

# **Parables: Important Questions – Simple Answers**



**Muhsin Qara'ati**

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Hujjat Al Islam Mohsin Qara'ati in his televised program Lessons from the Quran is using parables and similes, which has been a very successful method of getting the message of understanding across to the general population. In this publication, the author selected one hundred of the many similes and parables he has conveyed and presented them in a "Question and Answer" form.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Thanks to the All Mighty Lord and praise and blessings to the Prophet SAWA and his Pure Progeny peace be upon them and may the return of Imam Al-Mahdi – Our Savior, be hastened in this troubled world, for surely, the time for his return is soon, although the enemy sees it as far.

Forgiveness is sought for any shortcomings in the translation of this work, firstly from the Merciful Allah SWT, from the Prophet SAWA and from his Pure Progeny AS... and from the author of the work.

*This translation is, first and foremost, dedicated to*

***Syeda Fatima Masooma, Peace and Blessings Upon Her.***

For my *father* and *mother* whose unwavering support keeps me strong.

To my *brother* and *sister*, for whom without, this translation would never have taken place, and thank you for helping me with the final checking of the document.

A special thank you to my dear wife for her patience and support, and for helping me in the translation of this work, and for Sheikh Mansour Leghaei whose teachings has been instrumental in my development.

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**S.L. Al-Hakim**

**Monday, January 25, 2016**

One of the most effective methods that Hujjat Al Islam Mohsen Gharaati uses during his televised program Lessons from the Quran is the use of parables and similes, which has been very successful in getting the message of understanding across to the general population.

In this publication, the endeavor is to select one hundred of the many similes and parables he has conveyed and to present them in a “Question and Answer” form.

We hope that this initiative continues and that in the future more of the same will be made available to interested parties.

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If a well versed scientist gives an excellent speech, one would not question *why was such a good speech given by this expert?!* Because he has the knowledge and expertise in the field that he is able to express his views. However, if this same scientist, with all the experience and knowledge, remains silent, the question will then be *why nothing was said.*

God has the ability and wisdom and mercy to create from soil; wheat, and from wheat; sperm, and from sperm, a complete human being. And if He did not create this complete and perfect creation, the question should in fact be *why is it that with all His Power to Create, He did not?*

If you enter a house in which you know this place has no owner, nor is there any accountability, nor any cameras watching over your actions, nor having control over your actions without any trace of system or mandate over what you do. In such an unrestrained and unhampered free environment, whatever discipline over our actions and control over ourselves will be considered to be to our disadvantage. However, if we know that this house has an owner and that we are accountable with all our actions under full view of the owner, we would certainly act differently.

Faith brings us this: An Owner by the name of The Wise God, taking accountability for our actions in the name of (the day of) Resurrection. For all our thoughts, actions and words, there are rewards and punishments, and we too will take account of our own actions and make an effort to thwart any rebellion. Any actions in which the owner does not like, we would not do because we know we will be accountable for our entire actions, be they good or evil, and God is ever waiting in ambush (ever watching us).<sup>1</sup>

1. See Surah Fajr Ayah 14 explanations.

If all of humanity would build houses facing the sun, nothing will be added to the sun, and if all of humanity build houses facing away from the sun, the sun will not deteriorate in any way. The sun is not in any need of mankind to be facing it, rather it is mankind that is need of the sun's heat, light and energy that houses are built facing the sun.

In asking us to pray, God is not in any need of human beings worship for Him. Rather, its mankind that is in need of facing towards Him in order to obtain the Divine special favours that could be bestowed upon us and for our own growth.

The Qur'an reminds us of the following:

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

***“And Prophet Moses AS Said If you are ungrateful, you and those on earth all together, most surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised.”***<sup>1</sup>

1. Ibrahim 14:8

As God loves those who are his friends and supporters, when they disobey His authority, they are immediately punished with the Gods Wrath for their actions until they are reminded, as the Qur'an states:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ

**“Had he invented against Us any sayings, We would have seized him by the right hand.”<sup>1</sup>**

Likewise, if the believers do wrong it will not be long before they are punished.

However, if the infidels do wrong, Allah SWT gives them reprieve, and for every opportunity of reprieve they receive, they perish:

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرَىٰ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوا<sup>٢</sup> وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِم مَّوْعِدًا

**“And those cities, We destroyed them when they did evil, and appointed for their destruction a tryst.”<sup>2</sup>**

If there is no hope in their reform, their accountability is postponed until the Day of Resurrection and their pact is full.

إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّئُهُمْ لِيُزِدُوا<sup>٣</sup> ذُنُوبًا إِثْمًا

**“We grant them indulgence only that they may increase in sin.”<sup>3</sup>**

Let us have a look at one example:

If a drop of tea drops on your glasses, you would immediately wipe it off and clean it. However, if a drop of tea falls upon your white shirt you may wait until you get home to change in to clean clothes.

But if a drop goes on the carpet which you walk upon you might leave it, for example, until spring cleaning season before you would give it a wash.

Likewise, Allah SWT treats everyone on an individual basis and based on transparency or dimness of the individual, his or her punishment may be delayed.

1. Al Haqqa 69:44–45

2. Al Kahf 18:59

3. Al Imraan 3:178

When the police stop a driver on the road, they request the drivers licence from the driver. If the driver

presents a doctor licence, political licence, builders licence, business approval documents and licence of “ijtihad”, or whichever other documents one can present, the police will not accept this from the driver. The only document the police will accept will be the drivers licence; otherwise, he will prevent the driver from proceeding.

In the Resurrection also, it is a condition that to be able to reach your destination, your Prayer Licence and required documents need to be with you and if not, none of the other documents or deeds you have will be accepted or give you salvation.

From the doctrine of traditions, the more the number of participants in congregational prayers the more rewards are obtainable until such time that there are ten participants, in which the rewards become so great that it is immeasurable, and no one other than God will know its true value.

Consider what one can do with their fingers. A person can with one finger dial a number on the dial pad of a telephone, and with two fingers lift a small bucket, with three fingers do slightly more work, until you reach a point where the work that can be done with ten fingers is limitless. Any work that one wishes to do can be done with those ten fingers, leaving the number of applications for those ten fingers to be boundless.

By looking at the benefits animals and the actions of some people, we can see that such similes such as

أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

***“They are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors”<sup>1</sup>***

Are both true and logical. The most valuable clothes for people are those made of silk, which is from the animal kingdom.

The most important foods for mankind such as milk, yoghurt, honey and meat are from the animal kingdom.

Animals are a means of transportation and ploughing as well as other sources of labour.

The whole process of wool spinning, leather manufacture, dairy production and livestock trade are dependent on animals.

We can even learn from some animals. The crow taught the son of Adam AS and his heritage how to

bury the dead.

Some animals reported to prophets, such as the hoopoe bird which reported the transgression of the people of Seba to Prophet Sulaiman AS.

Some animals protected the prophets, such as the spider, which protected the Prophet SAWA in the cave.

Animals can be trained and taught, so a trained hunting dog is halal (to own, buy and sell).

Animals that are dangerous, such as snakes, will not attack anyone unless we come in to close proximity.

By paying attention to the above information, aren't humans that attack people and places with bombs and missiles that are distant to them not worse than snakes?

Are not individuals that day and night trick and deceive others for the sake of fulfilling their own whims and desires, for their own benefits, throwing humanity down the drain – not worse than animals?

Are not people that have collected many criminal files to their names not worse than the worst of beastly characteristics?

1. Al Araaf 7: 179

The Qur'an states:

وَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ يُعَلِّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ

***“Be God wary and God will teach you.”*** 1

Only when one is God wary can the true realities can be learnt.

“Taqwa”, God Wary, means to distance oneself from bad and ugly actions. So yes, people who have a polluted heart are prevented from seeing many of the realities.

If one is a fanatic about their culture, tribal connections, sectarianism, race etc. they cannot understand realities, just like one who is wearing red tinted glasses in which everything they see will be tinted red, they will see turnips as beet. Likewise, one wearing green tinted glasses will see hay as green grass.

If a mirror is polished, it will reflect perfectly what is in front of it. The mirror of the heart also needs to be polished in order to be able to reflect and understand realities. A heart with a grudge is like a dirty bowl,

in which if clean water is poured in to it, the water too becomes polluted. Sins are like the dirt and dust that does not allow mankind to see realities and truths.

1. Baqarah 2:282

In the Qur'an we read in one Ayah

يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا،

***“They are entering God's religion in throngs.”***<sup>1</sup>

And elsewhere we read, that when those who were claiming to have faith and believed, the Qur'an states they should not be saying we believe, rather, but rather we surrender:

وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ

***“For belief has not yet entered your hearts.”***<sup>2</sup>

Yes, belonging to a religion has stages: Warm stages, cool stages and cooked stages. Every hot stage can become cold again and every cold stage may become hot again. However, never will anything cooked become raw again.

● Entry of people in to a religion is easy, and one that says “I witness that there is no God but Allah SWT and that Muhammad PBUH is the Messenger of Allah SWT” (Twin Declaration of Faith) becomes a Muslim. This stage is the becoming warm stage. However, higher levels than that is to heat up to being very hot. The companions of the Prophet SAWA, with strong and overflowing feelings towards Islam, went to wars and were prepared to sacrifice their souls for the cause. However, the Qur'an speaks with them directly and asks them to pay a portion of the spoils of war

وَأَعْلَمُوا؟ أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ؟ وَاللرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنْتُمْ ءَامَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ

***“Know that, whatever booty you take, the fifth of it is God's, and the Messenger's, if you believe in God.”***<sup>3</sup>

Yes, it is possible for someone to say the Twin Declaration of Faith and even fight alongside the Prophet SAWA, but when it comes to wealth, they fall short and look the other way. For this reason, the Qur'an makes it clear that along with the Twin Declaration of Faith and joining the wars and prayers, the rights of Allah SWT and the Prophet SAWA and the poor must also be paid by believers. Only after we accept all responsibilities does faith truly enter our hearts and it is only for a niche group of people that Allah SWT identifies as the Faithful Believers

أَوْ لَيْسَ لَهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا

***“Those in truth are the believers.”***<sup>4</sup>

The real faithful believers are a special set of people, as for those who are hypocrites and only outwardly show their faith, the Qur'an states:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَالِيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

***“And some men there are who say, ‘We believe in God and the Last Day’; but they are not believers.”***<sup>5</sup>

1. Al Nasr 110:2
2. Al Hujjarat 49:14
3. Al Anfal 8:41
4. Al Anfal 8:4
5. Baqarah 2:8

For a car that is being driven on the wrong side of the road, there are two potential encounters that may occur:

1. All those on the road honk their horns and flash their lights to alert the driver of their offence.
2. The driver is caught by police and an infringement penalty is issued.

The Qur'an also advises all Muslims to participate in Enjoining what is Right and Forbidding Evil as in the following Ayah:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ

بِاللَّهِ ۚ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ  
الْفَاسِقُونَ

“Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.”

1

But also suggests that a certain group have that responsibility:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ  
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

***“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.”*** 2

1. Al Imran 3:110

2. Al Imran 3:104

Firstly, with regards to the Ayah that states:

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

***“God accepts only of the pious.”*** 1

Piety in itself has stages. Therefore, pious means “with more piety”. The Qur’an states:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

**“Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing of you.”<sup>2</sup>**

Most of the common people and those who do wrong also have levels of piety even if they have never done any good nor do they leave any sin.

Secondly, if a government dictates that only university students can be employed their intention is that when one officially is employed in their field, they need to have that qualification, not that anyone who works outside their field or without qualification has no right to their wages earned.

Thirdly, the acceptance of your actions also has levels. The Qur’an states Allah SWT accepts with:

بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ

**“With gracious favor.”<sup>3</sup>**

And in the prayer fare welling Ramadhan we read **تَقْبِلْ بِأَحْسَنِ قَبُولِكَ** and accept our deeds with the best of your acceptances. So everyone’s actions will be accepted according to their own level of piety.

Therefore, the Qur’an states different levels of reward relative to the people who do good and to what action they do:

- ضِعْفَيْنِ (Baqarah 2:265) Some actions have double the reward.
- أَضْعَافًا (Baqarah 2:245) some have rewards that are multiplied multiple times over.
- فَ لَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا (Al Anaam 6:160) Some actions have a tenfold reward attached to them.
- كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ (Baqarah 2:261) Some actions have the reward multiplied 700 times over.
- فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ (Sajda 32:17) Some rewards are so great that only Allah SWT knows them.

And these differences are based upon the differences in the intention and the kind of good deed being performed.

1. Al Maidah 5:27
2. Al Hujjarat 49.13
3. Al Emran 3:37

Every producer in the world that makes something will have a brochure or manual on their product which details how to use the item, and the purchaser, in order to maximise their benefit of their new acquisition,

will read the manual in order to understand how to best benefit from the product.

Who authors these manuals? Is it any one other than the designers and producers of the product? No.

We also have a designer and creator who alongside with our creation has sent down for us a manual named the Holy Qur'an, and no one has the right to implement a law which opposes the Divine Laws within the Qur'an. This is because only the Creator knows what He created in totality and is aware of every corner of His creation, knows what is best for His creation and what is detrimental.

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

***“Shall He not know, who created? And He is the All-subtle, the All-aware.”*** 1

Whoever makes new man made laws to replace the laws of the Creator is like the one who leaves the manual from the primary source behind to follow the instructions of others.

1. Al Mulk 67:14

The Qur'an states that:

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

***“That you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you; God loves not any man proud and boastful.”***1

Is it true that one can live in such a balanced lifestyle that obtaining something or losing another won't have any effect on us?

A staff member in a bank is one day responsible for accepting cash deposits and on another day is responsible for the withdrawal of cash from deposit accounts. On neither day will they be either happy nor will they be sad at the gain or loss of money from the bank knowing they are simply a trustee of the money.

Another example: To the tyres of a tractor, it makes no difference whether or not the ground on which it rolls on is smooth or not. However, for the tyres of bicycle, it certainly will make a difference. A bird on a thin twig will have an effect on the twig when it stands or sits on it, but won't make any difference if it

lands on a tree branch.

So an eminent person with piety in his heart will not be affected by peripheral (or worldly) issues.

During the torridness of the day of Ashura and the arrows pounding in the direction of Imam Hussein AS in Karbala, his prayers were in the best order and with humility, while if the slightest breeze of difficulty touches us, all humility evaporates from our prayers.

1. Al Hadeed 57:23

Our worldly deeds and actions are also dependent on the intention in which they are carried out. Here is an example: A surgeon and a psycho both cut open a person's body, but the work of the surgeon is a service while that of the psycho is a crime.

The surgeon can work for both money and for the service of humanity, both of these intentions have their own value and worth within themselves.

Another example: A single glass of water is available to three people. One does not consume it because they have no desire for it, the other does not consume it because they are feeling upset, and the third does not drink it because his thoughts are with a fourth individual that may be thirstier than him or herself, and wants to give the glass to the fourth individual. The fact that all three people did not drink is the same, however their intentions differed and therefore so does the value of their action.

Paper money has a thin thread through it which indicates its genuineness and its original source from the reserve bank of the government. Paper notes without this thread are an indication of forged money. Likewise, in actions of worship, a thread exists between the worshipper and the creator which is the intention of nearness and sincerity towards Allah SWT, for with which without it, the link between us and Allah SWT is cut and our deeds are not accepted.

The Qur'an states that:

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا

***"Whoso brings a good deed shall have ten the like of it."***<sup>1</sup>

What's important is the bringing of the worthy deed to the Day of Judgment, not performing the deed itself in the world.

Logistically, the delivery of products to its destination has value, but if the products are damaged or destroyed in the middle of the way to its destination, it no longer has any value. Many deeds are good at face value but are afflicted with an incident which causes it to not arrive to its final destination.

Or when we start a task, we start boastfully and ostentatiously and without any spiritually divine intention, or in the middle of the task we are afflicted with jealousy, self-pride, and egotism, or after a deed we sin and wipe out all the rewards of the deed.

In these three examples, we may perform a good deed but its delivery to its final destination is lacking. That's why the Qur'an does not say who so does a good deed shall have ten the like of it, but rather, "Whoso *brings* a good deed shall have ten the like of it" – مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ: Whoso delivers the good deed to the Hereafter safely.

1. Anam 6: 160

One driving along a road may be feeling (anxious or) fear due to reasons such as not having enough fuel, carrying illegal materials, or more passengers than that which is allowed, speeding, losing the way (or maybe even losing the GPS signal), or not having anything prepared at the destination, or having uncomfortable companions.

If during one's life, the necessary provisions are collected, actions opposing Divine Laws are not done, is prepared for the journey to the Hereafter and knows the directions, with the ultimate destination in mind, and with righteous companions, acting in accordance to the Divine Laws, such a person will not have any worries or concerns.

If instead of aviation fuel you pour gasoline or water in to the tank of an airplane, the plane would never be able to take off. The prayers and supplications of one whose prayers are answered does not have any "haram food"<sup>1</sup> in their stomach.

The hadith that states:

“من سره أن يستجاب دعوته فليطيب مكسبه”

***“Whoever desires to have their supplications answered should purify and make halal their income and their food.”<sup>2</sup>***

Notwithstanding that a supplication is intended for requesting what is good, however most of our

requests are not for good, but rather we imagine that what we are requesting is good.

1. This refers to anything that may be eaten, from non halal food such as alcohol, pork, and meat slaughtered in a non-Islamic manner, through to halal food that may have been purchased with money acquired through haram means, for example money earned through gambling, through the trade of liquor etc. Of course, it is not restricted to food, if one has money in their accounts which is non-halal acquired, they are considered to have consumed “haram bites” in to their stomach. See item 90 and the consumption of Riba as an example.

2. Bihar Al Anwar V90 P373

Our books of supplications, such as Mafateeh Al Jinaan, have supplications narrated for all hours of the day and supplications for all days of the year, however, this is like the example of when you go to a bus station, an airport or train station. You see the time table for departure times at all hours of the day, for example at 8am, 9am, and 10am and so on. It does not mean that every traveler needs to travel on every hour that a service is available, but rather it means that once you make a decision to travel during a particular period, that there are such and such services available at so and so times. Likewise, with supplications, whenever someone wishes to recite a supplication at a particular period of time, there are specific supplications for that scenario.

In addition, small supplications, especially if one memorizes them, can be recited while going on with your daily business without affecting your daily routine.

In the Qur'an, God states that:

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ

***“Anything that strikes you that is good is certainly from God and anything that strikes you which is evil is certainly from within your soul”.<sup>1</sup>***

Like the Earth which spins around its own axis and around the Sun, parts of the Earth are dark while others are lit up. Any place that is bright is due to the Sun while anywhere where there is darkness is because of the Earth itself (facing away from the sun).

God has created grapes, but human beings make alcoholic beverages out of it which is the cause of thousands of accidents and illnesses.

God has given mankind the power, but some use this power to strike the impoverished.

God has given mind to mankind, but some use the mind with ill intention and use its mischievous and

devious powers on others.

So whatever is good is from God and the source of all that is evil stems from within ourselves.

1. Nisa 4:79

Firstly, an empty seed will never sprout, and prayers without presence of heart is like an empty seed. Prayers are the cause of people staying away from sedition only where it is with the presence of heart, otherwise the movements of your lips and body have no special virtue.

If schools and universities give lessons to people which help them grow, it does not mean that every individual that goes to educational institutes will benefit and grow, but rather it means that these institutions are the grow beds for people to go and learn with the condition that they take their studies seriously and that they understand what it is they are studying.

Prayers, if performed with its conditions and doctrines applied, will impede shameful and unjust deeds.

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

***“For Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds.”***<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, if someone that prayer’s commits an offence, that same person would be committing greater offences had it not been for their prayers, because the need to perform prayers correctly requires pure clothes and a pure body, clothes and the space in which you pray need to be not ones taken from others, and even this little attention given to rules and regulations of prayers is cause for the distancing of that person from unlawful and sinful deeds, just like when one wears white clothes, you would refrain from sitting on an unclean surface.

1. Ankaboot 29:45

Firstly, if someone else can perform this duty better than yourself through better presentation of the issue, your duty is to let the others conduct that role. When Allah SWT ordered Prophet Moses AS to go to Pharaoh to show him the right path, Prophet Moses AS requested his brother Harun AS, who had a better ability to communicate, be sent along with him.

وَأَخِي هَارُونُ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسَلْتُهُ مَعِيَ

***“Moreover my brother Aaron is more eloquent than I. Send him with me as a helper.”***<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, sometimes once is not enough, but rather multiple clarifications and different methods may be required for an effect to take place. Just like hardened wood that won't be cut with a single strike of an axe, but rather repeated strikes are required. The Qur'an says that:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَكَّرُوا ۝۱

***“We have explained (things) in various (ways) in this Qur'an, in order that they may receive admonition.”***<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, it is possible that our methodology is incorrect and the reason for the lack of effect. This is because “enjoining of good and prohibition of wrong” has conditions and principles applicable so that each wrong has to be approached in its own unique way.

Sometimes clothing is dirtied with dust, and other times it is dirtied with soot. Dust can be slapped away but that same strike on soot on your clothes will not only dirty your hands with the same, but also drive the soot deeper in to the fabric of clothes. Removal of soot is by blowing on it while dust is with hitting it and therefore dusting it away. Each wrong requires its own methodology.

As the Qur'an states:

وَأْتُوا ۝۱ الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

***“Enter houses through the proper doors.”***<sup>3</sup>

Meaning you should enter each house through its own entry path.

Fourthly, to stop people from doing wrong, you must use lawful approaches. When Prophet Lot AS saw his community wanting to approach his guests with evil intention, he opened lawful doors to them so as to prevent them from committing sin:

قَالَ يَاقَوْمِ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ ۝۱ فَاتَّقُوا ۝۱ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ فِي ضَيْفِي

***“He said: "O my people! Here are my daughters: they are purer for you (if ye marry)! Now fear Allah, and cover me not with shame about my guests!”***<sup>4</sup>

1. Al Qusas 28:34
2. Israa 17:41
3. Baqarah 2:189
4. Hud 11:78

The intention of the slogan “Nor West Nor East” is that we have chosen a path and method of governance which has no link to either the East or the West nor would we be overwhelmed by any of the so called superpowers. Being affected by the East or the West are two diseases that will need to be eradicate and is a sign of weakness.

However, in seeking knowledge, experience and skills, we must be both Eastern and Western. In the Hadeeth, we read that the Prophet SAWA stated:

”اطلبو العلم و لو بالصين“

**“Seek knowledge even if it is from China.”**

Or in other words, even if it’s from the furthest corners of the world. Similarly, the effects of heat and ice can be cause of illnesses but their proper use in different situations, such as in cooking and storage of food respectively, renders them very useful.

Yes, we should be benefiting from ice, but we should not allow ourselves to be affected by it. We should be benefiting from heat, but we should not allow ourselves to be affected by it. We should be benefiting from the East and the West, however we should not allow ourselves to be affected by them.

Although the narration states that “*Say there is no God but Allah SWT and you will prosper*”<sup>1</sup>, it is not that the movement of the tongue that speaks those words yields prosperity, but rather the belief in monotheism.

The word “تفلحوا” (prosper) is derived from “فلاحت” (agriculture) with the meaning of growth of a seed in to a fruitful plant, and is a term coined for farmers as they provide the tools for the cultivation for seeds to grow in to fully-fledged plants.

In order for the germination of the seed to occur from within the depths of earth’s soil, three stages are needed:

The roots of the seed need to deepen down in to the soil.

Nutrients need to be absorbed by it.

The soil above it needs to be broken so as to allow its emergence.

A person must also, if they desire to uplift in to the sphere of monotheism, have deep rooted foundations in his/her beliefs which are derived through correct logic and reasoning, in order to fully utilize the potential in ones' abilities for their growth and development, and therefore attain the benefits, removing the obstacles that holds them back.

So prosperity is a result of deep-rooting, pursuing and movement in the Divine direction.

1. Bihar Anwar, V18 P202,

A mother, for the sake of seeing her child who is studying or serving in a remote and distant location, will travel and suffer through hardships such as extreme weather conditions to do so. However, when it comes to the time of departure and separation, she will say to herself that "I could bear all the hardships to see my child, but I cannot bear the hardship of our separation..."

Imam Ali AS said in Dua-e-Kumail:

صَبَرْتُ عَلَىٰ عَذَابِكَ، فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ فِرَاقِكَ

**“(Suppose that...) I am able to endure Your chastisement, How can I endure separation from You?”<sup>1</sup>**

1. Translation: <http://www.al-islam.org/dua-kumayl-a-translation-and-commentary-husein-a...> [9] Commentary: <http://www.al-islam.org/commentary-kumayl-supplication-allama-husayn-ans...> [10]

These sexual instincts and desires have been created by Allah SWT and so suppressing them is not permissible, but rather the control of those instincts is what is necessary. The existence of instincts is necessary for the preservation, continuation and completion of the human race. If we did not have a stomach, we would die of hunger, if we did not have anger, we would not defend ourselves against danger, and if we did not have desires, the human race would be extinct.

Nevertheless, the satisfaction of those desires needs to be fulfilled in a correct manner.

Desires are like a gas cylinder in that if the release of gas is controlled, it can be used to heat and cook with, but if uncontrolled, can lead to an explosive and dangerous outcome.

Women have a desire to self-beautify themselves. If this desire is controlled and exhibited inside the home, a sweet and cherished life full of love will result however if exhibited in the streets, results in the breakdown of family units in the community. A man who sees hundreds of beautified women on the streets and then returns home will pay little attention to his wife because his relationship with his wife becomes diminished.

In addition, those who are unmarried will (as a result of the above) have their desires provoked and a like a water candle that you carve out and burn, the thoughts of the unmarried will transgress boundaries and be destined towards wrong, resulting in a path to be followed leading to running away from their homes, threats, suicides, sexual assaults and mental illnesses.

Allah SWT created humans free willed and gave them the ability to choose their path. Although some have said that humans in their path are predestined but think that they are free willed, there is plenty of evidence to point to the free will of mankind, for which some will be presented below:

A) Every person who needs to make a choice where this doubt and hesitation in going ahead with that decision needs to go through a thought process as to whether or not to go ahead? That very hesitation is evidence of free will and the ability to or to refrain from doing something.

B) People are sometimes critical of the works of others, and that criticism in itself points to the fact that one can either act upon or refrain from acting upon a task.

C) Every person has done or said something that they have later regretted. That regret points to the ability to have not committed that act or said those words and therefore the free will to have refrained from doing so, which is why one then says “Oh how I wish I had not done or said that!”

D) All people raise their own children to the best of their ability and/or send them to mentors and tutors, indicating that one can move away from the wrong path and steer towards the right path.

Therefore, hesitation and doubt, criticism, regret and upbringing point to the reality of free will. Not only is free will for humans but also granted to animals. If you cage a cat and give it all kinds of food inside the cage to eat, it will prefer being out roaming the streets and have the simplest of foods rather than to be stuck inside the cage.

In heaven too, had there been no freedom, the faithful would have faced difficulties and discomfort, so we read in the Qur’an that when they enter heaven they thank Allah SWT for their freedom:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدُّهُ ۖ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ

***"Praise be to Allah, Who has truly fulfilled His Promise to us, and has given us (this) land in heritage: We can dwell in the Garden as we will."***<sup>1</sup>

Taken all of the above in to consideration, mankind is a servant of Allah SWT and must abide by the divine laws imposed upon him. And if the boundaries of freedom are not adhered to and choose to follows their own whims and fantasies, or those of others, they will be doomed in to the valley of destruction.

Freedom must be within the frame work of Divine Laws and intellect so that the deprivation of the freedom of others does not occur.

1. Al Zumr 39:74

Allah SWT says

أَنَا خَيْرَ شَرِيكَ فَمَنْ عَمَلَ لِغَيْرِي فَهُوَ لِمَنْ عَمَلَهُ غَيْرِي

***"I am the best partner, if one performs a deed where their goal is both I and something/someone else then their reward is with that whom they partnered with Me."***<sup>1</sup>

Any form of shirk or partnering with Allah SWT is an insult to His Grandeur and Status.

If someone was to say "I love both you and a rock" it would be an insult.

If someone was to say "I cooked this food for both you and my cat" it would again be an insult.

The result of following the Divine Laws is the growth and perfection of mankind while shirk and hypocrisy is the cause of the downfall of mankind. If one mouse falls in to a pot of food that whole pot is wasted.

One day a crew of a flight disembarked all the passengers and their cargo and said that there was a mouse sighted on the plane. They asked: "We had to disembark because of a single mouse?" The reply was affirmative, because that mouse may have eaten away a wire which cuts communication lines between the pilot and the airports control tower and the plane may end up crashing.

The mouse, being "Shirk", chews away the wire and cuts the connection between the worshipper and his creator.

1. Wasail Al Shia V1 P72.

● Clothing are not all about “Mahram1 and non-mahram” issues, but is sometimes from the point of view of honor and manners. Generally, when one is alone at home, you may wear simple and plain clothing. However, when hosting guests, in respecting your visitors, you may wear something more suitable to the occasion. And if you go to a wedding reception, again you would wear something suitable to that occasion. This change in the clothing is in respect and honor of the guests and surrounding environment.

● Also, therefore, in the presence of Allah SWT during your prayers, appropriate and complete clothing is required.

1. Mahram: Refers to being halal in terms of hijab... so a wife can she her hair to her husband, father, brother, son, uncle etc but not to a foreign man outside her family.

Imam Ali AS said to “*Hammam*”

عَظُمَ الْخَالِقُ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ فَصَغُرَ مَا دُونَهُ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ

**“When the Creator is glorified within one’s self, everything else becomes insignificant.” 1**

When we are on the ground, a hectare of land seems a large area of land. However, if you board a plane and start ascending in to the skies, the higher your altitude the more the land seems to shrink.

If you look at the total amount of money in the bank, your savings are very insignificant.

Likewise, if we look at the glorifications (tasbeeh) of all the creations, our own glorification of Allah SWT is insignificant.

If we look at the major libraries of the world and the volume of books they have, we would not be so proud of the amount of our own reading!

When Imam Sajjad AS was asked “Why is it that you worship so much?” he replied “Where is my worshipping? And where is the worshipping of Ali Ibn Abi Talib AS?”<sup>2</sup>

Allah SWT in the Qur’an says to the Prophet SAWA:

**“Remember the hardships of the past prophets so your hardships become easy and light...”**

Yes! If we look behind at the path you have crossed we may be proud, but we must look forward and ponder over the paths we have not yet traversed.

1. Speech 193 of Nahjul Balagha

2. A term used to magnify the efforts of the latter as opposed to the former. I.e Imam Sajjad AS is saying my worshipping is but nothing as compared to that of my grandfathers.

In the traditions we read:

اتقوا الحقرات من الذنوب فانها لا تغفر

**“Avoid the minor sins for they are not forgiven.”<sup>1</sup>**

It may be that one does not feel shyness in committing sins considered as minor, and therefore may think it not necessary to seek repentance. One’s boldness and courage to repeat and engage in the sin is increased and thus the foundation for forgiveness is no longer available.

If someone owes a small amount of money, but boldly neglects to pay the debt, they may not be forgiven. While another who owes a larger amount but apologetically seeks an extension of time, may be handed respite and excused.

Yes, a small debt may not be excused from someone who is bold, but a larger one from an apologetic person might be!

1. Wasaail Al Shia V15 P310

The hadeeth states that start everything by saying “بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ”, even when you are dinning and you change the type of food you’re eating, renew your “بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ.”<sup>1</sup>

If you pay attention to a manufacturing plant, you would notice that the final product produced will have the logo and the brand of the producer imprinted on it. For example, in a manufacturing plant in China, all their tools big and small, even their cartons and trucks related to the logistics of the product have their logos printed on them.

The flag of a nation is raised upon the tables of the government offices and their buildings, as well as upon the ships that represents the nation when travelling to different parts of the world.

A worshipper would also imprint the divine signature and logo on each of their deeds, whether large or small.

Prophet Ibrahim AS says my prayers, worship, life and death are all for Cherisher of the Worlds.

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds".<sup>2</sup>

● The Qur'an says to the Prophet SAWA:

● **"Start with the name of the Cherisher but also during free time to put all your attention towards the pleasure of Allah SWT"**

أَقْرَأُ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

● **"Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created".<sup>3</sup>**

● And

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَب

● **"Therefore, when thou art free (from thine immediate task), still labor hard, And to thy Lord turn (all) thy attention."<sup>4</sup>**

1. Bihar Al Anwar v63 p421

2. Al Anaam 6:162

3. Alaq 96:1

4. Inshirah 94:7-8

When the Prophet SAWA migrated from Mecca to Medina, Muslims also migrated with him, however some Muslims found themselves being opposed by their children and partners. And Ayah of the Qur'an was brought down that some of your partners and children are your enemy and that you should steer away from them. Some Muslims decided that even if their partners and children repent and migrate, they would no longer accept them. The completion of the Ayah continues to say:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا! <sup>؟</sup> إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ <sup>؟</sup> وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا <sup>؟</sup> وَتَصَفَّحُوا <sup>؟</sup> وَتَغْفِرُوا <sup>؟</sup> فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

***“O ye who believe! Truly, among your spouses and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them! But if ye forgive and overlook, and cover up (their faults), verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”***<sup>1</sup>.

1. Taghabun 64: 14

The water and electricity utilities provide the same quantities to all homes they service, the dwellers of those homes can use these services in both proper and sinister ways.

Allah SWT has created mankind free willed and everyone is able develop in ways according to their own choices. If one makes an informed choice to choose an evil path, the blame falls upon themselves.

But the question is why then does Allah SWT not impede such people? It is because if Allah SWT was to

- Mute every slanderer and individual that uses profanities
- Paralyse the hands of every oppressor that raises their hand against the oppressed
- Blind the eyes that views obscenities
- Deafens the ears the listens to blasphemy etc.

Then are these individuals able to be praised any longer for not doing their respective wrongs? The value of reward is when one, by their own free will, knowledge and choice, perform a deed or refrain from one. If you tie the hands of a person, take money from the pocket and spend that money benevolently, you cannot say that person is charitable, and if one is blind you cannot praise their piety for not looking!

Allah SWT wants mankind to be free to choose between good and evil and act upon the decision.

Every night, we await the rising of the next day's sun, however that does not mean that we just sit there wait in the darkness, but rather, everyone can turn on the light in their own room.

During winter, we await the return of summer, but that does not mean we should shiver in winter and not warm up our homes.

During the period of the Occultation of the Imam of Our Time, may his return be hastened, we should fight oppression to the best of our ability and work towards the embitterment of ourselves and community. In our narrations we read **افضلُ الاعمالُ إنتظارُ الفرج** the best of deeds is awaiting the reappearance of our Imam, 1 may his return be hastened. Based on this narration, “awaiting” is not a status, but rather an occupation or task... **افضلُ الاعمالُ** – the best deed! So in reality, awaiting actually

requires work to be done. A reformer awaiting must be reformed themselves, someone who is waiting for their guests to arrive does not rest while they are waiting.

The role of people during Occultation is to self-develop and to enjoin what is right with truth and to educate members of our community, and not to remain idle.

1. Bihar Al Anwar V75 P208

Firstly, the Islamic System does not mean every individual that is a Muslim in society is just, but rather the system of governance and laws need to be that of an Islamic nature.

A good trip is one where the vehicle of transport is in good order and the driver is experienced and the destination is reached, not that *none* of the travellers will not experience *any* glitches.

No one surveys every single passenger on every trip, but rather the concern is more about the skill of the driver and the safety of the vehicle used to transport.

In Ayah 102 of Surah Baqarah, we read a group of people choose to follow Satan rather than Prophet SAWA Suleiman AS (A Divinely Guided Prophet SAWA whose kingdom was divinely gifted).

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَىٰ مَلِكِ سُلَيْمَانَ

**“And they follow what the Satan’s recited over Solomon’s kingdom”.**

Secondly, Justice does not mean equality in all places. A just doctor does not give the same medicines to all the patients, a just teacher does not give the same marks to all the students, rather, this is equality and completely unjust. Are the cells of the eyes the same as that of the bones in the foot? Are the cells of leaves, fruits, mountains, fields, minerals, jungles, planets and galaxies, colors etc. all the same? Differentiation is of two kinds: One is with wisdom and with the truth and the other is discriminatory and against the truth.

Sometimes inconsistencies are based upon oppression which must be fully opposed. Traders that are aggressive, short sell, hoard, conspire, embezzle, steal, run shark loans and similar activities must have what these extracted from them. However sometimes inconsistencies are due to the effects of work, skill levels, expertise, administration, initiatives and similar issues in which divine rights (such as Khums and Zakat, religious charity) can be paid to. If we don’t want to pay for the rights of initiatives, skills, work and expertise, society will stand still and growth will not occur.

In the narrations we read:

من ذهب أنه له على الآخر فضلاً فهو من المستكبرين

**“Whoever sees themselves as better than another then they are from the arrogant ones.”<sup>1</sup>**

Because we are not aware of how in the end a person will end up being before they pass away, we cannot hastily pass a verdict upon them. Many believers have died as immoral people and many immoral people have passed away as believers.

Imam Sadiq AS in explaining the above narration describes how magicians whose entire lives were deviant in one moment have faith enter their hearts upon witnessing the miracle of Prophet Moses AS and all the threats of Pharaoh were to no avail. Satan worshipped Allah SWT for six thousand years but in the end deviated, while Hur and Zuhair in Karbala found happiness. So it is possible to leave the path of disbelief and immorality.

1. Bihar Al Anwar V70 P226

Breadth of chest means to be big spirited. Just like the tyres of a tractor is able to withstand a rough surface and not get damaged, as opposed to that of the common individual who is more like the tyre of a bicycle that can withstand considerably less hindrance and can easily be damaged.

Imam Ali AS said “The means to secure high authority is breadth of chest (i.e., generosity).” وقال عليه  
1 آله الرياسة سعة الصدر. 1  
so an obligatory requirement for accepting responsibility is to be able to with stand bumps along the way.

A supplication by Prophet Moses AS once he reached the position of prophet hood was to request breadth of his chest and asked Allah SWT to “expand my breast” 2:

قَالَ رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي

Of course, Prophet Moses AS requested this and Allah SWT provided this to him, however, it should be noted that this was granted before any request from the Prophet SAWA:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ

***“Did We not expand thy breast for thee”.***<sup>3</sup>

1. Nahjul Balagha Hikmat 176
2. Surah Ta Ha 20:25.
3. Inshirah 94: 1

In some cases, Islam gives quantity importance, for example when praying in congregation, the more present during the prayers the more reward there is in it.

In some cases, Islam also gives quality importance, for example giving towards the poor where how much given is not important, but rather the sincerity in which it was given:

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ

***“And they give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan, the captive.”***<sup>1</sup>

The amount given was not much, but the sincerity was pure.

Sometimes both quality and quantity is proposed. For example, with regards to the remembrance of Allah SWT the Qur'an states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ۚ اذْكُرُوا ۚ اللَّهُ زَكْرًا كَثِيرًا

***“O believers, remember God oft.”***<sup>2</sup>

And also

هُم فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

***“Those are they who are humble in their prayers.”***<sup>3</sup>

1. Insan 76:8
2. Ahzab 33:41
3. Al Mo'mineen 23:2

The tip of a shovel, due to the striking of the earth and along with the wear and tear it gets as a result, remains white, shiny and sharp, but the upper parts while bulky, is black and rusty.

Likewise, a nation strives in the path of Allah SWT and sends its youth to wars defending its doctrine and nation, and although it appears on the surface that the youth are perishing and the nation is exhausting its youth, from the standpoint of the international community and position of conscious awareness, that heart of the nation is white and unaccepting of loss... as opposed to a colonized nation in fear that appears on the outside to have more of the comforts of the world, but its inside is black and rusted.

The Qur'an states the following with regards to the wives of the Prophet SAWA:

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنِ يَا تُمِئَاتٍ مِّنْكُمْ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۗ<sup>١</sup>  
وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا

***“O wives of the prophet! Whoever of you commits an open indecency, the punishment shall be increased to her doubly; and this is easy to Allah.”*** 1

And likewise, in terms of doing good, the reward doubles:

وَمَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتَهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا  
رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا

***“And whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Apostle and does good, We will give to her reward doubly, and We have prepared for her an honorable sustenance.”***2

● The higher the tip of the mountain is, the deeper the valley of that mountain becomes. In Hadiths, we also read the following:

يَغْفِرُ لِلْجَاهِلِ سَبْعُونَ ذَنْبًا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِلْعَالِمِ ذَنْبًا وَاحِدًا

● ***“God will forgive the ignorant seventy sins before a single sin is forgiven of a learned scholar”***3.

A Persian poem translates as follows:

نردبان این جهان ، ما و منیست

عاقبت این نردبان ، افتادنیست

لاجرم آنکس که بالاتر نشست

استخوانش سخت تر خواهد شکست

The ladder of this world is about “me” and “us”

The result of this ladder is to fall

In so much as the higher on it one sits

The harder their bones will end up breaking.

1. Ahzab 33:30
2. Ahzab 33:31
3. Al Kafi – Part 1, page 59.

Each movement has several elements to it: The beginning, a path, a vehicle, a guide and a destination. Between these five elements, the guide is the most important.

If the leader and guide is knowledgeable and pious, neither goal would be lost not will there be any deviation.

If the leader is worthy and people are obedient, problems are solved, if a needle is sharp of and a thread is also attached to it, any fabric can be sewn by it, but if the needle is blunt or thread becomes detached, even the closest fabric won't be stitched.

If people are disobedient, the leader's task won't be advanced just like the thread that doesn't follow the needle, no matter how hard the needle tries to thread the fabric. The movement and the penetration of the needle in to different fabrics will depend upon the thread following the needle. A skilled driver is able to drive a vehicle even if the vehicle is damaged in some way. In this way, the prophets were able to build the best of communities even in the most difficult circumstances.

However, if the leader is unqualified, even if under the best of conditions, those conditions and

opportunities will be wastes, just like if the best supercar goes under the control an amateur driver, it will be driven in to the gorge!

Someone hired out a camel to go from Cairo to Abbaseye. The traveller climbed on to the camel's back and the guide held on to the bridle of the camel and walked alongside them. During their travel, the guide would quietly, and sometimes loudly, mock and make fun of his customer. But since the traveller was alone, foreign and in need, the guide continued with his audacious behaviour throughout.

During this trip, a person saw this occurrence and asked the traveller if he knew what the guide was muttering? The traveller replied affirmatively. So he was asked why he continued to put up with it. The traveller replied: If the guide takes me to my destination and the path he is taking through is correct, what he says is not important.

In Surah Mutaffifeen (The Stinters), a number of different ways in which the sinners mock and humiliate the believers:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ

***“Behold, the sinners were laughing at the believers.”*** 1

وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ

***“When they passed them by winking at one another.”*** 2

وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ

***“And when they returned to their people they returned blithely.”***3

وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ

***“And when they saw them they said, 'Lo, these men are astray!’”***4

However, the perseverance of the believers in not giving up their path pays of;

# فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ

***“So today the believers are laughing at the unbelievers.”***<sup>5</sup>

1. Surah Mutafiffen 83:29
2. Surah Mutafiffen 83:30
3. Surah Mutafiffen 83:31
4. Surah Mutafiffen 83:32
5. Surah Mutafiffen 83:34

In competitions, sportsmen and women do not stay we are too afraid of losing so we won't enter the sports field. Footballers must participate in the competition, goal conceding or goal scoring. Even if losses come hard and heavy, the team continues to participate in the competition. Napoleon said that he was defeated in fourteen operations before he finally found his success.

Based on narrations, during droughts we must participate in the prayers of rain. We must fulfil our duties. Whether it rains as a result or not rests ultimately with Allah SWT.

Firstly, every form of showing yourself and being seen by others is not forbidden/haram. For example, husband and wife make themselves presentable and beautify themselves for each other's pleasure and that is a form of worship in itself.

Islam advises us to attend mosques for prayers and that also is a form of showing yourself, but it is for the glorification of religious rituals.

The mourning for Imam Hussein AS1 through presence on roads and public places is a form of public demonstration, but hidden within this public display is worship.

Secondly, the presence of some individuals in such gatherings and in mosques can itself practically encourage others and is a form of propagation to others. If the well-respected individuals and those we look up to go to the local mosques, the community will also naturally follow the lead.

Showing off is haram where our intention and goal is showing off, not for the work being done. For example, if we go to such places so we can tell others how good we are and of how moral we are, that is hypocrisy and haram. However, if the intention is to encourage others to go by practically telling them “look I have come, so should you”, that is practical propagation and has reward in it.

1. The third Imam, martyred in Karbala in 61 AH by the army on the order of Yazeed Bin Muawiah, may he be cursed.

When we sit down to dine, we might have both sweet, spicy, and pickled foods, children may favour the sweets and completely ignore the pickled foods, but as adults, we know both are important.

Bitter experiences in our life also have benefits, consider the following:

1. Attention is directed towards Allah SWT during difficult times in our life.
2. It makes one able to consider things more thoroughly and flourish in their ability to think outside the square.
3. May in fact be a form of washing off our past sins and slip ups.
4. Ability to better appreciate the blessings we are surrounded with and have come to consider for granted.

With regards to experiences there are three groups of people: The children that are upset when the moment spices and pickles enter their mouths, the teenagers that simply put up with it, and the parents that fork out money to buy them.

The Qur'an states there are a group, who when a calamity befalls them,

1. Are impatient;1

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا

2. That are patient2:

وَيَشِيرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

***"Give good tidings to the patient, Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."***

And another group that go to greet difficulties

3. And among them is he who awaits.3

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ

No one forced any one to go with the Prophet SAWA to fight in the battlefields, and when the Prophet SAWA said he had no horses or weapons to arm his followers with; they would cry as to why they could not fight on the war front.

From bitter and harsh experiences, we can, with patience, good management and seeking help from Allah SWT, achieve the best of results and reap the best of benefits. Just as with sour lemons, lemonade can be made.

Yes, a good chef can even make jam out of the peel of oranges. Today, even rubbish can be put to good use.

Hazrat Zeinab's AS speech, as a prisoner of war, in the castle of oppressors in Kufa (Iraq) and Sham (Syria), sent shivers down the spine of the oppressive regime.

In the Mosque of Sham, Imam Sajjad AS went upon the mimbar and powerfully impeached the regime of Bani Ummayah, the cursed. Yazid Ibn Muawiyah, may he be cursed, ordered the caller for prayers to recite loudly the Call to Prayer (Adhan) to cut the speech off and hoped that Imam Sajjad's words can be washed out and not be heard. Yet the Imam turned the tables and proceeded to comment on each of the words of the Adhan until the entire Mosque was left shaking, especially with the words "أشهد أن محمد" رسول الله" where he reminded Yazid a powerful reminder: "Oh Yazid, is this Mohammad (PBUH) my grandfather or yours? Are these prisoners of war not the descendants of the Prophet SAWA?"

When Imam Kadhim AS was thrown in to solitary confinement in prison, he said "What a wonderful place for worship." Many scholars have authored books in difficult circumstances and even while in prison and cast away by oppressive governments.

1. Maarij 70:20
2. Baqarah 2:155-156
3. Ahzab 33:23

Islam is an innate religion and at the discretion and freedom of each individual. So relations, while keeping freedoms and discretions, has no problem in it.

A child on the dining table with spoon in hand, fills their spoon with food and messily misses the mouth spilling food all over their own clothes and table. The mother becomes upset and takes the spoon to feed the child herself, yet despite being fed, the child may say, with full contentment that they would prefer to have the spoon in their own hand rather than having the spoon in someone else's hand and being fed. That is, even if it means creating a big mess!!

In the first ten years after the Revelation to the Prophet SAWA, and perhaps because of the large number of idols in the Ka'ba, Muslims direction of prayer was considered to be Al Quds (Palestine). After

the migration to Medina, the Jews started their propaganda that you Muslims pray towards our holy house and therefore have no independence.

The Prophet SAWA turned to his Lord awaiting a response to their accusation, in which time a revelation was revealed to start praying towards the Ka'ba as the Muslims direction of prayer:

لِيَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ

***“That the people may not have any argument against you.”***<sup>1</sup>

Likewise, in Islam, it is forbidden to imitate the unbelievers as this is a form of losing face as a Muslim and giving tribute to the non-believers.

1. Baqarah 2:150.

A passer-by goes by a crystal glass shop and notices some drinking glasses on display on the shop-front that were placed upside-down. After looking at them for a little while, the passer-by goes in, picks one of the glasses up and complains to the shop keeper, asking why these glasses are sealed from the top yet bottomless.

The shop keeper smiles and says that if you look at it the right way and hold it the right way up, both of those problems will be resolved.

Yes, many of the problems are based upon incorrect beliefs and ideas. We imagine that the world is for convenience and comfort, and so we ask why there is inconvenience and discomfort. Like someone sitting in a kebab restaurant and complaining as to why there is no shower here? That individual needs to understand and believe that the restaurant is not a bathroom.

We too have to understand that the world is not a place to sleep, is not a place of pleasure, or a crib to be rocked in, but rather, one must grow and develop in this world in this world and tackle hardships in order to take oneself to growth, development and perfection.

The Qur'an reveals:

فَأَخَذْنَا هُمْ بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

***“And We seized them with misery and hardship that haply they might be humble.”***<sup>1</sup>

It's true that a scent stick, unless burning, will not be able to release its fragrance in to its environment. Hardship is a tool of much pride and vanity.

Like the regulated air that is pumped in to the tires of cars, so too are hardships that are experienced by mankind necessary to regulate and normalize us, eliminate neglect, vanity, ego and pride, as well as providing the pressure needed to allow the creation of new initiatives and a source of inventions.

1. Al Anaam 42

In the Qur'an, faith and pious deeds come together

آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

Those that believe, and do deeds of righteousness, like a needle and thread that need to work together, for which otherwise if the thread is not through the eye of the needle would not be able to sew anything.

The Qur'an states:

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي

***"If you love God, follow me."***<sup>1</sup>

Many say that *we have faith* but do no deeds, or that *we believe in God* but don't speak to Him nor do they pray, they say *The Wilayat of Ameer Al Mumineen AS (Imam Ali AS) is in our hearts*, but nothing in their actions has even the slightest figment of his Eminence in them, and that *We believe in the Imam of Our Time (May his return be hastened)* yet do not pay his rights that are obligatory upon us. If their actions do not represent what they say they believe, surely doubt has to be cast upon that belief.

In the past, when wars were fought and won, prisoners of war were sold to others as slaves. The more skilled the slave was, the higher the purchase price was. One day, a slave was brought to the market with a very high price tag. When a purchaser asked why he was told that this slave is able to detect who is thirsty and who is not. The purchaser was attracted to that skill and bought the slave.

He then invited his friends over to dine, but did not present them with any water. After some time, one of the invitees requested water. The owner looked upon the slave but the slave said that your guest is lying, that he is not thirsty. Slowly, more and more people started to claim thirst but the slave continued to belie them. Until one of the guests got up to get some water. At that point, the slave said to his master

that that guest was truly thirsty, because he got up from his place and obtained the water himself, rather than just claiming to be thirsty.

So someone who is truthful actually takes steps towards their claim. One who is without deeds can only make the claim of having faith.

#### 1. Al Imran 31

It is innately built in to humans that we idolise champions, take lead from and are impressed upon by role models. One of the best and most influential ways to grow and develop is through the knowledge of an appropriate role model. The more that role model is apparent and complete, the more attractive they are.

Patronage and the love of Ahlul Bayt AS is the foundation of taking leads and being impressed upon by role models as is the patronage to such greats. Therefore, if any one loves someone as their role model they would try hard to act, speak and behave like they do.

Of course, the connection and love an individual may have will have value when that individual tries hard to be inspired by their role model, follow them and support them in a practical way.

If a child asks for biscuits from his father, and his father promises to buy them for him, the child's eyes will be locked on the door awaiting his father's return. As soon as the father walks in, the child asks if he has fulfilled his promise to bring the biscuits, and if the father replies "No, but I love you very much", will that love without action be appreciated?

The withholding of truth is a sin, but the revelation of the truth requires pre conditions. Many truths that are revealed prematurely, and without the right foundations can lead to aggravation of corruption.

Sugar, is sweet. But the very same sugar if placed, as it is, in to the mouth of a child, would cause suffocation. We don't need to explain what sugar is and how the body needs it to work properly, rather the sugar should be dissolved in water and slowly given to the child.

Many truths require the preliminary introductions to be explained first, as many people are not prepared to accept the truth that is stated once and in its pure form. People go willingly inside a shower and wet their heads and hair, but if unready, a single glass of water poured on them will result in an unpleasant reaction.

A testimony to this is the fact that people are prepared to go and kiss the hands of the Jurists and pay their Khums and Zakat to them, but are not so enthusiastic about paying their taxes... because of their understanding of the Ayahs in the Qur'an and narrations about such issues, and after hearing it from

those they trust, and from their faith and cultural point of view, they are willing to make those payments. Likewise, with the visitations to the Imams and Imam Zadas, because they are aware of their significance they are prepared to go through hardship just to visit them and pay their respects and would be proud of having visited them, yet someone who is not aware of who they are would find no motivation to even send a greeting to them from afar.

So having intellectual premise and foundations for belief is a prerequisite.

Generally speaking, the hair that makes up the eyebrows and the eyelashes can remain unchanged on our face for decades and not grow at all, whereas the facial hair and the hair on our heads grows and changes every moment. Both are cells that are fed through the same meat, blood, nutrition and oxygen, yet the All Able Allah SWT has created them so that one remains unchanged and the other continuously changes, while close in proximity to each other.

Furthermore, there is no logical, experimental or passed-on information provided to us that limits the age of an individual. Age is like the process of change and its speed or otherwise is not limited by any boundaries, just as light has no boundaries. Allah SWT in the Qur'an, has granted the age of 1000 years for Prophet Noah AS and sleep of 300 years for the People of the Cave.

There are two types of obedience. Sometimes people are obedient to someone because of fear or greed or lack of self-confidence, just like the people of Pharaoh were obedient to him

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَاَطَاعُوهُ

***“So he made his people unsteady, and they obeyed him.”<sup>1</sup>***

And sometimes their obedience is based upon faith, love and passion, for otherwise, as the Qur'an says to the Prophet SAWA

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

***“Had you been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from about you.”<sup>2</sup>***

In Islam, the relation between the people and the leader is called “Wilayat”. The word “Wilayat” means following with which alongside there is love. Divine Leaders do not take anything for themselves;

وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

***“Neither am I of those who take things upon themselves.”***<sup>3</sup>

Nor do they prefer themselves over others

إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

***“I am only a mortal like you.”***<sup>4</sup>

Nor do they consider themselves having more rights over others.

During times of danger, the leader does not abandon his followers. Imam Ali AS states that the Prophet SAWA was closer to the enemy than the rest of us. He was Divinely ordered by Allah SWT to send his blessings upon people and to pray for them<sup>5</sup>,

وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ

And likewise people have been order to send their blessings upon the Prophet SAWA

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

***“O believers, do you also bless him, and pray him peace.”***<sup>6</sup>

So the relationship between the leader and the people is one of love and blessings, not of fear and terror.

1. Zukhruf 43:54
2. Al Imran 3:159
3. Saad 38:86
4. Kahf 18:110
5. Tawba 9:103
6. Ahzab 33:56

Taxes paid to the government are used for the services of the nation. Roads and highways are built,

security is provided, medical services and hospitals are provided for members of the society, schools and universities are built for education. That money is spent for the provision of the required services and is similar to that spent on one's own self and family on food, clothing and shelter.

Therefore, taxes paid to the government is to secure services to the community and for the general benefit of the nation, while finances for khums and zakat for the disadvantaged and the removal of their problems.

Denial of Divine Prophets can sometimes be due to imitation of forefathers, sometimes due to the desire to protect self-interests and sometimes due to self-conceit and bigotry.

If the lights in the darkness of the night are all switched off, the shining of the stars can be seen on a clear night. But if the lights are switch on, many of the stars' lights can no longer be seen. Likewise, someone who is self-centred and narcissistic is incapable of being able to see the perfection of others.

A person travelling on horseback came across a shallow river. The river was more like a thin stream of water, shallow enough for the horse to easily cross it. Yet the horse stopped and refused to cross. The horse rider tugged and kicked the horse to move forward, slapping him on the back, but the horse refused to budge. A wise man saw the scene and said to the horse rider to dirty the water with some of the soil nearby. After which, the horse comfortably crossed the river without any reservation.

When the horse back rider asked what was the wisdom behind the advice, the wise man said that when the water was clean the horse was able to see his own reflection, and would never allow itself to step on its own reflection.

Likewise, people who see themselves (through attention to their own rank, interests, family, party etc.) are not prepared to step on themselves, and so would never progress or reach perfection.

If you have a poorly lit large saloon, apart from large and bulky items, you will be limited in what you can see. However, if you light it up intensely, you will be able to see even tiny pieces of paper and litter.

The "Nur" or Divine Light of normal people are dim, so only the large sins are apparent and can be seen. However, infallible Prophets and Imams have such intense Divine Light that even if a moment is spent of their lifetime that could have been spent in a better way, they fall in to prayers and weep.

Another example is that of extending your feet in front of others. This act is neither haram (sinful) nor makrooh (disliked), however we see that when a person's legs are painful and they extend it towards others, they seek the pardon of others around them, because in respect of others, even "mubah" actions (neither liked nor disliked, neither halal nor haram) may embarrass us.

Another example, when a newsreader clears their throats on live television or radio, they seek the pardon of the viewers or listeners. This is again not a sinful act yet we see them seeking pardon from their viewers and listeners in respect, because they regard themselves to be in front of an audience.

The Representatives of God are so aware of their Creator that if they worship and glorify God as much as all the humans and Jinn, they consider themselves blameworthy.

The basis and goals of all the Divinely Guided Imams are consistent and constant, but their methods may have differed. Sometimes their actions show differences, however their goal is one. For example, the two blades of a pair of scissors move opposite to each other yet the goal is one – to cut (through the material in between the two blades).

Sometimes the movements on the sports fields of competing teams and their methods of training are different, but the aim of all of them is one – to be the winning side.

Yes, the aim of all the Divinely Guided Imams is for the perfect evolution of mankind (the Heart and Mind of mankind) without pest (or disease in the Heart or Soul); however, this deliverance of the message is at times with their movements towards the battlefields of war and at times in the participation of classes and teachings and sometimes by migration, while other times it is silence...

If someone works productively for twenty years for an employer but then kills the employers' child, all of those years of service will be worthless.

A bomb that destroys a building will destroy all of the labour and effort that went to building it in one instant.

Consuming one spoon of poison will mean the care and caution taken to consume only hygienic food will be destroyed.

A moment's snooze while driving means the car will veer off the road.

A single moment in which a knife pierces an eye, will lead to years of blindness.

Yes, sins are also of that nature, in which a single sin can wipe out an entire lifetime of good work, like fire that burns a beautiful jungle down to ash. Like the Qur'an states:

حَبَطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ

***“Their works have failed.”***<sup>1</sup>

Of course, countering that are Ayahs that state

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكْفِرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ

***“And whosoever believes in God, and does a righteous deed, God will cover from him his evil deeds.”***<sup>2</sup>

That would be like the employee that for years performed badly, yet if he springs into action in the moment of need and saves the child of his employer who fell into a swimming pool, will wipe out all of the employees’ bad behavior and shortcomings of his labor at work.

Likewise, the Qur’an states:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفَا مِنْ اللَّيْلِ ۚ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ

***“And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and night of the night; surely the good deeds will drive away the evil deeds.”***<sup>3</sup>

1. Baqarah 2:217

2. Taghabun 64:9

3. Hud 11:114.

Love of God is linked to the appreciation of the blessings bestowed upon us.

The remembrance of the divine blessings increases our relationship with Him, whether it be specific or general blessings.

On one side, general blessings are the wind, rain, sun, mountains, plants, food and drinks, our partners, off spring, faculty of mind, knowledge and science, tongue, eyes, ears, other parts of our body, the blessings of day and night, waking and sleeping, freedom and the power to choose, our attraction towards good and perfection and the dislike of evil; all of which without mankind would be paralysed.

How would you deal with saliva that is salty or bitter? Or if God takes away the blessing of sleep or just the ability to close our eyes during sleep, even if it’s just for a few days?

On the other side of the coin, there are specific blessings, such as abilities and talents, which are gifted

to particular individuals, and if one thinks about one's own blessings which are under our will, you would notice how much one has been blessed with of which others are deprived of.

Yes, it is the remembrance of divine blessings that brings us closer to God, the Qur'an states:

## فاذكروا آلاء الله

***“Remember the blessings from Allah SWT!”***<sup>1</sup>

1. Al Araf 7:69.

Horrific and bitter events that occur in our life come under two kinds: Those that are a result of our own actions, and those that are beyond our control.

Many terrible events occur because of our own lack of attention to detail and mismanagement. If during a transaction, we fail to maintain documentation and the other party, for example, fails to deliver on the money, that is our own fault.

If we don't build a safety fence around a swimming pool and a child drowns in it, that's our own fault.

If we don't practice good hygiene, obey road laws and practice social etiquettes, it's our fault if we fall ill, have car accidents or are humiliated in society.

As for the second type, under the shadow of hardship is the opportunity to struggle, advance, develop and grow and overcome the difficulty of life.

Hardships in life can be the atonement of our slip ups, and the reason for better regulation of people's spirits.

The Prophet SAWA said

لولا ثلاثة في ابن آدم ما طأطأ رأسه شيء: المرض، والموت، والفقير

***“If it were not for three things befalling the son of Adam, illness, death, and poverty, his arrogance would not have been suppressed.”***<sup>1</sup>

The occurrences of hardships flourish the ability to perfect oneself. One who is being tested with a calamity can, with patience and endurance, grow and develop and those who are at ease who struggle

to save others from hardship, through dedication and sacrifice can reach growth and development.

1. Bihar Al Anwar V69 P53

Worshipping God is connected to the will of human beings not to their knowledge. A carpenter who always builds ladders but climbs none of them will reach no height above the ground, because he never intended to go any higher!

A tailor that sews clothing for everyone else may not have clothing themselves. The seller of mirrors can be constantly going around the mirrors of his shop, but not have an ironed collar on his shirt, yet passers-by will neaten up themselves by looking at just one of those mirrors.

Many scientists search for answers to phenomena, but they have no intention of recognising the Creator.

A scientist that writes an article, uses different letters and words to compile his or her final work, however if the scientist uses a single letter to fill up the pages of his work, it can no longer be considered an article nor will it have any value or significance.

The differences in each of the letters of the alphabet cannot be considered oppression to the alphabet. For example, if we look at the word "SON", the S is curved, the "O" is round and the "N" has three lines joined to make up the letters. The formation of the word "SON" is made up of these letters and the letters are placed in such an order to make up the word that gives its meaning. None of these letters have the right to object to its author... e.g. the "S" cannot complain and say why am I crooked while the "O" is nice and round, nor can the N complain about its sharp edges because the other two are smooth and without any corners.

Oppressing the letters, rather, comes in play if we give a letter a different sound, like call "S" a "D" or if one writes a letter incorrectly, such as joining the ends of a "C" to make it look like an "O". But if each letter is created as it has been and from each of the letters a sound is formed from which we expect, that is not oppression.

If a large carpet is cut in to smaller pieces with scissors; that is oppressing the carpet that was once large and beautiful, because its value was in its size and we have taken that away from it. However, if we have many small carpets woven to start with then that is not oppression, as each of the carpets have their own perfection and completeness.

No one would complain to a manufacturer of plate-ware as to why small and large plates were made because each plate is manufactured in its own size and for its own purpose, and no plate was broken down to the size of another.

Likewise, differences in the creation of mankind is based upon the Divine Wisdom, not so that anyone is oppressed, but that from everyone is an expectation based upon their abilities given to them and nothing more.

Someone shuts off the lights in a wedding saloon and runs off. If their intention was to be punished through being caught, the full punishment can only be justly served when all those affected have been repaid. For example:

As a result of the darkness, glassware broke. Two people fell down the stairs... a few heads collided with walls or pillars, the cakes fell on to the floor. Some children were scared and were crying from the darkness, and for the sake of evacuating the saloon, much time was lost. Meanwhile, the families of the bride and groom suffer loss and embarrassment.

Yes, all of those events that resulted from the lights being turned off need to be accounted for and punishment duly sentenced to the perpetrator.

The Qur'an states:

نَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ

***“What is written is the action itself and the effects that action leaves behind.”***<sup>1</sup>

We read in the narrations

من سنَّ سنةً حسنةً عمل بها من بعده كان له أجره ومثل أجورهم من غير أن ينقص من أجورهم شيئاً، ومن سنَّ سنةً سيئةً فعمل بها بعده كان عليه وزره ومثل أوزارهم من غير أن ينقص من أوزارهم شيئاً

**“The Prophet SAWA states that whoever establishes a good action, the reward will go back to him from whoever that conducts that action and whoever establishes a bad action, the punishment will go back to the establisher from any one that does the bad action.”** <sup>2</sup>

Someone who causes the addiction of another person to a substance or to smoking, and the second person causes a third to do the same, and then a fourth as a result of the third... the first person is a partner in the sins of all the people that follow.

Narrations state that parents are partners in all the good deeds of their children and the teacher of the students first class is a partner in the reward of all knowledge gained in future courses.

1. Ya Sin 36: 12
2. Kanz Al Amal – Narration 43,079.

There are a number of reasons for this description in the Ayah

أَيُّبُ أَحَدِكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا

***“Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead?”***<sup>1</sup>

The Ayah is telling us a number of things:

1. Firstly, the dead cannot defend itself. Likewise, a person who is being backbitten is not present to be able to defend themselves.
2. Backbiting destroys the reputation and honour of an individual and that is non-compensable. Like the meat of the dead, once torn, cannot be healed.

If money is lost, it can be compensated for. But the complete reparation of honour and reputation completely is almost impossible, and it makes no difference if this was backbiting in jest or in seriousness, as in both cases, the honour of the individual has been tarnished.

3. Meat grows over time and slowly while eating it occurs in a single instance. Likewise, the reputation of one takes a long time to be developed, it can be destroyed through a single instance of backbiting.
4. A person may have worked hard and for years to build their reputation and backbiting can come in with a single swipe to destroy the entire lifetime’s work of that individual.

1. Hujjarat 49: 12

If a driver diverts from the right road, after noticing the diversion, they would go back on to the right road to continue on to their destination. However, if the river continues on the wrong road just announces that *“I am on the wrong road, I am on the wrong road, and the car just won’t go back on the right road”*, no passenger would accept that excuse.

Repentance (Tawbah/توبه) means to return from offending and to compensate for previous offences, in which case Allah SWT will accept this form of repentance;

## أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ

**“Certainly God is He who accepts the repentance.”<sup>1</sup>**

And not only that, but in fact Allah SWT loves those who repent<sup>2</sup>;

## إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ

If one has wrongly taken the money of another person, that money must be returned and if necessary, through an anonymous bank transaction if one wants to remain anonymous in such an instance.

If you have upset someone, you need to seek their forgiveness. If you have incomplete prayers, they must be prayed. If there is a fact that needs to be revealed, but have so far been reserved, then it needs to be stated. Anything that has been said or done contrary to what should have occurred needs to be fixed accordingly.

The Qur'an, next to the word تَابُوا has the word أَصْلَحُوا (repent and make amends respectively)<sup>3</sup>. That means repentance needs to be accompanied with the correction and compensation of any shortcoming.

Repentance also needs to be quickly acted upon, because when sins start to accumulate, they become problematic and harder to correct. Dust on clothes can easily be removed with a little dusting, but when it settles as soil on the ground, it becomes hard to remove it by just dusting it.

1. Tawbah 9:104
2. Baqarah 2:222
3. Baqarah 2:160

The invitation of people to the Truth comes in various shapes and form, such as those listed below:

1. Simply by inviting them through words, such as the Ayahs that state “قل”, which means: Say.
2. Practical invitations: وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ – thy robes purify<sup>1</sup>, so others take your example.
3. Direct invitation: أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ directly saying to them that they need to perform the prayer<sup>2</sup>.
4. Indirect invitation: Through stories of the Qur'an. Like the story of Prophet Yousef AS, who was taken by his brothers in the name of playing games before throwing him into a ditch, in an indirect manner youth should be warned the enemy is leading our young astray, deviating us from our original goal and throwing us in the ditch of abjection in the name of sport, entertainment, technology etc.

5. Collective invitation: كَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا he was a Messenger, a Prophet. Prophets were ordered to collectively invite people. 3
6. Private invitation: وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ The Prophet was ordered to invite his own family to prayer. 4
7. Invitation of spouses and children: قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ – O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters.5
8. Invitation to relatives: وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ and warn thy clan, thy nearest kin. 6
9. Invitation to those in your country: لِيُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا for thee to warn the Mother of Cities and those about her.7
10. Invitation to the general population: إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا Say: 'O mankind, I am the Messenger of God to you all.8

A fisherman and pearl diver should not concentrate their efforts in one corner of the sea or on one fish and oyster. A business man that is after more profit will not be content with the transaction of a single item of merchandise.

1. Muddathir 74:4
2. Baqarah 2:83
3. Maryam 19:51
4. Maryam 19:55
5. Ahzab 33:59
6. As-Shuaraa 26:214
7. Anaam 6:92
8. Al Araaf 7:158

The wage of a daily locum is more than that of a permanent worker. This is not because the locum is of more value than a permanent staff member, but rather, permanent staff have other rights which the locum would not get such as insurance, retirement rights, superannuation, sick and annual leave, training, family leave, level of difficulty of work and other entitlements added to their hourly wage. So when one factors all these in to the wage, in fact the wage of the permanent worker is more than that of the locum.

In Islam, yes, the inheritance of women is half that of men however, in return the obligations of daily expenditure is not upon the shoulders of women, rather, daily expenditure of living such as food, clothing, shelter, health and others are upon secured upon the shoulders of the man. Women have complete rights over their own inheritance and can keep all of it to herself, while her entire living expenses are obtained from the husband. On top of that, the dowry is also paid by the husband. So when one takes those factors in to consideration, the overall share or portion of women is in fact greater than that of men.

God has created women for the upbringing of a generation and this upbringing needs to be full of kindness, compassion and tenderness which is found at the hands of women. These feelings and emotions puts judgements in jeopardy, because a judge facing one who has committed a crime, must not be affected by tears, whinging, lies and threats of a criminal wishing to escape judgement, and If not dealt with strictness and strength, soft feelings may be affected and hurt to a point where the rights of others may be compromised.

It may be said that there are some men that are emotional and that there are women that have strength and strictness, but rulings are based on general principles rather than unique cases.

In addition, it is not so that a right has been taken away from women, rather, it is a burden and weight off the shoulders of women and should not be considered as a privilege for men.

Men and women in humanity are equal. Blood Money, known as **ديه** (Diya), does not represent the “value” of a human being, but rather it makes up for financial losses. If someone kills a man, they have hurt the bread winner and economic source and so the penalty is higher.

If it is to be based on personality, then the punishment for the murder of someone with knowledge and moral status needs to be higher. On the contrary, the Blood Money of murder for one who is plain and simple relative to one who is most outstanding is, in the eyes of Rights, equal.

In terms of Rights, Imam Ali AS and Ibn Muljim (may he be cursed)<sup>1</sup> are equal, and it is because of this that Imam Ali AS said, with regards to his murderer;

“فاضربوه ضربةً بضربة”<sup>2</sup> – So strike him once as he struck me once, no more<sup>3</sup>.

If Blood Money has anything to do with the value of a person or individual, all of the wealth and money of the world cannot ever recompense for a single atom from the personality of Imam Ali AS.

Yes, the accounting of Blood Money is not a consideration of ones’ worth for if we imagine that it is, then because Blood Money for women is half of that of men, then their value is less than men, and that is not the case.

1. Ibn Muljim L.A murdered Imam Ali AS.

2. Nahjul Balagha Letter 47.

3. Imam Ali AS was struck on the head with a poisoned sword and passed away three days later.

Anyone who does things consistently and in small portions, like cigarette smoking, will suddenly see the result of their dangerous actions in one go like difficulty breathing and weakened heart being the side effects of smoking.

The Qur'an states that:

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا السُّوْأَىٰ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

***“Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the miracles of Allah and used to mock them.”***<sup>1</sup>

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَالُهَا

***“Have they not then journeyed in the land and seen how was the end of those before them: Allah brought down destruction upon them, and the unbelievers shall have the like of it.”***<sup>2</sup>

1. Rome 30:10

2. Muhammad 47:10

In the Qur'an, God sometimes attributes work to Himself and other times to others, for example, in regards to the collection of souls, in one place He states:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ

***“Allah takes the souls.”***<sup>1</sup>

In another Ayah He states:

يَتَوَفَّاكُم مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ

***“The angel of death “Azrael” will gather the souls of me.”***<sup>2</sup>

Yet elsewhere He states that the Angels will collect the Souls; <sup>3</sup>

تَوَفَّاهُ رُسُلُنَا

All three phrases can be accepted. When you see a house, you can say that the house is built by an engineer and architect, or the house was built by the builder and their apprentices, or the house was built by the owner. With respect to the building of the house, all three are correct.

Likewise, you can say: The key opened the door, or my hand opened the door, or I opened the door. This is because the key is in your hand, and your hand is under your control.

In the Ayahs described above, it may be that: Angels collect the souls of men and pass them on to Azrael whom in turns passes them to God. It may also be possible that the souls of the general public are collected by angels, while those of outstanding people are collected by Azrael, while the most pious of the men are collected by God.

Likewise, in another area, the Qur'an makes different statements with regards to people of heaven. In one place he states:

وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ

***"Their Lord will quench their thirst."***<sup>4</sup>

While earlier in the same Surah the Qur'an states:

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا

***"They are watered with a cup."***<sup>5</sup>

And no mention of God is made.

1. Zumar 39:42
2. Sajda 32:11
3. Al Anaam 6:61
4. Insaan 76:21
5. Insaan 76:17

Whatever you see on the earth and soils and rocks when you take them to the laboratories, there is nothing that can be identified that indicates the notion of gravity. Yet from the falling of an apple from the tree gravity was discovered. So it is not essential that one must be able to see something with one's own eyes before can have faith in its existence. Gravity cannot be sensed with the five senses, however due to its effects, we can determine its existence.

Likewise, our knowledge with regards to science, insight, arts and skills of people, are through their behaviour and speeches and the effects they leave behind. 1

1. Likewise, we can begin to recognise God through the effects he has left behind through his creations.

The Qur'an states:

مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ يُخْلِفُهُ

***“And whatever thing you shall expend, He will replace it.”***<sup>1</sup>

So no matter what you give, no matter how little or large, you will be rewarded.

Even the smallest of help plays an important role. A yellowed leaf floating on the surface of the water can save the lives of multiple ants.

Furthermore, sometimes a little help is all that is needed and no more, like small change to make a call in a public phone booth, while a bank note will be of no benefit. A scratch on the skin requires light bandage to serve its purpose, while blankets and quilts will be of no use!

A very fine needle can be used to inject medicine in to the body to save lives, while a joist will be useless.

In narrations we read that no good deed should ever be considered small, because it may be the one that saves you, while no sin should ever be considered small, as it may be the one that brings upon your downfall. Just like a tip of a need or nail that goes in to a ball that ruins a whole game of football, or the banana peel that causes a heavyweight champion weightlifter slip and damage the spinal cord, causing paralysis.

1. Seba 34:39

If a corpse is thrown in to a pool of water, any water that enters the pool or rain falls in to it will increase the stench that emanates from the corpse.

The Qur'an brings mercy to an individual, however, in the heart of an impure disbeliever, it brings to them a loss. The Qur'an states:

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

***We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur`an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss. 1***

For each miracle or sign revealed, those individuals will insist on confronting it and will further deviate from the path of Truth. That is the greatest loss for mankind.

1. Al Israa 17:82

In the Qur'an we read:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا

***God takes the souls at the time of their death, and that which has not died, in its sleep***<sup>1</sup>.

Sometimes a driver parks the car in the garage and goes home. Sometimes, they drive off to the shops and leave the car on while they go inside for a moment. In both instances, the driver is not in the car, but in the first, neither driver is in the car nor is the car on, while in the second, the cars motors continue to run while the driver is away.

The human body is also like that, during sleep, the body continues to work, pumping blood, repairing muscle and exchanging carbon monoxide for oxygen, while the soul goes off to different places, but when death comes, the body stalls and turns off and the soul completely disconnects itself from the body.

1. Zumr 39:42

The ocean is full of water, but a sealed bottle will not have a single drop of water go inside it even if thrown in the middle of the ocean. Is that the fault of the ocean or the bottle?

Some people have closed all avenues of guidance to themselves; the faculty of thinking and intellect, edification and reflection, listening to the truth and submitting to it, guidance and advice, and assisting others and have built themselves in to being hard-hearted, just as the Qur'an states, they are like stones or harder;

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوًا

***“These people have been deprived of the bounties of Allah SWT due to themselves closing the paths that lead to that bounty, not because of any shortcoming from the bounties and mercy of Allah SWT.”<sup>1</sup>***

1. Baqarah 2:74.

From the ayat in the Qur’an and narrations we understand that the Islamic programs are all interlinked to each other. For example, there are over twenty Ayahs in the Qur’an that combine prayers and paying alms together such as

أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ

***“Perform the prayer, and pay the alms.”<sup>1</sup>***

يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ

***“Who perform the prayer and pay the alms.”<sup>2</sup>***

In narrations we read prayers without paying alms are not accepted. Like a locomotive on track that only has a single rail, it cannot move.

So yes, connecting with Allah SWT (through prayer) and with creation (through paying alms) are like a pair of wings to fly with spiritually. Flying with one wing just won’t work.

The Prophet SAWA would eject those who come to the mosque to pray but do not pay their alms.

Many of the orders in the Qur’an have conditions placed on them that they must reach their destination completely and without any faults or shortcomings before they are accepted by Allah SWT, otherwise they are rejected. The Qur’an states:

وَأْتِمُوا الْحَجَّ

***“Fulfil the Pilgrimage.”<sup>3</sup>***

Which means all of the rituals must be performed accordingly, and that performing some and not others

will invalidate the whole pilgrimage and is not enough. Elsewhere we read

أَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ

***“Complete the Fast unto the night.”***<sup>4</sup>

So even if it's just one minute before nightfall, there is no right to break the fast. Likewise, prayers cannot be shortened (except in certain circumstances).

1. Baqarah 2:277
2. Al Maida 5:55
3. Baqarah 2:196
4. Baqarah 2:187

Whatever is done with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT is considered worship, no matter how routine and normal that action may be.

An earring that we buy as a gift for our daughter, if done with the intention to encourage good deeds, is worship, but if not, is simply an act of affection.

The work of a scholar researching in a library, with the aim of earning an income and receiving accolades, materials and creature comforts, has a tinge of materialism on it and the cook that prepares food for the scholar, thinking that the scholar is doing work for the sake of God, the work of that cook is worship.

So it is possible for an individual to reach heaven through means of lentils, peas and vegetables while one with a library, with all its books and knowledge, can reach other places.

The Islamic Assembly Council has two types of laws it enacts:

1. One type is for the management of itself: how to elect the president and vice president, number of committees and number of representatives per committee, wages earned, number of holidays, conditions for which to hold public sessions and closed door sessions, conditions for secret ballots and open ballots, and for the interpellation of the minister etc.
2. The second type is for that of the nation and the people.

Allah SWT has also implemented a set of laws and system upon Himself and another set for the people, which have been revealed through the prophets. Laws that have been imposed upon Himself are

called **سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ** (Gods Tradition), including such laws as:

- The Law of Guidance:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَىٰ

***“Surely upon Us rests the guidance”*** 2

- The Law of Accounting:

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ

***“Then upon Us shall rest their reckoning.”*** 3

- The Law of Provision of Blessings:

عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا

***“Its provision rests on God.”*** 4

- The Law of Security:

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا

***“Surely We shall help Our Messenger.”*** 5

- The Law of Mercy:

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

***“Your Lord has prescribed for Himself mercy.”*** 6

But the laws that have been prescribed upon mankind are considered to be Sharia Law.

1. Ahzab 33:38
2. Layl 92:12
3. Ghashia 88:26
4. Hud 11:6
5. Ghafir 40:51
6. AnNaam 6:54

Let's have a look at some parables:

If you put yoghurt in a bottle and shake it, all the oil that was evenly distributed will come together in one place. Allah SWT will also shake the earth:

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا

***“When earth is shaken with a mighty shaking.”***<sup>1</sup>

Where the decomposed and spread out parts of each person will come together in the one place.

Mankind is from semen and semen is from nutrients and nutrients come from distributed soil. That means the wheat and the rice and fruits and vegetables all come to make semen which in turn comes to be human. So that means right now we are a product of soil that is from all around the earth that has come together to make us who we are.

Doesn't the milk that comes from animals (such as cows and goats) come from the fodder they eat? A God that can make milk from grass can also make us come out from the earth after our death.

1. Al Zilzilah 99: 1

Sometimes, a single virus can enter the body and cause paralysis to the entire body. Sometimes a single spark can result in the burning down of an entire area. Sometimes, a single thought of jealousy can turn in to a plot to kill Yousef AS. Sometimes, consuming sinful food<sup>1</sup> or the desire to reach a position of governance and power, causes mankind to stoop down to the point of killing Imam Hussein AS. Generally, each sin is the ground work for a larger one. On this issue, the Qur'an states:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***“Not so; whoso earns evil, and is encompassed by his transgression -- those are the inhabitants of the Fire; there they shall dwell forever.”***<sup>2</sup>

If the curtain of modesty is torn, sinning becomes easy. That’s why in Dua-e-Kumail we read:

اللهم اغفر لي الذنوب التي تهتك العصم

**Oh God... please forgive me for those sins I have committed that tear the curtain of chastity and purity.**

1. لقمه حرام: This can also include consuming halal food purchased with money that was sinfully obtained.
2. Baqarah 2:81

In describing the believers, the Qur’an in the last Ayah of Surah Fath states that:

أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا.

***“The believers are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another. Thou seest them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure.”***<sup>1</sup>

In this Ayah before prostration and bowing, believers being hard against the unbelievers is mentioned. The slogans “Death to America” and “Death to Israel” is an example of the practical application of believers being hard against the unbelievers, as mentioned in the Qur’an. Of course, the chanting of these slogans is not enough, but rather more importantly is the strength of our actions which fall under the shadow of education, unity, self-reliance, self-respect, not allowing the penetration of the enemy and staying away from any agreement or stance-softening which may cause hostile covetousness.

The Qur’an at the time of the Prophet SAWA states that:

إِنْ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ،

***“If you (O wives of the Prophet) are god-fearing, be not abject in your speech, so that he in whose heart is sickness may be lustful.”***<sup>2</sup>

Today, given the wives of the Prophet SAWA are not with us, this Ayah is teaching us an important political lesson in that faithful Muslims must never appear politically soft in its direction, encounters or agreements that lead to hostile covetousness. It is important that we don't open ourselves up to the enemy; giving them the green lights to do as they please.

1. Al Fath 48:29
2. Ahzab 33:32

Allah SWT in the Qur'an states that:

وَلَا يَطُئُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ

***“Neither tread they any tread enraging the unbelievers, nor gain any gain from any enemy, but a righteous deed is thereby written to their account.”***<sup>1</sup>

In other words, a group action that angers the unbelievers will not go unrewarded. So yes, a demonstration that angers the enemy of Islam and Muslims is a good deed.

The demonstrations and protests (especially those that are transmitted through means of satellite, television, social media and the like) that are attended with divine intentions are a form of congregational worship and a means of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and is a means of lifting the spirits of the believers and a threat to the enemy.

1. Tawbah 9:120

All of humanity during all of history and in every land, would go to ask an expert in the field specific to their questions. Jurists and scholars also follow the prescription given to them by doctors when they fall ill. Therefore, following instructions from the learned has historical and logical roots and jurisprudence should also be sought from experts in the field of religious jurisprudence, just as the jurists themselves will seek advice from experts in other fields.

In the Qur'an we read:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

***“So ask the people of remembrance if you do not know.”<sup>1</sup>***

The Ayah does not say ask your question from any scholar, but rather: ask your question from those who are people of remembrance, God conscious and fearing, and are not forgetful with regards to their own knowledge and what they have learnt.

In our traditions, we must not only follow those who have the highest level of knowledge, but also must be just, and his thoughts and words and behavior must not be inclined towards whims and desires and selfishness.

A building without a license and permit can be destroyed unless per chance it happens to be exactly in line with council requirements (and even then, it is up to the council whether it remains standing!).

Deeds without following a jurist are also void. A deed must be as per the jurisprudential rules of the jurist which one follows.

1. Al Nahl 16:43

Society as a whole is in need of a ruler because without appropriate management and leader chaos will ensue. The leader must be a Muslim not only knowledgeable in the field of Islam, but be amongst the most literate, brave, virtuous and aware of current Islamic affairs. Wilayat Faqih is nothing but to have a leader of the Islamic world being a Mujtahid, far from whims and desires, pious, visionary and brave. The recognition of such a person is the responsibility of a group of people selected by the population for their known piety and well versed in the laws of Islam, who in turn are then given the responsibility to elect the individual they deem the most learned pious person for the role.

There are many reasons for the success of prophets including:

1. Their purity and clean history and the fire, passion and sincerity they had.
2. Reasoning and logic they have, not dictatorship and bullying.
3. They practiced what they preached, they had presence in what they did and perseverance till their last breath.
4. Amplitude of their thoughts and their immaculate behaviour.
5. Their laws and regulations are in accordance with our nature and Divine Promises.
6. The comprehensive nature of their laws extending to everything including individual, societal, familial, psychological, political, economic, hygiene, worship and others...

7. The easy and pleasant manifestation of the laws given.

An ill child may be afraid of a needle that a doctor is about to inject him with... but the doctor may prepare the child by saying such things as:

1. My dear, my child, I love you.
2. All of the children that were ill that came before you have had this ampoule.
3. The injection is only for a few moments, please bear with me so you can get better.
4. If you can't tolerate a needle I'll have to prescribe other medicines for you.

Allah SWT that wants to impose the law of fasting uses the same concept.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا،

Allah tells the believers, "O believers" those who have a relationship with Me and love Me... God speaks with his worshippers in a loving, sincere way and with respect in order to prepare them. Then He says:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

***"Fasting for you is prescribed just like it was prescribed for those before you so that you may be God conscious."***<sup>1</sup>

God is reminding his believers of those before them that benefited from fasting with piety and god consciousness, and so will they. Then he states that this is for days numbered, no more:

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ

Then He states:

فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ

***"And if any of you be sick, or if he be on a journey, then a number of other days."***<sup>2</sup>

Reminding us that there is an alternative for those who are unable to fast due to illness or travel.

Allah SWT eases the law unto us, like the expression and method used by a doctor to prepare a child for the injection, that is the symbol of success of the prophets, peace be upon them.

1. Baqarah 2:183
2. Baqarah 2:184

The Qur'an states:

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً

***“Add Allah’s color to your work for the color of Allah SWT is the best of colors.” 1***

The intended meaning of Allah’s color is that the intention of doing any work must be for the pleasure of Allah SWT and according to Divine Laws, and performing such deeds, the giving of wealth and the sacrificing of souls is a transaction that should only be for Allah SWT.

Let’s have a look at some examples:

1. If we buy some clothes for our wives, and present it to them on the night of the birth of Syeda Fatimah Zahra AS... that gift has a shadow of divine color.
2. If we wash our face with the intention of ablution, that act has Divine color on it.
3. If where we sit is in the direction of the Qibla, Mecca, that has a divine shadow on it.

We can have shades of divine color on our jobs, education, sports and visitations to our family and friends.

At times when Imam Ali AS visited others and some food was placed in front of him, he would eat some and then say: I would like my intention to be the visiting of a believer, not of the lifting of hunger in your home.

When we give money to the needy, it may be for our own wellbeing, or it could be for the wellbeing of all believers and especially for Imam Mehdi A.F.

The Qur'an reminds us that whoever has the goal of Allah SWT and reaching heavenly levels in the hereafter, will also benefit in this world. However, those who only have the goal of this world will definitely be deprived of heavenly rewards and may or may not obtain any worldly rewards.

Sometimes, it is better not to know something. The Qur'an says:

لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِنْ تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ

***“Question not concerning things which, if they were revealed to you, would vex you.”***<sup>1</sup>

If those responsible for silos and storage of wheat tell the people that we only have enough wheat for so long, the people would become anxious from the moment they are told and would start to quarrel over bread supply. Those responsible should be considering a remedy of the situation and be in a position to purchase further wheat, and not in a way in which they negatively impact the society. So not every piece of information is useful. The Qur'an identifies knowledge in three different categories:

- Beneficial knowledge. Prophet Moses AS said to Khidr AS: Do you give me permission to follow you in your travels so that I may acquire the knowledge you have been given?

هَلْ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا

***“Shall I follow thee so that thou teachest me, of what thou hast been taught, right judgment.”***<sup>2</sup>

- Knowledge that is harmful. The Qur'an describes a group of people who pursued knowledge of magic and sorcery and learnt how to cause division and a split between a couple:

وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ

***“And they learned what hurt them, and did not profit them.”***<sup>3</sup>

- Knowledge that is neither beneficial nor harmful. This is parallel to the desire to know if the people of the cave were three or four or more or less

ثَلَاثَةً رَّابِعَهُمْ كَلْبَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةً سَادِسَهُمْ كَلْبَهُمْ

***“They will say they were ‘Three; and ‘their dog was the fourth of them.’ They will say, ‘Five; and their dog was the sixth of them.’”<sup>4</sup>***

The number of people that were in the cave is not what is important, what is important is how a small group of young people in a society full of sedition managed to protect their faith and for the sake of protecting their faith and belief, migrated away from the environment of sin and polytheism and opted to be cave dwellers than city dwellers.

1. Maida 5:101
2. Kahf 18:66
3. Baqarah 2:102
4. Kahf 18:22

Some drivers carry all the accessories that they may need with them in the boot of the vehicle on a “just in case” basis these might include tire chains, spare tires, car jack, emergency lights etc. while others hit the road without any such provisions and without any foresight on what may potentially happen. Either way, they either will need to use those items or they will not.

Those who are carrying the accessories and who find no difficulty on the road will not have harmed themselves whatsoever except perhaps for a few extra kilograms of weight being lugged around. If something does however, happen, they are prepared for the worst, and no one will be asking why you carried all those accessories. Meanwhile, those who did not carry anything and do fall in to trouble will be asked why they did not come prepared? What will they do now?

So it is important for us to have some foresight into potential and likely events that may happen and be prepared for those. Given the above example, let’s now consider religion.

Prophets have warned us of accountability after death in the resurrection and the laws revolving around it. Some accepted the warnings while others have rejected it. Those who have accepted it would spend some minutes during the day and night talking to God and say their prayers. During the year, a few days would be spent where lunch is delayed until sunset and some things are abstained from during the day.

If we assume there is no accountability, what harm would befall those people and what would they have given up? However, what will those people who did not heed the warnings of the prophets do if they meet the precise accounting of the Lord and they are in front of Him with nothing in their hand?

The reasonable person will seriously consider and heed the warnings even if they do not have certainty of the hereafter and the day of resurrection and for the sake of the possibility of accountability would ready themselves for such a day.

Once Pharaoh decided to kill Moses AS, one of the advisors around Pharaoh who had faith but concealed it from him asked if he would kill anyone one who said my Lord is Allah SWT and brought

clear evidence of such a claim?

If he lies, then it would be to his own detriment and if he says the truth, the promise of hardship and punishment given to those who reject will surely arrive.

وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۖ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ

***“If he is a liar, his lying is upon his own head; but if he is truthful, somewhat of that he promises you will smite you.”***<sup>1</sup>

1. Ghafir 40:28.

The best deed is the one that is accepted by Allah SWT, no matter what it is, large or small. What the deed is, is not so important it is the acceptance by Allah SWT that carries the weight.

Once Prophet Abraham AS and his assisting son, Ismael AS built the foundations of the Holy Kaaba, he prayed and said:

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا

***“Our Lord, receive this from us.”***<sup>1</sup>

Considering the enormity and the importance of the work being done, the building of the House of God, the mecca of worship for humanity, the builder being one of the Great Prophets, Abraham AS and his son, Prophet Ismael AS, considering their goals, and where prophets will perform their circumambulation, Angel Jibraels AS airport and the birth place of Imam Ali AS, all that being considered with all of its significance, it was still the acceptance of their work by Allah SWT that was most important  
**رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا!**

Even the building of the Holy Kaaba, had it not been accepted by Allah SWT, would have had no value.

1. Baqarah 2:127

Actions that have both the correct goal and the method of achieving that goal! Sometimes the goal is correct but the method used to achieve the goal is not correct, like going to hajj using a stolen vehicle or writing with black coal on a nice clean white wall *“please help keep area clean”*.

Other times the method is correct but the goal is corrupt. Consider the “Khawarij” group that stood against Imam Ali AS and rose with the slogan “لا حكم إلا لله” which means Only God and His Book Commands. Imam Ali AS stated:

## كلمة حق يُراد بها الباطل 133

Which means while their slogan is the good and stands with the truth their destination, with their slogan, is corrupted and stands in opposition to the Truth.

Likewise, the army of Muawiyah (may he be cursed) during the Siffin war with Imam Ali AS put pages of the Holy Qur’an on top of their spears and stated we are the followers of the Qur’an, however they were opposed and in fact were in conflict with the instructions of the “Talking Walking Qur’an”, a title given to Imam Ali AS himself.

While we ponder over the Qur’an during the nights of Power<sup>1</sup>, our behaviours must also not be in conflict with the Holy Qur’an. We must seek asylum in and submit completely to the Qur’an. If the Holy Qur’an states that “Riba (usury)” is forbidden, what is the point of submission if our bellies are full of wealth accumulated through Riba? If we are afflicted with an illness and the doctor prescribes a medicine, what is the point of the prescription if we do not have it dispensed at the pharmacy and take it as prescribed?

1. Al Qadr 97:1-5

There are four groups of people:

- A group who have both faith and do good deeds, those are the believers (مؤمن).
- A group that have neither faith nor action, those are the disbelievers (كافر).
- A group that have faith, but do not have the accompanying good actions, those are the defiantly disobedient (فاسق).
- A group that have no faith, but their deeds appear to be of a good and correct nature, those are the hypocrites (منافق).

Of course, hypocrisy has levels and stages. Lying is one kind of hypocrisy, lip service is another. Even an invitation to someone whom the inviter in their heart does not really want them to come, is a form of hypocrisy.

The Prophet SAWA said “المؤمن مرآة المؤمن”, a believer is the mirror of a believer. This beautiful simile has many points in which some are listed below:

1. Be like a mirror, see their strengths as well as their weaknesses, do not be like a fly that will only sit on the injuries and lacerations.
2. Be like a mirror, not a microscope. Do not magnify faults of others and see them bigger than what they really are.
3. Be like a mirror, not a fine tooth comb. A mirror will reflect the outer faults but a comb will go deep and dig out the faults buried within.
4. A mirror considers not the personality and position of the person standing in front of it, neither is it involved in bribery and threatening behaviour.
5. A mirror can only efficiently reflect realities if it is smooth and reflective with no dust gathering on its surface, likewise the time that humans are able to criticise others should only be when they themselves are free from faults.
6. The breaking of a mirror, because it has reflected a fault, is a miscalculation. Annoying is the one that criticises a fault of others they themselves demonstrate.
7. If a mirror is broken, the broken pieces will also reflect our faults. Therefore, retaliation and reprisal does not mean that we no longer have to do work upon ourselves.
8. The smoothness of a mirror allows for the reflection of our faults. Likewise, a true believing friend must reflect on the faults of his brothers in religion on the basis of smooth, honest and true friendship and not based on retribution and reprisal.
9. A mirror will not keep at heart our faults once it reflects it... the moment we turn and leave, our faults also turn, leave and erased from the mirror. A believer must likewise reflect the faults of his brother in faith but once we leave them, their fault is no longer contained in our hearts.
10. Anyone who wants to identify their own fault can do so however if one so desires, it is possible for us to simply see ourselves in a shallow dimension without ever searching for our own faults.

We should not get overly excited about those who accept, like the plant that flowers quickly but is withers easily in the cold, nor should we lose hope from those who are slow, as the strongest faith comes based on the foundation of thinking and choice.

With regards to those who are thinkers, the Qur'an states:

يَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا

***“They first reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth, and then they say: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this for vanity.’”<sup>1</sup>***

The Qur’an identifies the servants of Allah SWT as those who listen and choose the best of words

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ

***“Who give ear to the Word and follow the fairest of it.”<sup>2</sup>***

So quick decisions are not the basis of what has the most value.

A person by the name of Safwan requested from the Prophet SAWA two months in which he be allowed to consider him. The Prophet SAWA replied: I will grant you three, four months.

Of course if the issue is clear one should not be evasive. The criminals in the hereafter will say to their friends in heaven: Were we not together on the Earth? So please look towards us with kindness so that we may benefit from you. Those in heaven will say: While on Earth we were together, but you were evasive.

وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ

***“But you tempted yourselves, and you awaited.”<sup>3</sup>***

Therefore, where the issue is clear, rapid response is required. That’s why in the Qur’an, in places where it is necessary in certain work we hurry, speed and race, it tells us to just that with words such as *سارعوا, سابقوا, فاستبقوا*, (to race and to be fast) and in matters where the issue is not so clear, research and investigation is required, and more time is needed to make a decision.

1. Al Emran 3: 191

2. Al Zumr 39: 18

3. Hadeed 57: 14

The Qur’an is very critical of those who remember Allah SWT during times of danger, but the moment they are saved are quick to forget the favor bestowed upon them. The Qur’an reminds us that

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ

***“When a group of people embark their ships and are in danger, they call on God.”***<sup>1</sup>

But when they are saved, they forget God.

A faith that is in principle a faith that is brought about momentarily by hardship has no value even Pharaoh lipped his faith once he was face to face with death before drowning **آمَنْتُ** – I believe<sup>2</sup> he said, at which point these words had no value anymore.

Allah SWT states:

الآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ

***“Now? And before thou didst rebel.”***<sup>3</sup>

Meaning that repentance and faith now have no benefit.

The Qur’an reminds us that faith which is praised is one that comes along with stability and perseverance

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا

***“Those who have said, ‘Our Lord is God.’ then have gone straight.”***<sup>4</sup>

In life too, it is not marriage that is important, but rather the companionship of the spouse. It is not childbirth that is important, but the raising of the child that is important.

1. Ankaboot 29:65
2. Yunus 10:90
3. Yunus 10:91
4. Fussilat 41:30

The Qur’an states:

ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

***“Call upon Me and I will answer you.”<sup>1</sup>***

If a friend says to another: *if you ever get in to any trouble, give me a call and I will be there to help you*, that sentence is subject to terms and conditions such as:

1. The friendship is maintained.
2. That the phone number is not lost, and that it is correctly dialed.
3. When contact is made, unrelated matters and issues are not said and unrealistic expectations are not had while at the same time, you should be performing your own responsibilities.
4. Whatever is called for is really a problem, not an imaginary issue or groundless fear.
5. In order for the problem to be solved, do not wait for all the requirements to fall in to place.
6. In order for your own problem to be solved, it should not result in the beginning of another problem for yourself or others.
7. When portraying the problem, to be honest and truthful.

Have we maintained our friendship and worship of Allah SWT? The Qur'an states:

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

***“And He answers those who believe and do righteous deeds.”<sup>2</sup>***

Maintaining the relationship with Allah SWT.

Have we even got the right phone number to call? In our narrations, we have certain etiquettes for prayers:

Starting with the name of Allah SWT – بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ – having ablution and facing the Qibla, having presence of the heart, being in a holy place such as a mosque, and before starting our requests we should invoke the Lord with his attributes and divine names, saying ten times “Ya Allah” – يَا اللّٰه – “Ya Rabb” – يَا رَب – stating some of the blessings that we have been granted, be thank full towards Allah SWT, sending our divine blessings to the Prophet SAWA and his pure progeny, confessing to our own shortcomings and seeking forgiveness, we than state our needs in between two divine blessings upon the Prophet SAWA and his pure progeny and then to remain hopeful.

Do we have unrealistic expectations in our prayers and have we fulfilled our own duties?

A university student has not studied and prays that he passes. They say that a student once came home and went straight in to his room and became busy with his prayers. He prayed that the Himalayas be placed in a particular country and that the lake of Urmia be placed in Neyshabour. The mother asked: What kind of a prayer is that? The student replied that he answered some questions incorrectly and was praying that the geographical locations of these places be changed so that he can get the marks in his test!

Are we praying at the right time and have we fulfilled the other conditions for prayers?

In Islam, advice for the best times for praying for our needs have been gifted to us, they are Thursday nights (the night before Friday), dawn, after our daily prayers, Friday at sunset, after the Friday sermon of Friday prayers, during rainfall, and while our tears are flowing.

Are our problems really problems or we imagining that they are problems?

Many problems are necessary for the normal functioning of the natural world and the lifting of those problems means the destruction of the natural law of the world. A poor man who has a house with a broken roof will hear the sounds of the rain falling upon his roof. In order to solve the poor man's problem, either God has to stop the rain all together, or for it not rain on top of the man's house, or for the rain to not penetrate through to the broken roof or any of those will mean that some divine law must be broken in order for it to occur.

1. Ghafir 40:60
2. Shura 42:26

The need for the Divine Test is to separate those who call for Truth from those who call for Falsehood. Everyone claims to be a good person, but the truth will only be revealed to everyone in times of hardship as to how much of that claim is actually true.

The Qur'an states that we will test you with fear, hunger, poverty and death of loved ones:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ  
وَيَشِيرُ الصَّابِرِينَ

***“Surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of goods and lives and fruits; yet give thou good tidings unto the patient.”<sup>1</sup>***

God's knowledge is not the reason for our rewards and punishments, rather our own actions will be the cause of the rewards and punishments that we will receive in the Hereafter. Let's look at some

examples:

1. Knowing how a particular tailor or builder or carpenter builds or sews is not enough for anything to be made, but rather they must do the work itself in order to be able to present the fruits of their labor.
2. A teacher may know a particular student is not someone who is studying hard, but cannot fail the student before the time of their exams or assignments. Imam Ali AS states that Divine Tests are not for the benefit of Gods knowledge, but rather to set the foundation making it necessary for one to take an action which forms the basis for punishment and reward.

Without a test, people cannot be known.

Patience against a test is how to know someone.

Acceptance and submission when up against hard times is how to know someone.

Contentment and asceticism grows in times of scarcity.

Piety, patience and sacrifice of people becomes known during hardships.

1. Baqarah 2:155

The Qur'an states that the inheritance of the world will be to the God Conscious and the Pious...

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

1

and

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

2

The term Taqwa here is referring to deliverance, not relaxation. Management and governance requires special piety, capability and efficiency. The Qur'an states that:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

***"The earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants."***<sup>3</sup>

The inheritors of the world need to have two conditions fulfilled: one is being a worshipper of Allah SWT which is the “عبادى” that is being referred to, and the other is competence which is the piety, capability and efficiency required of management “الصالحون” – The righteous.

For this reason, we need to define what it means to say that those who inherit the world will be the pious ones. We need to understand them in the context of what other Ayahs in the Qur’an say about the same topic and also what the Ahlul Bayt AS say about them.

When one falls ill, the full prescription of the doctor needs to be followed and all the medications need to be taken as prescribed, otherwise if only some of the instructions are followed it may mean that the illness is prolonged and possibly even we fall prey to other illnesses and/or side effects that could have been prevented.

That’s why in the Qur’an Allah SWT is very critical of those who only believe in some of the Ayahs of the Qur’an and not others.<sup>4</sup>

Do schools and universities give certificates of completion to students who only complete some of the units and not others? Or which association fully rewards the worker that acts on some of the circulars while filing others without action? Which boss gives full pay to the employee who only fulfils some of the requirements of their work and not others?

1. Araaf 7:128
2. Taha 20:132
3. Anbiya 21:105
4. Nisa 4:150

The Holy Qur’an states:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

***“He Who has made everything which He has created most good.”***<sup>1</sup>

So even the poison of a snake in the snake’s body has benefits, although in the bodies of mankind it is fatal. As much as the saliva in our mouths is beneficial to us, if spat on another person, is an insult.

1. Sajda 32:7

This statement is as good as the statement of a young child who says to their parents: I don’t need your guidance in my life. I want to experience everything so that I can accept it. Is that statement detrimental

to the child or to the parent?

Those who believe in revelation, do not consider it as an entity that replaces science, mind and experience, but rather consider those items as limited and alongside experience and the faculty of thought, revelation provides benefits that adds to the other tools necessary to know oneself and the truth of the matter.

Anyone who pays no attention to revelation and relies solely on science and their own mind will deprive themselves of many matters relating to our existence.

With regards to their destiny, they have no insight in to life after death and are completely oblivious to facts revolving around the end of this existence.

There are many secrets to the world in which we live in and if one limits themselves only to science and thought, they will oppress themselves from that knowledge.

If a producer of goods provides us with information on how to use that product, should we turn around and tell them that we are in not need of your information, and that we want to experiment with the product our self so that we can use and understand it?

The Creator of this world, with regards to its very existence, the future, goals and proper use of the environment, has provided us with information to benefit through the best of people, who are the prophets. Ignoring these divine prophets will deprive us of a much wider scope of knowledge, than those limited to simply the power of experimentations and trial and error. There is no oppression greater upon ourselves than closing our eyes and ears to part of knowledge that is available to us.

The Qur'an calls for unity of Muslims:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

***“And hold you fast to God's bond, together, and do not scatter.”***<sup>1</sup>

And also ordered against division

وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا

***“And do not quarrel together and so lose heart, and your power depart.”***<sup>2</sup>

Let's have a look at two examples:

Rain drops on their own have no strength but once they come together and form a stream and then a river, it can have such power that if not contained, can cause serious damage and if harnessed such as using a dam, can turn a huge turbine to generate tens of megawatts of electrical power for civil and industrial use.

Each hand has five fingers, but against the enemy can join together to form a fist to strike the chest of the enemy. Each finger is an individual that stands alone and separate from the other, one long the other short, one slim and the other fat, and if any of them is missing, some of our daily tasks will remain incomplete. For example, without the thumb, one is unable to do up a button or hold a pen to write something.

And All praise is due to Allah SWT.

1. Al Imran 3:103
2. Al Anfal 8:46

**Ahlul Bayt:** Refers to the Prophet SAWA, Imam Ali AS, Syeda Fatima AS, Imam Hassan and Hussein AS, and the nine Pure Progeny from Imam Hussein AS that make up the fourteen Divinely Guided progeny of the Prophet SAWA.

**AS:** "Alayehi Al Salam" – Peace be upon them/him/her. Stated after mentioning any of the fourteen Divinely Guided.

**SAWA or PBUH:** "Salah Allah SWT Alayeh Wa Alihe Wasalam" – Blessings of Allah SWT upon him and his pure progeny, or Peace Be Upon Him. Stated each time the prophet's name is mentioned.

**SWT:** "Subahanahu Wa Ta'ala" – Glorified and Exalted Be He, used only in reference to Allah SWT.

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