

**Lessons on
Destructive flaws and means of salvation
in
Islam**

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Dedication

To the memory of both my parents and my son Khalid.

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe. May His peace and blessings be upon prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him), his household, companions and followers of right guidance till the Day of Judgment.

During my stay in Britain for studying for my PhD, I used to deliver the Friday oration (Friday Khutba). To my surprise I found that the Islamic Library is quite poor of Islamic references written in a simplified and clear style of English especially those which can help in understanding the destructive flaws and means of salvation. Therefore I decided to prepare this book in a style that admires those who are affected by the Western culture.

The book is expected to be a simple tool for understanding the destructive flaws and means of salvation in Islam. It is also expected to be a very helpful tool for preachers to prepare Friday khutbas related to these points.

The book is of two parts. Part one deals with clarifying the main destructive flaws that lead to Allah's anger and consequently to Hellfire. Therefore, it warns Muslims from committing such flaws. Whereas the second one is restricted to clarifying means of salvation that leads to Allah's pleasure and Paradise and encourages Muslims to stick to them.

The material of the book is collected from references of Sunnah and Jamaa'ah which are based on the holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. Some of the materials in the chapters of the book are quoted from the internet Islamic websites after being modified.

To clarify and illustrate points this book relies on the English books of interpretation of the Qur'an and the books of Hadeeth. The main sources are mainly the translation of Qur'an by Yousif Ali and others while the Hadeeth sources are the translated books of Al-Bukhari, Muslim, An-Nawawi (Riyad As-Saliheen) and others.

Part one

المهلكات

Destructive flaws

Chapter one

Polytheism

الشرك

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger. To proceed:

This chapter tackles the biggest sin in Islam that is polytheism.(Sherk) It means claiming that Allah the exalted has partners to be worshipped, with.

Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said, "The biggest of the great sins are (1) to join others as partners in worship with Allah, (2) to be undutiful to one's parents (3) to murder a human being, (4) and to make a false statement, "or said, "to give a false witness." (Bukhari 6870 P1722).

The chapter traces the origin of polytheism, its description in the three religions and then it ends with warning Muslims and All people from falling in or committing such sin.

Definition of Polytheism

Linguistically, the word "Polytheism" is derived from the Greek words "poly" (many) athend "theos" (God) and means "worship of many Gods". Polytheism is therefore defined as a belief in the existence of many Gods It is the antonym of monotheism. Religiously polytheism (Shirk) means directing any part or form of worship, or anything else that is solely the right of Allah, to other than Allah the Blessed, the Most High.

The origins of shirk (polytheism)

following Shaykh Muhammad Naasirud-Deen al-Albaanee:¹

From that which has been established in the Sharee'ah (prescribed law) is that mankind was – in the beginning – a single nation upon true Tawheed, then Shirk gradually overcame them. The basis for this is the saying of Allah – the Most Blessed, the Most High:

(كان الناس أمة واحدة فبعث الله النبيين مبشرين ومنذرين وأنزل معهم الكتاب بالحق ليحكم بين الناس فيما اختلفوا فيه وما اختلف فيه إلا الذين أوتوه من بعد ما جائتهم البينات بغياً بينهم فهدى الله الذين آمنوا لما اختلفوا فيه من الحق باذنه والله يهدي من يشاء إلى صراط مستقيم.) (البقرة 2:213).

“Mankind was one Ummah, then Allah sent prophets bringing good news and warnings.” (Baqarah 2:213)

Ibn 'Abbaas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “Between Nooh (Noah) and Adam were ten generations, all of them were upon Sharee'ah (law) of the truth, and then they differed. So Allah sent Prophets as bringers of good news and as warners.” Related by Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree in his Tafseer (4/275) and al-Haakim (2/546) who said: “It is authentic according to the criterion of al-Bukhaaree.” Imaam adh-Dhahabee also agreed.

Ibn 'Urwah al-Hanbalee (d.837 H) said: “This saying refutes those historians from the People of the Book who claim that Qaabil (Cain) and his sons were fire-worshippers.” (Al-Kawaakibud-Duraree fee Tarteeb Musnadil-Imaam Ahmad 'alaa Abwaabil-Bukhaaree (6/212/1), still in manuscript form).

I say: In it is also a refutation of some of the philosophers and atheists who claim that the (natural) basis of man is Shirk, and that Tawheed evolved in man! The preceding aayah (verse) falsifies this claim, as do the two following authentic ahadeeth: Firstly: His (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saying that he related from his Lord (Allah): “I created all my servants upon the true Religion (upon Tawheed, free from Shirk). Then the devils came to them and led them astray from their true Religion. They made unlawful to people that which I had made lawful for them, and they commanded them to associate in worship with Me, that

¹ Taken from Tahdheer-us-Saajid min Ittikhaadhil-Quboori Masaajid (p. 101-106) of Shaykh al-Albaanee. (cf <http://www.angelfire.com/mo2/scarves/shirk.html>)

which I had sent down no authority.” Related by Muslim (8/159) and Ahmad (4/162) from 'Iyaad Ibn Himaar al-Mujaashi'ee (radiy Allahu 'anhu).

Secondly: His (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) saying: “Every child is born upon the fitrah, but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. It is like the way an animal gives birth to a natural offspring. Have you noticed any born mutilated, before you mutilate them?” Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Recite if you wish: “Allah’s fitrah with which He created mankind. There is to be no change to the creation (Religion) of Allah.” Ar-Room (30:30) Related by Al-Bukhari (11/418) and Muslim (18/52).

After this clear explanation, it is of the utmost importance for the Muslim to know how Shirk spread amongst the believers, after they were muwahhideen (people upon Tawheed) Concerning the saying of Allah – the most perfect – about the people of Noah:

وَقَالُوا لَا تَزِرُكُمُ وَالَا تَذَلُّنَّ سُوْدًا لَهَا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا (نوح 71:23).

“And they have said: You shall not forsake your Gods, nor shall you forsake Wadd, nor Suwaa‘, nor Yaghooth, nor Ya’ooq, nor Nasr.” [Soorah Nooh 71:23]

It has been related by a group from the Salaf (Pious Predecessors), in many narrations, that these five deities were righteous worshippers. However, when they died, Shaytaan (Satan) whispered into their people to retreat and sit at their graves. Then Shaytaan whispered to those who came after them that they should take them as idols, beautifying to them the idea that you will be reminded of them and thereby follow them in righteous conduct. Then Shaytaan suggested to the third generation that they should worship these idols besides Allah – the Most High – and he whispered to them that this is what their forefathers used to do!!! So Allah sent to them Noah (as), commanding them to worship Allah alone. However none responded to his call except a few. Allah – the Mighty and Majestic – related this whole incident in Soorah Noah.

Ibn 'Abbaas relates: “Indeed these five names of righteous men from the people of Nooh. When they died Shaytaan whispered to their people to make statues of them and to place these statues in their places of gathering as a reminder of them, so they did this. However, none from amongst them worshipped these statues, until when they died and the purpose of the statues was forgotten. Then (the next generation) began to worship them.” Related by Al-Bukhari (8/534).

The likes of this has also been related by Ibn Jareer at-Tabaree and others, from a number of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) – may Allah be pleased with them.

In ad-Durr-al-Manthoor (6/269): 'Abdullaah Ibn Humayd relates from Abu Muttahar, who said: Yazeed Ibnul-Muhallab was mentioned to Aboo Ja'far al-Baaqir (d.11H), so he said: He was killed at the place where another besides Allah was first worshipped. Then he mentioned Wadd and said: "Wadd was a Muslim man who was loved by his people. When he died, the people began to gather around his grave in the land of Baabil (Babel), lamenting and mourning. So when Iblees (Satan) saw them mourning and lamenting over him, he took the form of a man and came to them, saying: I see that you are mourning and lamenting over him. So why don't you make a picture of him (i.e. a statue) and place it in your places of gatherings so that you may be reminded of him. So they said: Yes, and they made a picture of him and put in their place of gathering; which reminded them of him. When Iblees saw how they were (excessively) remembering him, he said: "Why doesn't every man amongst you make a similar picture to keep in your own houses, so that you can be (constantly) reminded of him." So they all said "Yes." So each household made a picture of him, which they adored and venerated and which constantly reminded them of him. Aboo Ja'far said: "Those from the later generation saw what the (previous generation) had done and considered that...to the extent that they took him as an ilaah (deity) to be worshipped besides Allah. He then said: "This was the first idol worshipped other than Allah, and they called this idol Wadd."

Thus the wisdom of Allah – the Blessed, the Most High – was fulfilled, when He sent Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) as the final Prophet and made his Sharee'ah the completion of all divinely Prescribed Laws, in that He prohibited all means and avenues by which people may fall into Shirk – which is the greatest of sins. For this reason, building shrines over graves and intending to specifically travel to them, taking them as places of festivity and gathering and swearing an oath by the inmate of a grave; have all been prohibited. All of these lead to excessiveness and lead to the worship of other than Allah – the Most High. This being the case even more so in an age in which knowledge is diminishing, ignorance is increasing, there are few sincere advisors (to the truth). However, Shaytaan is co-operating with men and jinn to misguide mankind and to take them away from the worship of Allah alone – the Blessed, the Most High.

One can deduce from the above that mankind was born upon a disposition and a nature which is ready to accept the true Religion. So if he were to be left upon this, then he would continue upon it. However, those who deviate from this do so due to following human weaknesses and blind following of others..." Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar said in al-Fath (3/248): "The people differ concerning what is meant by al-Fitrah and the most famous saying is that it means Islam. Ibn 'Abdul-Barr said: That is what was well known with most of the Salaf (pious predecessors), and the Scholars of tafseer are agreed that what is meant by the saying of Allah – the Most High – " Allah's fitrah with which He created mankind." is Islam.

Turning to the origin of polytheism in Christianity, it is known that polytheism is referred to as trinity. The question to be raised here is who invented trinity in Christianity?

According to III&E Brochure Series; No. 22 Published by The Institute of Islamic Information and Education (III&E) The three monotheistic religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - all purport to share one fundamental concept: belief in Allah as the Supreme Being, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Known as tawhid in Islam, this concept of the Oneness of Allah was stressed by Moses in a Biblical passage known as the "Shema" or the Jewish creed of faith: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our Allah is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4) It was repeated word-for-word approximately 1500 years later by Jesus when he said: "...The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our Allah is one Lord." (Mark 12:29)

Muhammad came along approximately 600 years later, bringing the same message again:

(إن إلهكم إله واحد لا إله إلا هو الرحمن الرحيم) (البقرة 2:163).

"And your God is One God: There is no God but He, ..." Al-Baqarah (2:163)

Christianity has digressed from the concept of the Oneness of Allah, however, into a vague and mysterious doctrine that was formulated during the fourth century. This doctrine, which continues to be a source of controversy both within and without the Christian religion, is known as the Doctrine of the Trinity. Simply put; the Christian doctrine of the Trinity states that Allah is the union of three divine persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - in one divine being.

If that concept, put in basic terms, sounds confusing, the flowery language in the actual text of the doctrine lends even more mystery to the matter.

Islam and the Matter of the Trinity

While Christianity may have a problem defining the essence of God, such is not the case in Islam.

(لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله ثالث ثلاثة وما من إله إلا إله واحد وإن لم ينتهوا عما يقولون ليمسن الذين كفروا منهم عذاب أليم) (المائدة 5: 73).

"They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity, for there is no God except One God." Almaa'da (5:73) It is worth noting that the Arabic language Bible uses the name " Allah" as the name of God.

Suzanne Haneef, in her book What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims (Library of Islam, 1985), puts the matter quite succinctly when she says, "But Allah is not like a pie or an apple which can be divided into three thirds which form one whole; if God is three persons or possesses three parts, He is assuredly not the Single, Unique, Indivisible Being which God is and which Christianity professes to believe in." (pp. 183-184)

Looking at it from another angle, the Trinity designates God as being three separate entities - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. If Allah is the Father and also the Son, He would then be the Father of Himself because He is His own Son. This is not exactly logical.

Christianity claims to be a monotheistic religion. Monotheism, however, has as its fundamental belief that Allah is One; the Christian doctrine of the Trinity - Allah being Three-in-One - is seen by Islam as a form of polytheism. Christians don't revere just One God, they revere three.

This is a charge not taken lightly by Christians, however. They, in turn, accuse the Muslims of not even knowing what the Trinity is, pointing out that the Qur'an sets it up as Allah the Father, Jesus the Son, and Mary his mother. While veneration of Mary has been a figment of the Catholic Church since 431 when she was given the title "Mother of Allah" by the Council of Ephesus, a closer examination of the verse in the Qur'an (5:116)

(وإذ قال الله يا عيسى ابن مريم أنت قلت للناس اتخذوني وأمي إلهين من دون الله قال سبحانك ما يكون لي أن أقول ما ليس لي بحق إن كنت قلته فقد علمته تعلم ما في نفسي ولا أعلم ما في نفسك إنك أنت علام الغيوب) (المائدة 5:116).

most often cited by Christians in support of their accusation, shows that the designation of Mary by the Qur'an as a "member" of the Trinity, is simply not true.

While the Qur'an does condemn both trinitarianism (the Qur'an 4:17) and the worship of Jesus and his mother Mary (the Qur'an 5:116), nowhere does it identify the actual three components of the Christian Trinity. The position of the Qur'an is that WHO or WHAT comprises this doctrine is not important; what is important is that the very notion of a Trinity is an affront against the concept of One God.

In conclusion, we see that the doctrine of the Trinity is a concept conceived entirely by man; there is no sanction whatsoever from Allah to be found regarding the matter simply because the whole idea of a Trinity of divine beings has no place in monotheism. In the Qur'an, Allah's Final Revelations to mankind, we find His stand quite clearly stated in a number of eloquent passages:

(قل إنما أنا بشر مثلكم يوحى إلي أنما إلهكم إله واحد فمن كان يرجو لقاء ربه فليعمل عملاً صالحاً ولا يشرك بعبادة ربه أحداً) (الكهف 18:110)

"...your God is One God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner."
(Al-kahf 18:110)

(ذلك مما أوحى إليك ربك من الحكمة ولا تجعل مع الله إلهاً آخر فتلقى في جهنم ملوماً مدحوراً)
(الإسراء 17:39).

"...take not, with Allah, another object of worship, lest you should be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected." (Al-'sraa' 17:39)

Because, as Allah tells us over and over again in a Message that is echoed throughout All His Revealed Scriptures:

(إن هذه أمتكم أمة واحدة وأنا ربكم فاعبدون) (الأنبياء 21:92).

"...I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore, serve Me (and no other)..."
(Al-'anbeyaa' 21:92)

The Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said: "Indeed Allah has forbidden Hell for the person who testifies: There is nothing worthy of worship in truth (i.e. there is no true God) but Allah, seeking thereby nothing but Allah's face (pleasure)". [Al- Bukhari and Muslim No27 P41]

Hence being a Muslim, and having sincere and correct Tawheed means that the person will be safe from Hellfire - forever!

We should also take note of the condition in this hadeeth - this testification is not merely uttering the words of the kalimah la ilaha illa Allah, but rather it has to be sincerely done for Allah's pleasure, meeting all the conditions of this kalimah.

AYAH - SHIRK IS 'ZULM (oppression)'

Allah says in His Noble Book:

(الذين آمنوا ولم يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أولئك لهم الأمن وهم مهتدون) (الأنعام 6 :82).

"It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with Zulm (oppression), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided". [Al-'an'aam 6:82]

What does 'Zulm' (oppression) mean here? As explained in the noble Hadeeth of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, 'zulm' is to do shirk, i.e. associate partners with Allah - so those who do no shirk, they are the ones for whom there is security in the Hereafter, and only they are the guided ones!

Why we must know Shirk even though we are Muslims 'The fear of Shirk'

From the discussion thus far, we have understood why Tawheed is crucial. Similarly, we understand now that Shirk must be avoided. In order to do this (avoid shirk) we must know what are the types of shirk and their manifestations in the modern world.

It may be the case that as Muslims, we are complacent and think that Shirk can never affect us in anyway, as we say the kalimah. Let us remove this misunderstanding, by seeing the fear of shirk the Prophet inculcated in his noble companions, the Sahabah.

Jaber may Allah be pleased with him narrated that the Prophet of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said: Whoever dies while not

ascribing partners to Allah, enters the Paradise and whoever dies while ascribing partners to Allah, enters the Hell-fire." Al-Bukhari No1238 P293.

Additionally, the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said, in an authentic hadeeth: "That which I fear the MOST for YOU is Shirk Al-Asghar (the minor Shirk)" [narrated by Mahmoud ibn Lubayd, and collected in Ahmad, Tabarane and Bayhaqee, also recorded in majma'z-zawa'id vol.3 P458].

Here the Noble Prophet is addressing the Best of All the Generations, i.e. his Noble Companions and saying that the thing he most fear for them is Shirk!

So what about us the Noble Companions of the Prophet (all of them, without exception, of course) were not only rightly guided, but the Best of All Generations, and the best amongst them were Abu Bakar, 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab, Uthman ibn 'Affan and 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, in that order.

Let us ponder this issue - if the best of all generations could fall into shirk, which is the worst of all crimes, shouldn't we consider our own actions and beliefs, and try and ensure that WE commit no shirk? Shouldn't we rectify our own beliefs and actions first and foremost? Of course we should! In fact, instead of pointing fingers at others, or getting agitated, or arguing about politics, we should all first struggle and strive to remove Shirk from our beliefs and actions! Some of us may be complacent, that just because we are Muslims, we can ignore Shirk, that Shirk would never impact us - this is not the case, as we shall study.

AYAHS ON THE FEAR OF SHIRK - PROPHET IBRAHEEM

Let us consider the following ayah of the Noble Qur'an: "And remember when Ibraheem peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said:

(وإذ قال إبراهيم رب اجعل هذا البلد آمناً واجنبني وبني أن نعبد الأصنام) (إبراهيم 14:35)

'O My Lord! Make this city (Makkah) one of peace and security and keep me and my sons away from worshiping idols' " [Ibraheem 14:35]

Now this is a truly instructive ayah, one which should give us all grave cause for concern. Ibraheem peace and blessing of Allah be upon him as we know, was the Father of the Prophets, the Khaleel of Allah, the True Muwahhid (believer in Tawhid).

So much so, that his own father was an idol-maker and he, Ibraheem destroyed those idols with his own hands! So much so, that even as a young boy, he was able to discern that the worship of created objects was Shirk and that Allah was far removed from all this.

We could go on quoting ayahs, but I think we all understand the point - not only was Ibraheem peace and blessing of Allah be upon him a truly Noble Prophet with a lofty status, but he is the one person who was ALWAYS on Tawheed, as the Qur'an says:

(إن إبراهيم كان أمة قانتاً لله حنيفاً ولم يكن من المشركين) (النحل 16:120).

"Verily Ibraheem was an Ummah, or a nation obedient to Allah, Haneefah (one who worships none but Allah). And he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikoon (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers)" [An-Nahl 16:120].

This ayah (verse) is just one of numerous which prove that not only was Ibraheem, a true monotheist (Muwahhid) but a Noble person; hence Allah the exalted calls him a nation in his own right (an Ummah!).

And this Ibraheem, the one of such lofty status, was scared that he may end up worshipping idols! Ibraheem who was the leader of Tawheed, the Imam of the Mutaqeen, that same Ibraheem peace and blessing of Allah be upon him is beseeching Allah, requesting Allah, that Allah protects him from shirk! And saves his family!

"And remember when Ibraheem said:

(وإذ قال إبراهيم رب اجعل هذا البلد آمناً واجنبني وبني أن نعبد الأصنام) (إبراهيم 14:35)

'O My Lord! Make this city (Makkah) one of peace and security and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols". [Ibraheem 14:35]

Subhan Allah! O! Muslims - our Tawheed is far less than that of Ibraheem peace and blessing of Allah be upon him or that of the Companions of the Noble Messenger Muhammad peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. But are we scared of shirk? Do we even spend time praying to Allah that He protects us from Shirk? That Allah saves us from worshipping other than Him, and that we die on Tawheed?

And if we never think about shirk, why not? Are we so sure that we will enter Jannah? Who has given us this surety? The companions of Muhammad peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and Ibraheem peace

and blessing of Allah be upon him did not have this certainty, rather they prayed to Allah and were scared of doing shirk - so why are we not similarly concerned?

Insha Allah our response should be to start to take Tawheed very seriously; in fact as the MOST Serious Issue in our lives, and to start to be wary of Shirk.

Based on all this discussion the question arises, as a summary: Why is shirk so bad? This of course, we have attempted to understand in the above analysis, Shirk is so ugly and unkind, so great an oppression because it vilifies and insults Allah, the Most High, the Most Gracious, the Most Compassionate!

MUSLIMS COMMIT SHIRK :

The fact is that the Qur'an tells us, in clear language, leaving no doubt, that Muslims and believers in Allah can also commit Shirk! So just because someone's name is Muhammad or Abdul Rahman or Fatimah or Ayesah, does not mean they are safe from Shirk!

This is clear from the following ayah of the Qur'an:

(وما يؤمن أكثرهم بالله إلا وهم مشركون) (يوسف 12:106).

"And most of them believe not in Allah, except that they commit Shirk"
[Yousf 12: 106]

So Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala tells us that most of the people who actually believe in Allah, commit Shirk! And we as Muslims think that just because we believe in Allah, we are safe! Of course we are not!

The same point is explained further in the following authentic Hadeeth: "The hour (Qiyamah: Day of Resurrection) will not be established till a group of my Ummah joins the Mushrikeen (people who commit Shirk), and many people of my Ummah start worshipping idols" [narrated by Thowban may Allah be pleased with him, and collected in Ibn Majah and Abu Dawood] No.3252 P633. This Hadeeth leaves no ambiguity - there is no doubt that Muslims will commit Shirk, because Allah's Messenger has told us that groups from his Ummah (i.e. from the Muslim nation) will worship idols and join the Mushriks. What should be our response to this? We, as people who are concerned about the Muslim nation, should recognize that Shirk is the greatest calamity afflicting our peoples, and the way to remove that is not force, or revolution or killing! Rather, the

way to remove shirk and to establish Tawheed is the way of the Noble Messenger peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, i.e. teaching the people about Tawheed, warning them of Shirk, educating them and changing their hearts. This is what we would Insha Allah aim to do: teach all of us this most important of all affairs, Tawheed of Allah, and educate us in what Shirk is, so we can all stay away from it, and warn our loved ones too.

This issue of warning others about Shirk is important and very applicable to those who are close to us, from amongst our friends and family - it should hurt us to see those whom we love doing actions which are displeasing to Allah or having beliefs not in accordance with the beliefs of pure Islam; and truly, we can exhibit our real love for them only by having concern for their deen.

Summary

The main points of the Ahadeeth we have covered in the past three sections are:

- i) the hadeeth of Mu'adh ibn Jabal, about what the slave's right upon Allah is, and vice versa, i.e. those who worship Allah alone are promised Jannah;
- ii) the hadeeth that whoever testifies that there is nothing worthy of worship in truth except Allah Alone, Allah will admit him into paradise, whatever his deeds might be; and
- iii) Allah's saying that if the human being were to come to Allah with the world full of sins, and meet Him without making anything partner to Him (shirk), Allah would come to him with a similar amount of forgiveness.
- iv) the hadeeth studied (in Section 1) that Hell Fire is haram for the one who has Tawheed and commits no Shirk.

Hence if we stay within the realm of iman and Islam, by having correct Tawheed, then even if we commit sins in this life (which is not something we may strive to do or be pleased with), Allah will enter us into Paradise as promised in the ayahs and ahadeeth discussed above. A person like this, a Muslim who is a sinner but has perfect Tawheed and no shirk, he may be punished in Hell for some time - and I ask Allah to save all of us from such an event, and to protect us from the Fire, Ameen.

But even such a Muslim who is punished in the Fire, Allah will then shower His mercy upon him and remove his sins, purify and enter into Paradise eventually, only because of his Tawheed and his avoidance of Shirk!

But if a Muslim should leave the fold of Islam, by forgetting their Tawheed or not believing in the correct Aqeedah, then all of the deeds that they may perform will be worth nothing and the person who does this will be in the Hell-fire forever. And it is a fact, from the Qur'an, that Muslims can commit Shirk - we have studied the evidences for this in details as well.

Hence, we can conclude by saying:

- i) that shirk is the greatest sin, and
- ii) that shirk and disbelief in Allah is a very weird and unnatural thing to do, because we are completely dependent and desperately in need of Allah, Our Creator. Allah is in no need of us, and we do not, in any way increase His unlimited richness.
- iii) we should start to take shirk and Tawheed seriously - by learning Tawheed properly, and by avoiding Shirk!

Chapter Two

القسوة

Cruelty

Indeed all praise is due to Allah, we praise Him, seek His aid and ask His forgiveness. We seek shelter in Allah from the evil of our own souls and the evil of our own actions. Whoever Allah guided then he is truly guided and whoever has caused to be misguided then there is no guide for him.

I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah alone and I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and messenger, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his family and all of the righteous. Amin.

To proceed,

According to the spirit and overall teachings of Islam, causing unavoidable pain and suffering to the defenseless and innocent creatures of Allah is not justifiable under any circumstances. Islam wants us to think and act in the positive terms of accepting all species as communities like us in their own right and not to sit in Judgment on them according to our human norms and values.

Prevention of physical cruelty is not enough; mental cruelty is equally important. In the following incident, a bird's emotional distress has been treated as seriously as a physical injury:

We were on a journey with the Apostle of Allah, and he left us for a while. During his absence, we saw a bird called hummara with its two young and took the young ones. The mother bird was circling above us in the air, beating its wings in grief, when the Prophet came back and said: 'who has hurt the FEELINGS of this bird by taking its young? Return them to her'. (Narrated by Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah bin Mas'ud. Reported by Muslim).

It is reported by the same authority that: "a man once robbed some eggs from the nest of a bird. The Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, had them restored to the nest." (id).

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, has even tried the 'Punishment and Reward' approach in the following Ahadeeth:

The Islamic concern about cruelty in general and to animals in particular is so great that it has declared the infliction of any unnecessary and avoidable pain 'even to a sparrow or any creature smaller than that' as a sin for which the culprit would be answerable to Allah on the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) told his companions of a woman who would be sent to Hell for having locked up a cat; not feeding it, nor even releasing it so that it could feed herself." (Narrated by Abdullah bin 'Omar. Bukhari, 4:337; recorded in Riyad (Ref. No. 28), Hadeeth No. 1605; p. 271. Also Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadeeth No. 2242. English translation by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi; Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, Pakistan; 1976; Vol. 4, Hadeeth No. 5570; p. 1215.

Islam's concern for animals goes beyond the prevention of physical cruelty or even condescending kindness to them, which is a negative proposition. It enjoins on the human species, as the principal primates of animated world, to take over the responsibility of all creatures in the spirit of a positive philosophy of life and to be their active protectors.

The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) was asked if acts of charity even to the animals were rewarded by Allah. He replied: 'yes, there is a reward for acts of charity to every beast alive.' (Narrated by Abu Huraira, Bukhari, 3:322. Also Muslim, Vol. 4; Hadeeth No. 2244.

Further, 'A good deed done to a beast is as good as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to human beings' and that: 'Kindness to animals was promised by rewards in Life Hereafter.' (Mishkat al-Masabih; Book 6; Chapter 7, 8:178.)

The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) told his companions of a serf who was blessed by Allah for saving the life of a dog by giving it water to drink and quenching its thirst. (Narrated by Abu Huraira. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadeeth No. 2244. Also Bukhari, 3:322. Also

To catch birds and imprison them in cages without any special purpose is considered abominable.

No advantages and no urgency of human needs would justify the kind of calculated violence which is being done these days against animals, especially through international trade of livestock and meat. One of the sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) tells us: "If you must kill, kill without torture." (La taqtolu bi'l-

idha'i). While pronouncing this dictum, he did not name any animal as an exception - not even any noxious or venomous creature, such as scorpions and snakes.

Luckily, on this theme, we have quite a few of the Holy Prophet(peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) sayings. During the pre-Islamic period, certain pagan superstitions and polytheistic practices involving acts of torture and general cruelties to animals used to be common in Arabia. All such practices were condemned and stopped by Islam. The following few sayings of the Holy Prophet(peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) will serve as an example:

Jabir told that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) forbade striking the face or branding on the face of animals...The same companion of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) reported him as saying, when an ass which had been branded in its face passed him by: ' Allah curse the one who branded it.' (Narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah. Muslim, Vol.3, Hadeeth No. 2116.

When the Holy Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, migrated to Medina from Makka in 622 A.C., people there used to cut off camels' humps and the fat tails of sheep. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) ordered this barbaric practice to be stopped. The temptation for the people to perform this sort of vivisection on the animals was that the juicy humps and fatty tails could be eaten while the animal remained alive for future use. To remove this avidity, he declared: "whatever is cut off an animal, while it is still alive, is carrion and is unlawful (Haram) to eat." (Narrated by Abu Waqid al-Laithi. Tirmidhi; Hadeeth No. 1480).

To make sure that no injury was inflicted on the animal while there was even a flicker of life in it, it was forbidden by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) to molest the carcass in any way, such as: by breaking its neck, skinning, or slicing off any of its parts, until the body is dead cold. One of his sayings on this theme is: "Do not deal hastily with a 'being' before it is stone dead." (Kitab al-Muqni, 3:542. Also Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm). Prince of believers 'Omar ibn al-Khattab may Allah be pleased with him used to instruct repeatedly: 'Give time to the slaughtered being' till it is dead cold. (Al-Muhalla, 7:457; Ibn Hazm).

Many other Muslim authorities have also given juristic opinions (fatawa) to the effect that, after slaughter, time should be given for the rigor mortis to set in before cutting up the carcass.

Another malpractice in Arabia in those days, which caused pain and discomfort to the animals, was stopped by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) in these words: "Do not store milk in the udders of animals...." (Muslim and Bukhari.).

Not only physical but also emotional care of animals was so much emphasized by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) that he once reprimanded his wife, A'ishah, for treating a camel a bit offhandedly. A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, herself narrates: "I was riding a restive camel and turned it rather roughly. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said to me: 'it behooves you to treat the animals gently'. (Narrated by A'ishah. Muslim, Vol. 4, Hadeeth No. 2593).

The following Hadeeth forbids the disfiguration of the body of an animal.

The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: 'Do not clip the forelock of a horse, for a decency is attached to its forelock; nor its mane, for it protects it; nor its tail, for it is its fly-flap'. (Narrated by 'Utbah ibn Farqad Abu Abdillah al-Sulami. Abu Dawud.

The incidents of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) personal grooming of his horse; his wife A'isha's rough handling of her camel; the Holy Prophet's (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) prohibition of cutting forelocks, the mane or tail; the condemnation of striking and branding on the face or ears - all these and many other such Ahadeeth show that this great man, Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) had realized even fourteen centuries ago that animals have a sense of adornment and sensitivity.

Chapter three
ضعف الإيمان

Weakness of Faith

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ "آل عمران الآية رقم 102

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except as Muslims.” Al Imran 3:102

O you who believe! The message is clearly directed to us as believers. It is not a general statement but addressed specifically to the believers and hence the emphasis –

أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ "آل عمران الآية رقم 102

O you who believe – Fear Allah. Fear Allah as He should be feared and die not but as Muslims. This ayah from the Surah Al Imran (3:102) states a simple and straightforward message that forms the basis of our Iman i.e. having Taqwa. .

The word Taqwa (piety), having the fear of Allah, has been mentioned in the Qur'an 251 times as an indication of the importance of the subject and the dimension that the concept of Taqwa – the fear of Allah the exalted.

Today as Muslims - both in the West and beyond- our Iman is weak and this fear that we should have for the creator today is displaced by the fear for the created. We fear people, we fear poverty, we fear humiliation, we fear death and we fear and fear everything but Allah the exalted as He should be feared- the most prominent fear and only fear that we should have is deficient. This overpowering fear of created things rather than for The Creator of all has subjected us (as a collective Ummah) to one humiliation after another with subsequent loss of our pride, our dignity, and our self-respect.

As the Messenger of Allah peace and blessing of Allah be upon him prophesied as narrated by Thawbaan:

"The People will soon summon one another to attack you as people when eating invite others to share their food." Someone asked, "Will that be because of our small numbers at that time?" He replied, "No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be froth and scum like that carried down by a torrent (of water), and Allah will take the fear of you from the breasts (hearts) of your enemy and cast al-wahn into your hearts." Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is al-wahn?" He replied, "Love of the world and dislike of death." [An authentic hadeeth recorded in sonan Abu Dawud, 2/514/4297]

Wahn results from the weakness of Iman or the lack of Taqwa and there is literally no English translation for this Arabic word wahn. There is no concept of wahn and it does not exist. So when we love this life and hate death we suffer from a sickness in our hearts, a sickness in our Iman. This weakness of Iman is what I would like to share with you today.

The phenomenon of weak faith has become so widespread among Muslims today. So often we feel this hardness in our heart, in that we do not find any joy in worship, reading Qur'an does not move us and we fall into sin so easily. It is unfortunate that this entity of weakness often goes by our entire existence without us being consciously aware of its destructive nature – and how it is detrimental to the spiritual and the moral aspects of our lives. As Muslims this is not acceptable. We need to recognize and acknowledge this weakness and make a sincere effort to channel this weakness to become strong enough to serve Allah the exalted and His cause.

What causes weakness of faith:

This is due to three broad categories as clarified along the following lines:

1. Failing to seek knowledge on a constant basis.

Many of us have abandoned reading the Qur'an and Hadeeth on a daily basis and when we do we seldom reflect on its message or seek guidance. Our minds are not focused on the virtue of its message. We starve ourselves in the knowledge of deen by allowing our attention to be diverted by feasting on daily talk shows on TV, or other forms of destructive activities for the passing of time. We miss out on that breeze of Iman that softens hearts.

2 Living in an environment surrounded with sin is conducive to weakening the faith.

In this environment temptation exists, continuously at every point. We need to guard our prayers and our Iman. We are not always as conscious as we ought to be, we allow ourselves to be swayed and distracted by temptations. We have been devoid of a faith-filled environment for too long. We've become de-sensitized and lost sight of the world of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We are oblivious to the good as taught by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). -- Moral and spiritual values that elevate man are replaced by the worldly pleasures of today's society. We fail to protect our families and ourselves from acts of disobedience and often we accept them as the norm.

3. Preoccupation with our worldly life, while neglecting the hereafter.

Our day to day activities centre on our material world - our business, our work, our money, our bills, the sizes of our homes, our cars, and so on. These take preference both in our minds and speech. This preoccupation with the world enslaves our hearts.

We have allowed the diseases of the heart to flourish such as vanity, pride, fame, glory. We tend to get lost in these illusions, fooled by the worldly glamour and fail to illuminate our hearts with Allah's light.

We remain pre-occupied with our worldly life. Allah the exalted says:

يَا كَاذِبًا وَذَيْمَةً مِّنْهُمُ عَاوِيَ وَيُلْهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ (سورة الحجر الآية 13)

“Leave them to eat and enjoy, and let them be preoccupied with (false) hope. They will come to know!” Al Hijr (15:3)

And Allah the exalted created us only for His Ubudiya, for His worship alone, as His slaves but today we have become slaves to this duniya, this world, slaves of our desires and ambitions, slaves to wealth.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “He is doomed, the slave of the dinar and the slave of the dirham” (Related by al-Bukhari, No. 2730. 1057.3.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) further said: “Every nation has its fitnah (trial or temptation), and the fitnah of my Ummah is wealth.” (Related by al-Tirmidhi, 2336. 569.4). So this

eagerness to acquire wealth weakens Iman. This is what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) meant when he said: “Two hungry wolves sent against the sheep do not do more damage than what a man’s eagerness for wealth does to his religion.” (Related by al-Tirmidhi, no. 2376. 588.4). That does it leave him injured or dead as far as his Iman is concerned?

We must analyze and reflect where we are in terms of our knowledge, our environment, our desires, our hopes and dreams and our level of Iman. A weak Iman is a disease of the heart. And like all diseases this too has its symptoms. I am going to mention those symptoms that are more apparent, and perhaps we can list these and perform a self- assessment of our Iman.

Performing prayers devoid of feeling, performance without the keenness to earn reward, performance without humility and obedience indicate a weak Iman. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said that “ Allah does not accept the dua’ of one whose heart is heedless of Him.” (Related by al-Tirmidhi, no. 3479.517.5).

Lack of zeal and enthusiasm in prayer and other acts of worship such that we are able to perform yet we tend to procrastinate on. For instance Hajj, often many of us are able to perform Hajj, yet we delay it, or fail to go for Jihad when we have the strength to do so, give Zakat when we have the means to do so and even pray in congregation when we are able to do so. All these are traits of weakness of faith. This lax attitude is in contrast to what Allah the exalted describes in Surah Al Anbiyaa? (21:90)

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ " الأنبياء آية

رقم 90

“... They used to hasten on to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us with hope and fear, and used to humble themselves before Us.”

4. Not being moved by the ayah of the Qur’an is yet another sign of the Weakness of Iman.

We hear and read the words of the Qur'an but seldom relate to its meanings. The promises of Paradise or its warnings of Hell do not touch our hearts. Its commands and prohibitions, its descriptions of the Day of Resurrection are not taken into the seriousness that it involves. The one who is weak in faith gets bored when he hears the Qur’an being recited,

and cannot continue reading it. Whenever he opens the **mus-haf**, (the holy Qur'an) he soon closes it again.

Not remembering Him often or making **dua'**, such that **dhikr** or remembrance of Allah the exalted becomes difficult, and when he raises his hands to make dua', he quickly lowers them again. A difference between those of faith and the hypocrites is that of remembrance of Allah the exalted.

Allah the exalted has described the hypocrites in Surah Al Nisa (4:142)

وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا” سورة النساء آية رقم 142

“... and they do not remember Allah but little.”

Another example.

5. Falling into sin and committing **haraam** deeds with ease.

Without any hesitation or reservation we fall into sins. Persisting in our sins to the extent that the sins become a part and a habit for us. And where we commit sins openly? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “All of my Ummah will be fine except for those who commit sin openly, an example of which is a man who does something at night, and when morning comes and Allah has concealed his sin, he says, ‘O So-and-so, I did such and such yesterday.’ His Lord had covered his sin all night, but he has uncovered what Allah had concealed.” (Related by Al-Bukhari,5/2254/5721) . Sinning without ease and with no remorse or repentance for it.

Physically this weakness manifests as anxiety, mood swings and depressions that weighs a man down. Irritability sets in and he has no tolerance. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described faith when he said, “Iman is patience and tolerance” Saheeh Al-Bukhari 7/426/10838.

The heart that harbors love for fame, desire for leadership without understanding the serious responsibility involved, stinginess and greed, malicious enjoyments of the failures of others can not share abundance of Iman in the same heart.

Two important aspects that affect us not just on an individual basis but collectively as an Ummah are:

1. Not feeling any responsibility to work for Islam
2. Lack of concerns for Muslims.

Shifting to talk about strengthening our Iman, we need to value that we are Muslims. No other creation has been as blessed as us, and no other creation is shielded by Allah's Mercy as we Muslims are. Allah the exalted bestowed us with His best blessings and made us the Ummah of the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). He granted this special favor, this high honor and privilege to us. He guides whom He wills.

Allah the exalted mentions in Surah An-Noor (24;46)

وَاللَّهُ يَهْتَدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ "سورة النور الآية(46)

".....and Allah guides whom He wills to a way that is straight".

For us to strengthen our Iman we must:

1. Reflect on our relationship with Allah the exalted and His commandments
2. Reflect internally as believers
3. Reflect externally in our community

Reflecting on our relationship with Allah the exalted.

There is none that can increase our Iman except Allah the exalted. He alone shares that personal relationship between a slave and Himself. Can we claim that we love Allah the exalted and His Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him in the manner where we can taste the sweetness of faith?

We need to turn to Him in sincerity and humility and ask. Sincerely pray for Iman -making dua to Allah the exalted to renew and strengthen our faith with each prayer.

Allah's messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught us that Faith is never static. It increases and decreases, or waxes and wanes. It is our responsibility to assess where our faith is, and make it our duty to constantly work towards improving it.

Allah the exalted mentions in Surah Al-Fath – (48:4)

ذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ جَدُّودُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا " سورة الفتح آية رقم 4

It is He Who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the Believers, that they may add faith to their faith;- for to Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is Full of Knowledge and Wisdom, Al-Fateh verse 4.

Faith increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience.

We should make every effort to obey Him and avoid disobedience. By doing this Allah the exalted will make it easy for us to strengthen our Iman.

Allah the exalted already blessed with His guidance through the example of Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) and the Qur'an. We need to implement those obligations and strive to increase our Iman. So how can we strengthen our Iman? We should begin the following:

1. With our daily prayers, not for a day but a sincere commitment and duty to Allah the exalted make it the part of our daily lives. Praying as if you are seeing Allah the exalted in front of you, and pray as if this is the last one of your life.

Confide in Allah and humble oneself before Him. The more we humble ourselves before Allah, the closer we become to Him. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The closest the slave can be to Allah is when he is prostrating to Him, so make lots of dua' then." (Related by Muslim,1/350/482.

2. Reading the Qur'an, even if it takes 10 minutes a day. We should make an effort to read and ponder the meaning of the Qur'an. There is no doubt that it contains a powerful and effective cure.

Allah says Surah Al-Israa' (17: 82)

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ " سورة الإسراء آية رقم 82

We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: Israa' verse 82.

3. Remembering Allah the exalted often. Even though our hands are occupied keep that heart attached to your Lord. Take the opportunity to remember at home with family .

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “No people sit together remembering Allah, but the angels surround them, mercy envelops them, tranquility descends upon them, and Allah mentions them to those who are in His presence.” (Saheeh Muslim, 2074/2699).

Reflect internally as believers

Are our deeds in accordance with Allah the exalted? And will He accept these deeds. Do I find the time to do good?

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked his **Sahaabah**: “Who among you got up fasting this morning?” Abu Bakr said, “I did.” He asked, “Who among you has attended a funeral today?” Abu Bakr said, “I have.” He asked, “Who among you has fed a needy person today?” Abu Bakr said, “I have.” He asked, “Who among you has visited a sick person today?” Abu Bakr said, “I have.” The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “No man does all of that but he will enter Paradise.” (Related by Muslim 4/1857/1028).

We need to self-evaluate on a constant basis.

Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “Take account of yourselves before you are called to account.”

Evaluate internally in terms of our lives, our deeds and our end. Do acts such that our end is a good one and where Allah the exalted is pleased with us. As The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Remember often the destroyer of pleasure, meaning death.”

(At-Termethi 4/553/2307).

Reflect externally in our community

We need to get involved in our community. We need to be known as Muslims and take part in all our community activities and for those in need. As Muslims we need to unite as people, make dawah and reach out with the message of Islam any place. It is our responsibility to convey this message of Islam to non-believers.

We need to attach our hearts with the believers and express enmity with those that our enemies of Islam. We need to be loyal and sincere to Islam and we need to care for our brothers in Islam and any and every way we can, even if it is by dua or sharing of your wealth or voicing your opinion. We need to think beyond ourselves and think collectively as an Ummah.²

² This chapter is quoted with some modifications from:
http://www.khutbahbank.org.uk/More_khutbahs/Weakness%20of%20Faith.htm

Chapter Four

الكبر

The disease of pride

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger. To proceed:

It is of no doubt that the disease of pride and arrogance deletes all traces of goodness and piety. This is the worst vice in causing havoc to Deen and a regrettable disease to have for the followers of this perfect and exalted religion. It launches a direct attack on beliefs and principles. If ignored and overlooked for sometime it becomes fatal and incurable, and gives rise to a lot of spiritual maladies and vices.

Allah the exalted says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ
أَمَّا مَنَعَكَ إِلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا
فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَّكِبَ فِيهَا فَخَالِجُكَ مِنَ الصَّاعِغِينَ " الأعراف (11-13)

It is We who created you and gave you shape. Then We bade the angels, "Bow down to Adam," and they bowed down. Not so Iblis. He refused to be of those who bowed down. And Allah said, "What prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?" He said, "I am better than he. Thou didst create me of fire and him from clay." And Allah said, "Get thee down from here. It is not for thee to be arrogant here. Get out, for thou art the meanest of creatures." (AlA'raaf 7:11-13) **According to Yusuf Islam** quoted in

<http://www.themodernreligion.com/basic/charac/pride.html>

"The word or the name for pride in Arabic is 'kibr'. This is the inner quality of pride. The name of the outward quality is 'takabbur' which means arrogance. It is the worst attribute of a human being, and owing to this sin, Shaytan, Iblis as he was known, was expelled from Paradise.

There is a hadeeth or saying of the Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, with regard to pride. Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, said, 'No one who has got faith in his heart to the weight of a mustard-seed shall

enter the Fire and nobody who has got pride in his heart to the weight of a mustard-seed shall enter Paradise.....' Sahih Al-jama' No. 7674, saheeh Muslim 7674.

There are essentially two kinds of pride.

The first is pride before Allah. The second is pride with other people. Pride with other people also could be divided into two - that is, pride against the superiority of the Prophets of Allah and pride in relation to other people.

The ugliest form of pride is pride before Allah, before Allah, as we see in the example of Shaytan. This is why prayer, and particularly sujud, which means prostration, putting one's head on the ground or bowing, separates the obedient from the disobedient. To be too proud to bow before Allah or to bow to His will is the greatest height of arrogance and ingratitude. People who do not bow when Allah commands them are in a way denying the very existence of Allah and the inevitable Day of Judgment. They deny the clear and obvious signs of Allah's majesty and power and they refuse to follow the straight path of the righteous.

Allah the exalted says:

رَفُ عَنْ آيَاتِي: الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوهَا وَإِنْ
سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ بِهِمْ تَكْذُوبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ لِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ " الأعراف (146-147)

Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right, them will I turn away from My signs. Even if they see all the signs, they will not believe in them. And if they see the way of right conduct, they will not adopt it as the way. But if they see the way of error, that is the way they will adopt. For they have rejected Our signs and failed to take warning from them. Those who reject Our signs and the meeting in the Hereafter, vain are their deeds. Can they expect to be rewarded except as they have worked? Surat Al-A'raf (7:146-147)

Abu Hurayra reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, said that the Almighty, Allah, had revealed, 'Pride is My cloth and Greatness is My robe. So whoso vies with Me regarding either of these two, I shall admit him into the Fire.' (Sonan abu Dawood No.4090, bin Maja, At-trmiDy).

the eye of a needle. Such is Our reward for those in sin. Surat Al-A'raf 35-40

Ibn Mas'ud reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, said, 'Whoso has got pride in his heart to the weight of an atom shall not enter Paradise.' Then a man asked the Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, about dressing well. He said that he liked to be well-dressed and his dress should be fine and his shoes shall be fine, and he said, 'Allah is beautiful and likes beauty. Pride is denying truth and despising people.' Sahih Aljame' (No. 7674) saheeh Muslim 147.

So the Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, indicated that there is nothing wrong with looking nice, neat, clean and tidy, but he said that pride is in fact denouncing or denying the truth and despising or looking down at people.

The other aspect of pride with people is to believe oneself to be better than others whereas the only basis upon which some are more honored than others is in piety or righteousness.

So essentially there are two cures for pride.

I'm going to read something from the Kitab Usulu'd-Din by 'Uthman dan Fodio which gives some cures for pride.

"The two cures are: first, knowledge. The second, action.

"First, the knowledge cure is to know and recognise your Lord and to know and recognise your own self as you should be recognised and that it is not worthy of greatness and that true greatness and pride are only for Allah; and, as for self-recognition, we read in the Qur'an:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ مِنْ شَيْءٍ عَرَبِيٍّ عَلِيمٍ بِذُنُوبِهِ خَلَقَهُ فَقَدَّرَهُ ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسَّرَهُ أَفْتَحَمَلَتْهُ فَاقْتَبَرَهُ
ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشَرَهُ " سورة عبس (17-22)

"Allah ta'ala said, 'Perish man! How thankless he is! Of what did He create him? Of a sperm-drop. He created him, and determined him, and then made the way easy for him. Then He makes him die, buries him, and then, when He wills, raises him.' (Abasa 80: 17-22)

"These verses point to the beginning of man's creation, his end, and his middle. Let us understand its meaning.

"As for the beginning of man, he was 'a thing unremembered.' He was concealed in non-existence. Non-existence has no beginning. What is lower and meaner than obliteration and non-existence? He was in non-existence. Then Allah created him from the basest of things, and then from the most unclean thing. He created him from earth and then from a sperm-drop, then a blood-clot. Then He made the bones, and then clothed the bones in flesh. This was the beginning of his existence.

"When you begin in this manner, how can you have arrogance, pride, glory and conceit? In fact, man is the weakest of the weak. During your existence, Allah Almighty has given illnesses power over you, whether you like or not, and whether you are content or enraged. You become hungry and thirsty without being able to do anything about it. You do not possess any power to bring yourself either harm or benefit.

"You want to know something but you remain ignorant of it. You want to remember something and yet you forget it. You want to forget something and yet you cannot forget it. You want to direct your heart to what concerns it and yet and you are caught up in the valleys of whisperings and thoughts. You own neither your heart nor your self. You desire something while your destruction may be in it, and you detest something while your life may be in it. You find some foods delicious when they destroy and kill you, and you find remedies repugnant when they help you and save you.

"If you truly know yourself, how can you think yourself worthy of pride?...Your end is death. It is indicated by His word,

ثُمَّ أَمَاتَهُ فَأَقْبَرَهُ ثُمَّ إِذَا شَاءَ أَنشُرَهُ "سورة عبس (21-22)

"Then He makes him die and buries him. Then, when He wills, He raises Him." Abasa 21-22

The meaning here is that your ruh, hearing, sight, knowledge, power, senses, perception, and movement are all stripped away. You revert to the inanimate as you were in the first place. Only the shape of your limbs remains. Your form has neither senses nor movement. Then you are placed in the earth and your limbs decay. You become absent after you existed. You become as if you were not. As you were at first for a long period of time.

"How then can he be arrogant? How can he see himself as anything to which excellence is attached? This is the knowledge-cure."

Then as far as the action-cure is concerned, it says, "it is to humble yourself to people in a constrained unnatural manner until it becomes natural for you."

Al-hamdu lillah. May Allah guide us to this knowledge and to this action".

Lets turn now to introducing some practical examples of pride just for awareness

Some practical examples of pride

According to Shariffa Carlo: A group of ladies walk into a masjid. They are all beautiful physical examples of Muslim women. They are fully covered, some even in face veils with gloves with Jilbabs, Khymars and even abiyas over. They are the perfect picture of Islam. They make beautiful salat, and even more beautiful recitation. As they are about to leave, one of them looks to a sister who is praying in the masjid and thinks, "So and so should not call herself Muslim, for she does not even wear hijab, except when she comes to masjid."

This woman has harmed herself. Islam is certainly the physical - outward appearance. It is a very valid and significant part of the deen, but it is also the heart and the behavior and the soul. This woman may not have backbitten the woman who was not a muhajibah, because she did not actually say anything, but she has done something much more dangerous, much worse.

Arrogance and pride have affected her. She has allowed the practices that she does, for Allah's sake, to make her feel she is superior or even safe. No one has a guarantee. We do our best to please Allah, but we all have to rely on Allah's Mercy. Also, we can not judge who is going to be saved from the fire. We do not know what Allah will do, so to look down on one who does not practice as we do is arrogance, and we must avoid it.

Our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) observed:

He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter Paradise.

A person (amongst his hearers) said: Verily a person loves that his dress should be fine, and his shoes should be fine. He (the Prophet) remarked: Verily, Allah is Graceful and He loves Grace. Pride is disdainng the truth (out of self-conceit) and contempt for the people.

[Sahih Muslim; 1: #164].

Some of our beloved Prophet's companions (may Allah bless him) used to fear so much that they were not doing enough that they would sometimes faint from fear of Allah, while they were spending the nights praying and the days fasting and devoting their lives to Allah. Who are we to think we have a guarantee?

In the previous hadeeth, Rasul- Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is clearly warning us that we have no right to look down on one another. No matter what. Even if the person is a sinner, we have no right. Look to the example of the adulterous man being punished. The man had confessed and been stoned to death.

"...Then the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) heard one of his companions saying to another: Look at this man whose fault was concealed by Allah but who would not leave the matter alone, so that he was stoned like a dog. He said nothing to them but walked on for a time till he came to the corpse of an ass with its legs in the air.

He asked: Where are so and so? They said: Here we are, Apostle of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)! He said: Go down and eat some of this ass's corpse. They replied: Apostle of Allah! Who can eat any of this? He said:

The dishonor you have just shown to your brother is more serious than eating some of it. By Him in Whose hand my soul is, he is now among the rivers of Paradise and plunging into them. Sunan Abu Dawud; 38; # 4414].

Look to this example. The man had committed a major sin. He had confessed to the sin. Yet, his repentance for that sin was sincere. We must not judge others because they sin, for that is for Allah Only. We can give out the punishments that Allah has mandated, and then leave it to Allah to forgive them or not. We can not decide. We are not privy to what is in the heart. We can talk to the one who is not doing something Islam mandates, like hijab or beard or avoiding music or whatever, but we can not even try to believe that we are better than they are. For we do not know their circumstances or what is in their hearts or even their fates. That is for Allah.

Look to the example of the prostitute. If we had seen her in the street, what would we have thought of her? Yet she was granted Paradise for a small deed she did.

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: Allah's Apostle said,

"A prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off

her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave he because of that."
[Sahih al-Bukhari; (4: 54 #538).

We can not be happy with her sins, but we must teach her, maybe punish her, but we should not abuse her, nor should we be certain that we are so much better than her. Furthermore, we should take the time to befriend those who we see committing sins, if we can. The person may simply be ignorant of the correct Islamic practices. We should try to teach them and maybe gain something ourselves from this effort. It may be that this person has something to offer you in the way of goodness.

Generally, when we are harsh with one another, when we look down on one another, we may be pushing the weaker of us to commit more sin. Think about it. Would you accept advice from one that looks down on you or insults you? Of course not. We must respect and like someone to take advice from him or her. No matter how bad the actions of the Muslim seem to us, we must never think we are so much better that we have the right to insult or even look down upon anyone. Look to the example of our merciful Prophet:

A Bedouin came and passed urine in one corner of the masjid. The people shouted at him but the Prophet stopped them till he finished urinating. The Prophet ordered them to spill a bucket of water over that place and they did so.[Sahih al-Bukhari; 1; 4 #221].

The Muslims shouted at him, they were abusive, but the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) in his great mercy and wisdom, knew that this is not the way to teach.

The prophet's wise reaction tells us that we need to think about what we think and say so that we can actually help each other, not tear each other down. There is none amongst us who can claim to be perfect. There is none amongst us who can guarantee that he/she will enter Jannah with no trial or punishment. We must not try to usurp the role of Allah by passing Judgment on one another.

Pride is dangerous. Look to the caution of rasul- Allah. We have to avoid feeling proud, even of our Islam.

Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said,
" Allah will not look on the Day of Judgment at him who drags his robe (behind him) out of pride." Abu Bakr said "One side of my robe slacks

down unless I get very cautious about it." Allah's Apostle said, "But you do not do that with a pride." [Sahih al-Bukhari; 5, 57 #17].

Pride and arrogance are the tools of Shaytan. When he was told to prostrate to Adam, and he refused, it became his undoing. Allah (awj) says,

فَلَمَّا لَمَّ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ " سورة البقرة (34)

"And behold, We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam" and they bowed down. Not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: He was of those who reject Faith." [Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 34]

Also, if you see this in you, beware of trying to justify yourself. Look to the example of Shaytan and his justifications when Allah questioned him about his refusal to prostrate

He (Allah) said:

مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَّكِبَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ " سورة الأعراف (12-13)

"What hindered you so that you did not prostrate when I commanded you? He said: I am better than he: You have created me of fire, while him You create of dust. He said: Then get forth from this (state), for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely you are of those degraded." [Al-'A'raaf7: 12-13]

We can not allow ourselves to fall into this horrible trap from Shaytan. We can not allow ourselves to think we are better, for the sin of pride is great. Allah says,

ذَاقِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ: أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهَا جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْأَمَهُادُ " سورة البقرة (206)

"And when it is said to him, guard against (the punishment of) Allah; pride carries him off to sin, therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting place." [Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 206]

So, when you see someone who is doing wrong, either in appearance or action, think twice before you think you are better.

Go to the person, if you can, with friendship and gentleness. Advise. Do not assume the worst. Give him or her seventy excuses for the sin, and try to help him/her to understand the evil involved. Do not expect a change. Just advise. Leave any changes to Allah. The person may get angry or try to dispute with you. Do not fall to this trick of Shaytan. Just leave him/her with the evidences from Allah's book and the authentic sunnah, and let it be. It is for them to accept or reject, and your job will be done. But do not leave them thinking yourself superior.

Also, next time you see someone from another culture or background, do not judge them based on your preconceived notions about that group. See the individual. Talk to him/her. It may be that they will have some advice that will benefit you. It may be that while you may dress more Islamicly, they have better Islamic manners than you do.

Do not assume that because you look more like a Muslim that you are the better Muslim. This pride and haughtiness you feel, may be your undoing. Fear Allah, brothers and sisters. Fear Allah, and give each Muslim his due. As I have said many times before, the most evil and wretched amongst us is better than the best of the non-Muslims, and it is our job to advise each other to bring each other up from the darkness and filth of sin to the light and cleanliness of obeying Allah.

Chapter Five

السخرية

Deriding and psychological abuse

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

Deriding Muslims is one of the dangerous sins that Allah the exalted and His prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, hate. Therefore Allah the almighty orders us we Muslims to avoid deriding each other

" يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْفُسُوقَ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ . يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَرَّ الرَّحِيمِ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ " (الآية 11-12) من سورة الحجرات

"O ye who believe! Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they (are), nor let women (deride) women who may be better than they are; neither defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames. Bad is the name of lewdness after faith. And whoso turneth not in repentance, such are evil doers. O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty (to Allah). Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful." (Al-Hujurat: 11-12)

The following lines will focus on one type of deriding seeds, that is deriding and psychologically abusing wives.

In Islam, the marriage of a man and a woman is not just a financial and physical arrangement of living together but a sacred contract, a gift of Allah, to lead a happy, enjoyable life and continue the lineage. The main goal of marriage in Islam is the realization of tranquility and compassion between the spouses.

The relationship between the spouses should be based on tranquility, love and mercy. These three summarize the ideals of Islamic marriage. It is the

duty of the husband and wife to see that they are a source of comfort and tranquility for each other.

While the meaning of physical abuse is rather obvious, the meaning of emotional abuse might not be, and the abuse itself may be more insidious. Emotional abuse includes name calling, belittling, using threat of divorce as a weapon to manipulate the other, threatening with a real weapon (even with no intention to use it). There may be other elements such as not allowing the wife to visit or contact family or friends. Even frequent teasing, though it starts in fun, may become a type of abuse if it takes the form of sarcasm or demeaning remarks.

It is common for some people when they are angry to call others names or belittle them. If one gets angry quickly and easily with one's spouse, it could lead to emotional abuse. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) advised us to control our anger, not to call each other names, not to use vulgar language, and not to point a weapon at another person. This advice was general for all, but it should be taken even more seriously within a marriage.

These general guidelines are established by the Qur'an in the verses mentioned above:

Moreover, Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet also said: "None of you should point his weapon at his brother, as Satan may provoke him (to hurt his brother) and as a result, he would fall into a pit of Fire." (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim in *Reyad s-saleheen* 431-432) In another version: "He who (even) points at his brother with a piece of iron is cursed by the angels until he puts it down, even if the other was his blood brother." (Reported by Muslim in *Reyad s-saleheen* P 432)

Additionally, "Emotional abuse truly damages and hurts as much as physical abuse does. In Islam, there is a special consideration of the relationship between the spouses. Allah says:

والله يقول " ومن آياته أن خلق لكم من أنفسكم أزواجا لتسكنوا إليها وجعل بينكم مودة ورحمة إن في ذلك لآيات لقوم يتفكرون " الآية (21) من سورة الروم .

"And among His Signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect." (Ar-Rum 21)

It is shown that the basis of the relationship between husband and wife is affection and mercy. In many Hadeeths the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) mentioned that if a husband looks at his wife with kindness and mercy, Allah Almighty looks at them with His mercy, and if they shake hands all their sins vanish. So, we have to study very well how the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) dealt with his wives. In fact, he was very merciful, kind, and loveable, bearing in mind that there were some problems that they faced in their marital life but they dealt with these problems with extreme wisdom and kindness. The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) never abused his wives either physically or emotionally.

Therefore, neither of the spouses is allowed to abuse the other emotionally. This is prohibited in Islam. If either does so, Almighty Allah will hold him or her accountable for that, and they should repent to Allah for this. It is clear now that the best guide to us to live a very successful martial life is to follow the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him)."

Chapter Six

البدعة

Innovation

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

Allah ordered Muslims not to divide themselves into sects. Innovations and divisions in matters of religion and worship within Islam are considered to be contamination, error, and deviation. Earlier heinous deviations from monotheism, such as worshipping creation, resulted in condemnation by Allah. (However, innovations in other matters, such as science and technology to improve life, are greatly encouraged.) Allah, The Most Compassionate, has told us through His last Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him,, when Muhammad was nearing the end of his life, that He had completed the religion of Islam. Muslims must recognize that any change in matters of worship is strictly forbidden. No change introduced by humankind, who is under the influence of Satan, could ever add anything positive and would only contribute to the degradation of the completed and perfected religion established by Allah. All innovations in matters of religion lead to straying, and all straying leads to hellfire. People must not allow any deviation (addition or deletion), even as small as one degree, in matters of worship. If any changes are allowed, those deviations will be compounded by future generations, and the result will be another manmade religion, not the Islam as it was perfected by Allah, The Truth. To build a faith using a “shopping cart” approach or the blind following of any religious leader is inadmissible.

The changing of Allah’s laws is forbidden in Islam. Allah condemns religious leaders who alter divine principles. One who attempts to make changes places him or herself on the same level with Allah, committing polytheism. An example of this would be to make the killing of innocents

lawful. The laws of Allah are perfect and do not need to be “modernized” by anyone. Allah allows us the freedom to obey or disobey Him by choosing to follow His faith or to follow our own desires. However, He forbids us to change His religious principles.

It is interesting to note that the crescent moon is not representative of the religion of Islam, as the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him,, never used or mentioned it. It was a pagan symbol and an innovation brought about by later generations as a political symbol. Sadly, it is commonly adopted and mistaken as an Islamic symbol.

Islam teaches that for an act of worship to be accepted by Allah it must fulfill two conditions: The intention must be first and foremost to please Allah, and the act must be done according to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him.

Meaning of Innovation

Many Muslims are often confused when one person says, "This act is an innovation," and someone will reply, "Yes, but it is a good innovation," Others are confused about what falls under the category of bidah and what does not, as the Muslims perform many acts today that the Prophet [peace and blessing of Allah be upon him never performed.

First of all, Muslims have to know that bidah is something related to religion as a belief or worship or transaction, so all matters outside this scope such as innovations and discoveries in the scientific, industrial and military fields and the means of transportation and the facilities in the every day life are welcomed in Islam and have nothing to do with bidah. There are many Qur'anic verses that clearly demonstrate that the Muslim must avoid any kind of innovation in his religion. An example is this quotation:

"اليوم أتممت عليكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام ديناً" (المائدة 3:5).

"This day have I perfected for you your religion and have completed My blessings upon you and have chosen for you Islam as a religion." (Al-maa'da 5:3).

Imam Maalik said, "What was not part of the religion during the time of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his companions is not part of the religion today." He also said, "If someone innovates something in the religion of Islam that he believes is good, he has, thereby, alleged that the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, has been disloyal to his message!"

This divine guidance is all that the Muslims need for happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. It is, therefore, in no need of additions, alterations or deletions. The laws and customs laid down by human beings repeatedly failed in meeting the intended results. If the person obeys the commands of Allah and follows the Sunnah of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him in the way that they are to be obeyed, then the person will become purified, his morals refined and his spirit rejuvenated.

There are many hadeeths that clearly demonstrate that the Muslim must avoid any kind of innovation in his religion. The Prophet, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said: "The worst actions are the invented on us. And every innovation is a going astray (dhalaAllah)." (Reported in saheeh Muslim No. 867 part 2 P592). In other narrations he would say, "And every going astray is in the hell fire." (Reported in sonan al-Nasaai No. 1577 part 3 p209). In this context, Al-Shaatibi wrote: "An innovation is a going astray. And the innovator is straying and leading others astray. Dalalah (straying) is mentioned in many of the reported texts. It is alluded to in the Qur'anic verses about splitting into sects and breaking up the community and following the errant paths but this is not how other sins are described. The term dhalallah is usually not used except for innovations or things similar to innovations. The innovator will also interpret the Qur'anic verses and the ahadeeth in such a way that will be compatible with his innovations. The Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said, "Allah refuses to accept the deeds of the companion of innovations until he leaves his innovation." (Recorded by ibn Maajah and ibn Abi Asim Part 1 P78). In the Hereafter, the innovators will not be allowed to drink from "the cistern of the Prophet," and if anyone drinks from that cistern he will never be thirsty again, as said by the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. From the Qur'an, one can see that Allah divides people into two groups, those that follow the guidance of Allah and those that follow their own desires. Therefore, all of the following verses also refer to the people of innovations. Allah says,

"فإن لم يستجيبوا لك فاعلم أنما يتبعون أهواءهم ومن أضل ممن اتبع هواه بغير هدى من الله إن الله لا يهدي القوم الظالمين" (القصص 28:50).

"And if they answer you not, then know that what they follow is their lusts. And who goes farther astray than he who follows his lust without guidance from Allah? Verily, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing folk." (Al-qasas 28:50)

In these verses Allah clearly states that if one follows his desires, he is not on the path of Allah and he is a wrongdoer. The Muslim should be

careful because the innovation is a double edged dagger. In this context the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said, "Whoever calls to guidance will receive a reward for the one who follows his call with the reward of neither being reduced. And whoever calls to an act of misguidance will share part of the sin of everyone who follows his call with the sin of neither being reduced." (Reported by Muslim No2398 part 3 P86).

Besides the Qur'anic verses and the ahadeeth of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, there are many statements from the companions and the early scholars exhorting people to stay away from innovations. Abdullah bin Masood is quoted as saying , "Follow our steps and do not innovate and that will be sufficient for you." Sonan Adarmy No 211Part1 P288.

Innovations are more harmful than sins. The sinner accepts the Shareeah as the supreme law while the innovator gives the supremacy and superiority to his own desires or whims. The person who performs or follows innovations believes them to be true in obedience to Allah and it is very rare that such an innovator should repent. This is why ibn Taimiyyah has stated that innovations are "more evil than adultery, theft and drinking alcohol." Sufyaan al-Thauri once said, "Innovations are more beloved to the Satan than sins because one may repent from sins but one does not repent from innovations!"

The Distinction between Sunnah and Bidah:

For the better understanding of the innovations (Bidah) we have first to shed some light on the various types of Sunnah of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him The Sunnah of the Prophet includes the statements and actions of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. Certain acts not performed by the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him but performed in his presence and were tacitly approved by him) also form part of the Sunnah.

There are many deeds that the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him could have easily performed as acts of worship, yet he explicitly did not perform. If these acts were meant to be performed and if they would have brought the Muslims closer to Allah, the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him would have been commanded to perform them and he would have performed them. Anyone who does perform such acts, thinking that he is getting closer to Allah by performing the same, he is performing an innovation. An example could be performing the call to prayer before the Eid prayers - the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him never did so although there would have been some purpose in doing it, he could have easily done so. There are some actions that the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be

upon him did not perform for some constraining reason. For example, the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him did not gather together the Qur'an (although his companions did so after his death). This was because there was a preventive reason that kept him from doing so; that is, the Qur'an was still being revealed during his lifetime so it was not possible for him to gather it altogether before his death. Once that preventive reason has been removed, then there is no harm in performing that act. Another example concerns the performing of the taraweeh or Ramadhaan nightly prayers in congregation. The Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him feared that this would become obligatory on the Muslims, that was the preventive reason, and therefore he discontinued this practice. During the time of Umar, the preventive reason no longer existed since Umar is not qualified to make any act obligatory. Therefore, it was possible to revive this Sunnah of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. In fact, the companions of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him were the best who understood the religion of Islam and they have implemented this distinction between the acts of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him.

The Juristic Meaning of Bidah:

There are three popular juristic definitions for bidah among the groups of scholars, some are much more "extensive" or "encompassing" than others.

The first group of scholars gives a broad definition for bidah that encompasses every new thing that has appeared after the time of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him. For example, Al-Shafi'ee in his book 'Ar-resala' has divided innovations into good and evil ones. He said, "Whatever is in agreement with the Sunnah is praiseworthy and whatever is in disagreement with the Sunnah is blameworthy." Ibn Hazm in his book 'Al-mohalla' has given a similar definition stating, "Innovations in the religion are everything that is not found in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah of the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, but for some of them the person who performs them will receive a reward due to his goal of performing what is good...These are those acts that are in essence permissible... Then there are some that are blameworthy."³

This definition implies that there are some innovations that are obligatory, recommended or permissible. According to the second definition, all innovations are blameworthy from the Shareeah point of

³ This quotation is from:

<http://www.islamweb.net/ver2/archive/article.php?lang=E&id=16451>

view. Ibn Rajab defined bidah as, "Any innovation that has no source whatsoever in the Shareeah that points to it.

The fourth definition by Al-Shatibi is that: a bidah is any innovated act that differs from the Sunnah and that is taken as part of the religion and as being along the straight path. This can include actions of worship as well as other actions.

It may be said that "the first definition", although correct lexically speaking, may not be the proper definition from the Shareeah point of view. Such a definition has led to confusion among today's Muslims and has been used by some as an excuse to follow some innovations, claiming that they are "good bidahs".

Conclusions on the Definition on Bidah:

Bidah or innovations, from a Shareeah point of view, are only blameworthy as the Prophet peace and blessing of Allah be upon him said, "Every innovation is a going astray."

Since the Shareeah has constrained the definition of bidah to be only blameworthy acts, it is best and less confusing, if not a must, to apply this constraint in the definition of bidah.

Finally, the second and third definitions agree that if the Shareeah alludes to something, it is not an innovation. And if the Shareeah in no way alludes to something, it is an innovation.

Turning to concluding remarks on the chapter, lets quote Sheikh Abdullah al-Ghimari, who said: In his al-Qawaid al-kubra, "Izz ibn Abd al-Salam classifies innovations (bidah), according to their benefit, harm, or indifference, into the five categories of rulings: the obligatory, recommended, unlawful, offensive, and permissible; giving examples of each and mentioning the principles of Sacred Law that verify his classification. His words on the subject display his keen insight and comprehensive knowledge of both the principles of jurisprudence and the human advantages and disadvantages in view of which the Lawgiver has established the rulings of Sacred Law.

Because his classification of innovation was established on a firm basis in Islamic jurisprudence and legal principles, it was confirmed by Imam Nawawi, Ibn Hajar Asqalani, and the vast majority of Islamic scholars, who received his words with acceptance and viewed it obligatory to apply them to the new events and contingencies that occur with the changing times and the peoples who live in them. One may not support the denial of his classification by clinging to the hadeeth "Every innovation is misguidance", because the only form of innovation that is without exception misguidance is that concerning tenets of faith, like the innovations of the Mutazilites, Qadarites, Murjiites, and so on, that contradicted the beliefs of the early Muslims. This is the innovation of

misguidance because it is harmful and devoid of benefit. As for innovation in works, meaning the occurrence of an act connected with worship or something else that did not exist in the first century of Islam, it must necessarily be judged according to the five categories mentioned by Izz ibn Abd al-Salam. To claim that such innovation is misguidance without further qualification is simply not applicable to it, for new things are among the exigencies brought into being by the passage of time and generations, and nothing that is new lacks a ruling of Allah Most High that is applicable to it, whether explicitly mentioned in primary texts, or inferable from them in some way. The only reason that Islamic law can be valid for every time and place and be the consummate and most perfect of all divine laws is because it comprises general methodological principles and universal criteria, together with the ability its scholars have been endowed with to understand its primary texts, the knowledge of types of analogy and parallelism, and the other excellences that characterize it. Were we to rule that every new act that has come into being after the first century of Islam is an innovation of misguidance without considering whether it entails benefit or harm, it would invalidate a large share of the fundamental bases of Sacred Law as well as those rulings established by analogical reasoning, and would narrow and limit the Sacred Laws vast and comprehensive scope. (Adilla Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaa, 145-47).

Chapter Seven

عقوق الوالدين

Mistreatment of Parents: The Second Major Sin in Islam

All praise belongs to Allah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

Reflecting on the Qur'anic instructions and prohibitions, a Muslim will get convinced with the fact that it is his duty to keep himself away from all sins, minor and major. This emanates from the fact that it is the Muslim first priority to gain Allah's pleasure by doing what He likes and steering clear of what He dislikes, irrespective of the gravity or the simplicity of the sin. Parent's disobedience is a major sin which stands in next to polytheism, in terms of its gravity, we may as well infer that from the order adopted by the Qur'an when dictating the duties of every Muslim. In the Qur'an immediately after the duty of worshipping Allah comes the duty of showing dutifulness to one's parents:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ذَلِكَ لِكَبْرِ أَدْوَابِهِمَا أَوْ كِبَلًا هُمَا تَقُل لَّهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (الاسراء: 23-24).

“Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents.” (Al-Israa': 23)

It is well-known that Islam urges every Muslim to be dutiful to his parents, extending to them the kindest treatment possible. Failing to treat one's parents kindly makes one guilty of disobedience to those parents as well as to Allah, and this may deprive one of a chance of being admitted to Paradise. So it goes without saying that disobedience to parents or mistreating them is the second major sin after polytheism.

The first commandment in Islam as revealed to all prophets is to worship Allah and the second is to treat one's parents kindly. Accordingly, the first major sin is Shirk (association of partners with Allah), and the second major sin is mistreating one's parents.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be on him) said: "Shall I tell you of the three most heinous sins?" He repeated this question three times and then said, "They are: to associate partners with Allah, to mistreat one's parents, and to bear false testimony." (Al-Bukhari, Muslim, and At-Termthi No.1821).

Also, he (peace and blessings be on him) said, "The pleasure of Allah is in performing prayers in their due time and the pleasure of one's parents and the wrath of Allah is in the wrath of one's parents." (Saheeh l-Bukhari No.2574) Now, it becomes clear that mistreatment of parents stands as the second major sin of Islam, after Shirk. Yet, a Muslim has to steer clear of all sins, major and minor, so as to gain Allah's pleasure.

These ahadeeth lead us to conclude that

One of the main duties upon us as Muslims is to show kindness towards our parents because Allah the Almighty says:

" و قضى ربك ألا تعبدوا إلا إياه و بالوالدين إحسانا إما يبلغن عندك الكبر احدهما أو كلاهما فلا تقل لهما أف ولا تنهرهما وقل لهما قولا كريما " (الإسراء 17 : 23) .

"Thy Lord has decreed, that you worship none save Him, and (that you show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, say not 'Fie' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word." (Al-Isra': 17:23)

One should show all kinds of good treatment to one's parents. Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) was once asked about the best deeds: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) says, 'Having faith in Allah and His Messenger, then honoring one's parents.'" (related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Obeying and honoring one's parents is a means of entering Paradise. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) quoted the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) as saying: "He is doomed, he is doomed, he is doomed." Then someone said, "Who, O Messenger of Allah?" He said, "The person whose parents, one or both of them, reach old age during his lifetime but he does not enter Paradise." (Related by Muslim No 2551).

Respecting and obeying one's parents is a way of showing gratitude to them for bringing one into this world. So, a child has to show gratitude towards his parents for rearing him and taking care of him when he was young. Allah the Almighty says,

" ووصينا الإنسان بوالديه حملته أمه وهنا على وهن وفصاله في عامين أن أشكر لي ولوالديك وألي المصير " (لقمان 14 : 13).

"And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents. His mother beareth him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Give thanks unto Me and unto thy parents. Unto Me is the journeying." (Luqman 31:14)

When a person gives his parents due regard, his own children will do the same to him. Allah Almighty says:

" هل جزاء الإحسان إلا الإحسان ؟ " (الرحمن 55 : 60).

"Is there any reward for good other than good?" (Ar-Rahman 55: 60)

There are many ways in which one can show parents kindness and respect, paying them a visit is one of the forms of dutifulness to parents, in addition to treating them well, addressing them politely, trying to humble oneself before them, giving them gifts, and so on⁴.

Additionally, dutifulness to parents extends beyond their death and continues as long as we live. Therefore, one should supplicate and do other acts that benefit the dead as much as possible for his parents after their death.

Abu Horyra may Allah be pleased with him narrated that The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said, "When a son of Adam passes away, he is cut off from his deeds except for three things: a current or perpetual charity, good knowledge that benefits someone, and a good child who makes du`a' (supplication) for him"(Muslim and Ibn Majah, Saheeh Abu Dawuud 2/557/2504)

Our duties towards our parents, as we learn from the sources, do not cease with their death; rather they continue as long as we live. In a report cited by Imam al-Bukhari in his famous work al-Adab al-Mufrad we read, "A man approached the Prophet asking, "Is there anything I must do in terms of kindness towards my parents after their death?" The Prophet replied, "Yes, there are four things for you to do: Praying and asking forgiveness of Allah on their behalf, fulfilling their promises, respecting their friends, and fostering their ties of kinship"...Da?eef Ibn Majah 296/8.

⁴Excerpted, with some modifications, from www.islam-qa.com

Moreover, it is highly recommended for us to visit the graves of our parents. Such visits serve as excellent reminders for us besides prompting us to remember and pray for our parents. Abdelah Bn Mas'ood may Allah be pleased with him narrated that The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said, "In the past, I had forbidden you from visiting graves, but now you should do so, for it might remind you of the next world". (Da'eef Ibn Majah 119/343, and At-Termthi)

After enjoining upon us the duty of excellence in rendering kindness towards our parents, Allah orders us in the Qur'an (Surat al-Isra', 17: 24) to pray for our parents saying,

واخفض لهما جناح الذل من الرحمة وقل ربي ارحمهما كما ربياني صغيرا " الإسراء 17 : 24

"Our Lord, have mercy on our parents, even as they had mercy on us, while we were little"!

Lastly, there are traditions from the Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) that indicate that often a person in the grave suddenly finds his station elevated or conditions change, and when he enquires why it is happening to him, he is told that it is by virtue of the good deeds or prayers of his offspring on his behalf.

Therefore, in light of the above, I urge you O! Muslims not to be slack in praying for your parents besides doing whatever good deeds you possibly can on their behalf.

The eminent Muslim scholar, Dr. `Abdel-Fattah Idrees, Professor of Comparative Jurisprudence at Al-Azhar Univ., adds:

"Showing kindness to parents is not only during their lives but it also can be done after their death. A Muslim can show kindness and do acts expressing dutifulness to his parents after their death by making du'a' for them, doing voluntary good deeds on their behalf, as well as fulfilling religious obligations such as Hajj, fasting, Zakah, Kaffarah (expiation), etc. on their behalf if they died before performing them or were negligent in performing them.

It is reported on the authority of al-Hajjaj ibn Dinar that a man asked Allah's Messenger (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him): "I used to show kindness to my parents during their lives, but what can I do in terms of kindness towards them after their death?" The Prophet (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said: "It is out of kindness after kindness towards parents that you offer prayers on their behalf along with your prayers and to fast on their behalf along with your fasting".

There are also several hadeeths reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and others to the effect that a Muslim can do several acts of righteousness as well as religious obligations on behalf of his deceased parents as a form of showing kindness to them after their death

Chapter Eight

الطمع Greed

All praise belongs to Allah Who says verily: "Allah Is The Rich, You Are The Poor" we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no God except Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) is His slave and Messenger.

To proceed:

Greed is defined linguistically as an excessive desire to possess wealth or goods; the word greed is known in Latin as avaritia, also known as avarice or covetousness. Religiously, it is known that one of the most dangerous ways in which Satan attempts to penetrate the heart is through the love of wealth and if this gains mastery over the heart then it corrupts it and causes such a person to seek the acquisition of wealth through means other than those permitted by Islam. Consequently, you see such a person rushing and chasing the acquisition of wealth by any means at his disposal, not caring whether it is halal or haram, because as far as he is concerned the ends justify the means. In addition, after all of this you see him still being miserly with the wealth he has acquired, being tight fisted and fearing poverty, resulting in him neglecting his duties, not fulfilling the rights of others, so that he does not pay zakat and is miserly when giving charity.

However, Allah the Exalted says in the Qur`an,

فَأَمَّا مَنْ * أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ (صَبَحًا) بِرَأْسِ حُسْبَىٰ (قَدْ نَسِيَ لَوْلَا يُسَوِّرُهَا لَمْ يَخِرْ) وَأَسَدَّ غَدَىٰ
وَكَثْرَ لَيْلٍ بِرَأْسِ حُسْبَىٰ (قَدْ نَسِيَ لَوْلَا يُسَوِّرُهَا لَمْ يَخِرْ) وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىٰ (إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا
لَلْآخِرِينَ الْآخِرَةَ) خَرَّةً وَالْأَخِرَةَ لَنُنزِلَنَّهَا كَمَا نَزَّلْنَا نَارًا سَاطِئَةً (سورة الليل 5-11)

“As for the one who gave, was pious and believed in the best reward then We will make ease, easy for him but as for the one who was miserly, thought himself free of need and denied the best reward, then We will make difficulty easy for him. And will his wealth avail him when he is destroyed, falling into the hellfire.” (Al-layl 92:5-11)

And in the hadeeth we find the statement of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, “O son of Adam, if you were to give

from the bounty [bestowed upon you] it would be better for you and if you held on to it, it would be worse for you. And do not blame those who beg and begin with those who you support, and [know that] the giving hand is better than the receiving hand.”(Related by Al-Bukhari No1427) And in another hadeeth he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, “Wealth is not reduced by the giving of charity, the more you forgive the more Allah elevates your rank and no one was humble before Allah except that Allah the Exalted raised him.” (Related by Muslim also by Albani in Jame’at-Termdy No.2029).

Allah says in the Qur`an,

بَلْ لَكُمْ تَكْرُرٌ مِّنْهُ لَئِيْلِيْمٌ حَرِيْمٌ وَالَّذِي يَتَّبِعُكُمْ (الطُّغْيَانُ) عَلٰى اَطْعَامِ الْاَمْسَكِيْنَ وَالَّذِي يَتَّبِعُكُمْ (الطُّغْيَانُ) عَلٰى اَطْعَامِ الْاَمْسَكِيْنَ وَالَّذِي يَتَّبِعُكُمْ (الطُّغْيَانُ) عَلٰى اَطْعَامِ الْاَمْسَكِيْنَ
 وَمَتَّخِئُوْنَ اِلٰهًا مَّالًا حُبُّكُمْ لَئِيْلًا ذٰلِكَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ رَاضٍ دَكًا دَكًا (سورة الفجر 17-20)

“Indeed you do not honor the orphan, nor do you encourage the feeding of the poor but you consume inheritance, devouring it and you love wealth more than anything.” (Al-Fajr 89:17-20)

According to the teachings of Islam, the desires and appetites play a vital part in the makeup of every human being; they cannot be ignored. The children of Adam, unlike the angels, face the challenge in this life of mastering these forces within us. If we fail to do so, then we become the servants of our appetites and thus fall below the level of the animal kingdom.

The hallmarks and influences of a "civilization" which in practical terms almost enforces the domination of human desires and lusts over the traditional belief in the need to heed one's consciences and principles and exercise restraint are to be seen all around us. So are the consequences, which are manifestly unhappy in this world. .

Sheikh Abd al-Hamid Kishk is one of the foremost Muslim scholars in the world of today (died recently, may Allah receive him well). For many years he held teaching posts at Al-Azhar and a number of other universities. At the same time, Sheikh Kishk is renowned for the power and clarity of his speeches and his books. These present the doctrines of Islam in an eloquent and accessible way and have provided spiritual nourishment and inspiration to millions of people.

This is a fact that none can escape, yet you go after the treasures of the world and renounce the Lord of Truth.