain that you complete all of these rituals, and that you do all of them only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The scholars also say that Hajj and Umrah are two rituals that **must** be completed once you enter the state of Ihram. Once you have entered into this state, then you must complete your Hajj or Umrah. You cannot back away from performing this obligation once you have entered into the state of Ihram. There is only one exception to this rule that we will discuss below Insha Allah.

In the next part of the ayah “**But if you are prevented, then whatever offering is obtained with ease**”. To understand what Allah (swt) is saying here we have to look at the context in which this ayah was revealed. We have to look at the Seerah. In the sixth year of the Islamic calendar, the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims left Madinah to perform Umrah in Makkah. The Prophet (saw) decided to make this Umrah to strengthen the position of the Islamic State. After defeating the Quraysh in the battle of Badr, and after resisting the Quraysh attack on Madinah in the battle of Uhud, the Prophet (saw) now wanted to take the Quraysh out of the picture in the foreign policy of the Islamic State. This was done so that the dawah can be focused to other tribes and nations. The Prophet (saw) specifically made Umrah during the sacred months because he (saw) knew that the Quraysh would not attack at this time. So he (saw) and the Muslims set off to perform Umrah. However when they had reached a place called Al-Hudaibiyah which is around twenty five miles outside of Makkah, the Quraysh prevented them from proceeding any further. They prevented them from proceeding into Makkah and completing their Umrah. Instead of battle, the Prophet (saw) opted for peace and he (saw) met with the delegations from Quraysh. It was after this that the famous treaty of Al-Hudaibiyah was signed. With the signing of this treaty, the Prophet (saw) made the Quraysh recognize the Islamic State, they recognized Madinah as the capitol of the Islamic State and the Prophet (saw) as it’s leader. Now the Prophet (saw) was free to focus the dawah on other tribes and nations.

However one of the clauses of the treaty was that the Muslims would not be able to perform Umrah that year, instead they had to go back to Madinah. When this happened many of the Muslims were concerned because they would not be able to complete the Umrah for which they had made the intention when they left Madinah. They had already entered into the state of Ihram and they knew that they now had to complete the Umrah. So they were worried about what they could do since the clause in the treaty said that the Muslims would not be able to perform the Umrah that year. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah where He (swt) said "**But if you are prevented, then whatever offering is obtained with ease**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if they are prevented from completing their Hajj or Umrah, then they can offer any sacrificial animal that they can obtain with ease. Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims here that since they were not able to complete their Umrah because the Quraysh chiefs prevented them from entering Makkah, they should offer an animal as a sacrifice instead. If they do this, then they will get the reward of the Umrah that they were prevented from performing. Recall from the previous part of the ayah, how we said that Hajj and Umrah must be completed once you are in a state of Ihram. This part of the ayah provides the exception to that rule. From this part of the ayah, the scholars have extracted the ruling that if anything prevents you from completing the Hajj or Umrah once you are in a state of Ihram, be they enemies of Islam like the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims faced in Al-Hudaibiyah or some illness or injury, then you can offer a sacrificial animal to get out of having to complete the Hajj or Umrah.

Notice also how Allah (swt) says that the animal to be sacrificed can be any that "**is obtained with ease**". Allah (swt) did not specify a particular kind of animal, so it could be a cow or a camel or a sheep or any other animal that is obtained with ease. Allah (swt) left it open so that the Muslims could simply sacrifice whatever it is that they find with ease. Furthermore the scholars say that if a group of Muslims are prevented from Hajj or Umrah as a group, then the whole group can offer only one animal in sacrifice if that is all that they can afford. This one animal will be enough for all of them. This ruling held true for the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) and it holds true for our time as well. Any person or group who is prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah after they have put on the Ihram can easily sacrifice any animal and

then the obligation to complete the Hajj or Umrah will be removed from them. Once again we see the Mercy and Kindness of Allah (swt) for this Ummah in the rules and commands that He (swt) legislates.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches it's destination**". This means that the Muslims are not to shave their heads until the sacrifice is made. We know that one of the integrals of the Hajj and Umrah is to shave one's head when the Hajj or Umrah is complete. Here Allah (swt) tells us that when we are sacrificing an animal because we were prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah, then the time for shaving the head is only after the animal is sacrificed. The animal can only be sacrificed at its destination. The scholars differ as to where exactly the "destination" is. Abu Hanifah says it is in the precincts of the Masjid Al-Haram because that is where the animals are sacrificed. Malik and Shafi said it is wherever you are stopped or prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah. So wherever it is that you are stopped or prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah, then at that location you should sacrifice the animal and then shave your head. This will then complete the Hajj or Umrah that you had intended when you put on your Ihram. This seems to be the stronger opinion because this is what the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah did when the Quraysh prevented them from completing their Umrah at Al-Hudaibiyah. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But for whoever of you is sick or has an ailment on his head, he should make a *Fidyah* by fasting, or charity, or sacrifice**". Now we know that the head has to be shaven only at the completion of the Hajj or Umrah. But supposing someone has an illness that requires for them to shave their head before the completion of their Hajj or Umrah. For example one of the companions of the Prophet (saw) had a head that was crawling with lice. There was so much lice that it was falling off his hair and onto his shoulders. What should such people do? They have an immediate need to shave their head. We see from this part of the ayah that even for such people, Allah (swt) shows Mercy and Kindness. Allah (swt) does not leave them to suffer even though He (swt) could have since they are His (swt)'s property. Rather He (swt) says that if someone has such a medical condition that requires them to shave the head before the completion of the Hajj or Umrah, then they may do

so. However they have to make a ***Fidyah*** or expiation. This expiation is that they have to fast for three days, or give charity by feeding six poor people, or make a sacrifice of some animal. Once again we see the Mercy and Compassion in the rules and laws of Allah (swt) for this Ummah. Allah (swt) does not want any of us to suffer or go through great hardships. Allah (swt) only wants us to perform the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) to the best of our ability so that we make manifest our belief in Him (swt) and our submission to Him (swt).

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Then when you are safe, whoever wants to take advantage with the Umrah to the Hajj, (should give) whatever offering is obtained with ease**". There are some people who may want to perform the Hajj and Umrah together. This is called *Hajj Tamattu*, which is taken from the words that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah. Literally it means "to take advantage", because you are taking advantage of the fact that you have already traveled to Makkah and you are in the Masjid al-Haram to fulfill your obligations for both Hajj and Umrah. Allah (swt) says that when you are safe, meaning that when there is no danger or impediments that make difficult or dangerous the journey to Makkah, and you still want to combine both Hajj and Umrah in one journey, then you may do so. You may take advantage of your journey by doing your Umrah with your Hajj. However the condition is that then you must offer an animal sacrifice. Notice that Allah (swt) uses the same words that He (swt) used in the previous part of the ayah when He (swt) says "**whatever offering is obtained with ease**". It does not have to be a red camel or a yellow cow, it can be whatever animal that is easy for you to find and sacrifice. If you can do this, then you can combine your Hajj and Umrah in one journey. You can fulfill both of these important obligations that you have on the same journey. It does not even have to be during a time of danger or fear. Even if you are in safety you may still perform both of these lifetime obligations together. Many are the pilgrims even today who take advantage of this allowance. How Merciful and Compassionate is our Rabb! Allah (swt) has created us to worship Him (swt) and in His (swt)'s Love He (swt) has made that worship easy for us. It is only we in our arrogance and laziness who think that the Din is difficult. But if we realize Allah (swt)'s right upon us to be worshipped then we would see that this Din has in fact been made very easy.

Then Allah (swt) says "**But who is not able to find (one) should fast three days in the Hajj and seven when you return. These are ten complete.**". Here Allah (swt) is saying that whoever who wants to make *Hajj Tamattu* but they are unable to find any animal to sacrifice, or they or unable to afford any animial, then they can fast instead. They have to fast three days when they are on Hajj and seven days when they return home. Allah (swt) makes certain to emphasize that it has to be ten days complete to make sure that the people will not be confused and think that they have a choice between three days on Hajj or seven days when they return. Rather it has to be both, three days when you are on Hajj and seven days when you return home for a total of ten days. Notice here how the Quran is not only a legal Book, but it is a precise and exact legal Book, with laws and commands that have been specified with precision as to how they should be carried out. How sad is it then that Muslims today fail to perceive the Quran in this way? When will the day come when we will return to view the Quran as the complete code with which to live our lives? May Allah (swt) make that day come soon!

Then Allah (swt) says "**This is for the one whose family is not present near the Masjid Al-Haram**". This means that only those who are **not** residing near the Masjid Al-Haram have to make this sacrifice or else perform the fast. If someone is living near the Masjid Al-Haram then they can combine the Hajj and Umrah without having to make a sacrifice or without having to fast. So if you are living in the vicinity of the Kabbah then it is permissible for you to perform *Hajj Tamattu* without having to sacrifice an animal or fast ten days. Perhaps this is a special allowance that Allah (swt) has given to those who have chosen to live near His (swt)'s House. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us to fear Him (swt) and He (swt) reminds us that He (swt) is severe in punishment. Throughout this ayah we have seen how Allah (swt) is Merciful and Compassionate for this Ummah. For those of us who are unable to perform our Hajj in the full manner, Allah (swt) has given us many allowances and He (swt) has made it easy for us to complete our Hajj and Umrah. However in this last part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us that in addition to being Merciful and Compassionate, He (swt) is also severe in punishment. This is a strong reminder to all of us. A reminder to carefully observe all of the rules

of Hajj and Umrah. The Hajj and Umrah both need to be performed and completed. All of the rituals that make up the Hajj and the Umrah need to be done. Whenever Allah (swt) gives an expiation, then the sacrifice or the fasts that are required for that expiation need to be done. But most importantly however is that the intention of the Hajj and Umrah must be for Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. Anyone who has any other intention when they perform the Hajj or Umrah, even if that other intention is very small, then they need to fear Allah (swt) and clean their heart of that intention. Remember to tell yourself that you are not making this Hajj to be called a *Haji* or to boast in front of your friends, but you are doing it for Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. If you find any other intention in your heart, then you should remember the words of your Rabb in this ayah when He (swt) said "**know that surely Allah is severe in punishment**". The Hajj is a right that you owe to Allah (swt). If you take that right and then give it back to yourself, then you should know that Allah (swt) is severe in punishment. Allah (swt) is severe in punishment! Can you even begin to understand what it means when the Creator of the heavens of the earth describes Himself as severe in punishment? May Allah (swt) save us from His (swt)'s punishment! If only you could see the reality of what this means then you will realize how much terror this must bring in your heart. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we must know Allah (swt) based on all that He (swt) has taught us rather than focusing on only some of what He (swt) said. For example we have seen in this ayah how Allah (swt) has been very Kind and Merciful with our Ummah but we have also seen how He (swt) has described Himself (swt) as being severe in punishment. So it is wrong for us to focus only on the Mercy of Allah (swt) and then do whatever we like. At the same time we must not focus only on the punishment of Allah (swt) and then despair of His (swt)'s Mercy. Rather we must always remember both His (swt)'s Mercy and punishment. We must have that balance of fear and hope. Similarly we cannot look at only one ayah or one hadith and then based on an incorrect understanding of it say that Allah (swt) is restricted to a particular location. Rather we must study all of the ayahs and hadith on this issue in order to come to the correct understanding. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace! May Allah (swt) allow us to know Him (swt) as He (swt) IS!

ٱلْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَٰتٌ ۚ فَمَن فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ ٱلْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا
جِدَالَ فِى ٱلْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا۟ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ
ٱلزَّادِ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَٱتَّقُونِ يَٰٓأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿١٩٧﴾

198. The Hajj is in months well known. Whoever intends to fulfill the obligation in them, then there should be no sexual actions, no transgression, and no argumentation. Whatever you do of good, Allah Knows it. And make provisions but the best of provision is Taqwa. So fear Me Alone, o people of *Al-Bab*.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to give us the rulings for Hajj. Simply the fact that our Lord has dedicated so many ayahs in this most important of Surahs to the performance of Hajj shows us how important the ritual is. May Allah (swt) give all of the sincere Muslims at least one opportunity to make this blessed pilgrimage!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**The Hajj is in months well known**". Recall from the previous ayah that Allah (swt) gave us the command to perform both Hajj and Umrah. In this part of the ayah, He (swt) reminds us of one of the key differences between Hajj and Umrah. While the Umrah can be performed at any time during the year, "**The Hajj is in months well known**". The time for Hajj is the months of Shawwal, Dhul Qaddah, and the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. This means that the *ihram* or the firm intention for the Hajj must be made during this time. These months are the specified time for the Hajj so the firm intention to perform the pilgrimage must be made during these months. Notice also that Allah (swt) did not specifically mention in the ayah which months these were, this is because it was already known among the Arabs which were the months for Hajj. Remember that this pilgrimage was being performed since the time of Ibrahim (as), for generations and generations. Everyone knew when the months of Hajj were.

Now a question may arise that if everyone knew when the months of Hajj were and they knew that the Hajj could only be done in these months, why then does Allah (swt) specifically mention that fact in this first part of the ayah? The answer is that although the Hajj still remained from the time of Ibrahim (as), we have to remember that the Arabs at that time had corrupted the

Hajj by adding many rituals into it that had not originally been prescribed by Allah (swt). For example the worship of idols and the making of Tawaf in the nude; these were heinous innovations that they added as part of the rituals of the Hajj that had never been prescribed by Allah (swt). So through the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) purified the Hajj. He (swt) told the people what was correct in what they had been doing and what was a reprehensible innovation that needed to be stopped. Now the time period in which they had been doing Hajj was correct, so Allah (swt) lets them know that fact in this ayah.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Whoever intends to fulfill the obligation in them**". Now here Allah (swt) starts to address those who are actually going to perform the Hajj. Notice how the language of the ayah clearly shows us that the Hajj is indeed an obligation. Allah (swt) uses the Arabic word *farada* to show that the person does not simply make an intention but he makes an intention to fulfill an obligation. So this part of the ayah brings our attention to the fact the Hajj is an obligation and the people whom Allah (swt) is addressing in this ayah are those who intend to fulfill this obligation. Now what should the person who makes the intention for Hajj do? We see that before Allah (swt) even gives any of the rulings for Hajj, before He (swt) tells us what are the rituals that need to be done, He (swt) tells us what we should not do. Allah (swt) says, "**then there should be no sexual actions, no transgression, and no argumentation**". Notice how Allah (swt) does not say "he should not do sexual actions" but Allah (swt) says "there should be no sexual actions". This shows us that such actions have no place whatsoever during the Hajj. The scholars say that the word Allah (swt) uses here for "sexual actions" does not only include intercourse but it also includes any kind of obscenity. So flirting, gazing with lust, sensual touching and the like are all absolutely forbidden. The scholars say that these are the worst of all actions that one can do on the Hajj. This is because for the other actions that are forbidden in the Hajj Allah (swt) has given us expiations, so the one who does those actions can still pay the particular expiation and then continue with their Hajj. But as for the person who engages in any kind of sexual activity or obscenity during the Hajj, then they have committed a great sin. In addition their Hajj is void and they have to repeat it again the next year. May Allah (swt) save us from ever committing any kind of lewdness when we are on the Hajj!

Then Allah (swt) says that there is to be no transgression. The scholars say that this includes sins in general, and it also includes those permissible actions that become forbidden when one is in a state of ihram. So we should be careful not to commit sins of any kind when we are on the Hajj. Sins in general gain the displeasure of Allah (swt) but this is especially true when we are on the Hajj, so Insha Allah we should try to avoid sins of all kinds when we are on the Hajj. For example you should not push or hurt your Muslim brothers or sisters in any way, you should not even cut the line when waiting for the bus. You should also be careful not to commit those permissible actions that are forbidden when in a state of ihram. These include cutting the fingernails, wearing perfumes, wearing clothes with stitches, hunting animals and other permissible actions that are specifically forbidden when you are in a state of Ihram. Committing any of these actions when in a state of ihram for Hajj would be a transgression, and Allah (swt) commands us in this ayah to avoid all acts of transgression.

Allah (swt) also tells us in this part of the ayah that there is to be no argumentation. This means you should avoid fighting and arguing with your Muslim brother or sister for no reason. When such a large number of people gather together, and everyone is confined to a limited amount of space, it is easy for arguments and fights to break out. We start thinking about ourselves and we soon forget about our Muslim brothers and sisters. It might not be long before fights and arguments break out over the most trivial matters. We forget where we are and what we are doing and most importantly Who was are doing it for. So Allah (swt) specifically commands us in this part of the ayah to try our best to avoid such arguments and fights. Remember that you have come answering the call of Allah (swt), and that you are doing this action only for Allah (swt). Remember that you are in this blessed place as a guest of the Lord and Master of the universe. Even if someone does something wrong to you, you should remember that Allah (swt) Knows what they did, and He (swt) will punish them much better than you could by getting angry with them. For your part you should forgive them, and then return your heart to the Creator instead of focusing it on the creation. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to avoid all kinds of arguments and fights when we are on our Hajj!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Whatever you do of good, Allah Knows it**". This is a statement that is always true, but we must especially strive to remember it when we are on the Hajj. Here you are in the precincts of the Kabbah, the first house ever built for the worship of Allah (swt), built by Ibrahim (as) and Ismail (as), and you are in the city where the Prophet (saw) was born and where he (saw) grew up. You are performing the Hajj, which the servants of Allah (swt) have been performing for Allah (swt) for thousands of years. You are carrying out a command that Allah (swt) specifically gave you in His (swt)'s Book. Can you imagine any time in your life when you are closer to Allah (swt)? Even if you try, you will never fully appreciate how fortunate and blessed you are to be on the Hajj. There are many, many Muslims who yearn for their whole life to be where you are but they never get the chance. So as Allah (swt) tells you in this ayah, while you are on the Hajj you should try your best to do as many as good deeds as possible. The word "good" here means both avoiding that which is displeasing to Allah (swt) and striving to do what is pleasing to Him (swt). We talked about what was displeasing to Allah (swt) above, as for what pleases Him (swt) it could be making dhikr, reading Quran, sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (saw), or even smiling in the face of your Muslim brother or sister. Even while you are performing the various rituals of Hajj, there is so much that you can do to get more reward from Allah (swt) and draw closer to Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**And make provisions but the best of provision is Taqwa**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah was revealed about some of the Arabs who would perform Hajj without taking any provisions with them. These pilgrims would say that they were putting their trust in Allah (swt) to provide for them. Some of them even said that since they were making the Hajj to the house of Allah (swt), then it was up to Allah (swt) to provide for them. This was the extent of their arrogance to think that Allah (swt) should serve them when they were the servant and He (swt) is the Master. Soon when they found themselves without provisions, they often had to beg of others and many of them even resorted to robbery and theft. Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah that such a practice is wrong. We always have trust in Allah (swt), for every single moment of our lives we trust in Him (swt). We trust in Allah (swt) to keep us alive at the next moment of our existence because we know that He (swt) could destroy us whenever He

(swt) wanted. So we always have trust in Allah (swt), but this trust should not prevent us from making preparations and from taking provisions. Allah (swt) wants us to prepare to the best of our ability and then to put our trust in Him (swt). So as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, we must make the necessary preparations and take the necessary provisions before we go on our Hajj. Once we have done that then we put our complete trust in Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to make the best of preparations! May Allah (swt) allow us to put our trust in Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) says "**but the best of provision is Taqwa**". We can take all of our money, and our clothes, and our food. But the best of provisions that we can take is the Taqwa of Allah (swt). The reason why we are going on Hajj is so that we can fulfill the command of our Rabb. So while we are on the Hajj we have to make certain that we complete all of the rituals and that we stay away from all that is displeasing to Allah (swt). There is nothing that will enable us to do this more than the Taqwa of Allah (swt). This consciousness of the Divine, this fear of His punishment, this effort that we make to protect ourselves from it. Such is the best of provisions.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**So fear Me Alone, o people of *Al-Bab***". This is the result of our Taqwa of Allah (swt), it is a fear of Allah (swt) that is generated within us. A fear that prevents us from doing anything that is displeasing to Him (swt) and a fear that makes us strive to do all that is pleasing to Him (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) commands us to have that fear of Him (swt). Notice also how it is only a special group of people whom Allah (swt) addresses here and tells them to have fear of Him (swt). This means that not all of mankind can give to their Rabb the kind of fear that He (swt) deserves. Only a special group of people are capable of fearing Him (swt). Who are these people? They are the people of ***Al-Bab***. The scholars have defined this word to mean intellect and reasoning, and also to mean kindness and compassion. It is only such people who can fear Allah (swt) as He (swt) deserves to be feared.

Elsewhere in the Quran Allah (swt) has told us how it is only those with knowledge who fear Him (swt). So it is only those with knowledge whom He (swt) addresses. When you think about Allah (swt), when you reflect on Allah (swt), when you realize what He (swt) can do to you, when you know what He (swt) Knows about you, that is how the fear of Allah (swt) can be generated. Your knowledge of Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s names and attributes, and your

reflection and contemplation on that knowledge is how the fear of Allah (swt) is generated. Just think, at this very moment, Allah (swt) is Seeing what you are doing right now. Allah (swt) Knows you very well and He (swt) Knows exactly what you are doing right now. If Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) could destroy you at the very next moment of your life. If Allah (swt) wanted you could find yourself in the Fire within the next five seconds. That is Who Allah (swt) IS, do you not then now fear Him (swt)? And remember that Allah (swt) is the purpose of your life. He (swt) created you and you were created for Him (swt). Does not that then make you fear doing anything that is displeasing to Him (swt)? Remember also that Allah (swt) is the sole Master of the Day of Judgment where you will soon find yourself. He (swt) is the Only One Who can give you eternal bliss or eternal pain. Does that not generate a fear of Him (swt) within you? Does it not generate fear of doing what is displeasing to Him (swt)? While it is true that Allah (swt) is Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful, we also have to remember as He (swt) told us in the previous ayah how He (swt) is severe in punishment. If we neglect our obligations or if we do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt), then we must fear Allah (swt) and fear His (swt)'s punishment. This is true for our rituals of the Hajj and it is true for our entire lives, which is nothing but the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Our minds clearly show us that only Allah (swt) deserves our fear, so why then do we not fear Him (swt)? Anyone who truly reflects on Allah (swt) will become terrified of Him (swt), they will become terrified of doing anything that is displeasing to Him (swt). At the same time you know that although you are afraid of Allah (swt), you cannot run away from Him but you can only run towards Him (swt). Because just as there is no one whom you fear more than Allah (swt), there is also no one whom you love more than Allah (swt). Just as you know that there is no one except Allah (swt) Who can hurt you, you realize that there is no one except Allah (swt) Who can save you. So Allah (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah that our intelligence and our knowledge must be used to contemplate on Him (swt). This is how Insha Allah we can generate within ourselves the fear of Him (swt) and generate within ourselves the love of Him (swt), and this is what will Insha Allah motivate us to please Him (swt).

لَيۡسَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَبۡتَغُواْ فَضۡلٗا مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡۚ فَإِذَآ أَفَضۡتُم مِّنۡ عَرَفَٰتٖ
فَٱذۡكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ عِندَ ٱلۡمَشۡعَرِ ٱلۡحَرَامِۖ وَٱذۡكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَىٰكُمۡ وَإِن كُنتُم
مِّن قَبۡلِهِۦ لَمِنَ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ١٩٨

199. There is no blame on you if you seek the bounty of your Rabb. Then when you set forth from 'Arafat, remember Allah at the *Mash'ar al-Haram*. So remember Him as He has guided you and you were before this of the ones who were astray.

In the previous ayah, we saw that Allah (swt) commanded us to perform the Hajj in the months that have been prescribed for them. Allah (swt) also commanded us to stay away from all sexual actions, from sin and transgression and from argumentation and fighting while we are on the Hajj. Allah (swt) also told us to take provisions for the Hajj, and He (swt) reminded us how the best of provisions was Taqwa. We also saw how Allah (swt) reminded us that we must have fear of Him (swt) Alone. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to give us rulings for the Hajj.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**There is no blame on you if you seek the bounty of your Rabb**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that there is no blame on us if we conduct trade or do business when we are on the Hajj. Although the Arabs in the time of Ignorance used to perform several heinous rituals during the Hajj, they held themselves back from doing trade while they were on the Hajj. They said that their restraining themselves from doing business while they were on the Hajj was a symbol of their piety. Allah (swt) corrects their behavior in this part of the ayah. He (swt) reminds them that piety is not the rituals that they themselves make up in their minds, but piety is fearing Him (swt) and doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). The actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) are those that have been prescribed by His (swt)'s Messenger, not the actions that human beings make up in their own minds. These Arabs were never told by any prophet or messenger that they could not trade on the Hajj, so they did not have to forbid themselves from this. Allah (swt) tells them clearly here that there is no blame if they conduct trade while they are on their Hajj. Thus just with this ayah Allah (swt) destroys their innovation and He (swt) gives this Ummah yet another mercy and alleviation.

Even though Allah (swt) has permitted trade on the Hajj, we still have to be careful to always keep our intention only for Allah (swt). Some Muslims might read this ayah, and think that they can go on the Hajj in order to make some money. Such an attitude is totally wrong. Everything that we do in life is part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Even when we trade, or when we work in some form of employment, it is still part of our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The key is the intention. When we do such actions, we always have to keep our intention for Allah (swt). You have to tell yourself that Allah (swt) commanded me to do this trade or this work, and so I am doing it for Him (swt). We can even see in this ayah how Allah (swt) refers to trade as "seeking the bounty of your Rabb". So we have to think that even when we work or do business we are still seeking the bounty of our Rabb. We are not simply working to get a paycheck, but we are working to seek the bounty of our Rabb as He (swt) has commanded us to. So our intention when we work or trade or study has to be for Allah (swt), then Insha Allah He (swt) will accept it as an act of worship from us and He (swt) will reward us. Then even when we are in office working or in the market trading or in the school studying we know that we are worshipping and serving our Creator. We are seeking of His (swt)'s bounty as He (swt) has commanded us to. Then even when we conduct trade while we are on the Hajj, Insha Allah we will still be rewarded for it. So although this permission of trading on the Hajj does exist, the intention behind the Hajj must never be trade but it must always be the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to two of the rituals of the Hajj and what we must do in them. Allah (swt) says "**Then when you set forth from 'Arafat, then remember Allah at the *Mash'ar al-Haram***". We know that one of the rituals of the Hajj is when the pilgrims stay at the plain of 'Arafat. When the stay at 'Arafat is complete, the pilgrims then go to Muzdallifah. It is this journey from 'Arafat to Muzdallifah that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. Allah (swt) tells us here that we have to remember Him (swt) when we go from Arafat to Muzdallifah and we have to remember Him (swt) at Muzdallifah. The scholars tell us that the words "***Mash'ar al-Haram***" refer to Muzdallifah. The remembrance of Allah (swt) is an action that is important at every moment of our lives. We must strive to remember our Lord when we are on Hajj and at every moment of our lives. But Allah (swt) Knows that we are weak and that

we sometimes forget to remember Him (swt). So He (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah that we must especially strive to remember Him (swt) when we leave 'Arafat and when we arrive at Muzdallifah. This is one of the best of times to do dhikr of Allah (swt).

One of the best ways in which to remember Allah (swt) when we are on Hajj is to make dua to Him (swt). As we know the Hajj is one of the best times in which to make dua to Allah (swt). There is one narration that tells us how the Prophet (saw) was making dua at Muzdallifah and the narrator tells us how his (saw)'s face was bright while he (saw) was supplicating to his (saw)'s Rabb. This shows us the joy with which the Prophet (saw) was supplicating to his (saw)'s Lord. The Prophet (saw) knew that this was one of the best times in which the dua is answered, so he (saw) never missed this opportunity to ask of Allah (swt). Insha Allah let us ourselves remember to make dua when we are on Hajj as well. Both for ourselves and for our Ummah.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**So remember Him as He has guided you and you were before this of the ones who are astray**". Once again we see the importance of the remembrance of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has told us that there is no action that we can do which will save us from the Fire more than the remembrance of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the Ultimate Reality. This world is only a shadow and an illusion when compared to Him (swt). But how many of us remember this fact? Just like sheep we only see the reality of the world that is directly ahead of us. We do not see the Reality of Allah (swt) that lies beyond this worldly existence. However when we strive to remember Allah (swt), we bring ourselves closer to that Reality. So do you want to live like a sheep and know only the world in front or do you want to experience the Reality of Allah (swt) that lies beyond this world? You make that choice and then you will see that nothing matters in life except constantly striving to remember Allah (swt) and doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that we have to remember Him (swt) because He (swt) is the One Who has guided us. Where would be if Allah (swt) had not guided us? We have a purpose and a tranquility in our lives because of this guidance that He (swt) has given us. This is why we have to remember Him (swt). This is why we have to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). It is to show gratitude to Allah (swt) for Him (swt) having guided us to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) also reminds the early Muslims in this ayah how before He (swt) had sent this guidance, they were among those who were astray. You truly experience how fortunate you are to have the blessings of this Message of Islam when you used to live in Ignorance prior to receiving it. You truly appreciate the Light when you know how it is to be in darkness. The early Muslims knew the kind of life they used to lead before Allah (swt) blessed them and favored them by sending them this Message of Islam. They knew the darkness in which they used to live. So as Allah (swt) gives them the rulings of Hajj in this ayah, He (swt) reminds them of this fact that it is only because of Him (swt) that they were guided. Thus they should be striving to show gratitude to Allah (swt) for this guidance.

Similarly we too can take a lesson from this part of the ayah. Even if never used to live in such a state of Ignorance ourselves, we can imagine how such a life would be. We must realize how fortunate we are that Allah (swt) saved us from such a life and guided us to this Message of Islam. If you are among those who are blessed to have been born Muslim then you cannot even begin to realize the kind of life that Allah (swt) saved you from. You cannot even begin to comprehend how fortunate you are. Thus we must show thanks to Allah (swt) for this guidance. We have to strive to remember Him (swt) at every moment of our lives, but we must especially strive to remember Him (swt) when we are on the Hajj.

Sayyid Qutb reminds us in his tafsir of this ayah how one of the main ways in which Allah (swt) guided us was that He (swt) united us from division and discord and He (swt) made us into one Ummah. Sayyid Qutb also reminds us how the Hajj is a symbol of this unity of our Ummah. Just imagine how it is like on the Hajj, Muslims from all over the world unite in the House of their Rabb. They come from every corner of the earth, they have so many different complexions, they speak so many different languages, they come from so many different classes in life, some are old and some are a young, some are rich and some are poor, but they are all united by the belief they have in their hearts. They all believe that there is no illah worthy of worship except Allah (swt) and that the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). This unity that we have is only because Allah (swt) has guided us. If Allah (swt) had not guided this community, then all those different people that you see on the Hajj would not have come

together. Their hearts would not have been united, and they would have seen each other as strangers instead of brothers and sisters. Instead of loving each other, they would have been fighting each other. So how fortunate are we that Allah (swt) has guided us and united our Ummah! The Hajj is a primary symbol of this unity, it shows how Allah (swt) through His (swt)'s guidance has taken so many different people and brought them together as one Ummah.

So just as we should remember Allah (swt) because He (swt) has guided us, we should also remember Allah (swt) because He (swt) has united us into one Ummah through the guidance that He (swt) has sent. Then when we remember Allah (swt), we must also remember our Muslim brothers and sisters whom Allah (swt) had made into our brothers and sisters through His (swt)'s guidance. We are all one brotherhood. How then can we sleep or enjoy ourselves when our brothers and sisters are suffering all over the world? If we are truly the devoted servants of Allah (swt), then we must be deeply concerned for them. When they are suffering, we must feel pain also. Otherwise how can we be their brethren? Allah (swt) has told us that they are our brothers and sisters, so if we love Allah (swt), then we must love them as well. We must love them for the sake of Allah (swt). So when we are on the Hajj and when we see so many of our brothers and sisters from all over the world, then we must remember that we are one Ummah. We must remember that we have a responsibility to care for everyone in this Ummah, an obligation to work for the betterment of their situation. Allah (swt) has guided them into being our brothers and sisters and Allah (swt) has guided us into being their brothers and sisters. Allah (swt) has guided us all into being one Ummah and Allah (swt) shows this fact to us every year during the Hajj. So when we see the Hajj, it should remind us of the unity of our Ummah and remind us of the obligation to work for our Ummah. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to work for this Ummah! May Allah (swt) make all the Muslims of the world recognize that we are one Ummah and may He (swt) let us come together to work for the betterment of this Ummah just like He (swt) brings us together for the Hajj! We as a nation have too great a responsibility to allow ourselves to continue to be in disunity and discord. May Allah (swt) help us!

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُواْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱسْتَغْفِرُواْ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



200. Then go forth from where the people go forth and seek forgiveness of Allah. Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

This ayah continues directly from the previous ayah. Recall how in the previous ayah Allah (swt) had told us about the correct way of how to perform many of the rituals of the Hajj. Allah (swt) told us about being at the plain of Arafat, and about proceeding from there to Muzdallifah. Allah (swt) also told us to remember Him (swt) in these places and to increase in our supplication when we are there. Allah (swt) also reminded us to always be grateful to Him (swt) since it is because of Him (swt) that we are guided. Now in this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the rituals of the Hajj.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Then go forth from where the people go forth**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah was revealed about the Quraysh chiefs. Although they performed the Hajj like everyone else, they would not go to Arafat. Since Arafat was outside Makkah, they thought that they were "above" going there. They thought that it was above their status of being the tribe of Quraysh to go to Arafat with the rest of the Arabs. For them it was a matter of pride; they were so proud of being the people of Makkah and of being the custodians of the Kabbah that they felt there was no need for them to leave Makkah when they perform the Hajj. So while all the other pilgrims would leave Makkah to go to Arafat, they would stay in Makkah. Since they were Quraysh, the residents of Makkah and the caretakers of the Kabbah, they thought that they were excused from going to Arafat. They made such an assumption even though they were certain that Arafat was an integral part of the Hajj. So here Allah (swt) addresses them and tells them to go forth from where the people go forth, meaning that they should go to Arafat. Thus Allah (swt) shows them that all are equal in the His (swt)'s Sight and the ones who are closer to Him (swt) are the ones who fear Him (swt) more. Your lineage and your race does not matter to Allah (swt), all that matters is your Iman and deeds.

The narrations tell us that the Prophet (saw) used to go to Arafat when he (saw) performed the Hajj even before he (saw) became the Messenger of Allah (swt). Even though he himself (saw) was from the tribe of Quraysh, he (saw) did not follow this custom of his (saw)'s tribe. The Prophet (saw) knew that going to Arafat was one of the integrals of the Hajj, so he (saw) did not neglect it. This shows how pure the heart of the Prophet (saw) was even before he (saw) became the Messenger of Allah (swt). All that he (saw) cared about was worshipping and serving Allah (swt) in the correct way, he (saw) did not care about status or rank in the eyes of the people. All that he (saw) cared about was pleasing his Creator. May Allah (swt) enable us all to emulate this man (saw) whom we love so much!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and seek forgiveness of Allah**". It was wrong for the Quraysh to have prevented themselves from going to Arafat when they knew that it was indeed a part of the Hajj. So Allah (swt) tells them to ask forgiveness of Him (swt) for what they have done. Once again we see the Mercy and Kindness of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) Knew that what they were doing was wrong, and they themselves knew that what they were doing was wrong. But Allah (swt) did not punish them immediately for what they had done. Rather Allah (swt) points out what portion of their behavior was not correct, and He (swt) directs them to correct their behavior and to seek forgiveness of Him (swt). Such is the Mercy and Love that Allah (swt) has for His (swt)'s creation. Why then are we so negligent in our worship and servitude of Him (swt)?

We also see once again the dangers of innovation in matters of worship. In the previous ayah we saw how many of the Arabs refused to take provisions with them for the journey of Hajj and they refused to do any trading or business while on the Hajj, they claimed that they were doing this as an act of worship to Allah (swt). But they had never been told to do this by any prophet or messenger, so this refraining from taking provisions and this refraining from trade is an act of worship that they had made up in their own minds. Not only did they make up acts of worship in their own minds, but they also neglected the acts that their prophets had specifically commanded them to do. They all knew that visiting Arafat was a part of the Hajj, but since they were so proud of being the people of Makkah and since Arafat was outside of Makkah, they did not want to visit it even though they knew that it was indeed a part of the Hajj. We have to be

careful that we do not become like them. We should be careful about inventing anything in our worship of Allah (swt), we should not perform any action for which there is no evidence in the Quran and Sunnah. Rather in everything that we do we have to follow the Quran and Sunnah. We must only do what Allah (swt) has commanded us to do and we must not neglect what He (swt) has commanded just because it does not agree with our desires or we feel too proud to do it. All of these feelings are from Shaitan and they must be fought and resisted at all costs.

This part of the ayah also serves to remind us of the equality of all mankind and especially the equality of all believers. Since they were the residents of Makkah and the custodians of the Kabbah, the Quraysh thought that they were better than the rest of the pilgrims. They thought that their status gave them the right to neglect some of the portions of the Hajj. Allah (swt) shows us here how wrong such thinking is. Every single human being is a child of Adam (as), we are all the same when it comes to our creation, what then gives some of us the right to claim that we are better than others. Is it the color of our skin? Is it the language that we speak? Is it the land that we are from? Is it the size of our bank account? No, none of these mean anything. None of these convey the value of a human being. Allah (swt) is the Ultimate Reality and He (swt) is everything. So the only way in which one human being is higher to another is in their nearness to Allah (swt). Even this cannot be a criteria for us thinking that we are better than others. We should never think that we are better than others because we believe that we are more pious than others. Piety is something that is known only to Allah (swt). So we are all equal before Allah (swt) and it is only by our belief in Allah (swt) and the actions that we do to please Him (swt) that some of us are raised above others.

In the final part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again that "**Surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) had told us that He (swt) is severe in punishment and that we should fear only Him (swt). While this is true, we also have to remember that Allah (swt) is Forgiving and Merciful. The Prophet (saw) has said that if the believer knew the punishment of Allah (swt) then he would never feel safe from it and that if the disbeliever knew the Mercy of Allah (swt) then he would never give up on it. The scholars have said that we need to have within ourselves an equal amount of fear of the punishment and hope in the Mercy of

Allah (swt). This is what many of us fail to do. We either think that Allah (swt) is so strict in punishment that there is no hope for us or we think that Allah (swt) forgives everyone and everything and we are free do to whatever we want. Such thinking is wrong, rather we must always fear the punishment of Allah (swt) and we must always hope for the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah (swt).

If you cannot achieve the perfect balance between these two, then let your hope in the Forgiveness and Mercy of Allah (swt) be greater because He (swt) has mentioned these two Names more in His (swt)'s Book. He (swt) has also told us in the hadith that His (swt)'s Mercy precedes His (swt)'s Wrath. So do not ever think that you have done so much evil that Allah (swt) will never forgive you. For you to give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt) is in fact a greater evil than whatever sins you may have done, so much so is the Mercy of Allah (swt) and so much so is the Forgiveness of Allah (swt). Always remember that Allah (swt) is not like human beings, no matter how many times you come to Him (swt) and ask for Forgiveness, He (swt) is the Forgiving and the Merciful. There is no limit to how much He (swt) can forgive you and show Mercy upon you. This is because He (swt) IS Forgiveness and He (swt) IS Mercy. These two Names define Who He (swt) IS. Allah (swt) has told us that His (swt)'s Mercy is more than His (swt)'s Wrath. This excess of Mercy over Wrath is not by a small amount but it is by an infinite amount. Can you even begin to imagine what this means? It means that you should never give up on the Mercy of Allah (swt). You should always hope for the Mercy of Allah (swt). So know that Allah (swt) will always forgive you if you are sincere in your plea, and He (swt) will always be Merciful if you sincerely yearn for His (swt)'s Mercy. May Allah (swt) give us His (swt)'s Forgiveness and Mercy! Allah (swt) Knows that we are in a desperate need for both of these.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ
ذِكْرًا ۗ فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ
خَلَاقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

201. So when you have completed your rituals, then remember Allah as you remember your forefathers or with an even stronger remembrance. Because from mankind there is one who says, "Our Rabb give us of this world", but there will be for him no share in the Hereafter.

Over the course of the previous ayahs we have seen that Allah (swt) has taken us through the various rituals of the Hajj. Although the exact rulings on how the Hajj is to be performed was not given, we can see that Allah (swt) has given us something that is far more important. Allah (swt) has shown us how the Hajj should bring us closer to Him (swt). We know that the exact rulings on how the Hajj is to be performed can be found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). But here in these ayahs instead of giving us such detailed rulings Allah (swt) has told us what is the state that our hearts need to be in when we perform the Hajj. First of all we need to make sure that we perform the Hajj only for Allah (swt). We must keep our intention purely for Him (swt). We then need to have the Taqwa of Allah (swt) and the fear of Allah (swt) while we perform the Hajj, this is so that we can avoid the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). Allah (swt) has told us how this is the best of provisions that we can take when we set off for the Hajj. Finally we must also strive to remember Allah (swt) at every point in the Hajj, we remember that Allah (swt) is severe in punishment and we remember that He (swt) is also the Forgiving and the Merciful. This is the state that we must strive to place our hearts in while we are on the Hajj, and the state that our hearts are in is often as important as the physical deeds that we perform. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what we must do when we complete our Hajj. Once again notice how the emphasis is more on the state of the heart rather than the physical actions of the limbs.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**So when you have completed your rituals, then remember Allah as you remember your forefathers or with an even stronger remembrance**". The Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) had a custom where once they had completed the Hajj, they would all gather together and tell each other about their forefathers. Each tribe that had come for the Hajj would compose many lines of poetry that eulogized their forefathers. They would recite this poetry to each other and they would each try to convince others that their forefathers were the greatest. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how evil and how wrong such a practice is. Here they are, they had come to Makkah to perform the Hajj for Allah (swt) and instead of remembering Allah (swt) they were remembering their forefathers. Instead of praising Allah (swt), they were praising their forefathers. How could they hold such reverence for their forefathers when their forefathers were only men like they were? Did they not realize that their forefathers were only a creation just like they were? So how does the creation compare the Creator? How could anyone forget Allah (swt) is such a way when He (swt) is the Ultimate Reality? Allah (swt) shows them the foolishness of their behavior in this ayah, He (swt) tells them that instead of remembering their forefathers they should be remembering Him (swt). Allah (swt) tells them that they should remember Him (swt) as they remember their forefathers or with an even stronger remembrance. Recall that the way in which they were remembering their forefathers was that they were praising them. This is how they should have been remembering Allah (swt). If not like this, then with an even stronger remembrance. With praise and glorification. They should praise Allah (swt) even more than they praise their forefathers. Who are their forefathers when compared to Allah (swt), the Majestic and the Mighty? How weak and imperfect are they when compared to Him (swt)? Furthermore what had their forefathers done for them when compared to what Allah (swt) had done for them? Allah (swt) is the One Who created them and the One Who maintains their existence at every moment? So Who then was more deserving of being remembered? Who then is more deserving of being thanked and glorified?

One of the lessons that we can take from this ayah is that it once again shows us the importance of remembering Allah (swt). Every moment of your life is more precious than gold because every moment of your life is another chance to remember Allah (swt). What is better in

this life than the remembrance of Allah (swt)? What is better than filling our minds with the thoughts of the Perfect One? How can so many people be heedless of Allah (swt)? How can they forget Him (swt) when He (swt) is their Creator and He (swt) is sustaining them for every moment of their lives? Everything in their life at every moment is only possible because of Him (swt) creating that moment for them. So how could they forget Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to remember Him (swt) at every moment of our lives!

This constant remembrance of Allah (swt) cannot be stressed enough. You might think that this is a point that we have mentioned too many times in our tafsir. This is an incorrect assumption. Firstly it is not us who is emphasizing this point of remembering Allah (swt) but it is Allah (swt) Himself, we are only explaining the meaning of the ayahs that are already in the Quran. More importantly, if you realized the importance of the remembrance of Allah (swt) then you will know that this point cannot be emphasized enough. If you realize how important it is for the believer to remember Allah (swt) then you will see that Allah (swt) cannot be remembered enough. What is the purpose of life other than to remember our Lord and seek to come closer to Him (swt) at every moment? Of all the thoughts that could fill your mind what could be better and more sublime than the thoughts of the Divine? If you have Him (swt) then what else could you possibly need? How does anything in this world compare to Him (swt)?

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that we must not overly praise our forefathers. Regardless of if our forefathers were great men or not, the truth remains that they have come and gone, and the truth remains that they were only human beings like us. They cannot help us on the Day of Judgment, and we cannot help them. We will all stand alone on that Day. So if they fulfilled the purpose of their existence, then we know that Allah (swt) will reward them. But we should not praise them any more than that because Allah (swt) created us to worship Him (swt) and to praise Him (swt) and to serve Him (swt). To dedicate ourselves to Him (swt). So why should we ever turn our attention away from Him (swt)? Why should we lose that precious moment in our life when we could be praising Allah (swt) by praising someone from His (swt)'s creation? May Allah (swt) save us from attaching our hearts to any but Him (swt)!

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Because from mankind there is one who says, "Our Rabb give us of this world", but there will be for him no share in the Hereafter**". In the previous part of the ayah Allah (swt) told us to remember Him (swt) when we complete the Hajj. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that one of the reasons for this is because by remembering Him (swt) then we can save ourselves from becoming like a certain kind of people. There are certain a kind of people who have forgotten about Allah (swt). Their hearts are so attached to the life of this world that they do not know anything but this world. Even when they go on Hajj, they go for the sake of pride or some worldly desire. They lazily perform all of the rituals of the Hajj just like they would lazily perform the Salah, and they do not try to avoid what Allah (swt) has forbidden while they are on the Hajj. The only time that they even remember Allah (swt) when they are on the Hajj is when the time comes to make Dua. But even at this moment the fact that their heart is attached to this worldly life can be seen in the Dua that they make. They only ask Allah (swt) for this world. They only ask Allah (swt) for the material things of this world or for an increase in their status in this world. They do not ask Allah (swt) to accept their Hajj, they do not ask Allah (swt) for Forgiveness, they do not ask Allah (swt) to bless the Prophet (saw), they do not ask Allah (swt) to give victory for this Ummah, they do not ask Allah (swt) to guide the sincere people, they do not ask Allah (swt) to give them Paradise, and they do not ask Allah (swt) to save them from the Fire. They only ask Allah (swt) for the things of this world because they do not know anything except this world. They forget how short and fleeting the life of this world is. They forget how with every moment of their lives they are coming closer and closer to that moment in which they will leave this world and go to meet Allah (swt). It is to such people that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us about them so that we can save ourselves from being like them. Our hearts must not be attached to the life of this world like their hearts are, rather our hearts must be with Allah (swt). Our Dua as well must be a Dua that Allah (swt) will be pleased with and not a Dua that is only pleasing to us. Because as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah; the one who only makes Dua for the life of this world will have no share in the Hereafter. What is this world compared to the Hereafter? How long are we going to stay here and how long in the Hereafter? Truly think about and contemplate on this.

وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

202. And from them is one who says "Our Rabb, give us the good in this world, and the good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the Fire".

Over the course of the previous ayahs Allah (swt) took us on this journey on how the Hajj is to be performed. He (swt) told us what we need to do when we are on the Hajj. He (swt) told us the state that our hearts need to be in. How it must be in a state where we are comparing remembering Him (swt). Allah (swt) also told us in the previous ayah about a certain kind of people. These are the ones who when make Dua while they are on the Hajj they only ask for the things of this world. This is because their hearts are attached to this world and they do not know anything but this world. In the Quran Allah (swt) always tells us about two kinds of people. Those whose example we must avoid, and those whose example we must strive to follow. In the previous ayah Allah (swt) gave us the example of the former, the ones who only remember this world even when they are on the Hajj. Now in this ayah He (swt) gives us the example of the latter. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to follow the guidance that He (swt) has given us!

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**And from them is one who says "Our Rabb, give us the good in this world, and the good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of the Fire"** ". We have to remind ourselves that the context around which this ayah has been placed is along with ayahs that tell us about the Hajj. Allah (swt) told us in the previous ayah about those pilgrims who when they go on Hajj they only ask Allah (swt) for this world, but in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about another group of pilgrims. Allah (swt) says "from them" that means "from the pilgrims", thus Allah (swt) is showing us that not all of the pilgrims were bad and asked only for the life of this world. There are some good people among the pilgrims who perform Hajj, and it is these kind of people whom we should try to emulate. Allah (swt) shows us the hearts of these people. He (swt) shows us how they are not only attached to this world. Rather they look beyond this world. They realize that this world is temporary. They realize that the true life is the life that lies beyond this. This then is what they yearn for.

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah about the Dua that such people make. The first part of the Dua is that they say "**Our Rabb, give us the good in this world**". Notice here how they do not just ask for this world but rather they ask for the good of this world. The word "good" in this ayah is comprehensive and it includes all kinds of good. First and foremost this good is the strong Iman. It is the firm belief in Allah (swt), the Prophet (saw) and all of the other tenets of our 'Aqeedah. Everything we do comes from this belief that we have in our hearts and it is the most precious gift that we have. Then good in this ayah also refers to the good actions that we do which are pleasing to Allah (swt), and the good is also to be kept away from the evil actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). These include both actions of the limbs and the actions of the heart. Then we can say that the good refers to the sound knowledge that will lead you to better worship and serve Allah (swt). Then it is a good family that will help you and support you in the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) and who themselves will be devout worshippers of Allah (swt). Then it is good health, a sound mind and body so that you can perform all of your obligations to Allah (swt). Then it is the provisions of this world such as food and drink, clothing and a home. Then it is a good profession where you can work and earn a livelihood. Then it is being kept safe from calamities and being eased of difficulties. Finally it is a chance to live under the banner of Islam in an Islamic State. To experience the peace and tranquility that comes from living under the Law of Allah (swt). All of these are included in the word "good", and when you ask Allah (swt) for the good of this world you are asking for all of these. May Allah (swt) give all of the good and sincere Muslims the good of this world! The next part of their Dua is that they say is "**and the good in the Hereafter**". So notice now that they are not like those whom Allah (swt) had criticized in the previous ayah. They are asking Allah (swt) for the good both in this world and the Hereafter. The good in the Hereafter is of course Paradise. But in addition to Paradise it is being saved from the punishment of the grave, it is being given an easy death, and it is safety and serenity on the Day of Judgment. It also includes being saved from the torment of the Fire. It is being kept far, far away from the Fire. Finally the good in the Hereafter is the greatest of the pleasures and that is the beholding of Allah (swt) and receiving the Pleasure of Allah (swt). There is no pleasure that is greater than this. May Allah (swt) grant it to us!

Finally they ask of Allah (swt) "**save us from the torment of the Fire**". We know that there are even some Muslims who will need to go to the Fire for a period of time because of the sins that they have done. You should ask Allah (swt) to be saved from this. Even a moment in the Fire is more than any of us can bear. No can be patient on the Fire, so much is the pain and the torment. As bad as you can imagine it to be, you should know that it is indeed much, much worse. May Allah (swt) save us from it!

The narrations tell us that this used to be the Prophet (saw)'s favorite Dua. He (saw) would always make this supplication to Allah (swt). Once the Prophet (saw) came upon a man who was terribly ill. But what was strange was that the man was actually asking for Allah (swt) to increase his disease so that he can get the punishment for his sins in the life of this world. When the Prophet (saw) saw him supplicating in this way, he (saw) told him not to do it. He (saw) said that rather he must ask Allah (swt) to cure his disease. Although diseases are a way in which our sins are purified, we must never ask to be sick and we must never ask for sickness to increase. Rather we should always ask for the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter. Allah (swt) is the Most Generous and He (swt) will give us both if we sincerely ask of Him (swt). Once some people came to one of the Sahabah and asked him to make Dua for them. The Sahabah then made this Dua for them. After he made this Dua, they asked him to make even more Dua for them. The Sahabah replied by saying, "what more could I ask for you because I have already asked you for the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter". What is there beyond this? That shows that when we make this small Dua we are actually asking Allah (swt) for every good thing that a Muslim could ever ask for. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to always make this Dua to Him (swt) just like our beloved Prophet (saw) did!

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا۟ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

203. These are for whom is (their) share of what they earned. And Allah is Swift at taking to account.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us about those whose hearts are not attached only to this world. The ones who when they make the Dua to Him (swt) they ask Him (swt) for the good of this world, but they also ask Him (swt) for the good of the Hereafter, and to be saved from the punishment of the Fire. Thus these people demonstrate how they believe in Allah (swt), how they believe in His Promise of a life after this one. Based upon this conviction they sacrifice and strive in this world. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what such people will get. Allah (swt) says "**These are for whom is their share of what they earned**". Allah (swt) is the Most Generous, and He (swt) gives to those who ask of Him (swt) without limit or measure. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that those who sincerely ask of Him (swt) will get both the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter. Allah (swt) tells us how they will get their share of what they earned both in this life and the Hereafter.

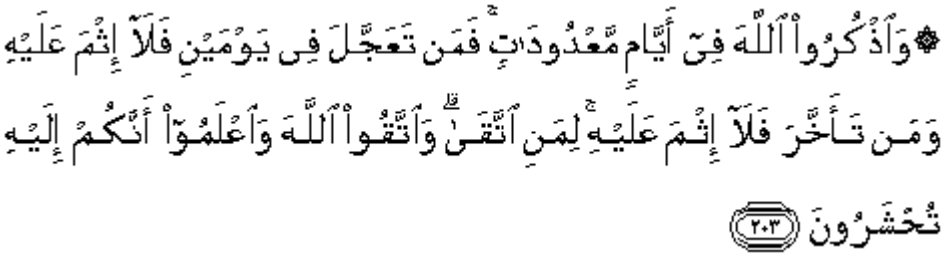
You make ask how is then that they have earned "their share" in this world and the next? Why does Allah (swt) use the phrase "their share"? Does it mean that what Allah (swt) gives us is something that we have earned? Something that we deserve? Of course not. Rather everything that we have been given both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter is a gift from Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has given us far more than we could possibly have earned with the good that we have done. This is true for the life of this world and the Hereafter. When it comes to the good that we have, both in this life and the Hereafter, Allah (swt) has given us far more than we could ever possibly deserve. For example think about the gift of vision that Allah (swt) has given you with your two eyes? How useful are your eyes to you? How many beauties and marvels have you beheld with them? Do you think that even a lifetime of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) could repay Him (swt) for giving you the blessing of sight? Of course not, rather this blessing of sight is more than a person like you and I could possibly ever deserve. So our share both in this life and the Hereafter is not something that we deserve, but rather it is a Mercy and Bounty from

Allah (swt). That is why when we read this ayah where Allah (swt) says that those who make this special Dua will get the share of what they earned both in this life and the Hereafter, it does not mean that it is literally what they earned. Everything that we have both in this life and the next is from the Mercy and Generosity of Allah (swt), and not what we have earned through our deeds.

However this does not mean that there is no point to the good deeds that we do. It does not mean that our deeds are worthless. Allah (swt) created us to worship and serve Him, this is the purpose of our existence. Allah (swt) placed us upon this earth for a test. To see if we would choose to live for this purpose. That is why our deeds have value. Allah (swt) will judge us when we return to Him (swt) on these deeds. But when Allah (swt) rewards us both in this life and the next, the kind of reward that He (swt) speaks about in this ayah, then we must never think that it is what we deserve. Rather Allah (swt) always gives the believers much more than what they deserve. Allah (swt) is so Generous that He (swt) will grant us all of these blessings both in this life and the Hereafter only for the few acts of worship and servitude that we do and for this Dua that we make, and then Allah (swt) will refer to what He (swt) has given us as what we have earned. Even though the share that we have been given both in this life and the next is far more than we could ever deserve, Allah (swt) still refers to it as what we have earned because He (swt) is so Kind and Generous. That is how Loving and Merciful your Lord IS. So for all of the blessings that you have, do not ever think this is what you deserve because of the good that you have done, but rather realize that it is Mercy and Bounty for you from Allah (swt).

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is Swift at taking to account**". Allah (swt) will give us so much even when we have done so little, and as we can see from this part of the ayah, not only will Allah (swt) give us but He (swt) will be swift in giving it to us. It is not like we have to wait forever to receive the gifts and blessings from Allah (swt). It is not like we have to wait forever to get the good of this world and the good of the Hereafter. Allah (swt) does not delay the good for those of His (swt)'s servants who ask of it, for those of His (swt)'s servants who are sincere in their obedience to Him (swt), those of His (swt)'s servants who love Him (swt) and fear Him (swt). Rather Allah (swt) is swift at reckoning, so if you do even a little bit of good, then you will quickly receive blessings and gifts from Allah (swt) that is more than you

could possibly ever imagine. It is more than you could possibly ever deserve for the little good that you have done. So we should all try to increase in our servitude to Allah (swt) and in our supplication to Allah (swt). If we would give Him (swt) only a little then He (swt) will give us a lot.



204. And remember Allah in the appointed days, for whom who leaves in two days there is no sin on him and for him who stays there is no sin on him. (This is) for the one who has Taqwa. And have Taqwa of Allah and know that to Him will you be gathered.

This is the last of the ayahs that discusses the subject of Hajj. Allah (swt) has dedicated eight ayahs in this Surah to the subject of Hajj. There are many more ayahs in the Quran where Allah (swt) tells us about the Hajj. Once again we should realize the importance of the Hajj from the fact that Allah (swt) gives so many ayahs concerning it in His (swt)'s Book. Insha Allah, all of us should try to make Hajj at least once in our lifetime and more times if Allah (swt) allows us to do. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to perform the Hajj!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And remember Allah in the appointed days**". The scholars say that the "**the appointed days**" that Allah (swt) refers to in this part of the ayah are the days of *Tashriq*. These are the 10th to the 13th of Dhul Hijjah. These are the last days of the Hajj. Allah (swt) commands that He (swt) be remembered in these days. The scholars say that one of the best ways in which Allah (swt) is to be remembered in these days is by making Takbir (saying *Allahu Akbar*). Allah (swt) is the Greatest. Whatever may happen in this universe, what will always be constant is that Allah (swt) will always be the Greatest. Allah (swt) is Great in His (swt)'s Greatness and Allah (swt) is Majestic in His (swt)'s Majesty. So this statement of Takbir is the truest statement in the universe. During the days of Tashriq, Allah (swt) reminds us to say these words and think about the meaning of these words throughout these blessed days.

We should say these words if we are in Makkah on the Hajj or if we are at home. These are special days in which Allah (swt) should be remembered and He (swt) should be glorified therein.

Allah (swt) then says "**for whom who leaves in two days there is no sin on him and for him who stays there is no sin on him**". At the time of the Prophet (saw), there was some dispute among the Arabs concerning whether the pilgrim should stay for two days or three days during the days of Tashriq. Some of them said that the pilgrim should stay only for two days and he should leave Makkah after that, they said that for him to stay for the third day would be a sin. Others said that if pilgrim left after two days it would be a sin and that he has to stay for three days. So each group was saying the opposite of what the other was saying, each group was accusing the other of sinning. However the truth is that both of these ideas were innovations that they themselves had made up in their own minds. They did not have any revelation from Allah (swt) to substantiate either of these laws. So we see here once again the dangers of innovating rules and prohibitions in our Din without evidence from Allah (swt). We should only follow what is in the Quran or Sunnah. Allah (swt) corrects the behavior of these people when He (swt) says that either of these two options is permissible. If one wishes to leave after two days of Tashriq that would be permissible or if one want to stay for three days that would be permissible as well. Once again we see Allah (swt) correcting the way in which the Hajj should be performed. This was once a pure ritual that had been prescribed for them by Ibrahim (as). However over time, they had corrupted it and added to it innovations that were not present in the original way that the Hajj was performed by Ibrahim (as). Now Allah (swt) corrects and purifies the practice of the Hajj by removing all of the innovations and corruptions that the people had placed into it.

Then Allah (swt) says "**(This is) for the one who has Taqwa**". In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) shows us that to have Taqwa of Him (swt) is far more important than focusing on exactly how many days one must remain in Makkah during the days of Tashriq. These people were arguing about whether the pilgrim should stay for two or three days, but what was far more important was the Taqwa that the pilgrim had in his heart. In the end what Allah (swt) is going to judge us on is how much we remembered Him (swt), how much we feared Him (swt), and how much we strove to please Him (swt) based on this remembrance and this fear.

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must not constantly argue over trivialities or minor issues of fiqh. Rather we should realize that what matters the most is always to have Taqwa of Allah (swt). Instead of arguing or debating over minor issues of fiqh, we must first focus on attaining the Taqwa of Allah (swt). What is this life except the striving to come closer to Allah (swt), so why should we debate endlessly on minor issues of fiqh? Why should we kill ourselves over where the hands must be placed in the Salah? If the brother does not have Taqwa, then what does it matter where he places his hand?

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must always have Taqwa whenever there is a disagreement between the scholars or whenever we are not sure what is the ruling on an issue. If there is an issue where there is a difference of opinion among the scholars or if there is an issue where we do not know what is the ruling for it, we first and foremost need to have Taqwa of Allah (swt) in regards to that issue. Before taking the opinion that is easiest or before we do an action without knowing the ruling for it, we first have to fear Allah (swt). We should remember that Allah (swt) Knows about each and every one of our actions and that He (swt) will hold us to account for each and every one of them. So we need to make an effort to protect ourselves from His Displeasure. This is Taqwa. That is why it is always safer for us to take the more difficult of the rulings or to stay away from an issue where we do not know the ruling for it. Of course this is difficult. Of course this will take effort. But always remember that Allah (swt) Knows the subtlest of the subtle. Even if you make the smallest of efforts for Him, in the deepest corners of your heart then you should know that He (swt) is Aware of it.

Allah (swt) concludes discussing the Hajj by saying "**And have Taqwa of Allah and know that to Him will you be gathered**". The purpose of the Hajj is to remind us of Allah (swt). The purpose of the Hajj is to build within ourselves the consciousness of Allah (swt), the Taqwa of Allah (swt). We all know the hadith where the Prophet (saw) has told that the one who performs Hajj purely for the sake of Allah (swt) and who does not commit any lewdness or sins during that Hajj will return cleansed of all sins and will be like the day in which their mother gave birth to them. We see from this hadith how the Hajj can wipe out a lifetime of sin if it is performed correctly. However it is important that we maintain Taqwa of Allah (swt) even after our return from

the Hajj, because if we do not then we would return to committing sins. How ungrateful then to Allah (swt) would we be? Allah (swt) has given the opportunity to go on Hajj, and then He (swt) has cleansed us of all of the evil and the disobedience to His (swt)'s Law that we had done, how ungrateful would we be if we then return to this evil and this disobedience after we return from Hajj? After He (swt) has purified us. The only thing that will protect us from sin is the Taqwa of Allah (swt). In the world that we live in today there are so many forces that are pushing us towards being disobedient to Allah (swt) and pushing us to being ungrateful to Allah (swt), only by remembering Him (swt) can we be saved from them. When we strive to remember Allah (swt) and have the Taqwa of Allah (swt) only then should we have a hope that He (swt) will protect us from sins. We need to stay away from as many sins as possible and we need to do as many good deeds as possible. This is because as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah "**know that to Him will you be gathered**". We will be gathered to Allah (swt) and He (swt) will judge us for each and every one of our actions. This is a fact about which we must have certain knowledge. It is not something that we must just guess or think that it is possibility to consider. But we must have certain knowledge of this reality. Just as you are sure right now that the sun will rise tomorrow, you should be sure that you will be gathered to Allah (swt). No matter where you may die you should be certain that you will be gathered to Him (swt). This must be certain knowledge within you, and from this knowledge you will gain the Taqwa of Allah (swt). When you went on Hajj you got a small taste of what the great gathering will be like. For so many people to be gathered together in one place. Know that the reality will be upon you before you know it. Before you know you will be gathered before Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. Why then can you not prepare for this in the short time that you have? May Allah (swt) grant us al the certain knowledge of this fact! May Allah (swt) give us all the Taqwa of Him (swt)!

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُعۡجِبُكَ قَوۡلُهُۥ فِي ٱلۡحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَيُشۡهِدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلۡبِهِۦ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ ٱلۡخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

205. And from mankind there is him whose speech in the life of this world would please you. And he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart. But he is the most rigid of opponents.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) told us about two kinds of people. Those who make their Hajj sincerely for Allah (swt) hoping for the reward from Him (swt) and those who make their Hajj for show and only remember Allah (swt) when they ask for the material things of this world. These two groups are the sincere believers and the hypocrites. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the hypocrites. We have to remind ourselves once again that this Surah was revealed soon after the Islamic State had been formed, and the first Muslim community had materialized in Madinah. Before the Muslims had their State, they were weak and oppressed. So in Makkah there were no hypocrites in the ranks of the Muslims. This was because in Makkah, when there was no Islamic State, there was no incentive for anyone to join the ranks of the Muslims. The only ones who became Muslim in Makkah were those who were sincere believers who wanted to worship and serve Allah (swt). The ones whose hearts were attached to Allah (swt). But when the Islamic State had been finally established in Madinah, and the Muslims finally gained power and they finally had a place to go where they would not be oppressed, that was when for the first time there were those who joined the ranks of the Muslim community who were not sincere believers. In fact some of them had no desire at all to fulfill the purpose of their creation by worshipping and serving Allah (swt), rather they only joined the Muslim community to get some benefit from the life of this world. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to such people. They are in fact this Ummah's greatest enemy because they are an enemy from within. You see them to be a believer, you see them to be your brother, but they are in reality your worst enemy. They are working from within the ranks of the believers to destroy this Message that Allah (swt) has sent for the guidance of all mankind! How evil are such people? May Allah (swt) save us all from them!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And from mankind there is him whose speech in the life of this world would please you**". Allah (swt) is telling us here about a certain kind of hypocrite within our community. Notice that Allah (swt) does not say "from the believers" or "from the Muslims", but He (swt) says that this hypocrite is "from mankind". This shows that these hypocrites are not true believers and they are not true Muslims. Even though they have been presented clearly with this Message they have chosen to reject it. This is true despite whatever they may say with their tongues.

We can also notice that because Allah (swt) is using the singular form of the second person pronoun in this ayah, this shows that He (swt) is firstly addressing the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) that there is a certain kind of person whose speech in the life of this world would please him (saw). This person would say whatever it is to make the Prophet (saw) happy. He would praise Allah (swt), he would talk about the importance of carrying this Message to mankind, he would speak about the importance of taking care of the affairs of the Muslims, he would say whatever it was that made the Prophet (saw) happy. But all of this would be lies, all of this would be falsehood. This is because that person is indeed a hypocrite. They would say whatever it is that would make the Prophet (saw) happy but all that they would say would be a deception. They would even speak in a very kind and respectful tone, the tone in which one is supposed to address the Messenger of Allah (swt), but in their heart they would have deep hatred for the Prophet (saw).

Not only does such a person say to the Prophet (saw) words that are pleasing to him (saw) but Allah (swt) also says about such a person that "**he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart**". He is telling the Prophet (saw) that all what he is saying is the truth and then he is calling on Allah (swt) to witness to this fact. How evil then is such a person? Not only does he speak lies, not only does he try to deceive the Prophet (saw), but he even claims that he is calling Allah (swt) to witness as to that which is in his heart. He is swearing by Allah (swt) that what he is speaking is the truth while he know that he is speaking only lies. How much arrogance and how much disrespect does such person have in front of the Lord and Master of the universe? Does he not know that Allah (swt) Knows that which is truly in his heart?

At first the Prophet (saw) may not have been aware of the true reality of such a person. The Prophet (saw) may have thought that such a person is the greatest of assets for this dawah, but then Allah (swt) exposes the reality of this person nature when He (swt) says "**But he is the most rigid of opponents**". He is the worst of enemies. Such a person may have a sweet tongue and he may say to the Prophet (saw) words that a pleasing to him (saw), but such a person is indeed the worst of opponents to this Message. Allah (swt) is telling the Prophet (saw) here that not only is such a person an enemy of Islam but he is in fact one of the worst enemies of Islam. He is the kind of person who will stop at nothing to destroy this Message. What is inside of him is the opposite of what he shows with his words. He shows love to the Prophet (saw) and to Islam but he hides deep hatred to the Prophet (saw) and to this Message that he (saw) was sent with. He says to the Prophet (saw) words that will please him (saw), but in his heart he is among the worst of enemies to this Din of Allah (swt). In his heart he is one who wants to destroy this Message that Allah (swt) has sent.

So in this ayah we see that Allah (swt) is warning the Prophet (saw) and He (swt) is warning the sincere believers who carry this dawah after him (saw). Allah (swt) is telling us not to be fooled by such people. In his tafsir of this ayah, Al-Qurtubi quotes a narration which says "There are some slaves of Allah whose tongues are sweeter than honey while their hearts are more bitter than aloes. They appear to people like gentle sheep while they use the din to buy this world". Such people have an objective and an agenda to destroy this Message of Islam. They only care about the life of this world and satisfying their lusts. In order to achieve this objective they would speak whatever lies it is that comes to their heart.

Muslims today need to be aware of such hypocrites as well. We know that this Message has many enemies; evil men who will stop at nothing to prevent this Message from gaining supremacy once again. They will use every trick that they know to prevent this Message from gaining power in the land once again. One of the ways in which they will try to stop this dawah is by sending these hypocrites into the ranks of the Ummah. These hypocrites will pretend to be one of the Ummah and they will even say words that are pleasing to the Ummah. They will tell every lie that their wretched tongue can make. Many of them will come to the Ummah as

scholars and learned people so that they can gain the trust of the Ummah. But all that they would say to the Ummah will be poison. They will tell the Ummah that it is no longer an obligation for us to work to bring back the Islamic State. They will tell the Ummah that we can be content living in the land of kufr as long as we are free to make our prayers and acts of worship. They will tell us that it is permissible to live in a state that does not rule by the law of Allah (swt). They will tell us that we should be passive and let the bad times pass us by. They will tell us that there is no place for war and conflict in the modern world. As we can see such people may say words that are pleasing to us but they are in fact the worst of enemies to Allah (swt). All that they want is to prevent the Mercy and Justice of this Message from reaching mankind. They want to maintain the status quo where the slaves of the devil have all of the power, and the masses are suffering and weak. They want to change this Din so that it is limited to only a few rituals instead of a complete guidance for all of mankind to live by. They want to prevent the Law of Allah (swt) from returning to the earth. They want to prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people. In order to reach this objective they will say whatever lie and make whatever claim. They will even twist the meaning of the ayahs of the Quran and hadith of the Prophet (saw) in order to reach this objective. We know what the Truth is. We know that it is an obligation to live under Islam. So whenever we here anything to the contrary, even from someone who may claim to be a Muslim and who may claim to be a scholar, then we know from this ayah the kind of person whom they are. May Allah (swt) expose such hypocrites in our community! May Allah (swt) save this Ummah from them! May Allah (swt) protect us from their lies and their words of deception!

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ ٱلْحَرْثَ وَٱلنَّسْلَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

206. And when he turns away, his effort on the earth is to make *Fasad* therein, and he destroys the *Harth* and the *Nasla*. And Allah loves not those who make *Fasad*.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the hypocrite whose words appear to be sweet and whose words please us, but who is in fact the worst of enemies for this Message. Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) described such a hypocrite for the Prophet (saw). This hypocrite says words that are pleasing to the Prophet (saw), and he calls Allah (swt) to witness to what is in his heart, but he is in fact the fiercest opponents to this Message. Just as Allah (swt) warned the Prophet (saw) of such people, He (swt) warns us as well. We as an Ummah need to know about the existence of such people within our community. We cannot read people's hearts so we do not know who is a hypocrite and who is not. But we must be aware that there are such people in our community. There are wolves in the midst of the flock of this Ummah. The only way to save ourselves from them is to verify everything that is said and done within our Ummah with the Quran and the Sunnah. When we are aware of the presence of such hypocrites in our community then we need to check our leaders and our scholars with the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw). We have to check all of their words to make sure that everything that they say to the Ummah is pleasing to Allah (swt). We have to make sure that they are guiding this Ummah towards Allah (swt) and not away from Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe such hypocrites for us. Allah (swt) begins by saying "**And when he turns away**". This means when he turns away from the Prophet (saw). In other words when he leaves the presence of the Prophet (saw). So we can see from here that this hypocrite has one type of behavior with the Prophet (saw) and then when he leaves the presence of the Prophet (saw), he behaves in a different way. Then Allah (swt) says "**his effort on the earth is to make *Fasad* therein**". This is what such a person does when he leaves the

presence of the Prophet (saw) and he leaves the presence of the Muslims. He makes an effort and he strives to make ***Fasad*** on the earth. The word ***Fasad*** is comprehensive to mean corruption and evil of all kinds. It is all that harms mankind and it is all that prevents the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. It includes all chaos and unnecessary bloodshed and it includes all immorality and lewdness. All such evil and corruption is encompassed by the word ***Fasad***. Notice that Allah (swt) does not simply say that such a person makes ***Fasad*** in the earth but Allah (swt) says that their *effort* is to make ***Fasad*** in the earth. In other words they strive to make ***Fasad*** in the earth. They work hard and they exert all efforts in preventing this Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people. They work hard and exert all efforts in making sure that evil and lewdness are prevalent all over the society. How unfortunate it is today that the sincere workers of this dawah are lazy and sleeping and the enemies of this Message are working hard and striving in their evil?

Allah (swt) then says about such people "**and he destroys the *Harth* and the *Nasla***". One of the ways in which such people cause ***Fasad*** in the land is that they cause destruction. Allah (swt) says here that they destroy the ***Harth*** and the ***Nasla***. One meaning for these words is "crops" and "cattle". So with this meaning Allah (swt) is telling us how such a person destroys the crops and kills the cattle and the livestock. The narrations tell us about a man named Al-Akhnas bin Shurayq who would sit with the Prophet (saw) and speak words that were pleasing to the Prophet (saw), but when he left the presence of the Prophet (saw) he would go and spread ***Fasad*** in the land. One of the ways he would do this is that he would destroy the crops of the Muslims and he would kill the cattle and the livestock of the Muslims. Al-Akhnas is just one example of these kinds of hypocrites who appear to be the best of mankind but in fact they are the worst of mankind.

Another meaning for the words ***Harth*** and ***Nasla*** that some scholars give is that they mean "harvest" and "offspring". So not only do these hypocrites destroy crops and cattle but they also destroy harvest and they kill children. Think now about all of the hypocrites and the enemies of Islam who are working to destroy this Message today. Are they not also destroying harvest and killing children? By harvest we mean all kinds of food that can be used to feed the people. An

example of this today are the large corporations of the West who are destroying tons and tons of wheat, literally dumping all of this wheat into the ocean, only to keep the price of this food from coming down. They dump this wheat when there are so many people in this world dying from starvation. They do this because one of the fundamental tenets of the Capitalist system is the survival of the fittest and to do whatever is necessary to survive and make a profit. So they destroy this harvest only to make a profit. When it comes to killing children we can write an entire book on how the powers be are killing children. We have seen how they put embargos and sanctions on nations that they perceive as a threat to their way of life. The result of these embargos and sanctions is that the children of those nations die from starvation. The enemies of this Message themselves admit that they are killing children but they justify it in the name of protecting freedom and democracy. Another way in which they are killing children is that they are depriving children of this Message of Islam. Children more than anyone else need to grow up in a proper Islamic society. They need to know that there is a purpose to their life. They need to know Allah (swt). What the hypocrites and the enemies of this Message are doing instead is that they are creating a society that is deprived of the worship and servitude to Allah (swt) and is deprived of this Message that Allah (swt) has sent for the guidance of mankind. So the children grow up seeing a society of corruption, of evil and of immorality and lewdness. Simply look at what they are feeding the children with today through the mass media. Looking at the messages that they are sending to the children. With the advent of the internet all kinds of perverse pornography is available for the children to see. This is what they feed the children. The children grow up thinking that there is no point in life except satisfying their carnal desires. Is this not killing the children? When you prevent a child from knowing about the Ultimate Reality of Allah (swt), are you not then killing that child? What is there to life if your life is not worshipping and serving Allah (swt)? What kind of a miserable existence does a soul live when it does not know of the Divine? So we see that yet another way in which the hypocrites and the enemies of this Message are spreading ***Fasad*** in the earth is that they are destroying the harvest and they are killing the children. May Allah (swt) take them to a severe account for what they have done!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah loves not *Fasad***". By doing such evil, these people have deprived themselves of the love of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) does not love ***Fasad*** in any form. Allah (swt) does not love evil and corruption. Allah (swt) does not like it when people go forth in the land destroying the cattle and the livestock. Allah (swt) does not like it when people destroy the crops and the vegetation. Allah (swt) does not like it when people kill innocent children. Allah (swt) does not like it when people strive to prevent His (swt)'s Message from reaching the people. Allah (swt) does not like it when people set up a society of immorality and sexual promiscuity. Allah (swt) does not like Capitalism and democracy. These are all manifestations of great evil and anyone who does these acts has deprived themselves of the Love of Allah (swt). What does it mean not to have the Love of Allah (swt)? It is pain and suffering in the life of this world and a painful and humiliating punishment in the Hereafter. Pain more than we can possible imagine. May Allah (swt) save us from such people and may Allah (swt) save us ever doing any ***Fasad***! May Allah (swt) always grant us His (swt)'s Love!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ ٱتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ ٱلْعِزَّةُ بِٱلْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ ٱلْمِهَادُ

٢٠٧

207. And when it is said to him "Have Taqwa of Allah", he is taken by pride into sin. Enough for him is hell, and certainly it is an evil resting place.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to tell us about the hypocrite whose talk is sweet but who is one of the worst enemies to this Message of Islam. We saw in the previous ayah how he is the kind of person who will speak words that will please us and he will swear to Allah (swt) as to that which is in his heart. But when he leaves, he will go about spreading ***Fasad*** in the land. This ***Fasad*** includes preventing the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people, destroying the crops, destroying the cattle, destroying the harvest and even killing the children. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us what is the source of this evil that such a person does and He (swt) also tells us where will be his destination. If you fear the destination then fear this trait that will take you there. Strive to cleanse your heart of it.

Allah (swt) says about such a person "**And when it is said to him "Have Taqwa of Allah", he is taken by pride into sin**". We said before that it was impossible to tell who was a hypocrite and who was not. This is because hypocrisy is a disease of the heart and we cannot see people's hearts, we can only see the actions that they do and the words that they say. So in general we do not know who is a hypocrite and who is a sincere believer. But there may be some people whose hypocrisy is so deep rooted that it even shows in their actions and words. It is to these kinds of people that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. Allah (swt) tells us about such people and He (swt) shows us what is in their hearts.

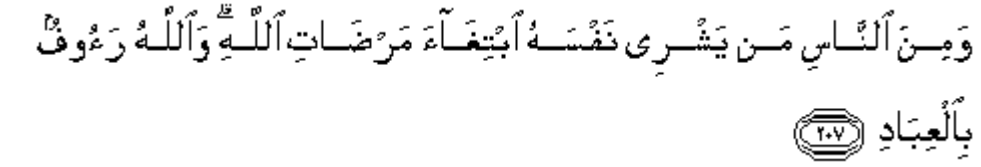
In this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to a certain group of hypocrites who do such great evil that it is manifested in their actions, and then Allah (swt) tells us what is their response when they are advised by the Muslims to stop their evil. When they are told to have Taqwa, when they are being called to return to the obedience of Allah (swt), their pride takes them further into sin. They do not take the advice of the believers, but instead they become angry for having their behavior be criticized. So puffed up are they with arrogance and pride that they cannot see themselves as doing any wrong. They cannot stand to be criticized in any way. They become angry and they go further into sin. So the sincere advice of the Muslims has the opposite effect in that instead of making them return to the worship and servitude of Allah, it carried them even deeper into sin. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like such people!

All of us commit sins, but in this ayah Allah (swt) shows us the difference between the sincere believer and the hypocrite. The sincere believer is the one who when he or she is advised to stop the evil that they are doing, and they know that what they are doing is wrong, they will follow that advice and return to the obedience of Allah (swt). They will follow the advice because they have Taqwa of Allah (swt). They fear Allah (swt) and they want more than anything else to avoid that which is displeasing to Him (swt). The hypocrite on the other hand will not yield to the advice of the Muslims. As we can see from this ayah, such advice will only generate anger within him towards the Muslims and it will carry him into more sin. This is because instead of the Taqwa of Allah (swt), the hypocrite has within himself pride. He cares about himself much more than he does his Creator and Sustainer. How evil then is such a person?

So one lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see the evil of pride. Pride and arrogance is one of the greatest of sins in our Din. Pride in and of itself is a lie and a deception. You make a great estimation of yourself and you look down upon others. You see yourself as the best and you see others as less than you. This is a deception because you are not the best and you are not the greatest. Allah (swt) is the Greatest and Allah (swt) is the Most Glorious, everyone else are only His (swt)'s slaves. All of creation is nothing but the abject and humble slaves of Allah (swt). So anyone who has pride and makes a high estimation of themselves are only deceiving themselves because they are placing greatness in something that does not have any. Anyone who even begins to comprehend Allah (swt) will realize that they have no place whatsoever for pride of any sort. They will realize the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) and how nothing else in all of the creation has a share in this. When they realize the Glory and Majesty of their Lord then they will realize their own place in the creation. They will realize that they are nothing when compared to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) help us all to reach this station! May Allah (swt) help us to realize His (swt)'s Majesty and may Allah (swt) clean our hearts of all traces of pride and arrogance!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says, "**Enough for him is hell, and certainly it is an evil resting place**". Can we even begin to count the evil that these hypocrites have done? On the one hand they have turned away from the Message that Allah (swt) has sent them. They were created to worship and serve Allah (swt), and Allah (swt) sent them a Message to remind them of this purpose and yet they turned away from it. Not only did they turn away from this Message but look at the way in which they turned away from it. They behaved and spoke like they accepted it, only to turn away from it in their hearts. They deceived the Prophet (saw) and the sincere believers with their hypocrisy. Then they actively worked and strove to destroy this Message and to spread ***Fasad*** in the earth. They destroyed the cattle and the crops, and they even killed the children. When they were reminded to have Taqwa of Allah (swt) and to return to His (swt)'s worship and servitude, they turned away in arrogance and pride. This sincere advice from the believers only served to increase them in their hostility and sin. They thought themselves to be great when deep down inside they knew that all Greatness and Majesty belongs only to

Allah (swt). What can be the recompense for a people who have done such great evil? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that hell is enough as a recompense for such people. They have done great evil, there are not even words to describe the evil that they have done. But Allah (swt) has created hell for such people, and He (swt) tells us here that hell is enough of a recompense for them. The greatest of their crimes, the crime for which they were deserving of this terrible punishment, is their pride and arrogance. Because such a crime is a crime against Allah (swt) Himself. How can you think anything of yourself when you know that there is a Being as Majestic and Glorious as He (swt)? If you have such arrogance and pride then this is what you deserve as a final resting place. Allah (swt) tells us "**certainly it is an evil resting place**". This is a place in which they will stay forever; it will be their home, it will be their resting place. How evil is hell as a home? How evil is hell as a place of rest? How miserable and painful an existence will it be? Their suffering and their torment therein is beyond all imagination. May Allah (swt) save us from this horrible place!



208. And from mankind, there is one who would sell himself, seeking the Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Full of Kindness to the slaves.

Allah (swt) has told us in the previous ayahs about the hypocrites. They have been presented with this Message from Allah (swt) and they have turned away from it. They have been clearly called upon to worship and serve Allah (swt), and they have turned away from that worship and servitude. The hypocrites are even worse than the disbelievers because they were immersed in this Message of Islam and still they turned away from it. They saw Islam being practiced all around them but it had no effect on them whatsoever. So not only were they presented with this Message but they were surrounded by it. Even though they saw the beauty of this Din all around them; they prayed with the Muslims, they saw the love and brotherhood that Islam brought, they saw how it created a peaceful and tranquil society, they even heard the

Quran being recited on the blessed tongue of the Prophet (saw). Even though they saw and experienced all of this, they still turned away from this Message and they still worked to destroy it. They were not affected by this Message in any way whatsoever. These are the hypocrites. That is why they were deserving of such a terrible punishment.

Now in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to a completely different kind of people. In fact these people are the opposite of the hypocrites whom Allah (swt) had described in the previous ayah. These are the ones whom this Message did have an impact on. Those who did respond to this Message when it reached them. Not only did this Message have an impact on these people but it turned their entire lives around. They became the kind of people who would give up their entire selves for this Message. See how different these two kinds of people are; the best of humanity and the worst of humanity. See how beautifully Allah (swt) describes such people for us in these ayahs. Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir how such a description is so vivid that we can almost picture such people. That is how powerful are the words that Allah (swt) uses to describe such people. May Allah (swt) guide us to benefit from these descriptions that He (swt) has given us! May Allah (swt) make us into those whom He (swt) is pleased with and may He (swt) save us from becoming those He (swt) is displeased with!

Allah (swt) describes those whom He (swt) is pleased with by saying "**And from mankind, there is one who would sell himself seeking the Pleasure of Allah**". The Pleasure of Allah (swt) should be the goal for all mankind. We were created only for Him (swt). He (swt) is the reason for our existence. When you know that there is so Majestic and Glorious a Being as He (swt) how then can you not seek to come close to Him (swt)? How then can you not seek to please Him (swt)? The vast majority of us however have forgotten this purpose of our existence. We think that we live only for the life of this world when we were created for a far greater purpose. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us about those who still remember this purpose of their existence. They remember Allah (swt) and they remember how all that matters should be gaining His (swt)'s Pleasure. Allah (swt) describes such people as those who would sell themselves to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. This means that they would give up everything to get His (swt)'s Pleasure. This includes all of their wealth and even their very lives. This was how the companions the Prophet

(saw) were. They knew what was the purpose of their lives. They knew that all that mattered was they live to worship and serve Allah (swt). They knew that part of their servitude to Allah (swt) is carrying out this great mission that He (swt) had given them in taking His (swt)'s Message to mankind. So they were the ones who made all kinds of sacrifices for this dawah. They gave and gave and they knew that they only give to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Here in this ayah Allah (swt) describes them as selling themselves to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. This means that they gave up everything that they had only to gain the countenance of their Lord. They gave every moment for their Lord. May Allah (swt) help us to even come close to their station and may Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to take up this mission once again!

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**And Allah is Full of Kindness to the slaves**". Allah (swt) Knows those who sacrifice and strive to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. So Allah (swt) concludes this ayah by letting such people know Who He (swt) IS. Allah (swt) is the One Who is Full of Kindness to the slaves. Allah (swt) is Full of Kindness for all mankind. Kindness and Compassion is part of Who Allah (swt) IS. Just imagine how a Being Who is so Kind and so Compassionate will respond to those who sacrifice and strive for Him (swt)? Those who give everything only to please Him (swt). Can you even begin to imagine the kind of reward and the blessings that Allah (swt) has in store for such of His (swt)'s servants who strive and sacrifice for Him (swt), both in this life and the life Hereafter? May Allah (swt) make us among those!

Please look for part four on Quran-Tafsir.org Insha Allah!

Quran-Tafsir.org

Surah Al-Baqarah

Part 4 (Ayahs 209-287)

This is the fourth part of Surah Baqarah, Insha Allah please go to Quran-Tafsir.org for the first second, and third parts.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱدۡخُلُواْ فِي ٱلسِّلۡمِ كَآفَّةٗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُواْ
خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنِۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمۡ عَدُوّٞ مُّبِينٞ ٢٠٨

209. O you who believe! Enter into Al-Islam completely and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan. Surely he is to you a clear enemy.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by calling out to the believers. Allah (swt) is addressing you and me in this ayah. Our Creator and Sustainer, our Lord and Master is addressing us with that which is most precious and dear to us, and that is our Iman. Before you even read the rest of the ayah, consider who is being addressed, consider the Addressor, and consider with what He (swt) is addressing you. When you consider all of these you will realize how important it is for you to pay complete attention to what Allah (swt) is telling you in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**O you who believe! Enter into Al-Islam completely**". To understand what Allah (swt) is telling us to do in this ayah, we first have to understand each word in this ayah. The first word that we must strive to understand is "Al-Islam". Notice that Allah (swt) uses the definite article to qualify this word. The definite article, which in English is "the" and in Arabic is "al" is used to qualify and specify a word. So Allah (swt) is not referring here to simply any "Islam" but Allah (swt) is referring here to "***The*** Islam". Which "Islam" is "***The*** Islam" you might ask. "Islam" linguistically means "peace" or "submission" but it is not simply any peace or submission that Allah (swt) is speaking about here. Rather Allah (swt) is referring to the Din that He (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw) and that He (swt) Himself called "Al Islam". So it is not simply any peace or surrender, but is the specific way of life that was revealed to the Prophet (saw). That is what Allah (swt) is referring to in this ayah. The next word that we must understand in order to understand the command of Allah (swt) in this ayah is the word "enter". What does it mean to enter into this Din of Al-Islam? When you enter into your house, when you go from being outdoors into being indoors, your entire surroundings change. You are in a completely different place than you were before. Similar should be the effect when you enter into this Din of Islam.

Your entire life should change. Your entire outlook on this world must change. The purpose of your life must change. Everything that you think, everything that you say, and everything that you do now has a purpose. Entering into this Din of Al-Islam is a complete transformation. Instead of living for yourself, you now live for Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the purpose of your existence and everything that you do is for Him (swt).

The next word that we must understand from this ayah is the word "completely". This is perhaps the most important word in this ayah, and it is the word that most Muslims today have forgotten. What does Allah (swt) mean when He (swt) says that He (swt) wants us to enter Al-Islam completely? There are actually two meanings here. One meaning is that we ourselves must enter Islam fully. We must enter it with our minds, our hearts and our limbs. This means that our thoughts, our emotions and our actions should be in accordance with Islam and it must be in the service of Islam. Any action that you do, any word that you say, and even any thought that you have must be part of your worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Strive not to even have a thought that is displeasing to Allah (swt). For example when you see a beautiful woman, not only you must not even look at her or talk to her but you must not even think about her. You must fight against the lusts that you have for her, and fill your heart with thoughts of your Rabb instead. Your actions, your words, your emotions and your thoughts must all be for Allah (swt). Al-Islam is a state of total submission to Allah (swt) and to enter into this submission completely is to submit everything that you have to Him (swt).

The other meaning of the word "completely" in this ayah is that we must enter into all of Al-Islam and not only the parts that are convenient to us or only the parts that are to our liking. Al-Islam is a complete package; it is a total way of life that covers every component of the life of the individual and the society. Many Muslims today take only parts of this Din and they leave other parts. For example they only follow the rulings and the injunctions related to worship, and they ignore the rulings related to government, economics, social interactions, and even the rulings related to the states of the heart such as the prohibition of jealousy and the obligation of patience and love for fellow Muslims. So Muslims today have forgotten the command of Allah (swt) to enter into Al-Islam completely. They pick and choose which parts of Al-Islam they want to enter into,

they only enter into the parts that they like and they leave the parts that they do not like. How corrupt a people have we become? How is it that we cannot even fulfill this simple command that our Lord has given us? May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) help our Ummah to gain a correct understanding of this Din! May Allah (swt) help us to see what a rich and vast way of life He (swt) has revealed to us!

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan. Surely he is to you a clear enemy**". In the previous part of the ayah, Allah (swt) told us to enter into the Din of Al-Islam completely and in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us not to follow the footsteps of Shaitan. Allah (swt) also reminds us that Shaitan is our clear and open enemy. The implication here is that if we fail to enter into Al-Islam completely then we would be following the footsteps of Shaitan. To follow the footsteps of Shaitan means to follow the way of Shaitan, the way of disobedience to Allah (swt). If you fail to adopt all of Islam and instead you adopt only the parts of it that are to your liking then you are in fact following the footsteps of Shaitan. So anyone who does not believe in the Islamic State is in fact following the devil. They are picking and choosing which parts of this Din they want to follow. That is something that we do not have the right to do.

Allah (swt) has sent you as a Message. In that Message Allah (swt) has clearly told you what to do. Then here you are with your pride and arrogance, your evil and rebellion, your insolence against the Lord and Master, to say that "I am going to follow this and that, but I do not like this and that so I am not going to follow it". Who are you to say that? How dare the slave question the Master! This is only from Shaitan. Since the dawn of time there has been a war between the forces of Allah (swt) and the forces of Shaitan. The forces that call to complete submission to the Creator and Sustainer in all matters of life and the forces that call to associate partners with Him (swt). You have a choice now to obey the command that Allah (swt) gave you and enter into Al-Islam completely. Based on that choice you make you will choose which side that you want to take in this war. There are no shades of gray in this war; there is only the path of Allah (swt) and the path of devils. So you decide now whose side you want to be in. If you want to give up or give in, thus following the footsteps of Shaitan and choosing to be in his camp, then

remember that he is your clear enemy. He will only lead you to misery and suffering in the life of this world, and he will lead you into total destruction and a painful and lasting punishment in the next world. This is because the outcome of this war is that the forces of Allah (swt) will eventually prevail. How can they lose when they have the Lord and Master of the universe on their side? Any victory that the forces of Shaitan may have is only a temporary one in the life of this world. When the Last Day comes, you will know who is the real victor and the real loser. So think now about this conflict, think now about this command that Allah (swt) has given you, and you decide for yourself what you want to do with the rest of your life. Do you want to dedicate it to your Creator and Sustainer, the One and the Irresistible, or do you want to give it to your clear enemy? May Allah (swt) guide us all to make the correct choice!

فَإِن زَلَلْتُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْكُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَـٰتُ فَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

٢٠٩

210. But if you slide back, after the clear proofs have come to you, then know that surely Allah is Al-Aziz and Al-Hakim.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) commanded us to enter into the Din of Al-Islam completely and Allah (swt) warned us against following Shaitan. Allah (swt) reminded us that Shaitan is our clear enemy. Thus any way of life that we choose except Al-Islam is a way of total ruin and destruction. How can there be anything else when it is the path of our enemy? So the choice was clear and you have made the choice to live a life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). You have chosen Allah (swt) over Shaitan. But Shaitan is always after you; remember that he has made a promise to lead you astray. So even after you have committed to live a life of worship and servitude to Allah (swt), he can still come and try to tempt you astray. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells you what will happen to you if you do follow the temptations of Shaitan. Allah (swt) tells us what will happen to all of us if we choose to turn away from Him (swt) after He (swt) had made the distinction between His (swt)'s path and the path of our enemy so clear.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**But if you slide back**". Notice how beautifully Allah (swt) describes going back to the way of Shaitan after you have entered into the Din of Allah (swt). You will be sliding back. Imagine yourself climbing a mountain. At the top of this mountain is the goal of your life and that is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). If you choose to follow the way of Shaitan, you will be sliding back in your path up this mountain. You will be going back to being that despised creature that only follows its lusts and desires. You will be going back to that low state after Allah (swt) had guided you to a much nobler purpose for your existence. This is exactly what you will be doing if you do not dedicate your entire self to Allah (swt). You will be sliding back down towards destruction instead of going closer to your goal. May Allah (swt) save us from that ever happening to us!

Then Allah (swt) says "**after the clear proofs have come to you**". Why do you believe in this Message? Do you not believe in it because you are absolutely certain that it is the Truth? Why is that you are absolutely certain? It is because Allah (swt) has established clear and undeniable proofs for this Message. This is a Message that calls on us to believe in the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, and every single thing in this universe is an evidence to the Existence, the Oneness and the total Sovereignty of this Creator. What we see in the universe about the Creator and what the Quran tells us is exactly the same. How then could this Quran not be the Truth when it describes the Creator for us so perfectly, matching exactly the perception that we have of Him (swt) when we study the reality around us? Not only does the Quran describe Allah (swt) perfectly, but Allah (swt) also sent the Quran with a Miracle of it's own. We know that if all of mankind came together, and they all helped each other, they would not be able to produce even one small Surah like the Surahs of the Quran. Fifteen hundred years of history and the Arabic language itself testify to this fact. There are hundreds and hundreds of other proofs that Allah (swt) has given us to verify the Truthfulness of this Message. Everything from the life of the Prophet (saw) to the kind of society this Quran built is an evidence to the Truth of this Message. Insha Allah all of these will help us to arrive in the absolute certainty of this Message. Once you arrive at the certainty, you have to remind yourself that this Message is no joke. It truly is from Allah (swt). Many of us tell ourselves that we believe in this fact, but many of

us fail to realize the consequences of this belief. Our behavior and our emotions in the life of this world is a testament to this fact.

What should we do if we choose to turn away from this Message after Allah (swt) has sent it to us with clear proofs? If we choose to do that, if we choose to slide away, then we should "**know that surely Allah is Al-Aziz and Al-Hakim**". When we say that Allah (swt) is "Al-Aziz" we are saying that He (swt) is the Mighty and the Powerful. He (swt) is the Defeater Who overcomes all and Who is not defeated by any. The forces of Shaitan may appear strong in the life of this world. They may control all of the wealth and all of the resources of this planet. Their power may seem to be endless and their lure may seem to be irresistible. But you should know that this is only an illusion. The real Might and the real Power is only with Allah (swt) and there is none who can stand against Him (swt). So if you choose to turn away from Allah (swt), then you should know that you will have no one to help you against Him (swt). Allah (swt) is Power itself and so how could there by anyone who can even hope to oppose Him (swt)?

Allah (swt) is also "Al-Hakim". He (swt) is the Most Wise. He (swt) is the manifestation of the perfection of Wisdom. Such Perfect Wisdom can only come from Perfect Knowledge and so the name "Al-Hakim" also gives the meaning that Allah (swt) is All-Knowing. Why would you then ever choose a way of life other than the way of life prescribed by the Most Wise and the All Knowing? When you know this Name of Allah (swt) do you then think that you can come up with a better way of life than He (swt)? If you choose to turn away from this way of life then you are turning away from the way of life prescribed by the All-Knowing and the Most Wise. All of the power and all of the judgment is with Allah (swt), He (swt) can do all things and all things return to Him (swt) for judgment. So why then would you ever want to turn away from Him (swt)? Those who turn away from this Message after it reaches them clearly have no excuse whatsoever in front of Him (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from being among those! May Allah (swt) help us to remember His (swt)'s Names so that we will realize Him (swt) and so that we will not turn away from Him (swt)!

هَلۡ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَأۡتِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٖ مِّنَ ٱلۡغَمَامِ وَٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ ٱلۡأَمۡرُۚ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ تُرۡجَعُ ٱلۡأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

211. Do they wait except for Allah to come to them in the shadows of clouds and the angels? Then the matter would have been decided. And to Allah to the matters return.

In this ayah Allah (swt) asks us a question to make us think and reflect. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) commanded us to enter into the Din of Al-Islam completely. Allah (swt) reminded us how He (swt) has given us clear signs and undeniable arguments to help us to reach certainty that this Message is indeed the Truth. The only people who would not follow this Message now are those who do not want to follow it. The ones who are looking for an excuse not to follow it. The ones who would rather serve their desires than submit to Allah (swt). These are the people whom Allah (swt) asks us to think about in the question that He (swt) is asking us in this ayah. Remind yourself that in the context of these ayahs Allah (swt) is not speaking only about the disbelievers but He (swt) is also speaking about those Muslims who fail to enter this Din of Islam completely. Now look how Allah (swt) describes these people who refuse to submit to the Truth when they know it, the ones who refuse to enter into Al-Islam completely.

The question which Allah (swt) asks in this ayah is "**Do they wait except for Allah to come to them in the shadows of clouds and the angels?**". Why are people refusing to enter into the Din of Al-Islam completely? What are they waiting for? Are they waiting for the Day of Judgment that they know will come? The Day of Judgment is a reality that is only waiting to happen. It is only a matter of time. You might think it is a long way away. But remember that your Day of Judgment is your death and death can come at any time. So consider the question that Allah (swt) is asking you in this ayah. If you have failed to enter Islam completely as Allah (swt) has commanded you to, then think about what you will do when the Day of Judgment comes? When you are made to stand before Allah (swt) and He (swt) questions you ask to why you did not follow His (swt)'s command, what then will you say? What excuse will you give? These are the questions that Allah (swt) wants us to ask ourselves in this ayah. When we ask ourselves these questions it should motivate us to fulfill the command of our Rabb and enter into Islam

completely as He (swt) has commanded us to. We should not wait for that tremendous day in which Allah (swt) comes to us in the shadows of the clouds with the angels. May Allah (swt) save us from that day!

So this is a day that we must be terrified of. This is a day that should motivate us to enter into Islam completely. This is the general meaning that we can take from this ayah. We must take this meaning and remind ourselves that the exact description that Allah (swt) is giving in this ayah is *mutashabiyat*. Only Allah (swt) Knows the exact description that He (swt) gives in this ayah. When Allah (swt) says "**Allah to come to them in the shadows of clouds**", we cannot think about how this will happen. The meaning of this description is known only to Allah (swt). Because our minds are limited we cannot comprehend how this will happen. We cannot imagine Allah (swt) to be a body that moves through time and space because we know that Allah (swt) is beyond time and space. As for this ayah, we believe in it, we take the general meaning from it, and we leave the true knowledge of how it will happen to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Then the matter would have been decided.**" Here Allah (swt) reminds us that when the Day of Judgment comes then the matter of where we will end up would already have been decided. At that moment the test is over, and we longer have the option to choose. For every second of your life now you have a choice. But at that moment when your lifespan finishes, when the sand in your hourglass runs out, the choice that you have now will no longer be there. The matter would be decided, and you will either be told to go the Fire or to go the Garden. You will be told to go and stay forever. Can you even begin to imagine what this means? So now in these precious moments of your life, while you still have a choice, make the correct choice. Make the choice to enter into Islam completely. Submit your body, your words and even your heart completely to Allah (swt). Nothing else matters in this entire universe.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And to Allah to the matters return**". Every single matter returns to Allah (swt) for decision. The final decision of where we will end up will be made by Allah (swt) Alone. The matter of judgment for every single person rests with Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone. So do not seek anything from anyone in this world. Remember that the

matter is only with your Lord. No one else can do anything for you. Your whole affair rests with Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the purpose of our lives and He (swt) is the end of our journey. Every matter returns to Allah (swt) including yours and mine. He (swt) is the only One Who will decide where we will end up. So remember that your life is nothing but a journey to Allah (swt). Do you what you can today to the best of your ability to prepare for the end of your journey. Know with certainty that in the end the matter will return to Him(swt)!

سَلۡ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ كَمۡ ءَاتَيۡنَٰهُم مِّنۡ ءَايَةم بَيِّنَةٖۗ وَمَن يُبَدِّلۡ
نِعۡمَةَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جَآءَتۡهُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلۡعِقَابِ ٢١١

212. Ask the children of Israil how many we gave them of the Clear Signs. And whoever changes the Blessing of Allah after it has come to him, then surely Allah is Severe in Punishment.

Let us remind ourselves once again about the context in which these ayahs were revealed. The Islamic State had just been established and Allah (swt) had once again raised a nation of men and women to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Now Allah (swt) was revealing ayahs that were preparing this nation for their important task of carrying this Message to mankind. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) commanded these Muslims to enter into the Din of Islam completely. How can you carry this Message to others when you yourself do not implement this Message fully in your life? Allah (swt) also reminded us not to wait until the Day of Judgment to enter into this Din completely, because on that Day when the angels come through the clouds, then the matter would already have been decided. After that day you cannot do one more good deed or say one more good word. Allah (swt) also told us of all of the Clear Signs that He (swt) has given us so that we can know that this Message is indeed the Truth. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again of the nation that came before us, the nation to whom the task of carrying this Message was given before.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Ask the children of Israil how many we gave them of the Clear Signs**". We know that the children of Israil were given several Signs to prove to them that this Message is indeed the Truth. They saw the staff of Musa (as) turn into a snake, the saw all of the plagues and the curses that fell upon the people of Firaun, they saw the ocean part in two directly in front of their eyes and they even saw the mountain being raised and placed above them. They knew that it was only Allah (swt) Who could produce such miracles and so they knew that the Message that Musa (as) had been sent with was indeed the Truth. Despite this certain knowledge that they had, they still refused to follow this Message. Even though they were certain that this Din was from Allah (swt), they still refused to enter into it completely as they had been commanded to do. Allah (swt) tells us about them here as an example so that we can avoid being like them. Allah (swt) shows us that it is not simply a matter of being shown signs and miracles, a human being can be shown all of the signs and miracles in the world but unless he has the humbleness and the sincerity within himself to submit to Allah (swt), then he will never accept these signs. So in the case of the children of Israil there is a terrible warning for us, we must not think that just because we have such a powerful Miracle like the Quran, our Iman is then safe. We must still strive to humble ourselves and submit ourselves before the Ultimate and the Magnificent. Otherwise we will not perceive all of the signs that are in front of us. The children of Israil had countless signs and they still turned away from this Message. This was only because of their pride and arrogance. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) enable us to always turn to Him (swt) and to submit ourselves completely to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) allow us to see all of the signs and to draw closer to Him (swt) through them!

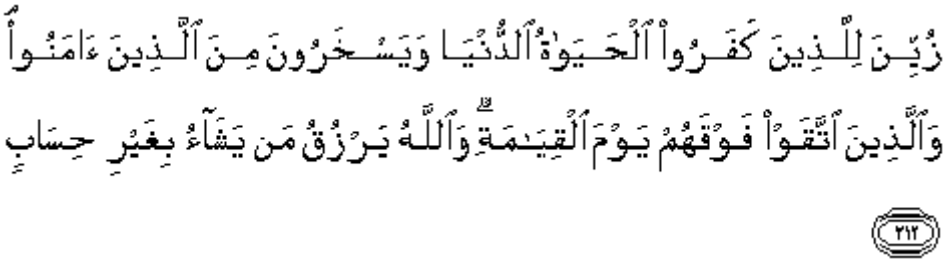
In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And whoever changes the Blessing of Allah after it has come to him**". This is exactly what the children of Israil did. Allah (swt) gave them His (swt)'s Blessing by giving them this Message and giving them the honorable task of carrying this Message to mankind. But what did they do with this Blessing that Allah (swt) had given them? They changed it. They made lawful what Allah (swt) had prohibited and they made prohibited what Allah (swt) made lawful. They told their people that they no longer needed to rule by the Law of Allah (swt) and that the people should be content with the laws of man. They also

told their people that it was no longer a duty to carry this Message to mankind, and they even claimed that they are above the rest of mankind and that the rest of mankind does not deserve the blessings of this Message. They also changed the descriptions of the Final Messenger that was in their Book so that their people and their children would not follow the Prophet (saw). This Message of Islam was the Blessing of Allah (swt) for them and they changed it. What then is their repayment for changing the Message of Allah (swt)?

Allah (swt) says "**then surely Allah is Severe in Punishment**". You know how weak you are and how susceptible your body is to pain. How much discomfort do you feel from the prick of a needle or something hot touching you? So you know how much pain the creatures of this world can inflict upon you. You know how much pain a knife or a disease can cause you. Now think about Allah (swt), how much pain can He (swt) inflict upon you if He (swt) wanted to hurt you? Allah (swt) could inflict pain on you like you had never known before. So when Allah (swt) says that He (swt) is severe in punishment you should realize that this is something that should send chills down your spine. Not even the most frightening horror movie should be as terrifying as this ayah of the Quran. The pain that Allah (swt) can inflict upon those whom Him (swt) is not pleased with is far worse than any pain that any person has suffered in the life of this world. Far, far worse. May Allah (swt) save us!

Are you scared now? If you are not then you should realize that Muslims today are doing exactly the same thing that Allah (swt) criticizes the children of Israil for in this ayah. We also have changed the Blessing of Allah (swt) after it has come to us. We have changed Islam from a complete Din that addresses every aspect of life into a few rituals. Even if it is not you or me that has changed it, if we keep silent while the majority of the Ummah still has the perception that Islam is only a few rituals then we are supporting those who have changed this Din by our silence. So we should all make an effort to correct the understanding of this Ummah towards their Din. By us keeping quiet we are acknowledging that Islam is only a few rituals when in reality it is so much more. So we have to teach the Muslims what Islam truly is. We have to show them how it is a complete ideology that gives guidance in every aspect of life. If we do not make the effort to the best of our ability, then we have to fear the threat that Allah (swt) has given us in this ayah.

Such would be what we would deserve for preventing the Mercy and Justice of this Message from reaching the Muslims and from reaching mankind. May Allah (swt) save us from that terrible punishment! May Allah (swt) give us His (swt)'s enabling grace to teach the Muslims what Islam really is! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to guide all the good and sincere people in this world to the Light of this Message! This Message that Allah (swt) has sent is His (swt)'s Blessing and Favor for all mankind. We ask Him (swt) to make this Message a reality in the world once again. When we see all of the suffering and all of the pain that is happening in the world today, we can see how all of humanity is thirsty for it.


زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا۟ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ
٢١٢

213. The life of this world has been made to seem attractive to those who do kufr, and they mock those who believe. But the ones who have Taqwa will be above them on the Day of Standing. And Allah gives to whom He wills without measure.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the children of Israil. They were the ones who were sent this Message before our Ummah. They were given clear signs and evidences to prove to them that this Message was indeed the Truth. They were sent prophet after prophet and messenger after messenger calling them to return to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). They were told time and time again to enter into this Din completely. Despite all of this, they still turned away from this Message. What is it that could make a people turn away from a Message that is so clear? What is it that could make a people turn away from Allah (swt) when He (swt) is the Ultimate Reality? How could a people still go astray when they had been given such clear warning? How can a people disbelieve after they had been shown such clear signs? How can a people be so ungrateful when Allah (swt) has been so Kind and Generous to them? Allah (swt) answers these questions for us in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says, "**The life of this world has been made to seem attractive to those who do kufr**". It is nothing but the life of this world that turns people astray from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that the life of this world has been made beautiful for those who choose to turn away from this Message. They see the world as attractive and beautiful, and they desire it with a strong desire. The Prophet (saw) has told us how this world is a Garden for the one who does kufr. One of the meanings of this hadith is that the one who does kufr is the one who wants to stay in this world for as long as possible and who wants to enjoy himself in this world to the full extent possible. He does not care about anything except his pleasure. All that he cares about is satisfying his lusts and desires. Such is how much the life of this world has been made to seem attractive and alluring to him.

But is this world worth so much? The Prophet (saw) has also told us that this world is not even worth the wing of a mosquito to Allah (swt). What then is the real value of the life of this world? What can you do with a wing of a mosquito? The human being is presented with a choice on whether to accept or reject this Message that has come to him from Allah (swt), For those who choose to reject this Message and disbelieve in it, Allah (swt) makes the life of this world seem attractive to them. Even though this world is really worthless, Allah (swt) makes it look so beautiful for them. This is part of their punishment for rejecting this Message when they knew that it was the Truth. This then leads them further astray. So they chase after this world, and they forget Allah (swt) and they forget the Message that He (swt) has sent to them. What then will be their condition when they return to Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) save us from this punishment! May Allah (swt) allow us to see the life of this world for the reality that it truly is! A temporary and fleeting existence that is doomed to destruction.

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and they mock those who believe**". Those who choose to follow the life of this world cannot understand those who believe. They are so in love with the pleasures of this world that they cannot understand how anyone would give it up. They consider those who give up the life of this world to be fools. So they mock them and ridicule them wherever they see them. This was exactly what many of the enemies of this Message did to the early Muslims at the time of Prophet (saw). Many of the Sahabah in Makkah,

like Bilal (ra), Ammar bin Yasir (ra) and Suhayb ar-Rumi (ra) were ridiculed and mocked by the Quraysh chiefs because of their beliefs. The Quraysh chiefs thought these noble Sahabah to be fools because they had believed in this Message. But in reality the true fools were themselves. Allah (swt) explains why in the next part of the ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**But the ones who have Taqwa will be above them on the Day of Standing**". The ones who believe are the ones who have Taqwa and they will be above the disbelievers on the Day of Standing. All of mankind will be standing before Allah (swt) on that Day. But on that Day, Allah (swt) will raise in rank some people and He (swt) will bring low others. The true believers who had Taqwa of Allah (swt) like Bilal (ra), Ammar bin Yasir (ra) and Suhayb ar-Rumi (ra) will be raised high in rank. While the Quraysh chiefs who chose the life of this world will be brought low. So as all of mankind stands on a Day that is fifty thousand years long, the Quraysh chiefs will look up and see the noble Sahahbah whom they used to mock. They will see these Sahabah raised high above them. They will see them above them and ready to enter the Garden, while they know that they themselves are doomed for the Fire. Then they will realize the true reality and they will know who were the real fools. Then they will know who it is who deserves to be mocked. They will curse themselves for not following this Message that they knew was the Truth. They will curse themselves for being deceived by the allures of the life of this world. They would wish that they are with the Sahabah whom they see above them. But they know that they had sealed their fate when they chose to reject this Message that had been sent to them by their Creator. They know that they had earned the Wrath of their Creator when they chose to mock His beloved. May Allah (swt) save us from making the same mistake that they did! May Allah (swt) save us from being deceived by this world!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah gives to whom He wills without measure**". Many of the early Muslims were mocked and ridiculed because they were poor. They chose to spend all of their time in worship and in gaining knowledge about this Din. They did not go chasing after the life of this world. They also gave away all of their wealth in the cause of Allah (swt). So they were left without much of the wealth and glitter of this world. This was another reason why the Quraysh chiefs used to mock at them. The ones who rejected this

Message for the life of this world could not understand how anyone would ever give up the material things of this world. For them the accumulation of material goods was the purpose of their existence. So they could not understand how anyone would give it up? But the believers gave away much of their material possessions and their wealth. They gave it away only hoping for the reward from Allah (swt) for it. This was because they knew Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who gives without measure, and for those who give their wealth hoping for reward from Allah (swt), they will be provided for by the One Who gives without measure. Allah (swt) will give them without measure both in this life and the next. In this world, Allah (swt) will give them the sweetness of Iman in their hearts and He (swt) will give them the tranquility and the serenity of Knowing Him (swt). Allah (swt) will also provide for their needs and the needs of their families. Allah (swt) may not give them riches but He (swt) will give them enough to get by. Allah (swt) will give them contentment in whatever they have of this world, and He (swt) will give them the love of mankind. Allah (swt) will also give victory for their nation and success for their cause. All of this is only in the life of this world, but what Allah (swt) will give them in the Hereafter is much more and is far better to what they have been given in this world. What will Allah (swt) give them in the Hereafter? Allah (swt) will allow them to have an easy death, to have peace and tranquility in the grave, to be saved from the terrors of the Last Day, to be given a quick reckoning, to be saved from the Fire, to be admitted into Gardens of Bliss, to have the most delicious foods therein and the sweetest of drinks, to have the touch of companions pure and gentle, but best of all is to the gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the chance to behold Allah (swt). Can anything be better than this? The quantity of such gifts cannot even be measured, and that is why Allah (swt) is the One Who gives without measure to whom He (swt) wills. May we be among those whom Allah (swt) wills to give all of this for!

So what is it that made Bilal (ra), Ammar bin Yasir (ra) and Suhayb ar-Rumi (ra) worthy of these great gifts? They received these great gifts because they were not deceived by the life of this world. They chose Allah (swt) instead of the life of this world. They realized the reality of this worldly life and how it pales when compared to the Reality of Allah (swt). They realized how everything that they had was only from Allah (swt) and so they had an obligation to show

gratitude to Him (swt) by serving Him (swt). They realized how Allah (swt) was the Perfect One and so only He (swt) deserved all of the worship and servitude. May Allah (swt) allow us to come this realization as well! May Allah (swt) guide us along their path! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to make the choice that they did! May Allah (swt) save us from the temptations of this world!

كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ
مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا
ٱخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ
فَهَدَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى
مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

214. Mankind was once one nation, so Allah raised among them prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth so that He may judge between mankind wherein they differed. And only the ones who were given it (the Book) differed concerning it, even after the Clear Signs had come to them. So Allah by His Leave guided the ones who believed to the Truth in what they (the disbelievers) had differed. And Allah guides whom He will to the Straight Path.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us how the life of this world had lead many among mankind astray. The only ones who were not tempted away by the life of this world were those few sincere believers whom He (swt) had guided. These were those who chose Allah (swt) over the glitter of the life of this world. Allah (swt) told us how they would be raised above the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment. In the life of this world, the disbelievers used to mock at them but on the Day of Judgment, Allah (swt) will raise the believers above the disbelievers and everyone will know who are the winners and who are the losers. Now a question to ask ourselves

is that is this how mankind always was? Was mankind always divided into this group of believers and disbelievers? In this ayah, Allah (swt) answers this question. In this one ayah, Allah (swt) gives us the history of mankind and He (swt) shows us how we have found ourselves today in this battle between Iman and kufr.

Allah (swt) begins this lesson of history by telling us that in the beginning "**Mankind was once one nation**". We know that the first human being was Adam (as) and he (as) was a righteous prophet who knew that the purpose of existence was the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Adam (as) taught his children this purpose of existence, and they remained on the guidance that he (as) gave them for generations. It was at this time that mankind was one nation. Mankind was one family of believers. All of them knew that what that mattered in life was the worship and servitude of Allah (swt) and so they dedicated their lives to this purpose. Instead of chasing after this world, the family of Adam (as) spent their hours in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Remembering Allah (swt) and glorifying Him (swt) in the hours of the morning and the evening. It was a society that did not see the moral corruption and degradation that we see in the world today. They knew that Allah (swt) was the purpose of their existence and so they abided themselves by the Law of Allah (swt) both inwardly and outwardly. This brought peace and tranquility to each of their individual lives and their collective life as a family and a society.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**so Allah raised among them prophets as bearers of good news and as warners**". Now why would Allah (swt) send prophets if mankind was already one nation that had already been guided? This part of the ayah may lead to confusion among some people who have this question. But those who are familiar with the style of the Quran can easily see the meaning here. You see when Allah (swt) narrates history for us, He (swt) does not tell us each and every single event. Rather Allah (swt) focuses on the events that are important and He (swt) leaves out those events that can be derived from context. So we can tell from the context of these ayahs that the reason why Allah (swt) sent these prophets and messengers was because mankind had become divided after they had once been united, and mankind had disbelieved after they had once believed. So even though Allah (swt) does not explicitly tell us that mankind differed and divided after they had once been one nation, we can

derive this fact from the context of the other parts of the ayah. This style is part of the Miracle of the Quran, and it is how Allah (swt) can put so much meaning into only a few words.

So far in our history lesson we have learned that mankind was once one community of believers submitting themselves to Allah (swt). But then they began to disbelieve and differ. They disbelieved in the total Oneness and absolute Sovereignty of Allah (swt) and they divided amongst themselves into various sects and nations. Their father Adam (as) had taught them to be united and worship Allah (swt) Alone, but they had allow themselves to be lead astray by Shaitan. So Allah (swt) send prophets and messenger to guide them back to Him (swt). These prophets came with good news for those who would believe in them and they came with warning for those who would choose to disbelieve. The good news is the peace and tranquility, and the Mercy and Justice that comes from this Message when it is implemented in the life of this world, and it is the Garden and Pleasure of Allah (swt) in the next world. The warning is the chaos and the injustice, the misery and the suffering, the confusion and the doubt that comes from turning away from this Message in this world and the Fire and being denied from Allah (swt) in the next world. This was what the prophets came with in order to call the people back to Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and He sent down with them the Book with the Truth so that He may judge between mankind wherein they differed**". So not only were the prophets and messengers sent as bearers of good news and givers of warning, but they were also sent with the Book. The Book has the Truth in it. The Truth in terms of beliefs where it tells the people which beliefs are true and which are false and the Truth in terms of actions where it tells them which actions are pleasing to Allah (swt) and which are not. The purpose of Allah (swt) sending the Book was so that with it He (swt) may judge between mankind concerning wherein they differ. Human beings naturally have disputes and conflicts. The purpose of a government and the purpose of a system of courts is to resolve these conflicts and to take care of the affairs of the society. So one of the reasons why Allah (swt) has sent down this Book is so that He (swt) may Judge between mankind and so that He (swt) may resolve their disputes and conflicts through His (swt)'s Book. The Quran is just as much a legal book on the basis of which a government and a system of courts can be formed as it is a book of admonition and spirituality. It has detailed rules

on how an economic system is to be formed that can be used to distribute the wealth of a nation. It also has laws on to how a social system can be formed to regulate the interactions of the people in the society. An entire society can be formed based on the principles established in this Book. We did once and we can do it again. How can people know ayahs such as these and still say that Islam is not political in nature? Allah (swt) is clearly telling us here that one of the reasons why He (swt) send down this Book is so that He (swt) may judge and rule mankind. So from this part of the ayah we can see that there were two purposes to Allah (swt) sending down the Book. One reason was to return mankind to the Truth after they had divided and disbelieved, and another reason was so that He (swt) may Judge between the people and resolve all of their conflicts and disputations. So the Quran today can be used to unify our Ummah and it can be the foundation upon which the systems of the Islamic State are formed. If only the Muslims would look at the Quran today in this way. If only the Muslims would look for guidance sincerely from their Creator and not from some saint, or imam, or king.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And only the ones who were given it (the Book) differed concerning it, even after the Clear Signs had come to them**". So Allah (swt) sent the Book with which to guide mankind to Him (swt). The word "Book" here could refer to any of the Books that were given to any of the previous nations. The Message in all of these Books was the same; all of the Books were only calling mankind to return to the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that even those who were given the Book began to differ among themselves. Allah (swt) tells us that they differed even after the Clear Signs had already come to them. They knew for certain that this Book was from Allah (swt). But they disbelieved in it and they differed concerning it even after they had been given the Clear Signs. Once again this shows us the evil nature of the human being. He has been a given a Book from Allah (swt) that reminds him of the reason why he was created. He has been shown Clear Signs so that he may know that this Message is indeed the Truth. But still he chooses to turn away from it. This shows us the absolute Love and Mercy of Allah (swt) and the evil and the ingratitude of the human being. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them! May Allah (swt) remind us how much of a Mercy this Quran is!

Now did everyone who had been given the Book choose to disbelieve in it? No, Allah (swt) tells us in the next part of the ayah how there were some sincere believers in this Message. Allah (swt) says "**So Allah by His Leave guided the ones who believed to the Truth in what they (the disbelievers) had differed**". There were some who had chosen to believe in this Message. They chose to be sincere and humble before Allah (swt). They had chose Allah (swt) over the life of this world. Allah (swt) rewarded such people for their choice by giving them guidance. The guidance from Allah (swt) that guides them to the Truth. The Truth about which the rest of mankind had differed and disagreed on. This is the reward that Allah (swt) gives for those who choose to be sincere and those who choose to submit to Him (swt). This is the gift of guidance from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make us among the sincere! May Allah (swt) grant us the gift of guidance!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah guides whom He will to the Straight Path**". Guidance comes from only Allah (swt). We cannot be true believers only by our choice. The only choice that we have is to seek the guidance from Allah (swt) and beg of Him (swt) to give it to us. We ourselves cannot guide ourselves but we need Allah (swt) to guide us. But we must always believe that if we strive hard to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure, if we strive to dedicate our entire lives to Him (swt), then we have a hope that Allah (swt) will guide us. Although the guidance comes from Allah (swt), remember that you still have a responsibility to seek that guidance from Him (swt) by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). The more that you sincerely do to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt), Insha Allah the more that He (swt) will guide you. Remember that at the end of the day, as Allah (swt) tells in this ayah, Allah (swt) will only guide those whom He (swt) pleases. So in order to receive this guidance we must make ourselves among those Allah (swt) is pleased with. Only then will Allah (swt) guide us. We must try our best to be worthy of that guidance, and we beg and plead to Allah (swt) to grant it to us.

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how mankind truly is one nation. Even though we are so divided today, this is not how we were meant to be. We were meant to be one nation united under one flag and serving one purpose. This flag is the black and white flag that bears the Kalimah. This purpose is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). This is how we

once were and this is how we must strive to be once again. May Allah (swt) make it so! May Allah (swt) make the flag of Islam spread to every corner of this world as He (swt) promised it would! May Allah (swt) unite mankind as one nation once again!

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْجَنَّةَ
وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلِكُم ۖ مَّسَّتْهُمُ ٱلْبَأْسَآءُ وَٱلضَّرَّآءُ
وَزُلْزِلُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ ٱلرَّسُولُ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ ٱللَّهِ ۗ أَلَآ
إِنَّ نَصْرَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

215. Or do you think that you will enter the Garden while there has not come to you the like of which came to those before you? They were afflicted with deprivation and hardships and were so shaken until even the Messenger and those who believed with him said "When will the Help of Allah come?" Now, surely the Help of Allah is near.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to prepare the Muslim Ummah for carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. We have seen how in the previous ayahs Allah (swt) reminded the Muslims that the effort to carry this Message to mankind was a struggle and a battle that had gone on seen the beginning of time. On the one hand there were the sincere believers who submitted themselves to Allah (swt). They dedicated themselves to Allah (swt) and to carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. These were those whom Allah (swt) had guided to Him (swt). On the other hand were those who had chosen to reject this Message. These were those for whom the life of this world had been made beautiful. So they turned away from Allah (swt) to chase after the material and ephemeral pleasures of this world. This is the conflict for which Allah (swt) was preparing the Muslim Ummah in these ayahs. Now it is true that the sincere believers have Allah (swt) on their side, but does this mean that the battle will be easy for them? Can they expect to spend the entire day in the masjid making Dua to Allah (swt) to give them victory and not make any effort of their own? Allah (swt) answers such questions in this ayah.

Allah (swt) answers these questions by asking us a question. Allah (swt) asks us "**Or do you think that you will enter the Garden while there has not come to you the like of which came to those before you?**". We as human beings always need to remind ourselves that we are here on this earth as part of a test. This test is the purpose of our existence. Every moment of our lives we are being tested. At every moment of our lives Allah (swt) is recording if we are doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) or if we are doing the actions that are pleasing to our own lower selves. The level of this test is based on the rank of the one being tested. No one is tested more than the messengers of Allah (swt). They are the highest in rank so their test is the most severe. After the prophets and messengers it is those who choose to carry this Message to mankind who are tested the most severely. This is because like the prophets, the dawah carriers are those who the closest to Allah (swt). Because the messengers and the dawah carriers are close to Allah (swt) He (swt) wants to test them more. Because the more that Allah (swt) tests them the more that He (swt) can love them when they strive and show patience for Him (swt). While those who are distant from Allah (swt) are those who have been given easy and comfortable lives. They enjoy their lives and rarely think about their Lord. How can Allah (swt) love such a people?

So we see that it is based on our performance on this test that we will gain the Love, the Pleasure and the Mercy of Allah (swt), and it is only with the Mercy of Allah (swt) that we can enter the Garden. If Allah (swt) is pleased with us then He (swt) will give us His (swt)'s Mercy and it is only with His (swt)'s Mercy that any of us can enter the garden. So our good performance on this test does not guarantee us the Garden, rather it only gives us a chance to gain the Mercy of Allah (swt) and only through the Mercy of Allah (swt) can we gain the Garden. No matter how much patience we have, and no matter how much we strive, our actions alone do not even qualify us for a moment in the Garden. So Allah (swt) asks the believers in this ayah if they hope to enter the Garden without going through any kind of test at all. Allah (swt) reminds them that this life is indeed a test, and He (swt) reminds them how severely those who carried this Message in the past were tested. Allah (swt) thus changes their entire outlook towards this life. This life is nothing but a quest for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The tests are but parts of this quest.

If you have any doubts about the nature of this life you only have to look to those who came before you. Those who carried this Message before the Ummah of the Prophet (saw) were severely tested and Allah (swt) reminds us of this fact in this ayah. Allah (swt) says "**They were afflicted with deprivation and hardships**". Although we translated the words that Allah (swt) uses in this ayah to describe the trials that they went through as "**deprivation and hardships**" in reality the original Arabic words give a far deeper meaning. These words give meanings of misery, extreme poverty, hardships, sufferings, illness, and deprivation. However much a human being can suffer because of physical pain and emotional pain as well being deprived of food, drink, shelter and clothing, that is how much the past nations suffered when they carried this Message to mankind. You cannot even imagine the level of pain that they went through! This is how severely those before us were tested. May Allah (swt) save us from trials that are so great! May Allah (swt) not lay upon us a burden like He (swt) laid on those before us!

How great were these trials that the dawah carriers of the past had to go through? How much did they suffer? Up to what limited were they tested? Allah (swt) describes their situation by telling us how they "**were so shaken until even the Messenger and those who believed with him said "When will the Help of Allah come?"** ". The trials were so severe that it shook them as if they were being shaken by an earthquake. They were so shaken by these trials that even the Messenger of Allah (swt) and those sincere believers who were with him began to cry for the Help of Allah (swt) to come. This was how severe and how trying these trials were. Can you even imagine how difficult it must have been? Here is a man who is the Messenger of Allah (swt), a man whom Allah (swt) spoke with. But even he was put through such great trials that even he cried out for the Help of Allah (swt) to come. This shows how he and the believers with him were pushed to the limit. But it also shows us that Allah (swt) loves them and that He (swt) has kept a great reward in store for them for their patience. The reason why Allah (swt) gave them such a great trial is because He (swt) wants to reward them greatly. These trials were great indeed. They were so great that even the messenger himself was questioning as to when the Help of Allah would come. But the greatness of the trial also shows the greatness of the reward that awaited them.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Now, surely the Help of Allah is near**". Just when you think when there is no more hope left. Just when you think that the believers have lost and the forces of kufr have won. Just when you think that the Muslims will never gain victory. Just when you think that the suffering and the misery of the Muslims cannot get any worse. Just when you think that this dawah will never be successful and that Islam will never return. Just when you would think that all hope is lost. This is when the Help of Allah (swt) is near. Your Lord will test you to the limit, and if you can have patience for just one moment more, then you will find the Help of Allah (swt). The Help of Allah (swt) is victory.

This was the point that the Messenger and the believers whom Allah (swt) had described in the previous ayah were at. This was how desperate their situation had become. That is when Allah (swt) says "**Now, surely the Help of Allah is near**". So never give up hope. The Help of Allah (swt) is coming. The nations who were carrying this dawah before you suffered in ways that you cannot even imagine. So whatever difficulty that you are going through now, know that it is nothing like what they went through and remember that it is part of the test that Allah (swt) has prepared for you. This test is only so that Allah (swt) may raise your rank and bring you closer to Him (swt). So always keep your trust and your hope on Allah (swt) and always repeat to yourself this part of the ayah "**Now, surely the Help of Allah is near**". May the Help of Allah (swt) come soon! May Allah (swt) give this Ummah victory!

Now it is important to remember that this ayah does not give the meaning that the life of the dawah carrier is filled with suffering. Nor does it give the meaning that any of us will have to face trials as those that Allah (swt) is describing in this ayah. We should always pray to our Lord to keep us safe from such trials. The true believer, the dawah carrier, in fact has the most content and the most peaceful of lives. There are many great scholars whom when their students visited them in prison they would find them smiling and in complete peace. This would be so even though these great scholars were being tortured or severely beaten. So this ayah does not give the meaning that the life of the believer is filled with suffering. Rather it only serves to remind us that we are all tested. Some of us more than others. Thus be patient with all that befalls you. Realize that with Allah (swt) you can overcome any trial and His (swt) Help is always near.

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ ۖ قُلْ مَآ أَنفَقْتُم
مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ۗ
وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

216. They ask you what they can spend. Say "Whatever you spend from good, it should be for parents, for near relatives, for orphans, for the Miskeen, and for the travelers. And whatever you do from good, surely Allah Knows it well".

In the previous ayahs, we saw Allah (swt) preparing the Muslim Ummah for carrying this Message to mankind. Allah (swt) reminded them how the effort to carry this Message to mankind was a struggle that had existed since the dawn of time. It was for this purpose that Allah (swt) had sent all of the prophets and messengers. Allah (swt) also reminded the Muslims how they would have be patient and steadfast because the role of carrying this Message required the nation that bears this responsibility to go through severe test and trials. Only those who demonstrate patience have a chance of their actions being accepted by Allah (swt). Only those who show patience have a hope of getting the Help of Allah (swt). Not only is it required to show patience and steadfastness through trials and difficulties, but the mission of carrying this Message also requires sacrifice. One of these sacrifices was that of wealth and resources. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) teaches us how we should be willing to part with our wealth if we are among those who would carry this Message to mankind. At the time of the Prophet (saw), many of the Muslims were ready and willing to sacrifice their wealth to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt), but they were unsure as to who was the most deserving of their wealth. They wanted to give their money in the way of Allah (swt) but they were not sure who to give it to. Allah (swt) addresses their doubts in this ayah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**They ask you what they can spend**". Once again we can see how the Quran is not a static book, but it responds to the questions and situations that arose in the lives of the Muslims. This fact that the Quran is dynamic is a further proof of it's Miracle because not only is at it the height of Arabic but it is Arabic that came in

response to the environment. To compose a Quran like this on the fly, and in response to the questions put forth by the people would be impossible for any human writer to accomplish, let along for someone illiterate like the Prophet (saw). So in this part of the ayah, we see Allah (swt) Himself responds to the questions of the Muslims when they asked what they could spend. Look how beautiful also is the attitude of the early Muslims; they were looking to spend their hard earned wealth. Muslims today grip their wealth and they hold on to it thinking that it is their only savior. While the early Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) were asking the Prophet (saw) how to spend their wealth. What will it take to return our thinking and behavior to that of the early Muslims?

Allah (swt) responds to the questions of the early Muslims by commanding the Prophet (saw) to "**Say "Whatever you spend from good**". Before we look at whom Allah (swt) has commanded us to spend on, notice that Allah (swt) refers to spending from "the good". Thus the command to spend is from "the good". So the spending here is not restricted to spending money, but it is anything that you can spend from the "good". The "good" is what you have that you give up sincerely to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This could be your time, your effort, your food, your home, or your transportation. All that we give up to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is that which is good.

Then Allah (swt) lists the groups of people on whom we must spend. Allah (swt) says "**it should be for parents, for near relatives, for orphans, for the Miskeen, and for the travelers**". We covered the importance of spending on each of these categories of people in our tafsir of ayah 178 of this Surah. Please refer to that ayah if you would like to be reminded of why it is so important to spend on these groups of people. A question to ask ourselves here is that why does not Allah (swt) tell us to spend on dawah and jihad? If dawah and jihad are so important then why does Allah (swt) not mention them here? Why does Allah (swt) mention these categories of people first? Is not the mission of this Ummah to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind? So should dawah and jihad have priority when it comes to spending for the way of Allah (swt)? We believe the answer to these questions is that it is most important to take care of those need in our own society first. Muslims care for all mankind but we should first make sure

that our own family and our own community is taken care of before we try to help others. So first we should spend on our families, then we should spend on those who are most deprived and most in need in our own community. Once these people have been taken care of then we can spend our wealth on the effort of dawah and jihad in carrying this Message to mankind. As always, Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And whatever you do from good, surely Allah Knows it well**". Here Allah (swt) once again reiterates that He (swt) Knows well even the smallest of good deeds that we do. So we must never belittle any good deed. Even if all the charity that we can give is to smile in the face of our brother, then that is what we must do. The Knowledge of Allah (swt) when it comes to our deeds is even beyond our comprehension. If we do even the smallest of good deeds, but we keep our intention for Allah (swt) in that deed then we can hope for Allah (swt). We can hope for a reward from Him (swt) for even the smallest of good deeds that we do. As long as your intention was pure, Allah (swt) will reward you for even the smallest of deeds that you did for Him (swt). So spend from everything that you have for your Creator. Do not only spend from your money but also spend from the moments of your life. Spend for your parents, spend for your family, spend for the poor, spend on all that is pleasing to your Lord. Realize that your Lord knows well all that you spend for Him (swt). Realize that this life is nothing but spending more and more of what you have for Him (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us to spend from all that is good like the early Muslims did! May Allah (swt) allow us to do as many good deeds as possible, small and big, to seek His (swt) Pleasure and may we do them realizing that He (swt) Knows about them well!

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تَكْرَهُوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تُحِبُّوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

217. Prescribed for you is fighting although it is disliked by you. But it may be that you hate a thing and it is good for you and that you like a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows while you do not know.

We see in this ayah how Allah (swt) continues to prepare the Muslims for their role of carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) reminded the Muslims how it was necessary to spend from their wealth. They should spend on their family, and their relatives and those in need. Allah (swt) also reminded them how He (swt) Knows whatever they spend of good and He (swt) Knows every good action that they do. But this task of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind not only requires the sacrifice of wealth and resources but it also requires fighting and warfare. It is to this aspect of carrying the Message to mankind that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Prescribed for you is fighting**". Now that the Islamic State had been established, Allah (swt) obligated fighting for the Muslim community. The fighting that Allah (swt) obligates has only two purposes. Either to defend the Muslims or to remove the obstacles that prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. These are the only two reasons where it is permissible to fight. Our scholars also maintain that one of the preconditions for the obligation of fighting is the existence of the Islamic State and a Khalifah who rules over it. The Khalifah is the only one who can wage jihad and send the Muslim armies out for war. This was the way of the Prophet (saw) and the early companions. They never fought when the Islamic State was not present. Allah (swt) Knows best.

So for us today jihad is an obligation but that obligation necessitates the presence of the Islamic State. So the first obligation is to establish the Islamic State with a Khalifah who rules over it following only the Book of Allah (swt) and the Sunnah of His (swt)'s Messenger (saw). Where in

the Muslim world today does such a State exist? If you were to study the political structure of the government of those countries today who claim to be “Islamic States” you will see that they do not even come close to what the Islamic State should be. All of them violate the very first principle of the Islamic State in that they give sovereignty to other than Allah (swt). This false god could be a king or a president or a parliament or a “shura” council. None of these are sanctioned in the governmental structure of the Islamic State, instead they are all systems of government that have been borrowed from the West. Thus what we find in the Muslim world are Western and kufr governments that have Islam sprinkled here and there so as to fool the ignorant masses. But in reality there is no Islamic State today. So jihad is still an obligation for the Muslims today, to save our brethren who are oppressed and whose home is occupied by the enemies of this Message, just as it is an obligation to bring down the governments that dare to rule by other than the Law of Allah (swt) and who prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching their people. But to accomplish this obligation we first have to work to restore the Islamic State, and so that is the more pressing obligation. As always Allah (swt) Knows best.

Allah (swt) then says “**although it is disliked by you**”. The vast majority of humans do not like fighting in battle. You have to leave the comfort and safety of your home, you have to part with your family whom you love, you often have to travel and make a journey to an unknown land. You also have to leave your business, your trade or whatever obligation that you may have at home. You also have to make great financial sacrifices. When the Islamic State was first formed, the Muslim soldiers paid for their own weapons, armor and mount. All of this is required only at the beginning, then when you are actually fighting you have to exert a great amount of effort when you are in combat with your enemy. You have to exert effort to gain strength to overpower your enemy just as you must exert effort to gain the courage to face your enemy and to stand your ground while you are in combat. You know that there is a very good possibility of becoming injured in battle, of feeling pain, or losing limbs, of being taken prisoner and being tortured, and even of death. The Muslim soldier who goes out into battle has to deal with all of these. So most humans, including you and me, do not like fighting. Allah (swt) acknowledges this fact in this ayah when He (swt) says about fighting that “**it is disliked by you**”.

However in the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**But it may be that you hate a thing and it is good for you and that you like a thing and it is bad for you**". We as human beings always need to remind ourselves how limited our knowledge is. We only know about the world what we can sense, we do not know anymore beyond that. Take the example of a pen, just by looking at that pen can you tell whether it is a good object or an evil object? You cannot, you only know that it can be used for both good and evil, but you yourself cannot say whether that object is good or evil. All that you really know about that pen is it's shape and color. The same can be said about anything that we sense in the universe. All that we can sense are the physical qualities of it. We cannot say if it is good or evil. So we as humans should not be the ones to judge and say what is good and what is evil. This is because we cannot sense or perceive the good of something just like we cannot sense or perceive the evil of a thing. All that we can sense are colors and shapes, noises and smells. So how do we know what is good and what is evil? We do not, rather only the Creator of good and evil Knows what is good and Knows what is evil. Good then is what Allah (swt) says is good and evil is what Allah (swt) says is evil. So we should submit ourselves to the fact that good is what Allah (swt) says is good and evil is what Allah (swt) says is evil. This realization is part of our submission to our Creator.

Take fighting for example. You probably don't like fighting, not only for the reasons cited above but also you might think why should we kill other human beings. You do not like the idea of killing another human being. But now suppose that human killed your entire family. Supposing he brutally tortured your father or brother or son and he raped and ravaged your mother or sister or wife or daughter. Would you still be hesitant about killing him after you can see the great evil that he has done? Probably not. This shows how your hesitation to fight is only an emotion that you have. But emotions can change based on the circumstance and the person. So you do not have the right to say whether fighting and killing is good and bad. You cannot sense the good or bad in that action just like you could not sense the good or bad in the pen. Only Allah (swt), the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and the All-Knowing Knows what is good and bad. So what Allah (swt) tells us in the Quran and Sunnah as good is what is good and what Allah (swt) tells us in the Quran as bad is what is bad. You should also realize that the ones whom Allah (swt) is asking

you to fight have done a far greater evil than what we described above. They are preventing the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. Can you even imagine a greater evil than that? You love Allah (swt) the most so you should consider any injustice that is done against Him (swt) to be even worse than any injustice that is done to your own family. These people have done injustice to Allah (swt) by preventing His (swt)'s Message from reaching mankind and by preventing His (swt)'s Law from being implemented in the land.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Knows while you do not know**". This is only to remind us how limited our knowledge is. The problem is that we as humans have a disease of pride and arrogance. We know so little but we think we know a lot. We pass judgments and have opinions on issues about which we know nothing. When the Creator and Sustainer and the Lord and Master of the universe tells you that fighting is good for you, who are you then to come and say that is not good. How can you come and say that there is no fighting and no jihad in Islam when there are ayahs such as these in the Book of Allah (swt)? For you to say that is the height of arrogance and rebellion against Allah (swt) and we can only advice to have fear of Allah (swt). Remind yourself of the Fire and remind yourself how Allah (swt) will punish those whom He (swt) is displeased with. We seek refuge in Allah (swt) from Him (swt) ever being displeased with us. Allah (swt) tells us clearly in this ayah that our knowledge is nothing and that it is He (swt) Who has all the Knowledge. So we should humbly submit to whatever command Allah (swt) gives us whether it is to our liking or not. We must always remember that it is the human who must submit to the Divine and not the Divine to the human. Think about who you are and think about Who Allah (swt) IS and then you will realize who should be the servant and who should be the Master.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah that we should be satisfied with whatever situation Allah (swt) places us in life. We do not know what is good for us, so Allah (swt) may give us some difficulty or trial in this world or He (swt) may hold something back that we desire. If that happens then we should remember that there might be some good in that for us. We may not see that good or realize that good at that moment but Allah (swt) Knows that good and that is why He (swt) gave us that particular trial or difficulty. Thus we should be patient through all of the

adversities that we face in life. We should remember what Allah (swt) has told us in this ayah and we should submit completely to Him (swt), If we are sincere to Allah (swt) then we must remember that there is good in everything that happens to us. Allah (swt) Knows better than us and we submit completely to Him (swt).

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ
وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌۢ بِهِۦ وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِۦ مِنْهُ
أَكْبَرُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ ٱسْتَطَٰعُوا۟ ۚ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ
عَن دِينِهِۦ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَٰلُهُمْ
فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾

218. They ask you about the Sacred Month and fighting in it, Say "Fighting in it is a great sin, but to block (people) from the Path of Allah and to do kufr to Him, and (to block people) from the Masjid Al-Haram, and to drive out it's people from it is a greater sin with Allah, and Fitna is worse than killing. And they will not stop fighting against you until they turn you away from your Din. And whoever from you turns away from his Din and then he dies as a disbeliever, these are the ones whose works are ruined in this life and the Hereafter. These are the companions of the Fire and they will abide therein forever.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) obligated the Muslims to fight in His (swt)'s way. They had to fight to remove the obstacles that were preventing the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. Allah (swt) told them that they had to fight even though they disliked fighting and Allah (swt) reminded them that He (swt) Knows and they do not know. So as we look back on the history of the Islamic State in these ayahs, we saw first how jihad had become permitted after it was once forbidden and now it had even become an obligation. When these

ayahs were revealed, the armies of Allah (swt) marched forth against the enemies of this Message. Since the Islamic State had been established, fighting had been prescribed by Allah (swt) to remove the obstacles to this Message.

Now when this ayah was revealed the worst of enemies for the Islamic State at that period was the powerful tribe of Quraysh. They were the Prophet (saw)'s own tribe and they rejected him (saw) even when they were certain that he (saw) was the Messenger of Allah (swt). They were also the most powerful of tribes in the Arabian peninsula and they were also the tribe that benefited the most from the status quo. So they were the ones who were the most opposed to the Message of Allah (swt) because they knew that it would bring a complete revolution in their land. The Prophet (saw) himself also knew that the Quraysh were the State's worst enemy and so he (saw) would send out raiding parties to attack their trading caravans. The Prophet (saw) wanted to damage their economic infrastructure so that they could be weakened and thus not pose a threat to the dawah. One of these raiding parties was lead by a Sahabi by the name of Abdullah bin Jash. Now it so happened that Abdullah's raiding party intercepted one of the trading caravans belonging to Quraysh. They attacked the caravan, killing one of it's guards and taking the others as prisoners. They returned with the caravan and their prisoners back to Madinah. However what Abdullah and his companions had failed to realize was that the night on which they had attacked the caravan was a night of the Sacred Month of Rajab during which fighting and killing was prohibited. So by mistake the Muslims had initiated a conflict and spilt blood during a month in which fighting and killing was forbidden. These Muslims had accidentally violated the sanctity of the sacred month. Now the enemies of Islam, including the Quraysh and the Jews, used this opportunity to launch a propaganda campaign against the Muslims. They told everyone how the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims had violated the sanctity of the Sacred Months. They ignored the fact that this incident had happened by mistake and that it was only a few Muslims who had actually done it. The ignored the fact that the majority of the Muslims were not involved in this incident and they did not even support what had been done. They ignored the fact that the Prophet (saw) himself was displeased with the actions of Abdullah and that he (saw) refused to take the booty from the caravan that the Abdullah's raiding party had captured. The enemies of

this Message did not care about all of this, they were only looking for an excuse to attack Islam. They only wanted to portray Islam in a negative light so that they can drive as many people away from it as they could. So they ignored everything else and they focused only on the fact that the Muslims had violated the sanctity of the sacred month by shedding blood in it. They kept pressing this point and they made sure the whole world heard it. This was a very difficult episode for all of the Muslims; they were the victims of a vicious propaganda campaign that turned all of the Arabs against them. Everyone was talking about how the Muslims had violated the sanctity of the sacred months. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**They ask you about the Sacred Month and fighting in it**". Many Muslims were unsure what to do in the situation that they had found themselves in it. They did not know how to react to the propaganda and the lies that were coming from the enemies of Islam as a result of this incident. They wondered if what Abdullah bin Jash and his companions had done was as evil as how the enemies of this Message made it out to be. So they came to the Prophet (saw) and they addressed their concerns to him (saw). Then Allah (swt) revealed this ayah in response to their inquires.

Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to "**Say "Fighting in it is a great sin**". First Allah (swt) acknowledges that fighting in the Sacred Month is a great sin. It was Allah (swt) Who had made the months sacred, and anyone who violates the Sacred Months violates what Allah (swt) had made sacred. So we see that Allah (swt) does not absolve Abdullah bin Jash and his companions completely. Allah (swt) shows them how what they had done was indeed a wrong action, and Allah (swt) lets them know that they should have been more careful and made sure that it was not the Sacred Month of Rajab before they initiated any fighting.

However in the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) exposes the reality of the situation and He (swt) shows us how the evil ones really were. Allah (swt) says "**but to block (people) from the Path of Allah and to do kufr to Him, and (to block people) from the Masjid Al-Haram, and to drive out its people from it, is a greater sin with Allah, and Fitna is worse than killing**". This was what the Quraysh chiefs had done. They had done all of this. So how dare they question the Muslims for committing an impious action when they had done the worst of actions?

They had blocked people from the Path of Allah (swt) by preventing this Message from reaching the people. They had made all sorts of lies and fabrications about this Message so that the people thought that this Message was evil without realizing that it was from Allah (swt). They had also made *kufr* to Allah (swt). Recall how we said that this word means "to cover". They had covered the Truth of this Message when they knew that it was the Truth. They had also done kufr by covering all of the favors and blessings that Allah (swt) had bestowed on them. They also blocked the Muslims from coming to the Masjid Al-Haram for Hajj and Umrah. How evil are a people who would block the true worshippers of Allah (swt) from even coming to the House of Allah (swt)? They had also driven the Prophet (saw) and the Muhajiroon out of Makkah. They also caused great Fitna by forcing many Muslims to abandon their Din through oppression, torture and persecution. This Fitna was far worse than killing because they were driving people away from Allah (swt), What could be a greater evil than turning people away from Allah (swt)? So even though Abdullah bin Jash and his companions had done wrong by fighting in the sacred months, the Quraysh had done much greater wrong and so they had no right whatsoever to criticize the Muslims in any way.

Allah (swt) then says "**And they will not stop fighting against you until they turn you away from your Din**". Here Allah (swt) exposes the true nature of the enemies of this Message. Not only have they turned away from this Message themselves, but they want to drive as many people as they can away from it as well. They know that this Message is a threat to their way of life. They have chosen to be a slave of their desires instead of being a slave of Allah (swt). They know that if this Message gains supremacy and the Law of Allah (swt) is established in the land, then they would no longer be able to live a life of serving their desires and exploiting the people. The Islamic State would establish a society in which all of their avenues to satisfy their lusts and desires have been closed off as well as one that establishes fairness and justice for all people. This is what they want to prevent at all costs because they want a society in which they can satisfy all of their lusts without any limits and they can exploit all of the people. They want a society in which they can sleep with their neighbor's wife and they can take exuberant amounts of interest from the people. The only way of life that will outlaw these evil practices is this Din of

Islam. The enemies of this Message know this reality about the Din of Allah (swt), so they will do everything they can to prevent it from gaining from supremacy. Furthermore they also know that the strength of Islam does not come from the military capabilities of it's armies or the resources of it's lands but rather the strength of Islam come from it's people. So they will stop at nothing to turn Muslims away from their Din.

We can see the same scenario playing out in the world today. The enemies of this Message recognize that Islam is the only threat remaining to their way of life. So they are trying every way possible to turn Muslims away from their Din. They are making all kinds of false propaganda about this Message. In addition to feeding this propaganda to the non-Muslims they also feed it to the Muslims through the mass media. They make Muslims think that their Din is one of barbarism and terror. They make Muslims think that their Din is outdated and not compatible with a modern society. A Din that allows slavery, oppresses women and exploits minorities. All of these are fabrications and distortions in order to fool the Muslims who have no knowledge about their Din. In addition to this, they oppress the Muslims and make their lives difficult; they make it hard for the Muslims to practice their Din correctly. How hard is it for a Muslim today to abide by all of the laws of Islam? The society in which he lives makes it very difficult for him to live the life that his Creator requires of him. In addition they attempt to create dissension and disorder among the Muslims by dividing them into various groups and sects. That is why you see the Muslims divided today not only into various nation-states but also into various sects and groups, each one claiming that they are the ones following the Quran and Sunnah. The enemies of Islam do all of this with the objective of making the Muslims leave their Din, and as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah they will not give up in their efforts. They will not give up until they are able to turn the Muslims away from their Din. So do not expect any abatement in this storm of ideas and situations that are trying to take you away from your Din. They have a mission and they are going to keep trying so do not ever think that they will give up. So can you then even begin to imagine how important it is that we strive to hold on to our Din living in the world that we are living in today? We must try our best to hold on to our Din and we must beg Allah (swt) to keep us on the Straight Path of living our lives to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure.

What will be our fate if we should turn away from our Din? What will be our fate if we give in to the pressure that the enemies of this Message are placing on our community? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah "**And whoever from you turns away from his Din and then he dies as a disbeliever, these are the ones whose works are ruined in this life and the Hereafter**". If we leave our Din and choose kufr over Iman, may Allah (swt) save us from that, then this will be our situation. All of the good deeds that we ever did would be lost. The reward for every single Salah you made, for every Zakat and charity that you gave, for your Hajj and Umrah, every day of fasting, for your kind treatment of others and for your fulfilling your trusts and obligations, all of that would be lost. You would find yourself as a loser both in this life and in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

From this we can also see the importance of doing as many good deeds as possible in the effort to hold on to our Din. The more good deeds that you have done, the more reluctant you would be to leave the folds of Islam because you do not want to miss the reward for all that you have done. This is why it is important especially in today's day and age to try and do as many good deeds as possible. Perhaps this is all that will save us from the armies of kufr and their plots. May Allah (swt) enable us to do as many actions as possible that are pleasing to Him (swt) before our death comes!

Those who turn away from the Din after having been guided to it would be denied the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter. There is only one situation possible for a people who have been denied the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter, Allah (swt) says, "**These are the companions of the Fire and they will abide therein forever**". May Allah (swt) save us from this! You cannot not even begin to imagine the pain and misery that you would feel if you would have the Fire as your companion. May Allah (swt) save us from the torment of the Fire! Once you have left the folds of Islam the only way to save yourself is to come back into the Din once again. The scholars say that if you should come back to Islam after becoming apostate, then you would regain the reward of all your actions which you had lost when you had become apostate. But such is a reality that none of us want to face. How would any of us know if we would ever come back to this Din after having left it? That is why we have to strive and struggle to hold on to our

Din when we have it. We have to do all that we can to protect ourselves from the plots and machinations of our enemies. May Allah (swt) enable us to hold on to our Din through all of the trials that the enemies of this Message put us through! May Allah (swt) always remind us that nothing else matters in this life except worshipping and serving Him (swt)!

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُواْ وَجَٰهَدُواْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ
يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾

218. Surely the ones who believe, and the ones who emigrate, and the ones who strive hard in the Path of Allah, these hope for Allah's Mercy, and Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) showed us who the evil party truly was in the episode where Abdullah bin Jash (ra) and the Muslim raiding party had attacked the Quraysh caravan. It was the Quraysh who were to blame for rejecting Allah (swt)'s Message when they knew that it was the Truth, for blocking the Message from reaching the people, for driving the Muslims away from their home and from barring access to the Masjid Al-Haram. If they had accepted this Message when it first came to them, then this whole conflict would not even have started. They are the ones who had rejected this Message when they were certain that it was the Truth. So they are the ones who had started this conflict. We also mentioned how the Prophet (saw) himself was reluctant to take the booty that Abdullah and his raiding party had captured. But then we saw how Allah (swt) revealed the previous ayah and showed the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims who the evil ones were and who were truly deserving of blame. Allah (swt) clearly showed us that it was the Quraysh who were really to blame and not the Muslims. Once Allah (swt) revealed that ayah, the Prophet (saw) then took the booty that Abdullah bin Jash and his party had captured. Now that Allah (swt) had showed us that it was the Quraysh who were to blame, He (swt) now brings our attention to who are the good people are.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely the ones who believe, and the ones who emigrate, and the ones who strive hard in the Path of Allah, these hope for Allah's Mercy**". This describes Abdullah bin Jash (ra) and the Muslims with him (ra). They are the ones who had believed in the Message that Allah (swt) had sent, they are the ones who had left their home in Makkah seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt), and they are the ones who had strove hard in the Path of Allah (swt). They did all of this hoping for the Mercy of Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) acknowledges their sacrifices and their efforts. Allah (swt) also shows us how they are the good people and not the evil people that the propaganda of the enemies of this Message had made them out to be. They are the ones whom Allah (swt) is pleased with so what else should matter after that? In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us why He (swt) is so pleased with them.

Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how the word that Allah (swt) uses here for "striving" includes fighting but it is far more comprehensive that that. It is any kind of struggle or effort that is made to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So anyone who struggles with his tounge, or his pen or his sword to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to remove the obstacles to the Message of Allah (swt) is a *Mujahid*, the one who strives in the Path of Allah (swt). Such slaves are the ones who hope for the Mercy of Allah (swt). The Mercy of Allah (swt) is our only hope both in this life and in the Hereafter. The Mercy of Allah (swt) is peace and tranquility in the life of this world and salvation in the Hereafter. So we must never lose hope in the Mercy of Allah (swt), rather we must always strive to attain it like the early Muslims did. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Notice also how Allah (swt) says that it is the ones who strive for Him (swt) who can hope to attain His (swt)'s Mercy. How can you hope to attain the Mercy of Allah (swt) if you do not make any effort? Only if you strive for Him (swt), only if you try, will He (swt) be pleased with you. Only if He (swt) is pleased with you will He (swt) show you mercy. So we see from this ayah how foolish are those who persist in sin and still hope for the mercy of Allah (swt). The ones who do not make any effort and still hope for the mercy of Allah (swt). How can such people hope to receive mercy? Rather Allah (swt) clearly tells us here the criterion that must be met in order to receive this mercy.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". Allah (swt) tells Abdullah bin Jash and the Muslims that He (swt) is Forgiving and Merciful. He (swt) will Forgive them the mistake that they made when they attacked the Quraysh trading caravan in Rajab, and He (swt) will grant them His (swt)'s Mercy in this life and the next. The Mercy of Allah (swt) in this life is the peace and tranquility that comes from knowing Allah (swt). What sorrow and difficulty can trouble any believer when he has certainty in Allah (swt)? They Mercy of Allah (swt) in the Hereafter is happiness and bliss that we cannot even begin to describe with our limited words and intellect. May Allah (swt) make us among those who experience this Mercy! May Allah (swt) forgive us all of our sins and our shortcomings! May Allah (swt) accept our striving in His (swt)'s Path!

۞يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَآ إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ
وَإِثْمُهُمَآ أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ ٱلْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾

219. They ask you about intoxicants and gambling, Say "In them is great sin and some benefit for mankind but the sin of them is far greater than their benefit". And they ask you what they can spend, say "what is in surplus". That is how Allah makes clear to you the Signs so that you may reflect.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to prepare the Muslim community for carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Just as Allah (swt) tells them what are the obligations that they must perform, Allah (swt) also tells them what are the evils and harms that they must avoid. Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that among the favorite pastimes of the Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) was drinking and gambling. That was how they spent free their time. Their days and nights were consumed drinking wine and playing games. At the time when this ayah was revealed, Allah (swt) had not yet made drinking intoxicants and gambling unlawful so there were still some Muslims who indulged in them. Now some of the extremely pious Muslims like

Umar (ra) and Muadh ibn Jabal (ra) realized how evil wine and gambling were. They saw how such evils consumed the free time of the Muslims, how they caused Muslims to become intoxicated thus dulling and distorting their minds, how they made Muslims lose their wealth in pursuit of these trivialities. They realized how a nation that was given this most important of tasks in carrying the Message of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe had no time to waste on these trivialities. So these pious Muslims came to the Prophet (saw) and told him (saw) how they noticed this evil in wine and gambling and how they were consuming the time and the wealth of the Muslims. They asked the Prophet (saw) what was the ruling of Allah (swt) on these. They were hoping that Allah (swt) would expose the evil of wine and gambling to the Muslim community. In this ayah, Allah (swt) responds to their inquiry.

Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say in response to their inquires "**Say "In them is great sin and some benefit for mankind but the sin of them is far greater than their benefit"** ". Allah (swt) tells the Muslims in this ayah that while there is some benefit in wine and gambling, the sin in them was far greater than their benefit. This is not the ayah where Allah (swt) had made wine and gambling unlawful, but we can see that Allah (swt) is preparing the Muslims for their prohibition. That prohibition is to come later on in Surah Maidah. But in this ayah, Allah (swt) makes the Muslims realize how the evil in wine and gambling is far greater than their benefit. The benefit in wine comes the profit that can be made from their sale because many Arabs would buy wine for cheap prices in As-Sham and sell them for a higher price in Arabia. Wine also helps in releasing tension and loosening inhibitions. The benefit in gambling is that it can be said that it allows you to obtain something without much hard work. There is also a certain thrill and enjoyment that comes from playing games of chance. So there is some benefit in them that Allah (swt) acknowledges. But Allah (swt) also tells us that the evil in drinking wine and gambling is far greater than whatever little benefit there may be in them. Drinking inhibits the mind, while the mind is how we can remember Allah (swt) and the mind is what controls us from the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt). So then how evil is a drink that dulls our mind when our mind is the key to our Rabb? Al-Qurtubi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how even the root word for the word "wine" comes from a word that means "to cover". It covers the mind and

prevents one from remembering Allah (swt). So why would you ever approach such a drink? Similarly the evil of gambling is that it prevents you from going out in the world and seeking the sustenance of Allah (swt). When you go out in the world, toiling and laboring hard in order to gain your sustenance, this also is part of your worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Muslims who hope to make fast money by gambling miss out on the great reward that they can get by seeking the sustenance from Allah (swt) in a lawful manner. It is only laziness that comes from Shaitan that prevents you from wanting to work. Shaitan knows that it is in good actions where the salvation of the son of Adam lies, so he tries to prevent the son of Adam from working by making him lazy. May Allah (swt) save us from him! Another evil of gambling is that it is time consuming. The Muslim's time in the life of this world is limited. He has to accumulate as many good deeds as he can before he returns to his Lord. He has to work to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to the people. So where then does this leave him time for such frivolities like gambling? Another evil in both drinking and gambling is that they are both terribly addictive. Anything that is addictive turns your mind away from Allah (swt) and towards it. You only think about your next drink of wine or how you are due for a lucky streak in the next game that you play. These thoughts distract you from Allah (swt) when you were created to remember Him (swt) and to serve Him (swt). May Allah (swt) make us realize how evil both intoxicants and gambling are, and may Allah (swt) turn us and our families away from them!

In the second part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**And they ask you what they can spend, say "what is in surplus"** ". In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to another question that many of the Muslims had. We saw in ayah 216 how Allah (swt) told the Muslims to spend on parents, close relatives, the orphans, the needy and the travelers. So Muslims knew who to spend on, but they did not how much to spend. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) tells them how much they should give in charity. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that after they have spent on what they are and their families need, after they have discharged their responsibilities on them for whom it is an obligation to spend on, then whatever is remaining in surplus is what should be spent in charity. So our first responsibility is to take care of our families and ourselves. Once we have discharged our responsibility to our families and those whom we are obligated to

spend on, then we can give to those people whom Allah (swt) mentioned in ayah 216 from what is left over from our wealth. An exception to this rule is spending on parents, if our parents are in need then they are among those whom are obligated to spend on. We should not only spend on them from what is in surplus of our wealth but rather we should take care of them as we would take care of our own wife and children. This is the level of obligation that Allah (swt) has placed on taking care of our parents. We have an obligation to spend on them if they are in need and we can even spend on them in charity if they are not in need. So in this part of the ayah we can see that Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that the wealth that must be spent in charity is the wealth that is in surplus. Whatever wealth is left over when they have fulfilled all of their duties and obligations. Allah (swt) Knows best.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**That is how Allah makes clear to you the Signs so that you may reflect**". The Signs that Allah (swt) speaks of here are the ayahs of the Quran. The ayahs of the Quran are the communications of Allah (swt) to mankind, in these ayahs Allah (swt) tells us what He (swt) is pleased with and what He (swt) is displeased with. Our purpose in life is to worship and serve Allah (swt) and in these ayahs Allah (swt) tells us how to fulfill that purpose. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us how not only has He (swt) given us the ayahs of the Quran so that we may be shown how to fulfill the purpose of our existence but He (swt) has also made these ayahs clear so that we may reflect upon them and so that we may understand them. Although there is reward for simply reading the Quran, we have to remember that Allah (swt) did not reveal the Quran simply to be read. Rather He (swt) revealed the Quran so that mankind may know the purpose of their existence. So it is a Book that was revealed to be understood. Allah (swt) made the Quran clear for us so that we may reflect on it and so that we may understand it and implement it in our lives. For example from this ayah we can clearly see how wine and gambling are displeasing to Allah (swt), but to give in charity after we have fulfilled the financial obligations to our families is pleasing to Allah (swt). Thus in order to please our Creator we have to strive to stay away from all forms of intoxicants and gambling, and we have to rush to spend our wealth in charity after we have fulfilled all of our responsibilities to our families. This is how Allah (swt) makes clear His (swt)'s communications so that we may understand.

فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْأَخِرَةِ ۗ وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْيَتَـٰمَىٰ ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ ۖ وَإِن
تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ ٱلْمُصْلِحِ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ
لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

221. In this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you about the orphans. Say "To work righteousness towards them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs then they are your brethren. And Allah Knows the mischief-maker from the righteous. And if Allah willed, He could have put you in difficulty. Surely Allah is All-Powerful All-Wise.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**In this world and the Hereafter**". Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims of the existence of both of these worlds. Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that their worship and servitude of Him (swt) affects them in both this world and the Hereafter. It is wrong for them to focus all of their attention on this world just as it is wrong for them to look completely at the Hereafter and forget this world. Both this world and the Hereafter have an important role to play in the life of a Muslim as he or she strives to fulfill the purpose of existence. In order to worship and serve Allah (swt) correctly this world is important because it is the place of testing. The life of this world is the realm that Allah (swt) has chosen to test us in. So every moment that we spend in the life of this world is important because it is an opportunity for us to do even better in the test that Allah (swt) has given us. Similarly the Hereafter is important because it is where we will be rewarded or punished based on how well we did our test. So as Muslims it is important that we realize both the importance of this world and the Hereafter.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And they ask you about the orphans**". Before Allah (swt) sent the Prophet (saw), orphans were treated very badly in the society of the Arabs. These young and innocent children were often exploited and oppressed by those who were supposed to be their guardians and their caretakers. The ones who were charged to take care of orphans would steal their wealth and treat them unjustly. Then Allah (swt) revealed ayahs of the Quran promising a grave punishment for those who mistreated orphans. When Muslims heard these ayahs they became terrified of ever mistreating any of the orphans that were under their care. They did not in

any way want to misappropriate any of the wealth of the orphans who were under their care. Their terror of Allah (swt)'s punishment reached such a level that they did not even want to mix their own food with that of the orphans who were under their care. So they would give the orphan's food on a separate plate and they would never even touch this food. This was the amount of fear that they had for doing any kind of injustice to an orphan, they did not even want to take one morsel of food that belonged to the orphan. Now look at the behavior of the people before the Quran and after the Quran. Before the Quran they would abuse the orphans and take all of their property, and after the Quran these same people took such special care of the orphans that they even gave them separate meals. This is how the Book of Allah (swt) can transform a people. Why then do you not look to it and reflect on it so that it can transform you?

Now such a situation with the orphans became very difficult for many of the early Muslims who were taking care of these young children. After all, the orphan was still a child that was living in their house. But the fear that the Muslims had of ever stealing anything that belonged to the orphans drove them to the point that they treated the orphans as if they were aliens or strangers. There was a total separation between their family and that of the young orphan. You can imagine how such a situation would be difficult on both the orphans and their Muslim guardians. That was when Allah (swt) revealed this ayah to alleviate the suffering and difficulties of the Muslims.

Allah (swt) begins to address the situations of the orphans by commanding the Prophet (saw) to "**Say "To work righteousness towards them is best**". Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that the best thing for them to do is to work righteousness towards the orphans, to treat them justly and kindly. This means that the Muslims should not steal the wealth of the orphans like was done in the days of ignorance, but at the same time they should not make the orphan child feel like a stranger in their home. Rather their attitude and their behavior towards the orphans has to be one of righteousness where they always look out for the best interests of the orphans. They have to be just and fair with the orphans, and at the same time they have to be kind and compassionate. They have to do whatever it is that will make the orphan happy. They have to behave towards the orphans in a just and fair manner and in a way where Allah (swt) would be pleased with them.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And if you mix your affairs with theirs then they are your brethren**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if the mix their food with that of the orphans' or even if they combine their wealth with that of the orphans', then there is no blame on them because the orphans are also Muslims and so they are all brothers in Islam. So as long as the Muslims do not steal from the orphans or take what is theirs unjustly, then there is no blame on them if they mix their food, property and wealth with that of the orphans. This is because they are all brothers in Islam.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Knows the mischief-maker from the righteous**". In the previous part of the ayah, Allah (swt) gave the Muslims the permission to mix their wealth and their food with that of the orphans. But here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that they still need to be righteous and not take anything that belongs to the orphans unjustly. Even though they were now given permission to mix their food and their wealth with that of the orphans, they still need to be careful not to steal any of that food or wealth in any way. Allah (swt) Knows those who are righteous and those who are mischief-makers. If they try to make mischief by stealing what really belongs to the child, then they should that remember Allah (swt) Knows what they do. They should know that they will be answerable before Allah (swt) on the Last Day.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And if Allah willed, He could have put you in difficulty**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that if He (swt) wanted, He (swt) did not have to legislate this law. He (swt) could have left the situation as it was before, where the Muslims were terrified to even mix their food with that of the orphans. It was only from the Mercy of Allah (swt) that He (swt) legislated this law that allows the Muslims to mix their affairs with that of the orphans who are under their care. The Muslims must then remember the Grace and Mercy of Allah (swt) when He (swt) gave them this allowance, and they must be careful not to take advantage by unfairly taking of the wealth that belongs to the orphans. The Muslims must always remember that if Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) could have made matters far more difficult for them. They must then show gratitude for their Lord for this by abiding His (swt)'s Law. It would be the height of injustice and rebellion if the Muslims were then to take advantage of this allowance by using this opportunity to take from the wealth of the orphans.

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is All-Powerful All-Wise**". Allah (swt) is All Powerful in that He (swt) can legislate any law that He (swt) wants and there is no one who can have any say in the laws that Allah (swt) legislates. Allah (swt) is also All Wise in that the laws that He (swt) legislates is what is best for the community. Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that these laws that He (swt) has given them concerning the orphans and their treatment are from Him (swt). There is no one who can overturn these laws because Allah (swt) is the Most Powerful and there is no one to overpower Him (swt) and overturn His (swt)'s Law. There is also no one who can bring any law for the orphans better than these because Allah (swt) is also the All-Wise. The Muslims then have no choice but to submit and implement the laws of Allah (swt) as He (swt) has given it to them. These laws come from the One Who is the All-Powerful and the All-Wise, who then can question laws that come from such a Source? May Allah (swt) make us as a Muslim community realize the One from whom our Shariah has come from, and may that realization make us strive to not implement any other law in our lives other than His (swt)!

وَلَا تَنكِحُواْ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكَٰتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤۡمِنَّۚ وَلَأَمَةٞ مُّؤۡمِنَةٌ خَيۡرٞ مِّن مُّشۡرِكَةٖ وَلَوۡ
أَعۡجَبَتۡكُمۡۗ وَلَا تُنكِحُواْ ٱلۡمُشۡرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤۡمِنُواْۚ وَلَعَبۡدٞ مُّؤۡمِنٌ خَيۡرٞ مِّن
مُّشۡرِكٖ وَلَوۡ أَعۡجَبَكُمۡۗ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ يَدۡعُونَ إِلَى ٱلنَّارِۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَدۡعُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱلۡجَنَّةِ
وَٱلۡمَغۡفِرَةِ بِإِذۡنِهِۦۖ وَيُبَيِّنُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ٢٢١

222. Do not marry the Mushrik women until they believe. A believing slave woman is better for you than a Mushrik woman even though she may please you. And do not give (your women) in marriage to the Mushriks until they believe. A believing slave is better for you than a Mushrik although he may please you. These call to the Fire while Allah calls to the Garden and Forgiveness by His permission, and He makes clear His Signs for mankind so that they may remember.

In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to build the foundations of the Muslim nation that will carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to the foundation of the Muslim society and that is the Muslim family. Allah (swt) begins by bringing our attention to the foundation upon which the Muslim family is built and that is marriage. Since marriage is the foundation of the family and the family is the foundation of the society, we can see how important a proper Islamic marriage is for the Muslim community. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how marriage must be built on a foundation of belief and submission to Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins by saying "**Do not marry the Mushrik women until they believe**". Allah (swt) commands the believers not to marry the women who make Shirk with Allah (swt) until they believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt). What could be a greater crime than to associate partners with Allah (swt)? What could be a greater evil than to think that you have another god, lord or master besides Allah (swt)? How then could any Muslim love such a person? When you live for Allah (swt) how could you then love a person who does not live for Allah (swt) like you do? Any marriage where both partners do not believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt) and do not submit completely to Allah (swt) will not earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt), furthermore it will not be conducive to building a strong Islamic society. So Allah (swt) commands the Muslims not to marry

women who associate others with Allah (swt). Allah (swt) commands the Muslims to build their marriages and their families on the worship and servitude of Him (swt).

Allah (swt) then says "**A believing slave woman is better for you than a Mushrik woman even though she may please you**". Here Allah (swt) shows us the value of Iman. Marriage to slaves was harshly looked down upon by the people during the time of the Prophet (saw). It was a social taboo that no one practiced. To marry a slave was to put yourself at the level of a slave and thus everyone avoided it. Now Allah (swt) shows the Muslim community the value of Iman by letting them know that a slave woman who has Iman in the Oneness of Allah (swt) is better than a free woman who associates partners to Allah (swt). When Allah (swt) says this to a people who used to look down upon slaves and who would never consider marriage to slaves, they can realize how important Iman is and how repulsive it must be for them to marry Mushrik women. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if they are looking for a marriage partner it is better for them to choose a slave woman that has Iman in the Oneness of Allah (swt). A slave woman with Iman is better than a free woman who believes in another god besides Allah (swt) or obeys another lord besides Allah (swt). This shows how it is Iman that matters in the Sight of Allah (swt) and not social status or wealth.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And do not give (your women) in marriage to the Mushriks until they believe. A believing slave is better for you than a Mushrik although he may please you**". Here we see that Allah (swt) commands the Muslims not to give their daughters and the women who are under their care to men who associate partners with Allah (swt). Allah (swt) tells them that it is better for them to give their daughters to a believing slave than a man who believes in another god besides Allah (swt) or who obeys another master besides Allah (swt).

Notice also for both of these cases how Allah (swt) says that the Muslims must leave the Mushriks even if the Mushriks are pleasing to them. Allah (swt) acknowledges that the Mushrik women and the Mushrik men are appealing. There may be many a Musrhrik woman who a Muslim sees to be very attractive and there may be many a Musrhrik man who a Muslim father sees as wealthy and powerful and so he would love to give his daughter to him. This is how you will see the Mushriks. But this pleasure and this temptation that you see from them is only from

Shaitan. Shaitan wants you to be disobedient to Allah (swt), so he will make the Mushrik very pleasing to you. He will make you admire them for their beauty, or their wealth or their social status. He will tell you that you need them and he will remind you of all the pleasures and joys that you can get if you should marry them. This is all part of his deception. When he comes to you and says such things to you, remember what Allah (swt) tells you in the next part of this ayah.

Then Allah (swt) says "**These call to the Fire while Allah calls to the Garden and to Forgiveness by His permission**". What does a Mushrik man or woman call to except the Fire? They do not believe in the Oneness of Allah (swt). They dedicate their lives to other than the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Will it not then be the case that they will call their marriage partner to the kind of life that they live? A life of heedlessness to Allah (swt). A life of disobedience and sin to the Law of Allah (swt). They will take you away from Allah (swt) consciously or unconsciously. They may deliberately try to turn you from your Din by trying to convince you that Allah (swt) should not be all that important in your life. Even if they do not do it deliberately they still might take you away from Allah (swt) just by being someone who is your spouse but who is not from your Din. When you live with them and you spend your time with them, you will talk with them about what is on their minds not realizing that this is speech that does not earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and you will do the activities that are pleasing to them not realizing that these are actions that do not earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) created you so that you will strive to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure by worshipping Him (swt) and serving Him (swt). Allah (swt) blessed you by giving you this Din of Islam so that you will know how to correctly worship Him (swt), so that you will know the purpose of your existence. How then will your Rabb like it when you choose a marriage partner that takes you away from this purpose? Just by being who they are, a Mushrik, they are calling you to the displeasure of Allah (swt) and the displeasure of Allah (swt) is the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire!

Allah (swt) on the other hand calls to the Garden and to His (swt)'s Forgiveness by His (swt)'s permission. Is this not much better than what they call you to? Yes it is true that the beauty of the Mushrik woman, as well as her wealth and her social status may be pleasing to you, but these are fleeting enjoyments of the life of this world. Her beauty will eventually fade with the

passage of time, and she could even more easily lose her wealth and her social status in a matter of moments. Is it then worth it to give up the Garden and to give up the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) for the ephemeral pleasures of the life of this world? The Garden is pure bliss and it is forever, and the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) is worth even more than that. For Allah (swt) to forgive us for all of the sins that we have done and to forgive us for all of our shortcomings in our worship and servitude of Him (swt) and for Him (swt) to accept us as a creation of His (swt) that He (swt) is pleased with. How wonderful would that be? Is even the most beautiful, and the wealthiest and the most high standing of Mushrik women worth sacrificing that for?

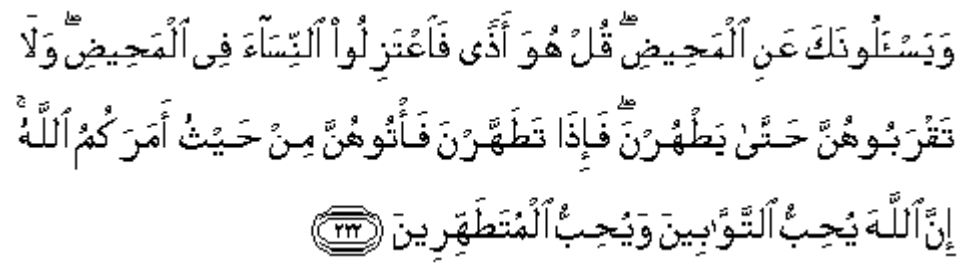
This part of the ayah is also further evidence that Allah (swt) uses metaphors in the Quran. Notice that Allah (swt) says here that He (swt) calls to the Garden and to His (swt)'s Forgiveness. But can anyone of us literally hear Allah (swt) calling us? Of course not, but rather this is a metaphor to mean that Allah (swt) calls us through His (swt)'s prophets and messengers. It could also mean that Allah (swt) calls us through His (swt)'s Book. We understand the meaning but we can also see that the literal meaning is not what is meant here, but rather it is an example of the many ayahs in Quran where Allah (swt) uses metaphors. So we see once again how those who say that we must only take the literal meaning from every ayah are wrong.

The Prophet (saw) said that a woman can be married for her beauty, for her wealth, for her social status or for her Din and then he (saw) told us to marry our wife for her Din. So not only must we choose a believing wife as Allah (swt) has commanded us to in this ayah, but we must try to choose a spouse whose Din is strong. When you realize that the very purpose of your life is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt), you will see why the Prophet (saw) told you to do this. What man does not desire a beautiful wife or a wealthy wife or a wife of high standing? The same is true for sisters when they seek their husbands. There is nothing wrong in seeking these from our spouses. But the Din of our spouses must be given priority over all of these. If any perspective spouse does not have Din, then none of these should matter. This is because we exist to worship and serve Allah (swt), and unless the Din of our spouse is strong we will never be fulfill the purpose of our existence. As Sayyid Qutb said in his tafsir of this ayah, there is no bond between any human beings that is stronger than the bond of marriage. Your spouse is your

partner in life so make sure that you choose a partner that will help you to fulfill the purpose of your life rather than hinder you from it. May Allah (swt) give us and give all the sincere Muslims spouses that will help them to fulfill their purpose of worshipping and serving Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and He makes clear His Signs for mankind that they may remember**". Allah (swt) makes His (swt)'s Signs clear for mankind so that they may remember the purpose of their existence. Allah (swt) created mankind to worship and serve Him (swt) and Allah (swt) sent the Quran to mankind so that they may know how to accomplish this purpose of their existence. In the ayahs of the Quran, Allah (swt) made clear how He (swt) is to be worshipped and served. From this ayah, we can see that even the choice of our spouse is part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt). By choosing a believing spouse whose Din is strong we are serving our Rabb but by following our lusts and our greed and choosing other than that we are turning away from serving our Rabb. So always remember why you were created, and always make the choices that will enable you to fulfill the purpose of your creation. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that! May Allah (swt) give us spouses that He (swt) is pleased with!

Also notice in this ayah that although the command not to marry Mushriks is clearly intended for Muslims, Allah (swt) ends the ayah by telling us how He (swt) has made His (swt)'s signs clear for mankind. This shows us that this command is also directed towards mankind as well. Allah (swt) desires for all mankind to become Muslim and then to implement this command. This is why in this ayah He (swt) says that His (swt)'s signs have been made clear for mankind. All of mankind are addressed in the ayahs of the Quran and all of mankind are being called upon to respond to them. But can most of mankind today hear this call? Who then can be blamed for that?



223. And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is a impurity, so keep away from women during menstruation, and do not come near them until they are purified. So when they are purified, then come to them as Allah has commanded you. Surely Allah loves those who make Tawbah and those who purify themselves.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) commanded the Muslims that the spouse that they choose must be one with Iman. Allah (swt) told them to keep away from those men and women who associate partners with Allah (swt), even if they may be pleasing to the Muslims by their beauty or their wealth or their status. Thus we saw how the foundation of the Muslim family must be based on belief and submission to Allah (swt). We saw how the very purpose of these two people coming together to form this union must be done as an act of worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Now once a couple comes together we all know what they do in order for Allah (swt) to give them children. Here Allah (swt) brings the attention of the Muslims to an issue that was very controversial at the time of the Prophet (saw) in regards to this private action between a man and wife.

Allah (swt) says "**And they ask you about menstruation**". Some Muslims came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) about the ruling of Allah (swt) on menstruation. From this fact alone we can see the attitude that the early Muslims had towards their Din. They did not see their Din as only their prayers and their fasting, but they saw their Din as a complete way of life. A way of life that addressed every aspect of their life, even this most private aspect. They realized that every moment of their life was part of their test. They knew that even their time with their wives in the night was part of their worship and servitude of Allah (swt). So they came and asked the Prophet (saw) what is the correct action that they should do with their wives when their wives are menstruating. They wanted to know what Allah (swt) wanted them to do.

In response to this inquiry, Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to say "**It is a impurity, so keep away from women during menstruation**". Women who are going through their monthly courses are impure just like men are after they have had an ejaculation. During this time of impurity, there are certain actions that women cannot do. They cannot pray, fast, touch or recite the Quran or enter a masjid or place of prayer. Similarly as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, their husbands cannot have sexual relations with them during this time. This does not mean that your wives must be avoided completely when they are going through monthly courses, rather it only means that you cannot have sexual intercourse with them during this time. You can still talk to them, eat with them, play with them, and the scholars even say that you can enjoy them from the part of their body that is above their navel. The only rule is that you must keep away from their private parts during this time. So what Allah (swt) means by "keep away from women" is that you cannot have sexual intercourse with them during menstruation.

Recall how Allah (swt) called our Ummah a "middle nation". We can see with the ruling that Allah (swt) has given us regarding menstruation how He (swt) has given us the middle path, the correct path in between the two extremes that other cultures and religions follow. There are some religions and cultures that avoid women completely when they are menstruating. They treat women as if they are carrying some kind of plague. They do not sit with them, they do not talk with them, they do not eat with them, and they do not even stay in the same room with them. Other cultures do everything with women when they are menstruating, even having intercourse with them from where the blood is coming. So the ruling that Allah (swt) has given us here is the middle way and the correct way between these two extremes.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do not come near them until they are purified**". As we said, menstruation is a state of impurity. Here Allah (swt) emphasizes the fact that Muslims must not approach their wives for intercourse until they have been cleansed of this impurity. The scholars say that a woman purifies herself by making the *ghusul* or the full bath after her courses have ended. The fact that Allah (swt) repeats the command not to come near our wives when they are menstruating in this part of the ayah shows us what a terrible sin it is to have sexual intercourse with one's wife while she is menstruating. It is an action that is most displeasing to

Allah (swt) and we must avoid it all costs no matter how much our desires may prompt us to come near them. May Allah (swt) give us Sabr!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**So when they are purified, then come to them as Allah has commanded you**". Once their wives stop bleeding and when they have made *ghusul*, then Muslims may approach their wives for sexual intercourse as they would usually do. In his tafsir of this ayah, Mawdudi says that the "command" of Allah (swt) in this ayah refers to the desire that we all have for our wives. This desire is a command that Allah (swt) has placed in all of us. We go to our wives to fulfill this command that Allah (swt) has placed in us. So we can see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) is telling us that after our wives have purified themselves, we may approach them with desire as we would normally do. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah loves those who make Tawbah and those who purify themselves**". Allah (swt) loves those who make Tawbah and He (swt) loves those who purify themselves. When we are alone with our wives in the privacy of our homes we are especially vulnerable to Shaitan. He may come to us and make us do actions with our wives that are displeasing to Allah (swt). These actions may include approaching our wives for intercourse while they are menstruating or it could mean keeping away from our wives completely where we do not even speak to them. As we mentioned, both of these extremes are forbidden by Allah (swt). We have an obligation to be good with our wives and keep their company just as we have an obligation to stay away from their private parts while they are menstruating. But Allah (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah that if we should slip and transgress the Law of Allah (swt) in regards to our wives while they are menstruating, then we should rush to make Tawbah to Him (swt). We should rush to make repentance to Allah (swt) because Allah (swt) loves those who repent to Him (swt). When we break the Law of Allah (swt) we should not tell ourselves that we are safe since no one saw what we were doing. We should know that Allah (swt) Knows what we did, and if we do not repent to Him (swt) then He (swt) may take us to task for it. We know how frightening a prospect it is to be in the Wrath of Allah (swt). So if we have ever broken the Law of Allah (swt) when we are alone with our wives, then we should rush to make Tawbah to Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah how He (swt) loves those who purify themselves. This is an encouragement for the sisters to rush to make the *ghusul* once their monthly courses have ended. Their *ghusul* is a purification for them, and Allah (swt) loves those who purify themselves. Allah (swt) gave them pure water with which they can clean their bodies and return to a state of purity. A state in which they can make their prayers, fast, enter the masajid as well as recite and touch the Book of Allah (swt). Through the ghusul, they can also come to a state in which their husbands can come to them for intercourse and through that they can both fulfill the purpose of their marriage; to raise a family of children who are worshipping and submitting to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow all of us to implement His (swt)'s ruling concerning menstruation! May Allah (swt) allow us to rush to make Tawbah to Him (swt) when we transgress His (swt)'s Law! May Allah (swt) allow us to purify ourselves for Him (swt)!

We can also note in this ayah how Allah (swt) says that He (swt) loves those who purify themselves. The ones who purify themselves have the Love of Allah (swt), what could be better than that? If we want the Love of Allah (swt) then we also must rush to purify ourselves as well. Imam Ghazzali (ra) said that there are four levels to purification. The first is that we must purify our bodies and our clothes of all filth. The second is that we purify our limbs of all sins. The third is that we purify our hearts of all diseases. The fourth is that we purify our lives of all that is not Allah (swt). When we reach this highest level of purification then we live only for Allah (swt). Everything that we do is only to earn the Pleasure of our Lord and Master. We exist only to please Him (swt). So Insha Allah we should always be in the habit of purifying ourselves. This life is nothing except giving up all that is not Allah (swt) and journeying towards Him (swt).

Before we leave our discussion of this ayah, we can notice how Merciful and Compassionate Allah (swt) has been towards women with this ruling that He (swt) has given concerning menstruation. As we mentioned there are some cultures who treat menstruating women as if they are some kind of disease. They do not even go near them and they do not even speak to them. While there are other cultures who view women only as an object of sexual pleasure. These cultures have no problem with using the body of a woman to sell something. They also do not respect and regard the woman when she is going through this difficult period of

her life. Many husbands from such a culture would have intercourse with their wives even when they are menstruating. They do not care about cleanliness, decency or morality. They see themselves as nothing more than apes that have evolved. So since they are animals, they can do whatever animals do to satisfy their carnal desires. Allah (swt) rescued the woman from both of these extremes with the Din that He (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw). Women are the creation of Allah (swt) just like men are, and He (swt) loves the believing women just as much as He (swt) loves the believing men. Allah (swt) gave both the believing men and the believing women an important role to play in the mission of carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Each has their job and their function as they both strive to fulfill their purpose of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make the Muslims and make all of mankind realize that this is the correct Din that correctly governs the relationship between men and women! May Allah (swt) make them realize that there is no other way of life that will help them find peace and tranquility in this world and eternal joy and bliss in the next life except this Din!

نِسَآؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا۟ حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۖ وَقَدِّمُوا۟ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟
ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّكُم مُّلَٰقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

224. Your wives are fields for you, so go to your fields whenever you like, and send forth good for yourselves. Have Taqwa of Allah and know that you will meet Him, and give good news to the believers.

Marriage is the bond around which the Muslim family is built and the Muslim family is the basis of the Muslim society, so we remind ourselves once again of the importance of marriage in Islam. Allah (swt) has already described for us in previous ayahs the relationship between a husband and wife. Recall how Allah (swt) described the husband and wife as garments for each other, they each protect the other from sin and disobedience to Allah (swt) and they are both very close to each other just like their garments are. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe for

us the relationship that a husband has with his wife. So as we read these ayahs we should remind ourselves of the importance of marriage in Islam. We should also remind ourselves of how the Muslim society is built on this relationship of love, tenderness and compassion. We should also remind ourselves once again, how the very purpose of marriage, the very purpose of a man and woman coming together to form this union is nothing other than the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The One and the Irresistible. The One to whom all must return.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Your wives are fields for you, so go to your fields whenever you like**". Here Allah (swt) makes a metaphor to the fields that a farmer goes to plant his seeds. Through this metaphor, Allah (swt) reminds us once again that the goal of any marriage, the goal of any man and woman coming together to perform that blessed act must be the seeking of righteous children. Children who will be worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). Children who will glorify and magnify Allah (swt) through their words and through their actions and through their hearts. So although we take pleasure from our wives, and there is nothing wrong with that, such is not the purpose why Allah (swt) placed this desire and this need within us. The reason why Allah (swt) placed this need within us, the reason why we get married, the reason why we approach our spouses in our bedrooms is to have righteous children who will be worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). Children who will carry on this responsibility of taking the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind once we have returned to our Rabb.

This goal of producing righteous children is so important that Allah (swt) commands us to go to our wives whenever we like. This desire that men have for women is strong, and Allah (swt) is the One Who made it so. This is so that we realize how important it is to have righteous children, children who will worship and serve Allah (swt) and children who will carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind after us. Thus whenever we want to we should go to our wives. In the Shafi school the husband has many responsibilities that he must fulfill for his wife including clothing her, feeding her, giving her shelter and taking care of all her other needs. But the only one responsibility that the wife has to her husband is that she must make her body available to him whenever he desires her. This is so that they can both fulfill the purpose of their marriage. So though we take pleasure from our wives that must not be the sole reason for our coming together.

Rather we must have a hope when we come to our wives that our union will produce a child that will glorify Allah (swt). A child that will serve Allah (swt). A child that will work for this Din. That is why we should mention the Name of Allah (swt) when we approach our wives, and we should keep this intention and have this hope every time we are with them. May Allah (swt) grant all the sincere Muslim brothers and sisters in our Ummah children who will be even better worshippers and servants of Allah (swt) than we are!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and send forth good for yourselves**". Our children are the good that we send forth for ourselves. We know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) that a righteous child will be a source of reward for us even after we have left this world. So once again we have to stress that the purpose of marriage should be the upbringing of righteous children who will worship and serve Allah (swt). That should be your intention when you are selecting your spouse, that should be your intention when you make the marriage contract, that should be intention when you approach your spouse in your bedroom, that should be your intention when your child is born, and that should be your intention as you raise your child. When you lived your life to worship and serve Allah (swt), would you not also want your children to do the same as well when you leave this world? So make sure you have this intention as you build your family and you raise your children. If you do, then Insha Allah it will be good that you send forth for yourself in the Hereafter.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Have Taqwa of Allah and Know that you will meet Him**". It is not easy to raise children. Anyone who says that it is easy to raise children has not done a good job of raising their children. It is a daunting task that requires patience, forbearance, mercy, kindness, and strength. These are just to name a few of the many requirements that any good parent needs to have. But although it is difficult, you must still strive to raise your children well. Not only to raise them well but also to raise them to dedicate their lives to Allah (swt) like you have done. If you should become lazy in this striving then you should remember what Allah (swt) says in this part of the ayah. You should get that fear of Allah (swt). You should ask yourself how it will be when you meet Allah (swt) and you have to answer for why your children are not His (swt)'s humble worshippers and obedient servants like they were created to be. You will have to answer for why you allowed your children to go astray. Allah (swt) gave you your children, so

what excuse will you give Him (swt) if you have allowed your children to turn away from the purpose of their creation? You know what the purpose of creation is, so make sure you teach your children this purpose and you bring them up in a way that they fulfill this purpose. May Allah (swt) enable us all to have Taqwa of Him (swt) in regards to our children, and as we raise them, may we always remember that we will one day soon leave them and go to meet Allah (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) commands the Prophet (saw) to "**Give good news to the believers**". This part of the ayah is general and it always hold true. The believers should always be given the best of news. Anyone who has even drop of Iman in their hearts will eventually go to Paradise to abide therein forever. That is the best news one can give to any human being. So rather than waiting for someone to tell you the news that you have received a promotion, or the news that a business transaction was successful, or the news that you made the honor roll in school, or the news that a house or car that you wanted is yours, you should hope for the good news of Paradise and the good news of the Pleasure of Allah (swt). You should hope that you will receive this news and you should hope that your family will receive it as well. Thus you should raise your children to be believers so that Insha Allah they will receive this news when they leave this world. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to raise our children to be believers who will receive this good news!

This prayer is one that we should always be making especially in the times that we live in today. Especially in these dark times when the ideas of Kufr and Bidah are rampant in the minds of the Ummah, and it is becoming commonplace for the youth of this Ummah to renounce their Iman completely. This is a time when it is especially important for you to look after the beliefs of your children. Teach them about the Quran and the Sunnah. Remind them of the purpose of their existence. May Allah (swt) save us and save our children from these dark times! May Allah (swt) keep our Iman strong so that we also will be given the good news of the believers!

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِّأَيْمَٰنِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوا۟ وَتَتَّقُوا۟ وَتُصْلِحُوا۟
بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

225. And do not make Allah a hindrance through your oaths from doing good, having Taqwa, and making peace among mankind, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to mould the first Muslim community that will be responsible for carrying His (swt)'s Message to mankind. Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims what they were created for. They were created to worship and serve Allah (swt). They were created to be a source of good in this world. This is the purpose of their existence. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds them that there is nothing that should stand in the way of them fulfilling this purpose for which they were created. Not even their own oaths and promises. Not even the oaths and promises that they made in the Name of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) says "**And do not make Allah a hindrance through your oaths from doing good, having Taqwa, and making peace among mankind**". The worship and servitude of Allah (swt) is nothing but "**doing good, having Taqwa, and making peace among mankind**". Doing good means doing the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with such as prayer, fasting, having patience, fighting jihad and carrying dawah. Having Taqwa means having fear of Allah (swt) and staying away from the actions that are pleasing to you but are displeasing to Allah (swt). So even if you desire zina, looking at women, backbiting, or taking interest you still avoid it because of the fear of Allah (swt). Making peace between mankind is doing good for others by helping them through their difficulties, by helping to resolve their disputes, and by establishing the Law of Allah (swt) over them so that they can they can experience the Mercy and Justice of the systems of Allah (swt). For non-Muslims making peace among mankind also includes inviting them to Islam because there is no peace like the peace that comes from knowing Allah (swt). These three duties are the mission of the Muslim. So Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that we should not let anything get in the way of this mission. Not even the oaths that we make. Even if we made an oath in the Name of Allah (swt), we should not let that oath be an obstacle in fulfilling our mission. So for example, suppose you made an oath that you would never speak to your

cousin, and you even mentioned the Name of Allah (swt) over that oath. Allah (swt) is telling you here that to break that oath and maintain ties of kinship as part of your worship and servitude to Allah (swt) is better for you than to hold on to your oath and break the ties of kinship with your cousin permanently. In this way you do not allow anything to prevent your worship and servitude of Allah (swt). You do not allow anything to prevent you from doing good.

When it comes to the breaking of oaths, there is a *kafara* or expiation that must be paid. Since this is not a tafsir of fiqh, we will not go into the details of that here. If you find yourself in a situation where you made an oath in earnest and you have to break it, please consult the books of fiqh or talk to a scholar to find out how you should pay the expiation for your oath. Of course we should respect and revere the Name of Allah (swt), and so we should not make useless oaths using the Name of our Rabb. To make a meaningless oath in the Name of Allah (swt) is to show disrespect to Allah (swt), may Allah (swt) save us from ever doing that! But at the same time if we do make an oath in the Name of Allah (swt), and it was an oath for an action that was not pleasing to Allah (swt) then we should not let that oath hinder us from the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Even if that oath has the Name of Allah (swt) over it, we should not let it hinder us from our mission. We should pay the expiation and return to the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with. That is the meaning of this ayah as we see it and of course Allah (swt) Knows best.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and Allah is Hearing, Knowing**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims to be careful of the oaths that they make. They should not make an oath that they do not intend to keep and then mention the Name of Allah (swt) over that oath. If they do then they should remember that Allah (swt) Hears the false oath that they made and He (swt) Knows that they did not intend to keep it. Allah (swt) has created you to worship and serve Him (swt) and He (swt) has forbidden you from lying. So how evil is it to make an oath with the Name of Allah (swt) and then not keep that oath? Allah (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. We should always remember that. This knowledge that we have of Allah (swt) and the Names of Allah (swt) should prevent us from doing the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the ability to only speak the words that He (swt) is pleased with! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to never make an oath in His (swt) Name unless we truly mean it from the depths of our

hearts! May Allah (swt) give us the ability to fulfill the mission that He (swt) has given us in this life! Nothing matters except that we strive to worship and serve Allah (swt) in everything that we do.

لَّا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِٱللَّغْوِ فِىٓ أَيْمَـٰنِكُمْ وَلَـٰكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾

226. Allah will not take you to account for that which is vain in your oaths, but He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Forgiving Forbearing.

Recall how Allah (swt) ended the previous ayah by reminding the early Muslim community that He (swt) was Hearing and Knowing. This was mentioned specifically in relation to the oaths that they made. This reminder must have created a sense of fear among many of the early Muslims. They would have remembered every single oath that they ever made, and then they would have remembered how they even made some oaths that might not have been pleasing to Allah (swt). For example some of them might have sworn to Allah (swt) about something which they were not certain was the truth or not, or they might have sworn to Allah (swt) about something which they thought was true but it did not turn out to be the truth, or some of them in the days of Ignorance might even have sworn to something that was a lie. Many of the early Muslims used to be idol worshippers in their past before Allah (swt) brought them to the Light of Islam, so some of them may even have made oaths to their idols. In the previous ayah, they were reminded how Allah (swt) is Hearing and Knowing in regards to their oaths, and then they remembered all these oaths that they had made in their past. Oaths that may not have been pleasing to Allah (swt). So these early Muslims must have been gripped with fear. The Sahahbah were always thinking about Allah (swt) and what they feared the most was Him (swt) being displeased with them in any way. That is why in this ayah Allah (swt) reassures them that He (swt) will not hold them to account for such oaths. When we see what Allah (swt) reveals in this ayah we cannot help but think how much of a reassurance this must have been for the early Muslims. How Kind and Merciful is our Rabb?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Allah will not take you to account for that which is vain in your oaths**". This means that Allah (swt) will not take us to task for those oaths that we make unintentionally. So for example if you make an oath and you even mention the Name of Allah (swt) over that oath, but you did not mean to make that oath and it was just something that you tounge said, then Allah (swt) will not hold that oath against you. Allah (swt) will not hold you accountable if you fail to fulfill that oath or if you fail to pay the expiation for it. This is true only if you did not have the intention in that oath, if it was really just a slip of your tongue. Now as we mentioned in the previous ayah, we should respect and revere the Name of our Rabb and we should not make oaths in vain using the Name of Allah (swt). But if ever we do, if we are in a debate or argument and we say such an oath unintentionally, then we can see from this ayah that Allah (swt) will not hold that oath against us. From this we can see the Mercy and Compassion of Allah (swt) for this Ummah. Allah (swt) could have easily held us accountable for these kinds of oaths as well, and He (swt) could have easily punished us if we failed to fulfill these oaths. But Allah (swt) IS Kindness and Mercy, so Allah (swt) will not hold us accountable for oaths that we make in vain and oaths that we make unintentionally. How Wonderful and Perfect is our Rabb Who is so Kind and Compassionate!

This part of the ayah is also a consolation for the early Muslims. In the days of Jahilliya, they were in ignorance to the Oneness of Allah (swt) and ignorant to His (swt)'s Law. As we mentioned at that time they may have made some oaths that may not have been pleasing to Allah (swt). So they can see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) will not hold them to task for those oaths that they made in their days of ignorance. These include the oaths made to idols and even the oaths made to Allah (swt) for something that was not true. Allah (swt) is pardoning them completely for such oaths. How Kind and Merciful is our Rabb!

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but He will take you to account for what your hearts have earned**". The oaths that you made with intention, knowing in your heart that you were making this oath, these are the oaths that Allah (swt) will hold you to account for. So if you make an oath, and you know that you are making this oath and you realize the consequences of this oath, only then will Allah (swt) hold you accountable for that oath. Such an

oath is what your heart has earned because it is in your heart that the intention for the oath lies. You fully intended to make this oath when you spoke those words and you even knew that it was displeasing to your Lord. That is when you are held responsible for your oaths. Once your heart has earned this oath, it is like a burden that your heart is carrying. The oath must now be fulfilled or the expiation must be paid for it. Otherwise you will meet Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment with that oath not fulfilled. That should be a reality that none of us should want to be faced with. That unfulfilled oath on our necks is just like a sin. It must be taken care of in the life of this world before our death or the Last Day arrives. May Allah (swt) save us from unfulfilled oaths! May Allah (swt) enable all of us to fulfill the oaths that we have made!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is Forgiving Forbearing**". Once again we see Allah (swt) calming the fear of the early Muslims. We see how Allah (swt) reminds them that He (swt) is Forgiving and Forbearing. Allah (swt) will forgive them the oaths that they have made in the past, and He (swt) will forgive them the oaths that they made unintentionally. He (swt) may even forgive them the oaths that they have made intentionally if they strive not to repeat that sin in the future. The same is true for us as well. Even if we have made the oaths that are displeasing to Allah (swt), and we have earned the punishment of Allah (swt) upon us for these oaths that we have made, we still have to remember that Allah (swt) is Forbearing. Allah (swt) could punish for these oaths, but He (swt) does not. In His (swt)'s Majesty and His (swt)'s Sublimity, Allah (swt) withholds the punishment that is due upon us even though He (swt) had the Full Power and the Complete Authority to punish us. Furthermore there is also a very good chance that Allah (swt) will forgive us if we rush to repent for that false oath that we made, and we promise never to do it in the future. That is why Allah (swt) is Forgiving and Forbearing. When we hear these Beautiful Names of Allah (swt), it should motivate us to worship and serve Him (swt) even more. How can you not love a Being that is so Pure and so Majestic! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that! How Beautiful and how Majestic and how Perfect a Master do you have? Should you not strive to do everything in your power to serve such a Master?

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَآئِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ ۖ فَإِن فَآءُو فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾

227. The ones who make *illa* to their wives, they should wait four months. Then if they go back, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

As we read these ayahs where Allah (swt) is building the first generation of Muslims to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind, we see how He (swt) has given them rulings concerning marriage and rulings concerning oaths. Marriage is the foundation of the Muslim family, which is the foundation of the Muslim society. Similarly the oath or the word of a Muslim defines who he or she is. The worth of a Muslim is his oath or promise. So we see the importance of these two rulings for the early Muslim community. In these ayahs Allah (swt) is teaching the early Muslims how they should base their marriages on Iman and He (swt) is teaching them how they should always fulfill their oaths. These Quranic teachings are among the foundations of our Din, and we as an Ummah need to learn them today. We as an Ummah today have reached a state where we are so far from the Din that we also need to be inculcated with the basics of this Din like these early Muslims were. Family and promises. These are two of the foundations of a Muslim, and these are what this ayah speaks about. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to learn all of the lessons in all these ayahs!

In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings the attention of the early Muslims to a special kind of oath that used to happen between the husband and wife in the period of Jahilliya that was called the ***illa***. In the time of Jahilliya, the age of ignorance before this Message was sent, when a husband and wife were going marital troubles and there were disputes between the two of them, the husband would make ***illa*** to his wife. Basically this was an oath where he swears not to have sexual relations with her for an extended period of time. This was meant to be a form of punishment for the wife. The scholars tell us how the ***illa*** in the time of Jahilliya would sometimes last years. We have to remember that this was a society in which men had all of the power. So they would put off their wives for months upon months or years upon years. We can imagine how

difficult this must have been on the wife. The husband may have had other wives or slave girls, but the wife would have to wait for years in a lonely bed and she could not even ask for a divorce. In this ayah Allah (swt) destroys this cruel way in which the ***illa*** was practiced in the time of Jahilliya.

Allah (swt) begins this by saying "**The ones who make *illa* to their wives, they should wait four months**". So here we see that Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that the maximum period for the ***illa*** must be four months. If the husbands are going to make ***illa*** to their wives it must be for four months or for a period shorter than that. Four months is the maximum duration for the illa. Once the four months are over, the husband must start having sexual relations with his wife again or he must divorce her. Four months is the maximum period that the wife can be left without having sexual relations with her husband.

You may be asking yourself at this point as to why Allah (swt) did not destroy this practice of ***illa*** completely if it is so unfair to women. Why does He (swt) only restrict it to a period of four months? First of all you should realize that it is wrong for you to question Allah (swt). When your Rabb legislates a Sacred Law, your only job is to take it and implement it will full submission. But in this ruling, we can see the benefit of ***illa*** if it is implemented only for a relatively short period of time. What was unfair for women in the time of Jahilliya was not the ***illa*** itself but the long period for which it lasted. However if the maximum duration of the ***illa*** can be kept to four months, then there are benefits in it that we can see. Sometimes when simple disputes arise between a husband and wife, the two of them may need some time apart from each other. Once they spend some time away from each other, they will begin to realize how much they love each other and how much they need each other. Temporary separation often brings love. But their period apart cannot be for too long. A long separation can be difficult on both the husband and the wife. That is why Allah (swt) sets the maximum period of the ***illa*** to four months. The husband can make the period less than four months but not more. So we see the Mercy of Allah (swt) for both the husband and the wife in this ruling that He (swt) legislates. Allah (swt) beautifully changed this practice of evil from the time of Ignorance to a practice in which there was good for both the husband and the wife.

In the second part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Then if they go back, then surely Allah is Forgiving Merciful**". In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if they should go back on the ***illa,*** if they should retract their oaths to abstain from their wives, then they will find Him (swt) Forgiving and Merciful. In other words Allah (swt) prefers when the husbands go back on the illa and return to their wives. So for example suppose a Muslim man makes an oath to abstain from his wife for two months. But then within that two months he wants to break this oath and go back to her. Allah (swt) is saying in this ayah that if the couple then comes back together then they will find Allah (swt) to be Forgiving and Merciful. Allah (swt) wants the Muslim family to be together. Even if they have to break an oath to come together Allah (swt) still wants them to be together. He (swt) will forgive and pardon the breaking of the oath in this instance. So Allah (swt) is telling the Muslim men in this part of the ayah that if should they go back on their promise to abstain from their wives then they will find Him (swt) to be Forgiving and Merciful.

The scholars disagree as to whether the expiation must be paid if the husband takes back the ***illa*** before the time he specified in his oath ends. But the lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how Allah (swt) wants the Muslim couple to come back together. Allah (swt) is telling the Muslim couple that if they should go back to each other then they will find Allah (swt) to be Forgiving and Merciful. Thus Allah (swt) is encouraging the Muslim couple to come together and be a family once again.

One lesson of the many lessons that we can take from this ayah is to see that husbands and wives should not be separate from each other for too long. The importance of family in our Din cannot be stressed enough, and it is the bond between the husband and the wife that keeps the family together. The stronger is the bond between the husband and the wife, the stronger the family will be. The stronger the family is the stronger the society as a whole will be. So husbands should be careful not to keep away from their wives for a period of more than four months. In this ayah Allah (swt) has told us that the maximum period for which a husband can be away from the wife is four months. This is the absolute maximum period of time that a Muslim couple can go without being with each other. When this time period elapses then they must come back together.

A sad circumstance that we see developing in the Muslim Ummah today is that many husbands leave their wives in their home country to come and work in the West. Many of these brothers are unable to bring their wives to be with them in the West, and they cannot go back home either. Back in their home country they cannot find work to support their family. So what happens is that Muslim families are divided for years as the father works in the West and the mother is left alone with the children in the home country. The only result is that the Muslim family, which is the very foundation of our society, starts to crumble. This is one of the many sad circumstances that this Ummah has to contend with as it tries to live without the Islamic State. The Capitalist economic system that rules over the world today has set up a world order where the Western nations have all of the wealth and resources and all other nations have little or nothing. They have pillaged our lands and they continue to pillage our lands of all of our wealth and resources. This has left very little for the people who live in those countries. So Muslim families have to become separated over great distances for them get enough sustenance to survive. Can you imagine how painful it must be for the husband to see another day pass without seeing his family and how painful it must be for the wife and children to see another day pass without seeing their husband and father? Such is the reality of the world today. In this ayah our Lord has set the limit for which a husband and wife can be away from each other at four months. Because of our situation in the world today this limit is exceeded by a long period of time. Not only is this displeasing to Allah (swt) but it also causes suffering for the Muslims. This also is most displeasing to our Lord. So how then can you say that we do not need the Islamic State and that we can be happy with the world as it is today. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to bring back the Islamic State so that this Ummah can experience the Mercy of the Din of Allah (swt) once again! May Allah (swt) reunite all of the families in this Ummah that have become separated! May Allah (swt) reunite these families on the worship and servitude of Him (swt)! Nothing matters in this life except the worship and servitude of Allah (swt)!

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

228. And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is Hearing Knowing.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the ***illa*** and how it was a period for which the husband would abstain from sexual relations with his wife for up to four months. This was a way in which marital disputes can be settled. A period of up to four months was decreed for the husband and wife to keep away from each other in their bedroom. They should both hope to resolve their differences in this time, and come to realize how much they love each other and how much they need each other. But what should happen if the four months should elapse and the couple is still not able to resolve their differences. In that case as we can see from this ayah, Allah (swt) permits divorce as an option.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And if they have resolved on divorce, then surely Allah is Hearing Knowing**". The scholars say that divorce in Islam is not desirable, some scholars even say that is the most disliked of the permissible actions to Allah (swt). But Allah (swt) still permits it because there are some couples who are simply not compatible. There are some couples who cannot bring themselves to love each other no matter how much they try. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims in this ayah that if the husband and wife are settled on divorce, then He (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. Allah (swt) Hears and Knows about all that happened between the couple that led the two of them to this situation where they are faced with divorce. If the husband was unjust with the wife or if the wife was unjust with the husband, then Allah (swt) Hears this injustice and He (swt) Knows them both well.

So the lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see that Allah (swt) does allow divorce for couples who are not compatible with each other. But since divorce is a disliked action, it should only be taken as a last resort when there is no other option left. Allah (swt) wants the Muslims to be happy, He (swt) does not want either the wife or the husband to suffer through a marriage that is not working. But at the same time the husband and the wife both need to remember that Allah (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. If either of them was unjust to the other or if either of them failed in their responsibility to the other or if either of them failed to be kind and

compassionate to the other, then they should remember that Allah (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. They should remember that they are only in this world to worship and serve Allah (swt), and part of that servitude is the good treatment of their spouse. So they should do all that they can to make their partner happy in order to avoid a divorce. Only when all else fails should the couple opt for divorce. If the husband and the wife see that they are truly not happy and they are not what the other wanted then Allah (swt) has given them this way out. May Allah (swt) help all Muslim couples remember that their first duty is to Him (swt) even in their relationship to each other!

Many other religions of the world do not even allow divorce and the scholars of these religions are critical of Islam for permitting divorce. But their criticism does not change the fact that the rate of divorce among their followers is still much higher than that of Muslims. Their criticism of Islam and its permitting divorce does not change the fact that among their society even the concept of marriage has become a joke. Men and women in their culture would have dozens of sexual partners before they resolve on one of them to marry. Some of their couples even live together for years before they get married. Even after marriage if either the husband or the wife should sleep with another person, this is not looked upon as a terrible crime as it is looked upon in Islam. Some husbands and wives even permit their spouses to have relationships outside of their marriage, that is how disgusting and corrupt their culture is. How different is this from Islam where Allah (swt) teaches both men and women to save themselves from their childhood for their wives and their husbands? A Muslim man is not even allowed to look with lust at a woman who is not his wife, he has to save himself completely for her. The same is true for Muslim women. Is it a surprise then that the rate of divorce is much higher in their society than it is in ours? In our culture Allah (swt) permits divorce but only as a last option when all other means of reconciliation fail. This shows the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on preserving the marriage and thus preserving the family. So we see that the importance of the family in our Din cannot be stressed enough. This is why every effort must be made to maintain the family. May Allah (swt) help us!

وَٱلْمُطَلَّقَـٰتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَـٰثَةَ قُرُوٓءٍ ۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ
أَن يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ فِىٓ أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِن كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَّ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ
ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ ۚ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوٓا۟ إِصْلَـٰحًا ۚ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ
ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِنَّ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

٢٢٨

229. And the divorced women should keep to themselves in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the greater right to take them back in that period if they desire reconciliation. And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity. And the men are a degree over them. And Allah is Mighty, Wise.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) began to teach the Muslim community about divorce. We mentioned how Islam was one of the few religions where divorce was permissible and how it was a way out for couples who are not compatible. However we also mentioned how divorce was an action that was disliked by Allah (swt), and it was best for a couple to try and reconcile their differences and avoid divorce if it was at all possible. However for those couples who are determined on divorce, they need to know how it should be performed. Even the method in which divorce is to be performed is legislated by the Law of Allah (swt). So here in this ayah Allah (swt) tells the Muslims how divorce is to be performed. The fact that Allah (swt) would reveal an entire ayah detailing how divorce is to be performed shows us how important marriage and family are in the Din.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And the divorced women should keep to themselves in waiting for three periods**". The first phase of the divorce is that the woman has to go through a waiting period. In this time she is not married to her husband but she cannot marry anyone else either. The length of this waiting period is based on her monthly courses and there is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to its exact duration. Some scholars say

she has to wait for three periods of menstruation while others say that she has to wait for three period of purity between menstruation. We will not go into the details of their debate here because this is not a tafsir of fiqh. We urge the reader who is interested in this topic to read the books of fiqh that cover this topic. For us the lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how Allah (swt) is giving the Muslim couple yet another chance to reconcile their differences and come together. This is a time for the husband and wife to be apart, and perhaps in this time, they will realize how much they need each and how much they love each other. Often times when you spend time away from a person you realize how much need them and how much love them. With this realization it is hoped that Muslim couple may come back together.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslim women that it is forbidden for them to conceal what He (swt) has created in their wombs. This could be a child or it could be their monthly courses. Both of these are to be found in the wombs of women and both of these are known only by those women. So she should not conceal her pregnancy or her monthly courses when she is in this waiting period. Remember that the waiting period of the woman that we discussed above is based on her monthly courses, so it is very important that she be honest about the duration of this time. She cannot make the waiting period shorter or longer by lying about her monthly courses. Similarly she cannot lie about a child that she might be carrying. If she is with child, then the husband has a right to know about it because it is his child as well. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells the women who are in their waiting period for divorce that they should not conceal a pregnancy and they should not conceal their monthly courses. If they do conceal, then they will have to answer for their sin when they meet Allah (swt) on the Last Day. May Allah (swt) save all our sisters from meeting Him (swt) with this sin on the Last Day!

In the next part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "**And their husbands have the greater right to take them back in that period if they desire reconciliation**". Here we see one of the reasons why Allah (swt) legislated the waiting period for women. It is a time in which their husbands can take them back if they both desire reconciliation in that period. Allah (swt) tells us

in this ayah that during this waiting period the husbands can take back their wives back if both of them want to come back together. The wife does not have to go back to her husband if she does not want to, and it would be a sin on the husband if he takes her back only to have sexual relations with her. Rather they can only come back together if they both want to come back together.

Now a question that you may have is what does Allah (swt) mean by "**the greater right**" that the husbands have? This means that it is husbands of the women who have a right to them over anyone else during this period and it is the husbands who can choose to take them back. So the women are not lawful for anyone else during this waiting period, it is only their husbands who have a right to take them back and resume the marriage. No other suitor can approach the woman for marriage till the waiting period ends and the divorce is finalized. In the waiting period it is the husbands who have the right to take them back. This is a right that Allah (swt) has given to the husbands. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity**". This part of the ayah is general and not restricted only to the subject of divorce. Here Allah (swt) says that Muslim women have rights over Muslim men just as Muslim men have rights over Muslim women. The rights that Muslim women have over men is that their husbands have a responsibility to provide for them and to treat them with kindness and understanding. The rights that Muslim men have over their wives is that their wives have a responsibility to obey them, provided that their husbands do not tell them to do anything forbidden. They both have a responsibility to treat each other with respect and kindness and a responsibility to try to make each other happy. If either the husband or the wife fails in this duty, then he or she is answerable to Allah (swt). So from this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) is telling us that both husbands and wives have mutual rights over each other in Islam.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And the men are a degree over them**". Many people would read the translation of this ayah and think that Allah (swt) has given preference to men over women in Islam. People who think in such a way a truly ignorant about Allah (swt) and His (swt)'s Book. Why would the Creator of both men and women, who is Just and Merciful, treat one of them

better than the other or give preference to one over the other? So it is no way true that Allah (swt) has given preference to men over women. Men and women are all the creation of Allah (swt) and He (swt) does not love any person more because of their sex. Allah (swt) loves the ones who are the most obedient to Him (swt), be they men or women.

What then is the meaning of this part of the ayah? If you connect this part of the ayah with the previous part, then you will see the meaning of this part clearly. What Allah (swt) is saying is that men have a greater degree of responsibility over women. It is the responsibility of the husband to take care of the family, to provide for the family, to look after the safety and the well being of the family. This is all in addition to the responsibility that both men and women have in carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. All of this burden and responsibility Allah (swt) has placed on the shoulders of the husbands. Some scholars even say that women are to be envied in Islam because they do not have as many duties and responsibilities as men. The only responsibility that women have is to take of their husbands and their family. Once they have done that then they have fulfilled all of the responsibilities that their Creator has given them. Of course they can do more if they wish and they will be rewarded by Allah (swt) but such would not be an obligation on them. Men on the other hand have a far greater responsibility and if they fail in this then they are answerable to their Creator. So we see that what Allah (swt) says in this part of the ayah is not that men are better than women but that men have a greater degree of responsibility than women. As always, Allah (swt) Knows best.

Those who say that Allah (swt) has given preference to men over women or that women are less than men in Islam are truly ignorant both about Islam and about how women in other ideologies besides Islam are treated. We challenge you to find any ideology that treats women better than Islam. If you are thinking about the West today then you are severely mistaken. What can you say about an ideology that treats the body of a woman like an object? This is a society that has no problem using the body of a woman to sell a can of beer. Her body is something to be displayed like some object or toy. They tell her that this is the only value that she has. This is what they have reduced her existence to. Just an object of decoration like a fancy car or a big house. But then again what do you expect from a people who not long ago in their history did not

even see women as human? Read the books of the Europeans and you will see that not long ago they used to debate as to whether the woman was even human or not. Those who said that she was human still said that her only role was to serve the man. It is not only the West today but every single ideology, thought, religion or system of life since the existence of man has always looked down upon women and has always transgressed against and oppressed women. In the Hindu tradition for example it was expected until not long ago for the woman to jump into the fire used to cremate her husband's body. Similarly many Jewish Rabbis would make a prayer where they would thank god for not being born a woman. In all of these societies women have always been treated as less than men. Women have always been looked down as despicable creatures. This is because these religions and ideologies have been made by men and men desire power over women. That is why these men have created a culture where they have given themselves power over women. Islam is the only ideology that is not from the mind of man but rather it is from the Creator of both men and women. That is why in Islam Allah (swt) has given both men and women their rights and Allah (swt) has given both of them their proper roles in the Muslim family and the Islamic society. We do not need to go over all of the rights that Allah (swt) has given women in Islam here because that would take pages and pages of this tafsir. We invite the reader who is interested to go and research the topic for themselves. We also challenge the reader to find even one ayah or hadith that says that men are better than women. There is none. The enemies of Islam often use this ayah but we can see how they have twisted and distorted the original meaning of the ayah. However we will mention here that not only has Allah (swt) given women countless rights in Islam but He (swt) has also given them the greatest blessing. That blessing is that women are also entitled to the Garden and to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) just like men are. How wonderful is that? This Message that leads to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and to the Garden of eternal bliss was revealed just as much for women as it was for men. All of the laws of Islam, with a few exceptions, apply to women just as they do for men. Allah (swt) addresses women in this Message just as He (swt) addresses men. So for example the command to pray, the command to fast, the command to give Zakat, the command to make Hajj, to command to carry dawah, all of these commands apply to women just as they do for men. All

of these are steps that women can take in their journey to their Lord. What could be better than that? So how can anyone find faults with the way this Din treats women when it was revealed for women just as it was revealed for men? Rather it is only ignorant people and people who want to find faults with Islam in order to attack this Din who have a problem with the role of women in Islam. In reality however their problem lies much deeper than simply finding faults with role of women in Islam, their problem is that they do not really believe that this Din is from Allah (swt). If they truly believe that this Din is from Allah (swt), then they will not question any of its laws because they know it is from the All-Knowing and the All-Wise. They will realize that we as humans whose knowledge is so limited are not one to question the All-Knowing and the All-Wise.

Thus we see that Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**And Allah is Mighty, Wise**". Realize now Who these laws come from. The One Who has Power over all things. The One Who has all of the Knowledge. The One Who has the Perfect Wisdom. It is not the place for men or women to question any of the laws of Allah (swt). When you realize Who these laws come from, you know that all that you can do is submit to them with full submission. Such is the Majesty and the Sublimity of the Being that revealed this Law. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this fact!

ٱلطَّلَـٰقُ مَرَّتَانِ ۖ فَإِمۡسَاكُۢ بِمَعۡرُوفٍ أَوۡ تَسۡرِيحُۢ بِإِحۡسَـٰنٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمۡ أَن
تَأۡخُذُواْ مِمَّآ ءَاتَيۡتُمُوهُنَّ شَيۡـًٔا إِلَّآ أَن يَخَافَآ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَإِنۡ خِفۡتُمۡ
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِمَا فِيمَا ٱفۡتَدَتۡ بِهِۦ ۗ تِلۡكَ حُدُودُ
ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَعۡتَدُوهَا ۚ وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّـٰلِمُونَ

٢٢٩

230. The divorce is twice. (After that) keep them with *M'aruf* or let them go with kindness. And it is not lawful for you to take back any part of what you have given them, unless they both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allah, but if you fear that you cannot keep within the limits of Allah, then there is no blame on them both for what she takes back. These are the limits of Allah so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah these are the *Dhalimoon*.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to give the early Muslim community rules on how the divorce is to be conducted. From these detailed laws we can see once again the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on family and the importance that He (swt) has placed on the relationship between men and women. In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) legislated that the first step in divorce is that women are placed in a waiting period. This is meant to be a period of reconciliation between the husband and the wife, a time apart from each other in which they can work out any differences that they have. We also mentioned how it was hoped that the two of them would come back together during that period. Allah (swt) also mentioned in the previous ayah how men have certain rights over women and how women have certain rights over men. In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to give the rules concerning divorce. In particular, Allah (swt) destroys a certain kind of divorce from the time of ignorance that was particularly cruel and unfair to women. In the time of Jahilliya, men would divorce and take back their wives several times. They would divorce them then take them back only to divorce them again. This process repeated again and again. Husbands would divorce their wives over the most trivial of matters. They would

not let their wives be happy with them and they would not let their wives go to find another husband either. They treated their wives like property whom they could just keep and let go whenever they wanted. So they just divorced and remarried these poor women whenever they felt like it. In this ayah Allah (swt) destroys such a cruel practice.

Allah (swt) says, "**The divorce is twice**". Here Allah (swt) puts a limit on the number of times that a man can divorce his wife. Here Allah (swt) says that a man can only pronounce divorce on his wife twice. Then Allah (swt) commands the Muslim husbands "**(After that) keep them with *M'aruf* or let them go with kindness**". After men have pronounced divorce on their wives two times, they then must keep their wives with ***M'aruf*** or let them go with kindness. The word ***M'aruf*** covers all of the duties and obligations that a husband has towards his wife. So if a husband should decide to keep his wife then he should treat her well and fulfill all of her rights and obligations. If he is not able to do that then he should let her go with kindness. To "**let them go with kindness**" is the third and final divorce. Notice that even in the way that Allah (swt) commands Muslims to divorce their wives there is kindness and mercy. It should not be an argument or debate where the husband and wife separate filled with hatred for each other. It should not be a divorce where the marriage ends with husband and wife fighting with each other, each one running to the best lawyer that they can find so that they can the most property and the most control over the children. Rather when a Muslim couple divorces, it should be with love and kindness. Both husband and wife should realize that they were both created to be the worshippers and servants of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) should take priority in their lives over everything else. If they can both see that their marriage is not working and that they are not compatible as a couple, then they can part ways but it must be with kindness and mercy. Instead of having hatred for each other they must both remember the purpose of their existence and that is the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). When they both live for Allah (swt), then they know that they cannot waste the precious moments of their life in this world having hatred for each other. They know that there are more pressing matters in their life that demand their attention. Matters such as how best to please their Lord. May Allah (swt) help us all to reach this ideal!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And it is not lawful for you to take back any part of what you have given them**". We know that when a Muslim man gets married, he has to pay a *Mahar* to his wife. This is a gift that the husband gives to this wife when their marriage contract is ratified. In addition to the Mahar, a husband may buy several other gifts for his wife over the course of their marriage. In addition to the Mahar and the gifts there is also whatever the husband spends to take care of his wife as he is obligated to do while they are married. All of this includes what a husband may give his wife over the course of their marriage. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells Muslim husbands that if they divorce their wives then it is not permitted for them to take back anything that they may have given their wives. Not the Mahar. Not the gifts. Not all that he bought to support her. All that he has spent on her while they were married belongs to her. Since he has touched her she is now entitled to keep everything that he has given her and everything that he has spent on her. If the husband tries to take anything back or if he even asks for something back then this is a sin upon him for which he has to answer to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us all from doing the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "**unless they both fear that they cannot keep within the limits of Allah, then if you fear that you cannot keep within the limits of Allah, then there is no blame on them both for what she takes back**". This part of the ayah is actually referring to a special kind of divorce called ***Al-Khul***. This is a divorce that the wife initiates when she is in some way displeased with her husband. She does this divorce by giving her *Mahar* or a portion of her *Mahar* back to her husband. When she returns this Mahar and the husband then accepts what she returns then the two of them are divorced. This is the divorce called ***Al-Khul*** and this is what Allah (swt) tells us about in this part of the ayah. In the special case of this kind of divorce the husband is allowed to take back the Mahar and there is no blame on him if he does.

Once again we see the Mercy and Justice of Allah (swt) for women in that He (swt) has given them the right to divorce their husbands if they feel that the marriage is not working. Notice also how Allah (swt) describes this kind of divorce. Allah (swt) says that this is the divorce where the husband and wife both fear that they cannot keep within the limits set by Him (swt). This

means that both of them fear that they cannot do their responsibility to the other. Allah (swt) has commanded both husband and wife to live in kindness with each other, and He (swt) has commanded each of them to fulfill the rights of the other. If either of them feels that they cannot keep the rights of the other, or they are unable to treat each other with kindness, then they are transgressing the limits of Allah (swt). This is because the limits of Allah (swt) include that both husband and wife be kind with each other and they each fulfill each other's rights. So if the wife reaches a point where she can no longer live in kindness with her husband, she just does not find the love for him, or if she feels that she can no longer fulfill her duties as a wife like coming to the bedroom when he calls her, then she can initiate this divorce called ***Al-Khul***. She does this by giving back her *Mahar* or a portion of it. The divorce of ***Al-Khul*** is the only time when there is no blame on the husband for taking back the *Mahar* that he gave his wife. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**These are the limits of Allah so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah these are the *Dhalimoon***". These laws concerning marriage and divorce are the limits set by Allah (swt). It is not right for either the husband or the wife to transgress these limits. So for example it would be a sin on the husband to divorce his wife more than two times just as it would be a sin on him to take her back only to have sexual relations with her. Similarly it would a sin on the wife to refuse to give her husband the *Mahar* if she intends to divorce him through ***Al-Khul*** just as it would be a sin on her to hide a pregnancy or her monthly courses during her waiting period. Similarly it would be a sin if either of them failed to fulfill the obligations that they have to the other or if they failed to treat each other with kindness. Both the husband and the wife need to realize that these limits have been set by Allah (swt). Their Lord and Master, their Creator and Sustainer, the One to Whom they will return for judgment. They should realize that if they transgress these limits, if they do the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt), then they would be among those whom Allah (swt) is referring to in this ayah as the ***Dhalimoon***. Do they realize what it means for Allah (swt) to include them in the company of such people? These are the people who commit evil, injustice and transgression. Would they ever want to be counted among such people? Would they ever want to return to Allah (swt) as such? So they must do everything to avoid the actions that are

displeasing to Allah (swt) and they must do everything to avoid being from among the ***Dhalimoon***. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) give His (swt)'s enabling grace to all the Muslim husbands and wives to always be in His Pleasure and to never be from among the ***Dhalimoon***!

فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعۡدُ حَتَّىٰ تَنكِحَ زَوۡجًا غَيۡرَهُۥۗ فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِمَآ أَن يَتَرَاجَعَآ إِن ظَنَّآ أَن يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِۗ وَتِلۡكَ حُدُودُ
ٱللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوۡمٖ يَعۡلَمُونَ ٢٣٠

231. So if he divorces her, then she is not lawful on him after that, until she marries another husband, then if he divorces her then there is no blame on them both if they reunite provided they are sure that they can keep within the limits of Allah. These are the limits of Allah that He makes clear for a people who know.

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues to relate for us the rules concerning divorce. Allah (swt) describes for us each step of how the divorce should be performed. We can see from these ayahs how divorce is one of the most important rulings in Islam. Although it is an action that is disliked by Allah (swt), it is still an action that must be handled very delicately. This is because it is an action that breaks the Muslim family. The Muslim family which is the foundation of the Muslim society. Thus from the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on divorce we can see the importance that He (swt) has placed on marriage and family. We see that although divorce is necessary for Muslim couples who are not compatible, it must still be handled very carefully. Thus we see Allah (swt) give the Muslim community detailed laws on how the divorce is to be conducted. We saw from a previous ayah how the husband was only allowed to divorce his wife three times. After that he must let her go with kindness or keep her and fulfill all of her rights. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) tells us the only one condition on which the couple may then come back.

Once again as we look at these ayahs we are reminded that the Quran is a legal text. It is a detailed law on how the human being should conduct the affairs of his life. It is not a Book simply to be read when someone passes away or in Ramadan. It is a practical Book that must be implemented in every aspect of the life of the individual and the society. When will the day come when the Muslims will look to the Quran in this way? May Allah (swt) make that day sooner rather than later!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**So if he divorces her then she is not lawful on him after that,**". Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) said that the divorce was twice. After that the husband must keep his wife with *M'aruf* or he should let her go with kindness. In this ayah Allah (swt) addresses the situation of a Muslim couple who want to come back together after they have been divorced twice. Notice once again the expansiveness of this text and how there is no situation that it does not address. First Allah (swt) says to the husband that his wife is no longer lawful for him after the second divorce. After the second divorce, even if the husband and the wife both want to come back together they will not be allowed to. If they were to get married after the second divorce, it would a sin on both of them. After they have been divorced two times, there is only one way in which they can come back together after that.

Allah (swt) says in the next part of the ayah "**until she marries another husband, then if he divorces her then there is no blame on them both if they reunite**". After the second divorce the only way that the husband and wife can come back together is the wife marries another man and then he divorces her. Once this other husband divorces the wife then she is allowed to come to her first husband. She may also return to her original husband if her second husband passes away. This is the meaning that we believe Allah (swt) gives in this ayah and Allah (swt) Knows best.

In his tafsir of this ayah, Ibn Kathir tells us of a practice called *Tahlil*. This was a practice where a woman would purposely get married to another husband only to go back to her original husband. Ibn Kathir also tells us how Prophet (saw) cursed the ones who practiced *Tahlil*. So we see that although Allah (swt) allows a woman to go back to her first husband after she has been married to another, neither the husband or the wife can purposely arrange for a marriage to

another man only so that the two of the can get back together. Such a practice is forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt), and the two husbands and the wife who knowingly participate in such an action earn the Wrath of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save all of us from ever being among those who earn His (swt)'s Wrath!

In the next part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) puts a condition on the two of them coming back together. Allah (swt) says, "**provided they are sure that they can keep within the limits of Allah**". Here we see that Allah (swt) says that the husband and wife can only come back together if they are both sure that they can both keep within the limits of Allah (swt). The limits of Allah (swt) are the rules of Allah (swt) concerning marriage. For the husband to keep within the limits of Allah (swt) he must fulfill all of his duties and obligations towards his wife and he must treat her with kindness, and similarly for the wife to keep within the limits of Allah (swt) she must fulfill all of her duties and obligations towards her husband and she must treat him with kindness. So if the two of them are sure that they have love for each other, that they desire each other, that they believe they can better worship and serve Allah (swt) together, then they can go back to each other even after a second divorce and even after another man has already married her and left her.

Then in the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**These are the limits of Allah that He makes clear for a people who know**". Once again we should remind ourselves Who these laws come from. These laws are not from any human, but they are from the Lord and the Master and the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. How then should we revere and respect these laws when we know from where they come? Our first duty is to believe that these laws are from Allah (swt), and then we should strive to implement them in our lives in order to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So when you fulfill the rights of your spouse and you treat them with kindness, you are not doing it for them but you are doing it for your Lord and Master as He (swt) has commanded you to do. And has Allah (swt) made His (swt)'s laws difficult to understand or in any way unclear or obscure? Are the laws of Allah (swt) in the Quran and Sunnah confusing and contradicting? No! Rather as Allah (swt) says in this ayah about His (swt)'s laws that "**He makes clear for a people who know**". All of the laws of Islam are clear for a people of

knowledge and understanding. There have been thousands and thousands of scholars in the history of this Din and none of them have ever complained that the laws of the Quran and Sunnah are confusing in any way. The laws of Allah (swt) are clear for the people of knowledge. It is only ignorant people who have no knowledge that think the Quran or Sunnah is confusing or unclear. Allah (swt) has made His (swt)'s Law clear for a people who have a sincerity to worship and serve Him (swt). Such people read the Quran and the Sunnah and they know which are the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and which are the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So they know how they can fulfill the purpose for which they were created. May Allah (swt) make us among such people! How Merciful and Compassionate then is the Creator Who has made His (swt)'s Law so easy for us to understand? May we all strive to learn the Law of Allah (swt) so that we may know how to please Him (swt)! Nothing else matters in this life!

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۚ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا۟ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ
نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوٓا۟ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ هُزُوًا ۚ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَآ
أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُم بِهِۦ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟
أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾

232. And when you divorce women, and then they complete their terms, then either keep them with *Maruf* or release them with *Maruf*. And do not keep them to hurt them, and whoever does that has surely harmed his own self. Do not take the signs of Allah as a joke. And remember the favor of Allah on you and what He revealed to you from the Book and the Wisdom admonishing you with it. Have Taqwa of Allah, and know that surely Allah is with every single thing Knowing.

In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to relate to the early Muslims the proper way in which divorce should be conducted. In the previous ayah we mentioned the importance of divorce in that it affects the very foundation of the Muslim society and that is the Muslim family. That was why it needed to be handled very delicately and it must be taken very seriously. Since this relationship between husband and wife is the very foundation of the Muslim society every aspect of it must be handled with care and reverence. These laws concerning marriage and divorce are part of the Din of Allah (swt), and the Din of Allah (swt) is no object of jest or play. That is why we see that Allah (swt) has dedicated many ayahs of this Surah to the subject of divorce.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah "**And when you divorce women, and then they complete their terms, then either keep them with *Maruf* or release them with *Maruf***". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims once again what must be done when the waiting period of their wives ends. They must keep them with ***Maruf*** or let them go with ***Maruf***. Once again we can note the Mercy and Compassion that Allah (swt) has for our sisters. Even during divorce which is time when

husbands would naturally have some anger or ill feelings towards their wives, Allah (swt) still commands the Muslim husbands to treat their wives with kindness and compassion and to fulfill all of their rights and obligations. We have already discussed the duties and obligations of the husbands towards their wife if they decide to keep them. If they should release them, the husbands' duties include allowing their wives to remarry another husband and making sure they are taken care of until they find another husband or until they return to their families.

Then Allah (swt) further emphasizes the kindness and compassion that we must have for our sisters when He (swt) says "**And do not keep them to hurt them, and whoever does that has surely harmed his own self**". If a husband should choose to keep his wife when her waiting period is over, he must not have any intention to cause her any harm or difficulty, should he do he would be committing a sin in front of Allah (swt). As we can see from this ayah, any husband who purposely hurts his wife or causes her undue hurt or suffering is only harming himself. He is harming himself in the life of this world by taking the love and compassion out of his marriage and bringing a life of misery and suffering for himself and his family. Even worse is that he is harming himself in the Hereafter by incurring sin for his action. We all know that any sin incurred in the life of this world can be transformed into unspeakable pain and suffering in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) save us from that! So we see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) commands the Muslim men who decide to keep their wives after their waiting period to keep them with love and compassion and not to hurt them or cause them any pain or suffering.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**Do not take the signs of Allah as a joke**". The scholars say the signs of Allah (swt) in this ayah refer to the laws of Allah (swt). The laws of Islam are also among the signs that this Message could only have come from Allah (swt). Anyone who studies the laws of Islam will see how they are the best set of laws to govern and rule the lives of human beings. At the level of the individual, the family and the society these laws organize and conduct the lives of Muslims in such a way as to bring them peace and tranquility. If you even look at only the economic system of Islam you will see how it distributes the wealth of the land fairly and it ensures that the needs of all its citizens are taken care of. Only Allah (swt) could have legislated such a perfect system for the human. This system of life comes from the law of Allah (swt) and

we see from this part of the ayah how Allah (swt) commands us not to treat His (swt)'s laws as a joke. The scholars say that if we fail to practice the laws of Allah (swt) in our lives or if we fail to implement them correctly in our society then that is how we would be treating them as a joke. We know that this system of life comes from Allah (swt), how then would we be if we fail to implement it or if we fail to practice it in our lives? Could you picture yourself returning to Allah (swt) after having taken His (swt)'s signs for a mockery. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And remember the favor of Allah on you and what He revealed to you from the Book and the Wisdom admonishing you with it**". We should not take the laws of Allah (swt) as a joke because the laws of Allah (swt) are a favor and blessing of our Lord upon us. "**The Book and the Wisdom**" in this ayah refer to the Quran and Sunnah, which are the two primary sources from which we derive the Law of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah how He (swt) revealed it to us to admonish us with it. This Law controls our behavior so that we would only do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and we stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). This Law blocks all of the paths that lead to the displeasure of Allah (swt) and shines a light on the path that leads to His Pleasure. Thus it shows you how to reach the goal for which you were created. Now do you see how it is a tremendous favor and blessing of Allah (swt) on you? Should you not then do everything in your power to implement this Law in your life? Should you not do what you can to implement this Law in the society in which you live?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) commands us to "**Have Taqwa of Allah, and know that surely Allah is with every single thing Knowing**". Allah (swt) sent us His (swt)'s Law so that we would implement it in our lives. Taqwa of Allah (swt) and the realization that He (swt) Knows every single thing is the primary motivator in implementing this Law and the primary deterrent from breaking it. When you remember and you realize that Allah (swt) Knows every single thing, He (swt) Knows all your actions and He (swt) Knows the intention behind your actions, will you not then strive to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) and strive to keep away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). This realization of the Knowledge of Allah (swt) in regards to our actions and the striving to only do what is pleasing to Him (swt) based on

this realization is what Taqwa of Allah (swt) is. So when you remember that Allah (swt) Knows about all of your actions, that is when you will have Taqwa of Him (swt). This is what Allah (swt) reminds us of in this part of the ayah. Taqwa of Allah (swt) is especially important in relation to the laws concerning marriage and divorce. Even in something as private as family life and the dealings with one's own spouse, this Taqwa must still be maintained. Remember that even your dealings with your wife are within the realm of the Knowledge of Allah (swt) and you will be held accountable for how you treat her. If you hurt her for no reason, remember that you are only hurting yourself. A small pain that you may cause her in the life of this world will be transformed into a tremendous pain for you when you meet Allah (swt) because He (swt) Knows all that you did to her. This is what Allah (swt) reminds the early Muslims and reminds us of in this part of the ayah. To always have Taqwa of Allah (swt) and to remember that He (swt) Knows everything. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being unjust to our spouses and may Allah (swt) help us to always remember the consequences of that!

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَن يَنكِحْنَ أَزْوَٰجَهُنَّ
إِذَا تَرَٰضَوْا۟ بَيْنَهُم بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِۦ مَن كَانَ مِنكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ
بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٢﴾

233. And when you divorce women, and then they complete their terms, then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands if they both agree between themselves in *M'aruf*. With this is admonished who among you believes in Allah and the Last Day. This is more virtuous for you and purer. And Allah Knows while you do not know.

We can see that Allah (swt) begins this ayah with the exact same words with which He (swt) began the previous ayah. Allah (swt) says "**And when you divorce women, and then they complete their terms**". These words indicate that time when the waiting period of a woman comes to an end when the couple must decide whether they want to come back together or whether they want to separate. This is the most crucial point in the divorce because it is here that the outcome of their relationship is determined. In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) reminded Muslim men that when this moment comes they must not take their wives back in order to harm them or cause them suffering in any way. Rather Allah (swt) told them to either keep their wives with ***M'aruf*** or to let them go with ***M'aruf***. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to describe what must be done at this crucial moment when the waiting period of the wife comes to an end and the decision is made as to whether she returns to her husband or not.

Allah (swt) then says in this ayah " **then do not prevent them from marrying their husbands if they agree between themselves in *M'aruf***". This part of the ayah is actually addressing the families of the wives whose waiting periods have ended. Allah (swt) says in this ayah that when the waiting period of a woman has come to an end, then she should not be prevented from marrying her husband if both of them agree to come back together in ***M'aruf***. So when her waiting period comes to an end, and she wants to return to her husband, then she should not be prevented from doing so. As long as she and her husband want to come back

together in ***M'aruf***, meaning they observe all of the laws of Allah (swt) and they treat each other with the love and kindness they each deserve, then the family of the wife should not stand in the way of the wife returning to her husband.

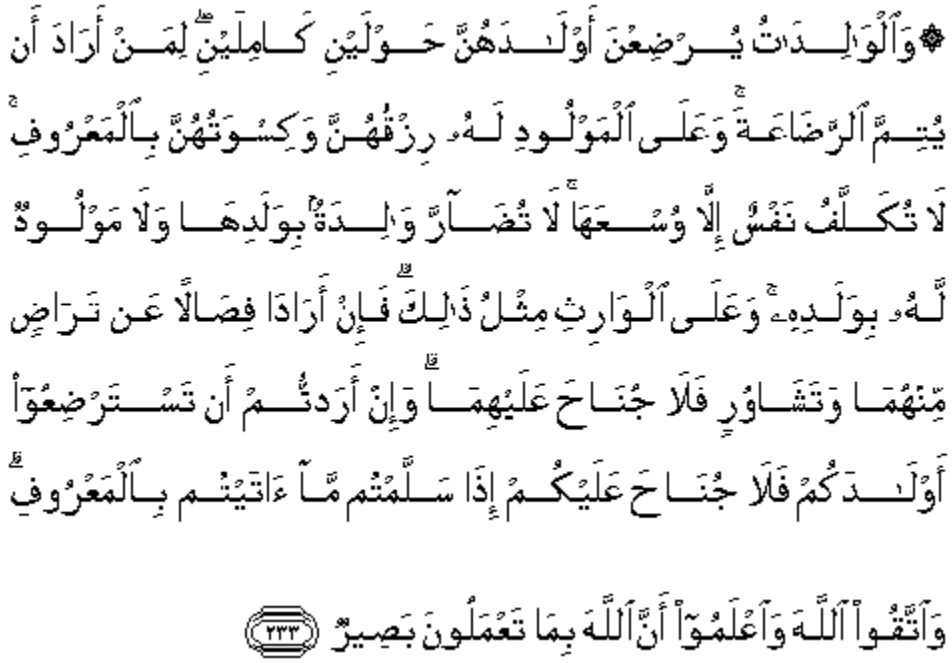
The scholars tell us how at the time of the Prophet (saw) this ayah was revealed to address this exact situation. Ma'qil ibn Yasir was a companion of the Prophet (saw). When his sister was divorced by her husband and her waiting period had ended, her husband wanted to take her back and she wanted to go back to her husband. But Ma'qil refused to marry her to him because the man had divorced her in the first place. Ma'qil even swore an oath that he would not allow the two of them to come back together. So much so was his animosity towards this man who had divorced his beloved sister. Then Allah (swt) revealed this ayah commanding the early Muslims not to prevent a Muslim couple from coming back together when both husband and wife desired to come back together. When this ayah was revealed Ma'qil immediately allowed his sister to marry her husband and he even paid the expiation for his oath. From this not only can we see the eagerness of the early Muslims to follow the commands of Allah (swt) but once again we see Allah (swt) exhorting the Muslims to maintain the bonds of family. Allah (swt) is encouraging Muslim couples to come together and to build families. So no only should Muslims get married and seek to build families themselves, but also they should not stand in the way of other Muslims getting married if they can see that both husband and wife are pious and they are good for each other. So we see from this part of the ayah as well that the importance of family in Islam. The importance of maintaining the bonds of family cannot be stressed enough. It is the sincere brothers and sisters of this Ummah who will bring back the Islamic State, and not tanks and atomic bombs, so our focus should be on building strong Muslim families rather than trying to research the latest weapons technologies. May Allah (swt) guide us!

Then Allah (swt) says "**With this is admonished who among you believes in Allah and the Last Day**". Here Allah (swt) is reminding the Muslims of the nature of these commands that He (swt) is giving them. It is an admonition for the one who believes in Allah (swt) and the Last Day. Notice how Allah (swt) links these commands with the belief in Him (swt) and the Last Day. Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims that if you believe in Me and the meeting with Me on the

Last Day, then do not do the actions that are displeasing to Me. For example do not prevent your women from marrying their husbands. Even if you are angry at the husbands for having divorced your sister, your fear for Allah (swt) and standing before Him (swt) on the Last Day should overcome that anger you have. This is one of many examples in the Quran where Allah (swt) links the behavior in this world with the belief in the Hereafter. Your behavior in this world is affected by your belief in the Hereafter. When you are certain that you are going to stand in front of Allah (swt) on the Last Day, and you are sure that Day is coming soon, then Insha Allah you will only do the actions in this world that are pleasing to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) help us all to prepare for the Last Day to the best of our ability with the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) says "**This is more virtuous for you and purer**". We can all understand the situation that Ma'qil ibn Yasir must have been in. A man had just divorced his beloved sister. Ma'qil obviously must have thought very highly of his sister. He may have thought that his sister is so pious, so beautiful and so noble that this man should have considered himself fortunate to have her. So you could see why he would have been so upset when this man divorced her and why he would have been so reluctant to give her back to him. Would you have acted any differently in his situation? But Ma'qil was missing the bigger picture in that by the fact his sister wanted to go back to her husband despite the fact that he had divorced her shows that she still has love for him. And as we mentioned divorce is a last option that must be implemented only when there is no love left between the couple and they are both sure that they do not want to be with each other. So Ma'qil did not realize that it would have been in the best interests of his sister, and her husband and the Muslim community as a whole if they stayed together. So for him to allow their marriage despite his grievances would be more virtuous for him and it would have been purer. Purifying yourself before Allah (swt) includes surrendering your desires for His (swt)'s. Doing what Allah (swt) wants for you rather than what you want for yourself. That is what true virtue and piety is. A good person is one who surrenders his will to that of his Creator and Sustainer, his Lord and Master. Allah (swt) reminds Ma'qil and reminds us of that fact in this part of the ayah. May Allah (swt) help us all to submit our desires and feelings to Him (swt)!

Finally Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Knows while you do not know**". In the final portion of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us that it is He (swt) Who Knows while we do not know. Like Ma'qil we are being asked to submit our desires to the Law of Allah (swt). This must be done with the realization that Allah (swt) Knows while we do not know. Allah (swt) Knows what is best for us and we do not. We should not question the Law of the Creator in any way but we should only submit to it with a full submission. We can become so arrogant with what little knowledge that we have that we tend to forget how it is Allah (swt) Who has all of the real knowledge and how our knowledge when compared to His (swt)'s is nothing. So when Allah (swt) tells us to do something we must do it knowing that command comes from the All-Knowing. Even if we do not feel like doing it and we feel like doing something else, we must still remind ourselves that our knowledge is little and that what Allah (swt) has commanded us to do is better for us even if we may not realize it. We must still do it because the command comes from the One Who has all Knowledge. Allah (swt) Knows what is best for us and we submit to His (swt)'s Knowledge with a full submission. We must always tell ourselves that Allah (swt) Knows while we do not know and that is why we have to follow all of His (swt)' laws without question. Look at the case of Ma'qil in this ayah. When Allah (swt) told him that it was better and purer for him to allow his sister to go back to her husband then he only submitted to this command with a full submission. Even though this command meant him having to admit that he was wrong and him allowing his sister to go back to a man who had divorced her Ma'qil still submitted to it. This must be our attitude as well. When it comes to the Sacred Law our job is not to question but instead our job is only to listen and obey. So even if our limited knowledge and our desires tell us to do one thing, and Allah (swt) tells us to do something else, we must do what Allah (swt) wants. Allah (swt) Knows while we do not know. May Allah (swt) help us and help all Muslims to realize and remember this fact!



234. And the mothers should suckle their children for two years, this is for whoever wishes to complete the time of suckling, and on the father is their sustenance and their clothing with M'aruf, and no soul is burdened more than it can bear. And the mother shall not be made to suffer for her child nor the father for his, and on the heir is incumbent similar to that. If they both decide on weaning the child by mutual consent and consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you desire to engage a wet nurse for your children then there is no blame on you so long as you pay fully what you would give in M'aruf. And have Taqwa of Allah and know that surely Allah is with all that you do Seeing.

One of the most important issues that comes up in any divorce is that of children and that is what Allah (swt) addresses in this ayah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) specifically addresses what must be done with young children who are less than two years. This is that vital age when the infant is most in need of its mother. It is when the child is most vulnerable and most in need of care. Allah (swt) tells us here of the responsibility of both the father and the mother during this critical age in the life of their child. Once again we can see from this ayah the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on family. Let us remind ourselves once again that Surah Baqarah was one of the first Surahs revealed in Madinah to guide the Islamic community that had formed there. In these ayahs we see that Allah (swt) has not given detailed rulings on the foreign policy of the

Islamic State or detailed laws on how to regulate the economy of the State, although these a very much a part of Islam as well. Rather the laws for these matters can be found in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). While here in the Quran, which is the foundation of Islam, we see laws relating to the foundation of the society and that is the family.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And the mothers should suckle their children for two full years**". Here Allah (swt) commands the Muslim mothers to breastfeed their children for the first two years. The breastfeeding should be present as long as she has the ability to do so. The breastfeeding of the child is an obligation on the mother for the first two years as long as she has the ability to do so. Even if she is divorced from her husband, she still has a responsibility to suckle the child. The milk that flows from her breast really belongs to that child and it is not right for her to deny it that. . Allah (swt) specifically emphasizes that is must be for "**two full years**" to show that the child has a right to that milk for the first two full years of its life. Even today doctors are discovering all of the benefits that can come to the child from the mother's milk. Breast milk has exactly the right amount of nutrients for the child and it also has antibodies to help protect the child from disease.

Then Allah (swt) says "**this is for whoever wishes to complete the time of suckling**". Not all mothers are able to complete two full years of breastfeeding for their child. Sometimes their milk may run dry, sometimes they might be sick, or there may be some other valid reason why the child should begin eating food other than its mother's milk. So Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah that the command to breastfeed the child is only for those mothers who are able and who do not find any valid reason not to breastfeed. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and on the father is their sustenance and their clothing with M'aruf**". This is true for the couple who is still married and even for the couple who is divorced when the child is less than two years of age. It is the responsibility of the father of the child to provide for the food, the shelter and the clothing of both the mother and of the child while she is breastfeeding it in those first two years. We see from the ayah that the father must provide "**with M'aruf**". In his tafsir of this ayah, Imam Qurtubi defines this as what is "without excess or negligence". So he does not have to overspend on them but he cannot leave them without their

needs. The father must remember that this spending is a duty that he has for Allah (swt) and if he spends too little then he is responsible before Allah (swt) for neglecting his obligations. May Allah (swt) save us all from that!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and no soul is burdened more than it can bear**". Here Allah (swt) says that the father does not need to provide for the wife and the child that which is more than his capacity. So the wife cannot demand from the husband the most expensive of clothing or the largest of houses. He has a responsibility to take care of her but only within his ability. From here we can see the Mercy and Justice of Allah (swt) for all parties. There is Mercy and Justice for the husband, for the mother and for the child. Even in divorce we can see that Allah (swt) ensured that the needs of the child are taken care of.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And the mother shall not be made to suffer for her child nor the father for his**". The scholars say that the meaning of this ayah is that neither the husband nor the wife can cause undue suffering for each other because of that child. For example the husband cannot neglect the obligations that he has to provide for the wife, and the wife cannot demand more than what is in the husband's capacity to pay. Even if they are divorced, the husband and wife still have a responsibility to look after their child. They cannot use their child as a way of venting any anger or ill feelings that they may have for each other. If they do then they are both answerable to Allah (swt).

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says '**and on the heir is incumbent similar to that**". Here Allah (swt) is saying that in case the father passes away, then it is the responsibility of his heir to look after the mother and the infant. So whoever inherits from the father, these are the people who are now responsible for the mother and the child. They must provide for and take care of the mother and child just as the father would have. From this part of the ayah we can see how even when the father has passed away, Allah (swt) has legislated laws to ensure that the mother and child are taken care of. How Merciful and Compassionate is Allah (swt) to the sisters and the children of this Ummah. Why is it that we as a nation have forgotten this mercy and compassion on our part?

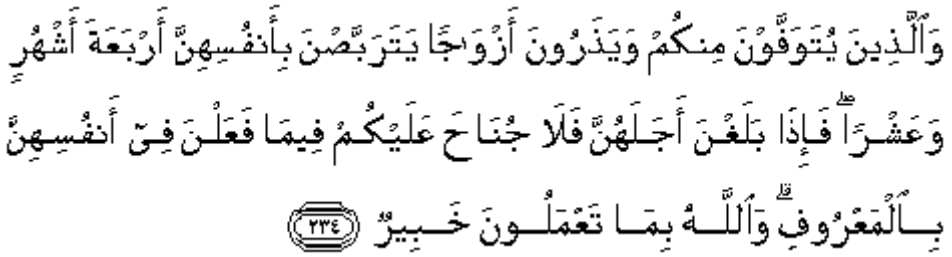
Then Allah (swt) says "**If they both decide on weaning the child by mutual consent and consultation, there is no blame on them**". Here Allah (swt) says how if for some reason that the mother is not able to breastfeed the child, then the child may be weaned on food other than it's mother's milk provided that both the mother and the father agree to this. So after mutual consultation between the father and the mother and after their agreement that it is what is best for the child, then there is no sin on them if they wean the child before it reaches two years.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And if you desire to engage a wet nurse for your children, there is no blame on you so long as you pay fully what you would give in M'aruf**". If the mother is not able to produce sufficient milk for the child then a wet nurse may be used to breastfeed the child for her. Here Allah (swt) says that there is no blame on the mother or the father if they employ a wet nurse to breastfeed their child in such a situation. The only condition is that the wet nurse must be paid in full for her services. Once again the amount must be what is **M'aruf**, that is not too extravagant or too little. We can also see from this part of the ayah how Allah (swt) commands that all debts, no matter how trivial, must be paid. From this part of the ayah scholars have ruled that it is an obligation for all employers to pay their employees and for all employees to fulfill their duties.

Finally Allah (swt) says "**And have Taqwa of Allah and know that surely Allah is with all that you do Seeing**". Notice how after Allah (swt) gives us commands, He (swt) always reminds us of His (swt)'s Names and attributes. Here Allah (swt) gave the Muslims several detailed commands on how to deal with young children. Allah (swt) expects all of these commands to be implemented and none of them to be neglected. So He (swt) reminded the Muslims to have Taqwa of Him (swt) and He (swt) reminded them how He (swt) is with all of their actions Seeing. He (swt) Sees every single thing that they do.

So for example when a mother decides not to breastfeed her child even when she is able then she should remember that Allah (swt) is Seeing her do that, and when a father does not pay enough to support his divorced wife and their infant child even when he is able then he should remember that Allah (swt) is Seeing him do that. If either husband or wife decide to neglect any of their duties then they must remember that Allah (swt) is Seeing.

The early Muslims realized Who Allah (swt) IS and they could picture themselves with the reality of having to face Allah (swt) on the Last Day. They knew that on that Day they would have to answer for all of their actions and they knew that Allah (swt) is Seeing to all of their actions. So they had this Taqwa of Allah (swt) and they did not do the actions that were displeasing to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) enable us to gain this Taqwa of Him (swt) as well! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that He (swt) is always Seeing every single one of our actions!


وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَٰجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ
وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ
بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٤﴾

235. And the ones who die from you and leave behind wives, they should keep to themselves in waiting for four months and ten days, then when they have completed their term, there is no blame on you for what they do with themselves in M'aruf. And Allah is with all your actions Well Aware.

The foundation of the Islamic society is the family and in this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to give us rulings on the family life of our community. We remind ourselves as we read these ayahs about the importance that our Lord has placed on family. The way in which we deal with our families should be every much an act of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as our prayers and fasting are. On the Last Day, Allah (swt) will question us on how we dealt with our family just as He (swt) will question us on our prayers and our fasting. So far Allah (swt) has already told us about marriage, divorce and children. Now He (swt) gives us rulings for another important aspect of family life and that is how we deal with widows. There would always be many widows in the early days of the Islamic State because many men would go out in the path of Allah (swt) never to return to their families. Instead of returning to their wives they would go their Lord.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells the entire community how the widows of such martyrs should be treated. Of course the ruling here applies to all widows regardless of how their husbands died.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And the ones who die from you and leave behind wives**". Here Allah (swt) is bringing our attention to widows. They are the women who are left behind when Muslim men pass away. Once again we can see the care and importance that Allah (swt) has placed on women. He (swt) dedicated an entire ayah in His (swt)'s blessed Book only to ensure that widows are properly cared for. Islam is a complete way of life and there are so many different subjects that Allah (swt) could have addressed in this ayah of the Quran. But Allah (swt) chose to address the subject widows because He (swt) cares for them. Who then can say that Islam neglects women or that Islam does not treat women well. Those who say so are unaware of the Source from where this Din originates. They are ignorant as to what is in the Quran.

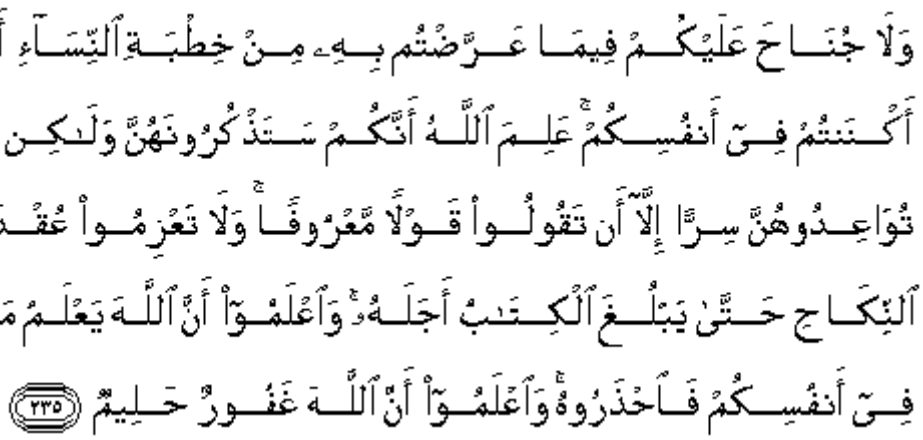
Regarding such widows Allah (swt) says "**they should keep to themselves in waiting for four months and ten days**". This is the mourning period for a widow in Islam. During this period she cannot marry anyone and she cannot accept explicit marriage proposals from anyone. She also cannot beautify herself or adorn herself for men in any way. The majority of the scholars also say that during this period she cannot leave her deceased husband's home unless absolutely necessary. So for example she can only go to the market for provisions during the day if she does not have anyone else to go out for her, and she can only go out for medical treatment if it is absolutely needed. Otherwise she must remain in the home of her husband during her mourning period. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**then when they have completed their term, there is no blame on you for what they do with themselves in M'aruf**". Here Allah (swt) says that when the mourning period is over, the widow should be free to do whatever she wants, as long as it is M'aruf, meaning as long it is in conformity with the Law of Allah (swt). So after the mourning period, she is free to accept marriage proposals, free to beautify and adorn herself, free to travel wherever she wishes and she is free to get married to another husband. Neither her relatives, nor the relatives of her deceased husband nor the Islamic State can prevent her from

doing so. Once her mourning period has ended she can do with herself as she pleases, just as long as it is in accordance with the Law of her Lord.

We can see the Wisdom of Allah (swt) in legislating this period of mourning for widows. Are there any two people who are closer in life than a husband and a wife? A husband and wife have a special companionship that is unlike any other. That is why women need time to get over the loss of their husbands. When anyone we know passes away, the Prophet (saw) has said that the time for mourning should only be three days except in the case of a wife whose husband passes away. Her period of mourning is as Allah (swt) says in this ayah, four months and ten days. This is for her to get over the loss of the person who was closest to her in life. Some scholars have also noted that this is a period when it can be ascertained for certain that she is not pregnant. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that "**Allah is with all your actions Well Aware**". Allah (swt) is Well Aware of every single action that you do. There is not even the smallest of actions that you can do that He (swt) is not well acquainted with. So we can see once again how Allah (swt) links obedience to His (swt)'s laws and rulings with the knowledge of His (swt)'s Names and attributes. The ones who know Allah (swt)'s Names and attributes will think twice about doing the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). When you know that Allah (swt) Knows Well every single action that you do, will you not then be extremely careful with your actions? Can you afford to give yourself the luxury of even a moment of heedlessness to Allah (swt)? No, because although you may not always be aware of Allah (swt) you should know that Allah (swt) is always Aware of you and that He (swt) is Aware of all that you do. And it is only your deeds that you take with you to your grave and it is only your deeds that you will meet Allah (swt) with. So should you not then strive to remember Allah (swt) at every moment of your life and strive to only do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)? Remind yourself again and again that Allah (swt) is even more Aware of your deeds than you are. Even the smallest of deed, an action that would not even take you a moment to do, Allah (swt) Knows about it even more than you do. So how much then should we be aware of our Lord? How much should we be asking Forgiveness of Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!



236. And there is no blame on you in giving a hint regarding proposal of marriage to these women or keeping it concealed to yourself. Allah Knows that you will think of them in this way. But do not make a contract with them in secret except that you may say a word in M'aruf. And do not resolve on marriage until the prescribed period reaches its end. And know that surely Allah Knows what is on your mind so fear Him. And know that surely Allah is Forgiving Forbearing.

We mentioned in the previous ayah how there were many widows in the early days of the Islamic State. Many of the Muslim men would go out in jihad in the path of Allah (swt) and they would not return to their wives, rather they would return to Allah (swt) as martyrs. Now Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) knew the importance of family. So they knew that their Muslim sisters should not be left without husbands. They knew that Allah (swt) created men and women for each other, and both of them should not be left without the other. So many Muslim men in the early days of the Islamic State wanted to wed these sisters who were widowed. Because of this the sisters who were widowed had a long line of potential suitors waiting for them. These brothers were waiting for the mourning period of these widows to finish so that they can propose to them. All of these Muslims wanted to make sure that their sisters in Islam were taken care of. They knew the importance of family in this Din and they knew the importance of every sister having a husband. Now some of the brothers found it difficult to wait for four months and ten days to

propose, they wanted to propose to the widow sooner so that another man would not beat them to her. For such brothers, Allah (swt) revealed this ayah.

Once again we can note from this ayah the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on making sure that all of our sisters are taken care of. The care that Allah (swt) has taken to make sure that as many Muslim families as possible are established. We can see from this ayah that Allah (swt) does not want anything to stand in the way of a good Muslim brother and sister from becoming husband and wife. Not even the mourning period of the widow.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And there is no blame on you in giving a hint regarding proposal of marriage to these women or keeping it concealed to yourself**". If a Muslim brother was interested in a Muslim sister who was a widow in her mourning period, and he desperately wanted to propose to her before anyone else did, Allah (swt) says to him in this ayah that he may give a hint of a proposal. For example he may say "how fortunate would be the husband who could have you as a wife" or he could even say "I hope Allah (swt) may bring us together as husband and wife" or something to that effect. It is not a direct proposal but it is a hint at a proposal. Through this proposal the sister may understand his intentions and she may keep herself for him when her mourning period ends. But on the other hand if the brother wants to keep his desire to himself until the mourning period is over, and then propose to her directly, then that is acceptable as well. Both of these options are acceptable for the Muslim brothers who are interested in Muslim sisters who are widowed.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Allah Knows that you will think of them in this way**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslim brothers that He (swt) Knows that they think about proposing to the Muslim sisters who are widowed. Allah (swt) Knows them and He (swt) Knows that they will have this intention. So it was only part of His (swt)'s Mercy and Compassion for this Ummah that He (swt) gave this allowance where the brothers can make this indirect proposal. From this we can see the Mercy of Allah (swt) for this Ummah, and we can see how Allah (swt) wants Muslim sisters to be wed as soon as their mourning period ends. We can also see how Allah (swt) wants Muslim families to be formed and righteous children to be raised.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**But do not make a contract with them in secret except that you may say a word in M'aruf**". Now here is a word of caution in this part of the ayah. Allah (swt) tells the Muslim brothers that although He (swt) has given them the allowance to make this indirect proposal, this does not mean that they can make an explicit proposal nor can they actually make a marriage contract. Such an action would be forbidden while the sister is still in her mourning period. All that they can do is "**say a word in M'aruf**". This "word in M'aruf" refers to the indirect proposal that they make towards the sister. Even their words in this indirect proposal must be in conformity to the Law of Allah (swt). They cannot say to her anything explicit, anything lewd or anything unbecoming of a Muslim. They can only say that which is decent and that which is indirect like the example we gave above. Anything more than this would be forbidden because the sister is still in her mourning period. Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And do not resolve on marriage until the prescribed period reaches its end**". Here Allah (swt) explicitly reminds us that no marriage is to be proposed or contracted until after the mourning period of the widow ends. So although there could be an implicit proposal, Allah (swt) makes it clear in this part of the ayah that it must not be an actual marriage proposal and there can be no marriage contract signed.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And know that surely Allah Knows what is on your mind so fear Him**". Allah (swt) Knows the intentions of all Muslim brothers and sisters towards each other. If they have a desire to get married once her mourning period ends, then He (swt) Knows whether they intend to abide by His (swt)'s Law or whether they are inclining towards satisfying their lusts. So Allah (swt) reminds them of His (swt) Knowledge and He (swt) reminds them to fear Him (swt). Allah (swt) has given them these allowances so that they can get married according to His Law once her mourning period ends. However if they try to circumvent the Law of Allah (swt) and do anything more than an indirect proposal with honorable and decent words then they should remember that Allah (swt) Knows what they are doing. Not only does Allah (swt) Know what they are doing but He (swt) also Knows what is on their minds. They should remember how Allah (swt) is going to take them to task for every single one of their actions on the Last Day. Thus in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) is reminding these brothers and sisters that He (swt) Knows what is on

their minds. If they are even thinking of going beyond the limits that He (swt) has set here then they should know that He (swt) Knows what they are thinking. They should remember that on the Day of Judgment it could be the smallest of deeds that could change the scale.

Finally Allah (swt) says, "**And know that surely Allah is Forgiving Forbearing**". Whenever Allah (swt) mentions fear of Him (swt) it used to send chills down the spines of the early Muslims. They would almost become paralyzed with the fear of Allah (swt). So in this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that He (swt) is also Forgiving and Forbearing. He (swt) is Forgiving in that if they had a small intention in their hearts to break the Law of Allah (swt), but they did not follow through with that intention then Allah (swt) would Forgive them and He (swt) would not punish them. Similarly Allah (swt) is also Forbearing in that even when they do the actions that would warrant the punishment of Allah (swt), He (swt) does not punish them immediately but rather He (swt) delays the punishment and He (swt) even wipes away the punishment if they sincerely make repentance to Him (swt). Such is our Lord. He (swt) Forgives again and again and He (swt) withholds the punishment again and again. How then can you give up on your Lord no matter how many sins you have done? How then can you think that He (swt) will never forgive you? Whenever we fall into sin may Allah (swt) always help us to remember how Forgiving He (swt) IS! May Allah (swt) make us among those who are always making Tawbah to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) help us to remember that He (swt) is the Forgiving and Forbearing!

لَّا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا۟
لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى ٱلْمُوسِعِ قَدَرُهُۥ وَعَلَى ٱلْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُۥ
مَتَٰعًۢا بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

237. There is no sin on you if you divorce women before you have touched them and before you have given them their *Mahr*, but give them a gift, the rich according to his means and the poor according to his means. A gift with *M'aruf*. A duty upon the *Mohsineen*.

In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives us rulings on what must be done when women are divorced before the marriage is consummated and before the *Mahar* is paid. Once again we remind ourselves that the *Mahar* is an obligatory gift that the husband must give to his wife when they get married. We remind ourselves also that the consummation of the marriage is the couple spending the night together. Here Allah (swt) gives the ruling of what must be done if the couple desire a separation while the *Mahar* has not yet been paid and the marriage has not yet been consummated. From this ayah we are once again reminded of the importance of marriage and family in this Din. The fact that Allah (swt) would dedicate so many ayahs to this subject shows the importance of it.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**There is no sin on you if you divorce women before you have touched them and before you have given them their *Mahr***". The Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) used to look down upon any divorce that occurred before the marriage was consummated. They used to think that even if the couple decides that they are not right for each other, they should still consummate their marriage first before they divorce. Here Allah (swt) shows how such thinking is wrong. If the marriage contract has been signed, but then the couple can clearly see that they are not right for each other, then there is no obligation on them to spend the night together. This time of intimacy should only be for couples who love each other and who want to spend their lives together with each other. If the couple can see that they

are not right for each other, then they can end the marriage before they even touch each other. Allah (swt) says in this part of the ayah that there is no sin on them in this case. The paying of the *Mahar* is closely linked with the consummation of the marriage. Once the marriage has been consummated, the husband must then pay the *Mahar* that he agreed to in the marriage contract, otherwise it would be a sin on him. Allah (swt) Knows best!

So what must the couple do if they divorce before the husband pays the *Mahar* and before they consummate the marriage? Allah (swt) says "**but give them a gift**". The husband must give his wife a gift if he should divorce her before consummation and before payment of the *Mahar*. Regarding this gift Allah (swt) says that it must be for "**the rich according to his means and the poor according to his means**". Once again we see the Mercy and Justice of Allah (swt) in the laws that He (swt) legislates. Allah (swt) cares for the Muslim sister so He (swt) legislates that she should receive a gift during this difficult time of divorce. Even though her husband has not even have touched her, she still receives this gift to console her during this difficult time of divorce. Allah (swt) also cares for the Muslim brother in that He (swt) does not order him to give a gift that it beyond his means. The Muslim brother should only give what is according to his means given his current financial situation in life. He does not need to give more than he can afford. At the same time however, he must remember that the order to give this gift came from his Lord so he should not give a gift that is worthless or of low value. He must give the best that he can afford according to his situation. Allah (swt) Knows best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**A gift with *M'aruf*. A duty upon the *Mohsineen***". This part of the ayah is an indication that the bestowal of this gift is an obligation for all Muslim men who are in this situation where they are divorcing their wives before they have consummated the marriage and before they have paid the *Mahar*. Here Allah (swt) shows Muslim men that marriage is no joke and similarly divorce is no joke. They are both something that must not be taken lightly. Even if the marriage ended before the husband and wife had a chance to consummate the marriage and even before the Mahar was paid, the husband still has to give this gift. If he does not give this gift he will be sinning in front of Allah (swt), and he will have to answer before his Lord on the Last Day. We can also note how Allah (swt) describes the gift as being

with M'aruf. Recall how we said that this means not too extravagant and not too niggardly. So one does not have to sacrifice all of one's wealth in this gift but at the same time it must be a gift of some value. The value that you place in this gift shows the regard that you have for Allah (swt) and the extent to which you are willing to sacrifice to obey His (swt)'s command. So we see from this final part of the ayah that this gift is an obligation for all husbands who divorce their wives before consummation of the marriage and before the Mahar is paid. Both the rich husband and the poor husband must give the best gift that he can afford to the woman that he is letting go. By giving this gift he is showing regard for Allah (swt) and he is also showing love and compassion for the woman that he is letting go. Such a gift will also show how even a divorce such as this will not end with any hard feelings between the Muslim brother and sister or between their respective families. Thus the overall unity of the Muslim community will be preserved. Even in this situation where Muslim couples see that they are not right for each other and they have to part, they will part on love and brotherhood. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize the love and compassion that He (swt) has placed in His (swt)'s Law! May Allah (swt) help us to realize that all that matters is that we submit to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) help us to realize that one of the ways in which we submit to Him (swt) is by showing love and compassion to our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters and to our fellow brother and sisters in humanity!

وَإِن طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ
فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَا۟ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِۦ عُقْدَةُ
ٱلنِّكَاحِ ۚ وَأَن تَعْفُوٓا۟ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَنسَوُا۟ ٱلْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾

238. And if you divorce them before you touch them but after you give them the Mahar, then give them half of the Mahar, except if she should relinquish it, or he in whose hand is the marriage should relinquish it completely, and to relinquish is closer to Taqwa, and do not forget *Fadl* between yourselves, surely Allah is with what you do All-Seeing.

Remember in the previous ayah how Allah (swt) gave us the ruling of what must be done when a couple is divorced before they have consummated the marriage and before the Mahar has been given. Allah (swt) told us how the husband was obligated to give a gift to the woman he was letting go. It was gift that was according to his means, according to what he can afford. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us the ruling on how to conduct the divorce where the marriage has not been consummated but the Mahar has already been paid. Once again we should note the details in the Law of Allah (swt), how the Law covers every situation that could arise in the lives of the Muslims.

Allah (swt) begins the ayah by saying "**And if you divorce them before you touch them but after you give them the Mahar**". Here Allah (swt) clearly describes for us the situation for which the ruling that follows will be applied. Once again we can note the clarity with which Allah (swt) gives us rulings in the Quran. Allah (swt) makes it clear how the previous ayah applied to the case where the Mahar had not been paid and the marriage was not consummated, and this ayah also applies to where the marriage is not consummated but it is where the Mahar has already been paid. So who is there who can say that the ayahs of the Quran are not clear, and who is there that they can seek to bring their own interpretation when the meaning that the words gives is so clear?

For this situation, Allah (swt) says "**then give them half of the Mahar**". If a husband divorces his wife before the consummation of the marriage then he is obligated to allow her to keep half of the Mahar. If the entire Mahar had already been paid in full before the divorce, then after the divorce the wife must give back half of it. So the ruling in this case is that the husband gets half and the wife gets half. Once again we can see Allah (swt) give rulings that are especially favorable to our sisters. The husband is still obligated to give her half of the Mahar even when he has not even touched her and she is no longer his wife. Who then can come and say that the laws of Islam are unfair for women? Do these look like the laws that were made by men in a desert society that used to completely exploit and oppress women? No rather these are the laws that come from the Creator and Sustainer of this universe. Would you not then give them the respect that they deserve?

Then Allah (swt) says "**except if she should relinquish it**". Here is an exception to the ruling above. Here Allah (swt) says that if the wife wants to she can give up her half of the Mahar, and she can return it to her husband. So for the sisters who may come from wealthy families or the sisters who may want to show kindness to their husbands, they can give up their share and return it to the former husbands.

Then Allah (swt) says "**or he in whose hand is the marriage should relinquish it completely**". This is yet another exception to the ruling of the wife getting half and the husband half. Most of the scholars say that whom Allah (swt) means by "**he in whose hand is the marriage**" is the husband. So here Allah (swt) is saying that if the husband wishes he can forego his entire claim on the Mahar and give it completely to the wife. This means that the wife would get to keep the entire Mahar just as she would have if they had consummated the marriage even though in this situation they have not. So another exception to each spouse getting half of the Mahar is that the husband gives the wife the entire Mahar even though he has divorced her without ever touching her. Allah (swt) Know best!

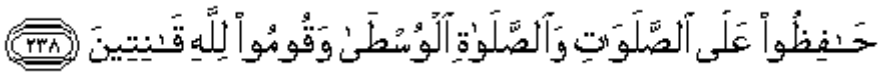
Then Allah (swt) says "**and to relinquish is closer to Taqwa**". This is directed to both the husband and the wife. Allah (swt) tells each of them that it is better for each of them to give up their share of the Mahar. So whoever of them both remembers Allah (swt) more, whoever of them

fears Allah (swt) more, that one would rush to give up their share of the Mahar. Because as they can see from the words of their Rabb in this ayah, such is closer to Taqwa. What is most important is that mutual love and compassion be preserved in the Muslim community even during times of divorce. Each member of the Muslim community should love to sacrifice for the sake of Allah (swt) in order to please another member of the community. This way the love exists between the members and the community remains united and strong. Our Ummah needs to be united as one body, and in ayahs like this, Allah (swt) ensures that even small family squabbles over something like the Mahar in a divorce does not get in the way of that unity. Everyone should love each other, and everyone should be willing to sacrifice for each other. How far is the Muslim Ummah today from the model that Allah (swt) expects of us in the ayahs of the Quran?

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do not forget *Fadl* between yourselves**". The word ***Fadl*** gives the meaning of "kindness", "bounty", and "grace". Allah (swt) is the owner Immense ***Fadl*** and He (swt) has given us more than we could possibly ever imagine. But in this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us how we must not forget ***Fadl*** between ourselves. Each member of the Muslim community must give with generosity as much as he or she can to the other members. Not only must you give your Muslim brothers and sisters what is their right and their due, but you must also try to give them more than what they deserve from you. Is this not what Allah (swt) has done to you? This part of the ayah applies not only to husbands and wives in regards to the Mahar, but to all Muslims in their dealings with each other. This ***Fadl*** between Muslim brothers and sisters does not have to be money or wealth, it could even be a smile or a kind word. We should give as much as we can to each other and consider as a part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) enable us all to be as generous as we possibly can to our Muslim brothers and sisters! For that is part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as well!

Finally Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims "**surely Allah is with what you do All-Seeing**". Allah (swt) Sees every single one of our actions. There is not a single action that we can do that Allah (swt) does not witness. For all the husbands and wives who found themselves going through this kind of divorce, their knowledge that Allah (swt) Sees all that they do was a motivation and incentive for them to do the right thing and strive to give up their share of the

Mahar. Each of them knew that should they be the one to forfeit the Mahar and give it up to the other party, then Allah (swt) Sees what they do and He (swt) would be pleased with that. Is there anything better than doing an action that Allah (swt) is pleased with and having the knowledge that He (swt) is Seeing you do that action? How wonderful a feeling is it to know that right at this moment your Lord is witnessing you and perchance He (swt) may be pleased by what He (swt) is Seeing? Allah (swt) Sees everything. So this is a fact that we as Muslims must be conscious of throughout our daily lives. Whenever you feel lazy in doing your acts of obedience to Allah (swt), remember that right now at this very moment Allah (swt) Sees what you are doing. Whenever you are tempted to disobey Allah (swt) and break His Law then also remember that Allah (swt) Sees what you are doing. May Allah (swt) help us to remember Him (swt) at every moment and may He (swt) help us to remember how He (swt) is Seeing each and every one of our actions!



239. Keep guard over your prayers, and the middle prayer, and stand before Allah *qanitin*.

Here we see that in between the ayahs concerning divorce, Allah (swt) reminds us of our Salah. Sayyid Qutb comments on this ayah by reminding us how this change in the subject matter of the ayahs is another aspect of the Miracle of the Quran. Allah (swt) is the only One Who can easily and smoothly change the subject matter and theme of the ayahs of the Quran without the change seeming out of place and without confusing the listener. Such a drastic yet smooth transition in the meaning of the words is a feat that is not achievable by the human writer. Only Allah (swt) is Able can compose a Quran where the meaning of the ayahs can be changed so easily and so smoothly. Sayyid Qutb also mentions how this ayah shows that all of Islam is part of our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The way in which we marry and we divorce is just as much a part of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt) as our prayers are.

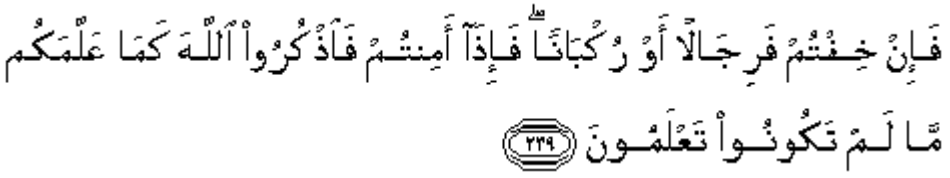
Allah (swt) begins this ayah by reminding us; "**Keep guard over your prayers**". Our Salah is something that we must guard like we would guard our family and our wealth. If we were

to miss making a Salah at it's appointed time then it would be like we lost that Salah. So to guard our Salah is to be mindful of the time for prayer and to strive to perform each prayer when the time comes. No matter what the difficulty, no matter what else you may have to do, when the time for Salah comes you must perform it. There is no excuse. This is because to lose your Salah would be even worse than losing your family or your wealth. Because if you lose your Salah you then you would be losing that which is most precious in your life; the Pleasure of Allah (swt). Think about Who Allah (swt) IS, then think about what you are losing, then realize how great is the loss of even one Salah. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to be constant in our prayers and may Allah (swt) save us from ever missing even one Salah!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and the middle prayer**". Here Allah (swt) is telling us that we should especially keep a guard over our middle prayer. The scholars have various opinions over which of the five daily prayers is "**the middle prayer**", but the strongest opinion and that of the majority of the scholars is that it refers to Salatul 'Asr. The reasoning that many scholars give is that this is the prayer that comes in between the five and it is the prayer during which one finds oneself most occupied with the activities of life. Because you are usually busy with your day when this Salah comes, this is the prayer that you are most likely to miss if you are not careful in guarding it. So the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we should strive to keep a guard over all our prayers, but we must be especially careful with Salatul 'Asr. May Allah (swt) enable us all to make Salatul 'Asr and all our other prayers on time!

Finally Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**and stand before Allah *qanitin*.**" This part of the ayah is to remind us that our Salah should not just be five minutes of our day where we say some words that we do not understand while simply moving our bodies up and down. Many scholars have reminded us that the more heedless we are of Allah (swt) during our Salah, the greater the chance is of our Salah not being accepted by Allah (swt). How then can we expect to fare before Allah (swt) on the Last Day when even our Salah is not in order? So Allah (swt) reminds us that when we stand for our Salah we have to sand ***qanitin***. This means that when we stand before Allah (swt) in our Salah it must be with full humility and complete obedience. Our entire selves must be dedicated to Allah (swt) during our Salah. Nothing else should distract us

from Allah (swt) during our Salah. Our minds must be focused on Allah (swt) during our Salah. When we are standing we should be thinking about the meaning of the Quran that we are reciting, when we are bowing we must magnify the Greatness of Allah (swt), when we are prostrating we must extol the absolute Perfection of Allah (swt), and when we are sitting we must think about the supplications that we are making. All of this humility, obedience and complete submission is captured in the word ***qanitin***. May Allah (swt) make us among those who make our Salah to Him (swt) ***qanitin***!



240. But if you fear, (then make your prayers) on foot or riding, but when you are safe then remember Allah as He has taught you all that you used to not know.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) reminded us how we needed to keep guard over all our prayers and how we need to be especially careful about Salatul 'Asr. Allah (swt) also reminded us how we need to make all our prayers ***qanitin***. This means with complete obedience and full humility before Allah (swt), with our entire selves focused on Allah (swt). So the Salah must always be guarded closely, you have no excuse before Allah (swt) if you lose even one of your Salah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how even during times of fear the Salah must be made.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**But if you fear, (then make your prayers) on foot or riding**". You may think that the only time in which you may have a genuine excuse for purposely not making one of your prayers is when you feel that you are in real danger. When you feel that there is an enemy army that is about to attack you, or you feel there is a predator that is stalking you, or a hurricane or a sandstorm is about to strike you. During such a time, you may feel that if you should occupy yourself with Allah (swt), if you should take those ten minutes to devote your entire body to Him (swt) for your Salah, then this danger may overcome you and you may lose

your life. You know that Salah is so important and so you may think that such a time is the only time where you may have an excuse for missing it. But look at what Allah (swt) says in this ayah. Allah (swt) says that even in such a state of fear, you must still make your Salah. Even when you are in such danger, you do not have an excuse for missing your Salah. Allah (swt) says in this ayah that you can make your Salah on foot or riding. This means you do not need to face the qibla, and you do not even need to make a full prostration or a full bowing. The scholars say it is enough to recite the words and nod your head for the movements. So we see that even in this time of fear, Allah (swt) has not given us an excuse to miss our Salah. Even in a time of great fear, the Salah must still be made. Can you then even begin to realize how important our Salah is? Many scholars have equated to Salah to Iman, it is something that must always be present, if it leaves then so does Iman. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In the second part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but when you are safe then remember Allah as He has taught you**". This means that when you find yourself in a safe place and free from the danger, then you should make your Salah as usual. Notice how Allah (swt) describes the Salah as something that He (swt) has taught us. This part of the ayah is then a further evidence that all of the Sunnah is from Allah (swt). Because we know that the actual method in which the Salah is to be performed is not to be found in the Quran but rather it is in the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). So even though the Prophet (saw) taught the Muslims how to make our prayers, we see from this part of the ayah that it was Allah (swt) Who taught the Prophet (saw) and so it was really Allah (swt) Who taught us as well. The fact that even the way in which we make our prayers has been taught to us by the Lord and Master of the universe should motivate us even further to make our prayers on time and with as much perfection as we can possibly muster. Everything about our prayer is from Allah (swt), every movement that we make in it and every word that we say in it, so we must consider how fortunate we are that we get the chance to perform this blessed ritual at least five times a day. May Allah (swt) help us to remember every time we approach our Salah that this was an action that was ordained by Him (swt) and this an action that is loved most by Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**He has taught you all that you used to not know**". This part of the ayah is general and it does not apply only to the Salah, rather it applies to everything in this Din that Allah (swt) has taught us. So it includes the Salah and all of the other rulings of Islam that Allah (swt) has taught us. This Din is the perfect code of living with which the human being can organize his life. This is true both at an individual level and a societal level. At a societal level this Din has laws and rulings with which all the conflicts that ever arise between humans can be resolved. It has a detailed governmental structure, a detailed economic system and a detailed social system. All of these systems will bring justice and fairness to all people living under the Islamic State. At an individual level this Din has laws and rulings that will bring the human closer to Allah (swt) and show him how to realize the purpose of his existence. Once the human realizes the purpose of his existence, he will know peace and tranquility like he has never known before. He knows that nothing can happen in this world except by the permission of Allah (swt), and he knows that nothing else matters in life except the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). When the human being realizes this, then everything that he does he does for Allah (swt) and he is content with whatever Allah (swt) gives him in this life. So what could be a greater gift that Allah (swt) has given all of mankind than this Din? In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us that this Din is a way of life that He (swt) taught us. It is a way of life about which we did not know. We were ignorant and we were lost, then Allah (swt) guided us by sending to us the Prophet (saw) and teaching us this Din. How grateful then must we be to Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us all to realize what an immense blessing this Din is! May Allah (swt) help us to live this Din at every moment of our lives!

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِّأَزْوَاجِهِم مَّتَٰعًا إِلَى
ٱلْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ ۚ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى مَا فَعَلْنَ
فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ مِن مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾

241. And the ones who die from you and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's provision and residence without turning them out, but if they leave (of their own accord), there is no sin on you for what they do with themselves with *M'aruf*. And Allah is Mighty Wise.

After telling us about the importance of Salah, Allah (swt) concludes the rulings for divorced and widowed women in these ayahs. From these ayahs, we can see once again the special place that Allah (swt) has given for women in this Din. We see how Allah (swt) has dedicated so many ayahs in this special Surah to make sure all of the needs of our sisters are taken care of and to make sure that they are well looked after. We can note a specific emphasis on those sisters who are widowed and those who are divorced because they are most in need of being taken care of. Does this then seem to be a Din that neglects women or that does not care for women? Does this seem to you like a Din that was made by the minds of men? Living in the world that we live in today, we can never fully understand where women were before Allah (swt) revealed this Message, and how far He (swt) took them and how high He (swt) raised them with this Message.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And the ones who die from you and leave behind wives should bequeath for their wives a year's provision and residence without turning them out**". In this ayah Allah (swt) is saying that those Muslim husbands who pass away should make sure that they leave behind for their wives provisions and residence for at least one year. It is an obligation for all Muslim husbands to leave behind for their wives enough money to provide for them for at least one year. They must also leave behind a residence for at least one year. Allah (swt) also commands in this ayah that the widows are not to be turned out from their homes. This shows that the widow has a right to stay in her husband's home for at least one year.

If anyone were to try and evict her from her home, be it the government or the relatives of the deceased husband, they would then be committing a great sin in the Sight of Allah (swt). So we see from this part of the ayah that residence and provisions for at least one year is an obligation that all widows in the Islamic State have. If the estate of her husband is not enough to provide for her, then this responsibility falls on the State. The Islamic State must provide for the widows and make sure all of their needs are taken care of. Do any of the kufr governments that rule over the Muslim lands today fulfill this obligation?

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that we also must try to the best of our ability to make sure that we leave provisions and a residence for our wives and families in case that we are no longer there for them. We have a responsibility to provide for them even when we are no longer with them. We have to be aware of the desperate situation that our Ummah is in today, the Islamic State does not exist and so we cannot expect for the government to take care of them like it did before. None of us knows when our death will come, so we should all make sure that even at this moment we have enough saved up to provide for them for at least a year. These provisions include food, clothing and whatever else that they may require. As Allah (swt) says in the ayah, we must also make sure that they have a home in which to stay for at least a year. Now we know that life insurance and the like are forbidden in the Law of Allah (swt). So from the wealth that Allah (swt) has given us, we have to make sure that we leave enough for them should Allah (swt) take our souls tomorrow. May Allah (swt) help all Muslim to realize the command that He (swt) has given in this ayah, and to leave enough for their wives and families should death take them!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but if they leave (of their own accord), there is no sin on you for what they do with themselves with *M'aruf***". We learned from the previous ayahs that the *idda* or mourning period of a widow is four months and ten days. This is the period in which she is not allowed to marry and she is not allowed to accept direct proposals for marriage. However in this ayah Allah (swt) says that once the *idda* of a widow expires then she is free to leave the house of her deceased husband and get married if she wants to. She can do whatever she wants with herself as long as it with ***M'aruf***, meaning as long as it in conformity

with the Law of Allah (swt). So the obligation of the husband is to make sure that she has provisions and residence for at least one year, but if she wants to, she could leave and find another husband on her own once her *idda* ends. Allah (swt) has left is to her discretion, she can do what she pleases. If she wants to find another husband once her *idda* ends, that is lawful for her and if she wants to stay in the home of her deceased husband then she can be sure that all of her needs will be taken care for at least six months after that. How Merciful and Kind is Allah (swt) to the sisters of this Ummah?

Some of the commentators on this ayah have told us about the treatment that women used to receive in the Arabian society before Allah (swt) sent this Message. How during the age of ignorance, the Arabs used to force the widow to wait by herself in isolation for an entire year. She was not allowed to have contact with anyone, she had to pass a year in solitude and isolation. Furthermore when her *idda* was over, she was subjected to a most humiliating and degrading of practices. First she was placed on a donkey, then camel dung was placed on her lap. Then was then paraded through the streets and alleys and she had to throw this dung from her lap to show everyone that her mourning period was over and that she was now eligible for marriage. This was the situation of widows in Arabian society before Islam came. Their situation in other societies was probably not that different.

Now look how Allah (swt) completely transformed the situation of such widows when He (swt) revealed this Message. First Allah (swt) reduced the mourning period from one year to four months. Furthermore even during this mourning period she no longer needed to remain in isolation but she could see her relatives and she could meet other women. Then even during the year after her husband's death Allah (swt) mandated that all of her needs were taken care of by obligating that she be given a home and that she be given all the provisions that she could require. Finally Allah (swt) outlawed humiliating and degrading practices such as this. Look at where women were before this Message was sent and look where they are after, then ask yourself if this Message could have come from any except Allah (swt)? Ask yourself if the treatment that this Din gives for women is as cruel as the enemies of Islam have made it out to be? You have to realize that these people have an agenda and their agenda is from Shaitan.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is Mighty Wise**". This is to remind us once again of the Source of this Din. None but Allah (swt) could have revealed this Din. Only the One Who is Mighty in that He (swt) can reveal any rulings that He (swt) wants could have revealed this Din. Some men at the time of the Prophet (saw) may have questioned as to why Allah (swt) revealed a Din that has given so many allowances to women? Allah (swt) reminds such doubters that He (swt) is Mighty so He (swt) does as He (swt) pleases. When Allah (swt) legislates a law, there can be none to question it. Allah (swt) is Mighty and so there is no force that can overcome Him (swt), no one to oppose Him (swt) or His Legislation. Thus you cannot resist the Law of Allah (swt), even if it is not to your liking you must still submit to it. This is because this Law comes from the Mighty and so there is no resisting it. So while some men may have complained as to why women were being given so many rights and why their power over their women was being taken away and why they have so many obligations that they must fulfill towards women, all of this complaining does not matter. These laws come from Allah (swt), the One Who is Mighty and Who cannot be defeated, so these laws must be submitted to.

These laws also come from the One Who is the Most Wise, the One Who has all Wisdom and the One Who Knows what is in the best interests of all human beings, both men and women. So even if we cannot immediately see the wisdom in the laws of Allah (swt), we must still submit to them because we know that they come from the One Who is the Most Wise. We must remember the place of Allah (swt) and we must remember our place. We are not one to question the laws of Allah (swt). We are not ones to say that the laws of Allah (swt) are unfair to men or unfair to women. When a law comes from the One Who is the most Wise then we must submit to it regardless of our desires. We have to realize that it is Allah (swt) Who has Wisdom and we have none. We have to always remind ourselves that this Din comes from One Who is Mighty and the One Who is Wise. There is no opposing it and there should be no opposing it. Instead there should only be complete submission. May Allah (swt) enable all of us to realize that this Din comes from Him (swt), and may Allah (swt) allow all of us to submit to it with a complete submission!

وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَٰتِ مَتَٰعٌۢ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾

242. And for the divorced women a provision with M'aruf. A duty on the Muttaqoon.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) had legislated that all Muslim husbands must leave behind provisions and a home for their wives when they pass away. We also saw how Allah (swt) had legislated similar rulings for sisters who are divorced. In this ayah Allah (swt) emphasizes the ruling that He (swt) gave in those ayahs. Allah (swt) emphasizes even further how the needs of all Muslim sisters should be taken care of.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**And for the divorced women a provision with M'aruf**". Here Allah (swt) legislates that all women who are divorced should be given a provision by their former husbands. This provision depends on the circumstance of the divorce. As we have mentioned, this provision is to be a generous gift if the marriage was not consummated and the Mahar was not paid, or it is to be at least half of the Mahar if the marriage was not consummated but the Mahar was paid, or it is to be the full Mahar if the marriage was consummated. In all three of these cases, the divorced women receive a generous provision to make sure that they are well taken care of. So once again we see the Mercy and Love that Allah (swt) has for all the sisters in this Ummah. Regardless of their situation Allah (swt) has provided them with something.

Allah (swt) also says that such a provision is "**A duty on the Muttaqoon**". This shows that such a provision for divorced women is an obligation on all Muslim husbands. If they fail to give their wives this provision, they will be sinning in front of Allah (swt) and He (swt) will question them on the Last Day. So once again we see rulings in the Quran that are especially favorable for the sisters of this Ummah. Even if they were at fault in the divorce, even if they did not fulfill all of their obligations to their husband, they will still receive this provision from their husbands. With laws such as these, who then is there who can say that Islam is unfair to women? It is only the most ignorant of people who make such statements. It is only those who have an agenda to destroy this Din who make such statements. May Allah (swt) help all of us to realize the Mercy and Compassion that this Din has for all of the creation!

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾

243. That is how Allah makes clear to you His Signs so that you may reflect.

Allah (swt) concludes this section of the Surah with this statement. In this section we have seen Allah (swt) give us many rulings concerning prayer, marriage, divorce, family life, laws of inheritance and the mourning period for women. Can anyone come and say that these rulings are in any way unclear? Were then in any way difficult to understand? After reading these ayahs can we say that we do not know what they mean? Should we think that these rulings are difficult or impossible to implement or follow in our lives? Of course not, because as Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**That is how Allah makes clear to you His Signs**". These rulings and laws in the Quran are the Signs of Allah (swt) and He (swt) has made it perfectly clear for us. If we follow them then we will attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and we would be fulfilling the purpose of our existence. If we fail to follow them, we will be earning the displeasure of Allah (swt) and we would be turning away from the purpose of our creation. It is as simple as that.

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah that He (swt) made His (swt) Signs clear for us so that we may reflect on them. There are two aspects to this reflection. One is that we reflect on them in order to understand them, to learn how to correctly implement them in our lives. This is what the scholars of fiqh do. Another aspect of this reflection however is that we think about these laws and we realize how perfect they are and so we realize how they could only have come from Allah (swt). Think to yourself now whether such a Din could have from any except Allah (swt). This Din is the perfect system of life for the human being, do you think any human with a limited intellect could have come up with this Din? No, rather the laws of this Message and the way of life that they establish are in the themselves a proof for this Message. Never has mankind ever known tranquility and prosperity like it has known under Islam. This Din is a complete way of life with laws and rulings addressing every aspect in the life of the human being. So from the time you open your eyes in the morning to the time you go to sleep at night, there is a ruling that addresses each and every action that you can take. From the way in which you deal with your family to the structure of your government to the management of your wealth to your relationship

with your Creator, all of this has been addressed in this Din. Allah (swt) has made this Din clear to you so that you may reflect on it and so that you may know that it is indeed from Him (swt). So we see from this the ayah how Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) has made the rulings of Islam clear so that we may ponder over them, so that we can see the perfect system they bring, so that we may see how they address the human being perfectly, and then we can realize that such a Din could only be from Him (swt). May Allah (swt) guide us all to come to this realization!

How unfortunate is it that today Islam is not being implemented in its entirety? So many people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, are unaware of how this Din is a complete way of life. Rather they only see Islam as a few rituals. Thus all these people are unaware of this clear evidence that Allah (swt) has placed in this Din. They are ignorant of one of the clearest Signs for this Message. Do you not think that when a person sees a Message as a complete way of life then he would be more attracted to it? Today one of the reasons why many non-Muslims are not interested in Islam and the reason why many Muslims have lost confidence in Islam is because they see it only as a religion like Christianity and Hinduism. So they think it is only superstitions of the past and that it has nothing to offer the modern world. They do not see it to be the complete way of life that it truly is. That is why they are not attracted to it and that is why they have turned away from it. We can even look back to the time of the Prophet (saw), it was only when the Islamic State was established and after it gained supremacy in the land did the people start entering into the Din in large numbers. Before the Islamic State was established, those who followed the Prophet (saw) were very few. So yet another reason why we need to work to bring back the Islamic State is so that both Muslims and non-Muslims will realize this Din for what it really is. Insha Allah when they come to this realization they will be guided to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to return Islam to being a complete way of life as it used to be not so long ago! This way all of mankind would see this Message as it should be and perchance Allah (swt) may guide them to it!

۞ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا۟ مِن دِيَـٰرِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ ٱلْمَوْتِ
فَقَالَ لَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مُوتُوا۟ ثُمَّ أَحْيَـٰهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَـٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾

244. Have you not looked to those who went forth from their homes fearing death and they were in the thousands, so Allah said to them "Die", then He gave them life. Surely Allah is full of Bounty to mankind but most of mankind do not give thanks.

With this ayah, Allah (swt) begins a new section of this beautiful Surah. We remind ourselves once again of the environment in which this Surah was revealed. The Islamic State had just been established. After being silent for so many centuries, the dawah of calling mankind back to Allah (swt) had begun once again. A small community of believers in a farming village were being prepared to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind and from them Allah (swt) would build the greatest civilization that mankind had ever known. It was in the midst of such greatness that Allah (swt) revealed this Surah to train and prepare this community for this tremendous mission. In the previous ayahs we have seen how Allah (swt) gave this community several important rulings related to prayer, to family life, to fasting and pilgrimage, and rulings to ensure that all the women within the community are looked after and taken care of. So we see that among the first of rulings that Allah (swt) gives this community are those to ensure that their wives and their families are taken care of. Then Allah (swt) gives them rulings to ensure that they strengthen their relationship with Him (swt) through prayer, fasting and pilgrimage. Once they had strengthened their connection with Allah (swt) and they had provided for their families, they were now ready to go forth into the world and carry this Message to mankind. We can take a lesson from this part of the ayah for ourselves as well, we can realize that in order to carry this dawah, we have to make sure that our relationship with Allah (swt) is strong and we should also make sure that our families are taken care of. What kind of a dawah carrier neglects his family or neglects his relationship with Allah (swt)? How can he call others to this Message when he

himself is neglecting the very fundamentals of it? May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like that!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Have you not looked to those who went forth from their homes fearing death and they were in the thousands**". Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how there are several reports among the mufasir as to whom this ayah refers to, but he also notes how most of those reports are weak. So we do not have any confirmed narration about whom this ayah refers to. But Sayyid Qutb also notes that for us to derive the lesson of this ayah it is not important for us to know exactly whom this ayah is referring to. So instead of relying on weak narrations we will only look for the lessons for our lives in this ayah. This is our Din and it should not be taken as a joke. Everything that we believe in must be established on solid evidence, if there is no strong evidence to link a particular narration to the lips of the Prophet (saw) then we should be careful about taking it. Our knowledge in this Din is what motivates our behavior so we have to be sure that our knowledge is certain knowledge. May Allah (swt) guide us all to that which is true!

So we see that Allah (swt) is bringing our attention and the attention of the early Muslims to a group of people who tried to flee from death. Notice how Allah (swt) describes this group of people as being in the thousands and yet they still feared death. There were so many of them and still they were scared of death. This reminds us once again how death is a constant in the universe of Allah (swt). No matter how powerful you are, no matter how many other people you may have with you, no matter how hard you may try, you can never overcome death. All of mankind will continue to live in complete dread of death except those whom Allah (swt) has had Mercy on, we ask Allah (swt) to make us among those! So these were a group of people who fled from their homes in the thousands because of fear of death. Once again we say that we are not going to speculate on who these people were. For us to take the lesson from this ayah it is not important for us to know who these people were and even why they fled from their homes fearing death. They could have been fleeing from an enemy or from a disease or from some natural disaster. Allah (swt) Knows best! However what we are going to try to take the lesson from what happened to them. May Allah (swt) guide us to the guidance in His (swt)'s Book!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**so Allah said to them "Die", then He gave them life**". Notice once again here the beauty of the Quran. Allah (swt) tells us the entire story of these people in only a few words. Look at the depth of meaning that these words carry, could they have come from any but Allah (swt)? In only a few words Allah (swt) relates everything that happened to them. Allah (swt) tells us about these people that even though they left their very homes because of death, Allah (swt) just told them to die and they died. Once again we do not need to speculate on whether or not Allah (swt) spoke with such people or the manner of that speech, we simply take the lesson that they died when Allah (swt) decreed that they should die. This shows that even though they tried to escape death, they could not do it. They even left their homes to try and escape death but they could not escape the decree of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has already written the time and place of death for each one of us before we are even born. There is nothing that we can do to change this. This is the lesson that we should take from this ayah. This is the lesson that Allah (swt) was teaching the early Muslims as He (swt) prepared them to carry this Message to mankind. Even if you and all your people leave your homes in the thousands and run away, you will still not be to escape death. You will only die when Allah (swt) has decreed for you to die, not a moment sooner and not a moment later. May Allah (swt) enable us all to constantly remember this fact! May Allah (swt) make all of our deaths a good one, one in which we are completely submitting to Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah how after He (swt) told them to die, and then they died, He (swt) then brought them back to life. Notice how Allah (swt) does not even need to mention the fact that they died after He (swt) had told them to die. It is enough for Him (swt) to simply say that He (swt) told them to die, from this we can assume that they died, It is understood that His (swt)'s Will is what will always be. Allah (swt) only says of something and it is. So this shows us how both life and death are under the complete control of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gives life to whom He (swt) pleases and He (swt) takes death from whom He (swt) pleases. As we can see from this ayah, Allah (swt) can even resurrect a people back to life after they have died. Allah (swt) can destroy an entire nation and then bring them back to life only by His (swt)'s Will. Such is the Power of Allah (swt), what then can you do with such Power except submit completely?

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely Allah is full of Bounty to mankind but most of mankind do not give thanks**". Here Allah (swt) reminds us how He (swt) is full of Bounty to mankind. Even life and death are from His (swt)'s Bounty. How much of a bounty from Allah (swt) are life and death to mankind? As Allah (swt) has told us in other ayahs of the Quran, He (swt) created both death and life in order to test us. This test is indeed the greatest of bounties for mankind. It is a chance for us to prove ourselves to Allah (swt). To show Him (swt) that we are indeed worthy of His (swt) Love and Mercy. What could be a greater bounty than this? Nothing else in the creation that we can see has been given this bounty. Nothing else has been given this chance to come closer and closer to Allah (swt). Only mankind has been given this greatest of gifts; the free will on whether or not to accept and submit to this Message that Allah (swt) has sent. The free will to choose whether or not we want to come closer to Allah (swt) with every action that we take and with every moment of our lives. As Imam Ghazzali (ra) said, every moment of our lives is a gem whose value cannot be described in words because every moment in life is a chance for us to come closer to Allah (swt).

However as Allah (swt) also tells us in this ayah, most of mankind do not give thanks for this gift that He (swt) has given. To give thanks for this gift is to believe in this Message that Allah (swt) has sent and then to strive to our utmost to worship and serve Allah (swt) as this Message commands us to do. If we fail to do that then we are being ungrateful to Allah (swt) for this great bounty that He (swt) has given us. Just think about it for a second, Allah (swt) has given you this gift of life, and He (swt) has told you about everything that will happen to you after your death, and He (swt) has given you the complete guidance on what you can do to worship and serve Him (swt) before death comes. How ungrateful and rebellious will you then be if you throw away this precious gift only to follow your low desires, or only because you are lazy, or only because you are proud and arrogant? Such would be utter foolishness that cannot even be described in words. May Allah (swt) save us from ever being ungrateful to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) help us to realize this greatest of bounties that He (swt) has bestowed on us!

وَقَٰتِلُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾

245. And fight in the way of Allah, and know that surely Allah is Hearing Knowing.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) gave the early Muslims a story to remind them that life and death are completely under His (swt)'s control. The human being is an extremely forgetful creature and he is easily deceived by the life of this world. So even though every Muslim should have known that death and life are only from Allah (swt), Allah (swt) reminded them again of this fact. In this ayah we see the reason why Allah (swt) reminded them that life and death are only from Him (swt).

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by giving the early Muslims a command, Allah (swt) says "**And fight in the way of Allah**". In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives the early Muslim community a clear order to fight in His (swt)'s cause. We know that for over thirteen years of dawah in Makkah, fighting was not allowed. Now that the Islamic State had been established, Allah (swt) gives the command for the early Muslim community to fight. As we mentioned there are only two reasons when fighting is permissible in Islam. The first is to remove the obstacles in the way of the dawah, these obstacles are the kufr governments which prevent this Message from properly reaching the people. The second reason is to defend the lives of Muslims who are oppressed. These two were the only reasons why the early Muslims fought. They never fought for honor or glory, for wealth or plunder, or to liberate a homeland. They only fought for Allah (swt). To allow the Message of Allah (swt) to reach the people and to save the lives of the servants of Allah (swt). So in this ayah Allah (swt) gives a clear command for the Muslims to fight because fighting is an integral part of this dawah once the State has been established.

For those of us who are living in a world without the Islamic State, there are still several lessons that we can take from this ayah. Firstly we should realize that in order to fulfill the command for jihad we first have to establish what makes jihad possible and that is the Islamic State. Allah (swt) has given us a command in this ayah to fight, but the only way that we can implement this command is if we reestablish the Islamic State. So for our situation today this is a

command to establish the State. Once the State has been established, then we will be able to fulfill this command to fight. So because fighting to save the Muslims and remove the obstacles in the dawah is an obligation, working to bring the State that enables fighting also becomes an obligation.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is to realize that there are many ways in which we can fight in the way of Allah (swt). Although fighting with the sword or with other material force is not allowed without the State, we can still fight with our pens and our tongues. We can fight to defend the ideas and tenets of Islam from the onslaught that is attempting to overwhelm it from all fronts today. We can strive to give people the correct understanding about Islam and to remove all innovations and misconceptions. We can struggle with our tongues and our pens to call the people back to Allah (swt). So although we have to wait for the State to return to fight with material force, we can still fight with ideas and thoughts to defend Islam and to carry the idea of Islam as a complete way of life into the minds of the Muslims. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to fight in His (swt)'s cause!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) gives another command when He (swt) says "**know that surely Allah is Hearing Knowing**". Here Allah (swt) commands the early Muslims to know with certainty that He (swt) Hears and Knows everything. This is a fact about which certain knowledge without any doubts must be established because it is certain knowledge that leads to action. When the Muslims know for certain that Allah (swt) Hears the call that is sounded to fight in His(swt)'s way and they know for certain that Allah (swt) Knows those who respond to this call and those who sit back, then they will think twice about not heeding this call. When the Muslims know for certain that Allah (swt) Hears and Knows everything, then they will be motivated to strive to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. Allah (swt) Knows the reason why those who held back did not go forward, He (swt) Knows whether their excuse was a valid one or not. Allah (swt) Knows what is in the deepest recesses of their hearts and He (swt) Hears the words that they spoke to themselves as they decided whether or not to go forward in the way of Allah (swt). Similarly we also must be aware that Allah (swt) Hears and Knows everything. All of us know that it is an obligation for us today to strive hard in the path of Allah (swt). We can see the situation that our

Ummah is in, and we know that there is no one else who can save her except us. So the time for making excuses is over. If we make excuses to ourselves then we have to remember that Allah (swt) Hears our excuses and He (swt) Knows whether they are valid excuses or not. Fighting in the way of Allah (swt) is by no means an easy task, but this is the most important of matters and so it demands our due attention. There should be nothing that is more important in our lives than worshipping and serving Allah (swt), striving in the way of Allah (swt), and working to see that the Din of Allah (swt) is made dominant once again. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace, there is no might nor power except in Him (swt)!

مَّن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يُقۡرِضُ ٱللَّهَ قَرۡضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَـٰعِفَهُۥ لَهُۥٓ أَضۡعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَٱللَّهُ
يَقۡبِضُ وَيَبۡصُۜطُ وَإِلَيۡهِ تُرۡجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾

236. Who is the one who will lend to Allah a goodly loan, so that He may double it for him many times over, and Allah straitens and enlarges, and to Him shall you return.

In the previous ayah we saw how Allah (swt) commanded the Muslims to fight in His (swt)'s cause. We had also mentioned previously how when the Islamic State was first formed, the soldiers had to pay for their own weapons, amour and mount. We have to remind ourselves now of the humble beginnings of the Islamic State. Madinah was only a farming village where the people only had enough to sustain themselves. The vast majority of it's people were date farmers who only had what they grew in their date farms, and what little they can get from trade. When it began the Islamic State was not a mighty empire with vast reserves of resources or several colonies under its dominion. Allah (swt) chose the weakest and most deprived of lands in which to begin the dawah, but in time He (swt) raised it to be the greatest empire this world has ever seen. Its dominion would stretch from one corner of the known world to another. But when the Islamic State began we have to remember that it was poor and weak, so it needed all that the Muslims could offer. That is why Allah (swt) encourages them to spend all that they can for this dawah.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by asking a question, "**Who is the one who will lend to Allah a goodly loan**". Allah (swt) is calling out to all of the Muslims and He (swt) is asking for a volunteer. Allah (swt) is asking them who can lend to Him (swt) a goodly loan. Now some may ask why Allah (swt) would need a loan when He (swt) is the One Free of all needs. The answer to this inquiry is that this loan is part of the test that Allah (swt) has given us. When you give your wealth to Allah (swt), you are demonstrating your love for Him (swt), your submission to Him (swt), and your willingness to sacrifice for Him (swt). So in this ayah Allah (swt) is encouraging the Muslims to spend their wealth in His (swt)'s way as part of the test that He (swt) has given them. They are called on to spend to support the dawah, to spend to build the armies to spread the Message of Allah (swt), and to spend to establish the Din of Allah (swt) in the land. This wealth that they spend is a goodly loan that they will give to Allah (swt).

Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that when Allah (swt) describes the loan as a "goodly loan" it means that it must be a loan that is given purely for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). You must sacrifice your wealth, your time, and your efforts seeking only Allah (swt) with them and nothing else. If your intentions are tainted with some ostentation, or some arrogance, or some desire of praise from the people of this world, then such a loan will not be accepted by Allah (swt). Remember that what matters at the end of the day is that you strive your best to worship and serve Allah (swt) and not that you establish the Islamic State. When you meet Allah (swt) on the Last Day, He (swt) will not question you on whether you established the State or not, but rather He (swt) will question you on whether or nor you spent as many moments of your life remembering Him (swt) and striving to worship and serve Him (swt) by doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). So you must be sincere to Allah (swt) in what you do, and you must make Allah (swt) as the goal of all your actions. So when you spend it must only be for Allah (swt) and no one else. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Other scholars add that what Allah (swt) means by a "goodly loan" is a loan the source of which is pure and lawful. Allah (swt) does not want for you to spend for Him (swt) from that which is acquired through unlawful means. So then obviously any money that is earned through interest or theft will have no reward with Allah (swt), no matter with how much sincerity it may have been

given. Similarly if you spend your time in the dawah, but you ignore the time that must be spent looking after your family or taking care of your obligations, then this is time that is not accepted by Allah (swt) as well. It is time that should have gone for your family and not for the dawah. This is because it is an obligation for you to look after your family and to take care of their needs just as it is a obligation to work in the path of Allah (swt). Now do not ever feel that you do not have enough time to do all of this, if you put your trust in Allah (swt) then you should have a hope that He (swt) will bless the time that you have and allow you to accomplish all of your needs and obligations. Remember that most of the Sahabah were not monks who dedicated all of their time for worship; rather they had families and responsibilities as well. However despite this fact, they still found the time to address all of their obligations towards Allah (swt). They still established the Islamic State with the Prophet (saw), and they still defeated all of the enemies of this Message. They did this despite the fact that they were humans like you and they had responsibilities like you. May Allah (swt) bless us like He (swt) blessed them! May Allah (swt) allow us to spend every moment of our lives in worship and servitude to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) allow us to give to Him (swt) only that which is pure and lawful!

What does Allah (swt) say about this goodly that the Muslims give? Allah (swt) describes it as a loan "**that He may double it for him many times over**". So whoever gives to Allah (swt) this loan they can be certain that Allah (swt) will double it for them over and over again. You give to Allah (swt) a little bit of wealth or a little bit of time or a little bit of effort, and Allah (swt) will double what you give Him (swt) again and again. He (swt) will then return what you have given Him (swt) both in this life and the Hereafter. What can you expect from the One Who owns everything and Who can give without limit? You can expect rewards and blessings that you never thought possible. So be sure that whatever you give to Allah (swt) will be returned to you in ways that you never thought to be possible. So what is stopping you from spending all that you have for Allah (swt)? The only thing that you have truly lost is that which you fail to give to Allah (swt) when you had the chance to.

Allah (swt) then says "**and Allah straitens and enlarges**". This is to remind the Muslims that just as Allah (swt) controls life and death, He (swt) also controls our provisions. Allah (swt)

can straiten the provisions for whom He (swt) pleases and He (swt) can enlarge the provisions for whom He (swt) pleases. Everything that we have is from Allah (swt) and He (swt) will increase and decrease what He (swt) gives as He (swt) pleases. So this reminds the early Muslims that just as they should not sit back from fighting in the way of Allah (swt) because of fear of death, they should also not hold back from spending their wealth in the way of Allah (swt) because of fear of poverty. It may be that they give away a large portion of their wealth and they then become richer or it may be that they hold back their wealth and they then become poorer. They do not control their wealth and their provisions, but rather it is Allah (swt) who controls their wealth and provisions and He (swt) straitens and enlarges as He (swt) pleases. May Allah (swt) help us to realize this fact! May Allah (swt) provide for us and may He (swt) provide for all for the sincere Muslims who strive and sacrifice in this dawah!

The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we should not fear poverty. We know from other ayahs of the Quran that Shaitan will threaten us with poverty in order to prevent us from spending in the path of Allah (swt). We should not listen to him, rather we should put our trust in the One Whom we love the most, the One Whom we live for, and we should hope that He (swt) will provide for us and for our families all that we would ever need. If you think about it for a moment, Allah (swt) has commanded you to worship and serve Him (swt), do you not then think that Allah (swt) would not provide for you if you should fulfill His (swt)'s command? How would Allah (swt) be if He (swt) commanded you to do something and then He (swt) did not give you what you need to fulfill His (swt)'s command? Why would Allah (swt) command you to worship and serve Him (swt) and then not provide for you if you do so? We can never think such about Allah (swt). Rather we have to know with certainty that Allah (swt) will provide for us if sincerely work in His (swt)'s cause. Now of course we have to use the ways and means that Allah (swt) has placed in this world to acquire wealth and provisions such as trade or employment, but we must never rely on those means. Rather we must know that it is Allah (swt) Who provides for us. So we must never neglect our obligations to Him (swt) because of fear of poverty. Rather we should spend and work in His (swt)'s cause and trust that He (swt) will take care of us. It is really a weakness in your Imam if you think that you will be in poverty should you worship and serve

Allah (swt) correctly. If you fear that you will lose your job if you make your Salah or if you fear that your savings will be depleted if you give Zakat. This kind of thinking really shows a deficiency in your Iman and an inability to comprehend the clear meaning that Allah (swt) gives in this ayah. Allah (swt) clearly tells you in this ayah that He (swt) is the One Who straitens and enlarges. So the quantity of provisions that you receive depends purely on Him (swt). May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this! May Allah (swt) save us all from fear of poverty and may Allah (swt) enable us all to spend from what He (swt) has given us to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and to Him shall you return**". We mentioned how the human being was a very forgetful creature, so this is to remind the Muslims once again the reason why they should spend and the reason why they should fight in the cause of Allah (swt). You only fight and you only spend in preparation for this Day when you will return to Allah (swt). When you return to Allah (swt), He (swt) will judge you for each and every one of your actions. How hard did you strive in the way of Allah (swt), how much did you sacrifice from your wealth and your time for Him (swt), how much thanks did you give to Him (swt) for this great bounty of life that He (swt) has given you. This meeting with Allah (swt) is the goal for each and every one of us, after this meeting our fate for all eternity will be decided. From that moment on it will only be an eternity of pleasure or an eternity of pain. As hard as we may try we can never fully realize the consequence of what this means. So do you not then want to do everything in your power to prepare for this meeting? To prepare for your return to your Originator. May Allah (swt) make all of our return to Him (swt) a good one! We began with Allah (swt) and life is nothing but a journey back to Him (swt)!

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلْمَلَإِ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ مِنۢ
بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰٓ إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لِنَبِىٍّ لَّهُمُ ٱبْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُّقَٰتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ
قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَٰتِلُوا۟ ۖ قَالُوا۟ وَمَا لَنَآ أَلَّا
نُقَٰتِلَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِن دِيَٰرِنَا وَأَبْنَآئِنَا ۖ فَلَمَّا
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا۟ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ

٢٤٦

247. Have you not looked to the elders of the children of Israil from after Musa when they said to a prophet of theirs "Raise for us a king so that we may fight in the way of Allah". He said "Perchance, if fighting was ordained on you, you may not fight". They said "What would be the matter with us that we would not fight in the way of Allah when we have been driven from our homes and our children". But when fighting was ordained on them they turned away, except a few among them. And Allah Knows the *Dhalimoon*.

We saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) commanded the Muslims to fight in His (swt)'s way and to spend in His (swt)'s way. Allah (swt) also reminded the Muslims that He (swt) Hears all that they say and He (swt) Knows all that they do, and that He (swt) is the Source of their provisions and to Him (swt) they will eventually return. Once the Muslims had certain knowledge of this, there should have been no reason for them to hesitate to respond to the call of Allah (swt). We also saw in the previous ayahs how Allah (swt) had given them a story of a nation in the past that tried to flee death but were unable to. This serves to remind the Muslims that there is no escape except to Allah (swt). In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) gives them yet another story from a nation of the past. This nation was the nation that had carried this dawah before the Muslims, a nation whose example Allah (swt) had cited several times previously so that the Muslims can take lessons from their mistakes. Allah (swt) shows the Muslims what was the response of these people when they were called to their duty for their Lord.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Have you not looked to the elders of the children of Israil from after Musa when they said to a prophet of theirs "Raise for us a king so that we may fight in the way of Allah"** ". Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how similar to the previous story about which Allah (swt) had told us, there are no definitive narrations to establish which prophet and which generation among the children of Israil this ayah is referring to. Some scholars like Mawdudi have surmised based on historical evidence and based on what is found in the Bible that it most likely refers to the Shamwil (as) or "Samuel" in the Bible and the generation of the children of Israil who were with him (as). But for us to take the lesson from this ayah it is not important for us to know exactly which prophet and which generation of the children of Israil this ayah is referring to. Rather we should look to what happened to them and how they responded to the test that Allah (swt) gave them.

Allah (swt) brings our attention in this ayah to the time when the elders among the children of Israil asked their prophet to raise for them a king. The reason for their requesting a king was so that they can fight under him. This was a time when a powerful enemy had taken over the lands of the children of Israil. After being the nation that had once carried the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind, the children of Israil had become deluded by the life of this world. They had given up the dawah and they had become a disunited people. Now instead of fighting against the enemies of this Message they had begun fighting amongst themselves. Because of this, their lands were taken over by their enemies and their children were enslaved. They knew that they needed a leader who can unite them once again, who could rally them to fight against their enemies. So they went to their prophet and asked him for this leader.

Notice that when they are asking their prophet to raise for them a king, they are really asking Allah (swt). They knew that their prophet had no power to raise a king on his own, but it was only Allah (swt) Who had the Power to do this. But it seems as if they had become so far from Allah (swt) that they could not even mention His (swt)' Name when they needed something from Him (swt). They knew that Allah (swt) was the cause for everything but they could not articulate this fact with their words. This is why they asked their prophet to ask Allah (swt) on their

behalf. They had become so distant from Allah (swt) that they could not ask Him (swt) themselves.

We should not let the same happen to us. When we have a need, first and foremost we have to ask of Allah (swt). We do not need to go through any "intermediaries" to reach Allah (swt), rather we should ask Allah (swt) directly for all of our needs. We have to know that it is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who helps us in all situations. We have to call out His (swt)'s Name and beg of Him (swt) like the humblest of beggars begs. Allah (swt) Knows of our sins much better than we do, so we should not let them prevent us from asking of Him (swt). Even when we are in the situation where we have to ask of others to fulfill our needs, we have to remember that we are really asking of Allah (swt) and that it is Allah (swt) Who is fulfilling our needs. May Allah (swt) enable us to turn to Him (swt) for all that we need!

Their prophet responds to their request to raise for them a king by saying to them "**Perchance, if fighting was ordained on you, you may not fight**". Their prophet wanted to remind them that what they were asking for was for jihad to become obliga]]ted upon them once again. Their prophet was reminding them that once the political authority has been established over them, then fighting becomes an obligation for them. Their prophet wanted to ensure that they were ready for this responsibility. As we know fighting is by no means an easy task, it takes all the courage, patience, determination and resolve that one can muster. Their prophet wanted to make sure that they were ready for this. So he tells them that perchance they may not fight even if fighting is prescribed for them. He is bringing to them the worst-case scenario to see how they would respond.

There is a lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah for ourselves as well. We see what is happening to our Muslim brothers and sisters in the world today. We wish that we could fight in the way of Allah (swt) to rescue them from the oppression that they are suffering. We are waiting for the Islamic State to be reestablished so that we can go out and fight in the path of Allah (swt). But we have to ask ourselves if we are truly ready for this? If the State was established tomorrow and the Khalifah calls you for jihad, are you certain that you will have the courage to go forward? Imagine yourself now holding a gun, standing on the battlefield, and

having to face an army that is larger than yours and is more technologically equipped than yours. When you see a fleet of helicopter gun ships coming at you from the horizon, will you then be able to stand your ground? If you are facing off against a squadron of large tanks, will you be able to stand your ground? If today you do not even have the Iman and the Sabr to lower your gaze when a beautiful woman passes by and you do not have the strength to be mindful and constant in your Salah, how then do you think that you will be able to stand your ground at that moment? So we all wish that we can fight in the way of Allah (swt), but we have to be sure that we are ready for what this entails. We have to build within ourselves the strength to fulfill this obligation when we are called to it. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to make ourselves ready for this obligation!

What then was the response of the children of Israil when their prophet posed to them this question? They said "**What is the matter with us that we would not fight in the way of Allah when we have been driven from our homes and our children**". First of all we can note the confidence in their reply, they are so certain that they will be able to stand their ground and fight when the call for jihad would be given. They are saying, "**What is the matter with us that we would not fight**", they cannot even perceive a reason for them not fighting. They are so sure that they will be able to go forth when the call to arms is given. They are so certain of themselves. This is because they do not comprehend the reality of fighting, they think it to be a simple matter. So they cannot see any reason for them not going forth to fight.

Then they even give a reason why they should go forward and fight. They tell their prophet of how they had been driven from their homes and how their children had been taken as slaves. The children of Israil at this period in history had reached such a desperate state. Their homeland had been overrun by their enemy and even their own children had been taken away from them. This should have been more than enough reason for anyone to go and fight. They knew that Allah (swt) had obligated that the lives of the Muslims be saved and that the lands of the Muslims be liberated. So they are telling their prophet that they have the best reasons to fight, and so they will fight. They are certain that they will be able to go and fight if only Allah (swt) would give them a leader. But what happened when they were given that leader?

Allah (swt) says "**But when fighting was ordained on them they turned away, except a few among them**". When Allah (swt) gave them the king whom they were asking for, and when He (swt) obligated fighting under him then most of these chiefs ran away from this obligation. See how they had so much confidence and they were so sure that they would go forth in the way of Allah (swt) to fight, but when the time came to transform words into actions, most of them turned away. Sayyid Qutb mentions how there were no people who had more of a reason to fight than the children of Israil in this situation. Their lands were occupied by the enemies of this Message, their very children were taken as slaves by these enemies, and then they had been given a king specifically by Allah (swt) to lead them into battle. This means that Allah (swt) Himself, Who was their Lord and Master, their Creator and Sustainer, was calling on them to fight, Furthermore they were the nation whom Allah (swt) had chosen to carry His (swt)'s banner and to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. So there should have been no reason for these people not to fight. The only reason for their turning away of course was the love of this world and the fear of death. The scholars mention how prior to the time when their enemies had conquered them, the children of Israil had immersed themselves in the life of this world. They had been given this world in plenty, and they had drowned themselves in it. They started enjoying everything that the life of this world has to offer, soon they did not even care if what they enjoyed was allowed by the Law of Allah (swt) or not. They enjoyed everything and anything. They gave up the dawah and calling to Allah (swt), and they became a people who lived for the life of this world. That was their situation when their enemies came upon them. Now when they were about to be overcome by their enemies, they had lost the will to fight because of their love for this world. When Allah (swt) and their king called them to fight they did not respond to the call. They just kept thinking to themselves about the possibility of not getting all those pleasures that they had to come love so dearly. They kept thinking about the possibility of feeling pain and discomfort. All that they wanted was to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. They did not care for Allah (swt) at all. Anyone who has such love of this worldly life in their hearts has no room for Allah (swt) in their hearts, they are not willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like such people!

However Allah (swt) tells us that there were a few among them who did go forward into battle as they promised that they would. The narrations tell us that these few were able to achieve the victory over an enemy that was much more powerful than they were. This shows how it is not the number of people you have in your army, or the technology that your soldiers are using which determines whether victory will be yours or not. Rather it is how close each of your soldiers is to Allah (swt). How much courage and determination that they have to fight. The Muslim Ummah today should pray more for a warrior like Khalid bin Whalid (ra) than for all the military technology of the West. These few among the children of Israil who went forth with their king and stood their ground were the closest among them to Allah (swt). Because of their trust in Allah (swt) and their hope in Him (swt), they were able to overcome an enemy that was much more powerful than they were. May Allah (swt) give this Ummah soldiers like these and soldiers like the companions of the Prophet (saw)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah Knows the *Dhalimoon***". This is a reminder and a threat to those who had turned away from their obligation to fight. If you turn away from your duty and your obligation to Allah (swt), then you should know that Allah (swt) Knows you very well. There is nowhere that you can go to hide from Allah (swt). To turn away from the obligations that you have to Allah (swt) is *Dhulm*. It is injustice and evil. You have no excuse in front of Allah (swt) for turning away from this obligation. You know that fear is not an excuse. Allah (swt) will not accept any of these excuses on the Day of Judgment. You know that Allah (swt) is your Creator and your Sustainer, so you should know that you only live for Him (swt)! You are who you are at this moment only because of Allah (swt) and if were not for He (swt) then you would cease to exist. So why do you want to live your life for any but He (swt)? When the call for jihad is given then you have no excuse to stay hiding in your house like a small child or an old woman. If you do, then you should fear Allah (swt) and you should fear the Day in which you will return to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) save us all from being among the ***Dhalimoon***!

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ
ٱلْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
ٱصْطَفَىٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُۥ بَسْطَةً فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ وَٱلْجِسْمِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن
يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

248. And their prophet said to them, "Surely Allah has raised for you Talut as a king". They said "How can he hold kingship over us when we have a greater right to the kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth". He said "Surely Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and strength. And Allah gives His kingship to whom He pleases. And Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing".

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with the story that He (swt) began in the previous ayah. As we read these stories it is very important that we look for the lessons in them that we can apply in our lives. We should not think of these stories as mere forms of entertainment or play, but we have to remember that this is the Speech of Allah (swt). We should not think of these stories as something that happened a long time ago to a people who were very different from us. Rather we should think that each of these ayahs and the stories in each of these ayahs as directly addressed to us. So in these events that Allah (swt) relates to us there is great wisdom and benefit here that will lead us to Him (swt), may Allah (swt) help us all to discover that wisdom and benefit. Recall from the previous ayah how the elders among the children of Israil had asked their prophet to raise for them a king so that they can fight in the way of Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what happened when this king that they had asked for was given to them.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And their prophet said to them, "Surely Allah has raised for you Talut as a king"** ". This is the response of their prophet to their request of raising for them a king. Their prophet tells them that Allah (swt) has raised for them Talut as a king. Talut was a poor man from among the children of Israil and Allah (swt) chose him to be a king over them. They were asking Allah (swt) for a king and a king is what they were given. But it was a king that Allah (swt) chose.

Now we should note that this was not a kingship in which Talut would have complete sovereignty, but it was a kingship where sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt) Alone. We know that one of the basic tenets of our Aqeedah is that all sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt), so we cannot imagine that a king whom Allah (swt) would appoint would rule by his own law and not the Law of Allah (swt). Rather we can be certain that Talut would only rule by the Law of Allah (swt). He is only a representative of Allah (swt) like the Khalifah of the Islamic State is. Furthermore we also know that Talut had a prophet at his side, and he himself may even have been a prophet, so he must have ruled by the Law of Allah (swt). What we can be certain of is that in no way was he like the so called "kings" who rule over the Muslim lands today, the ones who are exploiting the Muslims and giving away the resources and the wealth of this Ummah to the enemies of this Message. The ones who make alliances with the enemies of this Message and the ones who allow the unclean soldiers of disbelief to come into the land that Allah (swt) has made sacred and commanded to be purified. Talut was in no way a king like these pretenders. May Allah (swt) save us from their oppression and may Allah (swt) give us a righteous ruler who will rule us by His (swt)'s Law!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**They said "How can he hold kingship over us when we have a greater right to the kingship than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth"**". Here Allah (swt) shows us what was the response of the children of Israil when Allah (swt) told them that He (swt) had raised Talut for them as a king. They question as to how Talut can be king over them. They could not imagine how someone like Talut could be chosen over them and could be given power over them. They give two reasons for their objections. First they say that they are more entitled to the kingship than he is. The scholars say this is because Talut did not come from a noble family, while each of the elders who made this request had noble lineage. So they thought that only someone of noble blood could have the kingship. The other reason was that Talut was a poor man. They thought that only someone possessing a great deal of wealth was worthy of being a king. These elders were far wealthier than Talut was. Because of their wealth and their lineage they thought that one of them should have been the king instead of them.

This then is another characteristic of the people of this world in that they are always lusting for power. They love the life of this world and they love to hold power over others in this world. This is a characteristic of such people that we must strive to avoid. We must never seek power and we must never seek control over the people. We only work for the Islamic State so that sovereignty will return to Allah (swt). We ourselves should have no desire for power whatsoever. If we find within ourselves some desire for power then we must strive for the sake of Allah (swt) to remove that feeling from our hearts. Insha Allah this effort that we make will also be one for which we will be rewarded. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like such people!

So we can see from this part of the ayah how these elders among the children of Israil judged people, and we see how this is not the right way in which to judge. Our estimation of people must not be based on how much wealth they possess or how noble their family is. These things mean absolutely nothing to Allah (swt). How can one man be better than another based on his lineage or his wealth? Does his wealth or his lineage show how close he is to Allah (swt)? The Prophet (saw) said the one who is slowed by his works will not be increased by his lineage. So wealth and nobility mean nothing to Allah (swt). These should never be used in our criteria to judge people, it is only those whose hearts are attached to the life of this who look to such things.

Another lesson that we can take from this ayah is that people should not be given positions of power and authority based on their lineage. This is what these elders from the children of Israil wanted to do and Allah (swt) criticizes them for this fact. So positions of power should never be given to people because of their linage. Umar (ra) specifically told his son Abdullah (ra) not to seek the Khilafah after him even though Abdullah (ra) was one of the most qualified of people for that position. Umar (ra) was even reluctant to appoint Abdullah (ra) as governor of a province or any or other position of authority. Unfortunately many of the Khalifahs who followed Umar (ra) did not have this foresight and so they did not stick to the guidance of the Quran like he (ra) did. Many Khalifahs appointed their own family to positions of power even if they were not the best qualified. We believe that this was a mistake and that positions of power should always be given to those most qualified and not be based on lineage or family. Allah (swt) Knows best and we ask Him (swt) to guide us!

In the next part of the ayah we see that their prophet tells the elders why Allah (swt) chose Talut to be a king over them. Allah (swt) relates to us the words of their prophet, "**He said "Surely Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and strength**"". This is the reason why Allah (swt) chose Talut over the elders from the children of Israil; it is because he had great knowledge and strength. From this we can also see the criteria that we should look for in our own leaders. First they should have knowledge, they should know how to rule the people and conduct the affairs of the State. They should have knowledge of the Law of Allah (swt) so they can know what is the correct rule that should be applied for a given situation. They should also have knowledge of the world around them so they can know the reason why events happen and they can know how best to respond to them. Secondly they should also have strength. This is not so much physical strength as it is strength to deal with the pressures and trials that come with leadership. A leader is one who must be willing to work night and day for his people. He is one who has no time for rest or amusement. He must also deal with all of the situations that arise in his kingdom and he must deal with the people fairly. He must also be strong in that he does not become seduced by his power into acting unjustly with his people. So the two criteria that we should look for in our leaders are knowledge and strength. Allah (swt) had blessed Talut with both knowledge and strength and this is why Allah (swt) chose Talut to be a leader over the children of Israil in this time when they were most in need of a leader.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And Allah gives His kingship to whom He pleases**". This is to remind the children of Israil that the kingdom belongs to Allah (swt) and He (swt) gives it to whom He (swt) pleases. They are not the ones to set the criteria for who should be king because the kingship does not belong to them. Rather it is Allah (swt) Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth and so it is for Allah (swt) to give dominion to whomever He (swt) pleases. Thus Allah (swt) is telling these elders that the choice of who should be king is not up to them but it is up to Him (swt). He (swt) owns the kingdom and He (swt) gives it to whomever He (swt) pleases.

This part of the ayah is also a clear evidence that sovereignty belongs only to Allah (swt), and the only legitimate government in the Sight of Allah (swt) is one that rules by His (swt)'s Law completely. This is the only government for which Allah (swt) has given the authority to exist.

Such a government has not existed in the world today now for over a hundred years, and we can see the sorry state that mankind is in because of that. May Allah (swt) give us a dominion that He (swt) is pleased with once again!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us of two of His (swt)'s Names when He (swt) says "**And Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing**". Notice how these two Names link beautifully with the theme of this ayah. Talut was the best king for the children of Israil in that desperate hour of theirs, even though many of them did not realize this fact. He was the one who was able to save them from the oppression and tyranny that they were under, he was able to do this even though the number of them who joined him and fought under him were very few. So how great a Bounty from Allah (swt) was Talut for them as a king. Of course even the praise that one would give to Talut should really be given to Allah (swt). It was Allah (swt) Who gave him his knowledge and his strength, and it was Allah (swt) Who allowed him to prevail over his enemies who were much more powerful than he. So Allah (swt) was Full of Bounty and Grace to these people who in no way deserved it. Allah (swt) had given them the responsibility of carrying the His (swt)'s Message to mankind, they had turned away from this obligation to chase after the life of this world, then when their own desires got them in trouble, when their own laziness and negligence had caused them to be overcome by their enemies, they came running to Allah (swt) for help. Instead of allowing them to suffer in the turmoil that they themselves had caused, Allah (swt) raised for them a king who lead them to victory and saved them from the oppression that they were under. How Bountiful is Allah (swt)! However Allah (swt) also reminds them that He (swt) is All-Knowing. Allah (swt) Knows all of the favors and blessings that He (swt) had bestowed them. The fact that they had received so much blessings and gifts from Allah (swt) makes them all the more responsible to strive to worship and serve Him (swt) even more. Allah (swt) Knows this fact and Allah (swt) reminds them that He (swt) Knows this fact.

The only nation that Allah (swt) has been blessed more than the children of Israil is the nation of the Prophet (saw). And if we would only think about how much of a blessing the Quran and the Prophet (saw) are then we would realize that Allah (swt) has blessed us exponentially more than He (swt) blessed them. So how much should we strive to worship and serve Allah

(swt) in order to be grateful for this blessing? Ask yourself this question and remind yourself that Allah (swt) is All-Knowing. Allah (swt) Knows well all of the favors and bounties that He (swt) has bestowed on you. So you cannot hide anything from Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) enable us to live up to the gifts and bounty that He (swt) has given us! May Allah (swt) Know from us only that which He (swt) is pleased with!

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ءَايَةَ مُلْكِهِۦٓ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ ٱلتَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ ءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَءَالُ هَٰرُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِى
ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

249. And their prophet said to them "Surely a sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you At-Tabut wherein is peace and tranquility from your Rabb, and relics left behind by the family of Musa and the family of Haroon, carried by the angels. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers."

In this ayah Allah (swt) continues with this story where He (swt) tells us about the children of Israil and the king that He (swt) had appointed over them. Recall from the previous ayahs how the children of Israil were in a desperate situation and how they had gone to their prophet asking him to ask Allah (swt) to raise a king for them so that they can fight under him. But when Allah (swt) chose Talut for them as a king, they dared to contend with the choice of Allah (swt) because he was not wealthy and he was not of noble lineage. Now Allah (swt) could have forced them to accept Talut as their king or He (swt) could have taken their king away from them and left them without a leader once again, but as we see in this ayah, Allah (swt) in His (swt)'s Mercy and Bounty gives them a great sign to prove to them that Talut was indeed a king ordained by Him (swt). From this we can continue to see examples of the Mercy and Generosity of Allah (swt), and the ungratefulness and rebellion of man.

Allah (swt) says "**And their prophet said to them "Surely a sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you *At-Tabut***". The sign that Allah (swt) gave to them to prove to them that the kingship of Talut was indeed ordained by Him (swt) was ***At-Tabut***. Most of the scholars say that ***At-Tabut*** is what is referred to in the Bible as Ark of the Covenant. This is a special wooden chest that Musa (as) and the other prophets of the children of Israil would take with them whenever they went out in battle. It is said that ***At-Tabut*** would give the soldiers of the children of Israil peace and comfort during the battle and it would enable them to overcome their enemies. It was passed down among the children of Israil for generations, and each prophet or leader would always take it when they went out on jihad and through it Allah (swt) would give them victory. But when the children of Israil had become deceived by the life of this world and they had given up dawah and jihad in the way of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) caused them to lose ***At-Tabut***. Without ***At-Tabut***, they suffered one defeat after another from their enemies. So we can say that ***At-Tabut*** was a Mercy to the children of Israil from Allah (swt) that allowed them to have victory over their enemies. Now in order to prove that the kingship of Talut was indeed a valid one, Allah (swt) would return ***At-Tabut*** to them.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) describes ***At-Tabut*** for us by saying "**wherein is peace and tranquility from your Rabb**". As we mentioned that the distinguishing feature about ***At-Tabut*** was that it was a source of peace and tranquility. There was something that emanated from this special wooded chest that gave the righteous people around a sense of peace and comfort. As we mentioned this was especially helpful during times of battle when fear and nervousness tend to overtake one. Some commentators have gone into details about what exactly was it in ***At-Tabut*** that gave them this peace and tranquility, but since there are no strong narrations to support any of these claims we will not go into them here. Rather we will just take the general meaning that ***At-Tabut*** was a source of peace and tranquility for the children of Israil and so it was a great blessing for them from Allah (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and relics left behind by the family of Musa and the family of Haroon**". So we see that not only was ***At-Tabut*** a source of peace and comfort for the children of Israil but within it there were several important artifacts from the families of Musa (as) and Haroon

(as). Once again the commentators have gone into details about what these articles were, some of them said that ***At-Tabut*** contained the staff of Musa (as), and the turban of Haroon (as), and the basin from which the children of Israil ate Manna, and the pieces of the tablets on which the Tawrah was written and so forth. But for us to derive the benefit and the lesson from this ayah, it is not important for us to know exactly what these relics were. Rather we should think about what is the lesson in their receiving this gift that we can apply in our lives. We should always remind ourselves that we are reading these stories in order that they may guide us to Allah (swt) and not to entertain us. So we should always be looking for the lessons and the guidance that is in them. We should search for the guidance in these ayahs and we should restrain ourselves from speculating about what we do know about it. The lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that ***At-Tabut*** did contain several valuable relics from the families of two of the children of Israil's greatest prophets. This shows how valuable ***At-Tabut*** was to them, and what a great favor and blessing that Allah (swt) conferred upon them when He (swt) returned it to them. This shows us how Merciful and Generous Allah (swt) can be, even to a people who have been so disobedient and rebellious to Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) describes ***At-Tabut*** as being "**carried by the angels**". The narrations tell us that the angels carried ***At-Tabut*** and descended from the sky with it, and then they placed it in front of Talut while all of the children of Israil were looking on. How Merciful and Generous was Allah (swt) in that He (swt) gave them this great sign. Would they then have any doubts about Talut being the king that has been chosen for them by Allah (swt) after seeing this? Allah (swt) sent His (swt)'s own special messengers to deliver ***At-Tabut*** to Talut.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers**". This is to remind the children of Israil once again how ***At-Tabut*** was a great sign for them. Just think about the tremendous blessings that it contains. It was a source of peace and tranquility for them, it was a way in which they can achieve victory over their enemies, it contained the most important artifacts and relics of their heritage, and it was delivered to them by the angels. How could anyone of them have hesitated after seeing such a great sign?

The lesson that we can take from this in our lives is that once Allah (swt) has shown us His (swt)'s signs and we have increased in our Iman through them, then we must reciprocate by increasing in our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). Let us remind ourselves once again of the context in which Allah (swt) sent to them ***At-Tabut***. They were being asked to fight in the path of Allah (swt) against a powerful enemy and they were being asked to submit to a king who was not of noble blood and who was not possessing of great wealth. Both of these were two great acts of submission to Allah (swt) that they were being asked to do. To swallow your pride and submit to a king that you would have otherwise looked down upon and then to follow him into battle against a powerful enemy. But Allah (swt) gave them this great sign in order that they may do these acts of submission to Him (swt). Similarly for us, Allah (swt) has given us the greatest of signs in the Quran. Should we not then strive to worship and serve Allah (swt) because of this great sign that we have been given? Should we not submit ourselves to the Law of Allah (swt) because of the increase that the ayahs of the Quran have given our Iman? May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that! May Allah (swt) allow us to contemplate on His (swt)'s signs and draw nearer to Him (swt) through them! May Allah (swt) allow us to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt) as a demonstration of our Iman! May Allah (swt) guide this Ummah to the certainty of faith that she will need to overcome the trials and difficulties that await her!

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِٱلْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُم بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ
فَلَيْسَ مِنِّى وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنِّىٓ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةًۢ بِيَدِهِۦ
فَشَرِبُوا۟ مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُۥ هُوَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ قَالُوا۟ لَا
طَاقَةَ لَنَا ٱلْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ ۚ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَٰقُوا۟ ٱللَّهِ
كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيرَةًۢ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾

250. So when Talut departed with the army, he said "Surely Allah will test you with a river, so he who drinks from it is not of me, but he who does not taste it is of me, except he who takes with his hand as much as fills his hand. But they drank from it, except a few among them. And when they crossed it, he and those who believe with him, they said "We have no power today against Jalut and his forces". But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said "how many a small group has vanquished a large group by Allah's permission. And Allah is with the Sabiroon".

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about what happens when Talut and his army set out to fight against the people who were oppressing the children of Israil. After they had received the great sign of ***At-Tabut***, the children of Israil were certain that Talut was indeed their king. They were certain that he was the king who had been ordained for them by Allah (swt) to give them victory over their enemies. So they went forth with him to do battle against the powerful force that had been oppressing them. Here Allah (swt) tells us of this epic battle where the believers faced of against the enemies of this Message. We can see how this story was especially relevant for the early Muslim community that was being formed when this Surah was revealed. They too were being called to fight in the path of Allah (swt) against an enemy that was much more powerful than they were. In fact there are lessons in this story for any weak and oppressed people who have to face of against a force that is far more powerful than they are. Is that not our situation today? The dawah today is weaker than it has ever been, and it's enemies are more powerful

than they have ever been. But as we will learn from this ayah Insha Allah, this does not matter if we have Allah (swt) on our side.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**So when Talut departed with the army**". Here Allah (swt) is bringing our attention to the time when Talut and his army had marched out into battle. The narrations tell us that the army had to cross the desert during a period of intense heat. Those of us who have never been an arid desert cannot even begin to imagine how tormenting the heat can become. But just try to imagine yourself as being one of the soldiers in this army. You are marching forward in the path of Allah (swt) to save your people from a powerful enemy who wants to destroy you and who wants to prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. You find yourself in the scorching heat of the desert. There is nothing to shade you from the sun, the heat becomes so intense that every inch of your body feels it, it is so bad that even the wind is hot and fierce and it provides you with more discomfort rather than any relief. This was the situation that the army of Talut was in, and as we see from this ayah it was indeed a great test for them from Allah (swt). As you read the remainder of this ayah, ask yourself how you would have fared on that test if Allah (swt) had made you one of the soldiers in that army?

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) relates to us the words of Talut to the soldiers in his army when "**he said "Surely Allah will test you with a river**". This is the test that Allah (swt) had given them. In the heat of the desert, when they were all parched and extremely thirsty, they came upon a river flowing with cool water. Talut then said to them "**he who drinks from it is not of me but he who does not taste it is of me, except he who takes with his hand as much as fills his hand**". This was what they were required to do in order to pass this test. Despite the fact that they were extremely thirsty, they had to refrain themselves from drinking the water of this river. The most that they could drink was one handful. This was a test for them from Allah (swt). Some commentators cite the fact that since Talut knew this river was a test from Allah (swt) to say that he was a prophet as well as a king. Others say that this is not necessarily so because he may have had the prophet who had appointed him as king with him, and it may have been this prophet who had told him that the river was a test. In either case, the lesson for us in this part of the ayah is to see this great test that the soldiers in the army were subjected to. Would we able to

pass this test? From this we can see that if we also want to work in the path of Allah (swt), and stand against the enemies of Allah (swt), then we have to expect tests similar to this. May Allah (swt) save us from the test that we do not have the strength to bear!

Then Allah (swt) says "**But they drank from it, except a few among them**". Here we see that most of the soldiers failed the test. They were so thirsty that they kept on drinking from the river even when they were specifically told not to. They were not able to control their desires and their passions for the sake of Allah (swt). The test that Allah (swt) has given us in the life of this world is not much different from this test that this army of the children of Israil had to face. Our test in the life of this world is nothing but controlling our desires and our passions for the sake of Allah (swt). We know that we live to worship and serve Allah (swt), so for every moment of our lives we may feel like doing something that is displeasing to Allah (swt) but we control that feeling and overcome it and instead do what is pleasing to Allah (swt). We keep forcing ourselves to do what is pleasing to Allah (swt) until what we feel like doing is that which is pleasing to Allah (swt). Even though it is difficult that is what we do. We subjugate our desires until it is in accordance with the Law of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us all to reach that station!

The soldiers who obeyed the command of Talut were those who only drank a handful of water. They only drank the one sip that they could fill the palms of their hands with. They obeyed the command of their leader and made themselves content with small amount of water. The narrations tell us that those who drank only a handful were satisfied with what they drank, but those who kept on drinking were still thirsty even after they had drank. Such are the two kinds of people that we can find the in the life of this world; the ones who are pleased with whatever Allah (swt) has given them and the ones who are always craving more to satisfy their lusts and desires. One is a group that lives to serve Allah (swt) and the other is a group that lives to serve themselves. This latter group of people will never achieve satisfaction and contentment. They will always be thirsting for one thing after another. While the former of these groups will always be content because their hearts are attached to their Lord. They only want to please their Lord so they are content with whatever He (swt) gives them. May Allah (swt) make us among those who are content with whatever He (swt) has decreed for us!

So most of the soldiers in the army of Talut failed the test and they had to go back home, they were not allowed to accompany Talut as he went to face the enemy of their people. The scholars tell us that the army of Talut had numbered in the thousands when they had left their home, but after this test at the river, only 313 of them were able to continue with him. The remaining thousands all had to go back home. Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this was actually for the best. Because those soldiers who are weak and who are not able to control their desires and passions for the sake of Allah (swt) will not be of any help in the battle. They will run at the first sign of a more powerful enemy. So they would hurt the believers more than they would help them because when they run away, they may abandon critical posts in the formation of the army. So only 313 of the original army of Talut continued marching forth, and the scholars note that this is the exact number of Muslims who fought with the Prophet (saw) in the battle of Badr.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**And when they crossed it, he and those who believed with him**". So here Allah (swt) tells us that Talut and the few who had passed the test crossed the river as they continued their march towards their enemy. Not only did they cross the river but they conquered it. The river was the test that Allah (swt) had given them and they passed this test. Notice that Allah (swt) refers to the ones who had passed the test as believers. This is because only those who had the deep and firm conviction were able to control themselves and prevent themselves from drinking the water when they were so thirsty. That is why many scholars have said that our patience is equal to our Iman, the more Iman that we have the more patience that we will have and the more patience we have the more Iman that we will have.

Then Allah (swt) says "**they said "We have no power today against Jalut and his forces"** ". Mawdudi and other scholars are of the opinion that the pronoun "they" in this part of the ayah refers to those soldiers who had failed the test and who had to go back home, and that it does not refer to Talut and the soldiers who had passed the test. This is because these are words of those who have no trust in Allah (swt), and so it not befitting that Talut and the soldiers who had passed the test would speak such words. Talut and the true believers would never say that "**We have no power today against Jalut and his forces**" because they know that Allah (swt) is

on their side. Rather it was the soldiers who had failed the test and who were sent home that spoke these words. Now you might question that if these words were spoken by the soldiers who were sent home, then why would the use the pronoun “we” in their speech and not say “they”. This is because even though they were sent home, they were still part of the nation of the children of Israil just like Talut and the ones who had passed the test were. So in the battle that was about to ensure, they would still be supporting Talut and his army. Thus they considered themselves to be part of the army of Talut even though they themselves were not fit to join the army. This opinion seems correct to us and as always Allah (swt) Knows best!

Now let us look to the words that they spoke. They said that they have no power today against Jalut and his forces. They said this when they saw how small their army had become. As we mentioned the original army numbered in the thousands and now it was only a few hundred. So when the soldiers who were returning home saw this they said that this army has no power today against Jalut and his forces. They could not imagine how such a small army could defeat Jalut and his mighty forces. The army that they saw was so weak and so few that it seemed as if it had no power at all. Once again these people had forgotten about Allah (swt).

From the perspective of these soldiers however only the strongest and mightiest of armies could have stood a chance against Jalut. Jalut was the leader of the powerful enemy that they had to face. Not only did he have a huge and powerful army to fight for him, but he himself was enormous. One narration in Qurtubi’s tafsir says that his shadow stretched for over a mile and that he was able to defeat entire armies on his own. Can you then imagine the kind of creature that he was? Allah (swt) Knows best but he probably was not even human. So those of weak faith questioned how they could ever prevail against an enemy that was so powerful. How could an army of only 313 defeat an enemy that was gargantuan? The reason for their apprehension was because they had forgotten Allah (swt). These people only saw the life of this world and they did not remember Allah (swt). They forgot that nothing can happen except by the permission of Allah (swt) and they forgot that Allah (swt) has power over all things. They only thought about what they saw in the life of this world and so they could never imagine Jalut and his powerful forces ever being defeated.

Now contrast this attitude with the attitude of the true believers that Allah (swt) tells us about in the next part of the ayah, when He (swt) says "**But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said "how many a small group has vanquished a large group by Allah's permission. And Allah is with the steadfast"**". Once again we can note how Allah (swt) describes those few and sincere believers who had passed the test as those "who were certain that they would meet Allah". It is this certainty of belief that had allowed them to pass the test and refrain themselves from drinking when they were so thirsty, and it is this certainty of belief that took away all of their fear when they saw the mighty Jalut and his powerful forces. It is the certainty of belief in Allah (swt) and the meeting with Him (swt). Our words cannot sufficiently describe the Majesty and the Sublimity of Allah (swt), but when you believe in Him (swt) and you are certain that you are one Day soon going to meet Him (swt), then does anything else matter in your life? What could be more important in your life than Allah (swt) and preparing for the meeting with Him (swt)? Once you reach certainty in Allah (swt) and in the meeting with Him (swt), then you will do anything for Him (swt). All that you care about is that when you meet Allah (swt), that He (swt) is pleased with you. Such was the case of these true believers who were with Talut; they could control the most severe of thirsts for Allah (swt) and they were not overwhelmed with fear when they saw themselves facing of against an enemy as powerful as Jalut and his forces.

All that they said was "**how many a small group has vanquished a large group by Allah's permission**". They know that numbers mean nothing to Allah (swt). No matter how small and weak they are, and no matter how powerful and numerous their enemy may be, they know that they can vanquish their enemy completely if such be the Will of Allah (swt). They know that Allah (swt) is Able to do all things and that He (swt) is even Able to give them victory against such a powerful foe. They even cite the numerous times that such has happened in the past. They know that on several occasions in the past, a weak and small force has defeated a much larger and more powerful force because such was the Will of Allah (swt). If Allah (swt) gives His (swt)'s permission to what you desire, then it will become a reality. It will be so no matter how much the odds are against you and no matter how unlikely it may seem based on what you can sense. All that matters in this universe is Allah (swt). He (swt) can make anything into a reality.

This is what we need to remember as well when we work in this dawah. We should not worry about how great are the odds against us. All that matters for us now is to work sincerely in this dawah to the best of our ability. We should not worry about how weak we may be and how powerful they may be. As Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, there have been many instances in the past where a small force has overcome a much larger force. All they needed was the permission of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give His (swt)'s permission for this dawah to be victorious once again!

Then we see Talut and the true believers who were with him say "**And Allah is with the Sabiroon**". The **Sabiroon** are those who have *Sabr*. *Sabr* is one of those words that cannot adequately be translated to English. Among the meanings that it carries are patience, steadfastness, firmness, courage, determination, and the willingness to press forward no matter how much resistance that you may face. Talut and the true believers with him hoped that they are among the **Sabiroon**. Because they know that Allah (swt) is with the **Sabiroon**. What does it mean for Allah (swt) to be with you? It means that you have His (swt)'s support and help, it means that you have His (swt)'s protection and mercy. Once you have this, what else do you need? Once you have this, what enemy can overcome you? What can possibly stand in your way? What objective can you not reach? All that Allah (swt) asks of you is that you show a little sabr for Him (swt), if you can find it within yourself to have sabr for the sake of Allah (swt), then there is no limit to what you will able to accomplish because you will have Allah (swt) with you. You can change the world because you have the Lord and Master of the universe with you. All that He (swt) asks of you for Him (swt) to be with you is that you have a little patience and steadfastness. May Allah (swt) grants this to us! May Allah (swt) make us among the **Sabiroon**!

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا۟ لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَآ أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ
أَقْدَامَنَا وَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

251. And when they came face to face with Jalut and his forces, they said "Our Rabb, pour down on us sabr, and make firm our feet, and give us victory over the people who do kufr".

In this ayah we see the battle cry of the believers as they faced their enemy. Remember the desperate situation that they were in. They were hopelessly outnumbered, they had to overcome the most powerful of enemies, and they were fighting for the salvation of their people. Can you imagine a situation more desperate than this? What can one do in this time of need except call out to Allah (swt)? What can do at such a time other than put all of one's hopes in Allah (swt) and hope that He (swt) is there? In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us the prayer with which these sincere believers called out to Him (swt). This is the prayer that we also must try to make during our time of difficulty and need.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And when they came face to face with Jalut and his forces**". So Allah (swt) brings our attention to the moment when Talut and the small army of believers who were with him met their enemy. They were now face to face with their foe and their swords were about to meet. Allah (swt) tells the early Muslims about this moment because He (swt) Knows that they will have to face something similar. Was the battle of Badr all too different from this? Were many of the battles in which the armies of Allah (swt) had to fight all too different from this? Imagine yourself to be a solider in that army at that moment, what is the first thing that will come to your mind? You live for Allah (swt) and at that most desperate time of need, you will only call to Allah (swt).

That is what Talut and the believers who were with him did. But what exactly did they call out to Allah (swt) for? Did they only pray to Allah (swt) to keep them safe and not to let them become injured? Did they only pray for their enemy to be defeated? No rather they prayed "**Our Rabb, pour down on us sabr, and make firm our feet, and give us victory over the people who do kufr**". This is the prayer in the Book of Allah (swt) for all those who strive hard in His

(swt)'s way, so this is the prayer that He (swt) is pleased with. Let us now look at each part of their prayer. May Allah (swt) help us to memorize this prayer and to make it every moment of our lives as we struggle for Him (swt)!

First and foremost they prayed for sabr. Notice that they did not simply ask Allah (swt) to give them sabr, but they asked Allah (swt) to pour down on them sabr. They were in such desperate need for sabr that they asked Allah (swt) to pour it down on them like He (swt) pours down rain. They were asking to be drowned in sabr. It is only through sabr that the believer can overcome the difficulties that he faces, and the greater the difficulty the more sabr that is required. So the believer needs sabr throughout his life because at every moment of his life he is faced with challenges and difficulties. However there is no task that is more difficult and more challenging than calling to the path of Allah (swt) and working to make His (swt)'s Din supreme. That is why this work requires more sabr than you can possibly ever imagine. So the believers pray to Allah (swt) to pour down upon them sabr. May Allah (swt) pour sabr down upon us as well, Allah (swt) Knows we need every drop of it!

Then we see that the believers pray to Allah (swt) and say, "**make firm our feet**". They knew that they are required to work and strive for the victory to come. They knew that the victory will not come if they are just sleeping at home, or if they are just praying in the masjid the whole day long. They knew that they had to work to get the victory. But they also knew that they could not do it on their own. They knew that themselves were a weak and cowardly people who would run from an enemy that was more powerful than they were. This was how they saw themselves. Even though these were the soldiers who had passed the test of the river, they still saw themselves to be weak. They were never arrogant and proud but rather they knew that they needed Allah (swt) at every step of the way. They knew that if Allah (swt) does not make their feet firm then they would fall. They knew that they would turn and run if their Lord was not their to support them and give them strength. So they ask Allah (swt) to make their feet firm, to allow them to stand their ground and fight. May Allah (swt) make our feet firm in this dawah and in practicing His (swt)'s Din in our life! All success is from Allah (swt)!

Finally they say, "**and give us victory over the people who do kufr**". The victory is only from Allah (swt), about this there can be no doubt and this fact we cannot forget. No matter how hard we work and no matter how much effort we may put, the victory will never come from our own works. It is Allah (swt) and Allah (swt) Alone Who will bring the victory. The believers who were with Talut knew this fact and so they prayed to Allah (swt) to give them victory. You might ask now that if victory is only from Allah (swt), why should we even work then? Why can't we just sleep and wait for Allah (swt) to bring the victory, or else why do we not just pray for the victory and do nothing else? Why should we put any effort in this dawah? Those who ask questions like these have forgotten the purpose of their existence. We work only to worship and serve Allah (swt). Everything that we do is only for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). That is the test that Allah (swt) has given us in the life of this world. So we work in this dawah only because Allah (swt) has commanded us to work to establish His (swt)'s Law in the land and because He (swt) has commanded us to work to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind. We work only as an act of submission to Allah (swt) and not because we think our works will bring victory. Victory is only Allah (swt). All that we can do is work to the best of our ability and with the most sincerity to Allah (swt), and then we hope that Allah (swt) finds us worthy enough to grant victory to. May Allah (swt) grant this Ummah victory!

فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُۥدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَهُۥ مِمَّا يَشَآءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ
ٱلْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

252. So they defeated them with the permission of Allah, and Dawud killed Jalut, and Allah gave him the kingdom and the wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allah repelling some of mankind with others *fasad* would spread all over the earth, but Allah is of great bounty to all the worlds.

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us of the outcome of the battle. Notice that Allah (swt) does not go into the details of what happened during the battle, rather He (swt) only tells us the outcome of the battle. This is because it is not important for us to know exactly how the victory was achieved. Rather what is important for us to know is that Allah (swt) gives victory for the believers in several ways and that it is only Allah (swt) Who gives victory. So if we work sincerely in His (swt)'s path then we are guaranteed victory. That is why we must always pray to Allah (swt) to give us victory and we must pray to Allah (swt) for sabr to continue working in His (swt)'s path and to never give up. No matter how strong are the forces that may come to take us away from this path, we have to pray to Allah (swt) to keep our firm feet in it. If we ever that we think that we do not need Allah (swt) then we have already lost.

Allah (swt) begins by saying "**So they defeated them with the permission of Allah**". In his tafsir of this ayah, Qurtubi says that the word *hazama* that Allah (swt) uses in this part of the ayah means "to break completely". So not only did the army of Talut defeat their enemies but it was a complete and full defeat. They completely destroyed their enemy to the one point that Allah (swt) describes their enemy as being completely broken. However as we see from this ayah, it was only possible with the permission of Allah (swt). Everything happens with the permission of Allah (swt), and anything can happen with the permission of Allah (swt). So they achieved a resounding victory, but it was only with the permission of Allah (swt). Such is the Power of Allah (swt) in that He (swt) can grant such a complete victory over an enemy so powerful.

Now why did Allah (swt) choose to give this band of believers the victory? What did they do that made them worthy of the victory? To understand that we have to look at the first word with which Allah (swt) began this ayah. Allah (swt) began this ayah with the word *fa* which as we know means “so” or “because”. Thus this word links the meaning in this ayah with the previous ayah. In the previous ayah we saw that these believers prayed to Allah (swt) and they were steadfast on this path of dawah and jihad. So the reason why they received the victory was because they prayed and because they were steadfast. They kept on calling on their Lord and they kept on striving on this path. This was why Allah (swt) deemed them worthy to give the victory to. So now if we want Allah (swt) to bless us with victory as well we know what to do. Think about this the next time you think about giving up.

Then Allah (swt) says “**and Dawud killed Jalut**”. At that time, Dawud (as) was only a small child and he had only accompanied the army because his seven older brothers were soldiers in it. At one point during the battle, Jalut called out to the soldiers of the children of Israil to meet him for single combat. Because he was such an enormous and terrifying foe none of the soldiers went forward. Finally it was only young Dawud (as) who agreed to march forth against this goliath. Talut agreed to send him forward because none of the other soldiers were willing to go forward. One can see from this how terrifying Jalut must have been. Let us not forget that these were the soldiers who had passed the test and shown their resolve for the sake of Allah (swt). They had demonstrated their courage and their sabr by not drinking from the water and from marching forward against the army of Jalut. But when the time came to face Jalut in single combat, none of them could find the courage to do it. This shows how much of a monster Jalut must have been. It also shows the bravery of young Dawud (as) and the trust that he had in Allah (swt). It is said that when Jalut saw this young boy coming towards him, he started laughing. Dawud (as) on the other hand took his slingshot, mentioned the Name of Allah (swt) over it, and fired. The stone hit Jalut right in between the eyes with so much force that he fell down and died right there. Once again this shows that no matter how small and weak you are, if you have Allah (swt) on your side and you put your trust in Him (swt), then you can do anything. May Allah (swt) give us the resolve and the complete trust in Him (swt) that young Dawud (as) had on that day!

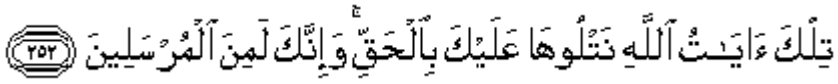
Then Allah (swt) says "**and Allah gave him the kingdom and the wisdom**". The narrations tell us that when Dawud (as) killed Jalut, Talut rewarded him by allowing him to marry his daughter and to have the kingdom after him. This was a reward that Allah (swt) gave to Dawud (as) in the life of this world. In addition, Allah (swt) also gave him wisdom. The scholars say that this refers to prophethood, which Allah (swt) also conferred on Dawud (as). So Allah (swt) made Dawud (as) a king and a prophet. Such are the gifts and the bounties of Allah (swt) that He (swt) gives to those whom He (swt) is pleased with. When you work hard and strive in the way of Allah (swt), your Rabb will reward you both in this life and the next. But despite all the riches of this world, there is no better reward in the life of this world for the true believer than Allah (swt) allowing him to come closer to Him (swt). What could be better in this world than to come closer to Allah (swt)? To live just one more moment for Him (swt) rather than for yourself? Is that not the best of this world? The closest to Allah (swt) are the prophets, they are the ones who work the hardest for Him (swt) and they are the ones whom He (swt) is the most pleased with. So most of us would love the reward that Dawud (as) got of the great kingdom and the princess but how many of us would love the reward of prophethood and being able to come near to Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us to remember that with Him (swt) does the true happiness lie!

Then Allah (swt) also tells us how He (swt) also "**taught him of what He pleased**". This refers to a special knowledge that Allah (swt) taught Dawud (as). This was an additional gift that Dawud (as) received on top of the kingdom and prophethood. The scholars have given several opinions on what exactly this knowledge is. Some say it was the knowledge on how to make a special kind of armor that made the soldiers of the children of Israil extremely powerful and almost undefeatable. Others say that it was the speech of birds, and others say other things. But for us what is important is to see how Dawud (as) received this gift from Allah (swt) because of his efforts in the path of Allah (swt) and because of his trust in Him (swt). We can take the lesson that if we work hard in the path of Allah (swt), then He (swt) will also grant us knowledge of many things that we did not know. May Allah (swt) grant us the knowledge to bring victory for this Ummah and the knowledge to come closer to Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And were it not for Allah repelling some of mankind with others *fasad* would spread all over the earth**". There are several meanings that Allah (swt) gives in this part of the ayah. One meaning is that were it not for Allah (swt) repelling the disbelievers with the believers, then *fasad* would spread all over the earth. Recall from previous ayahs that we discussed how we said that the word *fasad* gave meanings of "corruption", "evil" ,"disorder", "indecency" and "lewdness". So Allah (swt) is telling us in this part of the ayah that were it not for Him (swt) holding the disbelievers in check with the believers *fasad* would spread all across the land. We can see how this happened in the battle between the army of Talut and the army of Jalut. The army of Talut was the believers and they were fighting for the sake of Allah (swt). They were fighting to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land, to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind, and to save the lives of the Muslims. The army of Jalut on the other hand was fighting to kill the Muslims and take their land, to prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from spreading, and to establish a Din that does not rule by the Law of Allah (swt). So we can see how if the army of Jalut had been victorious, then fasad would have spread over the land. When the world is deprived of the light of the Message of Islam, it knows nothing but darkness. We can see how that is so from the world today and from the world before this Message was sent.

Yet another meaning of the words "**And were it not for Allah repelling some of mankind with others *fasad* would spread all over the earth**" that scholars give is that through the righteous believers Allah (swt) prevents His (swt)'s punishment from reaching the earth. The righteous believers are the ones whom Allah (swt) has guided. They are the ones who do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and they stay away from the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). It is only because of them that the punishment of Allah (swt) does not descend on mankind. If it were not for these few righteous believers, then Allah (swt) would find no good in the people of the world and He (swt) would destroy them like He (swt) destroyed the nations of 'Ad and Thamud. So it is only through the righteous believers that Allah (swt) has guided that He (swt) saves all of mankind from His (swt) punishment. May Allah (swt) make us among those rihteous believers!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but Allah is of great bounty to all the worlds**". Man is contemptible creature. If Allah (swt) left the world to him, he would spread fasad all across the land. He would simply follow his desires, and he would not care how much injustice to others he has to do. Corruption and disorder would spread all over the earth. But Allah (swt) tells us in this final portion of the ayah that He (swt) is full of bounty to all of the worlds. Allah (swt) could have let have let mankind destroy themselves, but He (swt) in His (swt)'s Bounty and Mercy sent guidance to mankind. This guidance showed the way to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and it gave man a purpose in life. Through this guidance Allah (swt) raised nations of righteous believers who called to Him (swt). Their dawah and their righteous actions saved the rest of mankind from the punishment of Allah (swt). They were thus part of the Mercy and Bounty of Allah (swt) to all mankind. May Allah (swt) send down His (swt)'s Mercy and Bounty to mankind, He (swt) Knows that we are in desperate need of it!



253. These are the signs of Allah that we recite them onto you with Truth, and surely you are of the messengers.

This ayah is a consolation that Allah (swt) gives for the Prophet (saw). To properly understand this ayah, we have to remind ourselves once again of the context in which it was revealed. Recall that the Islamic State had just been established, and the dawah had just been launched. So the Prophet (saw) was calling on the Muslims to march forth into battle to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind and to defeat the enemies who were seeking to destroy this Message. This was a tremendous task that required the greatest of efforts. The Prophet (saw) knew that the Muslims would not follow just anyone on such a great mission; they would only follow a messenger sent by Allah (swt). Can you then even begin to imagine the weight that was on the shoulders of our beloved (saw)? That was why Allah (swt) revealed this ayah to comfort him (saw).

First Allah (swt) says "**These are the signs of Allah that we recite them onto you with Truth**". This is to remind the Prophet (saw) of what the Quran is. These ayahs that Allah (swt) is reciting onto the Prophet (saw) are the Book of Allah (swt), they are the very words of Allah (swt). Each and every single ayah is a sign for all time that it could only be from Allah (swt). This blessed Book is the proof of the Prophet (saw), and Allah (swt) reminds him (saw) of this fact in this part of the ayah. It is a sign because such a Book with such ayahs could not have been composed by the minds of men. We have spoken already in ayah 24 about how the Quran is inimitable from a linguistic aspect. No Arab has ever composed words in the Arabic language that are on the level of the Quran. The depth of meaning that they convey and the beauty of their composition has been unmatched in the history of the Arabic language. In addition we also spoke about how the Quran is inimitable in that it contains narrations of the previous nations and prophets that no one except Allah (swt) could have known about. These nations existed centuries before the time of the Prophet (saw), and their events that Allah (swt) relates to us happened in a land that was far from the where the Prophet (saw) and the Arabs lived. Thus there is no way that the Prophet (saw) or any of the Arabs could have known about these narrations. So because the verses of the Quran are at a level of the Arabic language that no one could match and because they contained narrations that no one could have know about, they are a clear sign that they could only be from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us certainty in His (swt)'s signs!

What then is the consequence of these ayahs being from Allah (swt)? It means that the Prophet (saw), the man who brought these ayahs to us, has indeed been sent by Allah (swt). This is what Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) of in the second part of this ayah when He (swt) says "**and surely you are of the messengers**". Just like Allah (swt) reminded the Prophet (saw) that these ayahs are the Book of Allah (swt), He (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). What a tremendous consolation this fact must have been for the Prophet (saw), to be reminded that he (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) that while it is true that he (saw) has to face insurmountable odds, just like young Dawud (as) had to face when he battled Jalut, he (saw) is the still the Messenger of Allah (swt). No matter how powerful his (saw)'s enemy may be, he (saw) is still the Messenger of

Allah (swt). That means wherever he (saw) goes and whatever he (saw) does, he (saw) will always have Allah (swt) with him (saw). What enemy can stand against you when you have Allah (swt) on your side? So just like the Prophet (saw) was comforted by this ayah, we have to be comforted by this ayah in our efforts as well. The Quran is the Book of Allah (swt) and it is our Book as well, the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt) and he (saw) is our Messenger as well. The Book that we are calling to has the Signs of Allah (swt) and the man in whose path we are following is the Messenger of Allah (swt). If we can remain true to these, then of a surety we can be certain that Allah (swt) will be with us. How then could our dawah fail no matter how high the odds against us are? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to hold fast to His (swt)'s Book and to follow the way of His (swt)'s Messenger!

۞ تِلْكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۘ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ ۖ وَرَفَعَ
بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَٰتٍ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ
ٱلْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ
ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ وَلَٰكِنِ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُم مَّن كَفَرَ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ
مَا ٱقْتَتَلُوا۟ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

254. These are the Messengers. We gave grace to some of them more than others, from them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And we gave 'Isa, the son of Maryam, the clear signs and we strengthened him with *Ruh-Al-Quddus*. And had Allah willed, the ones who came after them would not have fought after the clear signs had come to them, but they differed, some of them believed and some did kufr, and if Allah had willed they would not have fought, but Allah does what He pleases.

Recall from the previous ayah how Allah (swt) comforted the Prophet (saw) by reminding him (saw) that he (saw) was indeed of the messengers. In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) what a great honor it is to be among the messengers. Allah (swt) shows the Prophet (saw) how he (saw) is not only a Messenger of Allah (swt) but he (saw) is a Messenger whom Allah (swt) has favored and whom Allah (swt) has raised in rank above other messengers. In addition in this ayah Allah (swt) also comforts the Prophet (saw) by letting him (saw) know that even in the past there were those who turned away from the messengers, and Allah (swt) lets him (saw) know that if He (swt) pleased He (swt) could have guided them. But they chose to turn away from the messengers and Allah (swt) allowed them to turn away. Thus the Prophet (saw) and the messengers who came before him (saw) are not to blame and they are not at fault. Just imagine what a great comfort these words must have been for the blessed heart of the Prophet (saw). First they let the Prophet (saw) know of the great station that he (saw) has with Allah (swt) and then they let him (saw) know that his responsibility is only the delivery of the Message. He (saw) will not be responsible in any way if the people turn away.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah with a small yet powerful statement, Allah (swt) says "**These are the Messengers**". This is to bring our attention to who these men were. They were Messengers from Allah (swt). Can you then even begin to comprehend how important they were? They were our connection with the Divine. They are the means through which we may know what is pleasing to Allah (swt). They show us the purpose of our existence. They bring the communications of our Creator and Sustainer to us. We have been created by Allah (swt), we return to Allah (swt), and for every moment of our lives we are being sustained by Allah (swt). It is through the messengers that we know Allah (swt) and it is the messengers who guide us to Allah (swt). Each one of them is free of sin and each one of them fulfilled all of their duties and responsibilities. Thus they are the most honored and revered of human beings. They are the role models for all of mankind to emulate and follow. They are the Messengers of Allah (swt). Thus Allah (swt) consoles the Prophet (saw) by letting him (saw) know that he (saw) is indeed from these messengers.

Not only is the Prophet (saw) one of the Messengers of Allah (swt), but he (saw) is the leader of all the messengers. We see this from the next part of the ayah where Allah (swt) says "**We gave grace to some of them more than others**". Thus Allah (swt) gave to some of the messengers more than He (swt) gave to others. Allah (swt) bestowed His (swt)'s gifts and blessings to some messengers more than others. But there was no messenger to whom He (swt) gave more than the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) made the Prophet (saw) the messenger who was sent to all mankind while the other messengers were all sent to a particular nation. Allah (swt) gave the Prophet (saw) His (swt)'s Final Message to which the people will be called to till the end of time. Allah (swt) gave to the Prophet (saw) the greatest Miracle and the enduring Miracle in the Quran. The Prophet (saw) is the only messenger who will be allowed to make intercession on the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) made the Prophet (saw) the leader of the messengers and this is known by the fact that he (saw) lead all of the prophets in prayer when he (saw) went on the Isra. These were just a few of the ways in which Allah (swt) favored the Prophet (saw) above all the other messengers and above all mankind. Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) of this fact in this ayah, what a consolation it must have been for him (saw) to hear these words from his Rabb!

Because the Prophet (saw) was the most honored and the most blessed of the messengers of Allah (swt), then how fortunate should we feel to be a member of his (saw)'s Ummah? What is preventing us then from working in the path of Allah (swt) when we know that we are following in his (saw)'s footsteps? The Messengers of Allah (swt) were all honored, but none was more honored than the Prophet (saw). So how fortunate and blessed are we that he (saw) is our messenger and that we are in his (saw)'s Ummah? There were other messengers like Musa (as) who would wish that they were part of the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). They would want to give up being a messenger of Allah (swt) only so that they could be a member of our nation. Then how fortunate are we to be in the Ummah of the Prophet (saw). He (saw) brought to us the very words of Allah (swt) in this Quran. Why do you think it is that Allah (swt) commanded us to love the Prophet (saw) more than we love our parents, our children and even our own selves? It is because the Prophet (saw) is our connection with Allah (swt), so what human being can be more important in our lives than him (saw)? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to follow the Prophet (saw) in everything that we do to the best of our ability!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**from them were those to whom Allah spoke**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that there were some of His (swt)'s messengers to whom He (swt) spoke directly. The scholars say that there are at least three messengers about whom we can be certain that Allah (swt) spoke with directly. These are Adam (as), Musa (as) and of course the Prophet (saw). So here we see that Allah (swt) further comforts the Prophet (saw) by letting him (saw) know that not only is he (saw) one of those messengers whom Allah (swt) favored and blessed above others, but he (saw) is also among those few messengers with whom Allah (swt) directly. We know that the Prophet (saw) spoke directly with Allah (swt) when he (saw) went on the Miraj. This was the time when he (saw) went on the journey up to the heavens. This journey happened during an especially trying and difficult period of the Prophet (saw)'s life. The dawah had been progressing for years without success and he (saw) had lost his two supporters in his (saw)'s wife and uncle. Can you even begin to imagine what an experience it must have been to communicate directly with the Majestic and the Sublime? What a relief and a comfort must this have been for the Prophet (saw) at a time when he (saw) was going through such difficulties and trials?

Then Allah (swt) says "**and He raised some of them in degrees**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) that there were some prophets and messengers whom He (swt) raised in degrees. This part of the ayah is general and there are many meanings that it gives. One meaning is that Allah (swt) raised the honor and the status of some of the messengers above others. For example some of the messengers like Nuh (as), Ibrahim (as), Musa (as) and 'Isa (as) are messengers whom everyone knows about. Allah (swt) has raised their rank and gave them a special place of mention and honor among mankind. Another meaning of this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) has raised the station in the Garden given to some of the messengers above others. Because of their striving and their sacrifices, Allah (swt) has raised some of the messengers to the highest stations of the garden. Allah (swt) gave them the stations that are closest to Him (swt). In both of these meanings we see that there is none whom Allah (swt) has raised more than the Prophet (saw). When we take the first meaning we see that the Prophet (saw) is the most honored and the most revered of the messengers of Allah (swt). There is no prophet or messenger or even any human being whose name is mentioned all over the world more than the name of the Prophet (saw). At every moment of time there is a caller to prayer calling the name of the Prophet (saw), and bearing witness that he (saw) is indeed the Messenger of Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has also been raised to the highest station in the highest garden. That place is Garden where the pleasure is the most felicitous, that place that is the closest to Allah (swt). This is the station where Allah (swt) has placed His (swt)'s beloved messenger (saw). So we see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) has raised the Prophet (saw) in degrees above other messengers. He (swt) has done so in more ways than one. Allah (swt) consoles the Prophet (saw) by reminding him (saw) of this fact. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember how fortunate we are to be in the Ummah of this blessed Messenger (saw)!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And we gave 'Isa, the son of Maryam, the clear signs and we strengthened him with *Ruh-Al-Quddus***". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) of the messenger whom he (saw) was following. The messenger that directly preceded the Prophet (saw) was 'Isa (as). How noble a messenger was 'Isa (as) and how much of an honor was it for the Prophet (saw) to follow him. Just like the Prophet (saw), 'Isa (as) was a messenger who was

given several clear signs and proofs, and ‘Isa (as) was strengthened and helped by Gibreel (as). Please see our discussion of ayah 88 of this Surah for a more detailed description of those clear signs and how ‘Isa (as) was supported by Gibreel (as).

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says “**And had Allah willed, the ones who came after them would not have fought after the clear signs had come to them**”. What happened after the prophets and messengers were sent? Did all of the people follow them? Did everyone believe? Was there even one prophet or messenger who had every one of the people to whom he was sent believe in him? No, rather there were always those who opposed the messengers. There were always those who chose to turn away from the Message that their Creator had sent them. There were always those who chose to fight against the messengers and prevent them from taking the Message of Allah (swt) to the people. It is to this fact that Allah (swt) brings the attention of the Prophet (saw) to in this part of the ayah. Allah (swt) reminds the Prophet (saw) how the messengers who came before him (saw) were also opposed and fought against by their people. Just like he (saw) was opposed and fought by his (saw)’s people.

Allah (swt) also tells the Prophet (saw) that had it been His (swt)’s Will then these evil people would not have opposed the messengers and they would not have fought against them. Allah (swt) could have guided them if He (swt) wanted to, but they chose to turn away so Allah (swt) let them go astray. Even though Allah (swt) could have guided them, He (swt) lead them go astray because they chose to go astray. They opposed the messengers and they prevented the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching mankind. Can you even begin to imagine their evil in that they would deny their people the Message that has been sent to them by their Creator? They will get the repayment for their deeds when they meet Allah (swt) on the Last Day. So we see how this part of the ayah is also a consolation for the Prophet (saw) who was being rejected by his own people and who was being fought against by his own people. It was the Prophet (saw)’s own tribe of Quraysh who were the foremost in their opposition to this Message. They were the foremost in their striving to destroy this Message. So Allah (swt) tells the Prophet (saw) in this part of the ayah that he (saw) is not alone. Just like he (saw) was being rejected by the people to whom he (saw) was sent, the messengers before him (saw) were also rejected. They were also

opposed and they were also fought against. Their own people fought against their messengers. If Allah (swt) had willed, they would not have done so. But they chose to fail the test that Allah (swt) had given them, so He (swt) let them fail. May Allah (swt) save us from becoming like them! May Allah (swt) save us from ever turning away from the Message that He (swt) has sent!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but Allah does what He pleases**". Allah (swt) could have guided those people who opposed and fought against His (swt)'s messengers if He (swt) wanted to, but Allah (swt) allowed them to go astray because of the evil that they had done. They chose to go astray so Allah (swt) let them go astray even though He (swt) has the Power and Ability to guide them. Thus Allah (swt) shows us that there are no rules which apply to Him (swt), Allah (swt) can do whatever He (swt) pleases because He (swt) is the complete Lord and Master of all things. Allah (swt) can guide whomsoever He (swt) pleases and He (swt) can send astray whomsoever He (swt) pleases. Thus this part of the ayah both demonstrates the Power of Allah (swt) and at the same time it is also a threat for those who oppose this Message. Allah (swt) is telling them not to think that He (swt) would save them if they themselves choose kufr over iman. Allah (swt) could guide them, but He (swt) could let them go astray as well. The matter is up to Allah (swt) and He (swt) does what He (swt) pleases. So they should try their best to please Allah (swt) and hope that they are among those who He (swt) chooses to guide. If they choose to reject this Message when it comes to them, then what hope can they ever hope of Allah (swt) guiding them? May Allah (swt) make us among those for whom He (swt) desires good, those whom He (swt) desires are guided to Him (swt)!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقۡنَٰكُم مِّن قَبۡلِ أَن يَأۡتِيَ يَوۡمٞ لَّا بَيۡعٞ
فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٞ وَلَا شَفَٰعَةٞۗ وَٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ٢٥٤

255. O you who believe, spend out of what we have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship and no intercession. And the ones who do *kufr*, they are the *Dhalimoon*.

After consoling the Prophet (saw) in the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) once again addresses the believers in this ayah. Recall how Allah (swt) had called on the believers to fight in His (swt)'s way, and He (swt) had given them the example of Talut and his army and how they defeated a force that was much more powerful than they were because they had Allah (swt) with them. So Allah (swt) tells the believers that if they fight sincerely in His (swt)'s way, then He (swt) will be with them. They will be able to overcome any army as long as they put their trust in Allah (swt) and they have Taqwa and Sabr for Him (swt). In addition to fighting, what was also required of the early Muslim community at that time was spending in the way of Allah (swt). Recall that we mentioned how every soldier in the army had to pay for his own armor, mount and weapons. In addition there were many Muslims who wanted to fight but they could not afford these requirements for battle, so many Muslims had to spend on others in addition to spending on themselves. All the Muslims had to spend as much as they can spare to equip the Muslim army for battle. So in this ayah, we see Allah (swt) calling on the early Muslims to spend so that His (swt)'s Law is established and so that His (swt) Message is carried to mankind.

Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**O you who believe, spend out of what we have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship and no intercession**". Once again we see Allah (swt) calling out to the believers and He (swt) addresses them as believers. He (swt) calls on them with that quality that they have which establishes their relationship with Him (swt). Allah (swt) links the Iman with the action by saying that if you are a believer then you must manifest your Iman through your actions. What is there to Iman if there are no actions to support it? How can anyone call themselves believers without doing a single act of obedience to Allah (swt)? The scholars have told us how the Iman supports

the actions and the actions support the Iman. The more Iman that you have the more actions that you will do that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and the more actions that you do that are pleasing to Allah the more Iman that you will have. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) addresses the early Muslim community by their Iman in Him (swt) and He (swt) calls on them to spend to demonstrate their Iman in Him (swt). If you believe in Allah (swt), then spend for Allah (swt) to show your Iman.

We can also notice that Allah (swt) calls on the believers to spend from that which He (swt) has provided for them. This is to remind the believers that everything that they have really belongs to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is saving the believers here from a particular kind of thinking. We have some things in this world, and we start thinking that we are deserving of them. We think that they belong to us and that we have them because of the great person that we are or because of the many accomplishments that we have achieved. We attribute all that we have to ourselves and to our works. We forget that we are in reality nothing and that we have in reality done nothing. We do not deserve even one penny that we have or even morsel of food that we eat or even one drop of water that we drink. Rather everything that we have is a gift from the Most Merciful and Most Bounteous, a gift that we have done nothing to deserve. So when we spend for the sake of Allah (swt), we are only returning the gifts that we have back to their real Owner. May Allah (swt) always help us to remember this fact! May Allah (swt) allow us to spend everything that we have for Him (swt)!

So Allah (swt) calls on the believers to spend, Allah (swt) links their spending with their Iman in Him (swt), and He (swt) shows them how spending was necessary to demonstrate their Iman in Him (swt). Then Allah (swt) reminds them that what they are being asked to spend is not what they own because of their own merits, but it is what Allah (swt) has bestowed on them as part of His (swt)'s Mercy and His (swt)'s Bounty. Then Allah (swt) links their spending with the Last Day. That Day which should always be on the mind of every believer. Allah (swt) describes that Day as a Day "**in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship and no intercession**". No bargaining means that there is nothing you can give to gain Paradise or be saved from the Fire. Even if you have all of the riches of the heavens and the earth, Allah (swt) would not accept it from you on that Day. Allah (swt) is the One Free of all needs, so there is nothing that you can

give Him (swt) to save yourself on that Day. No friendship means that you cannot rely on any friend or any companion to help you on that Day. It is a Day in which you will even run from your own parents, your own children and your own wife. You will run from them and they will run from you. Such is the absolute terror of that Day. So how can you expect any human being to save you on that Day? No intercession means that there will be no intercession without the permission of Allah (swt). When the judgment comes down on you, do not count on someone else coming and interceding on your behalf. No one will be able to intercede for you without the permission of Allah (swt). Not some saint, not your righteous children and not even the Prophet (saw). Such is the Day to which Allah (swt) brings the attention of the early Muslims to in this ayah. Allah (swt) calls on them to spend before this Day comes to them. The early Muslims knew that this Day is coming and that it is coming soon. It is a predator that is chasing you and with every second of your life that passes it comes closer. Do you not then want to do everything that you can to prepare for it? Do you not then not want to use every second of your life to prepare for it? So spend from that which Allah (swt) has given you. Your Prophet (saw) has told you to save yourself from the Hellfire even if it be with half a date. So anything that you can give, you should give. It could even be your time and your energy if you do not have much wealth to spend. You can give anything, the only condition is that you give seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The only purpose of your giving must be to attain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). The objective of your giving must only be to please Allah (swt). You should give knowing that Allah (swt) is Seeing you give and with a hope that He (swt) is pleased with your giving. That is how you can prepare for this awesome Day. All that matters when this Day comes is that Allah (swt) is pleased with you, because only He (swt) can help you on that Day and only He (swt) can save you. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to spend from what He (swt) has provided us! May Allah (swt) be pleased with us on that Day!

Why are the believers being called on to spend? Why are they being called on to fight? In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) answers these questions. Allah (swt) says "**And the ones who do *kufr*, they are the *Dhalimoon***". To understand this ayah correctly, we have to remind ourselves of the meanings of these words. Remember that the word ***kufr*** means to cover. It

means to cover the Truth when you know it and you recognize it. This refers to all those who openly opposed this Message. They knew that it was indeed the Truth from Allah (swt) but they still chose to turn away from it. They chose to serve their desires and their pride rather than serve their Creator and their Sustainer. How can you describe such people except as ***Dhalimoon***? The ***Dhalimoon*** are those who do Dhulm, and as we mentioned Dhulm means “injustice”, “evil”, and “corruption”. What can be a greater evil than to deny the Message that you receive from your Creator and your Sustainer? What could be a greater injustice than preventing this Message from reaching mankind? What could cause greater corruption than denying the world the Mercy and Justice of this Message? Such evil is so great that it must be fought against and it must be opposed no matter what the cost. Our Creator did not create us without telling us exactly what to do, He (swt) has told exactly what to do. It is only man in his pride and arrogance that has turned away from this Message. How can he then be described except as one of Dhalimoon? That is why the believers are being called on to spend and fight in this ayah; it is to stand up to these evil men who would deny the Message of Allah (swt). There is no greater evil than this. In order to bring down this evil Allah (swt) has even allowed us to shed blood. That is the extent of this evil that we are opposing. Life is sacred and to cause any kind of harm to another living creature is a great evil. But an even greater evil is to prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people and to deny Allah (swt) the Sovereignty on the earth. That is why this evil must be fought and we have to spend everything that we have in fighting this evil. May Allah (swt) help us and support us, because we certainly cannot do it by ourselves! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to turn back to this Message! May Allah (swt) make us among those who stand up for and defend this Message like the Prophet (saw), the Sahabah, and the righteous scholars and martyrs did!

ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ ٱلْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُۥ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَّهُۥ مَا فِى
ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۚ يَعْلَمُ
مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَىْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّا بِمَا شَآءَ ۚ
وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ ۖ وَلَا يَـُٔودُهُۥ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَلِىُّ
ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

256. Allah. There is no *illah* except He. *Al-Hayy Al-Qayyoum*. No daze takes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His permission. He Knows what is in front of them and what is behind them, and they encompass nothing of His Knowledge except what He wills, His *Kursi* spreads over the heavens and the earth, and He does not tire in preserving them. And He is *Al-Alee Al-Atheem*.

This is *Ayat-ul-Kursi*, the greatest ayah in the Quran. In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) reminded us of the battle between those who oppose this Message and those who stand up for this Message. This ayah is that Message. The very essence of the Message that Allah (swt) has sent can be summarized in this ayah. So when Allah (swt) calls on you to fight in His (swt)'s way and to spend in His (swt)'s way and to strive with your utmost in His (swt)'s way, the Message of this ayah is what you are striving for. This Message of Islam is nothing but a call to all mankind to submit completely to Allah (swt). This is Tawhid and this is the essence of this Message and this is the meaning of this ayah. This ayah describes Allah (swt) for us and it shows us why it is that only He (swt) is the One Who deserves to be submitted to. The Message of Islam is nothing but a call to Allah (swt).

"**Allah**". This is how Allah (swt) begins this ayah. Allah (swt) reminds us of the greatest of His (swt)'s Names. The Name that most describes Him (swt). By mentioning this Name, Allah (swt) gives us a summary of the entire ayah right from the very first word in the ayah. Because the rest of the ayah simply describes Who Allah (swt) IS. The meanings given by this Name

cannot adequately be described in a language as weak as English. The closest that we can say to it's true meaning is that Name "**Allah**" means the One Who has all of the attributes of perfection and Who has no weakness or imperfection, and as a consequence of which is the Only One who deserves all worship, obedience and submission. In other words, it means the Perfect One deserving of all worship, praise, adoration, respect and obedience. All of the other Perfect Names of Allah (swt) are captured in this Name "**Allah**". So when you say Allah (swt) is the Most Merciful, the Most Powerful, the All-Knowing, the Most Wise, the Most Patient, the Most Pure, all of these Names are captured in the Name "**Allah**". Allah (swt) is the Perfect One and so He (swt) deserves that you worship Him (swt) and that you submit completely to Him (swt).

Another meaning that this Name gives is the One Who baffles and confuses the mind. The One Who if you try to comprehend Him (swt) with your mind, it will leave your mind dazed and confused. Now this meaning does not mean that we should not think about Allah (swt) or that we should not reflect on His (swt)'s Greatness. It only means that our minds cannot fully comprehend or encompass His (swt)'s Essence. You can think about Allah (swt), but if you try to really understand Him (swt), you should know that your mind will never be able to. As one Imam said, think of your mind as a small cup and think about the Essence of Allah (swt) as an ocean. How can a small cup hold the ocean? So this should be a rule for us as we study this ayah. In this ayah, Allah (swt) has told us about Himself and so that we can learn a lot about our Rabb from this ayah. But at the same time we should remember that there is so much about Him (swt) that we do not know. This is because the finiteness of our minds cannot contain the Infiniteness of His (swt)'s Essence. This is why one of the meanings of His (swt)'s Name is the One who baffles and dazes the minds. This is only the beginning of the meanings that this Name "**Allah**" gives.

Then Allah (swt) says "**There is no *illah* except He**". Recall from our discussion of Surah Fatihah how we said that there were two meanings for the word ***illah***. One meaning is "god" or that which is worshipped, and another meaning is that which fills the heart and occupies the mind. So your ***illah*** is not simply the god that you worship, but rather it is the purpose of your existence. You live and you exist only for your ***illah***, nothing else matters in your life except it. It is all that you think about, and everything you do is for it. So for some people their ***illah*** is an idol or a

human being that they adore. For others it is their wealth, for others it is their family, for others it is their own pride and glorification, for others it is satisfying their lusts and desires, and some people have several ***illah***. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that the Only One Who truly deserves to be ***illah*** is He (swt). In fact there should be no ***illah*** whatsoever except Allah (swt). Notice that Allah (swt) did not simply say that He (swt) was the only ***illah***, but rather He (swt) says that there is no ***illah*** except Him (swt). This is to emphasize that there is no ***illah*** whatsoever except Him (swt). So think now as to who or what is the ***illah*** in your mind. What do you think about most from the time you open your eyes in the morning till the time you go to bed at night? If it is not Allah (swt), then realize how far you are from Allah (swt) and how far you have to go in your journey to Him (swt). This does not mean that all hope is lost for you, it just means that means you have to redouble your efforts in drawing nearer to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us all the enabling grace to make Him (swt) the ***illah*** in our lives!

Then Allah (swt) says "***Al-Hayy Al-Qayyoum***". These are two of the greatest Names of Allah (swt). Once again the meanings that they give cannot be given justice in English. But we will try our best to scratch the surface of the deep meanings given in these Names. May Allah (swt) help us! "**Al-Hayy**" means the Alive. The One Who is always Alive. The One Who has Life and the One to Whom Life does not come and go like it does for the rest of creation. Allah (swt) is Alive at this moment, Allah (swt) has always been Alive and Allah (swt) will always be Alive. There is nothing else that has Life like this, everything else has experienced non-existence. Allah (swt) on the other hand is always Alive. "**Al-Qayyoum**" is derived from the word *qiyam*, which means "to stand". The meaning that it gives is that Allah (swt) is the One Who is Self-Subsisting. Allah (swt) is the One Who is always *standing* without the need for any support or helper. Of course by *standing* we do not mean standing like we stand, but we mean Existing. Allah (swt) is always Existing and He (swt) does not need anything else or anyone else for His (swt)'s Existence. Everything else needs Allah (swt), nothing else can exist on it's own, nothing else can stand on it's own. Allah (swt) on the other hand is always Existing and He (swt) at the same time is also supporting the existence of everything else. In other words the Name "**Al-Qayyoum**" means the One Who needs nothing and the One Who all else needs. These are the beginnings of

the meanings that these two Names give. Now ask yourself, does anything else deserve to be the ***illah*** in your life except such a Being? When you know that such is Allah (swt), how can you then care about anything else?

This part of the ayah is also a clear proof for the Existence and the Oneness of Allah (swt). Just look at the world around you. Can you see anything that is always Alive like Allah (swt)? Can you see anything that is Self-Subsisting like Allah (swt)? No rather everything that you can see lives and dies. Everything that you can see only exists for a certain period of time. There was a time when it did not exist and there will be a time when it will no longer exist. This is true for everything. It is true for humans, it is true for animals, it is true for plants, and it is even true inanimate objects. Everything exists only for a certain period of time, there is nothing that has existed forever. Just like everything exists only for a limited amount of time, we can also see that everything is in need of something else for it's existence. For example you need air to breathe, food to eat, and even a space in the universe to occupy. If you do not have these, then you cannot exist. Similarly everything else in this universe needs something else to exist. Nothing that we can sense can stand on it's own or exist on it's own. Everything needs something else. That "something else" that everything needs is Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the One Who is providing for and sustaining everything in existence. That is why Allah (swt) is the "Necessary Existent", when we look at our own selves and we look at the universe around us then we can see that all of this cannot exist without Allah (swt). There is simply no way to explain the existence of everything in this universe without Allah (swt). Even the most hard core atheist still cannot explain how a universe filled with limited things that are dependent on something else for their existence can come into existence on it's own and can sustain itself on it's own. They will continue to deny Allah (swt) but they cannot explain this universe without Allah (swt). So while you cannot sense Allah (swt) directly, you should know that in you yourself and in everything else in this universe besides you there are signs for Allah (swt). So know Allah (swt) through yourself and through all that you can sense around you. Allah (swt) is both the Manifest and the Hidden. He (swt) is Manifest for those who look for Him (swt) and He (swt) is Hidden for those who turn away from Him (swt). Which of these groups do you want to be in?

Then Allah (swt) tells you more about Himself. Now do you see why the Quran is the greatest Book ever, it is a Book about the Most Great. Allah (swt) then says "**No daze takes Him nor sleep**". Daze is that state you experience between wakefulness and sleep. It is that moment of heedlessness that overtakes you when you are about to go to sleep. Sometimes you also feel it when you are really tired. Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah that no daze takes Him (swt) and that He (swt) does not sleep. This means that Allah (swt) does not need any rest whatsoever. That feeling of daze and that feeling of a need to sleep or rest does not come to Allah (swt). In fact there is not even one moment when Allah (swt) is heedless to what He (swt) is doing, there is not even one moment when Allah (swt) is "inactive". For every moment Allah (swt) is sustaining and maintaining this entire universe, and if He (swt) were to turn away from it for even a second then this whole creation would be destroyed. Can you then even begin to comprehend how tremendous your Master IS? How then can you ever turn away from Him (swt)?

We mentioned in the previous part of the ayah how the Name "**Al-Qayyoum**" means that Allah (swt) is sustaining the existence of everything in the heavens and the earth. Maintaining the existence of every single thing does not tire Allah (swt) in the least. If Allah (swt) were to be heedless of the heavens and the earth for even a moment, for even a fraction of a second, then everything in the heavens and the earth would be destroyed. Such is how much every single thing needs Allah (swt). So too do you need Allah (swt). Think about it now, Allah (swt) is sustaining and maintaining you for every second of your existence. He (swt) does not take any breaks, any rest, or any sleep in sustaining you or the universe around you. How then can you be heedless of Him (swt)? How then can you let anything else be the ***illah*** in your life except Him (swt)? Why do you want to let anything else be the purpose of your existence except Him (swt)? Why do you want to give even one moment in your life to anything other than Him (swt)?

This part of the ayah is also a clear refutation of the Judeo-Christian belief that says that "God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh". See how different is our Aqeedah from that of the Jews and Christians, how we differ in even the most fundamental tenets of our belief. They actually believe that "god" needs a day of rest. In their minds "god" is nothing more than an old man with a big beard living in the sky. He can do some things but he also gets

tired and needs rest. See now how corrupted and false is their belief. How can you believe that a being is perfect if that being needs rest like you do? Do you truly believe the originator of the heavens and the earth to be like that or is that merely imagination that you yourself have made up in your minds to liken your god to yourself? May Allah (swt) save our Ummah from such corruption in our Aqeedah! May Allah (swt) save us from ever likening Him (swt) to the creation!

Then Allah (swt) says "**To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth**". This means that every single thing in the heavens and the earth belongs completely to Allah (swt). This includes you and me; we belong completely to Allah (swt). What does it mean that you belong to Allah (swt)? It means that that He (swt) is free to do with you as He (swt) pleases. Once you realize this, how can you complain for anything that happens in your life? Know now that your life is not yours to live with as you please but you were created Him and to live your life in worship and servitude to Him. So strive with every moment of your life to please Him and be pleased with whatever He gives you in life.

Another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that all authority and sovereignty belongs to Allah (swt) Alone. When you say that He is your complete Master and your complete Owner, then how can anyone tell you what to do except He? How can you obey anyone except He? Complete obedience and complete sovereignty must be only for Allah (swt). Only His Law the valid Law that can rule the earth, and everyone must obey Him, So both at the societal level and at the individual level all obedience must be only for Allah (swt). At the societal level this means that only the Law of Allah (swt) can rule the land, and at the individual level this means that you have to obey only Allah (swt) in everything that you do. For every moment of your life, you have to see what is the action that is pleasing to Allah (swt) and then do that action. You also have to work to see to it that the only law that rules the land is the Law of Allah (swt). This is how you can realize the complete authority and sovereignty of Allah (swt) both in your life and the life of your society. This is what Allah (swt) wants from you in this part of the ayah. Do you really think that Allah (swt) will be pleased with you when He (swt) says "**To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth**" and then you live you life the way that you want and you rule the earth the way that you want. You do in your life that which displeases Allah (swt) and you

permit to exist on the earth that which displeases Him (swt). Do you really think that He (swt) will be pleased with you then? So this is a clear evidence for submitting to Allah (swt) completely in our lives and for working to bring the Islamic State.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His permission**". With this part of the ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the Day of Judgment. As we have mentioned, Allah (swt) created us to worship and serve Him (swt). Allah (swt) gave us the free will to choose whether we will fulfill this purpose for our creation. So for every moment of our life we are being tested on how well we are worshipping and serving Allah (swt). If He is truly the illah in your heart, then for as many moments in your life you should try to think about Him (swt) and for as many moments in your life, you should try to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). This is how you worship and serve Allah (swt) and this is the test that He (swt) has given you in the life of this world. And on the Last Day, you will return to Allah (swt) and He (swt) will judge you on how well you fared on this test. Thus your whole life has really been leading up to that Day when you return to your Rabb. It is to this Day that Allah (swt) brings your attention to in this part of the ayah. Then He asks you a question about this Day. He says "**Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His permission**". You know from Surah Fatihah that He is the Master and the Owner of the Last Day. So you know that He (swt) is the Only One to Judge you. In this ayah, He asks you if there is anyone who can intercede with Him (swt) for you on that Day? When His Judgment comes down on you, is there anyone who can prevent or stop that Judgment? Is there anyone who can change that Judgment? Of course the answer to all of these questions is no because you know that He is the complete Master and Owner of that Day. So why should you care about anyone else in your life except He? Is there anyone else who can help you on that Day? Even the Prophet (saw) who was the best human being to ever walk on the face of this earth will have to ask His for permission before he (saw) can make intercession? How then can you place your hopes in those who are less than the Prophet (saw) in His Sight? So in this part of the ayah as well Allah (swt) is calling on us to make Him (swt) as the illah in our lives, calling on us to make Him (swt) as the purpose of our lives. Allah (swt) is reminding us that there is no one else for us besides Him (swt) on that Last Day when our fate for all eternity will be

decided. So why then do you want to give even a moment of your life to other than Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do everything that we can to prepare for that Day to prepare for that meeting with Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) says "**He Knows what is in front of them and what is behind them**". Here He tells us that His (swt)'s Knowledge covers everything. The pronoun "them" in this ayah refers to all of creation. He Knows the past of every single thing, He (swt) Knows what happened to it since it's creation. Similarly He Knows the future of every single thing. He Knows where every single thing will end up. So even the rock on a mountain, Allah (swt) Knows whether that rock will one day fall down or not. He Knows all about you as well. He Knows every moment of your life better than you do. He (swt) Knows all that happened to you and all that you did since the day you were born and He (swt) Knows all that will happen to you and all that you will do till the day that you die. So how then can you turn away from Him (swt)? Why then should you care about anything or anyone except Him (swt)?

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) Knows us very well. So you have always remind yourself that He Knows everything about you, He (swt) Knows all the sacrifices that you make for Him (swt). However much you sacrifice and strive, He Knows all of your efforts and all of your determination. So you can be sure that He (swt) will reward you for all your efforts. He even Knows what is in the deepest recesses of your heart so not only does He Know the action itself but He Knows the sincerity behind that action. any action that you do sincerely for Him (swt), you can be sure that He (swt) Knows about it and that He (swt) will reward you for it. So why should you worship and serve any but Him (swt)? Why should you dedicate your life to any but Him (swt)? Turn your face away from the creation and towards the One Who Knows you more than you even know yourself. Seek your reward from the One Who Knows all of your striving. When you dedicate yourself to a Being of such Perfect Knowledge then nothing you do will ever be wasted. He Knows everything that you do for Him. He Knows every single moment that you gave to Him. Nothing whatsoever escapes His Knowledge. He Knows everything you do and He will recompense you for everything you do. Both in this world and the next. Both with pleasures and a station of nearness to Him.

Then Allah (swt) says '**and they encompass nothing of His Knowledge except what He wills**". What is our greatest achievement other than our knowledge? Is there anything that makes us more proud than our knowledge? Everything that we as human beings have accomplished is because of the knowledge that we have been given. All of our technological advancements, all our scientific discoveries and inventions, and these material comforts in which we live, is only possible because of the knowledge that we have been given. So our knowledge is our greatest achievement, but it often makes us proud and arrogant. Because we have been able to accomplish so much through our knowledge, it often leads us to forget our place in the creation. But in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds us that all of our knowledge comes from Him (swt) and we cannot take any of His (swt)'s Knowledge except what He (swt) wills. Should that then not humble us before Him (swt)? We think we are so great because of the knowledge that we have, we may even think that we know everything there is to know. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) shows how foolish such thinking is. He shows us how we in reality know nothing and that all Knowledge is with Him (swt). What little knowledge that we have is what has been given to us by Him by His will and permission. If it were not for Him (swt) and His (swt)'s Mercy on us, we would remain ignorant, lost and confused. If it were not for Him (swt), then you would not have any knowledge at all. Where then is your arrogance and pride now? May Allah (swt) forgive us for our arrogance! May Allah (swt) continue to bestow His (swt)'s Knowledge on us!

We have progressed and evolved in our knowledge since the time that Allah (swt) placed Adam (as) on this earth. Each generation builds on the knowledge of the previous generation and so each generation knows more than the previous generation. When it comes to knowledge of science and knowledge of how this world operates we as human beings have reached peaks of knowledge that our ancestors had never reached before. We have stood on their shoulders and reached heights that they have never reached before. However there is one negative side effect to this advancement in knowledge that we have reached, it has made some us believe that we can explain this universe without Allah (swt). We know a little bit about how the physical world around us works, and we think that knowledge makes us independent of Allah (swt). We think that we do not need Allah (swt) anymore and we even go to the extent of thinking that we can

explain this universe without Him. Is this not the height of arrogance and stupidity? People who think in such a way need to be reminded how little knowledge they possess, they need to be reminded of all that they do not know, and how they still cannot explain the existence of this universe without Allah (swt). All knowledge is only with Him and we do not take any of His (swt)'s Knowledge except what He (swt) wants. So we need to remind ourselves of how little we know and how we will never reach that stage in the evolution of our knowledge where we can ever be independent of Allah (swt). No matter how smart the scientist may become and no matter how much he may discover, he will never be able to explain how a limited and dependent universe can come into existence on it's own and how it can maintain itself on it's own? In his arrogance he may think that he can but he will never be able to do. May Allah (swt) always make us realize how limited our knowledge and may He (swt) always make us humble in our knowledge!

Mawdudi mentions in his tafsir of this part of the ayah that because our knowledge is so limited, we cannot be the ones to come up with a system of life for ourselves. We as human beings do not know what is best for ourselves because we do not know what is good or bad about anything. Let us take an example to illustrate this point, imagine for a second that you find yourself standing in front of a table that has a plate of beef and a plate of pork. Can you yourself without revelation from Allah (swt), without a Law from Allah (swt), say that the beef is good and the pork is bad? Is there anything in the smell of the pork or the taste of the pork that tells you that it is bad? No, rather based on what you can sense about it you cannot say if is good or bad. In fact the pork may smell very good to you and you may feel like eating it. So there is nothing about the pork that you can sense with which you say whether it is good or bad. Thus if you cannot know through your senses that the pork is bad then how can you know that it is bad? It is only Allah (swt) Who Knows all about it, Who Knows all about this universe Who can tell you that the beef is good and the pork is bad. This is because He (swt) has all of the Knowledge and you have very little knowledge. So how can we be the ones to say what is right and wrong, how can we be the ones to make the laws for our society when we ourselves cannot even sense the good and the bad in a thing? How do we, such ignorant and emotional creatures, know which laws are best for the people? Rather the Only One to say what is right and wrong and the Only One to

make the Law is Allah (swt). Only in the Islamic State does the Law of Allah (swt) exist, and until the State returns mankind will continue to live in darkness and oppression. Lead around by fools who think they know what they are doing but in reality do not. May Allah (swt) help all of mankind to realize that only He (swt) can be the Sovereign and the Judge in their lives! May Allah (swt) make us realize how ignorant we truly are!

Then Allah (swt) says "**His *Kursi* spreads over the heavens and the earth**". This part of the ayah is *mutashabiyat*, this means that it's true meaning is known only to Allah (swt). Recall how we said from the previous part of the ayah that the knowledge that Allah (swt) has given us is only a little. We know from the mutashabiyat ayahs that there are even some ayahs of the Quran whose true meaning Allah (swt) has been kept hidden from us. However there is still a general meaning that we can take from these ayahs, and these general meanings still serve their purpose in bringing us closer to Allah (swt) just like all of the others ayahs of the Quran do. But their true meaning is known only to Allah (swt), and this is knowledge that He (swt) has not bestowed on us. The general meaning that we can take from this ayah is that the word ***Kursi*** means the Knowledge of Allah (swt) as well as the Power and Authority of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah that both His (swt)'s Knowledge and His (swt)'s Power and Authority spreads all over the heavens and the earth. There is not one inch of the world where the Knowledge of Allah (swt) or the Power of Allah (swt) does not reach. This meaning is what is in conformity with the rest of the ayah where Allah (swt) has described to us His (swt) Knowledge and His (swt)'s Power and how He (swt) is the Only One Who deserves to be worshipped and served because of that. Just as the Knowledge and the Power of Allah (swt) spreads to every corner of the creation, so too does His (swt)'s Authority. Allah (swt) is the only One Who has the right to rule and legislate. Only His Law is the Law to rule every corner of this universe.

Thus we say that the true meaning of the word ***Kursi*** is known only to Allah (swt). The general meaning that we can take from it is that it refers to the Knowledge of Allah (swt) as well as His Power and Authority. Such has been the meaning that the majority of the mufasir have given for this part of the ayah, including Ibn Abbas (ra), who was the Sahabi for whom the Prophet (saw) himself prayed to Allah (swt) to give him (ra) knowledge of the Quran. So when the

great scholars of our Ummah have given this interpretation for this ayah, who are we then to come and give another interpretation? Who are we to say that this ayah must be understood literally? Such would be utter foolishness because not only does the literal interpretation of this ayah contradict the opinion of the vast majority of our scholars, but the literal interpretation of this ayah also contradicts the rational basis upon which we established our Aqeedah. The literal interpretation of this ayah puts limitations on Allah (swt), and we know that Allah (swt) is Far Above any weakness or limitations. Praised and Glorified be He (swt)! May Allah (swt) save our Ummah from those who want to put limitations and restrictions on our Rabb! The ones who want to liken Him (swt) to the creation! May Allah (swt) save us from them!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and He does not tire in preserving them**". Not only does the Power and the Knowledge of Allah (swt) spread to every corner of the heavens and the earth but He does not tire in the least bit in preserving them and maintaining them. Can you then even begin to imagine His Power? Every single thing in the heavens and the earth is being sustained and maintained by Him and it is not tiring Him (swt) in the least. The very existence of every single thing is being preserved by Him and He (swt) does not tire in the least bit . Such is the Power and Majesty of Allah (swt), what can you do with such a Being except submit to Him (swt) completely? So in this part of the ayah as well we see that Allah (swt) calling on mankind to submit with their all to Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the One maintaining and preserving you and the world around you for every moment of your existence, so why do you want to make anything else as the purpose of your life other than Him (swt)? How can you live in heedlessness of Him and dedicate your life to other than Him? Rather you should make Him as the focus of your life, this is in essence Tawhid and this is the Message of this ayah and the Message of this Din.

Sayyid Qutb also mentions in his tafsir of this ayah how this part of the ayah is a clear refutation of the Aristotelian belief that "god created the universe and then let it be". Allah (swt) clearly shows us in this part of the ayah how not only did He (swt) create the heavens and the earth but that He (swt) is maintaining and preserving them for every moment of their existence. Allah (swt) does not tire in maintaining and preserving them, this means that He (swt) has always been maintaining and preserving them and that He (swt) will continue to maintain and preserve

them till the Last Day. So how can you then ever tire in your worship and servitude of Him (swt)? It is only the fools who do not know Him who think that they can live a life without Him.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**He is *Al-Alee Al-Atheem***". These are two more of His Beautiful Names. Allah (swt) describes Himself to us with His (swt)'s Names and so we should seek to draw closer to Him (swt) through these Names. "***Al-Alee***" is the One Who has the Perfection in all attributes. For example we say that Allah (swt) is the One Who is the Most Knowing, the Most Powerful, the Most Wise. All of these attributes have reached their pinnacle and their perfection in Allah (swt) and that is the meaning given by His (swt)'s Name "***Al-Alee***". This Name does not mean the "Most High" in the literal sense because we know that Allah (swt) is beyond time and space. He (swt) is not the "highest" in terms of location, rather all the perfect attributes reach their height of perfection in Him (swt). As always, Allah (swt) Knows best.

"***Al-Atheem***" means the Most Great and the Most Majestic. The Most Tremendous. How can you describe Him (swt) as anything else other than this after what you have learned about Him (swt) in this ayah? Is there anything greater than Allah (swt)? Is there any being that is more majestic than Allah (swt)? Is there anything or anyone more tremendous? No, not even the mightiest king or the tallest mountain could ever compare to Him.

When you know all of this about Allah (swt) then is there anything that should be more important in your life than He (swt)? Is there anything else or anyone else for whom you should dedicate every moment of your life? So this ayah is nothing but a call to all mankind to submit completely to Allah (swt). He describes Himself to us and shows us why He (swt) is the One Who deserves to be worshipped and why He (swt) deserves to be submitted to. The Message of this ayah was what the early Muslims were striving, struggling and spending to uphold and carry. It is also what Allah (swt) calls upon us to take up and carry. When you think about the Greatness of Allah (swt), can you imagine another purpose for your life other than carrying this Message to mankind? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace!

So we see from this ayah how Allah (swt) has summarized for us this entire Message. This Message is nothing but a call to Allah (swt). A call to spend one's life in worship and servitude of Allah (swt). When you truly realize Who Allah (swt) IS that is when you will see that

there is no value to life except spending it in the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). This ayah tells you Who Allah (swt) IS. The more that you understand the meanings of this ayah the more that you will realize Allah (swt). The more that you realize Allah (swt) the more that you will see how there is no point to life except living this Din that He (swt) has sent to you. So we should all strive to reflect on the meanings of this ayah. We should all strive to memorize this ayah and recite it to ourselves often. Each time we recite it we should think about our Lord as He (swt) has described Himself in it and we should seek to draw closer to Him (swt) with it. May Allah (swt) allow this most beautiful of ayahs be a means with which we can approach Him (swt)!

لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّۚ فَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ
وَيُؤۡمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ ٱسۡتَمۡسَكَ بِٱلۡعُرۡوَةِ ٱلۡوُثۡقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ
عَلِيمٌ ٢٥٦

257. There is no compulsion in Din. Surely the Right Way has become clear from error. So whoever does kufr to the *Taghut*, and has Iman in Allah then surely he has grasped the firmest handhold that will never break. And Allah is Hearing Knowing.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us what was the essential of this Message, Allah (swt) told us what was the foundation of this Message. Allah (swt) reminded us how this Message was nothing but a call to submit to the Oneness and the Absoluteness of He (swt). Allah (swt) described Himself (swt) to us so that we can realize how He (swt) is the Only One Who deserves to be worshipped and the Only One Who deserves to be submitted to in all affairs of life. Allah (swt) reminded us how the propagation of this Message was what we should live for and what we should strive for. So the spread of this Message to mankind is what we live for, it is what we strive for, and it is what we sacrifice all that we have for. We realize the Greatness and the Majesty of Allah (swt) and so we have submitted to Him (swt). Similarly we want to see all of mankind submit to Allah (swt) as well just like we have. We are so sure and we are so convinced of this Message

that we want nothing more than to see all of mankind believe in this Message just like we have. But does this then mean that we can go so far as to force this Message on the people? After all it is the Truth right? How can we leave the people living in ignorance and darkness? Should we not force this Din upon them? It is to these questions that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**There is no compulsion in Din**". Basically this ayah means that you cannot force anyone to become Muslim, you cannot force this Din upon anyone. Allah (swt) says clearly that there is no compulsion and no force in the Din. So the first meaning that we can take from this part of the ayah is that it is forbidden for us to force anyone to become Muslim. You cannot put a gun to someone's head and tell them to become Muslim or else they would die. Everybody should be free to choose whether they want to accept Islam or not. So the most apparent meaning that this ayah gives is that in no way can we force anyone to accept this Din. If any Muslim were to force any non-Muslim to accept Islam then he would be doing a great sin for which he will have to answer to Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment.

This meaning of the ayah is also a clear refutation of those so called historians who say that Islam was spread by the sword. Their imaginative stories conjure up images in our minds of Muslim soldiers entering non Muslim lands and putting their swords on the necks of people telling them to say that Allah (swt) is One and the Prophet (saw) is the Messenger of Allah (swt). Such an image could not be further from the truth. Why would any Muslim soldier who is fighting for the sake of Allah (swt) perform an action that is clearly forbidden by Allah (swt)? We see from this ayah that Allah (swt) has clearly forbidden compulsion in the Din. The meaning of this ayah is a fundamental rule that all Muslims knew well. So it is inconceivable that any Muslim would have forced anyone to accept this Din at the sword, rather these are stories made up by the enemies of this Message. They know that Islam is the Truth, they see that it is the Truth, but they want to prevent it from spreading to mankind so they make up these lies about it. They make up these lies while completely ignoring the fact that Allah (swt) has forbidden compulsion by force in this ayah, and completely ignoring the fact that millions of non Muslims lived freely and practiced their religion freely within the Islamic State for the last fourteen hundred years of the State's existence.

So we can see that all that they say about Islam being a religion of violence and terror and of it being spread by the sword is nothing fabrications and propaganda to fool the people. Those of us who have even the most basic understanding of the Quran can see their lies for the falsehood and the propaganda that they are. May Allah (swt) save us and save the people from the lies and the deception of the enemies of this Message!

Notice also that Allah (swt) did not say that there is “no compulsion in Islam” but He (swt) said there is “no compulsion in Din”. So another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that there is to be no compulsion in any Din. There cannot exist any circumstance where the people are being forced to accept one Din over another. Rather all people must be given the freedom to choose what they want to believe in. Because belief is what in the heart of a person, and you cannot force something into someone’s heart. So another meaning that Allah (swt) gives in this part of the ayah is that no person should be forced to accept any belief.

Now let us look at the secular and materialistic societies that dominate the world today and let us ask ourselves if people truly have the freedom to choose their Din in such societies. You might say that they do because such societies claim to guarantee “freedom of belief”. Even this so called “freedom of belief” can be called into question when we see the oppression and persecution these societies levy upon Muslims. Even the country that is the champion of secularism and the originator of secularism is now forcing Muslim sisters to walk in the streets naked. So now where is their “freedom of belief”? But let us assume for now that even if there is such a concept of “freedom of belief” in their society, do you still think that the people are correctly receiving the Message of Allah (swt) in such societies? Do you think that their governments and their media are telling them the Truth about this Message? Or are they merely spreading lies and propaganda by telling their people that this is a Din of “terror” and this is Din that “takes away freedoms”? Let us even put that on the side for the moment, and let us then make the far-fetched assumption that the people can still receive the Message of Allah (swt) correctly in such societies. Even if the people do correctly receive the Message of Allah (swt) in the societies of the West, and this is a far-fetched assumption, do you think that the kind of society that these people live in is conducive to make the people accept the Message of Allah

(swt)? These people have created a society where the children are taught from a very early age that they are nothing but intelligent apes. So basically they are nothing more than animals. What does an animal live for other that satisfaction of its lusts and carnal pleasures? So how receptive will a person be to the Message of Allah (swt) when he has grown up thinking that he was an ape and thinking that all that there is to life is eat, sleep, defecate and satisfy his carnal lusts? How will he respond to a Message that is now calling on him to submit completely to Allah (swt)? Will he be very receptive to such a Message? Will he make the effort to find out whether this Message is the Truth or not, or will he prefer to live his life in ignorance so that he can continue to be a slave of his lusts and desires rather than being a slave of Allah (swt)? So you can see how by the very existence of such societies, they are forcing their people to accept their Din and their way of life. They are preventing the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people. Thus the people in such societies do not have the freedom to choose whether they want to accept the Message of Allah (swt) or not because the people never correctly receive the Message of Allah (swt) and they live in a society that makes them want to turn away from the Message of Allah (swt).

That is why Allah (swt) legislated that jihad must take place. We are not saying that people must be forced to accept Islam, even though this Message is the Ultimate Truth we are still not saying that the people must be forced to accept it. But we are saying that all of the material obstacles that prevent the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people must be removed. That is why jihad is necessary, to remove the material obstacles that stand in the way of the dawah. These material obstacles are the governments that rule over the people. The governments that force the people to accept a corrupted belief and a corrupted way of life without allowing the Message of Allah (swt) to correctly reach them. That is also why when we look back to the time of the Prophet (saw), we see that when he (saw) established the Islamic State, Allah (swt) then commanded the Muslims to fight in order to bring down the governments that prevented the Message of Allah (swt) from reaching the people. These governments force their Din on the people, and as Allah (swt) says in this part of the ayah there is to be no compulsion in Din. So the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah fought and strove to remove these obstacles to the dawah and to ensure that the Message of Allah (swt) correctly reached the people. Only then

would the people have the real freedom to choose what they want to believe. Only then did they all choose Islam. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to reestablish the Islamic State so that there can be no compulsion in Din once again!

Another reason why it is necessary to fight to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land is because of what we said previously in Ayat-al-Kursi. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah (swt), so this earth belongs to Allah (swt) as well. Therefore it is not right for anyone but Allah (swt) to rule over this earth. So when the Muslims fight to bring down the governments of *Taghut* and replace it with the Law of Allah (swt) they are in effect returning the sovereignty over the earth to it's rightful Owner. Once the Islamic State has been established, the people are given the freedom to choose as to whether they want to accept Islam or if they want to keep their religion and practice it in private. The Din is never forced upon the people to accept as a way of belief, but they must accept Allah (swt) as the Sovereign over the earth because the earth belongs to Allah (swt) and not to them. So the people are free to keep their religion, but the law that must rule over the earth is only the Law of Allah (swt). This is not forcing the people to accept Islam but this is only returning Sovereignty to its rightful Owner. May Allah (swt) help us all to realize this!

It is also ironic that the Christians and the Orientalists would accuse Muslims of forcing Islam on the people without looking at their own history. Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how the Christians were the foremost among those who forced their religion on other people. For example when Constantine, the Roman Emperor, made Christianity the official religion throughout his empire, he forced the people throughout the empire to adopt Christianity. Everyone across the Roman Empire had to accept Jesus Christ as their lord and savior or else face torture and death. Similarly when the Christians retook Spain in the fifteenth century, they had the Inquisitions where they rounded up all those who were not Christian in Spain and forced them to believe in Christianity or face torture and death. Similarly the natives of the New World that they colonized, exploited and pillaged received the same treatment. The *conquistadors* would go with the cross in one hand and the sword in the other. So how dare they accuse us of forcing people to believe by the sword when the history of their own religion is filled with so much blood?

But then what do you expect from a religion that is so foolish and filled with so much falsehood? A religion that teaches that “god has a son”, that “god is one yet god is three”, that “god has a mother”, that “the pope speaks with god”, and other foolish beliefs. How can you expect anyone to believe in a religion that has such foolish beliefs? So they know that the only way that they can make the people accept such a ludicrous religion is by forcing it upon the people. That is why we can see that most of the people entered into Christianity either because they were forced to or because they saw some benefit in them for it in this worldly life. For example during the Colonial times, many people knew that it was the religion of the colonizers and so they thought that they get some benefit by following their religion. Very few people adopted Christianity because they were convinced that it was the Truth from Allah (swt). Most of the people were forced into it in one way or another. So then how dare that they accuse Islam of forcing people to believe by force? They should first look to their own history. The fact that Christianity was forced on the people is also why today you can see so many Christians abandoning their religion for secularism, materialism, atheism, and even the eastern religions. They can see that their religion is nothing but falsehood. Their religion is nothing but falsehood, and falsehood knows no end except destruction.

Then Allah (swt) says “**Surely the Right Way has become clear from error**”. This is why there can be no compulsion in the Din of Islam. It is the Truth, it is the Right Way, and Allah (swt) has made it clear from all the ways of error and falsehood. Notice in this ayah how Allah (swt) emphasizes with certainty that Islam has surely been made clear from all the ways of error and falsehood. So once Islam has been made clear, why do you need to then force this Message on the people? Anyone who is sincere and who reflects on it will easily recognize it as the Truth. There is no other religion in the world today that calls on the worship of Allah (swt) Alone like Islam does. There is no other religion that presents the Creator as the Perfect One with no flaw or weakness like Islam does. There is no other religion that presents such clear proofs and evidences like Islam does. So from this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) has made the Right Way of His (swt)’s Message clear from all of the wrong paths of error and falsehood. So the people should be free to choose which path they want to follow. You know the Truth, now you

choose whether you want to follow it or not. The people know that following this Message was what they were created to do, if they choose not accept it then they will have to face Allah (swt) on the Last Day with their decision.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**So whoever does kufr to the *Taghut*, and has Iman in Allah then surely he has grasped the firmest handhold that will never break**". We saw from the previous part of the ayah that Allah (swt) has made this Message clear from all of the ways of error and misguidance. So what does it mean to believe in this Message and to follow this Message? Allah (swt) tells us in this part of the ayah. The first part of following this Message is turning away from the ***Taghut***; it is doing kufr to the ***Taghut***. The ***Taghut*** are all of the false gods that are worshipped instead of Allah (swt) and also all of the false masters and kings who are obeyed instead of Allah (swt). These could be idols or human beings or devils. So Allah (swt) first demands that you turn away from the worship of any but Him (swt) and that you turn away from the servitude of any but Him (swt). The next part of believing in this Message and following this Message is to have Iman in Allah (swt). It is to have the deep and firm conviction in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has described Himself in the Quran. So you must believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has described Himself in *Ayat-al-Kursi* and you must believe that Allah (swt) is the only ***illah*** in your life. This belief must make you dedicate your whole life for Allah (swt). If you are able to do this, then you will be among those whom Allah (swt) has described as "**surely he has grasped the firmest handhold that will never break**". This Iman in Allah (swt) in your heart and this Din of Islam in your life is what Allah (swt) has described as "**the firmest handhold that will never break**". As long as you hold on to it, it will never leave you, as long as you are sincere to it, it will never abandon you. This is because this Din is the Truth, and while the falsehood will be destroyed and will vanish, the Truth will remain. So you can be certain that if you believe in Allah (swt) with utmost conviction and you practice this Din of Al-Islam to the best of your ability, then you have grabbed hold of the firmest of handholds that will never break. May Allah (swt) enable us all to grab hold of this Din of Islam and to hold on to it till the Day in which we meet Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us once again that He (swt) is "**Hearing Knowing**". So the Message has been made clear, and the people are free to accept it or reject it.

In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that whatever choice the people make, He (swt) is Hearing and Knowing. If they chose to believe in this Message when they know it is Truth, then He (swt) Hears their acceptance of this Message and He (swt) Knows that their acceptance was sincere in their hearts. If they chose to reject this Message when they know that it is the Truth, then He (swt) Hears their rejection and He (swt) Knows the corruption in their hearts when they rejected a Message that they knew was the Truth. He (swt) Knows that they knew that this Message was the Truth, and He (swt) Knows how they turned away from it even when they were certain that it was the Truth. If they were ignorant of this Message because it never reached them correctly, then Allah (swt) Hears that the Message never reaches them and He (swt) Knows their situation as well. Allah (swt) Knows that they are not to be held responsible because He (swt) Hears that they have never received this Message. Allah (swt) Hears and Knows all things so Allah (swt) Hears all those who accept this Message and those who do not, and Allah (swt) Knows the hearts of all people if they are sincere to Him (swt) when His (swt)'s Message reaches them. So Allah (swt) reminds us in this part of the ayah as well that there is to be no compulsion in Din, Allah (swt) Hears all and Knows all and He (swt) Hears and Knows those who accepted this Message and those who did not. May Allah (swt) Hear from us words that please Him (swt) and may He (swt) Knows from us sincerity in our hearts!

ٱللَّهُ وَلِيُّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ ۖ
وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ ٱلطَّٰغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ ٱلنُّورِ إِلَى
ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

257. Allah is the Protecting Friend of the ones who believe, He takes them out of every kind of darkness and into the Light. But as for the ones who do kufr, their protecting friends are the *Taghut*, they take them from the Light into every kind of darkness. These are the companions of the Fire, they will stay therein forever.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) reminded us that there is to be no compulsion in the Din. Everyone should be given the free choice as to whether they want to accept this Message or not. The Truth of this Message has been made clear from the error and the falsehood of all other beliefs and ways of life. So now the people should be free to decide whether they want to accept this Message or not, that is after all is the test that every soul have been given in the life of this world. This Message is nothing but an call to total submission to Allah (swt) Who is as He (swt) has described Himself (swt) in *Ayat-ul-Kursi*. The ones who are sincere and who recognize their own weakness and who recognize the Greatness and the Majesty of Allah (swt) will follow this Message, and the ones who are arrogant and who want to follow their lusts and their desires will turn away from this Message. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what will happen to those who accept this Message and what will happen to those who turn away from this Message.

Allah (swt) says "**Allah is the Protecting Friend of the ones who believe**". The first thing that Allah (swt) does is that He (swt) establishes this special relationship with the ones who choose to accept this Message and the ones who choose to believe in it. This then is further incentive for you to accept this Message because if you do, then you too will have this special relationship with the Lord and Master of the universe. What is this special relationship that you will have with Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) will be your Protecting Friend. A friend is someone close to you, a friend is someone who is always there for you whenever you need him or her, a friend is someone whom you can take comfort in during times of sadness and difficulty, and someone whom you can share moments of joy and happiness with. Allah (swt) is telling you in this part of the ayah, that if you believe in Him (swt) as He (swt) should be believed in, then He (swt) will be your Friend. Who could have a better friend than Allah (swt)? Does the one who has Allah (swt) as a friend need any other friends from the life of this world? Do they need anyone else? Allah (swt) is the Friend Who will always be with you, and Who will never abandon you. Even when you are in the darkest moments of your life, and you look around and see no one else around you, you can know that Allah (swt) will be with you during those moments. Even when you are in your grave, you know that Allah (swt) will be with you. So how can you find a better friend than Him (swt)? Furthermore not only will Allah (swt) be your friend, but He (swt) will be your Protecting

Friend. This means Allah (swt) will take care of you wherever you go. Allah (swt) has all Might and all Power, and if He (swt) is your Protector then what do you have to fear from the creatures of this world. Anything in this world that may seek to harm you is His (swt)'s creation and under His (swt)'s complete Power and Control. What then can possibly happen to you, what harm or misfortune can befall you, if you have Allah (swt) as your Protecting Friend? Who in this world can be a better friend than Allah (swt)? Who in this world can be a better protector than Allah (swt)? So Allah (swt) reminds us in this first part of the ayah that if we choose to believe in this Message that He (swt) has sent, then He (swt) will be our Protecting Friend. This is what Allah (swt) will do for us if only we believe in this Message that He (swt) has sent to us.

Once Allah (swt) has become your Protecting Friend, what then will He (swt) do to you? How will He (swt) reward you for your belief in Him (swt) and your total submission to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) says "**He takes them out of every kind of darkness and into the Light**". This is what Allah (swt) does for those who choose to believe in the Message that He (swt) has sent. He (swt) takes them out of every kind of darkness and into the Light. The Light here refers to this Din of Al-Islam and the darkness refers to every single way of life other than it. So notice how Allah (swt) uses the singular for the Light because there is only One True belief and way of life, and how Allah (swt) uses the plural for the darkness because there are so many false beliefs and so many corrupted ways of life. This Din has been described as "Light" because it brings peace and tranquility for the people, it also brings justice and equity. It gives people a sense of purpose in their lives and it shows the way to the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the Garden in the Hereafter. All of the other ways of life are darkness because they bring the opposite of this. All other ways of life bring misery and suffering for the people, injustice and deprivation for the society and the show the way to the Wrath of Allah (swt) and the Fire. May Allah (swt) save us from the Fire! So for the ones who choose to believe in this Message, Allah (swt) will take them out of all kinds of darkness and into the Light of this Message.

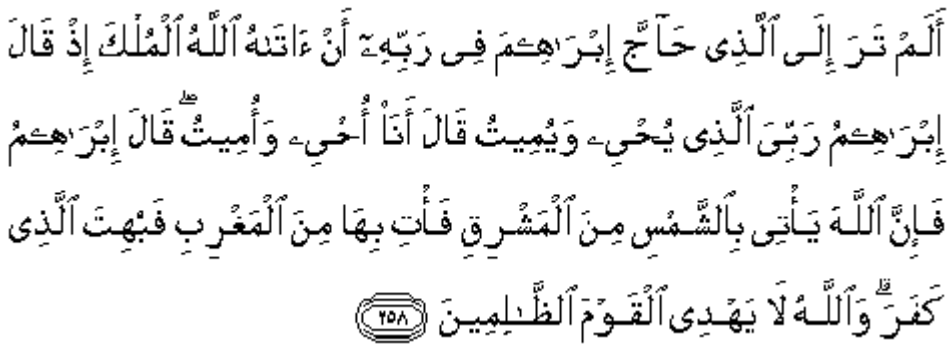
What then is the situation of those who choose to reject this Message when they know that it is the Truth? Allah (swt) says about them "**But as for the ones who do kufr, their protecting friends are the *Taghut***". They have protecting friends also but their protecting friends

are the ***Taghut***. Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that ***Taghut*** here refers to anything and everything that takes you away from the complete worship and servitude to Allah (swt). You know that Allah (swt) is your Creator, and you know that He (swt) is Sustaining your existence for every moment of your life, even those who chose to reject this Message are aware of this fact. Because of this you know that you must make Allah (swt) as the purpose of your life, everything that you do must only be for Him (swt). So anything that takes you away from Allah (swt) is ***Taghut***. This could be a human being that you adore, this could be a king that you obey, this could be the material things of this world that you crave after, this could be money, this could be your lust for women, or it could even be your own pride. Anything and everything that takes you away from Allah (swt) is ***Taghut***. Thus for those who choose to reject this Message when they know that is the Truth Allah (swt) punishes them by appointing the ***Taghut*** to be their protecting friends.

What do the ***Taghut*** then do to those who have chosen to reject this Message? What kind of friends are they? What kind of protectors are they? Allah (swt) says "**they take them from the Light into every kind of darkness**". So here Allah (swt) has given these a people a chance to come into the Light. Allah (swt) has sent them His (swt)'s Message. But they have willfully chosen to turn away from this Message. Allah (swt) shows us how these people are punished in the life of this world because of their evil in rejecting the Message of Allah (swt) that they knew was the Truth. Allah (swt) appoints for them ***Taghut*** to be their protectors and to be their friends. These ***Taghut*** then take these people away from this Message and plunge them further into darkness. Whatever darkness it was that made them turn away from the Light of Allah (swt)'s Message, whether it was a false religion or their lusts for this world or their pride and arrogance, these ***Taghut*** take them further into that darkness.

What is the result of their going into darkness and away from the Light of this Message? What is the result of their turning away from the purpose of their creation? Allah (swt) says, "**These are the companions of the Fire, they will stay therein forever**". Allah (swt) describes them as being the companions of the Fire. That shows us how close they are to the Fire. Can you imagine what it is like to be so close to a Fire that is seventy times hotter than the Fire of this world? Not only are they so close to the Fire but they will be in that Fire forever. Can you even

begin to imagine how terrifying this is. May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) save us from all of the ***Taghut*** that may seek to take us away from Him (swt)!


أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِى حَآجَّ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ فِى رَبِّهِۦٓ أَنْ ءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ
إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّىَ ٱلَّذِى يُحْىِۦ وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا۠ أُحْىِۦ وَأُمِيتُ ۖ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ
فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْتِى بِٱلشَّمْسِ مِنَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ ٱلْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ ٱلَّذِى
كَفَرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

258. Have you not looked to the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Rabb because Allah had given him the kingship. When Ibrahim said "My Rabb is the One Who gives life and causes death". He said "I give life and cause death". Ibrahim said "But surely Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it now from the west". So the one who disbelieved was confounded. And Allah does not guide the people who do Dhulm.

In the previous ayahs we have seen how Allah (swt) has set the stage for this battle between those who choose to believe in this Message and those who choose to reject this Message. The battle between those choose to stand up for this Message and who work to carry it to mankind and those who choose to suppress this Message and keep it hidden from mankind. This Message is the Ultimate Truth because it is a call to submit completely to the Ultimate Reality. In this ayah, Allah (swt) shows us how this battle is just as much a battle of ideas and thoughts as it is a material battle of swords. Allah (swt) brings our attention to a time when this battle of ideas took place between one of His (swt)'s noble messengers and a powerful and tyrannical king. As you read this ayah, look at the powerful and undeniable arguments that Allah (swt) brings to support this Message and look at the foolishness of the arguments of those oppose this Message.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Have you not looked to the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Rabb because Allah had given him the kingship**". Here Allah (swt)

brings our attention to the time when Ibrahim (as) debated with Nimrod who was the emperor of Babylon. Once again we see that Allah (swt) uses the words "**Have you not looked**". Why does Allah (swt) use these words when this was a reality that the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims have never physically seen? One reason for this is that Allah (swt) wants us to reflect and think about this story so deeply that it comes to the point where it is almost as if we perceive it directly. So imagine yourself now to be in the court of Nimrod. It is a grand and spacious hall because Nimrod who was one of the most powerful kings who ever ruled over this earth. There sits Nimrod on his throne and he has his army, his ministers and the rest of his entourage at his side. On the other side of this battle line is only Ibrahim (as). Now it may seem as if he (as) stood alone, but in reality he (as) had Allah (swt) with him (as). This is the scene that Allah (swt) wants you to bring to mind.

Notice also that Allah (swt) does not refer to Nimrod as "king" or "emperor" or even by his name, but rather Allah (swt) refers to him as "**the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Rabb**". This is a derogatory title that Allah (swt) has given for Nimrod. He will forever be known in the Book of Allah (swt) as the one who argued with the messenger of Allah (swt) about his own Lord and Master. Such is the fate that he made for himself when he chose to reject this Message. What did he argue with Ibrahim (as) about? He argued what most kings and men of power argue about, and that is a refusal to submit to the Authority and the Rule of Allah (swt). Why did he argue in such a way? Allah (swt) says in the ayah that it is because "**Allah had given him the kingship**". So because he had been given power in the land and the rule over men, he had become corrupted by this power. Thus when the messenger of Allah (swt) came to him and told him to relinquish sovereignty of the land to the One to Whom it belongs, he refused to do so. Rather he argued and debated with the messenger of Allah (swt) because he had this power in the land that he did not want to give up. So corrupted was he by the power that he had been given that he dared to argue with a man that he knew was the messenger of Allah (swt).

One lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see how power corrupts. When you are given power over the people then this power that you have been given could take you away from Allah (swt). It might make you arrogant and proud of yourself and you may see yourself as something more than an abject slave of Allah (swt). You may think that you are above

prostrating before Allah (swt). You may think that you are above obeying the Law of Allah (swt). Such is the danger of being in power and being given authority. So if you have been given power of any kind. Whether you are a leader in the community or the head of your household or even the teacher of students, you must be careful and not let this power make you arrogant. You must be careful and not let this power take you away from Allah (swt). Remember that it was Allah (swt) Who gave you your power and remember that Allah (swt) can take it away at any moment if you ever choose to become arrogant and if you ever choose not to serve Him (swt). Such is the only way that you can save yourself from becoming like Nimrod and those who became corrupted by their power.

Now how did Ibrahim (as) begin this battle of ideas with Nimrod? How did Ibrahim (as) show Nimrod that this Message that he (as) brought was the Truth and that it must be submitted to? How did Ibrahim (as) show Nimrod that Allah (swt) was the true Lord and Master Who alone must hold sovereignty? Allah (swt) tells us "**When Ibrahim said "My Rabb is the One Who gives life and causes death"**". Allah (swt) is the Only One Who has complete control over life and death. This fact alone should show why Allah (swt) is the One True King for all mankind. Why would you ever want to follow a king who cannot even bring life or cause death? So in this part of the ayah we see how Ibrahim (as) links the Power and Ability of Allah (swt) with the fact that He (swt) must be submitted to and obeyed. Allah (swt) is the One Who gives life and causes death, thus Allah (swt) has complete Power over all mankind, thus Allah (swt) must be obeyed and submitted to by all mankind.

The idiot Nimrod responded to the argument of Ibrahim (as) by saying, " **I give life and cause death**". Once again notice his foolishness and his stubbornness; his utter refusal to acknowledge a fact that he knows is the truth. He knew that it was only Allah (swt) who gave life and caused death but he was so keen on holding on to his power that he was looking for some argument to bring against what he knew was the truth. He had the audacity to say that he was the one who gave life and caused death. How evil is a man who claims a Power that belongs exclusively to Allah (swt) for himself? The narrations tell us that what he did was take two prisoners from his jail. One was about to be set free and one was about to be killed. He killed the

one who was about to set free and he set free the one who was about to be killed. Based on this, he claimed that he controlled life and death. Of course we can see the utter foolishness of his claim. First of all he did not really give life because what Ibrahim (as) meant was that Allah (swt) can give life to that which has no life, that is a feat which no human being can accomplish. Can any human being give life to that which has no life? Secondly Allah (swt) is the only cause of death. There is not one thing in this universe that causes death. There is nothing that can beidentified as the sole cause of death. People die of various circumstances and of various situations, so there is no factor that can be identified as the single cause of death. Sometimes people fall dead for no apparent reason, and sometimes people are in the worst of car accidents or they fall from the highest buildings and they do not die. So there is no cause for death except Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the cause of death in that we will only die when He (swt) has decreed for us to die. So we see how foolish was Nimrod in thinking that he controls life and death. He failed to see that the real Controller of life and death was Allah (swt).

Now Ibrahim (as) could have easily shown Nimrod the foolishness of his argument like we have. But Ibrahim (as) chose to bring an even more powerful argument to counter his argument, an argument that would completely destroy any claim that Nimrod had to sovereignty in the land. Ibrahim (as) says "**But surely Allah brings the sun from the east, so bring it now from the west**". Ibrahim (as) shows Nimrod how it is Allah (swt) who controls the movements of the celestial bodies, does any human being have power to control these? Can even the most powerful king, even if he rules over the entire earth, bring the sun from the West on even one day of all the days in which Allah (swt) brings the sun from the east? This universe works according to the Laws that Allah (swt) has placed over it. Can any of the false kings or legislators who claim sovereignty change any of these Divine Laws? Can they bring the sun from the West on even one day? What right then do they have to be a sovereign on the land? Ibrahim (as) challenges Nimrod and orders him to bring the sun from the West if he indeed has any legitimate claim to sovereignty over the land.

Was there anything that Nimrod could do to meet this challenge of Ibrahim (as)? Of course there was not, thus Allah (swt) describes his situation by saying "**So the one who**

disbelieved was confounded". Notice now how Allah (swt) describes Nimrod here as the "**the one who disbelieved**". Mawdudi tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how it was not in Allah (swt) that Nimrod refused to believe in, but rather it was in the fact that he had to submit to the sovereignty of Allah (swt). As a king that was what he was refusing to accept. So while he believed in Allah (swt) as the Creator and Sustainer, he refused to accept Him (swt) as King and Master. But Allah (swt) must be believed in as He (swt) IS and not how we want Him (swt) to be. Nimrod did not want to relinquish the political authority of his kingdom to Allah (swt), that is why he disbelieved in Allah (swt) as the Lord and Master. But just because Nimrod refused to believe in Allah (swt) as the Lord and Master does not change the fact that Allah (swt) is the Lord and Master. So Nimrod was only deceiving himself as to the reality of his Rabb.

What then could Nimrod do about the challenge of Ibrahim (as) to make the sun rise from the West? When Ibrahim (as) presented him with this challenge, Allah (swt) describes him as being "**confounded**". This English word does little to convey the sense of utter shock and helplessness that Nimrod found himself in. There was absolutely nothing he could do to answer the challenge of Ibrahim (as). He was even at a loss of words. Not only could he in no way answer the challenge of Ibrahim (as) to bring the sun from the west but there was nothing further that he could even say to argue that he had a right to be king or hold any power in the land. He realized now the complete Power of Allah (swt) and he realized his own inability and weakness. He realized Who was the Master and who was the servant. He realized Who was the Creator and who was the created. He realized Who was the Controller and who was the one being controlled. So he had been completely defeated and there was nothing further left for him to say. There were no more arguments for him to bring. Do you think that he then yielded to the Truth of this Message?

Once Ibrahim (as) had presented Nimrod with these undeniable arguments that he could not deny or counter, did he then yield to these proofs and acknowledge this Message as the Truth? Did he relinquish the sovereignty of his kingdom to Allah (swt) as he knew he should have? Of course he did not. This is because he had reached a stage in his corruption and his evil where all he cared about was holding on to his power, he no longer cared for the Truth and he no

longer cared for being sincere to Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) then says, "**Allah does not guide the people who do *Dhulm***". Allah (swt) could have guided Nimrod to the Truth but He (swt) did not because Nimrod was among those who did *Dhulm*. He did Dhulm because he turned away from this Message when he knew that it was the Truth, and he persisted in acts of great evil and oppression. How evil and unjust is a man who refuses to believe in the Message that comes to him from his Creator? How evil and unjust is a man who dares to usurp the sovereignty of the land from Allah (swt)? Even when he is warned and told to come back to the Truth, he still refuses. Even when he is shown clear signs and given undeniable arguments, he still refuses to give up the power that he is clinging to. Such a person is guilty of the worst forms of *Dhulm*, and so he does not deserve the guidance of Allah (swt). Because he has denied himself the guidance from Allah (swt) it will be that no matter how many signs and arguments he is shown, he will never accept the Message of his Creator. Such was the case of the fool Nimrod. May Allah (swt) save us from his fate!

Now ask yourself this, despite his stubbornness and obstinacy, did Nimrod have any chance of winning this battle of ideas between him and Ibrahim (as)? No, because he was fighting against the Truth, he was fighting against Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) clearly shows us in this ayah how there can be only one victor in this battle between Truth and falsehood. This is because falsehood does not stand a chance against the Truth. The false gods do not stand a chance against Allah (swt). So the enemies of this Message may argue and debate forever, but they will never be successful because what they are standing on is falsehood and what they are opposing is the Truth. In the end they will all end up like Nimrod, completely confounded and defeated. May Allah (swt) uphold the Message of Truth and keep us firm in it!

This then is the conflict that Allah (swt) brings the attention of the early Muslims to in these ayahs. The conflict between Truth and falsehood. The conflict between those who submit to Allah (swt) and those who turn away from Him (swt). The conflict between those who dedicate their lives to serving Allah (swt) and those who dedicate their lives to serving themselves. This conflict is at the very core of existence. It is a conflict that takes many different forms. This is a conflict that rages within the human soul as it rages with ideas and thoughts as it rages with

swords and shields. You now have the choice as to which side you want to take in this conflict. Remember now Ayat-ul-Kursi and remember how Allah (swt) described Himself (swt) in it. Once you realize Allah (swt) the choice is clear.

أَوْ كَٱلَّذِى مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِىَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ
أَنَّىٰ يُحْىِۦ هَٰذِهِ ٱللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۖ فَأَمَاتَهُ ٱللَّهُ مِاْئَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُۥ ۖ قَالَ
كَمْ لَبِثْتَ ۖ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۖ قَالَ بَل لَّبِثْتَ مِاْئَةَ عَامٍ
فَٱنظُرْ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ ۖ وَٱنظُرْ إِلَىٰ حِمَارِكَ
وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ ءَايَةً لِّلنَّاسِ ۖ وَٱنظُرْ إِلَى ٱلْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ
نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا ۚ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُۥ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

259. Or like the one who passed by a town that was overturned on its roofs. He said "How shall Allah give this town life after its death". So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years and raised him up again. He said "How long have you remained like this?". He said "I have remained like this for a day or a part of a day". He said "No, you have remained like this for a hundred years, so look at your food and your drink, they have not spoiled, and look at your donkey. And thus We have made you a sign for the people. And look at the bones how we bring them together and how we clothe them with flesh". So when it became clear to him, he said "I know that surely Allah has Power over all things".

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had showed us how the battle between those who stand for this Message and those who oppose it is just as much a battle of ideas and thoughts as it is material battle. Allah (swt) gave us the beautiful example of the debate between Ibrahim (as) and the tyrant Nimrod. Allah (swt) showed us how Ibrahim (as) completely destroyed any argument that Nimrod could bring by challenging him to bring the sun from the West if he indeed had any power or any legitimate claim to sovereignty in the land. Thus Ibrahim (as) demonstrated how it is Allah (swt) Who has all the Power in the universe and so it is only Allah (swt) Who has the right to

rule over the earth. In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to give us examples of His (swt)'s Power and He (swt) continues to show us why it is only Him (swt) Who can rule in the land. Allah (swt) gives us another story that clearly shows how all Power is with Him (swt) and that is why He (swt) is the only One Who must be submitted in all affairs of life.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**Or like the one who passed by a town that was overturned on its roofs**". In the previous ayah Allah (swt) had told us of the debate between Ibrahim (as) and Nimrod to show us how He (swt) had all the Power and all the Authority to rule. Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to another example to demonstrate the same point. Here Allah (swt) tells us about a man who once passed by a town that had been completely abandoned and ruined. It is not important for us to know who this man was or where this town was, once again what we need to look for is the lesson in this story, we need to see how this story demonstrates that all Power and Might rests with Allah (swt) Alone. We should always look for how each ayah of the Quran can bring us closer to Allah (swt) and we should prevent ourselves from worrying about unnecessary details. So the identity of the man and the location of the town are not important for us, rather what is important is the lesson in this story. Allah (swt) describes the town that this man passed by as being "**overturned on it's roofs**", this is to show how completely ruined and devastated the town was. Not only were there no people in this town but even the roofs of the houses and buildings had fallen down and become overturned. It was a completely abandoned and ruined town.

Upon seeing this town in such a condition, the man said "**How shall Allah give this town life after it's death**". The town was so devastated and ruined that the man wondered to himself how Allah (swt) could ever revive this town after it is in such a condition. Imagine that you also see such a town before you. There is not a single human soul in sight whatsoever. The houses are ruined and their roofs have fallen down. Even you might ask yourself how life could ever return to such a devastated place. So upon seeing such a ruined town, the man asked himself how Allah (swt) could ever return life to such a place.

So Allah (swt) chose to demonstrate to this man how He (swt) had Power to give life to anything. Allah (swt) says, "**So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years and raised him**

up again". Right there on the spot when he had asked this question, Allah (swt) caused him to fall down dead. Allah (swt) let his body remain dead for a hundred years, and then after a hundred years had passed, Allah (swt) raised him to life once again. See now the Power of Allah (swt), how easily He (swt) can cause death and how easily He (swt) can give life. We as human beings, in all our years of existence on this planet, despite all our scientific and technological advancements, still have not mastered death. The human being knows that if there were any way for him to overcome death, he would have done so. But he has realized now that this is a realm upon which he has no power whatsoever. When the time for a human soul comes, there is nothing that all of mankind can do to prevent the angel of death from taking it. Death and life are under the complete Power and Control of the All-Powerful, we as human beings have no power over it whatsoever. So what right then do we as human beings have to legislate laws in the land? How can we usurp the power to rule from Allah (swt) when we cannot even control when we will die? Who are we to tell others what they can do and how they can live their lives?

Then when Allah (swt) had raised this man back to life, Allah (swt) asks him a question. Allah (swt) says, "**How long have you remained like this?**". This part of the ayah has lead to some confusion among some of the commentators of Quran. They had debated on whether it was Allah (swt) Who had spoken with this man directly or if it was a human an angel speaking for Allah (swt), they further debated on whether this means that the man is a prophet or not. But before we ask ourselves questions like these we once again we need to remind ourselves that this ayah is giving us a lesson about the Power and Authority of Allah (swt), and for us to realize that lesson we do not need to know about details such as these. Allah (swt) chose not to tell us these details so we should not inquire into it too much and we should not make guesses and assumptions only to satisfy our curiosity. We always have to remember that we are learning the Quran in order to be guided to Allah (swt), and not to be entertained or to be informed about history. So when we learn the Quran, we should only look for the guidance and nothing else. So the general meaning that we can take from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) spoke with the man after he had awakened. Now when the man woke up, it must have felt to him like he had just been sleeping, so Allah (swt) asks him how long he thinks he had been sleeping?

The man replies by saying "**I have remained like this for a day or a part of a day**". So the man thought that he was sleeping for only a day or for only a part of a day. He had been dead for over a hundred years but he could not perceive it at all, rather he thought he was only sleeping for a day or a part of a day. This shows how we can often arrive at the wrong conclusion if we do not study the reality of our surroundings deeply. This man based his response only by looking quickly at his surroundings and based on how he felt. He woke up and he saw the sun had moved in the sky, so he made the assumption that he had been sleeping for a day or for a part of the day. He did not take the time to study his reality closely. Because of that he arrived at the wrong conclusion, thinking that he had been sleeping for a few hours when in reality he had been dead for a hundred years. So one lesson that we can take from this is that we must study our surroundings deeply and gather all of the information before we reach a conclusion. We should not jump to a conclusion before we study the reality closely and have all of the information.

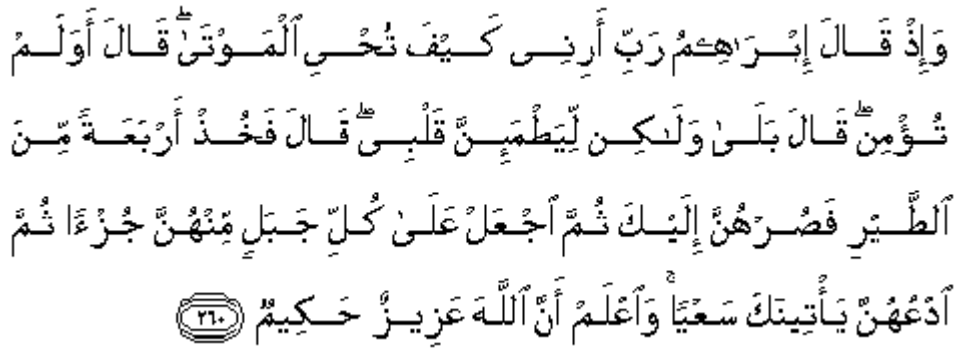
In the next part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) says "**No, you have remained like this for a hundred years, so look at your food and your drink, they have not spoiled, and look at your donkey**". So here Allah (swt) tells the man about the truth of his situation, and to prove it Allah (swt) turns his attention to the reality that he had previously failed to study. First Allah (swt) tells him that he indeed had been dead for a hundred years, imagine how much a shock this must have been for the man who as far he was concerned was only a few hours ago alive and questioning how Allah (swt) could give life to a dead town. Now in order to prove this unbelievable fact Allah (swt) first tells the man to look at his food and drink. Allah (swt) shows him how his food has not spoiled at all. Now it seems, and Allah (swt) Knows best, that the kind of food that this man was carrying with him was the kind of food that spoils very easily and very quickly. So if the man really had been sleeping for the entire day, as he had claimed to be, then all of his food and drink would have spoiled. But Allah (swt) shows him how the food and drink had not spoiled to prove to him that he indeed had not been sleeping for the entire day like he had thought. Then Allah (swt) tells the man to look at the donkey that he had been riding. The donkey had died, decomposed and was only scattered bones. Unlike the man, and his food and

drink, the donkey had not been preserved through the passage of time. When the man saw the skeleton of his donkey next to him, he realized the truth of what Allah (swt) told him. He realized then that he indeed had been dead for over a hundred years. He finally comprehended the reality of his situation.

Then Allah (swt) tells the man why He (swt) had caused him to die and why He (swt) had brought him back to life after a hundred years, Allah (swt) says "**And thus We have made you a sign for the people**". It was a sign for all people to demonstrate the Power and Ability of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) has Power over all things and Allah (swt) is Able to do all things. Who else but Allah (swt) can cause a man to die and then bring back him to life after a hundred years? When this man returns to his people, and tells them his story, they would all see clearly the Power and Ability of Allah (swt). Just think how wondrous it must have been for his people to see this man returning home after being away for hundred years, returning home without showing any sign of age. They would clearly see that it is only Allah (swt) Who has the Power to do this. They would clearly see how it is only Allah (swt) Who controls life and death. Thus the man and his miraculous resurrection is a clear sign for all people that it is Allah (swt) Who all Power over life and death. See how this man was questioning how Allah (swt) could give life to a dead town, and then Allah (swt) had made the man himself a sign for how He (swt) controls life and death. How Powerful and Wise is our Rabb!

Then Allah (swt) says "**And look at the bones how we bring them together and how we clothe them with flesh**". Now Allah (swt) turns the attention of the man to the bones of his dead donkey. Allah (swt) then brings the donkey back to life right before the man's very eyes. Allah (swt) first brought the bones back together, arranging them in place and then He (swt) clothed the bones with flesh. The way in which Allah (swt) brought the donkey back to life further demonstrates how only He (swt) has complete Power over life and death. Who but Allah (swt) can give life to dead and decomposing bones? Thus Allah (swt) shows the man how just as He (swt) can bring him back to life after being dead for a hundred years, Allah (swt) can even bring a animal back to life when it is nothing but scattered bones.

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says "**So when it became clear to him, he said "I know that surely Allah has Power over all things"**". Now we once again see the reason why Allah (swt) had caused this man to die and had brought him back to life, we see the reason why Allah (swt) tells us of these events in the Quran, it is to demonstrate the Power of Allah (swt) over all things. It is to show how it is only Allah (swt) Who has complete Power over life and death. The man was questioning how Allah (swt) could give life to a town after it had been completely ruined, and instead of showing the town being revived, Allah (swt) actually caused the man himself to die only to bring back to him after a hundred years. Allah (swt) then made this man as a sign for all people to show that it is He (swt) Who has complete Power over all things and that is He (swt) Who has complete control over life and death. Allah (swt) shows us here how it is only He (swt) the All-Powerful Who can control life and death, there is nothing in the creation that has any power over life and death except He (swt). So does that not show how we should submit completely to Allah (swt)? How can we follow the law of any other sovereign except Allah (swt)? Who else deserves to be our Lord, Master and King except He (swt)? How could you follow or obey any king, president or parliament when they are only human beings like you who cannot even control life and death? Allah (swt) is the only One Who gave you your life and He (swt) is the only One Who can take it away, so how then can you turn away from Him (swt)? These false sovereigns cannot even control the moment in which they will die. While Allah (swt), All-Powerful and Most Magnificent is He (swt), has complete Power over the lives of every single living creature. Who then is more deserving of your submission and your obedience? Who is more deserving to rule over this earth? May Allah (swt) help us all to see! May Allah (swt) help us all to realize that there is no life for us except in serving Him (swt)!



261. And when Ibrahim said "My Rabb, show me how you give life to the dead". He said "Do you not believe?". He said "Yes (I believe), but it is just that my heart may be at peace." He said "Then take four birds, and tame them to your call, then put a part of them on every mountain, and call them, they will come to you in haste. And know that surely Allah is Mighty, Wise".

Before we discuss this ayah, let us take a moment to remember the theme of the ayahs in this part of Surah. These ayahs had been revealed when the Islamic State had just been established, and the first Muslim community had just been formed. Now there was finally a city-state that ruled completely by the Law of Allah (swt), and there was a large group of people who were ready to take up the Cause of Allah (swt). As Allah (swt) called on these people to strive and sacrifice for this Message, Allah (swt) reminded them of the essential of this Message in *Ayat-ul-Kursi*. In that beautiful ayah Allah (swt) told the Muslims about Himself (swt) and He (swt) showed them how He (swt) deserved all of the worship and servitude because of Who He (swt) IS. Allah (swt) is the Perfect One, the Creator of every single thing, the Maintainer and Sustainer of every single thing, the One Who has complete Authority and Control on the Last Day, the Day on which all of mankind will return to Allah (swt). This is Allah (swt), so who else deserves any worship, servitude or obedience besides Him (swt). In the previous ayahs we also saw how Allah (swt) also reminded the Muslims that it is He (swt) Who has complete control over life and death. This also shows us how it is only Allah (swt) Who deserves all of the worship and all of the obedience. Now in this ayah Allah (swt) continues to demonstrate for us His (swt)'s Power and His (swt)'s

complete Control over life and death. This then is theme of these ayahs. They tell us about Allah (swt) and how He (swt) deserves all of the worship and servitude because of Who He (swt) IS. Once you realize that it is only Allah (swt) Who controls life and death then why would you ever want to worship or serve any other than the He (swt)? Why would you ever want to give your life to any other than the One Who has complete control over life and death?

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**And when Ibrahim said "My Rabb, show me how you give life to the dead"**". Here Allah (swt) brings our attention to a request that Ibrahim (as) once made to Him (swt). Ibrahim (as) once asked Allah (swt) to demonstrate for him (as) how He (swt) gave life to the dead. The reason why Ibrahim (as) had made this request was because of a curiosity that he (as) had as to how it is that Allah (swt) can restore life after death, it was not because he (as) in any way doubted the Power of Allah (swt) over life and death. This fact is proved in the next part of the ayah. First Allah (swt) asks Ibrahim (as) "**Do you not believe?**", this means "do you not believe in My complete power over life and death?". To which Ibrahim (as) responds by saying "**Yes (I believe), but it is just that my heart may be peace**". Here Ibrahim (as) shows us that he (as) indeed did believe in the complete Power of Allah (swt) over life and death, but he (as) only made this request so that his heart may be at peace, so that his curiosity could be satisfied. The Ability to give life is one of the greatest manifestations, if not the greatest manifestation of the Power of Allah (swt). Ibrahim (as) believed with utmost certainty in this Power of Allah (swt), but he only wanted to see how Allah (swt) did it so that his curiosity could be satisfied and his heart could be at peace. We ourselves may believe in something with utmost certainty, but it is something so amazing that we might have a curiosity to see how it is happening, such was the case with Ibrahim (as). So it is important for us to remember from this part of the ayah that Ibrahim (as) asked Allah (swt) for a demonstration of how He (swt) gave life only out of curiosity and not of doubt. It is very important for us to believe that all of the prophets believe in Allah (swt) and all of the Perfect Names of Allah (swt) with utmost certainty.

Then Allah (swt) tells Ibrahim (as) what he must do in order to see how Allah (swt) gives life to the dead. Allah (swt) says, "**Then take four birds, and tame them to your call**". First Ibrahim (as) had to take four birds, the scholars say that they were each different kinds of birds.

Then Ibrahim (as) had to tame them to his call, this means that he (as) had to train them to come to him (as) whenever he (as) called them. So we can imagine that Ibrahim (as) took some time to find these four birds, and then take the time to train them to come to his call. This must have been difficult, but it was necessary for the amazing demonstration that Allah (swt) was going to show him (as). Despite this difficulty Ibrahim (as) did what Allah (swt) had commanded. Ibrahim (as) was always one who fulfilled every single order that Allah (swt) gave him (as).

Then Allah (swt) says, "**then put a part of them on every mountain**". The scholars say that what Ibrahim (as) had to do next was that he had to kill each of the four birds. Then he had to cut their bodies into several pieces, then he had to mix the remains of all four birds with each other. So the flesh, feathers and bones of one of the dead birds was mixed with another of the dead birds. Then he had to a put this mixed portion of each bird on a different mountain. So each mountain had the remains of different birds, and the remains were all mixed together. All of this meaning that we have described here is given in this portion of the ayah. Notice once again how Allah (swt) puts so much meaning in only a few words.

Then Allah (swt) says "**call them, they will come to you in haste**". So imagine this now, not only is each of the birds dead, but each of them had been cut up into several pieces, and not only have they been cut up into several pieces, but the remains of each of them has been mixed with the remains of another of them and they have all been placed on different mountains. Now Allah (swt) tells Ibrahim (as) to merely stand in one place and to call out to the birds. Once Ibrahim (as) did that he saw each of the birds coming towards him. Not only had each of the birds been brought back to life, but each of the birds was whole and as it should be, none of the birds had any of their body parts mixed with another bird. When Ibrahim (as) called out to them, he saw them all coming towards him (as). Not only did they come, but they came in haste. So it must have been a very short time from the moment that Ibrahim (as) called out to the birds till the time that he saw them flying towards him (as). Thus not only had Allah (swt) resurrected the birds after their bodies had been cut up and mixed together, but He (swt) had done in it instantaneously. Such is the Power of Allah (swt) over life and death.

Then Allah (swt) says "**And know that surely Allah is Mighty, Wise**". This is a command from Allah (swt) to Ibrahim (as). Allah (swt) commands Ibrahim (as) to know with certainty that He (swt) is indeed Mighty and Wise. Allah (swt) reminds Ibrahim (as) of the reason for Him (swt) giving him (as) this demonstration. It is only so that Ibrahim (as) would know that surely Allah (swt) is Mighty and Wise. The Power of Allah (swt) and the Perfection of His (swt)'s Names are the reason why we worship and serve Him (swt). So our gaze in the life of this world must be directed towards looking at manifestations of the Power of Allah (swt). Just like Ibrahim (as), we ourselves can see several examples of how Allah (swt) gives life in the world around us. No matter where you are in the world you can see the Power of Allah (swt) in the world around you and you can draw closer to Him (swt) through your observations. For example if you live in the West look at how the trees come alive with leaves in the springtime after being dead for a long winter. Who do you think it is Who gives the trees life once again? If you live in the desert lands then see how Allah (swt) brings the rain and see how He (swt) gives life to the dead earth with that rain. Even look at the birds you see in the world around you, look at how Allah (swt) gives them by life by providing their sustenance. As you see the birds eating in front of you, then know that it is Allah (swt) Who provides for them and that surely Allah (swt) is Mighty and Wise. Allah (swt) is Mighty because He (swt) has the Power to give life to all the creatures of the world and Allah (swt) is Wise because He (swt) gives life to those whom He (swt) in His (swt)'s Eternal Wisdom deemed to have life. So look at the world around you, and look at yourself, and see the Might and Wisdom of Allah (swt) all around you. May Allah (swt) allow us to benefit from the signs in the world around us in drawing nearer to Him (swt) like Ibrahim (as) did!

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ
حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ
لِمَن يَشَآءُۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

262. The example of the ones who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah is as the example of a grain that grows seven ears, in each ear is a hundred grains, and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases, and Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

The two most prized possessions for a human being are his life and his wealth. In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) reminded us that it was He (swt) Alone Who had complete control over life and death. Thus Allah (swt) exhorted us to give our lives for His (swt)'s cause. In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to that other most prized possession of ours and that is our wealth. Allah (swt) shows us how we must spend our wealth despite our love for it. To encourage us to do this, Allah (swt) shows us the immense and uncountable reward that He (swt) has kept reserved for those who sincerely spend their wealth for Him (swt). Allah (swt) shows us how what He (swt) has kept reserved with Him (swt) for us is exponentially better than anything that this world has to offer. Thus He (swt) turns our attention away from the fleeting chattels of the life of this world and towards Him (swt). Allah (swt) makes us realize how our existence in the life of this world is nothing but releasing our passions and desires for this life and the material things of this life and instead journeying towards Him (swt).

To show us exactly how much reward that He (swt) has kept for those who sincerely spend for Him (swt), Allah (swt) gives us a beautiful parable. Allah (swt) says "**The example of the ones who spend their wealth in the Way of Allah is as the example of a grain that grows seven ears, in each ear is a hundred grains, and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases**". Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah of the beautiful imagery that this parable conveys. When you read this ayah in the original Arabic and with a deep comprehension of it's meaning, you can almost see a field of grains right there in front of you. You can almost see the grain opening up and multiplying right before your very eyes. This is how the early Muslims felt

when they read this ayah. They could picture this image that Allah (swt) gives so vividly in their minds. When they did then they knew that Allah (swt) was multiplying the reward of anything that they spent sincerely for His (swt)'s sake. Not only multiplying it once or twice but multiplying it seven hundred times! Can you even imagine the kind of reward that must be? So for example look at anything that you have which you give sincerely for Allah (swt). The moment you take this possession and give it away, the moment it leaves your hand, at that very moment a reward is generated for you. Then this reward is multiplied, how many times is it multiplied? We see from this ayah that Allah (swt) multiplies that reward seven hundred times. Seven hundred times. The reward of your spending is multiplied seven hundred times. Can you even begin to imagine how much your reward is growing when it is multiplied this many times? Such is the reward from the Merciful and the Gracious and the Bountiful. How can you expect anything less from Him (swt)? What exactly is this reward that Allah (swt) has given you? First and foremost, it is the Pleasure of Allah (swt). When you spend sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt), then you should know that the One Who created you and the One Who is keeping you alive at this very moment is pleased with you. If you truly realize Allah (swt) then you will see that this in fact is the best of rewards. Then the next reward is the eternal pleasure and bliss of the Garden. Then it is the forgiveness of sins and being saved from the punishment. Then it is peace and contentment in the life of this world. Then it is sustenance and provisions in the life of this world. All of these are part of the reward of Allah (swt). When you spend sincerely for Allah (swt), you can be sure that He (swt) will give you all of this and He (swt) will multiply it for you.

So what is it that you must spend in order to get this reward? Mawdudi tells us that this ayah is general and so anything that you spend sincerely seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt) will earn this reward. First and foremost you should know that it is your family who has the greatest right to your wealth, so first you must make sure all of their needs are met. The best charity that you can give is the charity to ensure that the needs of your family are met. Then there is spending on the orphans, the poor and those of your Muslim brothers and sisters who are going through times of difficulty. Then it also includes spending for the dawah. Spending to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind and spending to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land. The amount

to spend is not specified, but the more you spend, the more reward that you will get. The only key to bear in mind is that your spending must be sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt). You cannot seek any other objective in your spending other than the Pleasure of Allah (swt). If you ever try to seek anything from the creation because of your spending, such asking them for a favor in return or thinking that they owe you in any way, then you should not expect any reward from Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us of two of His (swt) Most Beautiful Names, Allah (swt) says "**Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing**" . The Name *Al-Wasi* simply cannot be adequately translated to English. It means the "**All-Embracing**", but it means far more than that. It means the One Who is Boundless and without limits. The Generosity and Bounty of Allah (swt) is Boundless and has no limits. Allah (swt) will give and give without counting or keeping track. There is no limit to what Allah (swt) can give. So know that you are being rewarded for what you give by One Who has no limit in how much He (swt) can reward. Whatever your expectations are for your reward from Allah (swt), you should know that Allah (swt) has already exceeded your expectations. You should also know that Allah (swt) is "**All-Knowing**". Allah (swt) Knows about every single thing that you spent for Him (swt), and Allah (swt) Knows the intention that was in your heart when you spent it. So what is stopping you from spending sincerely for Allah (swt)?

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتۡبِعُونَ مَآ أَنفَقُواْ مَنّٗا
وَلَآ أَذٗى لَّهُمۡ أَجۡرُهُمۡ عِندَ رَبِّهِمۡ وَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ

٢٦٢

263. The ones who spend their wealth in the path of Allah then do not follow what they have spent with reminders of their generosity or with injury, for them is their reward with their Rabb, they will have no fear on them, nor shall they grieve.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us about the enormous reward that He (swt) has kept reserved for those spend sincerely in His (swt)'s Way. In this ayah, Allah (swt) emphasizes how important sincerity is in the spending. The Prophet (saw) has told us that all actions are by intentions, so how can you expect to have an action rewarded by Allah (swt) unless that action is done purely for Him (swt). You should know that if you share that intention that should be for Allah (swt) with any other in the creation, then He (swt) will give you no reward for it whatsoever. Allah (swt) is Pure and He (swt) only accepts what is done purely for His (swt)'s sake. So in this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us how everything that we spend in the way of Allah (swt) must be sincerely for Him (swt).

In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to those who spend sincerely for Him (swt) and gives them as an example for us to follow. Allah (swt) describes such people by saying "**The ones who spend their wealth in the path of Allah then do not follow what they have spent with reminders of their generosity or with injury**". First of all we should notice that Allah (swt) describes such people as those who spend their wealth for Him (swt). Everything that these people spend, from their wealth to their effort to their time is only for Allah (swt). They do not spend for themselves but they only spend for their Lord and Master. However it is the second part of their description that is the key to understanding this ayah. Allah (swt) describes such people as those who do not follow what they have spent with reminders of their generosity or with injury. Many scholars say that what Allah (swt) means here by "injury" is demanding favors in return for what is spent on others. So the ones who are sincere when they have spent on others, they do

not remind the person whom they have spent on of their generosity, nor do they do they ask to be paid back in any way for what they have spent. Rather they know that the reward for what they have done is only from Allah (swt).

If you think about it, those people who remind others of their generosity and those who cause others injury because of their charity are missing the main component of their spending and that is keeping their intention sincerely for Allah (swt). When they were spending on others, they never had their intention purely for Allah (swt), because if they did then they would never remind others of their generosity or cause others harm because of the generosity. They would not even care about others because their hearts would have been attached purely to Allah (swt). So ask yourself now, why you should ever want anything from the creation when you know Allah (swt). Read to yourself *Ayat-ul-Kursi* and remind yourself of the kind of Rabb that you have. Why would you ever care about anyone but Him (swt)? What is there in this world that can compare to Him (swt)? So Insha Allah, whenever we spend on others, let us remind ourselves that they are not the reason why we are spending on them. Rather let us remind ourselves that we are on a journey towards Allah (swt), and as we spend our wealth and our time, we are traveling on this path towards Him (swt). If we even think about any of the creation while we are on this path, then we might lose our way to Allah (swt). So do not even worry about the creation, but rather give and give thinking only about Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

In the final part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us what will be the reward of those who give sincerely for Him (swt) while seeking nothing from the creation. Allah (swt) says "**for them is their reward with their Rabb, they will have no fear on them, nor shall they grieve**". They have their reward with Allah (swt) and who is better to reward than Allah (swt)? Can any of the creation even come close to giving the reward of Allah (swt)? Furthermore such people who give their all only for Allah (swt) will have no fear on them whatsoever. What do they have to fear when they know that Allah (swt) is with them and that He (swt) is going to take care of them both in this world and the Hereafter? They will also not grieve over what they have given away because they know that they will find it with Allah (swt) with a reward that is multiplied several times over. May Allah (swt) make us to be among such people!

۞قَوۡلٞ مَّعۡرُوفٞ وَمَغۡفِرَةٌ خَيۡرٞ مِّن صَدَقَةٖ يَتۡبَعُهَآ أَذٗىۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٞ

٢٦٣

264. Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of all needs and wants, Forbearing.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) reminded us how anything that we spend must only be for Him (swt). Allah (swt) reminded us what a great sin it was to spend while seeking something from the creation. Allah (swt) taught us how to turn our hearts away from the creation and towards Him (swt). By turning our hearts away from the creation and towards Him (swt), Allah (swt) also perfected our behavior and character. Allah (swt) turned us into the kind of people who live for Him (swt) instead of living ourselves. In this ayah, Allah (swt) emphasizes how good character and behavior are much more pleasing to Him (swt) than any charity that we can give. Thus Allah (swt) brings us closer to being that perfect human being, that human which is a representative of Him (swt) on the earth.

In this ayah Allah (swt) says, "**Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury**". Here Allah (swt) reminds us that if someone comes to us and asks for our help, it is much better for us to speak to them kind words and ask for their forgiveness for not giving them, rather than giving and injuring that person later on with reminders of our favor to them. Even if what we were to give them is more valuable than the heavens and the earth, speaking kindly to them and asking their forgiveness is still better than giving and injuring them later on. Thus Allah (swt) shows us how our behavior with the people, even the beggar who comes and asks for change, is more important than any charity than we can give. When you give someone charity, you are only giving them the material things of this world, but when you behave with someone correctly you are respecting and regarding them as a human being and as a fellow son or daughter of Adam (as). That is why kindness and forgiveness are much better than the most valuable of charity. That is why the Prophet (saw) himself has said that he (saw) was not sent except to perfect the character. May Allah (swt) allow us to inculcate this good character

within ourselves! May Allah (swt) allow us to forgive those who wrong us and may Allah (swt) give us the strength to ask forgiveness of them! May Allah (swt) allow us to speak words of kindness with all people! May Allah (swt) allow us to be that perfect human being that He (swt) created us to be!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And Allah is Free of all needs and wants, Forbearing**". Here Allah (swt) shows us that He (swt) is in no way in need of anything that we may give, He (swt) is Free of all needs and wants. Sometimes we can become so proud of what we have given in the path of Allah (swt). We tell ourselves that we spent this and that we spent that in the way of Allah (swt), and we praise ourselves for how generous and how righteous we are. Allah (swt) shows us in this part of the ayah, how utterly foolish such thinking is. Allah (swt) does not need anything from you, so do not feel proud of anything that you may have given Him (swt). All that you have given Him (swt) is for your own good; it is really a gift that He (swt) has given you. So instead of feeling proud of what you have spent in the way of Allah (swt), you should thank Allah (swt) for giving you the enabling grace to spend and to earn your reward through that spending.

Allah (swt) is also Forbearing in that He (swt) does not punish you immediately for what you have done, but rather He (swt) pardons you again and again. If you have spent seeking something from the creation, or you have become proud and arrogant because of what you have spent, then you should know that Allah (swt) is Forbearing. Allah (swt) could punish you immediately for your insolence and your arrogance and your ingratitude, but He (swt) pardons you again and again. Why then can you not purify your intentions so that you give only for Him (swt) and that you do not feel proud or arrogant because of what you have given? Can you not see that Allah (swt) has no need for you and yet He (swt) continues to sustain and He (swt) continues to reward you for your spending and He (swt) continues to pardon you? Again and again. This is Allah (swt), why then have you turned away from Him (swt). May Allah (swt) help us to remember His (swt)'s Beautiful Names and may those Names aid us in our journey to Him (swt)!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُبۡطِلُواْ صَدَقَٰتِكُم بِٱلۡمَنِّ وَٱلۡأَذَىٰ كَٱلَّذِي يُنفِقُ
مَالَهُۥ رِئَآءَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤۡمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۖ فَمَثَلُهُۥ كَمَثَلِ صَفۡوَانٍ
عَلَيۡهِ تُرَابٞ فَأَصَابَهُۥ وَابِلٞ فَتَرَكَهُۥ صَلۡدٗاۖ لَّا يَقۡدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيۡءٖ مِّمَّا
كَسَبُواْۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ٢٦٤

265. O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah by reminders of your generosity and by injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and who does not believe in Allah and the Last Day, his example is like the example of a smooth rock covered with dust, then a heavy rain falls on it and leaves it bare, they are not able to do anything with what they have earned, and Allah does not guide those who do *kufr*.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) showed us how important it was that our hearts be attached only to Him (swt) when we spend anything. When we give away our wealth, and we know we have a great love for our wealth, we should not seek with the giving away of our wealth anything of this world, but rather we should seek Allah (swt) and we should attach our hearts to Him (swt). Trying to please Allah (swt) in everything that we do should be all that matters in our life. To do other than this will be denying ourselves the reward for that spending in the Hereafter. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what will be the consequence if we spend our wealth and seek through that spending anything of this world.

Allah (swt) says "**. O you who believe! Do not render in vain your Sadaqah by reminders of your generosity and by injury**". See now the consequence of seeking this world in your charity. If you give expecting favors from others, or even if you give while thinking about what you are giving and whom you are giving it to instead of thinking of Allah (swt), then you should know that your entire act of giving in charity might be rendered in vain. All that you do will be in vain if you do it for other than the sake of Allah (swt). If that should happen then there will be no reward for your action whatsoever in the Hereafter. Instead as we know from the hadith of the Prophet (saw), if you give while seeking to win praise from the people because of your generosity, then you will be earning punishment for yourself. Think about it now, you are giving

away your wealth and you are getting in return for it punishment from Allah (swt). This shows us how important our intention is. This shows us how important it is that we keep our intention only for Allah (swt). Otherwise we will have no reward from Allah (swt) and we would even have punishment for saying that we are spending for Allah (swt) but seeking instead the creation by it. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) allow us to keep our intention only for Him (swt) so that we can find the reward of what we spend when we meet Him (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and who does not believe in Allah and the Last Day**". When we give anything in charity, and then if we remind others of what we have given them or we if demand favors back from them because of what have given them, then we would be becoming like the hypocrites. We can clearly see that the one whom Allah (swt) is describing in this part of the ayah is the hypocrite, the one who only does good deeds to be seen of others and who does not believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day. The one who does not believe that he lives only to worship and serve Allah (swt) and that he will return to Allah (swt) on the Last Day. So if were to spend our wealth while thinking of the creation instead of thinking of the Creator then we would be going further away from that perfect human being that Allah (swt) created us to be and we would be coming closer to the hypocrite. Can you even begin to imagine how frightening a prospect that is? You know that the lowest depths of the Fire have been promised for the hypocrite. May Allah (swt) save us from that! Such is the danger of making anything other than Allah (swt) as the motivation in our works. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) save us from even coming close to hypocrisy!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) gives us a similitude to describe the person who spends while seeking a reward from the creation. Allah (swt) says "**his example is like the example of a smooth rock covered with dust, then a heavy rain falls on it and leaves it bare**". Imagine in front of you now a smooth rock that is covered with dust. The dust is all over the rock, so it looks like there is a lot of dust on the rock. But in reality it is just dust. This is how the deeds of the hypocrite are, it is also how the deeds of the one whose heart is not attached to Allah (swt) are. They always think that they have done a lot of good deeds. But in reality it is

nothing but dust. In reality their deeds mean nothing to Allah (swt). That is why Allah (swt) says that when a heavy rain comes, it washes away all of the dust that was on the rock. When the rainwater washes away the dust you can see the smooth surface of the rock. All that they thought was a lot was only dust. Similarly on the Last Day Allah (swt) will wash away all of the deeds that the hypocrites and those whose hearts are not attached to Allah (swt) did. They did their actions seeking something other than Him (swt) so they cannot expect any reward from Him (swt). They will see the worthlessness of all that they did on that Day. Then the truth of the hypocrisy in their hearts will be exposed and bare for all to see, just like that rock is exposed and bare when the rainwater washes away all the dust that is on it. May Allah (swt) save us from that ever happening to us! May Allah (swt) keep our sincerity only for Him (swt) in everything that we do!

Then Allah (swt) says "**they are not able to do anything with what they have earned**". What good is dust? How will deeds that are not done purely for the Pleasure of Allah (swt) ever be accepted by Allah (swt)? In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us how worthless will be all of their actions that they did for other than Him (swt). They will not be able to do anything with them whatsoever. These deeds will not bring them the Pleasure of Allah (swt), they will not bring them the Garden and they will not save them from the Fire. Because they were not done purely for Allah (swt) He (swt) will not accept them in any way, so they are worthless.

This part of the ayah should frighten even those of us who think that we are sincerely working to worship and serve Allah (swt). We may work hard and strive with our money, time and energy to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). But at any moment, Shaitan may come and throw feelings of ostentation and pride into our hearts. We might start thinking that we are the best and we might start looking down on others. We might start thinking about how pious we are and how sinful the rest of creation is. Then slowly but surely Shaitan will turn our intentions away from Allah (swt) and towards the creation. So for example, we would start spending our money while seeking a reward from the creation. We will boast to people about how much we have spent, or we might even simply mention it to people, and there will be a dark corner in our hearts that is looking for their praise. The way to save ourselves from this is by turning to Allah (swt) and asking Him (swt) to help us purify our intentions. Then we also must strive to make Allah (swt) as the

only objective in everything that we do. Finally we must avoid telling others about what we have done and we must try to keep our good deeds as hidden as we can. Do not let anyone know of all the good that you did, it is enough that Allah (swt) Knows. This may seem to you like it is difficult, but read this ayah and look at the consequences of what will happen to you if you do not. May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) make Him (swt) the goal in all of our actions!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**Allah does not guide a people who do *kufr***". Recall how we said that the word ***kufr*** means "to cover". It could mean covering the Truth while you know it like the disbelievers have done, or it could mean covering the favors and blessings of Allah (swt) on you. This second form of ***kufr*** could be something that even the believers can be guilty of. Have we shown Allah (swt) enough gratitude for all that He (swt) has given us? Have we even tried? The way in which we show gratitude to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given us is by striving to worship and serve Him (swt) in all that we do. It is by spending and sacrificing everything that we have only for Him (swt). So if we spend and think about others while we spend, or if we seek a reward from others for our spending, are we not then being completely ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given us? Are we not doing ***kufr*** to all of the favors, blessings and gifts that Allah (swt) has given us? What will be our fate if we do that? Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah "**Allah does not guide a people who do *kufr***". We know that we are all in desperate need of the guidance from Allah (swt), we ourselves do not know how to please Allah (swt), we ourselves do not have the willpower to strive to worship and serve Allah (swt). We need Allah (swt) to guide us, to show us that which is pleasing to Him (swt) and then to give us the will and the strength to follow what we know to be pleasing to Him (swt). So if we do ***kufr*** to all that Allah (swt) has given us, then He (swt) will not guide us. How disastrous would that be, if we are not being guided to Allah (swt) then to where are we being guided? May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) give us His (swt)'s guidance!

وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمُ ٱبۡتِغَآءَ مَرۡضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ وَتَثۡبِيتٗا مِّنۡ أَنفُسِهِمۡ
كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةِۭ بِرَبۡوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٞ فَـَٔاتَتۡ أُكُلَهَا ضِعۡفَيۡنِ فَإِن لَّمۡ يُصِبۡهَا وَابِلٞ
فَطَلّٞۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ٢٦٥

266. And the example of the ones who spend their wealth to seek the Pleasure of Allah and for firmness of themselves is as the example of a garden on a high place, heavy rain falls on it and it doubles it's yield of harvest, and if heavy rain does not fall on it, then light rain suffices. And Allah is with what you do All-Seeing.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) gave us a beautiful example to describe those who spend their wealth for other than Him (swt). Those who spend and strive for the sake of the creation instead of the Creator. Allah (swt) told us how their example was like that of a smooth rock that was covered with dust. When the rainwater fell on such a rock, it washed away all of the dust and left the rock bare. Allah (swt) told us how such will be their deeds on the Last Day. There will be nothing that they could do with those deeds. It will all be rendered in vain. Their whole life that Allah (swt) had given them so that they could worship and serve Him (swt) in it would have been a complete waste. Such is the fate of those who attach their hearts to other than Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us about the opposite of such people. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives us an example that describes those who spend their wealth sincerely for Him (swt). Allah (swt) paints an image in our minds for us to realize the reality of those who spend sincerely for Him (swt). This is the example of the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah (ra). They gave everything that they had sincerely for the sake of Allah (swt). It was through their sacrifices and their sweat and their blood that the Islamic State was raised from being a tiny farming village into the greatest empire this earth has ever seen. Read this ayah and see how pleased Allah (swt) is with these people whom He (swt) is describing, then ask yourself why you cannot be like them.

First we see that Allah (swt) says "**And the example of the ones who spend their wealth to seek the Pleasure of Allah and for the strengthening of their souls**". Just like those from the previous ayah Allah (swt) describes these people as those who spend their wealth. But the difference between these two groups is the intention in their spending. Remember that Allah (swt) described those in the previous ayah as the ones who spend their wealth to be seen of men, and as the ones who remind others of their favors and as the ones who seek to get something back from others. They are the ones whose heart is attached to the creation and not to Allah (swt), so when they spend they think about the creation instead of thinking about Allah (swt). But now look at the intention of those whom Allah (swt) is describing in this part of the ayah. First and foremost they seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt). They know Allah (swt). They know that He (swt) is their Creator, they know that He (swt) is their Sustainer and their Nurturer. They know that He (swt) is the Perfect One with all of the Perfect Names and attributes. So there is no one that they want to please except Him (swt). Their whole life is nothing but a quest for the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So as Allah (swt) tells us in this ayah, when they spend they spend only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) also describes such people as spending "**for firmness of themselves**". The scholars say that this means that they always check their intentions to make certain that what they are spending is only for Allah (swt). We spoke previously about how easily pride and ostentation can come into any action that we originally try to do sincerely for Allah (swt), so here Allah (swt) shows us here how we must constantly check our intentions to make certain that they are only for Him (swt). The ones who spend purely for Allah (swt) and who always check their intentions are whom He (swt) is pleased with, may Allah (swt) make us among those!

Allah (swt) then describes the example of such people by saying "**as the example of a garden on a high place, heavy rain falls on it and it doubles it's yield of harvest, and if heavy rain does not fall on it, then light rain suffices**". Gardens that are on high elevations always yield more harvest because of their altitude. If there is heavy rain, they double the amount of fruits that they would normally produce. If there is no heavy rain, then even a drizzle is enough to produce abundant fruit. Allah (swt) blesses these gardens with more fruits and harvest

because of their high elevation. Such is also the case of the believer who spends sincerely for Allah (swt) and who always checks his intentions to make certain that they are for Allah (swt). If he spends more of his wealth, then Allah (swt) will double his reward many times over just like He (swt) doubles the harvest from the high garden when the heavy rain comes. But even if the believer spends only a little, Allah (swt) will still reward him just like Allah (swt) still produces fruit for the high garden even if only a drizzle falls on it. So how beautiful is this example to describe the true believers who spend their wealth only to please Allah (swt). If they spend a lot they will be rewarded even more than they spend, but even if they do not spend a lot they are still rewarded because of their intention for Allah (swt). Their reward is always much more than what they spent just like the high garden yields much more than the rain that falls on it. All of this is because of the sincerity that they had for Allah (swt). They do not care about anything else except pleasing Allah (swt) and coming closer to Him (swt). That is how the Prophet (saw) and the Sahabah were, and that is how we should try to be as well. Everything that we do must be only to please Allah (swt). As long as we have our intention sincerely for Allah (swt), then Allah (swt) will reward us even if what we spend for Him (swt) is relatively little. So do not worry if you do not have millions to give in charity. Insha Allah even the smallest of amounts that you give sincerely seeking Allah (swt) will bring a great reward for you with your Rabb in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) make us among those who spend everything that they have only for Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) make us like that garden on a high place and may Allah (swt) allow us to see the harvest of what we spend when we meet Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**And Allah is with what you do All-Seeing**". This is to remind us that Allah (swt) sees every single action that we do. There is not one second of your life that Allah (swt) is not Seeing you. He (swt) is always Watching. This also shows us that the reward that Allah (swt) told us about in the previous part of the ayah is not limited to spending, but it can be for any action that we do sincerely for Allah (swt). So for any action that you do, you should know with certainty that Allah (swt) is Seeing you do that action. There is not a single moment in your life when Allah (swt) is not Seeing you. So do good, do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). If you do a lot, then know that Allah (swt) will double your rewards over

and over again. Even if you do a little, Allah (swt) will still reward you. There is not a single action that you can do that Allah (swt) does not See, and so there is not a single action for which you cannot get reward from your Rabb if you keep your intention sincerely for Him (swt). So strive to do good with every moment of your life, and remember that Allah (swt) is Seeing all that you do.

أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا
ٱلْأَنْهَـٰرُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ وَأَصَابَهُ ٱلْكِبَرُ وَلَهُۥ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَآءُ
فَأَصَابَهَآ إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَٱحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَـٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

267. Would any of you love to have a garden of palms and vines with rives flowing underneath, in it is all kinds of fruit for him, and when old age has taken him and he has weak children, a fiery whirlwind should smite it and it be all burnt? Thus does Allah make His signs clear that you may reflect.

In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) told us how important it was to spend from our wealth in order to support the dawah and in order to help our Muslim brothers and sisters. Allah (swt) also reminded us how everything that we spend must be sincerely spent for His (swt)'s sake, our only objective in spending must be to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and we must always check ourselves to make sure that our intentions are purely for Him (swt). Finally we also mentioned that this sincerity for Allah (swt) is not only for spending wealth but also for any action that we may do. Every single action that we do must be done sincerely for Allah (swt), with pleasing Him (swt) as the only objective behind that action. Now what would happen to us if we do not have this sincerity? What would happen to us if we should lose our sincerity? In this ayah, Allah (swt) gives us a beautiful parable to show us the case of those who spend their wealth and do their acts for other than Him (swt).

Most of this ayah is a question that Allah (swt) is asking us. The purpose of this question is to make us think and reflect. Allah (swt) begins this question by saying "**Would any of you love to have a garden of palms and vines with rives flowing underneath, in it is all kinds of fruit for him**". So here Allah (swt) is describing a beautiful garden. It has date palms and grapevines running throughout it. For the Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw), dates and grapes were the most sought after fruits, and so such a garden as Allah (swt) is describing here would have been like Paradise like them. Allah (swt) further describes this garden as having rivers flowing underneath it and having all kind of fruits in it. How beautiful is that? Allah (swt) describes this garden just like He (swt) has described Paradise in other ayahs of the Quran. Who among us would not want such a garden?

When we read the first part of this question we may tell ourselves that we would all love to have a garden like that. Such a garden would be the closest to Paradise that we can have on this earth. But now look at what Allah (swt) says in the second part of the ayah, "**and when old age has taken him and he has weak children, a fiery whirlwind should smite it and it be all burnt?**". So in the first part of the ayah Allah (swt) described a man who has a beautiful garden. It provides him with all kinds of fruits so it takes care of all of his needs. No doubt it must have taken this man a long time to plant and nurture such a garden. Now imagine this man who spent his whole life making this garden for himself, he hoped that this garden would take care of him when he reaches old age. But what does Allah (swt) say will happen to the garden? Allah (swt) says that this garden will be burnt and destroyed by a fiery whirlwind. Now think of yourself to be in the situation of this man. You spent your whole life making this garden for yourself to take care of you when you reach old age. You placed all your hopes in this garden. Then a powerful storm comes and completely destroys your garden. What can you do? You are an old man; you do not have the energy to plant another garden. Furthermore, as Allah (swt) says in this ayah, you do not even have children to help you. All of your children are weak, and instead of them helping you, they are themselves in need of you. Can you imagine yourselves in such a situation? Would you ever like to be in situation? That is what Allah (swt) is asking you in this part of the ayah.

This is the example of the one who spends his wealth for other than Allah (swt) and who does his actions for other than Allah (swt). You work hard your whole life; you spend and sacrifice from your wealth and your time and your energy. You think that you will find these deeds for you on the Last Day. You think that this wealth that you spent and these actions that you did will take care of you on the Last Day. But on the Day of Judgment you will see that they are all lost, it is like a fierce whirlwind came and destroyed all of your deeds. The reason for this is that you did not have the sincerity purely for Allah (swt) in what you did. There was a small degree of ostentation and arrogance and seeking repayment from the creation in your actions. So because you tainted your actions by thinking of the creation instead of focusing on the Creator, He (swt) will not accept them. All of your actions will be burnt and turned to ashes just like the garden of the man whom Allah (swt) is described in this ayah. At that moment when he needed his garden the most all he found was ashes, similarly will you find only ashes when you need your good deeds the most. The only way to save yourself from this is by always checking the intentions in your actions. Are you acting purely for Allah (swt) or are you thinking about the creation even a little bit? Now do not feel that all hope is lost if you do find some impurity in your intentions, what is important is that you try your best your clean it. Allah (swt) Knows what is in the deepest corners of our hearts, and as long we strive to the best of our ability to keep our intentions purely for Him (swt), then Insha Allah we will find Him (swt) to be Forgiving and Merciful. May Allah (swt) accept all of our actions and may Allah (swt) save us from ever making anything or anyone other than Him (swt) to be the purpose of our lives! May Allah (swt) save us from our desires for the created things and may Allah (swt) help us to turn our attention towards Him (swt)!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says, "**Thus does Allah make His signs clear that you may reflect**". This beautiful parable is from the signs of Allah (swt). See how beautifully it describes the reality of the person who acts for other than Allah (swt). Allah (swt) has made it harsh and shocking because He (swt) wants to wake you up and make you think about your reality. It is very easy for us to forget about Allah (swt) and start thinking about the life of this world, it is very easy for us to start thinking about the creation instead of thinking about our Creator, that is why Allah (swt) gives us this powerful parable to make us think about the

foolishness of turning away from Him (swt). Only Allah (swt) could have given a parable as beautiful as this. It is a shame that most of us could not have read it in the original Arabic, there is so much of the meaning that is lost in the translation. That is why we must all make our best effort to learn Arabic, it would be one of the best acts of worship that we can do. Even though we do not have Arabic, from this parable we can see the depth of meaning in it and the relevance of it in our lives. This parable is from the signs of Allah (swt), and He (swt) has made it clear for us so that we may reflect on it.

So think about this parable, every time you feel like showing off in your actions and every time you start thinking about the creation in your actions and every time you want to seek a reward from the creation, think about this parable. Think about that man who lost his garden to a fiery whirlwind. Only by keeping your intention sincerely for Allah (swt) can you save yourself from the horror that Allah (swt) has described in this parable. You know Allah (swt) and you know that only He (swt) is deserving of all of your actions. So why then do you ever want to act for anyone other than He (swt)? When you know that Allah (swt) Knows the sincerity in your heart and you know the reward that He (swt) can give you both in this life and the next, why then do you want to take that sincerity and that purity in your actions away from Him (swt)? That is the lesson of this parable. It is a warning for us to never turn our intention in our actions away from Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to benefit from this parable! May Allah (swt) allow us to keep our intention purely for Him (swt) in everything that we do! May Allah (swt) help us to take the lesson from all of the signs that He (swt) had made clear for us in His (swt)'s Book!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَنفِقُواْ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّآ
أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُواْ ٱلْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُم
بِـَٔاخِذِيهِ إِلَّآ أَن تُغْمِضُواْ فِيهِ ۚ وَٱعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾

268. O you who believe, spend from the pure things that you earn, and what we bring out from the earth for you, and do not aim to spend at that which is bad from it, what you would not take yourselves except with closed eyes, and know that surely Allah is Free of all needs and Worthy of all praise.

In this ayah we see that Allah (swt) continues to give us rulings concerning spending in His (swt)'s way. Spending in the cause of Allah (swt) is one of the most important parts of our worship and servitude to Allah (swt). This is because we as human being all have a natural desire for wealth and for the material things of this world. We like it when we have something that we can touch and feel and take benefit from and call all our own. We do not like it when we part with our material goods and we especially do not like it when we have to part with our money. So when we spend from what we have sincerely for Allah (swt), it is one of the most important parts of our worship and servitude to Him (swt). This test that Allah (swt) has given us is nothing but spending from what we love of this world to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. As we know this mission that Allah (swt) has given us to establish His (swt)'s Law in the land and to spread His (swt)'s Message to mankind requires us to spend all that we have. Thus we see Allah (swt) continue to give us rulings and injunctions concerning spending in His (swt)'s way.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**O you who believe, spend from the pure things that you earn**". So here we see our Rabb calling out to all of the members of our community and encouraging us to spend for Him (swt). Once again we should note how Allah (swt) connects the spending with the Iman. If we are truly believers then we should not hesitate to spend for Allah (swt). The spending demonstrates and validates our belief in Allah (swt). We can also note how Allah (swt) tells us to spend from "**the pure things that you earn**". The scholars say that what Allah (swt) means here by "**pure**" is "lawful". So Allah (swt) is calling us to spend from the lawful

that we earn. The lesson that we can take from this is that anything that we spend from what is not lawful will not be accepted by Allah (swt). So if we spend from something that we have stolen, or if we spend from something that we have earned through interest or insurance, or other unlawful means, such spending will not be accepted by Allah (swt). Such spending would also be a sin because Allah (swt) has specifically told us in this ayah to only spend from that which is pure and lawful. So the person who spends from unlawful wealth would be earning double the punishment, one from earning the unlawful wealth and one from trying to spend that unlawful wealth for Allah (swt) when He (swt) has specifically commanded him not to. May Allah (swt) save us from all the wealth that is unlawful!

Most of the time the wealth that we have earned lawfully is the wealth that we have worked the hardest to get. It is not wealth that simply fell onto our laps, but it is wealth that struggled and strived throughout our life to get. So this is the kind of wealth that Allah (swt) would like us to spend. This wealth is our prized possession, so when we spend this wealth we demonstrate our love and submission to Allah (swt) more than we would if we spent wealth that came to us easily. What we are spending now is not just money or material things but we are also giving up the efforts and striving that we exerted in order to gain that wealth. As always, the more the effort and the greater the sacrifice, the more it is beloved to Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) allow us to spend from what we love only to please Him (swt)! May Allah (swt) save us from gaining any wealth through unlawful means and may Allah (swt) enable us to only give Him (swt) that which is lawful!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and what we bring out from the earth for you**". So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) calls on the Muslims to also spend of what He (swt) has brought out from the earth for them. How much does Allah (swt) bring out from the earth for us? Firstly there are all of the different kinds of fruits and vegetables, then there are the minerals and the gems, and there are also all of the natural resources like oil, coal and natural gas. All of this is from the earth and Allah (swt) brings it out for us so that we can spend it to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. So from this part of the ayah we see Allah (swt) calls on the Muslims to spend from what He (swt) brings out from the earth in His (swt)'s cause.

Now we know that this Ummah has the most fertile lands and the richest lands when it comes to natural resources. The energy resources that the modern world depends on today belongs to this Ummah. For example most of the oil in the world today flows under the feet of the Muslims. But do we see the Muslims benefiting from this wealth? No on the contrary what we see is the enemies of this Message plundering the Muslim lands and taking all of this wealth for themselves. They use the oil from the Muslim lands for their huge pick up trucks and war machines while the children of this Ummah are starving. They waste these resources for their pride and their show and their greed. They waste it while there are so many Muslims in the world today who need it. But we cannot only blame the West for this catastrophe, we also have to blame the fools and the puppets who are ruling the Muslim lands and giving our wealth to the enemies of Allah (swt). So in this ayah we see Allah (swt) telling the Muslims to spend what He (swt) brings out from the earth to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure, but what we see in the world today is the opposite. We see the Muslim rulers spending what Allah (swt) has produced from the earth to earn His (swt)'s Wrath! They are giving the wealth of this Ummah to the disbelievers while we are in desperate need of it. Such is our state of affairs since we have turned away from Allah (swt) and turned away from ruling by His (swt)'s Law. May Allah (swt) make this Ummah wake up from her slumber! May Allah (swt) return the riches that He (swt) has given this Ummah back to their rightful owners!

In the next part of the ayah we see Allah (swt) say "**and do not aim to spend that which is bad from it, what you would not take for yourselves except with closed eyes**". In this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) is telling us that we should not spend for His (swt)'s cause that which is of low quality and that which we would not like for ourselves. Allah (swt) describes this low quality wealth and merchandise as that which we would only accept with our eyes closed. This means that it is of such low quality that we would only accept with reluctance. So we should never spend for Allah (swt) that which we would not like for ourselves. Rather we should spend for Allah (swt) from that which is best. Remember that when you spend for the cause of Allah (swt), you are not simply giving to some Islamic movement or to some poor Muslim but you are really giving to Allah (swt). Do you think that Allah (swt) would like it if you gave Him (swt) which

is poor quality and which you would not like for yourself? Allah (swt) Who has given you everything that you have. Allah (swt) Who is the purpose of your existence. Do you think that He (swt) will like it? So here we see that Allah (swt) commands the Muslims that they should not spend for His (swt) cause that which is low quality. Rather they should spend from that which is of the very best. Now for the person who is poor and who can only afford to give that which is of poor quality, Insha Allah, Allah (swt) will accept that from him if it is the best that he can give. But for the rest of us when we spend for the cause of Allah (swt) we should spend from the best that we have. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

Now this does not apply only to money and wealth, but it applies to anything that we may have. Whenever we spend anything for Allah (swt), we must only spend from the very best of what we have. So if we spend our effort to perform a certain task, we have to do it in the best way possible. This is especially true when we do that task to for the sake of Allah (swt). When we are doing something for the sake of Allah (swt), we have to make sure that we do it in the best way possible. Unfortunately many Muslims today fail to realize this. So you would see many brothers when they are studying for their college courses they would study to the best of their ability, or when they are doing their work they would do it to the best of their ability. They want that good grade or that yearly bonus that they think their striving will bring them. But at the same time when these same brothers are studying Arabic or learning about Islam, you will see them to be very lazy and not put much effort into what they are doing. Is this how you want to be? Do you want to give to Allah (swt) what you will not even give to yourself? Do you not know that Allah (swt) has prescribed excellence in everything? How much excellence do you think that He (swt) expects when you work for Him (swt)? Do you want to be like those fools who care more for this world than they do for their Creator? May Allah (swt) save us from ever being like this! May Allah (swt) allow us to spend for Him (swt) from that which is of the very best!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and know that surely Allah is Free of all needs and Worthy of all praise**". Do you think that Allah (swt) needs anything that you give? No, rather He (swt) is the One Who is Free of all needs. There is absolutely nothing that Allah (swt) is in need of. While you and me on the other hand are in need of so much just for us to

exist. So anything that you give Allah (swt) is only for your own sake, you are the one who stands to benefit from it and not Allah (swt). So then why would you give something of poor quality? Do you want your reward to be diminished in the Hereafter? Do you want your station with Allah (swt) to be lowered? Similarly Allah (swt) is also the One Worthy of all praise. He (swt) will be praised and thanked by everything in the heavens and the earth regardless of if you give anything to Him (swt) or not. So you are not hurting Allah (swt) in the least by giving something of less quality, you are only hurting yourself. So give to Allah (swt), give Him (swt) your money and your time and your energy. Insha Allah soon a Day will come in which you will be glad you did.

ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ يَعِدُكُمُ ٱلْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلْفَحْشَآءِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ
وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

269. Shaitan threatens you poverty and commands you to *faksha*, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and *Fadl*, and Allah is All-Embracing All-Knowing.

So now you know that you must spend from what you have to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). You know that you must make only Allah (swt) as the reason for your spending, never seeking praise from the people or seeking any favor in return. Not only must you spend your wealth for Allah (swt), but you must also spend your time, efforts and energy. Not only must you spend from what you have for Allah (swt), but you must also spend from the best of what you have for Allah (swt). Your life is nothing but giving up what Allah (swt) has given you because of love for Him (swt). But there is one who does not want you to give to Allah (swt). There is one who does not want to see you spend for Allah (swt) and strive for Allah (swt). This one's mission is to take you away from Allah (swt). This one is your worst enemy and he flows through you like your blood. In this ayah Allah (swt) brings your attention to this one so that you can ask Him (swt) to save you from him. How can you be safe from your enemy unless you know him?

Allah (swt) says, "**Shaitan threatens you poverty and commands you to *faksha***". Shaitan is the one who is your open enemy who seeks to take you away from Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) describes him as threatening you with poverty. Whenever you want to spend for Allah (swt), he comes and whispers in your ear and tells you that if you should spend for Allah (swt) then you would become poor. He puts such questions in your head as "what if all your money runs out?", "who will take care of you and your family?", "tomorrow you will be on the street", "tomorrow you will have no food", "who can you go to beg to help you?". These are just a few of the questions that he puts in your head because he wants to prevent you from spending in the way of Allah (swt). He wants to take you away from Allah (swt). But anyone who has even a little bit of knowledge can see that these are the questions of a fool. Allah (swt) is the One Who provides us with everything that we have, and so we always have to trust in Him (swt) to take care of all of our needs. That is why the best defense against Shaitan is the remembrance of Allah (swt). Insha Allah, when you remember Allah (swt), when you remember Who He (swt) IS and what He (swt) has done for you and what He (swt) can do for you, then Shaitan cannot come near you. May Allah (swt) save us from poverty! May Allah (swt) save us from Shaitan!

Allah (swt) also tells us in this part of the ayah that Shaitan commands us to do ***faksha***. There is no good English translation for this word. It gives meanings of satisfying one's low desires, lusts and inclinations. All of the indecent, immoral and lewd sexual acts are covered by this word. Even greed for material things is covered by this word. So that low desire you have within yourself for members of the opposite sex, as well as that desire you have to do unspeakable acts with them, as well as your desire for more and more material things of this world, all of these meanings are given by this word ***faksha***. This is exactly what Shaitan commands you to do. So the next time you have this feeling within yourself, know that it is from Shaitan. Know also that he is your open and clear enemy, and he wants nothing for you but for you to suffer destruction and pain and for you to displease your Lord. So when he commands you to do ***faksha***, do not obey him. No matter how many times he may command you, and no matter how strong the feeling is, do not give in. Yes it is difficult, but remember that it is for this struggle that Allah (swt) will love you and that He (swt) will reward you with nearness to Him (swt) and the

Garden. Shaitan will try to fool you into thinking that these thoughts are not from him, he will bring to your mind how good it will feel to do what he is telling you to do. But you should know that this is all tricks and deception. These thoughts are indeed from him and if you should do what he says it will only bring you pain and misery. May Allah (swt) help us to always remember Him (swt) whenever the devil comes to us! May Allah (swt) save us from the evil of our own souls!

So Shaitan tries to prevent you from spending in the way of Allah (swt) by threatening you with poverty, and instead he commands you to do ***faksha***. But what does Allah (swt) promise you? Allah (swt) says in this ayah "**Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and *Fadl***". How wonderful is that? How wonderful is that? If you spend sincerely for Allah (swt), He (swt) will first and foremost give you His (swt)'s Forgiveness. How wonderful would it be to have the Forgiveness of Allah (swt)? We have all committed so many sins and we have all fallen short on so many of our obligations to Allah (swt). We are all in desperate need of the Forgiveness of Allah (swt). So when we spend from what we have sincerely for Allah (swt), He (swt) promises to give us His (swt)'s Forgiveness. A chance to be cleansed of all of our sins and be a creature that is worthy in the Sight of Allah (swt). That alone should be enough for an incentive to spend for Allah (swt). But we see in this part of the ayah, that Allah (swt) promises us even more. Allah (swt) promises us "***Fadl***". In his tafsir of this ayah, Imam Qurtubi says ***Fadl*** means provisions in this world and provisions and expansion in the next. So if we spend sincerely for Allah (swt), He (swt) promises us more and more both in this world and the next. Allah (swt) will take care of all our needs in this world, and He (swt) will give us rewards immeasurable and unimaginable in the next world. This is a promise from Allah (swt) that He (swt) is giving you in His (swt)'s Book. How wonderful is that?

Finally Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**Allah is All-Embracing All-Knowing**". Whenever Allah (swt) mentions His (swt)'s Names in the Quran it is always connected with the meaning of the ayah. When Allah (swt) uses the name *Wasi* in this ayah, it means "**All-Embracing**". This Name is connected both the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) and with the ***Fadl*** of Allah (swt). Literally *Wasi* means "wide" and "all-encompassing", and that is how Allah (swt) is in relation to both His (swt)'s Forgiveness and His (swt)'s ***Fadl***. If you spend sincerely for Allah

(swt), then you will find His (swt)'s Forgiveness to be All-Embracing and All-Encompassing. It will spread and cover all of your sins and transgressions not matter how big and how numerous they may be. Imagine if you have an ocean of sins, then know that the ocean of the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) is even greater, and this ocean will encompass and drown your ocean of sins. This is how Allah (swt) is *Wasi* in terms of His (swt)'s Forgiveness. Similarly the ***Fadl*** is also Wide and Encompassing. There is no limit to how much Allah (swt) can give you both in this life and the Hereafter. If you spend sincerely for Allah (swt), then you will find that He (swt) will give you more than you could ever ask for and more than you could ever deserve. Allah (swt) will give you more than you ever dreamed possible. Allah (swt) also wants us to remember from this ayah that He (swt) is All-Knowing. Shaitan threatens us with poverty and he tells us not to spend for Allah (swt), rather he commands us to do ***faksha***. Allah (swt) Knows whether we listened to him or not. Allah (swt) Knows exactly how much we struggled and strove against Shaitan. When the desires flared within us so strong, Allah (swt) Knows exactly how much effort we put to fight these desires. Allah (swt) Knows the extent of our struggle against Shaitan even more than we do, that is why He (swt) is the Best to Judge us and the Best to reward us for all that we did throughout our life. So remember these two Names of Allah (swt) and do battle with Shaitan the next time that he comes close to you. May Allah (swt) give us all success!

يُؤْتِى ٱلْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ ٱلْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِىَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا
يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَـٰبِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾

270. He gives *Al-Hikmah* to whom He pleases and whoever is given *Al-Hikmah* surely he has been given abundant good, but none take heed except the people of intellect.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) commanded us to do battle with Shaitan. Allah (swt) reminded us how Shaitan would threaten us with poverty every time we tried to sacrifice our time or money for Him (swt). Allah (swt) also reminded us how Shaitan tempts us with ***faksha***, and sometimes the ***faksha*** can seem very appealing to us. But if we do battle with Shaitan for the sake of Allah (swt) and we overcome him for the sake of Allah (swt), then Allah (swt) promises to reward us with Forgiveness and ***Fadl*** from Him (swt). There is no better reward for any effort than Forgiveness and ***Fadl*** from Allah (swt). But is it just any person who is able to do battle with Shaitan and overcome their desires and passions? This is a tremendous challenge and is it just any person who is up to it? Allah (swt) brings our attention in this ayah to a certain kind of people, these are the people who are able to overcome Shaitan and their low desires. We ask Allah (swt) to make us among these people.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**He gives *Al-Hikmah* to whom He pleases**". So here in the first part of the ayah Allah (swt) is telling us that there are certain group of people to whom He (swt) gives ***Al-Hikmah***. There are many opinions given by the scholars as to what Allah (swt) means by the word ***Al-Hikmah***. Some scholars have said that it means "Interpretation of Quran", others have said that it means "knowledge of the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt)", and others have said that it means "the fear of Allah (swt)". Allah (swt) Knows best, but it seems that all of these opinions are correct. In other words, the word ***Al-Hikmah*** encompasses all of these meanings. So there is a special group of people to whom Allah (swt) gives ***Al-Hikmah***, these are the people who are able overcome Shaitan and fulfill their purpose of worshipping and serving Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gives ***Al-Hikmah*** to whom He (swt) pleases, this means whomever He (swt) wants to. May Allah (swt) make us among those!

Then Allah (swt) says "**whoever is given *Al-Hikmah* surely he has been given abundant good**". What does it mean to have ***Al-Hikmah***? It means that for every moment of your life, you know what is pleasing to Allah (swt). It means that you understand the deep and profound meanings of the Quran. It means that Allah (swt) has opened the doors of His (swt)'s Book for you. This knowledge, this ***Al-Hikmah*** that Allah (swt) has given you generates the fear of Allah (swt) within you, and the fear of Allah (swt) is what we all seek. It is the fear of Allah (swt) that prevents us from doing the actions that are displeasing to Allah (swt) and it is the fear of Allah (swt) that motivates us to do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). This then leads us the Pleasure of Allah (swt), the eternal bliss of the Garden in the next life, and the peace and tranquility of being close to Allah (swt) in this life. So how good is it if you are among those to whom Allah (swt) has given ***Al-Hikmah***?

Allah (swt) gives ***Al-Hikmah*** to whom He (swt) pleases so your job is to be among those whom Allah (swt) is pleased with. You have to be someone who is always attached to the Book of Allah (swt), someone who is always trying to memorize it and learn more from it. You also have to be one who is always striving to do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) and striving to avoid the actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). You also have to be among those who are always asking forgiveness from Allah (swt) for all of your sins and your shortcomings. Only if you do this will you be among those whom Allah (swt) is pleased with. Only then will you be among those who are granted ***Al-Hikmah***.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**but none take heed except the people of intellect**". Here Allah (swt) is telling us that only the people who use their minds will take heed to the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt). This Din is not instinctual, you are not born knowing how to pray or knowing that alcohol is forbidden. You have to use your mind to learn this Din, you have to use your mind to study the Law of Allah (swt) to know what is pleasing to Him (swt) and what is not. You even have to use your mind to know Allah (swt), to recognize all of the signs that He (swt) has scattered across the universe for you. Signs that will help you to recognize His (swt)'s Existence, His (swt)'s Oneness, and His (swt)'s total Sovereignty over all of the creation. You also need to use your mind to recognize the signs that Allah (swt) sends with

his prophets and messengers so that you can know who is a true Messenger from Allah (swt). It is shame that many Muslims today have completely turned off their minds when it comes to understanding the Din. They blindly follow scholars without thinking or reflecting. They want their scholars to think for them, and they just do whatever their scholars tell them to do. You will find that such people are the most vulnerable to Shaitan. He can easily drive them to sin because Allah (swt) is not on their minds. To save ourselves from this we have to use our minds to understand this Din and to reflect on Allah (swt). It is only through our minds that we can reach Allah (swt) in the life of this world.

Now it is true that our mind has limitations, and we also have limitations in our knowledge that we need to always be aware of. But this does not meant that we should turn off our minds to this Din, especially when it is only through our minds that we can know Allah (swt) and know that which is pleasing to Him (swt). We have to seek the knowledge that will benefit us and bring us closer to Allah (swt) and we should stay away from the knowledge that will confuse us and that will take us further away from Allah (swt). We should not use our minds to think about that which we have no knowledge of, rather we should use our minds to bring us closet to Allah (swt). Only then can we make ourselves among the people of intellect who will take heed to Allah (swt). The ones who contemplate about Allah (swt) and the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt) in the deepest corners of their heart. The ones who strive at every moment of their lives to find out that which is pleasing to Allah (swt). The ones to whom Allah (swt) has granted ***Al-Hikmah***. May Allah (swt) make us among these people of intellect who use their minds to come closer to Him (swt)!

وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُم مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُۥ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٢٧٠﴾

271. And all that you spend of almsgiving and all that you vow of promises, surely Allah Knows it. And for the Dhalimoon there are no helpers.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) reminded us that only those are given ***Al-Hikmah*** take heed to this Message. They are the ones who use their intellect to contemplate on the signs of Allah (swt) and they use their minds to understand the Law of Allah (swt). They know Allah (swt) in all of His (swt)'s Greatness and Majesty and they know that which is pleasing to Him (swt). But we also learned from the previous ayah that ***Al-Hikmah*** is something that Allah (swt) must give. We ourselves cannot get ***Al-Hikmah*** for ourselves but rather we need Allah (swt) to give it to us. So how do we be among those to whom Allah (swt) has given ***Al-Hikmah***? Allah (swt) answers that question in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**And all that you spend of almsgiving and all that you vow of promises, surely Allah Knows it**". All the charity that you give, be it in your money or your property or your time, you have to be sure that Allah (swt) Knows it. Allah (swt) Knows the obligatory *Zakat* that you spend and He (swt) Knows the voluntary *Sadaqah* that you give. Allah (swt) Knows what you give secretly and what you give in public. Allah (swt) also Knows what was in your heart when you spent, He (swt) Knows whether or not your intention was sincerely for Him (swt) or not. Allah (swt) even Knows the extent of your desire to please Him (swt) that was present in your heart when you spent. How much did you love Allah (swt) when you spent and how much of your spending was purely because of love for Him (swt)? So we see that Allah (swt) Knows all about everything that you spend. Why then would you ever not want to spend for Him (swt)?

We also see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) also Knows of all of the promises that you make. Allah (swt) Knows whether or not you were sincere when you made those promises. Allah (swt) Knows which of your promises you fulfilled and which of them you broke.

Even if you broke your promises, Allah (swt) Knows if you even tried to keep them or if you always had an intention to break them. Allah (swt) even Knows the reason why you broke your promise, if it was a valid reason or not. Allah (swt) also Knows all of your obligations that you had for others. He (swt) Knows whether you lived up to those obligations or whether you failed in them. So we see that just as Allah (swt) Knows all about your spending, He (swt) Knows all about your promises and your vows. Allah (swt) Knows even the smallest of good that you do.

Now what is the connection between this ayah where Allah (swt) says that He (swt) Knows all about your spending and all about your promises and the previous ayah where Allah (swt) said that He (swt) gives ***Al-Hikmah*** to whom He (swt) pleases? The connection is that those whom Allah (swt) is pleased with, because they spend sincerely for Him (swt) and they always keep their promises and they fulfill their vows, these are the ones whom Allah (swt) will bless by giving them ***Al-Hikmah***. This special knowledge with which you can know what is pleasing to Allah (swt). This special knowledge that will save you both in this life and the next. Allah (swt) grants it to whom He (swt) is pleased with, and we see from this ayah that the ones whom Allah (swt) is pleased with are those who spend sincerely for Him (swt) and those who fulfill their promises and their vows. So we see that ***Al-Hikmah*** is a Bounty and Mercy from Allah (swt) that He (swt) grants to those whom He (swt) is pleased with. To prove ourselves worthy of this, all we have to do is strive to spend from what we have for Allah (swt) and we have to try our best to keep all our oaths and promises. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**And for the Dhalimoon there are no helpers**". The **Dhalimoon** are those who do *Dhulm* and *Dhulm* means every kind of "evil", "injustice" and "darkness". Is not the worst of injustices to turn away from your Creator and Sustainer? Even when a clear Message reaches you from Him (swt), you still turn away from Him (swt). You turn away from Him (swt) when you know that He (swt) is Allah (swt), the Perfect One, the One Who is sustaining the heavens and the earth for every second of their existence. You know all this about Allah (swt) and you still turn away from Him (swt). Can you then be described as anything that but being from the **Dhalimoon**? The **Dhalimoon** are those to whom Allah (swt) has not granted ***Al-Hikmah***. They are the ones who refuse to spend sincerely for Allah (swt), if

they spend they only to spend to be seen of others. They are also the ones who break their promises and fail to live up to their obligations. Would you ever want to be among such people? May Allah (swt) save us from ever being among the **Dhalimoon**!

Allah (swt) describes the **Dhalimoon** in this ayah as the ones who have no helpers. Why is it that the **Dhalimoon** refuse to spend sincerely for Allah (swt)? Why is it that they refuse to give what they have for Allah (swt)? Why is it that they break their promises and fail to fulfill their oaths? Often times it is because they do not realize their need and their absolute dependence on Allah (swt). They think that they are independent or self-sufficient, or they think that for whatever problem they may have there is always someone for them to go to help. They think that their own power, or their own wealth or their people will save them. Such fools have forgotten about the Last Day. On that Day they will realize their need for Allah (swt). They will see that there is no one to help them and no one to save them from Allah (swt). So we see now the situation of those who do not spend for Allah (swt) and those who break their promises. The ones whom Allah (swt) has not blessed with ***Al-Hikmah***. They will be left powerless and helpless on the Last Day, that Day in which you need all of the help that you can get. May Allah (swt) save us from being in that situation! May Allah (swt) save us from among the **Dhalimoon**!

إِن تُبْدُواْ ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۖ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا ٱلْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ ۚ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾

272. If you disclose your Sadaqah, it is well. But if you conceal it and give it to the poor, that is much better for you, and also it will cover for you some of your sins, and Allah is with all that you do Well-Aware.

So from these ayahs that we have been studying we can see the extreme importance of spending to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt). When we spend from our wealth for Allah (swt) then we are giving up the material things of this world that we may desire only because of our love of Allah (swt). Thus we are demonstrating that our love for Allah (swt) is much stronger than our love for this world. Is that not the perfect demonstration of faith when you sacrifice of this world because of what you believe? In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us some more benefits to spending for His (swt)'s sake. All of this reminder and admonition is a Mercy from Allah (swt) for us; remember that He (swt) does not need our charity. But rather it is we who need to spend in order to gain His (swt)'s Pleasure and fulfill the purpose of our creation. So even though Allah (swt) does not need our spending, He (swt) still reminds us again and again to spend for His (swt)'s cause. All of these reminders and admonitions are for our benefit and not for His (swt)'s. How Kind and Compassionate is Allah (swt) towards us and at same time how ungrateful and unjust are we to Him (swt)!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**If you disclose your Sadaqah, it is well**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that there is no sin upon us if we make our charity known to others, or if others find out about it. So it is not an obligation to give charity in secret, we may give charity in public also. However when we give charity in public what we need to be careful is that we never give to show off in front of others, we do not spend with the intention of being seen by others. We must always remember that Allah (swt) created us to worship and serve Him (swt), so everything that we do must only be for Him (swt). If we can avoid this danger of ostentation, then there are several benefits to spending in public also. One of them is that when others see us spending, it

will encourage them to spend as well. You yourself may see others spending, and then you might ask yourself why you can not spend as well. You might realize the lies that Shaitan has told you about spending leading to poverty. So the lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is to see that there is nothing wrong with spending in public as long as we spend only to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and not to show off in front of others.

Then Allah (swt) says "**But if you conceal it and give it to the poor, that is better for you**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that if we make secret what we are spending, that would be much better for us. This means that Allah (swt) will give us much more reward for spending that is done in secret than He (swt) would give for spending in public. This is because when we spend in secret, there is the real sincerity to Allah (swt). There is no one to see that act except Allah (swt), so there is no way for Shaitan to put any degree of ostentation or pride into that act of charity. In our hearts it will truly be an action that is done purely for Allah (swt). Another advantage to spending in secret is that the recipient of the charity does not feel bad from everyone seeing him to be in need. Another benefit that we can see from this ayah is that the poor are among the best recipients of our charity. Those who do not even have enough for a meal to eat, or clothes to wear or even a home in which to stay. When we give in secret to them, desiring no reward from them, but seeking only the Pleasure of Allah (swt) then Insha Allah this is one of the best of actions that we can do.

Imam Qurtubi in his tafsir of this ayah mentions a narration of Al-'Abbas (ra) where he (ra) said "The charitable act is only complete when it contains three characteristics: hastening it, thinking it small and concealing it". When you hasten to spend in charity, there is less of a chance of Shaitan preventing you from spending because we all know that the urge to horde wealth is always within us. So when we procrastinate there is more of a chance that Shaitan will come and prevent us from spending. When you think of your spending to be small, Insha Allah you can save yourself from praising yourself and thinking big of yourself because of your spending. Because should this happen then you will be reluctant to spend in the future, you will start telling yourself that you have already spent enough. Finally when you conceal your spending you save yourself from ostentation and showing off in front of the people. Thus you keep your Sadaqah purely for

Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give us all these three characteristics every time that we spend for Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and it will cover for you some of your sins**". Here is yet another tremendous benefit that we can get from spending in secret. Not only will Allah (swt) reward us greatly for our spending to only seek His (swt)'s Pleasure, but He (swt) will also cover some of our sins because of this spending. How many sins have we all done? How desperately in need are we for Allah (swt) to cover our sins? So for each act of charity that we spend, even if we give only a half date, we can be sure that Allah (swt) is covering some of our sins. For every sin that we cover in the life of this world, there is less of a chance that we will find that sin to be a source of punishment for us in the next world. Thus we should all strive to give more and more to cover that mountain of sins that we all have. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Finally Allah (swt) reminds us that "**Allah is with all that you do Well-Aware**". Do not ever think that any act of charity that you do is in vain, do not even think that any good deed that you do is in vain. The word *khabeer* that Allah (swt) uses in this part of the ayah is to describe His (swt)'s relation to your actions is one of close and intimate knowledge, as well as full and detailed knowledge. So Allah (swt) Knows all about your actions, even more than you yourself know. Then what does it matter if anyone else sees your charity or your good deeds, is it not enough for you that the One for Whom you exist Knows about them? May Allah (swt) help us to always remember that He (swt) is *khabeer* with everything that we do for Him (swt).

۞لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَىٰهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَمَا
تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلَّا ٱبْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَا
تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٢﴾

273. Not on you is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend from good it is for yourselves, and you are not spending except to seek the Pleasure of Allah, and for whatever you spend from good, it shall be paid back to you in full and you shall not be wronged.

To understand this ayah let us go back to the context in which it was revealed. The Islamic State had just been established and the Muslim community that was to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind was being formed. To demonstrate their Iman and to support the dawah as well as to support each other, Allah (swt) was encouraging the Muslims to spend of their wealth. Allah (swt) reminded the Muslims that the only concern for each of them when he or she spends must be to please Him (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) continues to emphasize that all that we spend must be only for Him (swt). Allah (swt) shows us in this ayah how even inviting the people to Islam cannot be a reason for our charity, but rather He (swt) must be the only reason for all that we spend.

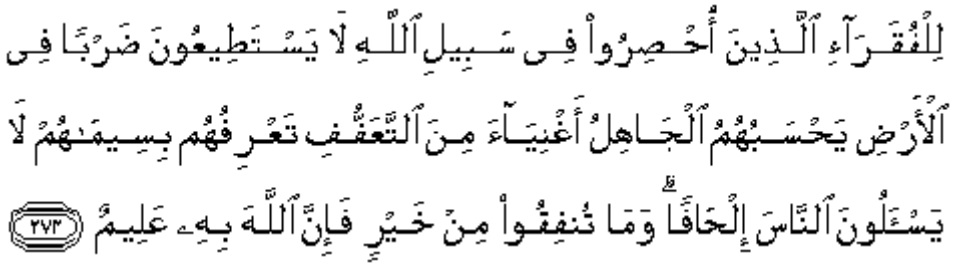
Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Not on you is their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills**". The scholars say that this ayah was revealed when some of the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) held back from giving charity to non-Muslims in the hope that this might invite them to Islam. These Muslims thought that when the poor among the non-Muslims saw that only Muslims were receiving charity this might then encourage them to inquire about Islam and be guided to the Truth. So Allah (swt) revealed this ayah telling the Muslims that the guidance of the people was not upon then, but rather it was upon Him (swt). It is Allah (swt) Who guides whom He (swt) pleases. In other words, the Muslims cannot make anyone accept Islam simply by their giving or by their restraining from giving charity, rather it is only Allah (swt) who can guide the people to Islam and Allah (swt) guides whom He (swt) pleases.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**And whatever you spend from good it is for yourselves".** Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that all of the charity that they give is really for themselves and not for anyone else. Whenever you give charity, you should always think that you are giving it for yourself and not for others. You are the one who is seeking a reward from Allah (swt) for that charity in the Hereafter, so it is for you more than it is for anyone else. You should not seek a return from anyone else for your charity, not even their accepting Islam. Every good deed that you do is only for your own good. Note also that Allah (swt) describes the charity as being "from good". This is to once again emphasize that the charity must be given from lawful sources of wealth and it must be given with the sincerest of intentions.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**and you are not spending except to seek the Pleasure of Allah**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that they are spending seeking only the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This should be the only reason for their spending. Likewise for us this should always be the only reason for our spending; it should only be to seek the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and for no other reason. We should not even try to convert people or bring people towards Islam through our charity; our charity and our spending must only be for Allah (swt). We should never think that our charity will be a reason for the people coming closer to Islam because we know that only Allah (swt) guides and Allah (swt) will guide whom He (swt) wills.

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and for whatever you spend from good, it shall be paid back to you in full and you shall not be wronged**". Here Allah (swt) reminds the Muslims that every single thing that they have spent for Him (swt) shall be repaid in full. Who is better at keeping a promise than Allah (swt)? So why should we worry about seeking anything from the creation from of our spending? Even their guidance to Islam should not be a reason for our spending. Every single penny that we spend should only be for Allah (swt). We exist only for Allah (swt) so He (swt) should be the reason for all that we spend and all that we do. If we keep this intention then we can be certain that Allah (swt) will reward us in full and that He (swt) will not do us any wrong. If our intention is purely for Allah (swt), then our reward will not be reduced even a little. So let us turn our focus away from the creation and towards the Creator. From Him (swt) we can expect a full reward and from Him (swt) we will know no injustice.

Now we are not saying from learning this ayah that we should not give dawah to non-Muslims or that we should not spend to support the dawah. We are simply saying that we should not refrain ourselves from spending on non-Muslims in the hope that they would accept Islam. Our hope for their acceptance of Islam should not be the reason for our spending. That was what some of the early Muslims did and that was why Allah (swt) revealed this ayah. So we should still carry dawah and we should still support the dawah financially, but our intention in our spending and our intention in our dawah should never be to convert people. Rather our intention should be only to please Allah (swt) and we should always remember that it is Allah (swt) Who guides whom He (swt) pleases.


لِلْفُقَرَآءِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِى
ٱلْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ ٱلْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَآءَ مِنَ ٱلتَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُم بِسِيمَىٰهُمْ لَا
يَسْـَٔلُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۗ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾

274. For the poor, the ones who are straitened and detained in the way of Allah, and are unable to move in the earth. The ignorant one thinks them to be free of want because of their abstaining from begging, but you will recognize them by their mark, they do not beg of the people at all, whatever you spend of good surely Allah Knows it well.

In the previous ayahs, Allah (swt) reminded us of the importance of spending sincerely for Him (swt). Allah (swt) encouraged us to spend and Allah (swt) reminded us to keep our intention sincerely for Him (swt). Allah (swt) told us how even the bringing of the people closer to Islam should not be a reason for our spending but rather He (swt) should be the only reason for our spending. One question that can be asked at this point is that who is it that Allah (swt) is most pleased with us to spend on? Who does Allah (swt) like for us to spend on? In this ayah, Allah (swt) brings our attention to a special group of people who are the most deserving of our charity.

Allah (swt) says "**For the poor, the ones who are detained in the way of Allah**". The scholars say that this part of the ayah was revealed about a group from among the Muhajiroon. There was a group from among the Muhajiroon who had left their home and all of their wealth behind in Makkah to make hijra to Madinah for the sake of Allah (swt). When they reached Madinah they had dedicated all of their time for the service of the dawah. They spent their days and their nights fighting in jihad, learning the Din, teaching it to others, and in worship of Allah (swt). They dedicated their entire lives to Allah (swt). Because they dedicated all of their time in the service of the Din, it did not leave them any time to seek a livelihood and earn any kind of wealth for themselves. So they were all extremely poor, they were so poor that they even had to live in the masjid of the Prophet (saw). They did not have a home of their own. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that it is this group from among the Muhajiroon who had dedicated themselves to the Din who were the most deserving of their charity. When the Muslims spent on these poor Muhajiroon, they were really spending to support the dawah, they were spending on the effort to establish the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and the effort to carry the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind.

In addition to referring to them as poor, Allah (swt) refers to these Muhajiroon as "**the ones who are straitened in the way of Allah**". There are several meanings given in this part of the ayah. One meaning is that they are straitened in the way of Allah (swt) because they had given up all of their wealth in the way of Allah (swt). They had left their homes and all of their property, as well as their profession and livelihood to make hijra for the sake of Allah (swt). Thus they were straitened in the way of Allah (swt) because of the loss of their wealth and the loss of their professions as a result of their hijra. Another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that the fact that they were part of the Muslim community prevented them from engaging in trade and business. We know that most of the Muhajiroon from Makkah were traders and businessmen by profession. When they joined the Muslim community and alienated themselves from the powerful tribe of Quraysh, they were unable to conduct trade anymore. No one would trade with them because they were the enemies of Quraysh. This was another way that they were straitened in the way of Allah (swt). Yet another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that the fact that

they were engaged in serving the Din full-time prevented them from earning a livelihood and thus they were straitened because of their service of the dawah. They were poor because they had dedicated all of their time and energy for the Din of Allah (swt). In all of these ways they were straitened in the way of Allah (swt), that was why they were beloved by Allah (swt) and He (swt) encouraged the Muslims to spend on them.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**The ignorant one thinks them to be free of want because of their abstaining from begging**". Here Allah (swt) continues to describe for us those poor among the Muhajiroon who had dedicated their lives to serving the dawah. One of the qualities of these Muhajiroon is that they would never beg of others. Even though they were often in desperate need of the most basic of necessities such as food, shelter and clothing, they would never beg of others. Even though they were working for the salvation of the Muslim Ummah and the salvation of all mankind, they would never beg of others. One reason for this could be because they loved their Muslim brothers and sisters and they did not want to put them through any difficulties by begging them, they knew that their Muslim brothers and sisters were also in need of their wealth and their food for their own families. So even though these poor Muhajiroon had every reason to beg, since they were the ones who were carrying out the important task of serving the Din, they refrained themselves and they controlled themselves from asking of others. Another reason for their restraining themselves from begging could have been their humility and their humbleness before Allah (swt). They did not see themselves as deserving the comforts and material pleasures of the world. Rather they were happy serving Allah (swt). So they continued serving Allah (swt) by fighting in jihad, learning knowledge, teaching others and through prayer in the late hours of the night. They still refrained themselves from begging though they themselves were often extremely hungry, without proper clothes and without a place to call home. Because they refrained from begging, Allah (swt) says that the ignorant one will think to be free of want. The ignorant person does not know their situation, he sees them walking in the streets and he thinks that their needs are all taken care of. He does not know that they do not have a home to go to and they may not even have had a meal on that day. So Allah (swt) brings

the attention of the Muslims to these members of their community who are in desperate need for their help but who refrain themselves from begging.

Then Allah (swt) says "**but you will recognize them by their mark**". The scholars differ as to what Allah (swt) means here by "**mark**". Some scholars have said that it means their humility and their humbleness in behavior, others have said that it is the exhaustion and hunger that can be seen on their faces, others have said that it is their tattered clothes, others have said that it is from the fact that they live in the masjid, others have said that it is the mark of prostration on their foreheads which comes from constant prayer. Allah (swt) Knows best but it seems that all of theses opinions are correct. So from this part of the ayah we see that Allah (swt) is commanding the early Muslim community to give charity to these poor Muhajiroon and He (swt) is telling them that these are some of the signs by which they can be recognized in the community.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**they do not beg of the people at all**". They are often in desperate need but they do not beg of the people at all. Here Allah (swt) is praising the poor among the Muhajiroon for their restraining themselves from begging. This shows us that begging and constantly asking of others is an action that Allah (swt) is not pleased with. As much possible we should refrain ourselves from asking of others and depending on others. Rather we should always depend on Allah (swt) to take care of us and to provide for us. May Allah (swt) make that easy for us!

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah how beautifully these words of the Quran describes and brings to life the plight of these poor among the Muhajiroon. If you were to read this ayah in Arabic with a deep comprehension of the language, it would be as if you have come face to face with these people. This is how vividly Allah (swt) describes their situation in this ayah. Using only a few words Allah (swt) describes their situation in such detail that it is almost as if you are actually in their shoes and you can feel their pain and you can experience their plight. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to learn the Arabic language in depth so that we can taste the beauty of the Quran just like Imam Shaheed Sayyid Qutb did! May we realize that one of the keys to gaining the full understanding of the Quran is a deep understanding of the Arabic language!

Finally Allah (swt) ends this beautiful ayah by saying "**whatever you spend of good surely Allah Knows it well**". So here we see that Allah (swt) is encouraging the Muslims to spend on these poor among the Muhajiroon, and here Allah (swt) tells them that whatever they spend they have to know that Allah (swt) Knows it well. So any kind of support that they offer to these poor Muhajiroon who are serving the dawah, no matter how big or small that it may be, they have to know that Allah (swt) Knows it well. The fact that Allah (swt) Knows our good deeds is a source of great hope for us. When we know that Allah (swt) Knows about each and every one of our good deeds, it gives us great hope because we know that every single action that we do might earn us the Pleasure of Allah (swt). This is what we live for so we should not belittle any good deed, rather we should strive to do as much good as we can. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to do that!

One lesson that we can take from this ayah is that the students of knowledge are among the best recipients of our charity. Even today there are brothers and sisters who have dedicated themselves to serving the Din full-time by spending all of their time in seeking knowledge of the Din. We as an Ummah have reached a level where our knowledge of this Din has plummeted to levels that it had never reached before, and so we as an Ummah today are totally ignorant of this Message that Allah (swt) has sent us. If we are ever going to be a revived nation once again, if we are ever going to try and change our pathetic situation then we need to go back to the Quran and Sunnah to find a way out. We need to produce an *ijtihad* that details a methodology on how the revival of our nation can be achieved. In other words, we need brothers and sisters to study the Quran and Sunnah in depth and find out the way in which our desperate situation can be rectified. We have to believe that the answer is there in the Quran and Sunnah, it is only up to us to strive to find that answer or at least to financially support those who are performing this task. So we should try to find those who are studying this Din with the objective of gaining the knowledge that will revive this Ummah, and we should do what we can to support them financially. If we ourselves are unable to take up this task of reviving this Ummah then the least that we can do is to support those that do. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that!

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُم بِٱلَّيۡلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ سِرّٗا وَعَلَانِيَةٗ فَلَهُمۡ أَجۡرُهُمۡ
عِندَ رَبِّهِمۡ وَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ ٢٧٤

275. The ones who spend their wealth by night and by day, secretly and openly, for them their reward is with their Rabb, no fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us how among those who are the most deserving of our *Sadaqah* are the ones who were serving the dawah full-time. They are the ones who have dedicated all of their time and energy to learning the Din in the hope that they can find a way to revive our Ummah from the desperate situation that we are in. Because they are spending all of their time and energy in studying the Din, they need for us to support them financially. Now what should we expect for ourselves if we do spend our money to support these brothers and sisters, or if we ourselves are from among them? What should we expect for ourselves in return? In this ayah, Allah (swt) answers these questions.

Allah (swt) says "**The ones who spend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, for them their reward is with their Rabb**". This task of serving the Din; of reviving the Ummah, of establishing the Law of Allah (swt) in the land and of carrying the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind, is a task that requires all of our time, all of our effort and all of our wealth. We should try to be among those who are actively working for this Din by studying it, or we should be among those who are supporting them to the best of our ability. Either way it would be a task that takes all of our time and all of our wealth. That was how the early Muslim community was when the Islamic State was first established. The Muslims in Madinah at that time knew the great responsibility that was on their shoulders. So all of them were either actively engaged in the dawah themselves or they were supporting it to the best of their ability. We should try to be like them, the ones who dedicated their all for the Message of Allah (swt). This ayah should be more than enough of an incentive for us to try to be like them, simply read again what Allah (swt) is saying in this ayah. Allah (swt) is saying that the ones who sincerely spend all of their wealth for His (swt)'s sake will have their reward in full with Him (swt). Allah (swt) is telling you that you will have your reward in full. Can you even begin to imagine the kind of reward that this will be?

Just look at how beautifully Allah (swt) describes such people in this ayah. Allah (swt) describes such people as spending their wealth night and day for Him (swt), so there is no hour of their life that is not dedicated to Allah (swt). Not even a minute in their life goes by except that they are dedicating in spending what they have for their Rabb. They are spending both secretly and openly. So there are moments in their life when others see the sacrifices that they make, and there are also moments when no one sees their sacrifices except Allah (swt). They are dedicating all that they have only for Allah (swt). That is how we should try to be as well. Nothing should matter in our life except spending every moment that we have in the service of our Rabb. Of course this is a very high ideal but it is what we should always be striving to reach.

What can we expect as a reward when we do this? Allah (swt) says that our repayment is with Him (swt). Allah (swt) Knows the exact extent of our sacrifices and our striving. The human being is given to laziness and lethargy. Our nature is that we would rather spend the moments of our lives in heedlessness to Allah (swt). But when we strive to remember Allah (swt) and we strive to do what is pleasing to Him (swt), even though it may be difficult for us, then we have to be sure that Allah (swt) Knows our striving. Allah (swt) Knows how hard we fought against ourselves to remain true to Him (swt). The human being is also given to stinginess and miserliness. We do not like to give away the things that we have, least of all we do not like to give our money. But when we sacrifice for the sake of Allah (swt) of the things that we love, we have to know that Allah (swt) Knows our sacrifices. Allah (swt) Knows all about our sacrifices and our striving and He (swt) is telling us in this ayah that our reward and our repayment is with Him (swt). Can you then even begin to imagine the kind of reward that Allah (swt) has kept with Him (swt) for you if you sincerely sacrifice and you sincerely strive for Him (swt)? Allah (swt) the One Who is rich beyond all needs and the One Who has all of the treasures of the heavens and the earth is telling you in this ayah that He (swt) has a repayment for you with Him (swt). Can you even begin to imagine the reward that Allah (swt) has for you? Can you imagine how wonderful and how bountiful it will be? It is a reward that will be beyond your dreams and further than your imagination. All that you have to do to receive it is strive sincerely for Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) make us among those who give everything that they have for Him (swt)!

Then Allah (swt) says, "**no fear shall be upon them nor shall they grieve**". Such is the condition of those who dedicate themselves to Allah (swt) both in this life and the next. When you give your all for Allah (swt), do you not think that He (swt) would not then love you? When Allah (swt) loves you then how can you expect your situation to be both in this life and in the Hereafter? What do you have to fear from this world when you know that Allah (swt) is with you? What do you have to fear in the Hereafter when you know that you are returning to Allah (swt)? Why should you be sad in the life of this world when you know that all the good and all the bad in your life is from Allah (swt)? When you know that He (swt) will reward you for you gratefulness with the good and He (swt) will reward you for your patience with the bad? When you realize this then how can you be sad? When you give yourself completely to Allah (swt), just as you will know no grief or fear in the life of this world, you will also know no grief or fear in the Hereafter. This then is the situation of those who spend all that they have for Allah (swt), so why then do you not want to be from among them? May Allah (swt) give us all the ability!

Allah (swt) is the Most Loving and the Most Merciful. All of the love and mercy that every mother has for a child is only a tiny fraction of the Mercy of Allah (swt). So when Allah (swt) tells you in these ayahs to spend sincerely for Him (swt), then you have to believe that it is for your own good. Allah (swt) does not need anything that you give Him (swt). Rather every single thing that you spend and every single thing that you do seeking with it only the Pleasure of Allah (swt) is only for your own good. All of this encouragement and motivation that Allah (swt) is giving you in these ayahs is only from His (swt)'s Love and Mercy for you. Allah (swt) wants you to be happy in the life of this world. Allah (swt) wants you to be saved from the Fire in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) wants to give you the Garden. He (swt) desires this for you because He (swt) loves you. That is why you see in these ayahs that Allah (swt) is encouraging you again and again to spend for Him (swt). The more sincerity that you have in your actions for Allah (swt), the more that your reward will be, the more your reward is the better it is for you. So why then do you not want to strive and spend for your Lord?

ٱلَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ ٱلرِّبَوٰاْ لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ ٱلَّذِى يَتَخَبَّطُهُ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنُ
مِنَ ٱلْمَسِّ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّمَا ٱلْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ ٱلرِّبَوٰاْ ۗ وَأَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْبَيْعَ
وَحَرَّمَ ٱلرِّبَوٰاْ ۚ فَمَن جَآءَهُۥ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ فَٱنتَهَىٰ فَلَهُۥ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُۥٓ
إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُوْلَـٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَـٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَـٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾

276. The ones who eat *riba* will not rise up except as rises the one whom Shaitan has driven mad by his touch. That is because they say, "trade is just like *riba*", but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden *riba*. Then to whomsoever the admonition has come from his Lord, and he desists, he shall have what has already passed and his affair is with Allah, but whoever returns to it these are the inmates of the Fire, they will stay there forever.

The basis of the Islamic Economic System had been given in the previous ayahs. Allah (swt) told us how our economic system was built on *Zakat* and *Sadaqah*, it was built upon a system where the wealth and resources of the land are shared by all of the members of the society. A system where every member of the society has a great incentive to give in order to help and support others. This principle of social corporation and charity is the foundation upon which the Islamic economic system is built. The government exists to serve the people and to ensure that the needs of everyone in the Islamic State are taken care of.

As a sharp contrast to the Islamic economic system, in this ayah Allah (swt) brings our attention to the basis upon which the economic systems of the enemies of this Message are based. Their economic systems are based on an idea that the goal of the human being is to hoard as much wealth as possible. It is based on a principle that the government should do as little as possible to take care of the people. The result of their economic system is a society in which the vast majority of the people have very little while most of the wealth is concentrated in the hands of a very few people. To facilitate this idea they have made ***riba*** as the basis of their economic system. ***Riba*** is any kind of interest or usury. There are actually several different forms

of ***riba***, in fact the Prophet (saw) has even told us that there are over seventy different forms of ***riba***. We advise the reader who is interested in finding out the different forms of ***riba*** to consult the books of fiqh that deal with this subject. For our purposes we will think of it as any kind of interest or usury, and we will look to what Allah (swt) says in these ayahs about those who deal in it. When you hear what Allah (swt) has to say about riba you then ask yourself if He (swt) would be pleased with Muslims living contently in any county whose economy is based on this.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**The ones who eat *riba* will not rise up except as rises the one whom Shaitan has driven mad by his touch**". Most of the commentators are of the view that in this ayah Allah (swt) is describing the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) is describing what will be the condition of the people who used to deal with ***riba*** when they are resurrected on the Last Day. We see from this ayah that such a person would be brought back to life in a state of madness and insanity. When they rise up from their graves they will be totally insane. They would not know anything or recognize anything, but instead they would have totally lost their minds. Can you imagine how humiliating it will be for them and for their family and for the rest of mankind to see them in this state? A state of complete madness and lunacy. But this is only the beginning of their punishment in the Hereafter for the horrible sin that they committed in the life of this world. May Allah (swt) save us from ***riba***!

Sayyid Qutb however is of the opinion that this ayah is not only referring to the Day of Judgment but is also referring to the condition of those who deal with interest in the life of this world as well. He says that we can see how those who consume riba are possessed with a kind of madness. Their greed for wealth has driven them to almost the point of insanity, and they are willing to do anything to increase their wealth. All that these people care about is their wealth, and all that they desire is an increase in their wealth. This is a form of madness that the people who consume riba suffer from in the life of this world. And who else is the source of such madness except Shaitan? He has made money as the *illah* in these people's hearts and they have gone mad in their love for it and their desire for an increase in it. They will do anything for an increase in their wealth, even selling their souls to the devil. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming like them!

This madness is not only restricted to those who deal with riba but to the society as a whole. This is because in the world today riba has covered every aspect of the society and there is no one who lives in such societies who has been able to escape it. Even Muslims who want to abide by the Law of Allah (swt) by staying away from riba are still affected by riba in one way or another. As long as you live in a society whose very foundation is based on riba, there will be no way for you to escape it. Riba in such societies is like a madness that will spread to every person within it. There is no one who can remain safe from it.

We can see the effects of this madness in the societies of the world today. First and foremost is the grossly unfair distribution of wealth and resources that exists at a global level. If you were to look at every single human being that is living on this planet right now, you will find that the vast majority of them have very little. Many of them are suffering from abject poverty and many of them are dying of starvation. The reason why the people in these countries have so little is because the countries themselves are very poor. These countries do not have the infrastructure or the industry in place to compete with the wealthy nations on a global level. They do not even have a proper education system with which they can educate their people to be skilled workers. One of the main reasons why these countries are so poor is because they are spending all of the wealth that they have to pay interest on the loans that they borrow. The fact that they are in debt also leaves them at the mercy of their lenders and allows their lenders to control their economy. So the result is that the people in these countries and the countries as a whole remain very poor. At the same time you will also find that the wealthy have wealth beyond imagination. Not only do they have exceeding amounts of wealth, but also they waste and squander this wealth on frivolous and useless luxuries. Everything from caviar dinners to high rise hotels to luxury jets. For them life is nothing but the satisfaction of their desires and the showing off of their wealth and status. Even the so-called “middle-class” that supposedly exists between these two extremes are nothing but workers who toil away for most of their days and who in reality own or have very little. Everything that they have is owned by some bank or some lender and they themselves spend their whole lives to pay back the interest on the loans that they took.

This unfair distribution of wealth is only the first effect of an economic system that is based on riba. This in turn creates several other tragedies at both the individual and societal level. At the individual level you will find people suffering from all kinds of anxiety and depression. They know that the world order in which they live has created a world in which the resources and wealth of the society is very limited, so all of the people are always afraid that they will find themselves in poverty tomorrow and that they will not be able to take care of themselves and their families. At the societal level you will find nations and tribes going to war with each other for control over land and control over the material resources of the land. These conflicts result in bloodshed and even more suffering for the people. All of this because of an economic system that is based on riba and a belief system that is based on the worship and servitude of wealth and desires instead of the worship and servitude of Allah (swt). The whole world is gripped by this madness as if they have been touched by the devil just as Allah (swt) describes in this ayah. May Allah (swt) save this world from the evils of riba! May Allah (swt) bring back the Islamic State so that the wealth of this earth can be shared fairly by all of its people!

Some Muslim scholars think that we can save ourselves from riba by simply eliminating it from the economic systems of Muslim countries. But they fail to realize that the evils of riba are not simply limited to the economic system of one Muslim county. Rather the economic systems of the entire world today are based on riba and we can never be free of it until this entire world order is changed. As the world moves closer towards globalization, the economies of all of the world nations will become even more integrated and dependent on each other. So even if a few Muslim countries were to try and rid their economies of interest they would still not be able to escape riba. That is why we can never be free of riba until the Islamic State returns and the entire earth comes under the Sovereignty of Allah (swt) as it should be. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to bring back the State so that justice and fairness can be restored to all of the people of this earth! Until we do all of mankind will be consumed by this madness for wealth that the devil has injected into us. As long as we are consumed by this madness the only result will be suffering and misery for all people in one way or another, and even worse if that we would be earning the Wrath of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) save us!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**That is because they say, "trade is just like *riba*"**". In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us the reason why the ones who deal with riba are made to suffer this humiliating punishment on the Day of Judgment and why their lust for wealth has driven mad in the life of this world. It is because they used to claim that trade and riba were the same. What kind of a fool would ever think that trade and riba were the same? Anyone who uses their mind can clearly distinguish between trade and riba. There are so many differences between the two even at the most fundamental level. Trade is the simple exchange of goods and services while riba is taking interest payments on loans. Only those who make money by riba, whose very business is riba would ever make such a claim that trade and riba are the same. For these people their business itself is riba. But even for such people who say that trade and riba are the same, it is clear that they never believed in it. They know the difference between trade and riba because the differences are so obvious. Rather they only make such a claim as an excuse for themselves to continue to deal with riba. Because of their lies and because of their excuses, Allah (swt) will give them madness in this life of this world and on the Last Day they will rise up as truly insane. May Allah (swt) save us from ever becoming them!

Then Allah (swt) says "**but Allah has permitted trade and forbidden *riba***". The difference between trade and riba is clear, and Allah (swt) clearly tells us in this ayah that He (swt) has permitted trade and forbidden riba. In these few words, Allah (swt) has permitted all kinds of trading and He (swt) has outlawed all kinds of riba. So any kind of trade be it you exchanging one dollar for a can of soda, or ten thousand dollars for a car, or your services at a company or business for a salary, any kind of trade is permitted with this ayah. Similarly any kind of riba, any kind of loan that is repaid with any kind of interest above the capital, is forbidden in this ayah. See then the Power of the Quran in that it is able to give so many rulings, so much meaning, with only a few words. Can any legislative text except the Book of Allah (swt) be capable of such?

In the next part of the ayah, we see that Allah (swt) says "**Then to whomsoever the admonition has come from his Lord, and he desists, he shall have what has already passed and his affair is with Allah**". The meaning of this part of the ayah is that anyone who

has made profits from riba in the past before they knew about its prohibition are allowed to keep the profits that they have earned. In other words they are not obliged to return the profits that they made from riba before riba was forbidden. Their affair is then up to Allah (swt), and He (swt) will take care of them. We know that Allah (swt) will not punish for what is done in ignorance, so we have to believe that such people have a great hope for Mercy from Allah (swt). But the key lesson to take from this part of the ayah is that these people desist in dealing with riba once they know that it is forbidden. They hear the admonition that comes from their Lord prohibiting riba and they stop dealing in it as a true and obedient servant should. Only then are they allowed to keep their profits and only then will Allah (swt) take care of their affair. So once you know that riba is forbidden and once you know that there are several different forms of riba, you have to stop dealing in it. People today try to put several different labels on riba such as “finance charges”, or “time value of money”, or “bank fees” or “bonus points” and so forth. It is up to you to find out if what you are paying or giving is riba or not. Once you know that it is riba or even if you are not sure if it is riba, then you have to stop dealing with it. This is the only way to save yourself from the reality that Allah (swt) describes in the next part of the ayah.

Allah (swt) says “**but whoever returns to it, these are the inmates of the Fire they will stay there forever**”. There are very few sins for which Allah (swt) has specifically promised the Fire. Mostly the Fire is only promised for those who know that this Message is the Truth and they then reject it. But dealing in riba is such a terrible crime that Allah (swt) has promised the Fire even for the Muslims who deal with it. This is how hateful riba is to Allah (swt). The Prophet (saw) has said that there are over seventy different forms of riba, and the least hated of them to Allah (swt) is still a greater sin than committing incest with your own mother. Can you then even begin to imagine how hated this action is by your Rabb? It is an action that is so hated by Allah (swt) that He (swt) describes those who deal in it in His (swt)’s Book as the companions of the Fire and as staying there forever. May Allah (swt) forgive us! May Allah (swt) save us from ourselves!

يَمْحَقُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ وَيُرْبِى ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

٢٧٦

277. Allah will destroy Riba, and give increase to Sadaqah and Allah does not love every ungrateful sinner.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told us about the evils of riba and the horrible fate that awaits those who deal with it. We saw how it brings nothing but pain and destruction to the people who deal in it and the societies that are built upon it. This is what the people have done to themselves by choosing to deal in riba. In this ayah Allah (swt) tells us what He (swt) Himself will do to riba. This only shows us once again how hateful this action is to our Lord. Allah (swt) then shows us what He (swt) does to Sadaqah, which is the opposite of riba.

Allah (swt) says "**Allah will destroy Riba, and give increase to Sadaqah**". The English word "destroy" does not fully convey the meaning of the Arabic word *yamhaq* that Allah (swt) uses to describe what He (swt) will do to riba. In addition to destruction, it gives meaning of curse and blight and being deprived of all good and being stripped of all blessings. This is what Allah (swt) promises that He (swt) will do to riba. We ourselves can see how Allah (swt) has done that to riba in the world today. In the previous ayah, we mentioned all of the pain and suffering that riba has brought to the world today. Even the ones who actually consume riba and think that they have become wealthy because of it in reality live a life of misery and suffering. They may have wealth but they are always in constant fear of losing their wealth and so their life is nothing but anxiety and misery. They are always lusting for more wealth and so this only adds to their misery and suffering, And this is only in the life of this world, we know of the unspeakable and unimaginable horror that awaits them in the next world. This is how Allah (swt) destroys riba. He (swt) brings pain and suffering to all those who choose to deal in it and that they have is deprived of all good and blessing. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

That is what Allah (swt) will do to riba. Sadaqah on the other hand is the opposite of riba, and so Allah (swt) will do to Sadaqah the opposite of what He (swt) will do to riba. While riba is stealing wealth from the people because of your love for yourself, Sadaqah is giving your wealth

to the people because of your love of Allah (swt). So Allah (swt) will bless Sadaqah and He (swt) will cause it to grow more and more. Allah (swt) will also give peace and tranquility to the one who gives Sadaqah in the life of this world. Such a person knows that they are spending their wealth for Allah (swt) and they know that Allah (swt) will love them if they spend their wealth sincerely for Him (swt). As Allah (swt) told us in a previous ayah such people will have no fear upon them and they will not grieve. We also know that for such people in the Hereafter they have their reward with their Rabb. Allah (swt) is the Owner of all the treasures of the heavens and the earth, and He (swt) can reward them to an extent that is beyond all imagination. So for the one who spends their wealth sincerely for Allah (swt) in Sadaqah, they will see an increase of their wealth in the life of this world, they will see peace and tranquility in the life of this world, and they will have a reward that is beyond imagine in the Hereafter. May Allah (swt) allow us to be among such people!

In the final part of this ayah Allah (swt) says, "**Allah does not love every ungrateful sinner**". Those who deal with riba are all ungrateful sinners. They are sinners in that they are specifically doing an action that their Lord and Master has told them not to do, and they are ungrateful in that they are showing ingratitude to their Creator and Sustainer for all that He (swt) has given them. Allah (swt) has told you that dealing in riba is forbidden, Allah (swt) has also told you exactly how displeasing it is to Him (swt) for you to deal in riba, and Allah (swt) has even told you what is the evil consequences that you will suffer both in this world and the next world should you continue to deal in it, How then can you continue to deal with riba? How can you be so disobedient to Allah (swt) when you know that He (swt) is your Lord? How can you be so ungrateful to Allah (swt) for all that He (swt) has given you? If you should continue to deal with riba after all that you know now, what other words can be used to describe you other than being an "**ungrateful sinner**"? Know now that should you continue to deal with riba not only would you be an "**ungrateful sinner**", but you will also be deprived of the Love of Allah (swt). What does it mean to be deprived of the Love of Allah (swt)? Allah (swt), your Creator. Allah (swt), the One Who is sustaining you and maintaining you for every moment of your existence. Allah (swt), the One to Whom you will return and the One Who will judge you and decide whether your eternal

home will be one of pleasure or pain. This is Who Allah (swt) IS. You think now to yourself whether you would ever want to be among those who are deprived of the Love of Allah (swt), then ask yourself if you want to continue dealing with riba. May Allah (swt) save us!

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَأَقَامُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُاْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ لَهُمْ
أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

278. Surely the ones who believe and do good deeds and establish Salah and give Zakat, for them their reward is with their Rabb. There will be no fear on them and they will not grieve.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) told us how He (swt) does not love all those who deal in riba and how He (swt) will curse, blight and destroy all the riba in this world. Allah (swt) also told us how everyone who deals in riba while they know that is wrong is an ungrateful sinner. Such people are deprived of the Love of Allah (swt) and there is no greater tragedy that can befall any human being than losing the Love of Allah (swt). Now if these are the people whom Allah (swt) has cursed and who have lost the Love of Allah (swt), then who are the people who have the Love of Allah (swt)? For those who have dealt in riba and realized how evil it was, how can they regain the Love of Allah (swt)? How can we gain the Love of Allah (swt)? How can we save ourselves and be worthy in the Sight of Allah (swt) once again? Allah (swt) answers such questions in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**Surely the ones who believe and do good deeds and establish Salah and give Zakat, for them their reward is with their Rabb**". These are the ones who have the Love of Allah (swt). In this ayah, Allah (swt) reminds us of those actions that are the most beloved to Him (swt). This is what we must do to gain the Love of Allah (swt). First and foremost we must believe. We must believe in Allah (swt) as He (swt) has described Himself in His (swt)'s Book and on the words of His (swt)'s Messenger (saw). We must believe in Him (swt) as the One

and Only, the Creator and the Sustainer of all, the Lord and Master of everything, the Perfect One with all of the Perfect Names. We must also believe in the Angels and the Books and the Prophets and Messengers. We also need to believe in the Last Day and the eternal life after this one in Paradise or the Fire, may Allah (swt) save us from the Fire! So if you want Allah (swt) to love you, the first thing you must do is believe in Him (swt) and you must believe in all that He (swt) has told you in His (swt)'s Book and on the words of His (swt)'s Messenger (saw).

After belief we see that Allah (swt) tells us to do the good deeds. Good deeds are all the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt). So doing good deeds means always doing the actions that Allah (swt) has made obligatory and trying to do as many of the actions that Allah (swt) has made recommended as possible. It also includes always staying away from the actions that Allah (swt) has made forbidden and trying one's best from to avoid the actions that are disliked to Him (swt). Doing good deeds is asking oneself for every moment as to what would be the action that is most pleasing to Allah (swt), and then striving to do that action.

Then Allah (swt) specifically mentions two of these actions that are especially beloved to Him (swt). The Salah and the Zakat are the foundations of this Din and they are the best of actions that you can do to gain the Love of Allah (swt). Salah is when you establish your connection with Allah (swt), you submit your entire body to Him (swt). As always we can see that Allah (swt) does not simply tell us to perform the Salah, but He (swt) commands us to *establish* the Salah. This means the Salah must be performed with all of its conditions and it must be done in a state of total submission to Allah (swt). Similarly the giving of Zakat is also an action that is beloved to Allah (swt). When you give your wealth only for Allah (swt), the wealth that you love and the wealth that you strove hard for. When you give it only to gain the Pleasure of Allah (swt), such an action is beloved to Allah (swt). Now when you do these actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt) that is how you can be among those who are beloved to Allah (swt).

What will be for you once you gain the Love of Allah (swt)? Allah (swt) says "**for them their reward is with their Rabb. There will be no fear on them and they will not grieve**". Think to yourself again as to who can reward better than Allah (swt). Think to yourself how beautiful it would be to live without fear and without grief. How much peace and tranquility would

you have in the life of this world? How much joy and bliss would you have in the next world? Contrast this now with the misery and anxiety felt by those who deal with riba in the life of this world and with the pain and torment that awaits them in the next life. For you to be saved from that and get what Allah (swt) is promising in this ayah, all that you have to do is believe in Allah (swt) and do the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Why then can you not do that? So even if you have done sins as great as riba, you should know that your Rabb is Forgiving and Merciful. If only you would give up dealing in riba and if only you would believe and do the actions that are pleasing to Allah (swt), then He (swt) will forgive you and reward you both in this life and in the Hereafter. What could be better than that? What could be better than Forgiveness from Allah (swt) and a reward on top of that? Such Mercy and Bounty even after we have committed sins as great as riba. May Allah (swt) give us the strength to leave all riba! May Allah (swt) make us among those who always remember His (swt)'s Mercy and Forgiveness!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَذَرُواْ مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ ٱلرِّبَوٰٓاْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَ ٢٧٨

279. O you who believe, have Taqwa of Allah, give up what remains due to you from riba, if you are truly believers.

In the previous ayahs Allah (swt) had told us about the fate of those who chase after this world and their desires by dealing in riba and He (swt) had also told us the fate of those who chase after His (swt)'s Forgiveness and Mercy by believing in Him (swt) doing the actions that are pleasing to Him (swt). Although dealing in riba is one of the greatest sins, it's prohibition was one of the last of rulings that Allah (swt) revealed to the Prophet (saw). So when the prohibition came down from Allah (swt), there were still some Muslims who were dealing in riba and there were still some Muslims who were owed money through riba. It is with this later group of Muslims whom Allah (swt) deals with in this ayah.

Allah (swt) says "**O you who believe, have Taqwa of Allah, give up what remains due to you from riba, if you are truly believers**". Once again notice how Allah (swt) begins this ayah by addressing the Muslims through their belief in Him (swt). Thus notice the link that Allah (swt) makes between the belief and the actions. It is as if Allah (swt) is saying that if you are truly believers then you have to demonstrate your belief through your actions. If you are truly believers then you have to give up your riba and if you do not give up your riba then there is something wrong with your belief. Then we see Allah (swt) tells the believers to have Taqwa of Him (swt). The scholars say that whenever Allah (swt) gives a ruling that is difficult to implement, Allah (swt) always reminds the believers to have Taqwa of Him (swt). It is this fear of Allah (swt) that should motivate you to implement even the most difficult of rulings. What you fear the most is Allah (swt), you know that He (swt) can punish you more than anyone else and you know that He (swt) can cause you pain like you have never known. So you do not care how much pain and suffering that you have to go thorough in this world and you do not care how much loss that you have to bear,

you will do anything just as long as Allah (swt) is not displeased with you. That is why though this Taqwa you are even able to implement the most difficult rulings Insha Allah.

Then Allah (swt) commands the believers to give up all that remains due to them from riba. Many Muslims, including the Prophet (saw)'s own uncle Al-Abbas, had large sums of money owed to them through riba. Here Allah (swt) commands all of them, including the Prophet (saw)'s own uncle, to forsake and dissolve all of the debts that are owed to them through riba. They are not allowed to ask others for the riba that is owed to them nor can they accept it if is offered to them. See now how detestable a sin dealing with riba is in the Sight of Allah (swt). Not only has Allah (swt) prohibited riba, but Allah (swt) has also prohibited the collecting of riba that is owed from before the prohibition. These Muslims had this riba owed to them before it was made haram, but Allah (swt) still forbade them from asking for it. This shows how great an evil riba is in the Din of Allah (swt).

Notice also how Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**if you are truly believers**". Once again we see Allah (swt) link the action with the belief. Allah (swt) reminds all of the Muslims that if they are truly believers, then they must forego all of the riba that is owed to them. Even if it is an extremely large amount of money, you must still let it go. How can anyone who truly believes in Allah (swt) deal with something that is so detestable to Allah (swt)? Do you not realize who Allah (swt) IS? Have you forgotten *Ayat-ul-Kursi*? Do you not see that you are in need of Allah (swt) for every moment of your existence? Can you not see that Allah (swt) has made dealing in riba forbidden and it is an action that it hated to Him (swt)? Allah (swt) has told you that He (swt) would rather See you have intercourse with your own mother inside the Kabbah then deal with riba, can you then even begin to imagine how hated this action is to Him (swt)? So how then can you claim to be a believer in Allah (swt) and go near riba? The only explanation is that there is something seriously wrong with your belief. Because if you are truly a believer then you will not even go near riba when you know now how hated it is to Allah (swt). Even if you did not know about all of the evil that riba brings for both you and your society, even if it means you losing your money, you still would not do it because you know how hated it is to your Rabb. May Allah (swt)

help us all to realize the evils of riba! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to demonstrate our belief to Him (swt) by staying away from riba even though it is difficult for us!

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَأْذَنُوا۟ بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ۖ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ
أَمْوَٰلِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

280. And if you do not, then be warned of war from Allah and His Messenger, but if you repent then for you is your principal, do not wrong and you will not be wronged.

In the previous ayah we saw Allah (swt) call out to all of the believers and tell them to give up what remains due to them of riba. For the Muslims at the time of the Prophet (saw) like the uncle of the Prophet (saw), they had to give up the riba that was owed to them even if it a large amount and even if they had made those riba contracts before Allah (swt) had forbidden it. Thus Allah (swt) showed us what an evil and detestable action dealing in riba was. In this ayah, Allah (swt) tells the Muslims what are the consequences that they would have to suffer if they do not obey the command of Allah (swt) and give up the riba that is owed to them.

Allah (swt) says "**And if you do not, then be warned of war from Allah and His Messenger**". What a frightening prospect is this? What chance does a feeble human being have against Allah (swt)? Can you even begin to imagine what are the consequences for Allah (swt) declaring war on you? If you were to declare war on someone you try your best to obliterate your foe in every way possible. Now think about Allah (swt) declaring war on you, in how many ways could He (swt) cause you pain and suffering? Yes, Allah (swt) is Kind and Merciful, but He (swt) is also the Strictest in Punishment. So when you want to continue to deal with riba, when you want to keep your money in that savings account, when you want to keep that mortgage, are you sure that Allah (swt) has not waged war on you? Perhaps all of the pain and suffering that you are going through now is because of the war that Allah (swt) has waged on you. If this is the case then you should rush to rid yourself of all traces of riba. You should know that if Allah (swt) has truly waged war on you then the pain and suffering that you may feel in this life is only the

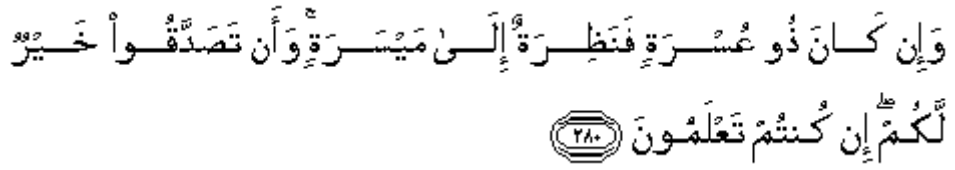
beginning. The real punishment awaits you in the Hereafter. Ibn Abbass (ra) has said in his tafsir of this ayah that the person who deals with riba and refuses to give it up will be given weapons on the Day of Judgment and they will be told that they are going to fight with Allah (swt). Can you imagine yourself fighting with Allah (swt)? That will be a battle in which you will know nothing but pain upon pain. May Allah (swt) save us from that ever happening to us!

This is what it means to be at war with Allah (swt), pain and suffering in this life and a terrible punishment in the Hereafter. But now what does it mean to be at war with the Messenger of Allah (saw)? Because Allah (swt) also says that a declaration of war must be taken from the Prophet (saw). The scholars say that this is a command from Allah (swt) to the Prophet (saw) for him (saw) to declare war on all those who continue to deal in riba. The ones who are refusing to stop even when they have been explicitly commanded to. It is a command to fight against those who ask for the riba that is owed to them and against those who accept the riba that is given to them. It is a battle against all who deal with riba. So if a Muslim province deals in riba, it becomes an enemy of the Islamic State. The Prophet (saw) or his (saw)'s Khalifah can attack that community and force them to give up dealing in riba. As for the individual Muslim who deals in riba, they are given a choice. They can either repent and give up all of their claims to riba or else they would have to be put to death by the sword. That is how evil riba is! May Allah (swt) save us from ever dealing in it!

Then Allah (swt) says "**but if you repent then for you is your principal**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that if they repent and give up all of their claims to riba then they are allowed to keep their principal. So for the lender who gave out a loan on which he had charged riba, all that he could ask for in return was the principal of the loan. He could not ask for any interest over that principal. From this point onwards there was to be no riba in the Islamic State and the Muslim community.

Finally Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**do not wrong and you will not be wronged**". To take riba when your Lord and Master has specifically told you not to, and when He (swt) has told you that it is the most detestable of actions to Him (swt) is the most wrong of actions that you can do. Allah (swt) assures the believers in this ayah that if they can refrain

themselves from this wrong action, then no wrong would be done to them. No wrong would be done to them in the Hereafter or in this world. Some people may think that being asked to give up all of their wealth is truly unfair for them. They know that they have worked hard to acquire that money and they know that they and their family need that money, so they may be thinking that it is wrong for them to give up all the money that is owed to them. Allah (swt) assures such people that no wrong would be done to them. Rather if they are sincere to Allah (swt), then He (swt) will reward for all that they did for Him (swt), He (swt) will reward them either in this world or in the next. Even if they may have had to sacrifice some of their money, they can be assured a reward for all that they spent both in this life and the next. They will not be wronged in any way; this is a promise from Allah (swt) and who is better at keeping promises than Allah (swt)?



281. And if the debtor is in difficulty, then let there be postponement until a time of ease, but if you remit the debt it is better for you, if only you knew.

In the previous ayah Allah (swt) told the believers of the consequences that they would have to face if they did not give up riba. They would have to face war with Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). They would face pain and suffering both in this life and the next. The only way that those who ate riba could save themselves from this declaration of war was to give up all the riba that was due to them. All that they could ask of their debtors was the principal amount that they originally lent to them. They could not even ask for a dirham or penny of riba over that amount. No matter how big the loan was and for not matter how long it was borrowed, all that they could ask for in return was their principal. In this ayah Allah (swt) shows us how even in asking for that principal to be returned they have to be merciful and understanding to their debtors.

Allah (swt) says "**And if the debtor is in difficulty, then let there be postponement until a time of ease**". Look here at the Mercy and Kindness of Allah (swt) for all the members of this Ummah. In the previous part of the ayah Allah (swt) told the creditors that they would be allowed to have their principal if they forego the interest that was due on it. But here Allah (swt) tells them that if their debtors are in some hardship then they should give them time to repay the loan. Even here we see how Allah (swt) ensures that fairness and justice is done for all people of this Ummah. This ruling is good for the debtors because it saves them from having to give up their money if they are in a time of difficulty, it may very well be that for them to return the money at that moment would mean them losing all of their money. However this ruling is even better for the creditors because when they give those debtors who are in difficulty some time to repay the loan they are doing an action that is pleasing to their Rabb. They are doing an act of worship and servitude to Allah (swt) for which they can seek a reward from Him (swt). So see how Kind and Merciful is Allah (swt) to all Muslims with this law where He (swt) has legislated that the debtor in financial difficulties must be given time to repay their loan.

Finally Allah (swt) says "**but if you remit the debt it is better for you, if only you knew**". Here Allah (swt) tells the debtors that for them to give up the debt that is owed to them would be even better for them. It is usually the case that those in financial difficulties are in desperate need of the money. So it would an act of great charity for the creditor to allow the one who borrowed the money from them to keep that money. It would be action that is most beloved to Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says that such would be better for them. Allah (swt) loves when we give up the things of this world to seek His (swt)'s Pleasure. So to give up their money in this situation is what is better for the creditors.

Now the fools and those whose hearts are attached to this world would question how it would be better since they would be losing their money. But the true believers know that it is indeed better because it is the action that is the most pleasing to Allah (swt). They know that nothing should be more important in their lives than earning the Pleasure of Allah (swt). So they would gladly sacrifice their money to attain this goal. Allah (swt) also says in this ayah "**if only you knew**". If only we knew the reality of the world in which we live. If only we knew that this

world is only an illusion when compared with the Real Allah (swt). If only we knew how short our life in this world would be. If only we knew how the Day of Judgment would be like. If only we knew how the pleasure of the Garden and the pain of the Fire would be like. If we knew then we would definitely realize that it is far better for us to allow the debtor to keep the money if we can see that they are in a difficult situation than to demand its return. Such would be best because such would earn the Pleasure of Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) help us to realize the reality of this world as it is!

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

282. And have Taqwa of the Day when you will return to Allah, then every soul will be paid back in full what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

Most of the scholars agree that this ayah was the very last ayah that was ever revealed to the Prophet (saw). Some scholars even say that this ayah was revealed only three days before the Prophet (saw) left us to be with his (saw)'s Rabb. Before you even think about the meaning of the ayah, think about what it means for this ayah to be last ayah of the Book of Allah (swt). These words are the very last words that Allah (swt) has chosen to speak to mankind through revelation. So these words should suffice mankind till the Day we all return to Him (swt). And it is to this very Day that Allah (swt) brings our attention to in this ayah. This very last ayah that Allah (swt) sent as revelation to mankind. Can you then even begin to imagine how important the Day of Judgment must be in your life?

Allah (swt) says "**And have Taqwa of the Day when you will return to Allah**". To have Taqwa is to have fear and to have consciousness. It is to seriously think about it and it is to worry about it. How often do we seriously think about the Day in which we will return to Allah (swt)? How scared are we of that Day? Have you really even thought about the consequences of that Day? Can you think to yourself now how it would be like for you on that Day? You should think

about it, you should picture yourself standing before Allah (swt) on that Day. When you are standing before Allah (swt) on that Day you will curse yourself. You will curse yourself for not spending more of the moments of your life \ worshipping and serving Allah (swt). You will curse yourself for the sins and transgressions that you have done. You will curse yourself for not giving up more of what you had for Allah (swt). You will curse yourself for not dedicating more of your actions for Allah (swt). You will cure yourself for not realizing the true reality of this universe. So in this ayah we see Allah (swt) commanding all of the believers to remember this Day, to have fear of this Day, and to do everything in our power to prepare for this Day. Your entire life will be shown to you on this Day, every moment of your life will be shown to you. Then your final abode for all eternity will be decided on this Day. How then can you not think of this Day? Even more important is that this is the Day on which you will return to Allah (swt). This is the Day on which you will meet Allah (swt). Can you then even begin to understand the Greatness of this Day? Can you begin to realize how much you must prepare for it?

Then we see Allah (swt) say "**then every soul will be paid back in full what it has earned**". This is what will happen to you on the Day of Judgment. You will be paid back in full for all that you have done. You will be paid back in full for all of the evil that you have done and you will be paid back in full for all of the good that you have done. There is no sin that you have done that will escape Allah (swt) and there is no good deed that you done have which Allah (swt) did not record. So you will see all the good and evil that you did. You have to believe that every single deed that you have ever done will be presented before you on this Day. Do not think that there is even one deed that you can do that has escaped Allah (swt). If you think in such a way then you do not understand your Lord and Master. So look back at your life now, do you think that you have done enough good? Do you think have avoided enough evil? If you think you have then you are deluding yourself, and you are not giving Allah (swt) the right estimation. When you truly realize Allah (swt) and you realize all that He (swt) has done for you, then you know that you can never do enough for Him (swt). Rather your whole life must be a struggle to do as many good deeds as possible and to avoid as many sins as possible. So always remember this Day, and

remember that is Allah (swt) Himself Who will judge you on that Day. Insha Allah this reminder should be enough to prepare you for this Day.

Finally Allah (swt) ends this beautiful ayah by saying "**and they will not be wronged**". One thing that you can be certain of is that absolutely no injustice will done to you on the Day of Judgment. Allah (swt) Knows your own actions more than you know your own actions and Allah (swt) Knows your heart more than you know your own heart. So Allah (swt) Knows how much love you have for Him (swt) and how much you strove for Him (swt) because of that love. So when it comes to your good deeds, Allah (swt) will reward you more and more, even more than you deserve. When it comes to your sins, Allah (swt) will only punish you as much you deserve, and He (swt) may even forgive you many of your sins or even all of them if He (swt) so pleases. We ask Allah (swt) for that! So your life in this world is what you must give for Allah (swt) and on the Day of Judgment, He (swt) will reward you on how well you lived your life for Him (swt). This is a transaction in which you will suffer no injustice whatsoever. No wrong will be done to you whatsoever. So what are you scared of? Why do you hesitate? Why do you not resolve that from this moment on you are going to try your best to give everything that you have for Allah (swt)? You will not regret it when you meet Allah (swt) on that Day. Know now that for every second of your life that passes that Day only comes closer. May Allah (swt) help us all to do everything that we can to prepare for it!

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا تَدَايَنتُم بِدَيۡنٍ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٖ مُّسَمّٗى فَٱكۡتُبُوهُۚ
وَلۡيَكۡتُب بَّيۡنَكُمۡ كَاتِۢبُۢ بِٱلۡعَدۡلِۚ وَلَا يَأۡبَ كَاتِۢبٌ أَن يَكۡتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ
ٱللَّهُۚ فَلۡيَكۡتُبۡ وَلۡيُمۡلِلِ ٱلَّذِي عَلَيۡهِ ٱلۡحَقُّ وَلۡيَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّهُۥ وَلَا يَبۡخَسۡ
مِنۡهُ شَيۡـٔٗاۚ فَإِن كَانَ ٱلَّذِي عَلَيۡهِ ٱلۡحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوۡ ضَعِيفًا أَوۡ لَا يَسۡتَطِيعُ
أَن يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلۡيُمۡلِلۡ وَلِيُّهُۥ بِٱلۡعَدۡلِۚ وَٱسۡتَشۡهِدُواْ شَهِيدَيۡنِ مِن رِّجَالِكُمۡۖ
فَإِن لَّمۡ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيۡنِ فَرَجُلٞ وَٱمۡرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرۡضَوۡنَ مِنَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءِ أَن
تَضِلَّ إِحۡدَىٰهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحۡدَىٰهُمَا ٱلۡأُخۡرَىٰۚ وَلَا يَأۡبَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُواْۚ
وَلَا تَسۡـَٔمُوٓاْ أَن تَكۡتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوۡ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلِهِۦۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ أَقۡسَطُ عِندَ
ٱللَّهِ وَأَقۡوَمُ لِلشَّهَٰدَةِ وَأَدۡنَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَرۡتَابُوٓاْۖ إِلَّآ أَن تَكُونَ تِجَٰرَةً حَاضِرَةٗ
تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيۡنَكُمۡ فَلَيۡسَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكۡتُبُوهَاۗ وَأَشۡهِدُوٓاْ إِذَا
تَبَايَعۡتُمۡۖ وَلَا يُضَآرَّ كَاتِۢبٞ وَلَا شَهِيدٞۚ وَإِن تَفۡعَلُواْ فَإِنَّهُۥ فُسُوقُۢ بِكُمۡۗ
وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَۖ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱللَّهُۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيۡءٍ عَلِيمٞ ٢٨٢

283. O you who believe! When you borrow from one another a debt for a fixed term, then write it down. Let a scribe write it down in justice between you, and the scribe should not refuse to write as Allah has taught him, and let him who owes the debt dictate, and he should have Taqwa of Allah his Rabb, and not diminish anything of what he owes, but if he who owes the debt is of low understanding, or weak, or unable himself to dictate, then let his guardian dictate with justice, and let it be witnessed by two witnesses from among your men, and if two men are not available then a man and two women, of such as you approve to be witnesses, so that if one of the two women should the other can remind

her, and the witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned, and be not averse to writing it down whether it be small or large, along with it's appointed time of payment, that is more just with Allah and stronger as evidence, and the best way of avoiding doubt between you, except when it is a trade that you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no blame on you if you do not write it down, and have witnesses when you sell to one and another, and let no harm be done to the scribe or the witness, and if you do it is certainly a sin on your part, and have Taqwa of Allah, and Allah is teaching you, and Allah is with every single thing All-Knowing.

This is the longest ayah in the Quran. In this ayah, Allah (swt) details for the Muslims how all loans and financial agreements are to be conducted. After telling Muslims about the evils of riba and reminding them of the Day in which they will have to return to Him (swt), Allah (swt) brings their attention in this ayah to how they should conduct all loans and financial agreements. Allah (swt) wants fairness and equity to be established between all members of the community in all affairs of life. Even in matters relating to the affairs of this world there must be equity and justice. Even in matters relating to the affairs of this world there must be remembrance of Allah (swt). This is so that Allah (swt) is always remembered and the unity of this community is always preserved.

Before we begin our discussion of this ayah we should see how this ayah is a precise legal document. In this ayah Allah (swt) gives specific and detailed rules about how loans and financial agreements are to be conducted. Allah (swt) addresses every possibility that could arise in the formation of these contracts, and He (swt) tells us exactly what must be done should these circumstances arise. But despite the fact that this ayah is an exacting legal document, it still does not lose the literary Miracle of the Quran. That ability of the Quran to convey a depth of meaning using only a few words is still present in this ayah despite the fact that it is such a precise legal document. Furthermore while transmitting that deep meaning the beautiful and harmonious tone of the Quran is still present in the ayah despite the fact that is a legal document. Now if you were to read any legal document that has been written by any human writer, it would probably be the most boring work you have ever read. It would be so dry and it would not sound the least bit like

poetry in any way. There would be no beauty in the words because it is only a set of dos and don'ts, only a set of terms and conditions. But this not so with the Quran, here Allah (swt) has given us the most precise and exact legal document detailing how financial agreements are to be conducted but He (swt) has presented it to us with the beauty and the harmony of words that are found throughout the Quran. You could listen to this ayah like you would listen to a song or poem and it would ease your soul and move your heart just like all of the other ayahs of the Quran do. You could even listen to it again and again without ever becoming bored of it, but in reality what you are listening to is a legal document detailing rules on how loans and financial agreements are to be conducted. Who would think that people would ever listen to a legal document just for the sake of listening to it? Who would think that there would be beauty in the words of a legal document? This is part of the Miracle of the Quran that it could present a subject that would normally be so dry and dull in a way in which it moves your heart and brings you closer to Allah (swt). Just listen to this ayah in the original Arabic and you can see for yourself, Insha Allah then you will see that none but Allah (swt) could have composed such a Book.

Sayyid Qutb mentions in his tafsir of this ayah how this ayah is even more an evidence for the Miracle of the Quran because since it is a legal document, it has to be exact and precise. No human writer could have composed a precise and legal document such as this while still maintaining the beauty and depth of meaning that is present in the Quran. Such a feat is impossible for the human writer to ever achieve. If you think that you can do it then why don't you try May Allah (swt) help us all to ponder on this fact and realize through it that this Book could have come from none but Him (swt)!

This ayah is also a clear evidence against those who say that Islam has no practical relevance in the life of this world. These people say that Islam should only be for the Hereafter. These people say that Islam is nothing but a religion like Christianity or Hinduism where you simply prepare for the next life through ritual acts of worship. Such people are proved wrong in this very ayah where Allah (swt) has given detailed rules pertaining to all financial agreements. See then how Islam has a direct impact on the lives of the human being as they conduct their affairs in this world. See how Islam is not simply prayer and fasting, but it is a complete way of life

that addresses every aspect in the life of the human being. It is only Shaitan who wants to make you think that Islam is only a religion like Christianity and Hinduism. This way you will only remember Allah (swt) when it is time for the five prayers or only in Ramadan instead of at every moment of your life like you were created to do. May Allah (swt) save us from their lies! May Allah (swt) allow us to live Islam!

Before we discuss this ayah we once again have to emphasize that this is not a tafsir of fiqh. Contract law in Islam is a very detailed subject, so here we are not going to give all the rules here on how contracts should be formed. Such is not the intention of our tafsir. So you should not refer to it as a manual of fiqh to be used in your everyday life. If you desire to know how contracts are to be formed in Islam, we advise you to consult the books of fiqh or a scholar that you know and trust. For our purposes we are only going to give a general overview of this ayah and we are going look for the general guidelines and benefits that we can apply in our lives. Success comes only from Allah (swt)!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**O you who believe! When you borrow from one another a debt for a fixed term, then write it down**". Here Allah (swt) is telling the Muslims that whenever they loan out money to each other, or whenever they enter into any kind of financial obligation where they have to pay back each other over a period of time, they should then commit the terms of their agreement to writing. So any kind of agreement where money is borrowed or money has to be exchanged over a period of time must be committed to writing. Notice here the emphasis that Allah (swt) has placed on writing down the terms of the agreement, Allah (swt) specifically says to "**write it down**". That shows the importance that Allah (swt) has pressed on writing these contracts down. We should remind ourselves at this point of the people to whom this ayah was first revealed. The Arabs at the time of the Prophet (saw) hardly wrote anything down. Almost all of their contracts and debts were through oral agreements and promises. Another factor that we have to bear in mind is that writing instruments and materials were scarce in their culture, they did not have computers or even pen and paper like we have today. Despite this fact that writing was very uncommon in their society, Allah (swt) still orders that all loans and financial agreements be written down. From this we can see the great

importance that Allah (swt) has placed on making sure all of these contracts are written down. Each and every single term of the contract must specifically be written down.

Then Allah (swt) says "**Let a scribe write it down in justice between you**". Once again we see the emphasis on writing, Allah (swt) specifically says that a scribe must be present to write down the agreement between the two parties. Although the debtor or the creditor may themselves be lettered and capable of writing down the contract, Allah (swt) still mandates that a third party be present. So instead of telling either of the two parties to write, Allah (swt) says that a scribe must be present and he must write the details of the contract. This is to ensure that the document will be impartial since it has been written by someone who is not affiliated with either of the two parties. We can also see the emphasis on fairness from the fact that Allah (swt) commands the scribe to write with justice, so he must not be biased to either of the two parties. When the scribe writes the terms of the contract he must be fair and equitable to both parties because the contract is written by his very hands. He must not add anything of his own or remove anything without letting both parties know about it. Thus we see Allah (swt) commands that the contract must be written down by a scribe and that the scribe must write with justice. We see the emphasis that Allah (swt) has placed on fairness and equity, this is so that the love between brothers is never broken and that the unity of our community is always preserved.

Then Allah (swt) says, "**and the scribe should not refuse to write as Allah has taught him**". Here we see that Allah (swt) is saying that if any scribe is called upon to write this contract between two Muslims, then he must come and write. He cannot refuse when he is called upon to write. Allah (swt) reminds the scribe that it was He (swt) Who had taught him to write and given him that ability. So the scribe must be grateful to Allah (swt) and he must not refuse this duty when he is called upon to fulfill it. This is the right of Allah (swt) between two of the servants of Allah (swt) which he must help to complete with the gift that Allah (swt) has given them,

Then Allah (swt) says, "**and let him who owes the debt dictate**". So the debtor is the one who should dictate to the scribe the terms of the agreement. Sayyid Qutb tells us that this is because the debtor is the one who is the weaker of the two parties in this agreement. The debtor is the one who owes the money so this contract is against him. The creditor on the other hand

has the power because the money belongs to him and the contract is supporting him. From this we can once again see the Love and Mercy that Allah (swt) has for the weak in the society. The debtor is the weak one, he is the one who is in need of the money and he is the one with the responsibility to repay the money, so Allah (swt) allows him to be the one who will dictate the terms and conditions of the contract to the scribe. The terms of the contract should also include how much is borrowed and for how long. The debtor is the one who would know this because he is the one who knows how much he needs and he knows when he can pay it back. Another reason for allowing the debtor to dictate is that when he is the one who dictates the contract that contract would always be on his mind. He will always think about this contract, the terms and conditions of this contract, and so he will always remember that it is a responsibility that he has to fulfill.

Even though Allah (swt) has allowed the debtor to dictate the terms of the contract, Allah (swt) also says "**he should have *taqwa* of Allah his Rabb, and not diminish anything of what he owes**". So even when he is dictating the terms of the contract, the debtor must always remember Allah (swt), he must be aware of Allah (swt) and he must be fearful of Allah (swt). Thus we see how even the writing of business contracts is part of our worship and servitude of Allah (swt). In Islam there is no separation between the "worldly life" and the "spiritual life", your whole life should be nothing but submission to Allah (swt). When the debtor remembers Allah (swt) as he is dictating the terms of the contract, he should remember that the creditor is also his Muslim brother. He should realize that Allah (swt) would not love for him to cheat his Muslim brother or diminish his Muslim brother from what is due to him. So this *taqwa* of Allah (swt) will ensure that he dictates the contract in a manner that is fair to him and to the creditor who is his brother in Islam.

If this taqwa is built into the people and they always remember Allah (swt), just think to yourself how much better the society would be. The people would not be trying to cheat each other and deprive each other of their rights and property. The people would realize that they live for a greater purpose than merely accumulating wealth or satisfying their desires. They will realize how Allah (swt) should be the purpose of their existence and how every single thing that they do

must only be for Him (swt). Even when they make business contracts, it must be done to please Allah (swt). May Allah (swt) give this Ummah the enabling grace for us to realize the completeness of our Din! May Allah (swt) enable us to realize how our Din addresses every single aspect of our life!

Then Allah (swt) says "**but if he who owes the debt is of low understanding, or weak, or unable himself to dictate, then let his guardian dictate with justice**". Here Allah (swt) says that if the debtor is unable to dictate the terms of the contract, for whatever reason, then the person who is his guardian may dictate for him. See once again the precision and detail of this legal document and how it accounts and addresses every possibility. Most of us would never think that the debtor would be someone who is unable to dictate a contract because most of us are capable of doing it. Thus we would never think to add a clause such as this in the contract. But Allah (swt) Knows us more than we know ourselves so He (swt) accounts for this possibility. Allah (swt) Knows that there will be some debtors who are of weak understanding, and some debtors who are not strong enough to stand up for what they want, and some debtors who are unable to dictate because they have a problem speaking or who do not speak the language of the scribe. There could be several reasons why the debtor is unable to dictate the terms of the contract, should any of these conditions arise while the contract is being formed then Allah (swt) mandates here that the guardian of the debtor can dictate on his behalf.

We can also see here how Allah (swt) also commands that the guardian must "**dictate with justice**". Once again we see a command to establish justice, all praise and thanks be to Allah (swt), how Merciful and Just is He (swt) with this Ummah. Even the guardian of the debtor must be sure to dictate the terms of the contract with justice. He has to be just both to the creditor and the debtor. He has to be just with the creditor so that he does not cheat him or take his money unfairly, and he has to be just with debtor so that dictates fairly on his behalf. So just as the guardian has a responsibility to the creditor in that he does not put in any unfair terms in the contract, he also has a responsibility to the debtor in that he must represent his interests fairly. Allah (swt) has mandated that every guardian is responsible for those who under their care. They

must always do what is in the best interest of those under their care. May Allah (swt) help all of us who are guardians to fulfill our responsibilities to those who are under our care!

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says, "**and let it be witnessed by two witnesses from among your men**". From this part of the ayah we see that it is not enough to simply write down the contract, but there must also be two witnesses presiding over it. We can see from here how many a precaution Allah (swt) is giving us in order for us to avoid conflict between us. How many a precaution Allah (swt) is giving us to ensure that the brotherhood and unity of our Ummah is always maintained. Do you yourself not know of all the fights and quarrels that arise between Muslim brothers and sisters because of debts that are not paid or money that is owed? Such conflicts are known to tear at the very fabric of our community. In order to avoid such conflicts Allah (swt) has mandated several safeguards that we must take. First we should put the agreement that is between us in writing, we ourselves cannot write the contract but a scribe must write it with justice to ensure that it is impartial and fair. Then, as we see from this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) has mandated that there be not one but two witnesses present to witness the contract and to witness all of the terms in the contract. Notice also the language that Allah (swt) uses. Allah (swt) says that the contract must be "**witnessed by two witnesses**". Allah (swt) repeats the word for "witness" both in the verb of witnessing and the noun of witness, thus Allah (swt) emphasizes that every part of the contract should be carefully witnessed. Allah (swt) also says in this ayah that the witnesses must come from "**from among your men**". This means that the witnesses must be two Muslim men, the scholars also add that they must be sane and mature. A weak-minded person or a child are not qualified to be witnesses. So from this part of the ayah we see that the contract must be witnessed by two male witnesses.

To understand the next part of the ayah we have to remind ourselves once again of the context in which this ayah was revealed. When this ayah was revealed both men and women in the Muslim community played the particular role that Allah (swt) had created each of them for. Allah (swt) has given the man the role of providing for the family and He (swt) has given the woman the role of looking after the children and the home. Both of these roles are equally important roles, and Allah (swt) has created both men and women to best fulfill their particular

role. We cannot say that men have been given a better role than women nor can we see that women have been given a better role than men. In fact one can even say that the role of the woman is more important because it is she who raises the children. It is she who looks after the child, and nurtures the body and the mind of the child. This child who will be given the responsibility of being the representative of Allah (swt) on the earth, Allah (swt) has given the woman the duty of taking care of and bringing up this child. Now ask yourself is there any role in this whole world that is more important and more honorable than that? Allah (swt) has created the woman to fulfill this important role, she has been created in such a way. She may not be physically strong like the man who needs to go out into the world and work, but she has the deep emotional attachment with the child and she meticulously and carefully looks after the child. This is just what the child needs. So the place of the woman is at the home with the children, that was the role for which Allah (swt) created her. This is what we must bear in mind as we learn this part of the ayah.

So when this ayah was revealed it was mostly Muslim men who went to the marketplace and it was mostly Muslim men who made contracts such as these. That is why Allah (swt) first legislated that two men must be called upon to witness the contract. Men were the ones who were experts in the affairs of the marketplace, and so they knew best about these contracts. It is not because Allah (swt) has shown favor to men over women, as we have already discussed all human beings are the creation of Allah (swt) and He (swt) does not prefer a man over a woman only because he is a man. Even the best and most pious men today do not even come close to the nearness to Allah (swt) that women like Khadija (ra) and ‘Aisha (ra) had. So we see that the only reason why Allah (swt) legislated that men be given preference in witnessing these contracts is because men are knowledgeable in the how to conduct business and trade. This was the role for which Allah (swt) created them.

Now it was the case when this ayah was revealed that many of the Muslim men would leave the Islamic State to go fight in jihad, and to teach the new Muslims in different lands about the Din and to spread the Message of Allah (swt) to mankind. So sometimes the situation would arise when Muslim men were not to be found to be witnesses over these contracts. Now recall

how we said that Allah (swt) accounts for every possibility in the rulings that He (swt) gives, so Allah (swt) also accounted for the possibility of two male witnesses not being present. In that case, Allah (swt) says "**and if two men are not available then a man and two women**". Some ignorant people read this part of the ayah and think that Allah (swt) has discriminated against women because He (swt) has made the testimony of a woman to be equal to half that of a man. They claim from this ayah that the Quran treats women as intellectually inferior to men. People who think in such a way are totally ignorant of this Din, not to mention the utter insolence and disrespect that they show to their Lord and Master by thinking in such a way about Him (swt). Those people need to be told that first and foremost the Quran is from Allah (swt), and it is not our place to question Him (swt). Once we establish without a doubt that the Quran is indeed from Allah (swt), then our only task is to submit to it completely. If you think that this Quran is not from Allah (swt) then produce another like it. When you can see that you cannot then submit to it completely like you know that you should. This should be the way of the sincere. There should be no questioning but rather there should only be complete submission.

Once we have established this fact then we can then show them that there is a very good reason why Allah (swt) has legislated that there be two women in place of one man. It is as we said that the woman is inexperienced in the affairs of the marketplace, such is not meant to be her realm. So she may be unfamiliar with the way that such contracts are written, she may be unfamiliar with the rules and conditions of buying and selling. That is why it is only when it comes to being a witness over business contracts that Allah (swt) says that two women must be used in place of one man. For all of the other situations in which witnesses may be called, such as witnessing of various crimes for which a punishment is due or even the witnessing of the Muslims above mankind, the witness of a woman is equal to that of a man. The witnessing for these issues is far more important than the witnessing of business contracts. So if the woman really was intellectually inferior to a man why would not Allah (swt) make her witness to be half of a man in such situations as well? Why would Allah (swt) give her the important task of raising up the children of this Ummah if she was intellectually weak like these people claim that the Quran says? We also know that a large portion of this Din has been transmitted to us through women

like ‘Aisha (ra) and Umm Salamah (ra), why would Allah (swt) decree this if they were intellectually inferior to men? Would Allah (swt) have allowed us to learn our Din from women if they were intellectually weak? So we see that those who make such a claim are truly ignorant about this Din. It is only in the specific area of witnessing business contracts that Allah (swt) has legislated two women to take the place of a man.

Then Allah (swt) says “**such as you approve to be witnesses**”. In this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) tells us that those whom we choose to be witnesses must only be those whom we approve of being witnesses. So it must be someone who is trustworthy, who has a good memory, who is not known to tell lies, and it must be someone who we can be sure will be impartial and fair to both parties. The Muslims’ objective in writing this contract must be to please Allah (swt), thus it must be a contract that achieves equity and fairness for both parties. Remind yourself once again that in this Din there is no difference between the affairs of this world and the affairs of the Hereafter. There is no separation between church and state. Rather our entire life, every action that we take, is part of our worship. Everything that we do is only to please our Creator. Even when we write business contracts we have to strive to be fair and impartial. So the witnesses who preside over this contract must be those who will aid in achieving this objective. This is what we must always keep in mind when we choose witnesses.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says “**so that if one of the two women should err the other can remind her**”. We already mentioned in a previous part of the ayah how most women were inexperienced with business contracts and financial agreements, so in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us why He (swt) legislated that two women are required to witness over the contract. It is so that if one of the women should forget or make any mistake, then the other can remind her and correct her. They can each support each other and help each other in their role of witnessing over the contract. We should not think of this part of the ayah as being unfair to women but instead we should see it as a great Mercy that Allah (swt) has given to our sisters. If they are ever called upon to witness over a business contract, they can be sure that there will be someone there to help them. So we see that the two principles that are recurring in all of the laws that Allah (swt) legislates are Mercy and Justice.

Then we see Allah (swt) say, "**and the witnesses should not refuse when they are summoned**". Here we see Allah (swt) tell us that whenever the witnesses are summoned they should respond. This could be either to witness the actual contract being written or it could be being summoned to court to give a testimony of their witness. In either case the witnesses should respond when they are asked to come forward. From this we can once again see the importance that Allah (swt) has placed on the presence of witnesses, whenever they are summoned they should not refuse to come.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and be not averse to writing it down whether it be small or large**". Here Allah (swt) tells us that every single loan or debt that is undertaken between Muslims should be written down, there are no exceptions. Sayyid Qutb asks us to note from this ayah how beautifully Allah (swt) has legislated laws that take into account the very nature of the human being. Human beings are by nature lazy, we often think to ourselves that if the debt is only for a small amount then there is no reason for us to write it down. We always want to find the easy way out for everything, we always want to do the least amount of work. This is how we are by nature. So Allah (swt), Who Knows our nature better than we do, specifically tells us to write down all of our contracts. We are also forgetful by nature in that we would often forget to write it down. We always think about the money, and what we can do with the money and when we can repay the money, that we often forget to write down the terms of the loan. Here Allah (swt) tells us that there should be nothing that prevents us from writing down all of our loans and debts in the manner that He (swt) has legislated in this ayah. This should be so regardless of how small or large that loan may be.

Allah (swt) also says, "**along with its appointed time of payment**". So the date on which the loan is to be returned must be clearly documented. This is where conflicts often arise with debts and loans. When people make loans or financial agreements, they leave the date on which the money is to be returned or the date on which the goods are to be shipped as vague. This then leads to conflicts between both parties because both parties have a different idea in their minds about the when the date is. In order to prevent this confusion and this conflict

between Muslim brothers, Allah (swt) clearly legislates that the due date of the loan must be specified in the contract.

Then Allah (swt) says "**that is more just with Allah and stronger as evidence**". Why did Allah (swt) mandate for at least two witnesses to be present? Why did Allah (swt) order the witnesses to come forward when they are summoned? Why did Allah (swt) order the debt to be put in writing? Why did Allah (swt) mandate that the time in which the loan is to be repaid be clearly specified? Allah (swt) answers such questions in this part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says that such is more just with Him (swt). Allah (swt) is the Just and He (swt) loves for justice to be done among His (swt)'s servants. When there are safeguards such as witnesses and written documents then we can be certain that justice will be done for all parties. It would be very difficult for anyone to cheat anyone else or for anyone to be unfair with anyone else. In the case that such conflicts should ever arise, the witnesses and the contracts would provide for the best evidence to resolve those conflicts. No one can change the ink on paper and no one can change the words of the witnesses if they are true to Allah (swt). So here we see the reason why Allah (swt) legislated for all of these safeguards to be in place, it is to provide justice for all parties and to establish the strongest evidence.

Then Allah (swt) says "**and the best way of avoiding doubt between you**". As we said it is human nature to be forgetful. This is how Allah (swt) created us. So Allah (swt) has legislated the presence of these safeguards to prevent us falling from into situations where we would forget and where we would doubt. When the contract has been detailed in writing, and when there are two witnesses presiding over it, then there is less of a chance for anyone to forget what is in the contract and so less of a chance for anyone to doubt. Everything has been clearly detailed in writing and there are witnesses to support what has been written. So in this part of the ayah we once again see the Mercy of Allah (swt) for this Ummah in that He (swt) has legislated laws that will prevent us from doubt and confusion in our business contracts. Avoiding such doubts helps to avoid conflicts between Muslim brothers and helps to keep the community strong. All praise and thanks are for Allah (swt)!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**except when it is a trade that you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no blame on you if you do not write it down**". This is the exception in which a contract would not have to be made. When a transaction begins and ends on the spot, then there is no need to record that transaction in writing. So if you were to buy some fruits in the market and you paid the entire price for them right there, then you do not have to record it in writing. This is because the transaction ended right there, there is nothing further concerning it that needs to be recorded and remembered for the future. No one owes anyone else in the future anything as a result of that transaction, all the debts are settled right there on the spot. So these are the only transactions for which writing is not required and Allah (swt) Knows best!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and have witnesses when you sell to one and another**". In the previous part of the ayah Allah (swt) told us that for transactions that begin and end on the spot there is no need to record them in writing. From this part of the ayah we see that witnesses must still be present to witness such transactions. Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that whenever they buy and sell from each other, there should be witnesses present to witness the transaction. Most of the scholars say that the presence of witnesses in this situation is only a recommendation and not only an obligation. However we can still see how the presence of witnesses, especially for transactions involving large sums of money would be helpful. As we mentioned human beings are forgetful and we all have a desire for the material goods of this world. Insha Allah when there are witnesses present it ensures that we will all deal fairly with each other and that we would not try to take advantage of each other. So Insha Allah we should try to abide by this recommendation that Allah (swt) has given us and have witnesses present when we buy and sell goods and services that cost a large sum of money.

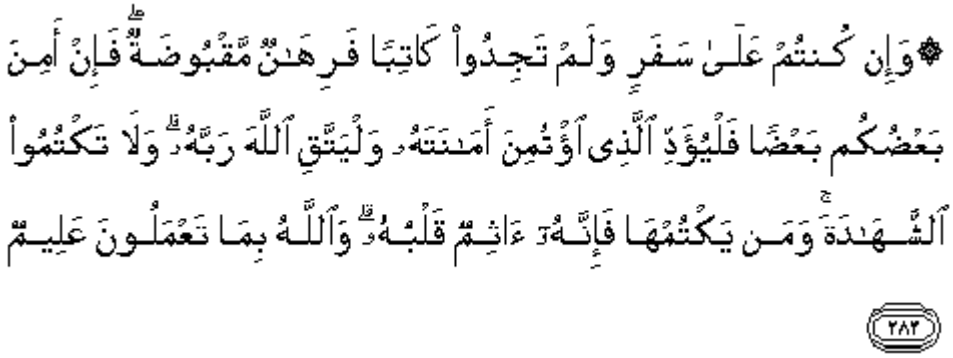
Then Allah (swt) says "**and let no harm be done to the scribe or the witness, and if you do it is certainly a sin on your part**". Most of us cannot even imagine members of the early Muslim community who were with the Prophet (saw) doing any kind of harm to the scribes or witnesses in order to serve their own material interests. All of the Sahabah knew how fleeting this world was and they knew what a great sin it was to harm any Muslim in any way. But Allah (swt)

revealed this Quran for all generations of Muslims, and Allah (swt) Knew that the generations who would follow that early community would not be as pious as they were. Also as we have mentioned, Allah (swt) accounts for every possibility in the laws that He (swt) legislates, so He (swt) also legislated laws for the possibility of people abusing the scribes or the witnesses for their own benefit. Thus Allah (swt) specifically says that no harm is to be done either to the scribe or the witnesses. Anyone who harms them will be carrying a great sin on his neck. We all should realize by now how frightening it is for Allah (swt) Himself to call you a sinner in His (swt)'s Book. May Allah (swt) save us from that!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and have Taqwa of Allah, and Allah is teaching you**". Many people would read this ayah about contracts and they would think that the writing down of contracts is not terribly important. They would not think of it like they think of prayer and fasting. Such people have a mentality that this Din is only for the Hereafter and it has nothing to do with the life of this world. These are Muslims who have been heavily influenced by the ideology of secularism that dominates the world today. This is an ideology which completely disconnects religion from the daily affairs of life. Such Muslims might even be shocked to find an ayah like this in the Quran, for them Islam is nothing but praying, fasting and going to Hajj. In this ayah Allah (swt) reminds such people to have Taqwa of Him (swt) and He (swt) reminds such people that it is He (swt) Who is teaching them these laws. The rulings in this ayah are from Allah (swt), it is what He (swt) has taught us. So carrying them out is every much a duty upon us like our Salah and our fasting are. Who are we to decide which are the rulings that we are going to follow and which we are not going to follow? As Allah (swt) has told us already we have to enter into this Din completely. We cannot pick and choose which of the rulings we want to follow and which we do not want to follow. Just because we live in a world today where all of the other religions have been compromised so that they become compatible with the ideology of secularism does not mean that we can do the same with Islam. Those other religions are falsehood and you can compromise on falsehood. You can change it to whatever suits your whims and desires because it is falsehood. But you cannot do that with this Din. This Din is from Allah (swt), it is what He (swt) has taught us, and this Din is the Truth. So if we think about

changing it, we should have Taqwa of Him (swt) first. Fear Allah (swt) and fear what He (swt) can do to you if He (swt) is displeased with you. May Allah (swt) save us!

Finally Allah (swt) ends this beautiful ayah by saying "**and Allah is with every single thing All-Knowing**". Once again Allah (swt) links the rulings that He (swt) has given in the ayah with His (swt) Names. This time Allah (swt) reminds us how He (swt) Knows every single thing. There is not a single thing that escapes the Knowledge of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) gave our community several rulings in this ayah, He (swt) Knows exactly those who carried it out, and those who were lazy in it, He (swt) Knows those who had fear of Him (swt) and those who turned away from Him (swt), and He (swt) Knows those who were true and sincere to His (swt)'s Din and those who try to change it to suit their whims and desires and to suit the society in which they live. Allah (swt) Knows every single thing and one Day soon He (swt) is going to gather me and gather you to Him (swt). How do you think that you are going to answer Him (swt) then if you failed to carry out these rulings? Always think about that Day on which you will be judged how well you lived your life according to this Din. So realize now that this Din is not simply your prayers and your fasting but rather it is your entire life. Everything that you do is part of this Din. Then remember what Allah (swt) tells you in this part of the ayah. He (swt) Knows every single thing. He (swt) Knows every single action that you have taken. So always remember that every moment that passes, every action that you take, could be the moment and could be the action that determines where you will abide for all eternity. So try your best and remember that Allah (swt) Knows everything that you do. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace so that He (swt) will Know from us only that which He (swt) is pleased with!



284. And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then let there be a pledge with possession, but if one of you trusts the other, then he who is trusted should deliver his trust and let him have taqwa of Allah his Rabb, and do not conceal the testimony, and whoever conceals it his heart is surely sinful, and Allah is with all that you do Knowing.

In the previous ayah, Allah (swt) gave us important rulings on how to conduct loans and financial agreements that extend over a period of time. We saw the completeness of our Din and how it addresses every sphere of our lives. We also saw how Allah (swt) addresses every possibility that could arise in the rulings that He (swt) gives. Now what if we find ourselves in a situation where we have to make a financial agreement and we do not find a scribe or we do not find proper writing instruments or we do not find qualified witnesses, what should we do in such a situation? Allah (swt) answers such questions in this ayah. Once again you should note the completeness and the thoroughness of this Divine Law, and how it covers every situation that could arise in the lives of the Muslims.

Allah (swt) says "**And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe**". The scholars say that being on a journey is only one example of the many situations in which a scribe would not be available. So the ruling that Allah (swt) gives in this ayah applies for journeys and applies for any other situation in which a scribe is not to be found, it even applies for the situation in which writing instruments are not to be found. The ruling in this ayah covers every situation in which writing would not be possible. Notice once again how the rulings cover every single possibility that the Muslim community could face, could these laws then have come from any but the All-Knowing? Allah (swt) has given us rulings for every aspect of our lives, but how many Muslims

today apply the Din in their lives? How many Muslims allow the Law of Allah (swt) to guide their behavior? May Allah (swt) allow this Ummah to wake up from her slumber!

In such a situation where a scribe is not to be found, Allah (swt) says "**then let there be a pledge with possession**". Here Allah (swt) tells the Muslims that when they are in a situation where a scribe is not to be found then they can give a pledge with possession. This is basically something of value that the creditor holds on to as collateral until the debtor returns his loan. So for example the narrations tell us of an incident when the Prophet (saw) took some barley from a Jew in Madinah. The Prophet (saw) allowed the Jew to hold on to a shield that belonged to him (saw) until he (saw) was able to return the barley. The scholars tell us that the creditor cannot use what he is holding on to in any way, he cannot derive any benefit from it. All that he can do is hold on to it until the debtor returns what was borrowed from him. Mawdudi says that one exception to this rule is cattle, the creditor can take the milk from the cattle in exchange for the fodder that he feeds to the cattle while he is holding on to it. Once again we can see the completeness of this Din and how it addresses every situation that can arise in the life of our community.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**then he who is trusted should deliver his trust and let him have *taqwa* of Allah his Rabb**". This part of the ayah is addressing both the creditor and the debtor, both of them have a trust with the other. The debtor has a trust that he will return whatever it is that he has borrowed, and the creditor has a trust that he will take care of whatever it is that he is holding as collateral. They both have a trust to each other and they both have a trust to their Creator. So Allah (swt) reminds both of them that they are each trusted by the other and Allah (swt) commands both of them to deliver their trust. Allah (swt) then links this trust that they have with each other to ***taqwa*** of Him (swt). If you think about breaking the trust that you have made with your Muslims brother, then you should first fear Allah (swt). Remember that Allah (swt) is your Rabb, the One Who created you, the One Who sustains you and the One to Whom you will return. Do you want to displease Him (swt) by betraying your Muslim brother over the fleeting things of this world? Is a few material possessions of this world worth the Wrath of Allah (swt)? So we see how Allah (swt) moulds the behavior of the Muslims by reminding them of Him (swt).

Then Allah (swt) says "**and do not conceal the testimony**". This is a command to both the creditor and the debtor as well. Each of them gave a promise to the other that they would return each other's property. The debtor has to return what he borrowed, and the creditor has to return what he is holding as collateral. If either of them dared to steal from the other, then that one would have to hide the testimony that he has given, he would have to hide the promise that he made to return what he took. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) commands both the debtor and the creditor not to steal, and also not to hide the promises that they made to each other.

Sayyid Qutb tells us in his tafsir of this ayah that this command not to hide testimony is not only restricted to the testimony taken for pledges, but it is also a general command not to hide any testimony. So it is prohibited for us to hide any testimony. A Muslim always has the responsibility to stand up for the truth and to speak the truth. He or she should always be a beacon of good in the society; they must do whatever they can to benefit others around them. This means never concealing the truth that they know. When they know that something is the truth, they should not hide it in order to serve their own interests. By doing so they harm themselves and the society in which they live. They harm the society because the truth is hidden from the people and justice is not done, and even worse they harm themselves by earning the Wrath of Allah (swt) and by bringing down the punishment of Allah (swt) on themselves. May Allah (swt) save us from that! May Allah (swt) save us from ever hiding the Truth that we know!

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**and whoever conceals it his heart is surely sinful**". Anyone who conceals such a testimony is surely sinful. They are sinful because they are hiding the Truth only to get some material benefits of this world. Not only are they sinful, but Allah (swt) specifically says that their hearts are sinful. What does it mean to have a sinful heart? It means that they have a heart that does not wish to submit to Allah (swt), a heart that would rather serve it's desires than serve it's Creator and Sustainer, it's Lord and Master. A heart that is far from Allah (swt), a heart that does not realize the Greatness and Majesty of Allah (swt), a heart that is heedless of the Real (swt). This is why their heart is given to sin. This is why their heart thinks only about the life of this world. It is a heart that is far away from Allah (swt). May

Allah (swt) save us from ever having a heart like that! May Allah (swt) allow us to return to Him (swt) with a heart that is dedicated purely to Him (swt)!

Finally Allah (swt) ends this ayah by reminding us that "**Allah is with all that you do Knowing".** We do so many actions from the time that we open our eyes in the morning till the time that we do to bed at night. We have done so many actions from the time we came out of mother's womb up to this moment in time. Many of these actions that we have done were not witnessed by any person. There are many actions that we do which we ourselves do not know about and there are many other actions that we do that we ourselves forget. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) reminds us once again that He (swt) Knows about every single one of our actions. Allah (swt) Knows very well every single action that we have ever done from the time that we entered this world right up to this very moment in time. Can you then even begin to imagine Who Allah (swt) IS? Can you even begin to realize Who Allah (swt) IS? Such is Allah (swt)! He (swt) Knows in great detail every single action that you have ever done from the time that you came into this world up to this moment. Now look back at your life and ask yourself are there more actions that you have done which Allah (swt) would be pleased with or which He (swt) would not be pleased with. If you are truly sincere in this reflection you will find many actions that Allah (swt) would be displeased with and only a few actions that He (swt) would be pleased with. This realization should make you strive to do more of the actions that Allah (swt) is pleased with and strive to avoid the actions that He (swt) is displeased with. When you know that Allah (swt) Knows every single thing that you do then why do you want to allow even a moment in your life to pass while you are not doing something that is pleasing to Him (swt). Have you forgotten Who Allah (swt) IS? Have you forgotten that one Day soon you are going to return to Him (swt)? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do what is pleasing to Him (swt) at every moment of our lives! May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace so that He (swt) would only know from us that which is He (swt) is pleased with!

لِّلَّهِ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِن تُبْدُوا۟ مَا فِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ
أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُم بِهِ ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

285. To Allah alone belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and if you disclose what is within yourselves or you conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it, then He will forgive whom He pleases and He will punish whom He pleases. And Allah has Power over every single thing.

With this ayah Allah (swt) begins the last section of Surah Baqarah. In this Surah, Allah (swt) has given us several important rulings that serve as the foundation of our servitude to Him (swt), and He (swt) has given us several important lessons that we can learn from the previous nations who came before us. Foremost among these lessons were those that we learned from the children of Israil who were the nation that bore this Message before us. This was the Surah that Allah (swt) revealed to build the first Muslim community when the Islamic State was first established. So in many ways this Surah contains the foundations and the essence of Islam. There are rulings in this Surah concerning the pillars of our Din including the prayers, fasting, spending in charity and the pilgrimage. There is also much mention of dawah and jihad, as well as laws pertaining to the family life and marriage. However as Allah (swt) ends this Surah, He (swt) brings our attention back to Himself (swt), because in the end He (swt) should be all that matters in our life. This entire Din is nothing but bringing mankind to Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) begins by saying "**To Allah alone belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth**". Here Allah (swt) reminds us that every single thing in all of creation belongs only to Him (swt). Everything belongs to Allah (swt) completely and it belongs only to Him (swt). The Arabic letter "*lam*" that Allah (swt) uses here to indicate possession is also a tool of exclusiveness, so in addition to giving the meaning that all things belong to Allah (swt) it also gives the meaning that all things belong *only* to Him (swt). So all of your possessions that you think you own really belongs to Allah (swt). Thus you can only use everything that you have in a

way that is pleasing to Him (swt). Even you belong completely to Allah (swt), so do not think that you are free to do whatever you like with your life. Rather you are the complete slave of Allah (swt), so you can only do with your life that which He (swt) is pleased with you doing. Think about it, would any owner like it if what belonged to him was used in a way that was displeasing to him? So when you know that everything that you have belongs only to Allah (swt), how can you think that He (swt) would like it if you used what was His (swt) in disobedience to Him (swt)?

If only mankind today would realize the meaning of this ayah then we would not see all of the problems that we find in the world today. Everyone is fighting for the things of this world without realizing that everything really belongs to Allah (swt). Everyone cares only for themselves without realizing that they should only live for Allah (swt). We waste and squander the resources of this world without realizing that everything that we have really belongs to Allah (swt), and it is only a trust that we have been given. If only the people would live for Allah (swt) as they had been created to do, then we would not see all of the misery and suffering that we find in the world today. How can a heart know sorrow or fear when that heart is attached to Allah (swt)? May Allah (swt) help us all to realize the meaning of this ayah!

This ayah is also a clear evidence that all of the sovereignty on the earth must belong only to Allah (swt). How can you say that the earth belongs only to Allah (swt) and then you make the rules for how the earth is to be governed? What did you do to make this earth yours for you to do with it whatever you pleased? We are all the property of Allah (swt) and so we must submit to Him (swt) in everything that we do. We must submit to Him (swt) as individuals and as a society as a whole. Only then could we realize what Allah (swt) has commanded us to do in this ayah. So how unfortunate is it that today there is no land in this earth where sovereignty belongs only to Allah (swt) when He (swt) clearly says in this ayah that this whole earth belongs only to Him (swt).

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) says "**if you disclose what is within yourselves or you conceal it, Allah will call you to account for it**". The scholars say that what Allah (swt) means here by what is "**within yourselves**" are the thoughts that you have in your mind. So in this part of the ayah Allah (swt) is saying that for all of the thoughts that are in your mind, it does not matter if you disclose these thoughts with your words or you disclose them with your actions

or instead if you keep them hidden to yourself, Allah (swt) will still take you to account for all of them. So we see from this ayah that Allah (swt) will hold us to account even for the thoughts that are in our minds. Now when this ayah was first revealed it troubled the Companions of the Prophet (saw). So they went to the Prophet (saw) and told him (saw) that Allah (swt) had given them a burden that is more than they can bear. They said that they are able to control the actions that they do, but they are often not able to control the thoughts that they have. Sometimes thoughts come into their minds that they do not like and they do not want Allah (swt) to take them to account for those thoughts. So after the Sahabah (ra) went and complained to the Prophet (saw), Allah (swt) then revealed the ayah where He (swt) said "Allah does not burden a soul more than it can bear". One of the meanings of this ayah was that a Muslim would not be held accountable for those thoughts that come to his mind involuntarily that he does not act upon and that he does not speak out. This is actually the last ayah of this Surah and Insha Allah we will discuss it some more when we reach it. So the last ayah of this Surah then abrogates this ayah where Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will take us to account for our thoughts. In this ayah Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will take us to account for our actions and words that we disclose and also for our thoughts that we keep hidden to ourselves. In the last ayah Allah (swt) abrogated the second of these rulings and so now we are only responsible for our actions and our words and not for our thoughts.

So in the last ayah of this Surah Allah (swt) absolved us of being responsible for our thoughts that we keep hidden. However the scholars say that are some thoughts that we have for which Allah (swt) will take us to account. These are the thoughts that we voluntarily have and that we voluntarily keep in our minds. So Allah (swt) will not take us to account for the thoughts that involuntarily come into our minds but He (swt) will take us to account for the thoughts that we voluntarily have. An example of the voluntary thoughts for which we will be taken to account are the thoughts where we are determined to carry out an evil action or say an evil word, but for which we never got the chance. So suppose for example that you had a firm resolve in your mind to go to the bar and drink beer. You know that such an action would be displeasing to Allah (swt), but you still did it anyway to satisfy your lusts and desires. Now suppose that on your way to the

bar you met with an accident and died. So you never actually performed the action of drinking beer in the bar, but since you had the resolve to in your mind Allah (swt) will still take you into account for it. This is an example of a thought that although it was hidden in your mind and you never disclosed it with your action of actually drinking the beer, Allah (swt) will still hold you to account for it because you had the firm intention to carry out the action. Thus from this ayah we should learn to be terrified of Allah (swt), we should not even think about sin. If the thought of a sin comes to our mind we have to destroy that thought as quickly as we can. If we entertain that thought and we think about committing that sin then we must know that we are walking down a very dangerous path. May Allah (swt) save us!

Another category of voluntary thoughts for which you will be taken into account are what the scholars call “the diseases of the heart”. These are thoughts such as hatred, envy, pride, arrogance, miserliness, and thoughts similar to these. All of these are thoughts that you are forbidden to have, so you will be held accountable for each of these thoughts. There are also some thoughts which you are obliged to have, and if you do not have these thoughts you will also be held accountable just like you will be held accountable for not having all of your prayers or all of your fasting. These are thoughts such as having patience through times of hardship, being grateful for bounties and favors from Allah (swt), being sincere in all of your actions to Allah (swt), being humble before Allah (swt), and having love for Allah (swt) and love for all that Allah (swt) loves as well as having hatred for all that Allah (swt) hates. These are thoughts that we are obliged to have. All of these are only thoughts that we have in our minds, but as we see from this ayah, we will be held accountable for these thoughts just like we will be held accountable for our actions. These thoughts are hidden in our hearts, and often times nobody else knows about these thoughts except us. But Allah (swt) Knows about them, and He (swt) will hold us to account for them. However we should once again note that it is only for those thoughts that we *voluntarily* have for which Allah (swt) will take us to account for. Allah (swt) will not hold us to account for those thoughts that we cannot control. So say for example that there was a Muslim brother, and for whatever reason you do not like this brother. If you keep this hatred within yourself, and you allow this hatred to grow, only then will Allah (swt) take you to account for this hatred that you

have. Even if you never act on this hatred or you never express this hatred with your words, Allah (swt) will still hold you to account for it because of the fact that you did not fight this feeling when it came to you and you allowed it to linger and grow in your heart. So this was hatred that you voluntarily had in your heart and so Allah (swt) will hold you accountable for it. If on the other hand, you told yourself that this person is still your Muslim brother, and that whatever he did wrong you still have to love him for the sake of Allah (swt), and you fight this feeling of hatred that you have in your heart, then Insha Allah Allah (swt) will not hold you to account for this thought that came into your heart. Rather He (swt) will reward you because you strove to love for His (swt)'s sake. Even if this evil thought still lingers in your mind, Insha Allah Allah (swt) will not punish you for it because you saw that this thought was wrong and you tried to clean your heart of it. So we see from this part of the ayah that there are some thoughts that we have in our minds for which Allah (swt) will hold us accountable. Among these are the thoughts where we resolved to perform acts of disobedience to Allah (swt), and among these are thoughts where we do not fight the corruptions of our heart like jealousy, hatred and arrogance. May Allah (swt) perfect our thoughts and feelings as He (swt) has allowed to perfect our behavior!

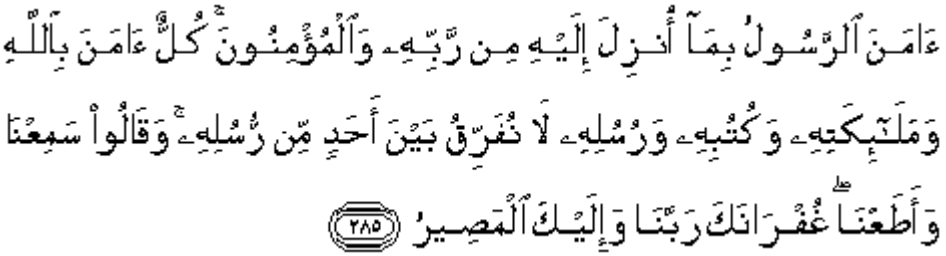
In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) says "**then He will forgive whom He pleases and He will punish whom He pleases**". Allah (swt) Knows what we do in the open and what we keep hidden. Allah (swt) Knows the actions that we show and the words that we say as well as the intention that was in our hearts when we did those actions or spoke those words. Allah (swt) even Knows the actions that we did which no one else saw! Everything that we do is in the Knowledge of the All-Knowing. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) says that He (swt) will forgive whom He (swt) pleases and He (swt) will punish whom He (swt) pleases. All authority, decision and judgment rests only with Allah (swt). Only He (swt) will be the One to say who will be forgiven and who will be punished. Whoever Allah (swt) wants to be forgiven He (swt) will forgive and whoever Allah (swt) wants to be punished He (swt) will punish. He (swt) has all of the Power to do as He (swt) pleases. Do you realize from this then how much you must strive to please Allah (swt)? You must strive to please Allah (swt) both in your thoughts and in your actions, because only if Allah (swt) is pleased with you will you find contentment and tranquility both in this life and

the next. Only He (swt) has the Power to give you the fulfillment of the purpose of your creation, all of the material things of this world will only give an extremely fleeting pleasure but leave you in thirst and misery. So we see from this part of the ayah that Allah (swt) has all of the Power to forgive whom He (swt) pleases and punish whom He (swt) pleases. We should then turn to no one but Him (swt) and seek His (swt)'s Forgiveness with every fiber of our being and we must flee His (swt)'s punishment with every fiber of our being. May Allah (swt) help us to realize Who He (swt) IS and may He (swt) give us the enabling grace to worship and serve Him (swt) as is His (swt)'s right!

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we must never feel safe from the punishment of Allah (swt), and at same time we must never give up hope on the Mercy of Allah (swt). Allah (swt) can punish anyone, and He (swt) can forgive anyone. So no matter how many good deeds you may have done, you must never feel sure that Paradise is guaranteed for you. If Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) could still punish you for the sins that you have, and you know that you have done many sins. At the same time no matter how many sins you have committed, you should never give up on the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah (swt). If Allah (swt) wanted He (swt) could forgive you even if you came to Him (swt) with a mountain full of sins. Allah (swt) could forgive all of those sins if He (swt) so pleases. So know that Allah (swt) forgives whom He (swt) wants and He (swt) punishes whom He (swt) wants, and if He (swt) wanted He (swt) could forgive you and if He (swt) wanted He (swt) could punish you. The matter is completely up to Him (swt), so why then should you seek to please anyone but Him (swt)?

Finally Allah (swt) ends this ayah by saying "**And Allah has Power over every single thing**". Allah (swt) can do whatever He (swt) wants to, there is nothing that is outside the Power of Allah (swt). If Allah (swt) wanted to, He (swt) could forgive the worst of sinners and if Allah (swt) wanted He (swt) could punish the most pious of men. There is nothing that He (swt) cannot do; He (swt) is not bound by rules and laws. Rather He (swt) does whatever He (swt) pleases and He (swt) can do all that He (swt) pleases to do. So the lesson for us is that nothing should matter in our lives except Allah (swt). No one else has any power to bring us any harm or any benefit except He (swt) and He (swt) has Power to do all things. So for every moment of your life that

passes, try to spend that moment trying to please Allah (swt). As long you believe that you have pleased Allah (swt) then you should be content. No matter what happens as long as you spent that moment sincerely trying to please Allah (swt) then you should know that that moment is a treasure that is waiting for you when you leave this world. On the other hand if a moment of your life passes you by and you think that you may have displeased Allah (swt) in that moment, then you should seek His (swt)'s Forgiveness and rush to bring yourself back to Him (swt). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to do that!


ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ
وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦۚ وَقَالُواْ سَمِعۡنَا
وَأَطَعۡنَاۖ غُفۡرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡمَصِيرُ ٢٨٥

286. The Messenger believes in all that was revealed to him from his Rabb, and (so do) the believers. Every single one of them believes in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, (they say) "we do not differentiate between any of His messengers", and they say "We hear and we obey, Your Forgiveness our Rabb and to you is the journeying".

These last two ayahs of Surah Baqarah are among the most special of ayahs in the entire Quran. There are many hadith of the Prophet (saw) that tell us of the virtues of these two ayahs. The Prophet (saw) encouraged us to memorize these two ayahs and recite it to ourselves often, he (saw) especially encouraged us to recite them before we go to bed. So every night before you go to bed you should recite these two ayahs to yourself. Many scholars are even of the opinion that these two ayahs are the only two ayahs in the entire Quran that were not revealed to the Prophet by the angel Gibreel (as), but rather they were given to the Prophet (saw) directly by Allah (swt) when he (saw) journeyed to his Rabb on the *miraj*. This shows us how special these two ayahs are. There is an endless ocean of meaning in these two ayahs, and we

could never hope to capture all of that in our humble tafsir. Rather we are only going to scratch the surface of these meanings and we ask Allah (swt) to guide us all.

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying "**The Messenger believes in all that was revealed to him from his Rabb**". The Prophet (saw) believed in every single thing that was revealed to him (saw) by Allah (swt). Allah (swt) created the human being to know Him (swt), to believe in Him (swt) and to serve Him (swt), and Allah (swt) made the Prophet (saw) as the perfect model that all humans can emulate if they want to fulfill this purpose of their creation. There is nothing that is more important than Iman or certain belief in Allah (swt), and if we want to have the most perfect Iman then the Prophet (saw) is the best of examples for us to follow. The Prophet (saw) believed in Allah (swt) with a firmer convection than any of us could even hope to achieve, so if should we desire to have Iman then the example of the Prophet (saw) is what we should follow. That is why Allah (swt) emphasizes the fact in this ayah that the Prophet (saw) believes, Allah (swt) tells us that if we want to believe with that level of certainty then we should look to the Prophet (saw) as the example to follow. We should do what he (saw) did in order to even hope to come close to the Iman that he (saw) had. Nothing is more important than Iman and following in the way of the Prophet (saw) is the way to achieve Iman. This is because no one had a more perfect Iman than the Prophet (saw). May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to follow the Prophet (saw) in everything that we do!

In addition to an exhortation to the believers to follow in the way of the Prophet (saw), this part of the ayah is also a consolation for the Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) is reminding the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) does indeed believe. There is nothing that is more beloved to Allah (swt) than Iman in Him (swt), and here Allah (swt) consoles the Prophet (saw) by reminding him (saw) that he (saw) does have Iman. Not only does he (saw) have Iman, but he (saw) has the most perfect Iman. Thus he (saw) is the most beloved to Allah (swt). Imagine how difficult it must have been for the Prophet (saw) to have carried this Message. He (saw) was surrounded by disbelievers and hypocrites. Everyone came to him (saw) with doubts and arguments. Even those few believers who were with him (saw) constantly looked to him (saw) as a source of support. So how heavy was the responsibility on his (saw)'s shoulders? That is why Allah (swt) consoles the Prophet

(saw) here by reminding him (saw) that he (saw) did indeed believe. Not only did he (saw) believe but he (saw) had the most perfect belief. May Allah (swt) bestow on us the Iman and the nearness to Allah (swt) that the Prophet (saw) had!

Then Allah (swt) says "**and (so do) the believers**". Here Allah (swt) praises all of the believers by linking their belief to the belief of the Prophet (saw). Even though none of us will ever reach the certainty of belief that the Prophet (saw) had, Allah (swt) still connects our belief with his (saw)'s belief because of His (swt)'s Love for us and also because the Prophet (saw)'s love for us. Can you even begin to imagine how wonderful this is? Allah (swt) is connecting our Iman with the Prophet (saw)'s Iman. Who is greater than Allah (swt)? Who is more special than the Prophet (saw)? What is more valuable more than Iman? How wonderful is it that Allah (swt) Himself links your Iman with that of the Prophet (saw)'s? So in this ayah Allah (swt) praises all of the believers by affirming their belief in Him (swt). From this fact alone you should realize how honorable a station you have because Allah (swt) has blessed you with belief in Him (swt). Allah (swt) has blessed you with belief in the Message that the Prophet (saw) brought. Can you then imagine the Love that Allah (swt) has for you? So know that even if the whole world should hate you, you are still loved by Allah (swt) because of your belief in Him (swt).

So one lesson that we can take from this ayah is to see how much Allah (swt) has praised the believers. This shows us that we should not have any hatred for any Muslim. Just by the fact that that person believes in the Message that the Prophet (saw) brought makes him beloved to Allah (swt) because of that belief. Belief in the Message that the Prophet (saw) brought is the difference between eternity in Paradise and eternity in the Fire. We know that even the worst of sinners will eventually go to Paradise only because of their belief. So belief in this Message is the most important thing, and we should find within ourselves to love all of the believers because of their belief. No matter what they may have done, no matter how much Shaitan may try to put animosity for them in our hearts, we should still love them for the sake of Allah (swt). So spread Salams between your brothers and try your best to love them because they are Muslims. Allah (swt) Loves them because they have believed in this Message so why can't you? May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to do that!

Allah (swt) then further describes the believers by saying " **Every single one of them believes in Allah and His angels and His books and messengers**". Although Islam requires of us to believe in more than this, this is the foundation of our belief. The central tenet of our Iman is our belief in Allah (swt), the angels, the Books, and the Messengers. Our entire Din is based on the belief in Allah (swt), the Creator, the Source from where we all originated. The Sustainer Who maintains our existence for every moment of our lives. The Lord Who we must obey in everything that we do. The Journey's End to whom we must all return. Allah (swt) sent us our Din through the angels who brought down the revelation from the heavens. This Message that the angels brought down was in books, and the books were brought to us by the Messengers. So we see how belief in Allah (swt), and belief in the angels, and belief in the books, and belief in the messengers serves as the foundation for our belief in everything else. Everything else that we believe in, including our belief in the Last Day and our belief in the Garden and the Fire, is because of our belief in Allah (swt), His (swt)'s angels, His (swt)'s books, and His (swt)'s messengers.

Allah (swt) is the One Who tells us what to believe in through the Message that He (swt) sends to us. Allah (swt) sends that Message through the angels in books that are conveyed to us by the messengers. This is the path that revelation takes in order to reach us. So our belief in each of these is the foundation of our belief in everything else. Notice also how Allah (swt) reminds us that the angels, the books, and the messengers all belong to Him (swt). This is because this Message is from Allah (swt), and all of these are merely intermediaries that bring us the Message from Him (swt). So even though our belief has been conveyed to us by a messenger who brought a book that was given to him by an angel, the source of our belief is still Allah (swt). This is why we must believe in everything that is in this Quran with utmost certainty. The Source of this Book is the All-Knowing.

Then Allah (swt) says "**(they say) "we do not differentiate between any of His messengers"**". In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) relates to us the speech of the believers. Allah (swt) shows us how the believers are those who not only believe in the messengers, but they also do not make any distinction or differentiation between any of the messengers. We believe in all of

the messengers equally as being from Allah (swt). All of the prophets and messengers are from Allah (swt) so what right do we have to differentiate between them? Who are we to say that we will accept some of them and reject others? No, rather we believe in all of the prophets and messengers as being sent by Allah (swt), we make no distinction between any of them and we believe in all of them. So we can see how this part of the ayah is a direct attack to the Jews and Christians. They differentiated between the messengers of Allah (swt), they chose to follow some of the messengers and they choose to reject others. They only made this choice and this distinction based on their desires. They were certain that these prophets and messengers that came to them were indeed from Allah (swt). But because they wanted to follow their lusts and their desires they rejected the messengers who brought them a Message that they did not like. But this is not the way of the believers, the ones whom Allah (swt) is pleased with, they live only to worship and serve Allah (swt) so they believe in all of the prophets and messengers that Allah (swt) has sent to them without making and differentiation between them.

Another lesson that we can take from this part of the ayah is that we affirm that all of the messengers were indeed sent with the same Message. By the fact that we do not make any distinction between any of the messengers shows that we affirm that all of the messengers were sent with the same Message. If any two messengers were sent with a different message then we would not be able to affirm all of them. So when we say that we believe in all of the messengers we are saying that they were all sent with the same Message. This Message is nothing but a call to the absolute Oneness of Allah (swt). This Message is nothing but a call to spend our whole life in worship and servitude to Allah (swt). Total submission to Allah (swt) both at the level of the individual and that of the society, this was the Message of every single messenger that Allah (swt) has sent and so we believe in all of them.

Then Allah (swt) describes the believers as saying, "**We hear and we obey**". After belief in the messengers that Allah (swt) has sent, this is what He (swt) expects next of the believers. They should hear what the messengers tell them and they should obey what they heard. There should be total obedience. There should not be any questions asked, or any hesitations, or any doubts. You have to listen to what the Prophet (saw) tells you to do and then you should do it.

The lesson that we can take from this ayah is that our relationship to the Prophet (saw) must be one of complete obedience. We know that he (saw) has been sent to us from our Lord and Master, and we know that every command that he (saw) gives us is indeed from Allah (swt). So whatever the Prophet (saw) tells us to do we should do it without question or hesitation. We hear the command and we obey it, that is what Allah (swt) is pleased with us doing as we can see from this ayah. What is there to this life except seeking the Pleasure of Allah (swt)? When you realize that this is your goal then how can you ignore what the Messenger of Allah (swt) says? May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to follow every single command that reaches us from the Prophet (saw)!

Finally Allah (swt) describes the believers as saying "**Your Forgiveness our Rabb and to you is the journeying**". In the previous parts of the ayah Allah (swt) told us that we have to believe in the Message that He (swt) has sent us through His (swt)'s messengers, and then we must hear and obey every single command that our messenger gives us. This is what Allah (swt) created each and every single one of us to do. This is what He (swt) created you and me to do. But do we always live up to this ideal? Do we always dedicate every moment of our life to Allah (swt) like we were created to do? No of course not. There are many times when we fall short of this ideal. There are many commands that the Prophet (saw) has given us that we did not do, and there are many prohibitions that Prophet (saw) told us to stay away from that we indulged in. Because of this transgression we may have earned the Wrath of the One Who sent the Prophet (saw) to us. Because of this transgression, Allah (swt), the One Who is our reason for being may be displeased with us. If this is our situation, then what should we do? What is it that we need? All that we can say in such a situation is "**Your Forgiveness our Rabb**". We call out for the Forgiveness of Allah (swt). There is nothing that we crave more than the Forgiveness of Allah (swt). We acknowledge that the Forgiveness comes only from Allah (swt) and we call out to Him (swt) to grant it to us. Notice in the language of the ayah that the believers do not even explicitly ask Allah (swt) for Forgiveness but rather they just say "**Your Forgiveness our Rabb**". This is because what else could be our relationship with the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) except to desire it eagerly. The reason that we desire the Forgiveness of Allah (swt) so eagerly is because we have

all committed so many sins and we have all fallen short on so many obligations. Did you know that looking at any woman who is not your wife with any kind of desire is a major sin, did you know that speaking anything about a Muslim that he would not like you saying is a major sin, did you know that missing even one prayer on purpose is a major sin, did you know that living in the land of kufar and not carrying dawah is a major sin, did you that dealing with riba in any way is a major sin, did you know that not working to bring back the Islamic State is major sin. How many of us are guilty of these major sins? It is only from the great and tremendous Forgiveness of Allah (swt) that you and me are not in the Fire right now. It is only Allah (swt), the Perfect One, Who could have this much Forgiveness and Mercy. So how much should you crave the Forgiveness of Allah (swt)? More than you crave water on the last hour of fasting you have to crave the Forgiveness of Allah (swt). You have to beg Allah (swt) to grant it to you. That is why in this ayah the believers only say "**Your Forgiveness our Rabb**".

After the believers beg Allah (swt) for Forgiveness they then say, "**to you is the journeying**". Our whole life is a journey, and Allah (swt) is the end of our journey. Think about it, your whole life is nothing but a journey to Allah (swt). Look at your life now and reflect on whether or not you are living your life as a journey to Allah (swt). How often during your day do you think about Allah (swt)? How many of your actions that you do throughout your day do you do for Allah (swt)? If you were sincere with yourself, you will not be satisfied with yourself in your answers to these questions. Thus you have to constantly remind yourself that your life is nothing but a journey to Allah (swt). It is nothing but a journey to Allah (swt) and with every breath that you take and with every moment that passes you are coming closer and closer to your destination. So everything that you do must be in preparing for the end of your journey. In your thoughts and in your actions you must strive to please Allah (swt), this is how you make your journey and this is how you prepare for arriving at your destination. So from this ayah we see that our whole life ends with Allah (swt) and thus He (swt) should be the purpose of our lives. May Allah (swt) give us the enabling grace to dedicate every moment of our lives for Him (swt)! It is possible if Allah (swt) answers our prayer!

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا
تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُۥ
عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦ ۖ وَٱعْفُ عَنَّا وَٱغْفِرْ
لَنَا وَٱرْحَمْنَآ ۚ أَنتَ مَوْلَىٰنَا فَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

287. Allah does not burden any soul more than it can bear, for it is what it has earned and against it is what is has deserved, our Rabb do not punish us if we forget or if we make a mistake, our Rabb do not place on us a burden like you placed on those before us, our Rabb do not place on us a burden that we do not have the strength to bear, and pardon us and forgive us and have mercy on us, you are our Maulana, so give us victory over the people who do kufr.

This is the last ayah of Surah Baqarah. With this ayah Allah (swt) completes this wonderful Surah. Now that you have completed Surah Baqarah, ask yourself what you can walk away with as you leave this Surah and move on to the rest of the Quran Insha Allah. Ask yourself why Allah (swt) placed this Surah at the very beginning of the Quran even though it was revealed during the later years of the Prophet (saw)'s mission. We know that one reason is because this Surah contains the foundations and essence of this Din. Every aspect of this Din from matters of Aqeedah to laws and regulations to advice and exhortations are present in this Surah. This is why this Surah is the foundation of this Din and this is why this is one of the most important of Surahs.

If you look closely you will see that this last ayah is nothing but a dua. The dua began in the previous ayah and it concludes in this ayah. The Prophet (saw) said "dua is ibadah", in other words supplication is the very essence of worship. Our worship of Allah (swt) is nothing but our expressing our complete need for Him (swt). So why did Allah (swt) choose for this last ayah of this most important of Surahs to be a dua? It is to show us how important dua is. Not only is the dua one of the best of deeds that we can do, a deed that carries a lot of reward, but also the dua itself demonstrates our need of Allah (swt). It demonstrates how we are weak and how Allah (swt)

is Strong. It shows how we are unable and how Allah (swt) is Able. So when we make dua to Allah (swt) we are showing Him (swt) that we need Him (swt). We are acknowledging how we are nothing and how He (swt) is everything. When we humble ourselves before Allah (swt) through our dua in such a way, it is an action that we do that He (swt) is well pleased with. That is why Allah (swt) shows us the importance of dua by making this ayah into a dua. May Allah (swt) give us the ability to turn to Him (swt) in dua again and again!

Allah (swt) begins this ayah by saying, "**Allah does not burden any soul more than it can bear**". We touched briefly upon this part of the ayah in a previous ayah when we talked about how Allah (swt) revealed this part of the ayah to console the Muslims by letting them know that He (swt) would not take them to account for the thoughts that involuntarily came into their minds. Recall in that ayah how Allah (swt) was telling us that He (swt) Knows what we disclose and what we conceal and that He (swt) would take us to account for both what we disclose and what we conceal. But we cannot control the thoughts that come into our minds, sometimes dark thoughts come into our minds that we do not want to express in words. In this part of the ayah Allah (swt) tells us that He (swt) will not hold us accountable for such thoughts. This is because controlling the thoughts that enter into our mind is beyond our ability, it is a burden that is more than we can bear. So Allah (swt) will not impose this on us. This is part of the Love and Mercy of Allah (swt) upon us. He (swt) will not hold us to account for what we do not have the power to stop. So the first lesson that we take from this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) will not hold us to account for thoughts that involuntarily come into our minds.

Another meaning of this part of the ayah is that Allah (swt) will not hold us accountable for what we do out of forgetfulness, what we do out of coercion, what we do by accident or what we do by mistake. So for example suppose you missed one of your prayers because you truly forgot, you were busy with your day and the time for a prayer came and went without you even remembering to pray. Since you genuinely forgot to pray we see from this ayah that Allah (swt) will not hold you accountable for it. Or suppose you drank some water in Ramadan while you forgot that you were fasting, in such a case as well Allah (swt) will not hold you accountable for what you did. Of course we should still make our best effort to remember that we are fasting and

to remember our prayers, but in case we forget we know from this ayah that Allah (swt) will forgive us. Similarly if we are forced to do something we will not be held accountable for that either. So for example supposing that someone forces you to eat pork, and they threaten you or your family if you do not, in such a situation you are allowed to eat and Allah (swt) will not hold you accountable if you do. Even though pork is clearly forbidden in the Sacred Law of Allah (swt), you are excused in this situation because you were forced to eat by coercion. So another meaning of this part of the ayah is that we will not be accountable for what we are forced to do. Similarly Allah (swt) will also not hold you accountable for anything that you do by accident or by mistake. So for example if you hit your Muslim brother by accident and you caused him harm, you will not be held accountable for that action if that action was completely unintentionally on your part. No matter what wrong that you may have done, you will not be held accountable for that wrong if you did not intend to do it. So we see that yet another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that the believers are absolved of all of the wrongs actions that they have done unintentionally. Allah (swt) will not hold them to account for those actions because such would be a burden that is more than they can bear. How Merciful and Compassionate is Allah (swt) with this Ummah!

Yet another meaning that this part of the ayah gives is that Allah (swt) promises that He (swt) will not give us any rulings that are more than our capacity to bear. So we know from this part of the ayah that every single command that Allah (swt) has told us to do is within our capability. There is not a single obligation that Allah (swt) had laid down upon us which we cannot do nor a single prohibition that is beyond our capacity to avoid, every single command that Allah (swt) has given us is indeed within our ability. Think about practically for a moment, five daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan, lowering the gaze, what human being cannot do these actions? These are all within the ability of every human being. Allah (swt) had not told you to pray fifty times a day or to fast for five days consecutively. Those would have been rulings that would have been impossible for you. But all of the rulings that Allah (swt) has given you are within your capacity to bear. So when you know that you will get the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and the Forgiveness of Allah (swt), why then do you not want to do these actions?

How unfortunate is it today that so many Muslims complain that this Din is too difficult for them to practice? Especially for those of us who live in the West, we always find some reason to complain about implementing the Law of Allah (swt) in our lives. Why can't we see that Allah (swt) is clearly telling us in this ayah that He (swt) will not impose on any soul a burden more than it can bear? This means there should be no ruling in the Din that is beyond our ability to implement or beyond our capability to bear. Any command that Allah (swt) tells us to do should be within our ability to implement, and any prohibition that Allah (swt) tells us to stay away from should be within our ability to avoid. So if you are among those people who have this mentality that what Allah (swt) has told you to do in this Din is beyond your ability, then look to what Allah (swt) is telling you in this ayah. Ponder over these words and ask yourself if it really is impossible for you to do what Allah (swt) had commanded you. Is it really impossible for you or is it merely Shaitan telling you that it is impossible for you? May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to implement every command that He (swt) has given us in this Din because He (swt) has not laid down upon us a burden more than we can bear!

The believers then continue their dua by saying "**for it is what it has earned and against it is what is has deserved**". For every soul will be all of the good deeds that it has earned, and against it will be all of the evil deeds that it has deserved. The language of the ayah gives the meaning that the good deeds are what you strive to achieve, they do not just come to you but you have to make the effort to acquire them. You have to go out and get your good deeds. However the language of ayah also gives the meaning that the bad deeds are what come and attach themselves to you. You do not need to strive to achieve your bad deeds but they come to you and they attach themselves to you. They come to you because of the sins that you do. The English translation of this ayah does little to capture the beauty of the way Allah (swt) describes this reality. The good deeds are what you strive for and you earn them, and the bad deeds are what come to you and attach themselves to you. This beautiful description is given in the language of the ayah but it is lost in the translation. May Allah (swt) give us all the ability to learn the Arabic language so that we can taste this beauty of the Quran ourselves!

So from this part of the ayah we see that all that a soul will have for it is what is has earned, and all that a soul will have against it is what it has deserved. Thus the only thing that you really have is your Iman in Allah (swt) and the good actions that you have done for His (swt)'s sake. All that you have against you are the evil actions that you have done in disobedience to Allah (swt). This is what your whole life comes down to, so see how beautifully Allah (swt) has summarized in these few words of the Quran what your whole life has to be about. If you constantly strive to remember only this part of the ayah, it will be enough for you to remain obedient to the Law of Allah (swt). It will also save you from desiring anything but the Pleasure of Allah (swt) in all that you do.

In the next part of the ayah Allah (swt) describes the believers as saying "**our Rabb do not punish us if we forget or if we make a mistake**". We already mentioned how Allah (swt) had decreed that He (swt) would not punish us if we do an act of disobedience by mistake or by forgetfulness. But Allah (swt) did not have to make such a Decree. If Allah (swt) wanted, He (swt) could have punished us even for those actions that we did by mistake and for those actions that we do by forgetfulness. We are the complete property of Allah (swt) and He (swt) can do with us whatever He (swt) pleases. It was only part of His (swt)'s Love and Mercy for us that He (swt) chose not to punish us for our forgetfulness and for our mistakes. So we should always be praying to Allah (swt) to grant us this Love and Mercy. We have to beg Allah (swt) not to punish us when we make mistakes and when we forget.

Another meaning of this part of the ayah is that in addition to asking Allah (swt) not to punish us for those actions that we genuinely do out of mistake and forgetfulness, we are also asking Allah (swt) not to punish us for those wrong actions that we do with intentionally. Even those wrong actions that we do out willfully, we still do them in a state of forgetfulness to Allah (swt). We still do them by mistake. If we truly remember Allah (swt), if we truly remember our obligation to Allah (swt), if we truly remember the punishment of Allah (swt), then we would never commit any sins. But there are moments in our life where we just forget. We are by our nature forgetful creatures, and we often forget Allah (swt). We forget our responsibility to Allah (swt) and we forget the punishment of Allah (swt). This is why we fall into sin. If we were truly conscious of

Allah (swt) and we maintained that taqwa throughout our life, then we would not do any actions that are displeasing to Him (swt). So many of the wrong actions that we do, we do out of forgetfulness and we do by mistake. After we have committed the sin we then realize how wrong we were. When we remember Allah (swt) we realize what a wrong thing it is that we have done. So in this part of the ayah we are asking Allah (swt) not to punish us for those actions as well. We realize that we were wrong in what we did, so we beg and plead Allah (swt) not to punish for these actions.

In the next part of the ayah, Allah (swt) describes the believers as saying "**our Rabb do not place on us a burden like you placed on those before us**". Here the Ummah of the Prophet (saw) pray to Allah (swt) and ask Him (swt) not to place on them a burden like He (swt) placed on the previous nations. There are at least two meanings that this part of the ayah gives as well. One meaning is that we are asking Allah (swt) not to give us laws as difficult as He (swt) gave to the previous nations. Allah (swt) legislated many difficult laws for the nations before us and here we ask Him (swt) not to give us laws that are as difficult as those. For example we know that the children of Israil were given several difficult laws. They could only make their prayers in a temple, and whenever there was an impurity in their garments they had to completely cut off the piece of the garment where the impurity was. In comparison to this Allah (swt) has given us much more lenient laws. Allah (swt) has made the entire earth a masjid for us to pray in, so wherever we are when the time for prayer comes we can pray. We do not need to go and look for a masjid when the time for prayer comes, but we can pray wherever we are. Similarly Allah (swt) has legislated that whenever some impurity falls on our garment we do not need to cut of the entire piece of that garment but we can simply wash that garment and it will be considered pure once again. So one of the meanings of this part of the ayah is that we are asking Allah (swt) not to give us laws as difficult as He (swt) placed on the nations before us.

Another meaning of this part of the ayah is that we are asking Allah (swt) not to subject us to trials and tribulations like He (swt) placed on those before us. There is a narration where a companion who was being brutally tortured by the enemies of this Message came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him (saw) to make dua to give victory for the Muslims and to save the Muslims

from such oppression. Instead of making the dua like this noble companion had asked him (saw) to, the Prophet (saw) instead became upset and he (saw) reminded this companion of all of the trials and tribulations that those before had gone through. All of the believers who stand up for the Truth will always face trials and tribulations at the hands of the enemies of this Message. In this part of the ayah we are asking Allah (swt) not to make the trials and tribulations that we face as difficult as the ones before us had to face. We know that what the Prophet (saw) and the companions had to face was far greater than anything we could ever bear. So we beg and plead to Allah (swt) for Him (swt) not to place on us such trials as He (swt) placed on them. May Allah (swt) answer our prayers! May Allah (swt) reward all those who suffer and strive to carry His (swt)'s Message to mankind and to establish His (swt)'s Law in the land! May Allah (swt) save us from the trials that they had to bear!

Then Allah (swt) describes the believers as saying "**our Rabb do not place on us a burden that we do not have the strength to bear**". Allah (swt) already promised us that He (swt) would not lay on us a burden that is more than we can bear so why is that we once again ask this of Allah (swt)? The scholars say that it is to stress and emphasize how much we desire this of Allah (swt). We know that we are weak creatures. We know that there are so many obligations that we fall short of and we know that there are so many prohibitions that we indulge in. So we ask Allah (swt) to lighten our responsibilities as much as possible. We realize the consequences of our life in this world, we realize that this life is a test and we realize what would happen to us if we were to fail in this test. We realize that failure in this test could mean the Fire for us, so we beg and plead Allah (swt) to give us the easiest and lightest of burdens that He (swt) can give us. So we should all realize how weak we are, and how desperate we are for the Love and Mercy of Allah (swt). That is why we should all beg and pray to Allah (swt) to give us as light and as easy a burden as possible, and at the same time we should rush to fulfill all of our duties and responsibilities to the best of our ability. This short life is all that we have, and the moments are passing away, when it is over all that will remain for us is either the Fire or the Garden forever. May Allah (swt) save us! May Allah (swt) not place on us a burden that is more than we can bear!

Then the believers say "**and pardon us and forgive us have mercy on us**". Not only do we ask Allah (swt) to give us as light a burden as possibility in terms of our responsibility on this earth, but we also know that we have committed several sins. So in this part of the ayah we plead and beg of Allah (swt) to eliminate and destroy all of our sins. Only if Allah (swt) were to wipe out all of our sins would we all have any chance of salvation. Allah (swt) has no reason to remove our sins from us since we did them through our free will knowing that it was wrong for us to indulge in them, yet here we still humbly beg and plead of Him (swt) to remove our sins. First we ask Allah (swt) to "**pardon us**", the Arabic word that Allah (swt) uses here gives the meaning of not only pardoning sins but also of completely wiping them out and destroying them. This is what we ask Allah (swt) to do with all of our sins. Then we ask Allah (swt) to "**forgive us**". We ask Allah (swt) for us to be worthy in His (swt)'s Sight once again. For all the sins that we have done, it would not be unreasonable for Allah (swt) to never consider us to be worthy in His (swt)'s Sight again. He (swt) had given us so many signs and He (swt) had given so much warning and He (swt) had made this Din so easy for us, if we still fall into sin after all of that then it would not unreasonable for Allah (swt) to curse forever after that. But we are asking Allah (swt) in this part of the ayah not to do that, instead we are asking Him (swt) to let us be worthy in His (swt)'s Sight again, in other words we are asking Allah (swt) to Forgive us. The Forgiveness of Allah (swt) is the real Forgiveness and it is more Sublime and Powerful than we could ever imagine, we ask Allah (swt) in this part of the ayah to grant that to us. Finally we ask Allah (swt) to have ""**have mercy on us**". What more can we say about this? We beg and plead Allah (swt) to bestow on us from His (swt)'s Mercy? The Mercy of Allah (swt) is both in this life and the next. In this life the Mercy of Allah (swt) is being free from pain and sickness, being free from anxiety and sorrow, being free from fear and distress. Every moment of your life that passes where in you are content is from the Mercy of Allah (swt) and every moment that passes where in you are not content is from the removal of that Mercy. You can never fully realize how desperately you are in need of the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the life of this world, and you can never fully realize how much you need it in the next world. In the Hereafter the Mercy of Allah (swt) is being saved from the terrors of the Last Day, to be given an easy and lenient reckoning, to be saved from the torment of the Fire, to being

admitted into the Garden, to gaining the Pleasure of Allah (swt) and to be given the opportunity to gaze upon Allah (swt). Who among us would not want that Mercy? So we beg and plead Allah (swt) to give us that Mercy!

In the final part of this ayah, Allah (swt) teaches us to pray to Him (swt) by saying "**you are our *Maulana*, so give us victory over the people who do kufr**'. The word ***Maulana*** means "Protector", "Caretaker", and "Supporter". First and foremost we acknowledge that Allah (swt) is our only Protector and Caretaker, without Him (swt) we would be lost, and without Him (swt) we would be destroyed. We depend completely on Him (swt) for everything. So because Allah (swt) is our ***Maulana***, we ask Him (swt) to give us victory over the people who do kufr. Now you should wonder as to why Allah (swt) teaches us to end our dua in this way. Why did Allah (swt) tell us to end our dua by asking Him (swt) to give us victory over the people who do kufr? Why did not Allah (swt) make us end our dua in asking Him (swt) for Forgiveness or by asking Him (swt) to bless the Prophet (saw)? Why did Allah (swt) specifically tell us to end our dua by asking Him (swt) to give us victory over the people who do kufr? It is because this shows that we are a nation that is on a mission. Since the time of Adam (as) there has been a battle between those who chose to uphold the Message of Allah (swt) and carry it to mankind and those who choose to oppose the Message of Allah (swt) and work for it's destruction. This latter group of people are the ones who do kufr, they know that this Message is indeed the Truth from Allah (swt) but they choose to reject it. Not only do they reject it but they actively work to destroy it. So the mission of our nation is to defend the Message of Allah (swt) against those who would seek to destroy it. In every time and age there have been those who have stood up for the Message of Allah (swt) and there have been those who have sought to destroy it. You have to choose now as to which of these two camps you want to be a part of. There are only these two sides that you can join, there is only right and wrong, only truth and falsehood. But before you make your decision you should realize that one of these two groups has Allah (swt) as their ***Maulana***. What could be better than that? What could be better than having the Lord and Master, the All Powerful and the All Knowing, as your Guardian, Protector, and Supporter? This shows that the victor in this conflict has already been determined. So all that is left for you to do now is to choose as to whether you

want to be on the side that will be successful or on the side that will be the losers. You learned about Allah (swt) in this Surah, would you like for Him (swt) to be your ***Maulana*** or your enemy? This Surah has taught us that life is nothing but a choice that we make. Do we want to submit to Allah (swt) or do we want to turn away from Him (swt)? If you are reading this now then know that you have been given the greatest of blessings. You have been given a few more moments of your life to make the correct choice. So make the correct choice and choose Allah (swt), nothing else matter except Him (swt). May Allah (swt) answer this dua that we make to Him (swt) again and again! May Allah (swt) be the ***Maulana*** for this Ummah! May Allah (swt) give her victory over all of her enemies! May Allah (swt) destroy all those who oppose His (swt)'s Message and all those who oppress the members of the nation of His (swt)'s beloved messenger (saw)!

All praise and thanks belongs to Allah (swt), our tafsir of the fourth part Surah Baqarah ends here.