

Section 1

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الم

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِیْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِیْنَ

الَّذِیْنَ یُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَیْبِ وَیُقِیْمُونَ الصَّلٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ یُنْفِقُونَ

وَالَّذِیْنَ یُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا اُنزِلَ اِلَیْكَ وَمَا اُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ یُوقِنُونَ

اُولٰٓئِكَ عَلٰی هُدًى مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

1. "Alif 'A', Lam 'L', Mim 'M'."

2. "This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the pious ones,"

3. "Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (in charity) of what We have provided them."

4. "And who believe in what has been revealed to you (Muhammad), and what has been sent down (to other apostles) before you; and of the Hereafter they are certain."

5. ***"They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the successful."***

The Abbreviated Letters of the Qur'an

At the beginning of 29 Suras of the Holy Qur'an, there are several certain abbreviated letters, the Muqatta'at, which seem separate from each other; i.e. they do not form an apparently meaningful word, but wherever they occur, in the Qur'an, the Surah follows immediately with some expressions about the Qur'an and its importance.

This in itself indicates that there is a relation between these letters and the origin of the Qur'an. As an example, Surah An-Naml, No.27, verses 1-2, say: **"Ta. Sin. These are verses of the Qur'an, a Book that makes (things) clear."** There are, also, many other examples, similar to this one, in the Qur'an.

The abbreviated letters of the Holy Qur'an have always been considered mysterious. In the words of scholars and commentators, the letters that are prefixes to some Suras, such as **'Alif 'A' Lam 'L', Mim 'M'**, and the like, are among the 'metaphorical expressions' of the Qur'an.

They are secrets that none knows except the Prophet (S) and, after him, his successors (as) who have left some traditions and narrations which testify to this very matter:

1 Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) said:

"Every book has all elite and the elite of this Book (The Qur'an) is the 'abbreviated letters'." [1](#)

2. It is narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who said:

***'Alif 'A' Lam 'L', Mim 'M'**, are the letters among the (whole) letters of the 'Exalted Name' of Allah, which are separated and scattered in the Qur'an and whenever the Prophet and the sinless Imams (as) call Allah by that 'Exalted Name', their prayer will be accepted." [2](#)*

3. It is narrated from Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn (as), thus:

*"The Quraysh and the Jews refuted the Qur'an and said: 'It is mere magic and he has made it by himself'. So, Allah said: **'Alif, Lam, Mim. This is the (True) Book...'**, i.e. 'O' Muhammad, this Book that is sent down to you, is made up of the abbreviated letters and 'Alif Lam, Mim are among them. They are the same as the letters of the alphabet that you (people) use in your words. Bring similar to it if you are genuine'." [3](#)*

4. It is narrated from Ibn-Abbas and 'Akramah who have said that these letters are the 'letters of oath', as well as 'the Name of Allah', by which He (s.w.t.) has Sworn.

The reason why Allah has sworn by these letters is, perhaps, for their importance and greatness through which the Glory and Highness of Allah and the secrets of the world of creation are stated.

All sciences, from the beginning to the end, daily activities and arrangements of affairs in societies and their communications throughout the world, the development of industries, the trading and commercial activity between people, their marriages, the social laws, regulations, and the jurisprudence of the religions of human beings, all in all, depend on the letters of the alphabet.

The transmission of ancient civilizations and cultures from old generations to the later ones has been possible only through transcribing and recording them essentially with the help of the bounty of alphabets.

Even this very book, which is the statement of the Divine laws and the description of the Qur'anic concepts, is being published and distributed throughout the world in different languages including the English language, because of the existence of the letters of the alphabet. Furthermore, an oath is usually taken to an important and great subject.

These abbreviated letters have such an importance and greatness. Hence, *Allah*, the Exalted, taking an oath to a letter of the alphabet, says:

"Nun. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write," (Surah Al-Qalam. No.68. verse 1).

However, there are more than one hundred other traditions on the abbreviated letters of the Qur'an cited by Muslim scholars in many authentic and tradition books.

Another aspect is that some eminent men have said that these letters refer to the idea that this heavenly Book, with such splendour and reputation that it stirs wonder in the great speakers, both Arab and non-Arab, and that has made the men of letters and all others unable to challenge it, is composed of the sort of the very alphabetical letters that are within the reach of everyone.

This fact shows that the Qur'an has not been produced by the mind of Man, but it is an absolute revelation and, therefore, none can produce the like of it.

Imam Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (as) is narrated to have said in a tradition: "*Verily, Allah has sent down this Qur'an narrated by the very letters that all Arabs apply ordinarily*". And, thus, *Allah*, Glory be to Him and Highly Exalted is He, says:

"Say, 'If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support", (Surah Al-Isra', No. 17, verse 88).

Following the abbreviated letters, the Surah, referring to the importance of this heavenly Book, says:

"This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt.."

This meaning may point to the idea that *Allah* promised His prophet (S) to send down to him a Book for

the guidance of men and now it was done. For, it is a Book wherein is a source of guidance for all truth-seekers, and, these believers, in fact, have no doubt in it.

The Qur'an says that there is no doubt in this Book, and this statement is not a mere claim. It means that the content of the Qur'an has such a style that it, in itself, attests to the authenticity of itself.

In other words, the signs of truthfulness, greatness, and firmness together with the depth and synthesis of meanings, the sweetness and elegancy of the words and its stylistic form found in the statements are so evident that no doubt or temptation can interfere and every truth-seeker reaches the limits of certitude.

It is interesting that over the course of time not only the freshness of the Holy Qur'an does not decrease, but, with the progress of science and the secrets of created things being uncovered, the facts of the Holy Qur'an become more manifest.

As the international standards of development, science, and industry are raised, the luminosity and resplendence of these verses become more evident.

This is not only a claim but it is a reality that will be dealt with in this very book, *Allah*-Willing.

What is Guidance?

The term '*guidance*' is utilized in many occurrences in the Qur'an. In all these cases the root meaning of the word refers to two main guidances: Divine Guidance and Religious Guidance.

A) Divine Guidance is the guidance that exists in all creatures of the world. (In other words, 'Divine Guidance' means the leadership of *Allah* upon creatures under the regulation of creation governed by some definite laws and secrets of the world of existence.)

There are some verses in the Holy Qur'an concerning the subject; like the verse where the Qur'an reveals through Moses (as):

"...Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance", (Surah Taha No.20. verse 50).

It can also be said that those who are in lack of Faith are characterized in two groups. The members of the first group are those who generally seek for the truth and hold enough piety in their souls so that wherever they confront the truth they accept it.

The second group is some obstinate, fanatical, lustful people that not only do not seek for the truth but wherever they find it, they try to blowout its light.

It is certain that the Qur'an, or any other heavenly Book, has always been beneficial for the first group,

but the second group does not take any advantage from it. Hence, the Qur'an says:

"And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'an that which is healing and a mercy unto the believers, but it adds not to the unjust but perdition", (Surah Al-Asra', No.17. verse 82).

However, it is a fact that saline soil does not grow flowers such as hyacinth though it rains a thousand times on it. But, if the land is ploughed, fertilized and prepared for planting, the life-giving droplets of rain will be useful for it.

The land of the self of man is similar to this parable. It should be empty of obstinacy and enmity; otherwise, the seed of guidance will not grow in it. So, *Allah* qualifies the Qur'an as:

"(The Qur'an is) a guidance to the pious ones".

B) 'Religious Guidance' is introduced by prophets and Divine Books. It is through their teaching and training that man can progress on the path of development. The references to this fact are found abundantly in the Holy Qur'an, including the verse that says:

"And We made them Leaders guiding (men) by Our Command...", (Surah Al-Anbiya No.21. Verse 73).

Why is Guidance Particular to the Pious Ones?

It is certain that the Qur'an was sent down for the guidance of all human beings. So, the question is that why the guidance is introduced as particular to the 'pious ones'.

The reason is that it is impossible for Man to take benefit from the guidance of the Divine Books unless he attains some degrees of submission and kindles the light of piety in his self.

Piety in Lexicon and Religion

The term / taqwa /, philologically, is derived from / wiqayah / '**to protect from what harms'**. *Allah*, the Exalted, says: "...**save yourselves and your families from a fire...**", (Surah At- Tahrim. No. 66. **verse 6**). Then, piety, in this sense, is 'the protection of oneself from what one fears'.

And, in religion, the pious are 'people who preserve their selves from what harms them in the Hereafter'.

The Stages of Piety

There are some stages of piety. The first stage is to avoid and restrain from committing sins and wrong doings; as it is narrated from the holy Prophet (S) that none reaches (this stage of) piety unless he avoids unlawful things. [4](#)

In a tradition from the Prophet (S), deeds of people are divided into three kinds:

1) Those that are clearly lawful, whose lawfulness is vividly apparent. 2) Those that are clearly unlawful, whose unlawfulness is certain. 3) Some dubious things that are situated between these two. They are lawful but resemble the unlawful. The person who avoids even the dubious things will never approach the unlawful ones. [5](#)

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) is narrated to have said:

"A pious person is he whose deeds would not include anything shameful if they are put in a tray and displayed it around the world (to show them) ". [6](#)

The second stage of piety is the full obedience to what is revealed to the Prophet (S). Thus, piety consists of performing obligatory things (Wajibat) and avoiding the unlawful things.

The third stage of piety is to rid the heart and soul of everything save *Allah*. In this sense, a pious person is one who strains out from his wishes, those that are not pleasing to *Allah*, and relies not on individuals but on Him only; viz, he forsakes from hoping in every other being and hopes only in Him; he focuses his view on observing the Beauty and Glory of His Lordship.

This is real piety; so the Qur'an says:

"O ' you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah with the care which is due to Him...",
(Surah Ale-Imran No 3. verse 102).

The Effects of Piety on Man's Spirit and Body

Regarding the Faith and practices in Islam, the Qur'an, at the beginning of this Surah, divides people into three different categories:

1. The pious ones (Muttaqin), who accept Islam in all aspects.
2. Unbelievers, who are in the exact opposite state as compared to the first group. They confess their infidelity and do not refrain from expressing hatred and acting hostilely against Islam.
3. The hypocrites, who portray contradictory features. They show themselves Muslims when they are with Muslims, but they behave hostilely towards Muslims when they are with the enemies of Islam. Their main fundamental features are, in fact, the very infidelity of theirs, but they simulate affection for Islam, too.

Undoubtedly, the harm of this group, for Islam, is greater than the second group. Hence, the Qur'an, concerning them, is more severe.

This quality, of course, is found not only in Islam but also in all ideological schools of the world. Their members are either faithful to the doctrine of that school, or are clearly opposed to it, or they are conservative hypocrites. Furthermore, this proposition does not refer only to a specific time; it has

always existed in all ages of the human world.

The Pious Ones, the First Group

The verses under discussion deal with the first group. These verses explain the special characteristics of the pious ones from the point of view of Faith and practice in five matters: Faith in the Unseen, establishment of prayer, spending in charity from all of the divine merits they possess, belief in the invitation of all prophets, and Faith in the Resurrection Day.

1. Faith in the Unseen

At first, the verse describes the pious ones as those: ***"Who believe in the Unseen..."***

'The world of the Unseen' and ***'the world of the senses'*** are two concepts opposite each other. 'The world of the senses' is the visible and physical world, while 'the world of the Unseen' is a world beyond our senses.

Therefore, the term / qayb / is used 'for that which is concealed from us'. The Qur'an says: ***"...the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. (Surah Al-Hashr, No. 59, Verse 22).***

'Faith in the Unseen' is just the first characteristic that separates the believers from unbelievers. Thus, the believers in heavenly religions contrast with the deniers of God, revelation, and Resurrection. It is for this very reason that 'Faith in the Unseen' has been mentioned as the first characteristic of 'the pious ones'.

The believers have cleft the limits of the world of 'materiality' and freed themselves from their restrictions. They have stepped into a quite vast open world and, with this broad scope of view that they have obtained, they have connected themselves with the realm of an extraordinary, bigger, and greater world.

But, the contrary group insists on confining Man, as an animal, inside the walls of the world of materialism. They call this retrogression, which is a kind of life filled with lusts and excessive luxuries, an advanced civilized life.

Comparing the concepts and doctrines of these two groups, we conclude that the 'pious ones' believe in 'the Unseen', a world very much wider and bigger than what can be seen or touched with the external senses in the world of existence.

The Creator of this universe is Omniscient and Omnipotent, Who has infinite Glory and Insight. He is Eternal and has no end. He has planned the world in a good, regular, and precise design.

In the world of believing men, the spirit of Man has produced a great distance between humans and animals. For them, death does not mean an end. On the contrary, it is one of the stages of progression

towards man's development. Death is an opening to a broader and greater world.

Whereas, a materialist believes that the world of being is restricted to what we can see. He says that natural science has proved that the rules of nature are a chain of obligatory rules by which, without any designs or special programs, this world has been fashioned.

They believe productive power of the world has no intellect even as little as that of a child. And, Man is a part of nature, i.e., when he dies everything ends. His corpse is decomposed in a few days and joins with nature again as a natural component. They conclude that there is no life after death for Man, and there is no difference between Man and animal.

Are these two people with these two different methods of thinking comparable with each other? Are their actions and behaviours in the society the same?

The first one cannot ignore that which is right, just and benevolent, and helping other fellow members. But the second does not see any reason for any of these matters. He cares for only what is effective and beneficial in his physical life at present or in the future.

That is why that, in the lives of truthful believing people, there is purity, brotherhood, mutual understanding, and cooperation; while in the lives governed by materialism, colonialism, exploitation, plunder and murder are seen. Therefore, the Holy Qur'an, in the above mentioned verses, considers '**Faith in the Unseen**' the first stage of piety.

Opinions are divided among the commentators as to whether Faith in the Unseen, here, points to Faith in Monotheism, or to a vast meaning that covers Faith in the world of revelation, Resurrection, angels and, in general, what is beyond the external senses.

We already pointed out that Faith in 'the world of beyond the external senses' is the first phase of separation of the believers from unbelievers. This makes it clear that the term '*Unseen*', here, contains the same vast meaning as the term that was pointed out.

Moreover, the application of the word in this verse is absolute and unrestricted. There is nothing included in the verse that would confine its meaning to a specific one.

In some traditions from Ahlul Bayt (as) [7](#) " the term '*Unseen*', in the verse under discussion, is rendered to the '12th Imam (as)', who, as we believe, is alive right now but is concealed from the eyes of people.

This idea does not contrast with what was said in the above, because it is one of the aspects of '*Unseen*', too. And, in other words, '*Unseen*' is something which is not possible to be seen or heard by our external senses, such as sight or hearing or things outside the grasp of our other senses.

The Existence of *Allah* is apparently hidden because of the limit of our external senses. The Hereafter, the status of the next world, is concealed from our eyes.

In this gloomy time in which we live, the presence of prophets and our sinless Imams (as) are necessary for us, but, even our Expected Imam (as) whom we need to be our guide out in front of us, whose light of mastership, which would help us follow along this dim, murky, dangerous road that lies before us upon which we must travel until we reach the sound abode of ours, is absent from us.

Apparently, he is out of our reach. Though, he, the esteemed one (as), is never heedless of his true followers and he is always aware of their circumstances. (There will be a more comprehensive discussion concerning the '12th Imam (as), later in the .)

This statement shows that at this time, which is the worst of the ages, how high the position of the persons with complete Faith is! And, as it is narrated, there is reason for the holy Prophet (S) to say about them: *"How much I am eager to see my brothers (who will come to being) in 'the end of time' ".* [8](#)

We may consider that the Prophet (S), with such high rank and glory, has expressed his eagerness for seeing the true believers of this time, and has introduced them as his 'brothers'.

2. Relationship with Allah

Another specialty of the 'pious ones' mentioned in the Qur'an is their prayers.

Prayer, which is the key to communion with *Allah*, holds the believers in permanent and perpetual contact with that great Origin of Creation. They have found the way to the world beyond this world, viz, the world of the supernatural.

They bow only to *Allah* and submit only to the Great Creator of the World of Being. That is why there is no place for submission or surrender to any tyrants and oppressors in their agenda.

Such a human feels that he has been promoted to a situation higher than that of all other creatures for that he has the honour of standing in front of *Allah* and is worthy of speaking directly with Him. This status is the greatest factor necessary for training.

The person who, with his whole heart and mind, stands in front of *Allah*, at least five times a day and sincerely utters invocation, his thoughts, his actions and his speech altogether will become divine. How is it possible that a person like that could do anything against *Allah's* pleasure?

The Excellence & Importance of Prayer

Prayer is the pillar of Faith, the means of attaining nearness to *Allah*, the expression of obedience to Him, the thanksgiving for His infinite Mercy, the imitation of the examples of the holy Prophet and immaculate Imams (as), the strong link between a person and *Allah*, and the constant means of seeking and receiving His Guidance and assistance and avoiding errors and evil.

Prayer is the only way in which faith that lives in the heart, can be made manifest in our actions, and can

ensure admission to the realm of everlasting happiness in our life in this world as well as the life in the next world.

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'an and plenty of traditions in Islamic literature on the importance and virtue of prayer. Intellectual and religious considerations approve its excellence, too.

Here, we narrate the words of the Late Sahib Jawahir cited in 'Jawahir-ul-Kalam', vol. 7, page 1. The words and ideas are based on the contents of the verses of the Qur'an and some authentic traditions:

"Prayer is an action that prevents the performance of hideous indecent deeds. This status causes the Fire of Hell to extinguish, and any pure believer to be linked with Allah by which he can make, spiritually, progress.

Just as the water of a stream washes away dirt from the body, prayer washes away the sins of believers; and, its repetition five times a day is similar to washing the body in that stream repeatedly. Allah told Jesus (as) and other prophets (as) as well, to pray throughout their lives "

"However, prayer is the basis of Islam and it is the best deed and the best subject (which is legislated by the religion). It is the standard and criterion of other deeds of people. Thus, when a person has performed the prayer completely, the reward of all other of his deeds is complete, because all of his good deeds are accepted.

Therefore, prayer, comparing with other religious practices, even the religion itself; is considered as a pillar similar to the central pole of a tent. For this reason the first deed of a mortal, which will be questioned about in the next life and will be discussed, is prayer'.

If prayer is accepted from a person, other (good) deeds of his lifetime will be evaluated and accepted from him. But, if it is refused, his other deeds will not be looked at and will be refused and returned to him.

So, regarding this, it is not surprising if an abandoner of prayer is called an 'unbeliever'. Yes, it is certainly so when the reason of its abandonment is especially for the scorning of the religion. Prayer is something that Imam al-Sadiq (as) did not know anything better or higher and more beloved than that with Allah.

Even, he (as) has said that these five daily canonical prayers are obligatory. He, who establishes them and observes them at their proper times, will meet Allah on the Judgment Day, and He holds a covenant stating that because of this he will enter Paradise.

But, he who does not keep up these obligatory prayers and does not observe them at their proper times, then, it will be up to Allah whether to forgive him or to punish him. And, the obligatory prayer is better than twenty Hajj-performances, each of which is better than a room full of gold that would completely be paid as donation in the way of Allah.

Or, the obligatory prayer is better than one thousand Hajj-performances, every one of them being better than the whole world with all its contents. Verily, obedience to Allah is service to Him, on the earth, and no service is comparable with prayer.

That was why the angels called Zachariah (as) while he was praying in his sanctuary. When a person is preparing for saying prayer, the Divine favours come down from heaven to him on the earth and some angels surround him. An angel proclaims that if this prayerful believer knew what existed in the prayer, he would never neglect it.."

"Hadrat Rida, the 8th holy Imam (as), wrote as an answer to the problems of Muhammad-ibn-Sanan that the reason of (the importance of) prayer is that it is the confession to the Lordship of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and lack of attributing partners to Him.

Prayer means to stand in front of the Almighty, Glory be to His Majesty, in a manner of humility, abasement and wretchedness and to seek forgiveness for the sins committed.

In prayer, a servant puts his head down on the soil several times a day in order to glorify Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and to furnish His remembrance all the time.

To stand in the presence of Allah in prayer, causes a believing person to avoid evils and it hinders him from all kinds of sin and corruption." [9](#)

3. Relationship with People

Besides the constant communion with Allah, the pious ones have a close and permanent relationship with people, the creatures of Allah. For this very reason, the Holy Qur'an introduces their third characteristic in this verse as thus:

"(They) spend (in charity) of what We have provided them".

It is noteworthy that the Qur'an does not say that 'They spend (in charity) of what they have' but it says: '***of what We have provided them'***. In this manner, it generalizes the subject of 'charity' so broadly that it includes all the material and spiritual gifts of Allah.

Therefore, the pious ones are those who donate not only from their material bounties but also from their spiritual gifts such as knowledge, science, intellect, physical power, or social abilities, and, in short, from all they have in their own possession. They donate from their own capital to those who are in need of them, and, in the meantime, they do not expect any recompense from them.

Another point is that the regulation of donation is a general regularity in the world of creation and, also, in the bodily system of every living creature. The heart of a man does not beat for itself alone but it donates of whatever it has to all of the cells.

The brain and the lungs, as well as other organs of the body, continually donate the vital results of their active functions. And, generally speaking, social life with the lack of donation is meaningless.

Sincere coherence with human beings is, in fact, coherence and attachment to *Allah*. A person who is attached to *Allah*, and knows that all bounties and sustenance proceed from Him, not from himself, will not be displeased with giving charity but will be happy to donate His gifts to His servants on His way, and, as a consequence, he gains the physical and spiritual merits for doing it for himself.

(For the importance of charity and its effects, refer to later explanations concerning **Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2 verses 261–274**).

At any rate, this kind of thinking purifies the soul of man from miserliness and envy. It changes the world of 'struggle for existence' to the world of 'humanity and civilization', a world in which everybody bonds himself to sharing his bounties with all the needy in his environment and, like the sun, gives light to his surroundings without expecting any favor in return or recompense.

It is notable that on the meaning of the phrase: "***(They) spend (in charity) of what We have provided them***", a tradition from Imam–Sadiq (as) says:

"It means that they share (and teach to those who need) the knowledge and science Allah has taught them." [10](#)

It is obvious that this statement does not mean that donation is specific to knowledge but, since when speaking about charity almost all the attention is usually turned to monetary donations, Imam al–Sadiq (as), by mentioning this kind of spiritual donation, wanted to clarify the broadness of the meaning of 'donation'.

So therefore, this idea makes it very clear that the word 'charity', referred to in the verse under discussion, is not restricted to the 'obligatory alms giving' (Zakat), but refers to alms in general, irrespective of obligatory or recommended ones; therefore, it has a vast meaning which includes any kind of help given gratuitously.

Another characteristic of the pious ones is belief in all of the prophets and the Divine designs. The Qur'an says that they are those who believe in what has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) (i.e. the Qur'an) and what has been sent down (to other apostles preceding him like the Turah, the Evangel, the Psalms of David and the rest of the Divine Books).

Therefore, not only they do not feel that there is any difference in the basis of the invitation of prophets, but they know all prophets to be similar truthful teachers and trainers who came, one after another, in this great school of the world of human beings to persuade people to pave the path of their development.

Further, the pious ones not only do not consider the Divine religions the cause of dispersion and

hypocrisy, but, regarding their fundamental unity, recognize them as a means of relation and sincere communication among nations.

Those who have this sort of concept and this point of view would cleanse their souls and minds from the dirt of obstinacy, and believe in all that the prophets of *Allah* have brought forth for the guidance and development of the human race. They would respect all the '*guides*' of the path of '*Monotheism*'.

Belief in the instructions of the prophets of the past (as), of course, does not mean that they do not adapt their thoughts and deeds to the religion of the last prophet (S), which is the last and completing link of the series of religions. If they do anything other than that, they, in fact, regress on their path towards development.

Faith in the Resurrection is an epithet which is mentioned as the last quality in this series of qualities for the pious Ones. [11](#) It says:

"...and of the Hereafter they are certain ".

In the phrase / wa bil 'axirati hum yuqinun / the word /yaqin / is the state of conviction and certainty reached through accepting undoubtable evidence or unquestionable proof in / muttaqin /. One of the epithets of 'the pious ones', / muttaqin /, is having an unshakably firm conviction and certainty that the ultimate purpose of life here lies in the realm beyond it, in the direction towards the Absolute.

They are sure that Man is not created uselessly and purposelessly. The creation has defined a route for him which will never end with death, for, if everything came to a completion in this world, all of these statements and tremendous activities and movements in the universe would certainly be in vain if it was meant only for a brief temporary life.

He accepts that the Absolute Justice of *Allah* is waiting for all humankind and it is not so that our deeds in this world will be disregarded without having any reckoning and compensation.

This belief provides him with ease and tranquility. The stresses resulting from the fulfillment of responsibilities not only do not hurt him, but on the contrary he receives them willingly. He stands firmly in front of misfortunes.

He does not resign to any unjust matter. He is sure that even the smallest action, good or evil will be compensated; and, after death, he will be transferred to a more comprehensive world where no cruelty or oppression exists. But he will meet the infinite favour and Mercy of *Allah*, the Just.

Belief in the Hereafter means cleaving the binding walls of materialism and reaching a happy realm, better and higher than that. The present world is like a school wherein Man should best prepare himself for the coming world. The present life is not the final goal but it is a preparation for the next life which will be eternal.

The life in this world is also similar to the prenatal period of a foetus in the mother's womb. This period is not the purpose of the creation of man, of course, but it is an evolutionary stage for the next period of life. Yet, if this foetus does not finish its course safely and without any defects or harm until the baby is born, it will not be happy and prosperous in its next life.

Belief in the Hereafter brings a profound effect in the behaviour of human beings. It gives them courage and bravery, because, *'martyrdom'* in the way of a Divine holy purpose, which is life's climax of honour and pride in this world, is the most beloved thing to a believing person. Since, to him, martyrdom is the beginning of an eternal and everlasting life.

Belief in the Hereafter controls man against sins. In other words, our sins have a reverse ratio with our Faith in *Allah* and the Hereafter. The more that Faith is firm and decisive, the less the amount of sin is. One reference is the words of *Allah* where He commands David (as):

"...and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah: (as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning", (Surah Sad, No, 38, verse 26).

Yes, this forgetfulness of the 'Day of Reckoning' in man is the origin of the kinds of disobedience, cruelty, and corruption which are the total source of grievous punishment.

The last verse in the verses under discussion refers to the fruit and the destination of the pious ones who have acquired the above five attributes. It says:

"They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the successful."

In fact, both their guidance and their successfulness are guaranteed by *Allah*. So, it can be said that the only path towards felicity and salvation is the path of this group who, with these five special attributes, have received the guidance of *Allah*.

The reason for the restriction, / 'ulā'ika / the pious ones only –, is clear in that His guidance is always universal but only the people with such characteristics who have chosen His narrow path, and none else, can be benefited by it, and will be successful in their life–journey in this world and the next.

It is worthy to note that the term / hidayat / 'guidance', as was stated before, has a vast meaning including many kinds of guidance, all of which originate from Him alone, such as: Divine Guidance, Religious Guidance, and Natural Guidance. Some details about 'guidance' were discussed when commenting on verse 6 from Surah Al-Fatihah. [12](#).

Note:

By the way, imitating the style in Surah Al-Fatihah, these five beginning verses of the Surah, which were mentioned as a group at first, are exceptionally repeated again one by one both in Arabic and English when commenting on each of them. The cause of this repetition was the length of their descriptions. But

from here on, only the English translations and the descriptions will be mentioned.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 6-7

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

6. "Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they will not believe."

7. "Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and over their eyes is a covering, and there awaits them a great punishment."

Disbelievers, the Second Group

The followers of this group are just the opposite of 'the pious ones'. Their characteristics are concisely expressed in the above two verses. In the first verse, it says:

"Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them whether you have warned them or have not warned them, they will not believe."

The first group, i.e., the pious ones, in all aspects and with all of their talents and faculties, are thoroughly ready to accept the truth and follow it when they receive it.

But this group, i.e. disbelievers, insist on their aberration so rigorously that they do not agree to show any inclination towards the truth even when it becomes completely clear to them. The Qur'an, which is a guide for the pious ones, is totally non-effective for this group.

It makes no difference to them whether you describe for them or not, warn them or not, give good tidings to them or not. In principle, they are not spiritually ready to follow the 'right path' or submit to it.

The second verse refers to the reason behind the existence of this bigotry and stubbornness. It indicates that they have sunk into impiety, infidelity, and enmity so deeply that they have lost their power of distinction. It says:

"Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and over their eyes is a covering..."

And for that reason, a great penalty is appropriate for them as the consequence of their deeds, and they deserve it. As Allah warns:

"...and there awaits them a great punishment.."

Thus, the eyes by which the pious ones see the signs of *Allah*, the ears through which they hear the words of right, and the hearts (and minds) wherein they conceive realities, are of no avail to the second group.

They have minds, eyes, and ears but, when it comes to realities, they are not able to understand, to see, or to hear, indeed, because their disgraceful actions, their stubbornness, and their enmity, like curtains, have covered over these means of acknowledgement.

It is certain that man is worthy of being guided before he reaches this state, even if he is rather astray. But when he loses his sense of distinction, there will not be any way for him to attain felicity, because he does not have the means of acknowledgement.

So, it is natural that 'the great punishment awaits him'. This case is like the situation of a lazy student who, by his own mischoice, does not strive to study hard enough and consequently becomes involved in the torment of ignorance and lack of certification.

The important fact is that one should be careful of sins, and when he commits one, he should repent soon and wipe it out with doing good deeds, lest the sin will remain as a fast colour stain on his heart, that which would seal the heart (with sin). The turning of the mind and the heart from the 'real' towards the 'unreal', when it gets rigid is termed in the Holy Qur'an as 'sealing'.

A tradition from Imam Baqir (as) says: "*There is not a believing servant but there is a white bright site on his heart, When he commits a sin, there appears a black dot in that site.*

If he repents, the black dot will disappear, But if he continues committing sins, that black dot enlarges until it covers the white bright site completely, When this site is covered (with blackness) the holder of this heart will never return back to doing good deeds.

*This is the meaning of the words of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, when He says: **Nay! Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts'**." (Surah Mutaffifin, No 83. verse 14) [13](#)*

Infidelity and its Meaning

Philologically, the term / kufr / means 'to cover, to conceal'. In religion it means: 'to deny the Grace or the Existence of *Allah*, His prophet, the prophecies of the apostles, and the Resurrection'. He who denies these principles of the religion, even only one of them, according to the consensus of Muslims, is out of the Circle of Islam and becomes counted among the disbelievers.

Anyhow, infidelity is '**the corrupt tree**' whose root is false ideas, its trunk is immorality, its branches and leaves are sins and vices, and its fruit is disgrace in this world and punishment in the coming world.

But Faith is **'the good tree'** whose root is true conviction, its trunk is fair virtues, its branches and leaves are good deeds, and its fruit is the happiness and prosperity in this world and the next world which, itself, is eternal salvation.

Surah Ibrahim, No 14, verses 14–16 say: **"Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a goodly word (being) like a goodly tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven, -"**

"Yielding its fruit in every season by the leave of its Lord ? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may receive admonition". "And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the surface of the earth, it has no stability".

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 8–16

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

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

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شِيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

8. ***"And of people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day', but they do not really believe."***
9. ***"They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith, but they deceive none save themselves, and they are not aware."***
10. ***"In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they were lying."***
11. ***"And when it is said to them: 'Do not make corruption in the earth', they say: 'Verily, we are only reformers'."***
12. ***"Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware."***
13. ***"And when it is said to them: 'Believe as the people believe', they say: 'Shall we believe as the fools believe?' Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know."***
14. ***"And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe (in what you believe)', but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: 'Verily, we are with you; we were only mocking'."***
15. ***"Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on."***
16. ***"These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright)."***

Hypocrites, the Third Group

The above verses state a short but very expressive explanation on 'hypocrites' and their spiritual specialties and characteristics illustrated by their actions.

Attention should be attracted to the fact that: In a special period of its sensitive historical course, Islam was faced with a specific group among the whole of the people, who neither had the courage to truly accept the invitation of Islam, nor had the power and boldness to openly oppose it.

This third group, whom the Qur'an calls, in Arabic terminology, /munafiqun/ 'hypocrites', is also termed the two-faced ones. They penetrate in the rows of true Muslim communities and become a great danger for Islam and Muslims.

It is usually difficult for the faithful believers to recognize them, because they appear in the society with the same manner as other Muslims do. But the Qur'an yields some clear exact signs and specialties about them which identify their hidden routines everywhere and in all centuries. These particular

qualifications can provide good criteria for the real Muslims to recognize them.

At the beginning, it gives an illustration of hypocrisy itself, saying:

"And of the people there are some who say: 'We believe in Allah and the Last Day', but they do not really believe."

They imagine this action of theirs as a kind of cleverness or, so to speak an advantageous policy. Therefore:

"They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith..."

It is not such as they think:

"...but they deceive none save themselves, and they are not aware"

Having deviated from the Straight Path, they spend their whole lives misled. They apply their power and potentials in vanity where their gain is nothing but failure, infamy, and a painful Divine penalty.

In the next verse, the Qur'an points to the fact that hypocrisy is, indeed, a disease. A safe and sound person does not have two faces. There is complete harmony ruling between his soul and his body, since outward and inward, as well as body and spirit, are complementary to each other.

If a person is a believing one, his entire being cries Faith and indicates his conviction. And if he goes astray, his deviation is revealed both outwardly and inwardly. This dissimilarity of spirit and body possessed by the hypocrite is a new additional disease. It is a sort of contradiction or duplicity or cleft that governs over the self of a man. Then, it says:

"In their hearts is a disease..."

Hence, in the regularity of creation, everybody who chooses a path and equips himself with the necessary means to pave it would go forth on that very path. Or, in other words, the abundance of actions and imaginations of a man on his chosen route would make the above idea much more colourful and secure. Then, the verse continues saying:

"...so Allah has increased their disease..."

The investment of the hypocrite is 'lies'. They adjust the contradictions found in their lives, as much as they can; each lie with its own set of excuses. Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says:

"...and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they were lying"

Then, the Qur'an refers to their specialties, the first of which is the claim of being 'reformers', while they are, in fact, mischief-mongers, saying:

"And when it is said to them: 'Do not make corruption in the earth', they say: 'Verily, we are only reformers'."

"Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware."

Both their persistence on the path of hypocrisy and their accustomedness to these hideous disgraceful agenda have caused them to think, gradually, that their activities are useful and constructive.

And, as it was mentioned previously, when sin is in excess and treads the limits, it seizes the sense of distinction, or even, it reverses the man's distinction. In this state, impurity and impiety prevail as his second nature.

Another specialty of this group is that they think themselves wise and clever while they think the believers are some simple-minded and credulous fools; as the Qur'an says:

"And when it is said to them: 'Believe as the people believe', they say: 'Shall we believe as the fools believe?'"

Thus, they accuse the truth-seeking, pure-hearted people of foolishness, for that these people, observing the signs of reality and rightfulness in the content of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (S), have humbly accepted it.

The hypocrites consider corruption, duplicity, and hypocrisy signs of their cleverness and wisdom. Yes, in their logic, intellect has changed its place with foolishness.

So, the Qur'an, answering them, says:

"...Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they do not know."

Is this not, within itself, a kind of foolishness, that a person does not specify his conviction, but changes colour according to whatever group or class of ideology he joins, and assumes duplicity or even multifariousness? Is it not silly for a person to spend his faculties and abilities in doing evil and making plots for destruction and, in the meantime, to count himself among the wise?

The third specialty is that they change colour everyday, and choose the direction of every group they

meet. As the Holy Qur'an says:

"And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe (in what you believe)'..."

They tell the believers that they follow the same school of thought as theirs, that is, they have accepted Islam eagerly and there is no difference between them.

"...but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say: 'Verily, we are with you..."

They tell their fellow men that they are mocking the believers when telling them that they have believed:

"...we were only mocking..."

They say to them that they are deceiving them and, actually, they are supporters of their fellow men whom they have taken friend with and, keep their secrets safe and hidden.

Then, the Qur'an, with a beating and decisive tone says:

"Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their inordinacy, blindly wandering on."

The concluding verse, on this subject, expresses their final fate which is a very grievous, inauspicious, and dark end, thus:

"These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright)."

For this very reason, their purchase not only is of no avail for them, but also they have lost even their investment.

Explanations

The Appearance of Hypocrisy and its Roots

When a revolution takes place in a society, particularly a revolution like the Islamic Revolution which was founded on the virtues of Right and Justice, the interests of an oppressive, tyrannical, and selfish, group will be exposed and possibly placed in danger.

At first, this group mocks it, and then they apply the power of guns, economic sanctions, and continuous social propagation in order to try to subvert it.

But when the signs of triumph are made manifest for all of the forces and authorities of the region, some

of the opponents change their practical style of opposition and apparently resign themselves, but, in fact, they organize a hidden antagonistic group against the revolution.

These vicious individuals who are termed 'hypocrites', because of their actual duplicity, are the most harmful enemies of the revolution, because their position is not quite clear so that the revolutionists can recognize them and avoid them.

They deceitfully imitate and join the faithful people and occupy some social positions in the rows of the pure, truthful believers. They sometimes attain the sensitive posts, even.

Until the time when the holy Prophet (S) emigrated from Mecca to Medina, Muslims had not established a government. The prime essential basis of the Islamic government was founded when the holy Prophet (S) arrived in Medina. This process was made more manifest with the occurrence of the triumph of Badr, viz. ; a small but progressive government was formally organized.

It was at that time that the profits of many authorities in Medina, particularly that of the Jews, who were respected by Arabs, were being threatened. The Jews were respected at that time, mostly because they were of 'the People of the Book'. [14](#)

They were fairly learned, and they were economically advanced. It was they who, before the advent of the prophet of Islam (S) used to give the good news of his coming.

There were others, too, who were aspiring for the leadership of the people of Medina and were disappointed due to the migration of the Messenger of *Allah*. The cruel, selfish chieftains of Medina and their plunderers adherents saw that people, even their relatives, were tending to Islam and abundantly believing in the Prophet (S).

They, after resisting for a short time, understood that they could not help but to accept Islam, though only outwardly.

They realized that if they had opposed and stood against the new process, besides the damages of war and economic problems, they would have faced the danger of destruction; particularly because the total power of the Arab was his tribe, but their tribes had separated from them for the most part.

For this reason, they had developed a grudge in their hearts against the holy Prophet (S) and his mission. So, they secretly planned to subvert Islam. Therefore, they selected a third way. They decided to accept the Prophet (S) apparently, and to follow their own plots hiddenly. [15](#)

In short, the appearance of hypocrisy in a society is usually the effect of one of these two causes. The first is the triumph and power of the existing revolutionary school of thought in the society. The second cause is the spiritual weakness and the lack of nobility and courage needed to challenge such a force.

The Necessity of Knowing the Hypocrite

Undoubtedly, hypocrisy and the hypocrite were not only particular to the time of the Prophet (S); they are found in any society and at any time. They should be recognized, of course, according to the defined criteria that the Qur'an has introduced them with, in order to prevent their probable damages or harms.

There are various characteristics mentioned about the hypocrite in the former verses, as well as through Surah Al-Munafiqun No.63 and, also, in numerous Islamic traditions. Here are a few of these characteristics:

1. Great public outbursts and high claims with lots of boasting, but little action making their claims and actions unparalleled.
2. To swing to every side in any environment with any group; to speak among any society with the ideas of that society's school of thought, and to show themselves adherents in the society of true followers but, in the meantime, to cooperate with the oppositional group.
3. To separate their affairs from those of the people and to form secret hidden societies with specific plans.
4. Characterized by tricks, deceit, lies, flattery, breach of promises, and treachery.
5. To act before others with self-aggrandizement and self-conceit, counting people silly, simple, and foolish, while knowing themselves wise and clever.

In short, duplicity of personality, or contrast between internal and external, which is the clear characteristic of the hypocrite, has different effects on their personal and social behaviour, which can be easily figured out by the keen observer.

How beautifully the Qur'an puts it when it says: ***"In their hearts is a disease..."***. Which sickness can be worse than the sickness of duplicity of outward and inward character? What disease is more painful than the illness of self-aggrandizement or lack of courage for challenging the things that we do not believe in?

However, the disease of hypocrisy, though it is hidden, is recognizable by its different features. It is similar to heart disease which cannot be concealed wholly; although it is unseen, its signs and symptoms can be seen in one's face and limbs quite vividly.

Hypocrisy, in its specific meaning, is the condition of some faithless persons who are apparently counted among Muslims, but their hearts are actually pledged to infidelity. They are the most dangerous group, not only for Islam but also for any revolutionary progressive school of thought.

The hypocrites penetrate into the communities of Muslims and misuse any chance or opportunity for

hindering affairs. For this very hostile position that they have, they are the object of serious attacks in the Qur'an.

One complete Surah of the Qur'an is revealed about their circumstances which is entitled '**AI-Munafiqun**'. They have also been reproached and condemned very strongly in the narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as).

To introduce the hypocrite, a tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (as) who has narrated from the Prophet (S) says:

"There are three specialties that when they are in a person, he/she is a hypocrite even the one who observes the fast, practices prayers and considers oneself a Muslim: he who is treacherous when he is trusted, when he speaks he tells lies, and when he promises he fails it". [16](#)

Here, we attract your attention to the noble words of Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (as) about the hypocrites. He says:

"O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to fear, and I warn you against the hypocrites. They themselves are misguided and they will misguide you. They are lost in the labyrinth of sins and vices and will make you lose your straight path in that tortuous maze. They change their colours to suit their surroundings, and their words always have double meanings.

To convert you to their views and to win your sympathies they will resort to every sort of fraud and pretence, will adopt varieties of artifices and pretexts and will apply all possible allurements and deceptions. They always lie in ambush to seduce you. They pretend to be sincere and honest but their hearts are full of hypocrisy and vileness.

Their movements are very subtle. To mislead you they work so artfully and cunningly that you cannot easily find out their purpose. They poison your minds without your knowing it, like a disease spreading inside your body without your realizing the fact.

They behave as if they are ministering cures to your ailments. They talk as if they really feel for your troubles, but the result of their activities and their persuasions will affect you like an incurable disease.

Happiness and prosperity of others make them jealous and unhappy. They will do their worst to drag others into difficulties, reverses, and troubles. They will exert themselves to convert hopes of others into disappointments and despairs. And they have their victims in every walk of life.

They know how to touch your heart and how to gain your ears. For your every sorrow they have crocodile tears to shed and for every pain they offer you a balm, ineffective or injurious. If they praise you, it is with the hope of getting louder praises out of you.

If they want to get something out of you, they will pester you with their demands. If they wish to slander

anybody they will expose him threadbare. If they pass judgments they always forsake equity and justice

" . 17

Surah Al-Baqarah, Verses 17-20

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

صُمُّكُمْ بَعْضٌ عُمِّي فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ
بِالْكَافِرِينَ

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

17. ***"The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing."***

18. ***"(They are) deaf, dumb, blind –so they shall not return (to the right path)."***

19. ***"Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death; thus Allah encompasses the infidels."***

20. ***"The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight, whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them they stand still. Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things."***

Two Interesting Parables manifesting the Hypocrite

After stating the epithets and characteristics of the hypocrite, the Holy Qur'an, in order to illustrate their condition, likens them to two expressive parables:

1. In the first parable, the idea is that they are similar to a person who kindles a fire (by dark night) – (to distinguish the right way from the false way under its light and reach the destination). It says:

"The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing"

They think they can challenge against the darkness they are in with a small little fire. But, it happens that

suddenly a storm arrives, or a heavy rain falls, or their fuel runs out and the fire dies in coldness; so, they remain helpless, wandering in the terrible darkness.

Then, it adds: "***(They are) deaf, dumb, blind –so they shall not return (to the right path)***", because they no longer have the essential necessary means of grasping the truth in their possession.

Allah, the Exalted, stating the status of the hypocrites and unbelievers, informs His Messenger that they have totally lost their human innate potentialities. They, abusing it, have destroyed the talent which *Allah* has originally put in their created nature and they should revive it in order for it to be used correctly.

They have entirely deprived themselves of the real function of the divine faculties of sight, hearing, and speech. These sense organs are practically left useless and ineffective.

2. In the second parable, the scene of their life is illustrated in another way.

It is a dark fearful night, full of terror and danger. The rain is heavily falling and lightning flashes in the corner of the horizon every now and then. The horrible crashes of thunder seem to tear the eardrums.

A defenseless person, amazed at the situation in this vast dark dangerous plain, gains no benefit. For this frightened person, whose back is wet from the rain, there is neither a safe and secure shelter to take refuge, nor does the darkness let him step forth towards his destination.

The Holy Qur'an, in a short sentence, explains the situation of such a wandering passenger, thus:

"Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning..."

Then, it adds:

"...They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death..."

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'an points to a fact that wherever the disbelievers go, they are under the forceful control and watch of *Allah*. It says:

"...thus Allah encompasses the infidels."

In this situation lightning brightens the expanse of the sky again and again.

"The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight..."

Whenever the lightning strikes and lightens the dark spread of the desert, they walk a few steps under that light, but, immediately after that, they find themselves in the same darkness they were in before:

"...whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them they stand still..."

Every moment, they feel the danger in front of them because there is nothing in this desert, such as a mountain, a tree, or anything else for them to seek refuge in order to protect themselves from the danger of the flash of lightning and thunderbolt. At any moment they may be seized by the lightning as its prey and be laid in ashes in a blink of an eye!

There is even the danger of the sound of thunder tearing their eardrums and the sharp flash of lightning blinding their eyes. Yes, it is true:

"...Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things."

At the time of the holy Prophet (S), the quick spread of Islam, like the lightning, dazzled their eyes, and the verses of the Qur'an, which uncovered their secrets, surrounded them as quick as lightning. They thought that another verse might come down, too, and remove the curtains from some other secrets, so, they would become publicly more disgraced.

The Qur'an also points to this very meaning where it says:

"The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Surah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts, say: 'Mock you! But verily Allah will bring to light all that you fear (should be revealed)'." (Surah At-Taubah. No.9. verse 64).

Again, the Qur'an, verifying that the hypocrites were always in terror and fear that with their secrets being manifested, Allah's command would come down for the Muslims to fight them, the worst interior enemy of Islam, and destroy them, says:

"Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition in the City, desist not, We shall certainly stir thee up against them: then will they not be able to stay in it as your neighbours for any length of time:" "They shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be seized and slain (without mercy)." (Surah AL-Ahzab No. 33. verse 60 & 61).

In the Islamic literature, as was mentioned before, the traditions and data narrated about the hypocrite are abundant. One of them is the tradition that Imam al-Sadiq (as) quoted from his father and grandfathers who, in turn, had narrated from the Messenger of Allah (S) who, addressing Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), said:

"There are three signs for a believer: prayer, fasting, and alms. There are also indications referring to a hypocrite: when he speaks he tells lies, when he promises, he breaks them, and when he is entrusted with (something), he proves himself to be dishonest" [18](#)

Again, Abdullah 'Umar narrates from the holy Prophet (S) that there are four characteristics which are the signs of hypocrisy: lie in speech, excuse in promise, wickedness in enmity, and dishonesty in deposit. [19](#)

- [1.](#) Tafsir-us-Safi; vol. 1, pg 78
- [2.](#) Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, pg 66
- [3.](#) Al-Burhan, vol. 1, pg. 54
- [4.](#) Makhzan-ul-' Irfan, vol. 1, p. 81
- [5.](#) Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 221
- [6.](#) Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 82
- [7.](#) Nur-uth- Thaqaalayn, vol. 1, p. 31
- [8.](#) Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. 1, p. 99
- [9.](#) Jawahir-ul-Kalam, vol. 7, p. 1
- [10.](#) Majma'-ul-Bayan vol. 1, p. 39; and Nur-uth-Thaqaalayn, vol. 1, p. 32
- [11.](#) True Faith is, indeed, accompanied with / yaqin / 'certainty'. This status in a person may be defined from different scopes of view. The most important one of them is 'certainty of knowledge', which has been described as having three stages. More details are given on page 208, vol. 2, the current .
- [12.](#) For further explanation about 'guidance' review pages 55-61 in this very book.
- [13.](#) Usul-i-Kafi: vol. 2, p. 209, Tradition 20
- [14.](#) For the meaning of 'the People of the Book' see p. 202.
- [15.](#) This example also happened in the Islamic Revolution of Iran where they played the same role but, luckily, under the light of Allah's Grace and through the awareness of this honourable nation, they failed.
- [16.](#) Safinatul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 605
- [17.](#) Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon 194 Arabic print, and No.199, p. 172 English version
- [18.](#) Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 53, Tradition 3.
- [19.](#) Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol. 2, p. 198

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