

## Surah A'la, Chapter 87

(The Most High)

Number of Verses: 19

### Contents of Surah A'la

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

#### *In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*

This Surah is made up of two parts. In the first part, the words are directed to the Prophet (S), himself, containing some instructions regarding the praise of Allah and the fulfillment of his prophecy.

Corresponding to that, it names seven attributes of Allah the Most High.

The second part is about the humble believers, and the wretched rejecters. It expresses, concisely, the cause of their felicity and wickedness. At the end of the Surah, it is stated that these facts (pointed out in these verses) are mentioned not only in the Holy Qur'an, but are also mentioned in the earlier Scriptures; as well as the Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

### The Virtue in Studying this Surah

There are many narrations cited on the virtue of reciting this Surah; among them is a tradition from the Prophet Muhammad (S) which says:

*“Allah will reward him, who recites this Surah, the number of words, tenfold, which were revealed to Abraham, Moses and Muhammad.”*<sup>1</sup>

There are several narrations which denote that whenever the Prophet (S) or one of the twelve Imams (as) recited Surah A'la, they used to say /subhana rabbi-al-a'la/ 'Glory be to my Lord, the Most High'.

Another narration says that one of the companions of Hazrat Ali (as) said that he prayed twenty consecutive nights behind him (as) and he (as) did not recite any Surah, except Surah A'la. Also, he (as) said that if they knew what a blessing it has, every single one of them would recite the Surah ten times each day. He added that he who recites the Surah has, in essence, recited the Book and the Scriptures of Moses and Abraham.<sup>2</sup>

In short, as it is understood from all the narrations about it, this Surah stands out with special importance. Again, a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says that Surah A'la was beloved by the Holy Prophet (S).<sup>3</sup>

Opinions are divided over this Surah as to whether it was revealed in Mecca or Medina, but the popular idea among commentators is that it was revealed in Mecca.

Al-'Allamah-as-Sayyid Muhammad Hosain at-Tabataba'i (may Allah have mercy on him) prefers to consider the first part of the Surah Meccan and the last part Medinan, since it contains words about prayer and alms and, according to the narrations from Ahlul Bayt, (as) the words mean 'the prayer and alms on the feast of fast-breaking day', and we know that the instruction of the fasting month, with its relevant actions, were revealed in Medina. <sup>4</sup>

However, it is probable that the instruction of prayer and alms, mentioned at the end of the Surah, is a general instruction and 'the prayer and alms on the feast of fast-breaking day' are counted as its 'clear examples'. We know that commentary on the phrase 'clear example' is found abundantly in the narrations of Ahlul Bayt (as).

Therefore, the popular idea denoting that the Surah is Meccan is not improbable, particularly because the beginning verses, of the Surah, are completely compatible with the ending verses. Then, it is not easy to say that the Surah was revealed partly in Mecca and partly in Medina. There is also a narration which says that each group of people who arrived in Medina recited this Surah to some people in Medina.

This probability; that only its beginning verses were recited and the last verses were revealed in Medina, is very improbable.

## **Surah A'la, Verses 1-5**

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

***In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful***

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى

وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى

1. ***"Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High,"***
2. ***"He Who has created and fashioned (all things)"***
3. ***"And He Who has determined and guided"***
4. ***"And He Who brings out the Pasturage,"***
5. ***"Then makes it dried up; dust-coloured."***

## **Glorify Allah, The Most High**

This Surah contains the essence of the Prophet's Doctrine and mission, and begins with the praise of Allah.

The very first verse addresses the Prophet (S) and says:

***"Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High".***

Some commentators believe that the word 'name', here, means 'that which is named', while some others have said that 'name', itself, means 'Allah', a name, of course, which refers to 'that which is named'.

In any event, there is not much difference between these two commentaries, when both of them mean that His name would not be mentioned among the names of idols; in the way some idol worshippers wanted to regard His name, adding it along with the names of their own idols, or by those who consider Him material or corporeal.

The term

***la'la' 'the Most High'***

points to the fact that He is High and the Most High to any other persons or things that can be thought of, or beyond any apparent idolatrous or hidden polytheism.

Along with these two attributes, viz: 'Lord, the Cherisher', and 'the Most High', five more characteristics are expressed, here, all of which are about His very High Lordship. It says:

***“He Who has created and fashioned (all things)”.***

The term /sawwa/ is based on /taswiyah/ and means 'to proportion, fashion, perfect, make level and equal'. It has such a broad meaning which involves all the regularities of the world, containing the regulations over the stars and celestial bodies, or over the earthly creatures; particularly mankind, from the view point of body and spirit.

Some commentators have meant it to be the special fashioning of man's eyes, hands, legs, or his body standing erect, but, in fact, it is only a limited example of the vast concept of this term.

On the whole, the regularities of the Universe; from the greatest celestial systems to the simplest matters, such as the grooves in the finger tips; which are pointed out in Surah Qiyamat, No. 75, verse 4:

***“Nay We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers”,***

all are clear evidences of His Lordship and the affirmation of the one true Allah. This short statement, in itself, contains abundant meanings.

Following the matter of creation and its fashioning, attention is paid to the subject of the laws and decrees that He has ordained for the development, and guidance of the creatures to progress, on the Way.

It goes on to say:

***“And He Who has determined and guided”.***

The objective point of the term /taqdir/; the root for /qaddara/, is the very proportioning in the whole scheme of development towards the goal that creatures are created for.

And the objective point for the term /hidayat/; the base of /hada/, is 'the divine guidance' in the form of instincts and inner creeds dominating on every creature (irrespective of their inner or outer motives.)

For instance, on the one hand, a mother's breasts and the milk therein are created for the child's nourishment and she has been gifted with strong motherly love, and on the other hand, it includes the

instinct of the child moving toward its mother's breast, an instinct which is created in him. This preparation and mutual attraction, on the path to the goal, is seen in all living creatures.

In short, an alert observation upon the structure of any creature and the process it passes through in its life, makes this fact clear that there is an exact scheme in the course of development and, also, a powerful authoritative guidance supporting it and helping the program to be put into effect. This is another sign of His Lordship.

Of course, for human beings, in addition to divine guidance, there is another kind of guidance which is conveyed through revelation and by prophets and is called 'religious guidance'. It is interesting to note that man's religious guidance is complementary to his divine guidance, in all ways and under all circumstances.

A similar meaning is stated in Surah Taha, No. 20, verses 49–50 where Moses answers Pharaoh who asks:

***"...Who, then, O Moses, is the Lord of you two?"***

and he replies:

***"Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further, gave (it) guidance."***

Although the meaning of this statement was partly known at the time of Moses or in the days of the revelation of Qur'an, today, with the development of science and man's knowledge about different kinds of creatures; especially living creatures and plants, it has become more clear than ever before.

There are thousands and thousands of books written on the subject of /taqdir/ and 'the divine guidance', and they confess that there are still more unexpressed facts than what have already been stated.

Then, referring to plants, particularly pastures for cattle, it says:

***"And He Who brings out the Pasturage".***

The term /axraja/ is based on /ixraj/ which is used with a sense as if all of these had been inside the land and Allah has brought them out. It is obvious that the nutrition of animals is a preparation for the nutrition of man and, finally, the result of which eventually comes back round to human beings.

***"Then makes it dried up; dust-coloured."***

The term /qutha'/ basically means 'stubble, light straw, and dried plants that float over-flood waters', also, the foam that appears on the surface of a boiling liquid is called /qutha'/. Hence, the word is used for everything that is waste and perishable and, in the current verse, it is used in the sense of 'dead, dried leaves and plants'.

The term /a'wa/ is based on /awayya/ and /uwwa/, and means 'dark green' and 'black coloured'.

Both of them are used in one sense, because the colour of 'dark green' is usually close to a black colour; and the colour of dried plants gradually turns to black when they are covered over.

The choice of this meaning, even though reference is made to the divine blessings, may be for one of the following reasons:

1. These plants are symbols to tell human beings about the meaning of mortality conveyed in this world.
2. When dried plants are piled up they rot and change into compost which is useful for the growth of plants.
3. Some believe that there is a hint, in this verse, to the formation of underground coal by plants and trees which occurred over millions of years ago.

Of course, the verse can have a collective meaning consisting of all three of the above commentaries.

In any event, the 'dried up dust-coloured' material made from 'pasture' is both a good food for grazing animals in winter and a substance for men to burn, while also being a good fertilizer for farm lands.

In fact, the subject of

***'Lord, the Most High'***,

is characterized, well, by the last five characteristics in these verses; the study of which makes man familiar with His High Lordship.

## **Surah A'la, Verses 6-13**

سُنُقْرُكُ فَلَا تَنْسَى

إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى

وَنُيْسِرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ

سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَىٰ

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشْقَىٰ

الَّذِي يَصِلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَىٰ

ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ

6. ***“We will make you recite, so you shall not forget,”***
7. ***“Save what Allah wills, surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden.”***
8. ***“And We will ease you (your way) to a (state of) ease,”***
9. ***“Therefore do mention for mentioning does profit (mankind).”***
10. ***“He who fears will heed,”***
11. ***“But the most reprobate will shun it”***
12. ***“Who will enter the Great Fire”***
13. ***“Then he will neither die therein nor will he live.”***

## **We Will Make Everything Prepared For You To Do Good**

The contents of the former verses are about His Lordship and 'Oneness', while in the following verses reference is about the Qur'an and the 'prophecy' of the Prophet (S).

In those former verses (No. 1–5) general guidance is given while these verses refer to the guidance of man in particular. And finally, in the former verses the 'praise of the Lord; the Most High' is indicated, while in the following verses the Qur'an, itself, which conveys that very praise, is specified.

***“We will make you recite, so you shall not forget”.***

Therefore, (O Muhammad!), at the time of revelation be patient and do not make haste, you will never forget the Message. He Who descends them to you for the guidance of mankind, Himself, will protect

them and keep them fresh and pure, firmly in your mind, so that they will not be forgotten.

This idea is similar to what is mentioned in Surah Taha No. 20, verse 114 which says:

***“...Be not in haste with the Qur'an before its revelation to thee is completed, but say, 'O my Lord! advance me in knowledge'”.***

Also Surah Qiyamat No. 75, verses 16–17 say:

***“Move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'an) to make haste there with”.***  
***“It is for Us to collect it and to promulgate it”.***

Then, referring to Allah's bountiful providence and noting that all gifts are from Him, it goes on to say:

***“Save what Allah wills, surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden”.***

The verse does not mean that the holy Prophet (S) forgets something of the verses, or that his statement would be untrustworthy, it means that the memorization of them is a gift from Allah and, then, whenever He wills He can retrieve it from His prophet. In other words, the idea is to state the difference between Allah's intrinsic knowledge and the Prophet's gifted knowledge.

This verse, in fact, is similar to what is mentioned in Surah Hud , No. 11, verse 108 about the eternity of those who dwell in Paradise, which says:

***“And those who are blessed shall be in Gardens: they will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord willeth: a gift without break.”***

It is certain that the Blessed will never be sent out of Paradise as the last part of the verse attests to, but the expression 'except as thy Lord willeth' denotes to the Authority and Dominion of Allah's Will and that everything depends on His Will, both for the beginning of creation and its existence.

What confirms this sense is that keeping some data in mind and forgetting others is common for all human beings and cannot be a luxury that Allah counts as a privilege for His prophet. Hence, in this verse the objective is for Prophet (S) to know, by heart, all the verses of Qur'an and ordinances of Islam.

Some have also said that the objective point of this exception is the verses whose content and recitation both have been abrogated.

But this commentary is completely improbable, since, basically, the existence of these kind of verses is not certain.

The sentence

***‘...Surely He knows the manifest and what is hidden’***

is, in fact, the reason for the following phrase

***Isanuqri'uka/ 'We will make you recite'***,

remarking that Allah, Who knows all that is manifest and what is hidden, informs the Prophet (S) about what is necessary for human beings, by means of revelation, and nothing in that connection will be left out.

It is also likely that the Prophet (S) would not make haste when receiving revelation and would not be afraid of forgetting it, because Allah has promised him that he would not forget anything of the facts and He knows all things which are manifest or hidden.

Furthermore, one of the miracles of the Prophet (S) was that he learned all the Surahs, long and short, by heart, which Gabriel recited only once and he always remembered them forgetting nothing.

Then, to console the Prophet (S), it says:

***“And We will ease you (your way) to a state of ease”.***

In other words, the objective is to state the fact that there are many difficulties on the way which he has in front of him: by way of receiving the revelation, preserving it and communicating his prophecy, together with its fulfillment, and also by doing good deeds; in all of which Allah helps him and eases the problems for him.

This statement may refer to the content of the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) and the divine duties of the believers, viz: its content is easy to follow, his (S) religion is an easy one for the believers to practice and there are no hard, backbreaking duties contained in it.

Therefore, the above mentioned verse has a vast meaning, though many of the commentators have limited it to only one of its dimensions.

Verily, if it were not for the help and success of Allah, the Prophet (S) could never win out over those many difficulties.

The life of the Prophet, himself, was also a complete example for teaching this fact.

He was not a taskmaster in any aspect of his life: he ate any suitable food; he wore any clothes that were not repulsive; he slept sometimes in a bed and sometimes on a simple rug, or even on the sand. He was free from any formality; that is, he was friendly and informal.

After referring to revelation and Allah's promise for success and ease for the Prophet's affairs, his greatest duty is mentioned, thus:

***“Therefore do mention for mentioning does profit (mankind)”.***

Some have said that this means that mentioning is always useful. There are few whom it does not profit. Besides, at the least, it completes the argument and gives reasons to the unbelievers; which in, itself, is of a great benefit.

Some others believe that it means 'do mention whether it be useful or useless'.

In fact, it is like what Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 81 says:

***"...He made you garments to protect you from heat..."***

In this verse only

***'heat'***

is mentioned while 'to protect you from the cold' is also understood.

Still other commentators say that the conditional sentence, here has some meaning and its point is that when mentioning is useful 'do mention' but, when it is not useful it is not necessary to do so.

It is also probable that the term /an/ is not used here for conditioning, but for emphasis. If so, the sentence means 'Do mention, for mentioning is useful'.

The first commentary, out of these four commentaries, seems to be the most appropriate.

The practical program of the Prophet (S) verifies this fact.

He put no condition or limit on his citations and used to teach and give the warning to all.

Next, attention is paid to the reaction of people, before giving a speech and warning, and they are divided into two groups.

Note the following:

***"He who fears will heed."***

***"But the most reprobate will shun it".***

Truly, when the spirit of the fear of Allah, or, in other words, when the truth seeking spirit, which is a stage of righteousness, does not exist in man, he does not derive profit from the admonitions of Allah or the sermons of prophets.

For this very reason, at the beginning of Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 2 it is said about the Holy Qur'an, that:

***"In it is guidance sure, to those who fear Allah".***

Some narrations denote that Ibn–Abbas has cited that the verse

***"He who fears will heed;"***

was revealed about 'Abdullah–ibn–Maktum, the truth–seeking blind man, and some have said that the verse:

***"But the most reprobate will shun it"***

was revealed about Walid–ibn–Muqayyarah and 'Atabata–ibn–Rabi'ah who were among the chiefs of the pagans.<sup>5</sup>

Some have said that the term

***al-āqal 'the most reprobate'***,

here, means those who are the enemies of Truth and they dishonour Allah's Message.

As people are divided into three groups; in this respect:

- a) those who are aware and knowledgeable,
- b) those who hesitate and stand in doubt,
- c) and those who are the enemies of Truth, it is natural that the first and the second groups derive benefit from admonitions, but, for the third group the admonition is useless.

The only thing that can be mentioned about them is that admonition is useful to complete the argument and as a reason for them to be warned.

By the way, it is understood from this verse that the Prophet (S) proclaimed Allah's Message to the third group, too, but they ran away from it and did not accept it.

It is noteworthy that in these two verses 'the most reprobate' contrasts with 'he who fears Allah' and basically stands opposite to felicity. It is because the main origin of the felicity and salvation of man is the very fear of Allah and perception of responsibility.

In the next verse, the destiny of the last group is proclaimed:

***"Who will enter the Great Fire"***

***"Then he will neither die therein nor will he live."***

That is, they neither die to be free of the fire nor can the state in which they are in be called 'life'. They are always swinging between life and death; and this is the worse possible state to be in.

For the meaning of the phrase

### ***lan-nar-al-kubra/ 'the Great Fire'***

different attitudes have been formed. Some have said that it means 'the lowest place in Hell', /asfal-us-safilin/, because they are the most reprobate among people and their penalty also should be the worse and the most painful one.

Others have said that 'the Great Fire' is the final Penalty or disaster in the Hereafter, as contrasted with the minor penalties or disasters in this very life.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (as) denotes that he said:

*"Verily your simple fire here is a part out of seventy parts of the fire in Hell. It has been extinguished seventy times with water and has flamed again. If it were not so, mankind could not bear to be close to it".6*

In the supplication of Kumail, Hazrat Ali (as), comparing the fire of this world and that of the next world, says:

*"It is a tribulation and ordeal whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little and whose period is but fleeting."*

## **Surah A'la, Verses 14-19**

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى

بَلْ تُؤْتِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى

# إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ

## صُّحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ

14. ***"Indeed, he (alone) who has purified (himself) shall succeed",***
15. ***"And remembers the name of his Lord and prays."***
16. ***"Nay, you prefer the life of this world,"***
17. ***"While the world to come is better and more lasting,"***
18. ***"Surely this is in the earlier Scriptures,"***
19. ***"The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses."***

### **All Divine Books Contained A Definite Law**

The former verses point to the dreadful penalty of the enemies of Truth while the next verses touch on the salvation of the believers and also the effective causes for this felicity.

It begins:

***"Indeed, he (alone) who has purified (himself) shall succeed".***  
***"And remembers the name of his Lord and prays."***

Thus, the causes of salvation, felicity and success are counted as three: 'purification', 'remembrance of the Name of Allah', and 'prayers'.

Various commentaries have been cited for the meaning of the term /tazkiyah/ 'purification'.

First of all, it means 'purification of the soul from polytheism', in comparison with the former verses, and also that this is the most important purification.

Another meaning is 'purification of the heart from vices' by doing righteous deeds according to the verses of felicity in the Holy Qur'an, such as the beginning verses of Surah Mo'minun, No. 23, which says that salvation is a pledge for righteous deeds; or Surah Shams, No. 91, verse 9 which, according to the questions of righteousness and impiety, says:

***"Truly he succeeds that purifies it".***

Also, the term means 'alms of the fast-breaking feast' which would be paid first and, then, the special two rak'ah prayer of the day may be said, as this meaning has been cited in several narrations from Imam Sadiq (as).<sup>7</sup>

The same idea is narrated from Hazrat Ali (as) in other Muslim texts.<sup>8</sup>

A question may arise, here, as to is this Surah a Meccan Surah or not because there was nothing said, in Mecca, about fasting in the fasting month, alms of the fast-breaking feast, or the special two rak'ah prayer of the day. ('id-i-Fitr)

The answer to this question may be that some have said that the first part of the Surah was revealed in Mecca and the last part of it was revealed in Medina.

It is also probable that the above commentary expresses one clear example, out of many, and is conforming the verse with a vivid example of the above meaning.

Some have also said that the term /tazkiyah/, here, means 'alms-giving'.

It is important to know that /tazkiyah/ has such a vast meaning that can involve all of the following: the purification of the soul from polytheism, purification of the heart from iniquities, purification of deeds from prohibited ones and from hypocrisy, and purifying the soul and property by alms-giving in the path of Allah, because based on verse

***"Of their goods take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them", 9***

alms-giving causes the soul and spirit to be purified.

Therefore, all the above commentaries can be concentrated in the broad meaning of the verse.

It is worth mentioning that in these verses, at first, purification is mentioned and, then, the Name of Allah and prayer are pointed out.

It is also noteworthy that

***'prayer'***

is mentioned secondary to the Name of Allah. This is for the reason that one will not stand for prayers unless he remembers Allah and the light of Faith has enlightened his heart. Besides, prayer is worthy and acceptable when it is said wholly with the Name of Allah and His remembrance.

And that some have commented on

***'the remembrance of Allah'***

only by 'Allah-u-akbar' or

***/bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ (In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful)***

which is said at the beginning of the prayers, are, indeed, examples of this.

Pointing to the main cause of disobedience on the path of salvation, it says:

***"Nay, you prefer the life of this world,"  
"While the world to come is better and more lasting".***

And this is the very fact that is, also, stated in traditions:

*"The love for this world is the prime origin of all vice"*<sup>10</sup>

There is no sound reason that lets man exchange the everlasting next world for this fleeting world and prefer these short low desires, which are often mingled with different kinds of pain and sorrow, to those tremendous eternal blessings which are free from any unbecoming harmful vice.

And it should not be forgotten that:

***"Surely this is in the earlier Scriptures,"  
"The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses."***

Opinions are divided as to what the demonstrative /hatha/ 'this' points to. Some have said that it points to the last instruction about 'purification', 'prayer', and 'consider the life of this world superior to the Next World', because these have been the most basic teachings of all the prophets and are found in all of the Divine books.

Some others believe that it denotes to the whole Surah, because the Surah begins with monotheism, continues with prophecy and ends with practiced programs of religion.

In any case, this structure shows that the splendid content of this Surah, or its last verses in particular, are in the principles of all religions and among the basic teachings of all prophets; that which is a sign of greatness for the Surah and the importance of these teachings.

The term /suhuf/ is the plural form of /sahifah/ which, here, means 'a tablet or a page on which something is written.'

The above verses show that Abraham and Moses did, indeed, have Divine books.

A narration from Abuthar says that he asked the Prophet (S) how many prophets (Nabi) there were and he answered that there were one hundred and twenty four thousand (124,000).

Then he asked about the number of their messengers (Rasul), and the Prophet (S) answered him:

*"They were three hundred and thirteen and the rest were only prophets (Nabi)."*

He asked whether Adam was a prophet, and he (S) agreed and said that Allah spoke to Adam and it was He Who created him, Himself.

Then the Holy Prophet (S) added:

*“O Abuthar, four prophets were Arabs: Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb, and your prophet.”*

Also, Abuthar asked the Messenger of Allah how many books Allah revealed, and he replied:

*“One hundred and four books were revealed; ten books to Adam, fifty books to Shith, thirty books to Okhnukh (Enoch) and he is the first one who wrote by pen, ten books to Abraham, and Torah to Moses, Ingeel to Jesus, Zaboor to David, and Qur'an to Muhammad, (the Prophet of Islam)”.* 11

The words

***al-suhuf-il-ula/ 'the earlier Scriptures'***

refer to the books of Abraham and Moses that are compared with the latter books which were revealed to Jesus (as) and the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

## **Explanation**

An analysis on the tradition:

*'The love of this world is the prime origin of all vice'*

The Qur'anic calculation, in the aforementioned verses, for comparing this world with the Next World, saying:

***“While the world to come is better and more lasting,”***

is surely quite clear for the believing persons, but, regarding it, how does a believing person neglect his knowledge and commit sin and crimes?

The answer to the question is 'the predominance of desires on man's entity', whose main origin is also the love for the world. Love of this world is irrespective of the love of wealth, ambitions, sensuality (lusts), self-indulgence, vengefulness, mammonism, and the like.

They may sometimes be so forceful and violent, in man, as to cause him to set aside all his knowledge and wisdom which removes his sense of recognition and, consequently, he gives priority to this world rather than the Next World.

In Islamic traditions and narrations love of this world is repeatedly considered as the source of all sins and it is, in fact, an experienced truth that has been examined frequently in our own lives as well as in that of others.

Therefore, for eradicating sins from our lives, there is no other way but, to quell the love we have for this world.

We should know that this world is a probationary place and it is considered as a means, a passage, a bridge or as a farm through which we pass.

It is impossible for a lover of this world, when he is to choose either the property of this world or attaining Allah's contentment, to accept the second idea.

The files of criminal persons in courts prove, clearly, the truthfulness of the above tradition.

When fights (even between brothers and friends), wars or murders are deeply examined, the hand of the love for this world is seen.

But, how can we get rid of the love of this world when we are born and raised as the children of this world; and the love of a child for its mother is a natural phenomena?

To accomplish this task, mental, cultural and ideological training is needed and, then, purification of the soul is necessary.

The most helpful thing in this process, for those who have decided to travel this path, is the contemplation on the outcome of the lovers of this world.

What did the Pharaohs finally do with that abundant wealth that they had?

What happened to Qarun whose

***"Treasures were such that their very keys would have been a burden to the body of a strong man?"***<sup>12</sup>

And how much could he finally take with him from the coffers?

The present great forceful powers of our time, whose lives and authority have easily vanished and their kingdoms have changed into nothing after a single night or only over a short time, are the best examples for us to learn from.

We conclude this long and vast theme with an expressive tradition from Imam Ali-ibn-al-Hosain (as) who was asked what act Allah considers the best, and he answered:

*"Next to having the knowledge and consciousness about the Messenger of Allah, no act is better than having enmity for the world".*

Then he added:

*"Because there are many paths on the road to the love of the world, and there are numerous ways of committing sin. The first thing, by which sin against Allah began, was Iblis (Satan) when*

***'he refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject Faith'***<sup>13</sup>.

*“The second thing was ‘greed’ which caused Adam and Eve to leave the better when the Almighty Allah told them:*

***‘O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) you will; but approach not this tree, or you ran into harm and transgression’<sup>14</sup>.***

*But they went to something that they did not need and (the result of) that very action remained and will be for his children until the Day of Judgement, since most things that man demands he does not need”.*

(Necessities are not often the source of sin, what is the origin of vice is vain desires and those things which are extra to the main necessities).

*“Then it was ‘envy’ which was the cause of sin in Adam’s son who envied his brother and killed him”.*

Some other forms of love of the world are:

1. lust for women,
2. coveting this world (length of life, having all wishes fulfilled),
3. love for position; (prestige, status),
4. love for comfort (no responsibility: always wanting to be merry),
5. love to be superior,
6. love of speech, and
7. love for wealth.

All these seven characteristics are found in the love of this world.

The prophets and learned men, having considered this fact, say:

*“Love of this world is the prime origin of all vice.”<sup>15</sup>*

## **Supplication**

*O Lord! Clear our hearts from ‘the love of the world’, the source of all vice.*

*O Lord! Always guide us on all routes to the path of development.*

*O Lord! You know the manifest and what is hidden, forgive us of our apparent and hidden sins with your Grace.*

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1. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 533.
  2. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. 5, p. 544.
  3. Majma'-al Bayan, vol. 10, p. 472.
  4. Al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 386.
  5. Qartabi Commentary, vol... 10. p. 7110.
  6. Behar-al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 288, Tradition No. 21.
  7. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 556, Traditions 19 and 20.
  8. Ruh-al-Ma`ali, vol. 30, p. 110, Kashshaf Commentary, vol. 4, p. 740.
  9. Surah Taubah, No.9, verse 103
  10. This tradition, with a little difference, is narrated from Imam Sadiq, which Ali-ibn-Hosain and the prophets (as) shows its extreme importance (Nur-uth-Thaqaiayn, vol. 5, p. 556-557.)
  11. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 476.
  12. Surah Taubah, No.9, verse 103
  13. Surah Baqarah, No. 2. verse 34
  14. Sura Baqarah. No. 2, verse 35
  15. Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter 'Love For The World', Tradition No. 8

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